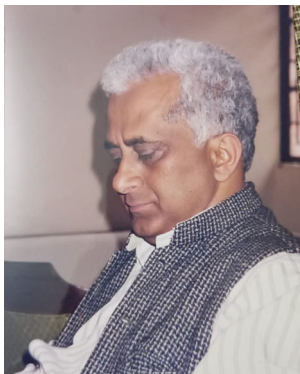Saitya Brata Das   *Editor*

Language and the World: Essays in Honor of Franson Manjali

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Franson Manjali (1955–2023)

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Editor

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Mourning involves a movement away from the knowable and the communicable. That which has been named, in its movement from speech to muteness, is clearly more prone to melancholy. It would be even stronger tendency of melancholy when the process takes place in the plurality of overused and name-withered human languages. This involves an "overnaming" which according to Benjamin is the "deepest linguistic reason for all melancholy"…[such melancholy], according to Benjamin, is the basis of the distinction between Greek tragedy and German Trauerspiel. It is also for him the basis of the "divine violence" which strikes at the root of what is set up as the natural law. It is a non-violent violence, which opens up the space and the voice of art, essentially melancholic, due to the disjunction between the natural and the human, a disjunction which is also that of time, of the messianic time, a time outside of all given time, wherein the above tension cannot be resolved in any presumed dialectical movement of history.

—Franson Manjali

The opposite is itself precisely what is nearest. Deserts, mountains, distant lands, and seas can separate us from a friend in this life; the distance between this life and the other is no greater than that between night and day or vice versa. A heartfelt thought, together with our complete withdrawal from anything external, transfers us into that other world, and perhaps this other world becomes all the more hidden from us, the nearer to us it is.

—F.W.J. von Schelling

Acknowledgments

Editor's Introduction

Events of Justice

The difficulty of speaking of Franson Manjali's "philosophy" has more than one reason. First of all, Manjali never speaks directly in his own voice; it is an indirect *récit* that he carefully cultivated over decades as a singular style of philosophical thinking (such is his self-effacement!). Secondly, even more decisively, his writing never has assumed the form of a "treatize", a "monograph", or a "book". There is no "thesis" or "hypothesis" that he proves or disproves in a systematic manner of argumentation, in a teleological fashion, which ends up in a decisive conclusion or result. Rather than thinking in a pre-determined method of argumentation leading to decisive results, Manjali thinks in style which is more of a *récit* of thought, a free unfolding of thinking on a temporal becoming where a shade or a tone of a thought opens up another, where the thought still remains open even though his essay is made to end almost in an abrupt style. It is extremely difficult to speak about thinking that follows such a free movement in becoming and unfolding, thinking that does not end up yielding to the demands of an "axiom" of deducing or inducing.

Like Nietzsche, also like Blanchot (both being his favorite *writers*) and like Benjamin (all three, in a strict sense, are not "philosophers" but *writers*), Manjali is a writer of discontinuous prose: prose that interrupts its own continuity; prose that by a necessity is destined to fragment itself—an incessant open *spacing*, without closure of deduction or induction. This is the highest necessity that freedom bears within itself: the necessity to be free, freedom which is free enough even to be necessary, the necessary freedom of necessity. This sudden conjunction of these two disparate—necessity and freedom—is truly the coincidence of opposites. Manjali likes to call it—again not in his own name but by taking recourse to other writers and thinkers—by this beautiful name: *event*. It is, as if as it were, in this name *event* (Manjali would prefer to speak of *events*—always in plural, *differential* and *deferential*, without being subsumable to any further unity) language itself come to its event: the event of an origin always immemorial and yet always prosthetic.

Despite the Proteus-like character of Manjali's thoughts, this enigma of the origin—of language—constitutes the real passion of his thinking. That the question concerning the "origin" of language cannot itself be formulable and formalizable in the form of formal linguistic analysis, in the grasp (*greifen*) of a conceptual (*begrifflich*) determination, or in the *pinning* it down to "truth": this origin is indeed *the event* par excellence—*the event of language* as such. Later we will see how Manjali understands this event of language as the very event of justice. What is important here is to recognize that what constitutes the real passion of Manjali's thinking poses an impasse, an enigma, a paradox, an aporia for thinking that, paradoxically, at once inhibits thinking and yet, at the same time, enables thinking to flourish. How to speak of such thinking which consists of ever exposing itself to what refuses to be measured by the thinkable? How to speak of that thinking that reaches its utmost fecundity precisely where it reaches it *a-poros?* We have seen that recognition of this enigma is necessary each time we speak of Manjali's thinking, which takes, as we know, myriad pathways—incalculable, aleatory, eventive, and adventitious.

Manjali calls *experience* of thinking "exploration". *Exploration* is *experience* in true sense of the term. The German word for "experience" is *Erfahrung.* To experience something is to explore, to undergo, to go *under*, to *under*take a voyage and to be transformed therein. To *explore* (this is one of Manjali's favorite words) is *to cry out*: ex (out)-*plorare* (to utter a cry); to *ex-plore* is to *ex-plode into a cry.* This *cry* is of uttermost importance to Manjali. In many of his classes, which this author has had the opportunity to attend, Manjali used to spend hours to *ex-pose* the sense of the French word *écriture*: the *cry*—the *cri*—of écriture/writing. This cry is the event of language. It is the cry of justice. When one is *ex-ploring*, s/he is *ex-posed* (one is deposed from all given, static, positions) to the *ex-ploding* of the *cri* of language—the *cri* that always one hears in its *differential* and *deferential* scattering of the same.

For Manjali the Protean thinker to think the same that does not mean nevertheless to remain identical. To speak of Manjali's "philosophy" is to be mindful of this Proteus-character of this thinking. A true Proteus that he is (not just in the external story of his life), Manjali's thinking revolves around the same that never remains identical to itself: discontinuity is as essential to thinking as its maximizing thrust towards sense; in fact, it is sense itself which is rather discontinuous and interruptive. That is why thinking for Benjamin, for Nietzsche and Blanchot, and also for Manjali, can at best be a kind of narrative-prose that opens up time only to disrupt itself. Benjamin, Blanchot and Nietzsche: three great thinkers of incompletion from whom Manjali never ceases to derive inspiration. That is why to speak of Manjali's "philosophy" is difficult in an essential sense: what he presents in his *récit*—provided that we can speak of his philosophical essays as *récit*—is the opening up of a field that lets thinkers come and go, make their appearance and disappearance, while he masks himself by letting others speak. Speaking and masking, masking and speaking: *récit* brings these two together in an intimacy whose enigma is difficult to be pinned down to a "truth". This is Manjali's oblique speech that does not let itself be pinned down; or, rather, it refuses itself to be pinned down, an obstinate refusal which nevertheless is gentle, a reticence that nevertheless does not reduce itself to any muteness. What

kind of language is this *écriture?* How do we formally and thematically analyze—
in the propositional structure of "truth", in the grammatical structure of language
(whether tree structure or animal structure)—this *cry of the event*, this *event of the
cry*?: Manjali ceaselessly asks this question in all his years that make up of we call as
the years of a "career". How do we understand, hermetically and hermeneutically, in
the hermetic language of hermeneutic or in the hermeneutic language of a hermit, this
excess—this *excessus*—of language, this event of a cry that *ex*-ceeds language, and
thereby letting language arrive or come (*l'avenir*: Manjali follows Derrida's termi-
nology more than that of any other, excepting Blanchot, for Blanchot has always
been the signature of *ex*-ception for him) to its own *jouissance,* to its own pleasure,
to its joy? For language too has its own pleasure and Manjali ceaselessly attends to
this pleasure: not the pleasure of being able to return to itself in the composure of
self-identity, but the pleasure of an exodus, in the difficult way out, as the very word
"exodus" shows itself (*ex-hodos*—the way out, the *hodos* that does not return to its
self-same identity). *The event of language is the exodus of language*: the cry that goes
out of the womb of the mouth and suffers in the *outside,* in the harsh sands of the
desert, in the desert of suffering, in the desert where all destination loses its address,
the desert where one loses one's way, the desert where one does not know where one
is going to and from where has one come. The language of the event is the language
of exodus: in its pleasure, in its *coming*, language suffers the violence of pleasure.
How do we formalize it in the grammatical pinning it down to a tree structure, to
the propositional pinning it down to a conceptual structure? Manjali wonders. He
wonders in a very essential sense: he himself is *ex*-posed in the desert out of which
the cry of the event—or, the event of the cry—e-rupts, inter-rupts, dis-rupts, rupt-
ures, rapt-urs. What *e-rupts* is essentially that which *rupts:* all eruption is a rupture,
as the root verb *rumpere* implies; without breaking, without the fissure, there is no
eruption, no event, no advent, no coming, no pleasure, no moaning, no bursting into
a cry, no explosion in an exploration. Such is the language of language! Such is the
origin of language. Explosion is the origin of language; bursting into a cry is the
event of language. In one of his fascinating essays Manjali brings this out in such a
lucid manner, reading very carefully a very old text of an ancient Indian philosopher
of language called Bhartrhari:

> Meaning is the particular instantiation of the activation, through an explosion or "bursting
> forth" (sphota) in the intellect (*pratibha*) of the perceiver. What is important in these views
> is the dynamic perspective attached to both meaning and form.

Manjali then goes onto say,

> As the semantic essence of speech, Sphota, is both umembodied (it is the linguistic centre,
> the universal) and unmanifested in all-differentiating and all-diversifying time. Bhartrhari's
> references to the various analogies employed by other scholars to describe this *sphota* (that of
> the 'wave', and that of the 'flame', and even more pertinently that of the 'seed' or the 'egg')
> make this amply clear. Owing to the literal meaning of the word, some commentators have
> also defined *sphota* as the 'bursting forth', etc. Some have even suggested that *sphota* might
> actually refer to the bursting forth of meaning in the mind/brain. However, in the present
> author's view it is indeed useful to retain this very physical sense of the word, rather than
> quickly reduce it to something cognitive or linguistic, without abandoning the insistence on

the undifferentiated character of the *sphota*, in comparison with *dhwani*. (Manjali 2014a, pp. 85–86)

Manjali then goes onto address some of the deepest metaphysical questions concerning the origin and the event of language, into the cosmological questions concerning the universe, the questions concerning time and history, and the messianic problematic of the destruction of power. Juxtaposing 7th century philosopher of language Bhartrhari with the contemporary philosopher Walter Benjamin's messianic conception of language and time, Manjali was being able to raise some of the most disconcerting questions of our time, opening up the problematic of language, beyond any formal analysis of the static properties of language, to the great questions of politics and history, of memory and time, of law and justice, of event and advent. This particular essay is perhaps Manjali's at his best; and we have around us very few thinkers, almost none, who can really match the insights therein attained. Manjali listens to the cry of language that bursts forth in the desert of our time, and finds therein messianic promises and possibilities where the oppressive powers of the world enter into suspension and destruction. This messianic anarchy of Manjali is not a well-defined, programmable, political project of overthrowing a well-defined "enemy" of people: it is *an-arché* in true sense of the term, that is, to think the possibility of the political as without having to be grounded on an *arché*, on a founding principle to ground a new hegemony in turn.

What is at stake here? At stake here is the double bind—the *differend*—between the event and law. Following Derrida and Deleuze here—these two thinkers of différance and difference without it having to be a representation of difference—Manjali points to the possibility of justice through an interminable inoperation and interruption of the law. The messianic suspension of the law—here Manjali is closer to Derrida, as perhaps he has always been—an anarchic event, or anarchic events. Events are necessarily anarchic, in Manjali's understanding, by a necessity which is the eternal donation of freedom, by a paradoxical co-incidence of the incommensurable. This event, exceeding politics and yet opening up the space for the political, is that which makes totality or closure impossible.

These are the great questions that Manjali asks, questions that are always dangerous and risky, risks that, however, he has always assumed. Behind the quiet, almost solitary, "gentlemanly" empirical man, there lives a fiery intellect, filled with a messianic-explosive imagination, always about to burst into a flame which only here and there finds an adequate expression. For he has also to the listen to the other demand that thought itself imposes on a thinker: always to appear masked. Like Nietzsche, also like Kierkegaard, here mask is not accessory, an accidental putting on: through masks, the essential play of the world is introduced.

Such is the thinker Manjali. This is why it is only deceptively easy to speak of Manjali's work. He always finds himself in the desert of language and hears the cry that erupts in the wilderness; he listens to that cry which is as ordinary as death and yet is as extraordinary precisely thereby: death that goes *extra* way out of the ordinary, born out of the open wound that gives birth to events, death that is the yawning abyss of the origin. This is nothing other than the origin of language itself. Despite

myriad paths that Manjali *under*takes and always *under*goes what he takes up, his real passion of thought in all these decades of thinking, researching, in searching *out*, in his interminable and incessant road *out*—is this: this prodigious and yet utter fragility of the origin—of language itself, this cry that resounds when language erupts out of a cut, of a slit, of a wound. In this sense, Manjali's thought is closer to Nietzsche and to Blanchot than to any other thinkers. Nietzsche too hears the cry of the origin, always heard only prosthetically and therefore only dimly and darkly. It is in great tragic music—which Nietzsche finds resounding in Sophocles rather than in the great monumental conceptual structures of Hegel—that we hear darkly the cry of the origin. In that sense—and here Manjali follows Nietzsche very closely[1] – Manjali's deconstruction of the formal-grammatical linguistics' analysis of language[2] is in very proximity to Nietzsche's deconstruction of the conceptual structures of Western metaphysics from Plato to Hegel. The concept is the last evaporating reality—of the immemorial cry of the origin; in fact, according to Nietzsche, the concept is the inversion of the cry, like the Platonic idea (and Hegel's concept) is the inversion of reality. Essays after essays, Manjali tirelessly emphasizes this. To hear the cry of the origin one has to be exposed to the harsh sun of the desert, to the suffering of the wilderness. Like Oedipus who has to pluck out his eyes in order to see, because he did not see when he had his eyes—so that he becomes like Tiresias, the blind one who sees—so someone who takes the road *out* in order to hear the cry of the origin has to be ex-posed in the desert of language, de-posed from one's homeland of analytically arrived "truth" and of the pinned-down dwelling of the "concept": only thus does one explore. Manjali explores. He explodes into a cry. And nobody hears it out. One would like to hear it because it is a risk; it is the very wager of existence where one has to constantly measure out against the immeasurable. Manjali always takes this risk. Often he fails. By failing he succeeds. Like Nietzsche, he throws his dice, he affirms chance, he fails, and there he succeeds. His downfall is his tragic joy. In this sense also, he is anarchist (another of his favorite words: *an-arché*—without or beyond or above all *arché*) in true sense of the term out of which—we are now speaking of his engagement with the question of the political—he questions "authorities", those principles or *archéi* that claims themselves to be originary in a mythic self-identity. Manjali, in his road *out*, in his *ex*-plorations, searches *out* the origin behind and beyond these mythical "origins": the anarchy of the origin that refuses to be grounded in the mythic foundation of a community, of a race, of a national self-identity, or even a linguistic self-presence. This is Manjali's "politics", in an entirely heterogeneous sense to the point that one wonders whether it is possible to speak of " politics" here, for the dominant conception of what "politics" means itself needs questioning, that is to say, needs to be put into question, to be put *under* question.

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[1] One only needs to read Manjali's various texts on Nietzsche, including his edited volume which grew out of an incredibly rich conference on Nietzsche that he organized in 2004 (See Manjali 2006).

[2] See the relevant essays (especially essays 1, 11, 12 &13) that are collected in *Labyrinths of Language* (Manjali 2014).

There is no anarchist politics or politics of anarchy in the simple, prevalent, dominant sense of the term; and yet, precisely thereby it points towards the possibility of pure politics as infinite contestation. This pure politics has no other sense than the infinite and interminable exposure of totality to an infinity that no totality can ever measure. In that very extraordinary essay I have just cited above, Manjali indicates (Manjali always *indicates*, he only *indicates*)—reading Walter Benjamin, another messianic thinker of anarchy—the possibility of a pure politics, politics that is absolved from the means and end structure which constitutes the language of the law. What is that, having finally absolved from the structure of being mere means to an end, that is to say, by a suspension of the law, opens to the possibility of justice—if not an event, or events? Language here again serves for Manjali, as for Benjamin, as the cipher, as an indication of the politics without *means*: the messianic possibility of the pure language of the name, absolved from the prattle of the law, is the language without *means*, which is to say, it is the event of language itself. The event of language is the language without *means*, that is to say, the event itself does not consist of *meaning*. *To mean* is to have at one's disposal *means* in sight of an end: to speak, by positing meaning as the originary moment of language, is to posit a mythic foundation which would be the self-identical to itself. The pure language, on the other hand, is attuned to an anarchic mourning that exceeds the mythic violence of the law by following as much as preceding it. To understand this event, Manjali uses two words here: "uncircumscribable" and "infinite". Manjali here is speaking of Benjamin here, and through Benjamin, he indicates—and Manjali only indicates—the pure possibility of pure politics as the messianic violence that interrupts the mythic violence of the law. This passage which enables Manjali, with a recourse to Benjamin, to pass from the question of language to the law is fascinating:

> Mourning thus involves a movement away from the knowable and the communicable. That which has been named, in its movement from speech to muteness, is clearly more prone to melancholy. It would be even stronger tendency of melancholy when the process takes place in the plurality of overused and name-withered human languages. This involves an 'overnaming' which according to Benjamin is the "deepest linguistic reason for all melancholy"…[such melancholy], according to Benjamin, is the basis of the distinction between Greek tragedy and German *Trauerspiel*. It is also for him the basis of the 'divine violence' which strikes at the root of what is set up as the natural law. It is a non-violent violence, which opens up the space and the voice of art, essentially melancholic, due to the disjunction between the natural and the human, a disjunction which is also that of time, of the messianic time, a time outside of all given time, wherein the above tension cannot be resolved in any presumed dialectical movement of history. (Manjali 2014a, pp. 84–85)

What Manjali calls here as "tension" is the agonal differend, or the anarchic polemos whose enemy is "any presumed dialectical movement of history", for "any presumed dialectical movement of history", with its maximizing thrust towards unity, would subsume the singularity of events within the figure of totality. I would like to think that this is the very heart of Manjali's thought. Sufficient here is to attend to this: language for Manjali is something like a cipher or crypt, not a determinable series of static statements, for all that *states* and can be *stated*—including the great political institution called "the State"—is, by a logic interior to it, *static;* language is

not a fixed apparatus of determinable properties which can be analyzed, logically-conceptually-grammatically, in terms of "truth". Rather, for Manjali, the fecundity of the crypt is such that it opens up what cannot be stated in static statements. This is what Manjali calls *event* or *events*. Following a philosopher like Emmanuel Levinas, Manjali would call this opening up of infinity from the heart of finitude as *the ethical*. Language is not a determinable and closed system of law that is necessarily governed by a hegemonic *arché*, nor is it a necessary apparatus of morphological-syntactic-phonological properties which can be analyzed by a set of rules or laws: the "state" of language is not static but rather eventive. Manjali also calls this eventive eruption of language, in its aleatory possibility of messianic interruptions and disruptions, as "dynamic", a word that he uses in almost all his essays from later period.

The event of language is the cry. Once we are *ex-posed* open to the cry of this event or these events, then the Pandora 's Box of ethico-political questions erupt that disrupt and interrupt totalities, systems, apparatuses—of knowledge, of political regimes, of "truths". Manjali's anarchist philosophy of language—which does not hesitate to put into question philosophy itself—ceaselessly tempts us to *at-tempt* this opening up of the Pandora's Box of language, to open the closed book of language once more, to expose ourselves to the desert where the cry is heard once again. Somewhere between the closure of the Book and opening of *écriture* there stands Manjali crying in the desert of language. He lets us hear words of a promise that murmurs and rustles—out of the profound melancholy of the depth—which will redeem us from the violence of injustice. The call of justice *to* come, which demands infinite acts of responsibility from each one of us, is the call he wants us to hear out of the darkness of our historical existence. But the one who hears the call that comes from *to come* of time, the time that remains *to* come—what Derrida would call *l'avenir,* as distinguished from *futur*—which even demands the arrest or suspension of what has already become fixed as the law of the world, this singular being who hears the coming of the other time, this time of the other, is not for Manjali a prince of the world, a man of dominion and principalities. He is more like sadhu—just like Benjamin's messiah incognitus who is more melancholic than a triumphant figure—who opens up, from the heart of the time that has been, the other time that is not yet accomplished. In these inimitable words Manjali opens up those other thoughts, those thoughts of the other time that come to intervene and interrupt the time of the present:

> The action of time on things induces specific dynamics in their ontology. Consequent to the action of time, things are perceived as *siddha* (accomplished) or *sadhya* (to be accomplished). A thing in the process of accomplished is perceived as *sadhana*…in the state of *sadhana*, man retreats himself from the normal course of actions in time. It is a weak state, having power only to prevent its own accomplishment in time as *sidddha* (completed thing). In this conscious state of being a *sadhana*, in which man is a sadhu, there is a double orientation to time. A *sadhu*—often a figure of inexorable melancholy—has, on the other hand, internalized all the experiences of the past, or rather all the events of destruction wrought by time, and on the other hand, he/she is looking forward to the time to come with hope and promise. A *sadhu* is also the one who arrests the unstoppable movement of time, intervenes in it, and creates intervals in it (Ibid., pp. 88-89).

A weak, fragile figure—barely a *figure* as such, for the concept of "figure" invokes certain mythic power—*sadhu* opens time to that which the law of presence cannot capture and capsize; she intervenes in it and opens intervals in it so that justice may shoot through this *inter-* of *venes* and *vals*. Manjali thinks the possibility of justice as the time of the intervention in the intervals: it is the very possibility of time itself as events, as events of justice, for justice requires time that is not just *siddha* but also *sadhya*. Hence is the incessant and interminable necessity of *sadhana*. Sadhu is she who opens up a hyphen by interrupting the unity of sense so that, in this distance of dis-junction, the other may come. This is precisely the task of sadhana, that is, by weakening of worldly powers, we come to renounce the power of time over us. I consider this as the most beautiful thought that Manjali ever has come to think.

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Two questions occupied Manjali towards the end of his life. First is the question of image to which Manjali has devoted a number of admirable essays (Manjali 2014b, pp. 153–67); second is the problematic of justice. In a series of unpublished fragments—sort of working notes towards an essay or a monograph—which are possibly among the last working notes of his life, Manjali embarks on an ambitious project of addressing the problematic of justice. The abstract of the fragments reads:

> We shall try to eke out some of the poststructuralist approaches to law and justice. We shall be mainly concerned with the views of the philosophers, Foucault, Deleuze and Derrida. (The title of this paper is derived from the title of Levinas' well-known work, *Otherwise than Being Or, Beyond Essence.*) On the one hand, these philosophers undermine Law, in its historical and socio-political existence, but on the other hand, through complex argumentation concerning the discourse of law, their views converge on a justice that is obtained only by an endless displacement of law. Justice, for them, is that which precedes law and can thus be located only as an *event* or a paradoxical becoming that simultaneously exceeds law. Though justice by law is always aspired for and never finally or fully attained, every moment of historical existence is potentially charged with events of justice that is outside of law.[3]

The title given to these notes is: *Events of Justice, or Otherwise than the Being of Law*. What Manjali means by "events" here is not accidental occurrences in which justice instantiates itself in differential fashions; rather, events of justice themselves are intrinsically: (1) differential, (2) multiple, and as such are (3) truly eventive, eruptive, adventitious. Much more difficult is to understand what Manjali means by "the being of law": justice are events, law is being. It appears as if—at least this much we can infer from these enigmatic, cryptic notes which are very difficult to understand—that the *différance* (which is not dialectical opposition) between justice and law is *like* the *différance* between events and being (while "events" are always plural, while " being" is in singular). How to understand this? How to understand this intrinsic connection made between "being" and "law"? The ontological understanding of "law"—law in its very being—is at stake here, but it is not just that: what seems to be at stake here is that law, in its very lawfulness, itself has the *being-character;* and that, precisely by that same measure, being itself, in its very being-character, has the

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[3] Manjali, "Events of Justice, or Otherwise than the Being of Law".

law-character. Manjali does not elaborate on this intriguing connection that is made here between "being" and "law", but he provides an indication: the title in part is derived from the title of an important book by Emmanuel Levinas—*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence.* It appears here that "deconstruction" of the law also has to be, at the same time, deconstruction of ontology: only then can we understand "otherwise than the law" as "the otherwise than being" or as "otherwise than the being of law". This also indicates that "events of justice" are *events* to the extent that they are always *otherwise*, that the otherwise shows itself as events—otherwise than being, otherwise than law. Events are disparate to being as justice is to law. This *disparate* constitutes an essential paradox: justice is simultaneously *becoming* and *exceeding*—the law; justice *becomes* to the extent that it also *exceeds thereby;* justice *exceeds* to the extent it necessarily *becomes* thereby. These final notes—very cryptic and full of paradoxical formulations—from his final years show how was he struggling with a very fundamental question that lies at the heart of his concerns. It points towards his near obsessive concern to understand the world that has come to be, the world whose poisonous air we breathe today; and to understand this world, he found himself placed in the desert of the world out of which questions, infinite questions, erupt like thousand volcanic eruptions, with loud cries bursting out in thousand explosions. Yet, he still saw burning the messianic fire of hope, very dimly though, that life-giving fire whose messianic trait he saw affirming itself against the abyss of hopelessness, while the world around him was growing darker, even more darker, and growing darker still.

This is a collection of essays in his memory and in his honor. These essays recall and renew "the unavowable community"—in words of Maurice Blanchot—which Manjali always dreamed of. It is the idea of a messianic community—a community *to* come—the community that interrupts not only any other totality but its own totality above all: such an idea of community—disrupting available, fixed, substantive identity—lies at the heart of Manjali' thought. This volume, renewing this vision, also recalls the thought of a responsibility whose inheritance can only be discontinuous and thereby opening ever new and ever singular horizon, interrupting any mythic foundation that constitutes hegemonic world order. Only thus death—not only his death—becomes not only bearable but also is overcome, and then we can ask, with the apostle: "Death, where is thy sing"? (1 Corinthians 15: 55)

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Demand for Sense and Nihilism

Gérard Bensussan

Abstract This article argues that the demand for sense constitutes the very movement of philosophical discourse. It is in the confrontation with non-sense—with the nihilation of sense—that philosophy asserts and grounds itself, but the spectres of non-sense could not be conjured away once and for all. Philosophy remains haunted by the possibility of non-sense that would interrupt its closure.

Keywords Sense · Non-sense · Nihilism · Philosophy

> Writing is where language is constantly transformed by the work of writers in their attempt to reveal what is outside known existence, in nonexistence. Language as literature is thus the continuous manifestation of the outside and the other that is yet to exist, or 'to come'.
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> — Franson Manjali (2018, p. 19).

In Terrasse à Rome, Pascal Quignard writes: "Providing a reason devastates love. To give sense to what we love is to lie" (Gallimard 2000, p. 66). The point is easily understood. In fact, it is self-evident that the sense of "love" or "what we love" poses no problem: proliferating even where it is absent, it risks being lost as soon as it asserts itself, always in excess or in default of its own truth. More generally, can we say that "to procure sense" is "to lie" without flinching at the performatively contradictory logic of the proposition?

What is the point of providing a sense, a reason? From the point of view of tradition, the question is so massive that it is formulated as another, which is the same as its mirror image: What is the point of philosophy? This question of sense precedes all our questions, and we always find ourselves and moved in advance. But grasped in its originality, it interrogates the sense of sense, that which precedes sense, and the sense of this precession. The word "sense" can be understood in many ways. This plurality obliges. It carries with it the questioning of philosophy itself, as the sensible exercise of sense and oriented the practice of argumentation, deduction and

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syllogism. Insofar as we will never be able to escape the first question, that of sense in its abyss, and will never be finished with the second, strictly disciplinary philosophy, their knot is determined as a demand of philosophy: firstly, a "social" demand, as doxa calls for philosophical episteme, and secondly, a more strictly philosophical demand. Let's start by asking the question.

In§ 2 of Sein und Zeit, before asking how the general formal structure of any question can be specified in the question of the sense of being, Heidegger, in a somewhat chaotic fashion, attempts to determine the formal structure of all questioning. What do I take from this for my own purposes and without re-explaining the argument of the whole paragraph? If I didn't already know what I was looking for without knowing it, I wouldn't be able to question about a given field. Two senses of knowledge are already emerging here, or in reverse, two types of knowledge about sense. When I ask Pierre what his name is, how old he is, etc., I know he has a name, an age, etc., but I don't know what that name or age is. I know in order to be able to question, and I don't know what gives rise to the question: "as a seeker, the questioner needs a prior orientation from the sought. As a result, the sense of being must necessarily be already available to us in some way…we move… always already in an understanding of being" (Sein und Zeit, $ 5). The answer belongs to the question. What is gefragt already contains what is erfragt, what is aimed at in the question, the "point" (trans. Vezin). The question, in turn, encloses the answer and assigns it a path to the exclusion of all others. This is what we mean when we say that we're moving with an "understanding of being", and we have yet to understand what this "understanding" is. Heidegger tells us from the outset that it is a "fact" that always precedes itself as a question–answer.

So, I retain this Faktum. What can I draw from this "fact" of the pre-comprehension of being—and from here I take the point of departure from the letter, and also from the spirit, of Sein und Zeit?

If we are always already immersed in the question: "What is the sense of philosophy, what is the sense of the demand of/for philosophy?", then, according to the rule in §2 of Being and Time, we are always already immersed in immediate answers that in fact precede the question—something Levinas will remember in his thematisation of ethics as the fundamental structure of subjectivity. We might then suggest a more precise, layered distribution of the initial question, sense and philosophy, now based on the request addressed to them and the agreed use of the terms of this address.

The first answer to this general question is that philosophy is useless—and if we take this answer seriously, i.e. if we consider it to be anything other than laziness or avoidance, there are significant elements of demarcation from both positive knowledge and established beliefs. I will take the second answer here, choosing this branch and temporarily abandoning the other. It comes from our daily lives: a. philosophy serves to give sense to things that have little of it, it is a kind of service provider; b. philosophy serves to live, to live better, it is a wisdom, an art of living, a way of proposing a way of life, that is to say, of giving sense to one's life.

In this double second response (service of sense, wisdom of sense), philosophy is the object of an obvious expectation. But this solicitation is doubtful. Philosophy has to be wary all the more as it is perfectly capable of answering them,

which it is inevitably tempted to do. Why be on guard? Because responding to this "social" demand for philosophy runs the risk of adjusting one's discourse to system of purposes already constituted, to formulate questions for answers already given and already found-nihilism of the snake biting its own tail. Many philosophers, well-versed in the exercise, do not hesitate in the face of this distorted public use of their maxims, which is both a ruse and a professional idiocy. Philosophy itself carries this ambiguity, and is never free of it. Levinas gave voice to this ontological duplicity: "the problem", he writes, "consists in asking whether sense is equivalent to the esse of being, that is, whether sense which philosophy is sense, is not already a restriction of sense, if it is not already a derivative ora derivation of sense, if the sense equivalent to the essence… is not already addressed in the presence which is the time of the Same" (Levinas 1982, p. 96. How can we think, and à fortiori philosophise, if we don't give in to this intimate slope of philosophy, the "restriction of sense", its tightening which can go as far as "lying", which leads to the supply of the "sense which in philosophy is sense".

I would now turn to the two responses "in philosophy" together, thereby suggesting other paths than those indicated by the perennial philosophy or at least other understanding of what is asked of it and what it requires.

Philosophy, is all about making sense, an expression of a kind of common and spontaneous language. Alfred Fouillée, in his time, used to call it "philosophism". Philosophy is supposed to show the sense of what would otherwise have no sense, or would remain hidden. Why is this answer so difficult to accept, or even fallacious? Because it starts from a false premise. What is it that shows itself to us, that presents itself? Surely not a raw state of affairs, objective and neutral data, facts without interpretation. What is immediately exposed is always a sense, a certain sense, a certain Deutung, a system of causalities, an oriented perspective. This is what we read when we open our newspapers, what we listen to on the radio or television, not to mention social networks: sense, sense that makes too much sense, that is, a system of beliefs determined by Wittgenstein as the "superstition" of causality.[1] We are not given a set of heterogeneous "things", a chaos, an unintelligible multiplicity which we could naively defer, but from the outset explanations, representations, grids for understanding—which not only superimpose themselves but substitute themselves for the world, or crush it. Under these conditions, nothing is more difficult than accessing the real, in the Proustian and Lacanian sense of what we come up against, through the layers of sense that presage it, and without prejudging the "reality" of this real, which is yet another question.

Interestingly, common sense is in line with the most elaborate philosophies, which, from Platonism onwards—or at least Platonism as determined by Nietzsche—posit that any demand—not only in terms of the philosophical order of sense but for thought in general, for science, for everything that was embraced by the Galileo-Cartesian

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[1] «La superstition» est une tendance propre à la pensée, aussi bien magique que scientifique, à poser une causalité là où n'existent que deux événements successifs, afin de les lier logiquement selon un sens" (Wittgenstein 1961, p. 67). [Trans]: "Superstition is a tendency specific to thought, both magical and scientific, to posit causality where only two successive events exist, in order to logically link them together."

method and rigour of the mathesis universalis paradigm—would be a demand for sense, a quest for an essence concealed by and under deceptive appearances, more original than the question itself.

But is it the philosopher's job to unveil this sense, to reveal it, to critically construct it, behind the phenomenality of the sensible? Is he destined to take on the role of the high priest of the intelligible, as Hegel put it? This presupposes that when thought begins to think, as Schelling puts it, it is immediately confronted with a void, a lack, a defect, which it must fill with an answer, in other words, with what Jacques Rivière, reading Proust, called "the obturation of abysses". What can this obturating sense mean, once the "superstitious" etiological operation of exposing the void has been carried out, if I may put it that way?

Like the man of science, who is undoubtedly a man of sense with a "spontaneous philosophy" (Althusser), isn't the philosopher unknowingly exposed to the spontaneity of an overabundance of sense, to the excessive immediacy of a sense, of more than one sense, to a proliferation of senses? Ideology, in all its senses, from the "logic of an idea"(Arendt) to Marxist sophistication, is nothing other than a sense that comes to clothe phenomena and give them the illusory consolation of significance. Ideology is always sensible, like doxa, like philosophy when it sets out to uncover the hidden sense of an essence behind senseless appearances. In terms of what Levinas calls "sense, which in philosophy is sense", there is no need to distinguish between these instances, as tradition obviously does in a self-serving way. The work of thought must first meta-philosophically undo these swarmings of sense. Unless he falls into "philosophism", the philosopher, therefore, when he questions (fragt nach—the German verb has the advantage of being intransitive), is not faced with a constitutive void that the "obturating" response would fill with objects. On the contrary, he is beset by an abundance of senses, interpretations, intelligibility systems and causalities at work. He must begin by asking what is the "sense" of all this sense and if there is any. And in the course of this meta-questioning, the question of the sense of the demand quickly supplants that of the demand for sense.

To repeat, the philosopher's gesture consists of not giving sense to what has none, since sense is what is given to us, to our gaze, to our understanding. Rather, it is a matter of interrupting it, for "sense always results from elements that in themselves are not signifiers… sense is always reducible…behind every sense there is a nonsense, and the opposite is not true…sense is always phenomenal" (Levi-Strauss 1963, p. 636).

Sense is evidence. But evidence is something other than the indubitable, which it is the task and responsibility of thought to make us perceive. Where there is sense, there is the enigma of the real, and in place of the obvious, a "pre-reflexive" beyond doubt. If we are still faced with the "obvious", it's because we haven't even begun to philosophise, and it's time to get started. To philosophise, beyond "sense in the sense of philosophy", is to enter into the enigmatic character of the world and the human being. This word, enigmatic, has nothing pompous or evanescent about it, since it envelops the absolutely indubitable. It designates the non-programmable, the unforeseeable, the unpredictable—or the event, the actual that no possibility precedes (Schelling), that which always precedes the program (Proust).

Husserlian phenomenology is built on this gesture of suspending natural evidence, of bracketing sense—both common sense and the sense conferred by positive knowledge—in order to "return to things themselves". It is in the defection of sense, and its patience, that philosophical work deepens. The examples could be multiplied. Marx: against the absolute evidence that the wage is the remuneration of work, which makes admirable sense and continues to make sense, Marx cuts a small incision that undermines the sense of classical political economy and, one step at a time, reformulates the ontology of social being—namely, that the wage does not remunerate work, but the use of a force, labour power, for a given time (a force that holds the unheard-of possibility of creating value and even surplus value- a force that is properly creative). I'm not commenting here on the validity of Marx's discovery, but on its formal epistemology, its sense or meta-sense, which consists in displacing sense by reaching it at its very source, at its social institutionalisation, at the form of evidence it takes for the actors in a situation. We could easily show how "ethics" according to Levinas, to take yet another example, incises the long history of traditional moral philosophy and shakes ontology to its core.

We could say, perhaps at the risk of a misunderstanding that needs to be avoided, that philosophy, insofar as it interrupts sense by pointing to its front, by circumscribing its pre-sense, necessarily endures a certain nonsense, the nonsense of what Levinas calls the patience of the refusal of the concept. I note in passing that *Autrement qu'être* (Otherwise than Being), if we relate the gesture to §2 of Being and Time, deformalises the gefragt/befragt/erfragt form and radicalises it in the process. In fact, this form is subjected to the precession of the addressee of any question on the question itself: in Levinas, the "quisnity of the who" names this extraordinary ascent to the extremes[2] which opens up in his thought what I have clumsily called insensé or even "non-sense" (Levi-Strauss), through which the change of direction "of the answer to the question" (Levinas 2004, p. 251). This backward "path" requires

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[2] « la *quis-nité* du *qui* s'excepte de la quiddité ontologique du *quoi* recherché et orientant la recherche…La subjectivité est structurée comme l'Autre dans le Même, mais selon un mode différent de celui de *la conscience*. Celle-ci est toujours *corrélative d'un thème*, d'un présent représenté—d'un thème placé devant moi, d'un être qui est phénomène. Le mode selon lequel la subjectivité se structure comme l'Autre dans le Même diffère de celui de la conscience—qui est conscience de l'être quelque indirecte et ténue et inconsistante que soit cette relation entre la conscience et son thème—« placé» devant elle: que cette relation soit perception d'une présence « en chair et en os», figuration d'une image, symbolisation d'un symbolisé, transparence et voilement du fugitif et de l'instable dans l'allusion».Toute quête de sens serait tensionvers une objectalité pleine, unie, et plus ou moins articulée à l'amphibolie qui/que" (Levinas 2004, p. 46). [Trans]: "The quisnity of the who is excepted from the ontological quiddity of the what is sought and orienting research…Subjectivity is structured like the Other in the Same, but according to a mode different from that of consciousness. This is always co-relative of a theme, of a represented present—of a theme placed before me, of a being which is phenomenon. The mode according to which subjectivity is structured as the Other in the Same differs from that of consciousness—which is consciousness of being, however indirect and tenuous and inconsistent this relationship between consciousness and its theme may be—"placed" before her: that this relationship is perception of a presence in "flesh and blood", figuration of an image, symbolization of the symbolized, transparency and veiling of the fugitive, and the unstable in the allusion. Meaning would be tension towards a full, united objectivity and more or less articulated with the amphiboly "which"/"that"."

humility, i.e. immersion in the resistant equivocity of sense, without saying anything about the sense—it's enough to pass to the plural of the sensible for sense to be already destabilised, with a simple flick of the wrist.

The philosopher is the athlete of this impatient patience, this endurance of the infinite before the "measure" of sense is brought to him. And philosophy is resistance to the material of the unthought. It's practice always benefits from keeping in mind, however diffuse and oblivious, its own ordeal of what comes before the elaboration of sense, and enjoins upon it the immense, impossible task of "making definition of the indefinable" (Schelling). The fact that one can hardly philosophise before the manifestation of what is manifested does not mean that this "what" is the primary source of manifestation.

A particularly evocative parable comes to mind. One day, a passer-by sees Diogenes the Cynic reaching out and begging for an obolus from a statue. The gesture is obviously senseless, the very opposite of all the sensible and good services of wise conduct. The passer-by asks Diogenes why he is doing this, since he knows it makes no sense. And Diogenes replies: "I practice receiving nothing". This word is not simply a witticism. It undoubtedly says something about the philosopher's monstrative gesture, which is indissociably ontological and ethical, or ethico-political. It is indeed an exercise (I practice receiving nothing), of that endurance or test of which I have just spoken, in which is revealed, that what we never see and which arouses the astonishment of the passer-by. Diogenes' posture, through this astonishment, provokes a meditation on poverty and wealth, on the difficulty of living in indigence. It certainly turns distress into irony. But by masquerading as imposture, it also transforms the suffering of the poor into an opportunity to ridicule the sterile glory of statues, which is nothing other than the triumph of sense erected among us, which gives nothing.

This first point is crucial. The philosopher seeks a sense that will not come. A fortiori, he cannot give sense. On the contrary, he strives, without necessarily succeeding, to reach what lies beneath sense—the "cobblestones", the statue—and which sense conceals by blocking it out, the "beach". If sense is, on the one hand, a teleology, a direction, a program(where there is none); and if teleology is the concept, i.e. an oriented self-movement of sense, according to knowledge or consciousness, then the philosopher's task is not, or not only, to conceive the conceivable, and create concepts, but to confront the hetero-teleological, the inconceivable, the real and its enigma, that which cannot be subjected to its confinement in a concept that conceives or in a signification that signifies, i.e. in a perhaps fatal over-sense.[3]

Philosophy is neither the provider of a service nor the purveyor of symbolic additions that it would bring from outside to a reality that would otherwise be devoid of sense. Rather than an epistemic correction, is it an art of living, a consolation, a wisdom, and what does this mean from my point of view?

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[3] Hannah Arendt parle de sur-sens, « le sur-sens, sa logique absolue et ses conséquences», pour définir le mal (Arendt 1972, p. 198). [Trans]: Hannah Arendt speaks of super-sense whose absolute logic and its consequences define the evil.

In general, we refer to the Ancients when we rally to this characterisation of philosophy as wisdom and conduct, patience and serenity. The work of Pierre Hadot will no doubt come to mind – although I can't help noting, without being able to elaborate further, that what he calls "spiritual exercises" is very significantly different from a "philosophical exercise". We're talking about the "wisdom" that constitutes philosophy, or a hedonistic ethic that Christianity would have dried up.

A first observation: the birth of philosophy occurs through differentiation from traditional wisdoms, and from the wise, i.e. the sophists, the masters of speech, an appellation that is in no way depreciatory from the outset, since Homer and Hesiod are among them. It was philosophy, with Socrates, that initiated the pejoration of the words "sophist" or "sophistic". The act of designating philo-sophos by delimiting it from sophos, as we know, belongs to Pythagoras in the sixth century: "Are you a wise man? No", he replied, "I'm a friend or lover of wisdom".

The wise man holds wisdom and passes it on, like a treasure, an asset, a substantial possession. The very word philo-sophe, this neologism, is formed as a schize, a cleavage. In contrast to the wise man, the philosopher sets out in search of that which he does not have and which he pursues assiduously, a wisdom or truth, always promised, never conquered. On the wise man's side, a serenity, surely, the impassivity of one who has and is able to actualise what he has. On the philosopher's side, the worried fever of the one who runs after (fragt nach) what he doesn't have, the sense accomplished in wisdom. Philosophy, in its singular exercise, is originally a figure of inadequacy between what one seeks and what one puts in place, what one seeks and what one has. In this race, which is itself a "practice in receiving nothing", or very little, a practice of thought is invented in distortion and deviation—where wisdom aims to be adequate to the world, to harmony.

Kierkegaard called the philosopher a man who doesn't think what he does and doesn't do what he thinks—pushing the schizophrenia of philo-sophia to the point of the philosopher's schizophrenia! What we hear here is a scathing critique of philosophy, of the renunciation, even cowardice, to which it can lead. But this gesture of recusal is itself, profoundly, a philosophical gesture. It invites us to think in the gap it indicates between doing and thinking, a gap that is itself a part of the law of separation from which philosophy springs. What Kierkegaard says, and what he urges us to do, is to remedy philosophy with philosophy. There is philosophy and philosophy, and between philosophy and philosophy there is sometimes an abyss. There is no other way to un-philosophise than to philosophise again, but in a different way, as a long tradition has taught us.[4] Other means of recourse are likely to prove futile, because

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[4] Cette « ligne» est en effet quasi-concomittante à la philosophie, dès le début: Aristote, *Protreptique*, fragment 2, coll. W. Ross:« Si vous voulez philosopher, *il faut philosopher*; si vous ne voulez pas philosopher, *il faut philosopher* pour voir si vous devriez philosopher ou pourquoi vous n'avez pas besoin de philosopher, Donc dans tous les cas, il faut philosopher»; Alexandre d'Aphrodise,*Comm. aux Topiques*, 149, 9–17: «D'ailleurs, si tu dis qu'on doit philosopher, tu dois philosopher; mais si tu prétends qu'on ne doit pas philosopher, alors tu dois philosopher, ne fût-ce que pour le prouver. De toute façon, tu dois philosopher. Car c'est déjà philosopher que se demander si on doit le faire»; Clément d'Alexandrie, *Stromates*, 6. 18 et 162. 5: «Si on doit philosopher, on doit philosopher; car la même chose s'ensuit de lamême chose. Mais la même conclusion s'ensuit, si on ne doit pas

their answers do not fit the question as philosophy, in its own language, formulates its expectations. Technical efficiency is entirely a matter of doing, positive knowledge does not think about doing, but measures it against internal standards, established wisdoms present themselves as an a priori adequacy of doing and thinking.

The gap between doing and thinking that Kierkegaard denounces when he evokes the figure of the philosopher can be seen as something that goes beyond mere idiosyncrasy, and is truly a condition for the existence of philosophy. This is not to say that we must simply resign ourselves to this split-being, as stoic wisdom might recommend, since ontologically it doesn't depend on us. That would be contemptible cowardice, says Kierkegaard, this would be to abdicate the infinite power of thought under the pretext that our finite condition strikes it as an effect of continuous in-actuality. Kierkegaard's maxim refers back to finitude itself, not just the philosopher's finitude, but that of each and every one of us, and which is indicated in and by a way of living that is torn apart, inadequate and incapable of stable, pre-found or constructed sense.

In its exercise, that is, in its infinite and infinitely (un)actualisable power, philosophy can well "make sense", if you like, between finite and infinite, condition and question. The word "between" excludes organic adherence to oneself, self-identity, any correspondence between oneself and the world, of any "sense"—but works on the contrary to demonstrate the vanity of any adequacy, of any peace with oneself, of any satisfied identity, i.e. to produce a "sense" other than that promoted by the wisdoms, a sense structured as quest and potentiality.

To say that philosophy is a friend of what it doesn't have and what it desires, is to determine it as a potential being, aiming for adequacy insofar as it speaks for a humanity inadequate to itself, between birth and death, temporalised life and existence. Philosophy and the philosopher, and all men, are in the power of sense. If all current, a priori sense is, through philosophy, struck by and through the "insense", it is by virtue of this em-power of sense. The philosopher reminds us and makes it clear—even if he doesn't always do so, far from it—that he holds nothing: no definitive explanation, no ready-made sense that can simply be applied to events, to the facticity of the world, no wisdom whose instructions he would give. And he has to make do with this nothing. To make do with this nothing is to un-make the

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philosopher; car personne ne saurait assurément cela sans l'avoir d'abord examiné; de toute façon, donc, on doit philosopher.» Tout ceci culmine avec la célèbre maxime de Pascal, « Se moquer de la philosophie, c'est vraiment philosopher» et se renouvelle jusqu'à Kant et au-delà. [Trans]: such "line" is in fact almost concomitant with philosophy from its beginning: "If you want to philosophize, you have to philosophize; if you don't want to philosophize, you have to philosophize to see if you should philosophize, or why don't you need to philosophize. So in any case you have to philosophize" (see Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, fragment no. 2, collected W. Ross: Aristotle 2006); "Besides, if you say that we must philosophize, you must philosophize; but if you claim that one should not philosophize, then you must philosophize, if only to prove it, because it is already philosophizing whether one should do it" (Alexander of Aphrodisias, commentary on *Topics*, 149, 9–17); "If one must philosophize, one must philosophize; for the same thing follows from the same thing. But the same conclusion follows, if we are not to philosophize, for no one would certainly know this without having first examined it; in any case, therefore, we must philosophize" (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6:18 & 162:5). All this culminates in Pascal's mocking maxim: "to mock philosophy is truly philosophizing" and is repeated all the way to Kant and beyond.

whole, "the True", or the substantialised something of the world and of man, the sense as it proposes itself to us in its statues in the city.

We understand why there is a deceptive dimension to philosophy (as there is to democracy, and for a structurally identical and historically coincidental reason). But why shouldn't disappointment be a good beginning for philosophy, as much or more than astonishment? A philosophy proceeding from disappointment in the face of all that astonishment has left unquestioned could set about re-questioning the enigma. The Apology of Socrates tells the story of Cherephon, who, having questioned the Pythia on the subject, is told: "There is no wiser man than Socrates". Socrates is told of this flattering statement by his old friend, and subjects it to scrutiny, as he takes it to be an enigma, being by no means "wise" in his own eyes. So he sets out to find wiser men than himself, politicians, craftsmen, poets—a disappointing quest, since none of these competent men can demonstrate superior wisdom. The enigma becomes self-evident. There are no wise men, only men in search of wisdom, waiting for sense and working towards it, politically, poetically and productively.

Philosophy, the power of sense, is an infinite effort, opening up countless possibilities for questioning the world and mankind. It can infinitely, but will never fully actualise this power. Philosophy is linked to our finite condition. But this finiteness signifies in us an infinite vocation, which philo-sophia articulates in its multiple and polymorphous demands. We will never be finished with it—this is our difference with God, who is an infinite that is always present, whereas our infinity condemns us to a deferred, in-finite actualisation, in the Levinasian understanding of the word. This implies, at least since German idealism and its refoundations of ontology, another determination of the source of questioning, of its outpouring.

Reason, since that's what we're talking about, is not a human attribute, nor even a faculty. We don't have reason any more than we have wisdom or sense. The philosopher doesn't have reason, the whole reason, an entire reason, since he must strive to achieve this wholeness, or at least aim for it "in the element of the concept" (Hegel). In the extreme, and by way of exaggeration, we could say that the philosopher is not always in his right mind. The ordeal of nonsense to which I referred with the example of Diogenes places him in limit experiences that can border on a vacillation of this kind. It's reason that has the philosopher; it's reason that inhabits him and holds him. Philosophy would then be, to quote Schelling, "the interminable preface to a book always awaited in vain" (Schelling 1856–61, XIII, p. 178, italics mine), always hoped for, in the process of arriving—a preface, not even a book, whereas wisdom is always given in a book that contains it in its entirety, "sacred". In contrast, philosophy is "a long impatience"(Valery 1957, p. 144).

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The question that borders on the vertigo of the preceding interrogations about sense is obviously the question of nihilism—which must therefore be confronted. This question is posed within philosophy itself, in its most established tradition, Idealism,

from Plato to Hegel, "from Ionia to Jena" (Rosenzweig). I would therefore like to start, or re-start, from a paradox, a coup de force, a coup de théâtre, the coup de sens, which philosophy has managed to pull off.

This blow to sense is to have installed us in the certainty, based on the constitution of a belief, that the world in which we are born, live, experience and die, is a phenomenon, even an epiphenomenon, in search of its "sense" and essence. It is merely appearing, in other words, nothing. The being, the true, the real, the being of this world would be the opposite of this appearing, and would lodge in its intimate, invisible ontological depth. The coup du sens is only possible from the philosophical bedrock of nihilism.

I was talking about Idealism, by which I mean Platonism. As everyone has known since Nietzsche, there is a Platonism for philosophers, "metaphysics", and a Platonism for the people, "Christianity". According to Nietzsche, this Platonism is not necessarily congruent with Plato's ontology in the strict sense. In essence, it consists in matrixically opposing two worlds, the sensible and the intelligible, or appearances and being, with being concealed behind the sensible appearances of the phenomenal world. The task of the philosopher follows directly from this—to provide sense. Metaphysics comes after physics, the physical, the sensible world, the better to reveal its "rear". Its aim: to flush out what lies behind, hidden and invisible, i.e. the true being of things. Active and dynamic, it tracks down the being.

To appear or to be—this is the quintessential Hamletean philosophical dilemma. The philosopher is often its coryphaeus. To be or to appear, the alternative unfolds throughout the long history of philosophy, from its ontological-metaphysical foundations. It is illustrated in the most sophisticated philosophical systems as well as in the most everyday beliefs and the most diverse catechisms of thought.

Thinkers like Rosenzweig and Heidegger, among others, saw this very clearly. The former asserted that the day we understand that the difference between being and appearing doesn't exist, philosophy, finis philosophiae, will be over; the latter posited that soviel Schein, soviel Sein: there is only as much being as there is appearing. This trivialisation of philosophy in its practices and constructions also runs through popular culture. I'm reminded of a line heard in an old French film: "If you come across a man with a duck's beak, duck's legs, duck's wings, then he's a duck". To put it bluntly, "a dog that dies and knows it dies like a dog, and can say it knows it dies like a dog, is a man" (Fried 1984, p. 134). The metaphor ("like a dog") in the exchange that regulates these bestiary elements, in this cross-referencing, reintroduces knowledge and speech, the logos, from the crude ordinariness of appearances. Levinas provided a phenomenologically inspired formula for this apparent self-evidence, in which being bends and submits: "Phenomenology is easy", he said, "it's when you eat soup with a spoon and meat with a knife and fork, because if you ate soup with a knife and fork, it wouldn't be soup, it would be meat". The examples I have just mentioned in bulk have the use of a viaticum. The bestial laziness of appearances, against which the august work of the negative and the enduring patience of the concept are set up, would here have to assert its most vivid resources. The secret of thought on its laborious paths, "its effort and fatigue" as Hegel once said, could then appear,

tenaciously affirming and strengthening itself: the opposite of appearing is not being, it is disappearing.

This disappearance is removed against the flashing backdrop of our appearance. Without these intermittencies of finitude, it risks falling into the trap of dialectical essentialisation, where "birth and disappearance… are neither born nor disappeared", and where the "disappearing" is therefore "considered essential" (Hegel 1996, pp. 103–105). An extraordinary twist, a variant of the philosophical coup I was talking about: the disappearing, always disappearing, no longer disappears. It thus strikes at appearances far more effectively than in the fixed duality of the sensible and the intelligible. There is only one way out of this essential disappearance: to restore the existential pain of being born and dying. Appearing (Paraître), like the child coming into the world, and appearance (apparaître), standing in a shared space, summon up places and times that make for ongoing interrelationships. People appear to each other affectively, speak to each other, meet or cross paths, enter into deliberations and confrontations, they love each other, they hate each other, they disappear, they die—and their disappearance does not disappear in favour of ontic perpetuation. Of course, non-sharing is never absent from this ethico-rhetorical intersubjectivity, from this sharing. It precedes it as existence—a factuality of appearance that is not preceded by any "disappearing" essence. I exist between my appearing/appearance into the world and my death, my disappearance. Disappearance reduces something to nothing, of course, an existence to a death, a life to its erasure, an absence to its obsession, like the letter E in Pérec's La Disparition. But this effective nothingness is not the nihilist nihil. Why not? Nihilism is not the belief in nothing or the belief in a nothing, but the position of a nothing where there is something. "It is a mania common to philosophers of all ages to deny what is, and to explain what is not", wrote Rousseau in The New Heloise (1967, p. 554).

Not all nothings are nihilistic. Some nothings are simply nothing. These can hardly be circled by a dialectic of something and nothing, nor can they be circumvented by its shell games and sleight-of-hand.

If we substitute disappearing for philosophical being as its effective counterpoint, what happens? My own death, the possibility of the impossibility of my existence, is the counterpoint to all ontology, to the unremitting perpetuation of being. I appear, then I disappear, I exist, I don't exist. The first step of nihilism is to make us believe that instead of disappearing, we must put being, a being-nothing: I am "disappearing", I am dead, an absolute oxymoron, but I am only dead in a way. We say "depart" to disappear, as soon as we are talking about a death. The "dearly departed" is "gone". To another place, to the immortal abode of the departed, where he or she is reunited with his or her loved ones. In a tomb, an urn, a dwelling to fit the body, and even its measurements: length, width, height. "To part" obviously euphemises "disappear" by assigning it a new place da. To disappear is to be in no place at all, da and Sein, as in conventional representations of the separation of soul and body, become separated. No more da for the Sein, explains Derrida![5] To leave, to "die a little" as the saying

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[5] L'inhumation et l'incinération seraient deux modalités inégalement radicales de l'amortissement de la disparition du *da* du *Dasein*, ou de ses ruses (Derrida 2010, p. 233). [Trans]: "Burial and

goes, is to leave one place and set sail for another, in other words, to preserve the possibility of possibility by locating it, and to provide for the future of sharing the part abandoned or the place left behind. We used to say "to leave" just as we still say "to separate", from someone, a country, a landscape.

Nihilism works on language, it euphemises to better open the stage for a new beginning, the prospect of a belief in the being of nothing, in being instead of nothing, and in nothing instead of disappearing. Nihilism is everywhere because it speaks. The difference between the nothing of being and the nothing of disappearing is infinitesimal—which is why nihilism is so stubborn, sometimes undetectable. The point is not so much to denounce it, which would mean accompanying it in its assault on sense, as to understand the illusions it produces and conceals, by and in philosophy and its tradition. The being of the great ontologies is a camouflage that conceals a nothing, a hole, a pit, the "grand canyon of nothingness".[6] It is and it puts a word, and not just any word, in the place of nothing, over the void.

Here, we must refer directly to what Jacobi wrote in his 1799 Letter to Fichte, where all these motifs are inaugurally interwoven and made explicit, and German Idealism determined, in its rationalism of thought, as nihilism.

The Letter attests to the first properly philosophical use of the term nihilism. Jacobi writes that idealist metaphysics is in itself prometheism and nihilism.[7] It is incapable of thinking positively about existence, finitude and life. It can only deny, with God, with freedom or with "being", the very reality of nature. It reduces all things to an unconditioned principle, which can only be considered from the point of view of thought alone and within itself. Outside thought, that is, in the reality of things and the world, this principle of absoluteness is an absolute Nothingness: "man knows only by conceiving, and he conceives only by transforming the thing into a mere form, by making the form a thing, the thing a nothingness"[8] from which everything follows in accordance with an implacable necessity. This conceptual nothingness

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cremation would be two unequally radical modalities of cushioning the disappearance of the *da* of *Dasein*, or of its ruses".

[6] " au bord du grand canyon du néant"(Nancy 2005, p. 109). [Trans]: "at the edge of the grand Canyon of nothingness".

[7] « L'idéalisme que je traite de nihilisme», affirme-t-il (Jacobi 1946/2009, p. 328, 2009). [Trans]: "I treat Idealism as nihilism", affirms he.

[8] Jacobi (1946/2009, p. 314). Cf. Similarly see Jacobi's *Die Denkbücher* (1986, p. 172), I cite I. Radrizzani's translation: « Le nihilisme comme destin de la philosophie moderne…», in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 2020/2: « La raison produit des choses abstraites, fait de ce qui est néant quelque chose, et réduit ce qui est quelque chose à néant [*Die Vernunft* […] *macht was nichts ist zu etwas, und was etwas ist zu nichts*]. Vous … ne disposez de votre raison qu'à titre d'emprunt [*daß ihr Eure Vernunft nur zur Lehn tragt*], elle n'est que l'empreinte [*Abdruck*] de la sagesse de Dieu exprimée dans le monde, et sinon elle n'est rien; vous avez voulu faire d'elle quelque chose [*ihr habt sie selbst zu etwas machen wollen*], et du coup tout s'est transformé entre vos mains en néant [*und so gleich wurde unter euren Händen alles zu nichts*]». [Trans]: "Reason produces abstract things, makes something of what is nothing, and reduces what is something to nothing…you only have your reason as a loan, it is only an impression or gift of the wisdom of God expressed in the world, otherwise it is mere nothing; you want to make something of it and suddenly everything is transformed in your hands into nothingness."

dooms all "idealism", that is, all philosophy "for a hundred years", to swallow up transcendence in the blind night of a smooth, flat immanence.

In his elucidations, Jacobi sets up a metaphor of which he has given several versions. Perhaps the most elaborate is to be found in his critique of Fichte. The "I" of the Doctrine of Science, he explains, logos is compared to a stocking on which flowers, a sun, a moon and stars are knitted. The world arrived at by the philosopher through this logical weave, where the weaving of "forms" is akin to a forfeit against existence, and even to a fabricating "idolatry" (Jacobi 2009, p. 331),[9] would be similar to the design of this stocking. A pure product of the back-and-forth movement of the thread of what Hegel would call the "negative", its patience and pain, nothing external to the loom is involved. This is the "chimerical" image produced by speculative reason in its "dream", detached from the "real" like a fever attack (Jacobi 1946/2009, p. 321): a sock instead of the world, a non-being substituted for the being, a substitute for the real instead of the real. The entire universe, in its fundamental exteriority—flowers, sun, moon and stars—is nothing more than a poor knitted pattern, a substitute for the real, an immensity that an ersatz replaces, an image, a perception says Jacobi, a nothing taken for the truth of the world. Reason knits its world and passes it off as the world. Nihilism is above all a denial of the "outside" (Ibid., p. 311), of that continuous manifestation of the outside and the other of which Franson Manjali speaks. By a knock-on effect, it is anarchy of thought. Jacobi invokes the mythological figure of Narcissus, for whom everything outside himself and his image in the water is Nothingness, "a phantom in itself, a real Nothingness, a Nothingness of reality". Nihilism exists only in thought, for thought, for "my being"[10] " yet I cannot be my supreme being to myself", "I am not by myself, I do not stand in any way of myself". Against this narcissism of the Fichtean ego, and of all self-centered reason, there is "more than me, better than me, a completely different Other", "all above and beyond me" (Ibid., p. 323; and Jacobi 1986). Nihilism is "an engorged and self-sealing gap" (Nancy 2005, p. 11). The nihilist is a solipsist, because he believes that nothing is external to him. This radical immanentism, which Jacobi detects in particular in the Spinozistic naturalism of the sive, can only be broken by a salto mortale, he explains, whereby reason can finally escape its own demons, starting with strict and integral rationalism. The Letter makes a diagnosis, examines a tradition of which its author is a contemporary, and endeavours to look beyond this traditionis traditio.

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[9] Jacobi ajoute pour marquer la responsabilité théorique et morale de la métaphysique: « ce n'est point l'idole qui fait l'idolâtre» (p. 333). [Trans]: Jacobi adds to mark the theoretical and moral responsibility of metaphysics: "It is not the idol who makes the idolator" (p. 333).

[10] Canetti explique qu'un « penseur» se caractérise en ce qu'il « écarte tout»: « d'où tenez-vous cela ?», « votre père n'existe pas» puisqu'il est mort, « vous n'étiez nulle part» puisque vous y étiez hier, etc. « Le geste» même de la pensée, selon ce savoureux dialogue du *Territoire de l'Homme* (1978, p. 288) consiste à produire partout du « rien» à la place du « quelque chose», au nom du « vrai». La « demande de sens» s'exténue en inutile « cruauté», celle de la « pensée» (p. 295).[Trans] Canetti explains that a "thinker" is characterised by "discarding everything": "where do you get that from?", "your father does not exist" since he is dead, "you were nowhere" since you were there yesterday, etc. "The very gesture of thought", according to this delicious dialogue from *Territoire de l'Homme* consists of producing "nothing" everywhere in place of "something", in the name of "true". The demand for sense is exhausted into useless "cruelty" of thought.

In his anti-Kantian points, Schopenhauer takes up Jacobi's themes. I would highlight two central motives that organise this reprise. Firstly, Schopenhauer questions the validity of a "so-called practical reason" and its titles, then he criticises Kant for establishing the foundations of his morality "on nothingness" (Nichtigkeit) (Schopenhauer 1998, p. 148 and 158). The imputation of nihilism to morality is rooted in the nihilism of all metaphysics, as the author of the Letter had already emphasised. Philosophy is the successive history not of being, but of nothing. It starts from Nothingness, passes through Nothingness and ends in Nothingness. Kantian morality, "the morality of pure reason" as Jacobi puts it, "is founded on this will that wants nothing, on this impersonal personality, on this pure egoism of a self without its own essence" (Jacobi 2009, pp. 323–325; italics mine). Secondly, Schopenhauer argues for the emptiness of the concept, and of each concept in particular, which would always allow us to progress to the point where we want to go. This is what Shelling, following Jacobi, called in his 1830 teachings, Introduction to Philosophy in particular, the "false movement" of the Hegelian Concept, or its "standing still" (Schelling 1996, p. 86 onwards).

The concept, in general, allows us to get where we want to go. But this power is its own inanity; it is a mere potentiality without effectiveness. Nothing resists it, because this nothing is nothing real. Everything happens in thought. The concept allows us to advance in thought at will. It is like a virtual machine that simulates movement, provided we follow the paths and protocols it proposes. That's why it's right to speak of the concept of the "metaphysics of the will" (Heidegger) determines the history of Western ontology in its entirety. The concept sinks into the real-thought "like butter", since the real-real doesn't collide with it. The real isn't there, and where it really is, logic must come in after emptying it of its reality, logikos kai kenos.[11] The latter, the artefact of thought, never ceases to fill and fill up the former, the actual. Nothing then resists the concept. And this resistance is the most acute index of thought, as the 1830 Introduction impeccably demonstrates. What is the nature of this "nothing"? This illusory absence of resistance is produced by the sheer power of a fetishised logic. It creates a vacuum, then "performs" its pseudo-remembering—endlessly, in, by, for thought; in, by, for "nothing". This is the way metaphysics has been going since the Socratic origins of its mission statement.

In this great philosophical tradition, dialectics as the logic of contradiction has taken on the task of examining this "nothing" of thought, its laws and procedures. Throughout its long history (Plato's dialogues, their dialectic, whether it's the "ascending" dialectic, the coincidence of opposites in Gnosis or Nicolas of Cusa, the antinomies of pure reason, the Hegelian succession, Kierkegaard's paradoxes, Derrida's aporias of all kinds, and so on), dialectics recounts the capacity of language to invent the nothingness of reality before ontologising it, a nihilistic double-amortisation. Dialectics is not to be taken seriously when it claims to achieve something, for example when its speculative assumption mimics Hegel's return to

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[11] Soit d'une manière verbale et vide—c'est ce qu'Aristote reprochait à la pensée platonicienne (*Ethique à Eudème*, I, 8, 1217b-21: Aristotle 2011). [Trans]: either in a verbal or empty manner, this is how Aristotle criticizes Platonic thought.

Wirklichkeit after its detours through negativity. "Dialectic is a kind of denture", writes Canetti (1978, p. 326): both a prosthesis that replaces the loss of the real, and a trap whose two jaws believe they are crushing the lost real.

Here, as at the edge of the grand canyon of nothingness, or hell, it is essential for those who enter it to bear in mind that "every word is a lie" (Nietzsche) and that all philosophy is "a lie" (parlière) (Rousseau). When Claire writes to her friend Julie, in La nouvelle Héloïse, she advises her not to "pay much attention to all that parlière philosophy", having in mind the Stoic precepts, which she regards as pure philosophical babble, particularly inconsistent when it decrees that suffering is nothing (Rousseau 1967, p. 83).

This disqualification of language does not, however, affect speech, which is not to be confused. Rosenzweig made "sonorous" speech the antonym of the concept. Carried away in its self-movement by the fluid, homogeneous element of thought, the concept is the lie of lies. Speech, on the other hand, as Blanchot puts it, crosses the abyss of the concept, traverses nothing, endures nothingness and does not annihilate it. It speaks it. On the contrary, dialectics has always told us, at least since Socrates and Plato, about the adventures of thought that thinks itself. Its narcissism is a nihilism: the self as it's' other, nothing but this self. If his words are lies, we must add, as Rousseau says, that they "do not lie by telling lies", i.e. there is indeed a truth to nihilism insofar as it stems from metaphysics of subjectivity/subjectitity/will and unfolds in a certain intelligence of the relationship between inside and outside.

If the will consists in "being, through its representations, the cause of the reality of these same representations" (Kant), this is because it is subjectivity making itself the work of itself, projecting itself from its supposed interiority onto a plane of exteriority that realises it. Metaphysics (subjectivity) is the exacerbation of the will to the point of annihilation of that which resists it. Jacobi calls this will to subjugate exteriority, reason. Nihilism consists in this exacerbation, this amplification of the will, or of "sense", of which it in no way signifies "expiration" (Nancy 2005, p. 181), but rather the continuation by any means necessary. It stands in the saturation of sense. The "last man" intends to say the last word, the sense of sense. As he is "the one who doesn't believe in what is",[12] his jouissance is the jouissance of ultimate sense. The last man sneers, he's being clever. The evil and malignity of his self-righteous nihilism is induced by his non-belief in what is, reduced to pure appearance. It's time to search for the sense hidden beneath that cloak of appearances, as we said. There is a nihilism of sense, just as there is a nihilism of morality, as Nietzsche perfectly discerned.

In relation to morality and what it says, in relation also to language, then, I would like to dwell briefly on nihilism in the Russian sense, in the sense of the Russian terrorist "nihilists" of the nineteenth century, or today's jihadist nihilists, or even radical populisms—in what way and why are they nihilist? In that they hold the word for nothing. "Deeds, not words", "enough talk, action", they proclaim over and over again. This nihilism of action against speech, which is at the same time the nihilism

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[12] « Le nihiliste n'est pas celui qui ne croit à rien, mais celui qui ne croit pas à ce qui est» (Camus 1951, p. 77). [Trans]: "The nihilist is not the one who believes in nothing, but the one who does not believe in what is".

of silent action, is often based on a pathology of the immediate without a sentence. It is animated in depth by what essayists like (Schneider 2002/2005; Heuillet 2017) have identified as a refusal and even hatred of separation in favour of direct action, the name of a French ultra-left group from the 70 s and 80 s. This nihilism takes our status as speaking beings (Lacan) for granted. It refuses to pay its debt to language, to the word, to the pledge represented by language and what it engages, the equivocality it carries, the separations it carries through its symbolising function, that of signifier and signified, that of representative and represented. Generally speaking, nihilist hatreds often target representation, in all its diverse senses. They see the transvaluation of all values, the Nietzschean Umwertung, not as a re-evaluation of the value of values, which obliges us to value, de-value, re-value, etc., but as a simple reversal, and indeed as the outright destruction of all values, cancel, Vernichtung, an annihilation, not a deconstruction.

For nihilism to exist, negation must be total, all or nothing, both in thought and in action. The erection of a direct-total is its foundation. This is why nihilist hatred, as it emerges from what Nietzsche called resentment, hates politics, and incidentally, politicians. As such, hatred, resentment, is often non-repression, a raw excretion that opposes all speech, which transits between speakers. The praise for the direct hates speech as mediation. Terror annihilates speech in action: what cannot be spoken of, must be done, could be its maxim. Authorities, principles, programs, debates, articles of faith—all acts of language to which the nihilist opposes his nothingness: "No, none of that", Nicolas Petrovich explains to his uncle when talking about Bazarov (Tourguéniev 2008, pp. 53–54).

Nihilism is not anti-morality, anti-religion, in the Russian and political sense of the term, nor is it the expiration of sense; on the contrary, with Nietzsche, morality can be said to represent the pinnacle of European nihilism. The opening paragraphs of Aurore lay out a quasi-myth, the Dostoyevskian descent into the depths of subterranean being. It is accompanied by the discovery of a buried truth: morality is the enchantress "Circe of the philosophers". It destitutes the world as it is, effecting the annihilation of the real that Jacobi speaks of, and substituting it with an imaginary world, a nothing, a non-existent. Genealogy represents the indispensable protocol for exposing the nihilism of morality (Nietzsche 2012, Avant-propos, § 3) in its "necessary" becoming-instinct, which attests to its power, i.e. the extraordinary will to power that drives the slave revolt and the invention of moral values. Where morality has become second nature, a (re)becoming-innocent of man is also conceivable, for hierarchies are merely a matter of degrees, quantitative differences and ranks. This civilisational process of the becoming-instinct of the morality shows itself in the slightest of our indignities. For example, when we reject injustice or moral standards that we find stifling—in what name do we do so, if not in the name of moral values clearly determined by the Kantian criterion of universality, i.e. in the name of an ideal of justice, in the name of morality? Let's remember the militant rhetoric of a few decades ago, which expressed a laughable paradox and open impotence: "I don't judge, I don't make moral judgments, but…". Against these tricks of morality, against the effectiveness of its nihilism, "the body speaks more convincingly" than

all preaching voices, explains Nietzsche.[13] It is the most radical operator of the genealogy and devaluation/revaluation of values, i.e. of their destruction/creation. It is, by virtue of its "probity", the radical instrument of all anti-nihilism, rooted in the affects of the body that tend to pose the moral question beyond good and evil.

Nietzsche's thought, as I have just outlined some of its key points, is far from having resolved the many difficulties that follow its genealogical elucidation. It does, however, have the merit of having shown that, far from being its origin, nihilism is a political and cultural consequence of the morality of duty-to-be, which is ultimately nothing but a being-nothing elaborated from its distant Christian origins. If this world is nothing, then the "other" world is everything, and the onto-theological sense of this one will be determined by its pseudo-being [pseudo-étantité], by its "rear". This nihilism, "our" nihilism, redoubles by considerably displacing the ancient passive nihilism and its will to nothing: the "nihilist instinct says no; its most moderate affirmation is that not-being is better than being, that the desire for nothingness is more valuable than the will to live; its most rigorous affirmation is that, if nothingness is the most desirable thing, this life, as its antithesis, is absolutely worthless" (Nietzsche 1997; 17 (7), début 1888-début janvier 1889, t. XIV)..

Ultimately, nihilism is ourselves. The profound ambivalence of Nietzsche's critique of nihilism lies in its very probity, since it indicates that nihilism is also a feeling, "the feeling of worthlessness" (Nietzsche 1997; 11 [99], automne 1887-mars 1888), the perpetually disappointing feeling that there is no future, no redemption, no salvation, a feeling which thus almost inevitably turns into resentment. This nihilism of the negative-reactive will is everywhere and nowhere. This "most disturbing host of all" (Nietzsche 1997; 1887, VIII, 9/35) inhabits and haunts us. Nihilism is our companion, a double of ourselves who are chained in the cave or in the basement, but also determined to get out. It's there, in our innermost depths, lurking in the logic of our ideals, our values, our truths, morals and philosophy, religion and logic. This enormous mass of shadow is not just a disease of the mind and will. It insinuates itself into our bodies, in its illnesses and disorders, all of which point to dysfunctions of a political or cultural nature. The philosopher-physician, who deals with the body and affects, and the philosopher-legislator, who presides over the creation of new values, are the figures Nietzsche favours when he outlines the "philosopher of the future". The dereliction of Platonic-Judeo-Christian culture is thus surpassed by the prospect of overcoming it through "physics" and" re-evaluation", the body and the creation of values.

This Nietzschean outcome is undeniably problematic. If we broaden the spectrum of questioning and investigation, the question is: can we ever get out of nihilism? It all depends on what we mean by nihilism, a term so polymorphous that it sometimes discourages thought. If, however, we try to keep up with the question, which goes from the demand for sense to the sense of this demand, we will have to go through an exercise of thought in which philosophy would be both the nihilistic poison I have described and the anti-nihilistic antidote we must seek, by embarking on the salto

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[13] « *Redlicher redet und reiner der gesunde Leib*», *Zarathoustra*, I, « Des hallucinés de l'arrière-monde»

mortale recommended by Jacobi. Philosophy can be practised with its pharmakon dynamic in mind. This leap into the void would then, perhaps, reconnect with the Ürsprung, the primordial leap as Levinas translated it, rather than the origin, a somersault backwards to escape the jolts of a reason that wants to hear nothing but itself, an Aufklärung (Enlightenment) incessantly threatened by Ausklärung (obscurism), as Fichte put it (Fichte 1990, p. 54). This type of interruption by a leap has a singular specular affinity with what I have elsewhere called, in relation to literature, conatus interruptus (Bensussan 2021, pp. 391–400). The English poet Coleridge advocated a subtle "willing suspension of disbelief" to express what seems to me to be an emergence, however intermittent or precarious, from nihilism. Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" describes the mental operation performed by the reader or viewer of a work of art who agrees, for the time it takes to consult, read or contemplate the work, to set aside his or her disbelief in the fiction presented to him or her as such. It's a question of "[…] drawing from the depths of our innermost nature a humanity as well as a verisimilitude that we would transfer to these creatures of the imagination, of sufficient quality to strike a suspension, punctually and deliberately, of disbelief, which is the hallmark of poetic faith".[14] This suspension forms the condition of possibility of all aesthetic jouissance and access to its particular reality. It incises objective knowledge, the diverse types of knowledge of the second kind, to use the Spinozian triad. It proceeds, against these, from a granted belief, a confidence that unlocks the hidden treasures covered by the slow, sedimented work of reason, that annihilating hybris of which Jacobi speaks. The voluntary suspension of disbelief does not, however, amount to knowledge of the first kind. It blurs the all-too-simple and all-too-famous tripartition. It displaces the critical exercise of "intelligence". Proust associated the deployment of this "intelligence" with a deliberate, premeditated will to know, which for this very reason does not reach the unconscious depths that carry it. In La Recherche du temps perdu (In Search of Lost Time), the art of the painter Elstir, for example, hinges on an "effort to strip himself of all the notions of his intelligence in the presence of reality" (Proust 2023, p. 196).[15] Interruption, suspension, the leap out of conatus, are all modes of this stripping away of intelligence, "useless", in favour of discovery, "chance" encountered or not "before dying" (Proust 2023, p. 44). The nihilism of philosophy is similar in its structures and modes of production to Proustian "intelligence", sometimes referred to in the Recherche as German Idealism. Their extension, to both, is universal and indefinite, covering an entire surface.

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[14] On en trouverait de nombreux équivalents chez Aristote, Horace ou Shakespeare. Je n'ai pas le temps ici de discuter du rapport entre le *willing* de Coleridge et l'involontaire de Proust qui ne sont nullement des antonymes, en dépit de la littéralité qui semble les oppose (Coleridge 2007, p. 379). [Trans]: we would find numerous equivalents in Aristotle, Horace or Shakespeare. I don't have time here to discuss the relationship between Coleridge's willing and Proust's involuntary which are in no way antonyms, despite the literality which seems to oppose them.

[15] Cf également lettre à G. Gallimard du 18 juillet 1916, *Lettres*, p. 779: « je ne conçois pas l'art comme quelque chose à quoi suffisent ni la grande intelligence, ni même l'abdication *volontaire* de l'intelligence» (Proust 2023, p. 196). [Trans]: "I don't conceive of art as something for which neither great intelligence nor even the voluntary abdication of intelligence is sufficient".

The leap crosses a void, or fails to do so—that's its risk. It leaps above nothing, suspended for the time it takes to fly, or fall, who knows, over the abyss of intelligence. Platonism, in its extra-large sense, wants to ward off this risk of falling at all costs. In Loin de Rueil (Away from home), Queneau says of Dominique, a woman with whom the hero Jacques is in love, even though she refuses to accept him: "she Platonized to the hilt". Dominique denies the reality of the body, of sexual love, of the world of desire, and "it pleased her…that a love of which she was the occasional cause (no less than efficient and final and material, alas!) was exalted towards the empire of pure ideas" (Queneau 1977, p. 155). By substituting nothing for the body, Dominique "Platonizes to the hilt", elevating the materiality ("alas!") of Jacques's desire to the heavens of intelligence and intelligible ideals. Queneau's reader is not mistaken: Dominique's refusal disguises his absence of desire as an idea, thanks to the convenient virtues of unbridled patronisation.

The "poetic faith" that Coleridge wants to mobilise in order to better understand the work and the work of this work (l'œuvre et l'œuvrer) is in precise consonance with what Proust, against "intelligence", called "poetic knowledge".[16] The act of suspending disbelief, which opens it up to "nature", to the world, proceeds from an ontology of the sensible that is entirely held in a positivity, a materiality, an existence. This suspense is not a dialectic, but rather its a-narchic precession. This is because it in no way intends to double the reality of the work, or the reality of any work, by inscribing them in a dialectical principle of negativity. The significance of the suspension and leap would be lost if we were to see it as a "critique of critique" in the Young Hegelian sense. Speculative dialectic is often the motor of nihilism. It is a mimetic of the salto mortale. It's announced term, Hegel's "that which is effective", or real-rational, would like to proceed from an overcoming of the nothingness of thoughts of understanding. But to jump is not to go beyond, to surpass, to overcome, to lift up. To leap is to go out, to create out of nothing, to start from nothing, in a farewell without return, a leap where all the steps of the past are completed. To leap, to go out, to create, to believe, all this at once amounts to undoing the principles of all metaphysics, the nihilistic archè that sustains them.

This is the "more" that Hamlet evokes when he exclaims to Horatio: "there is more in heaven and earth than in all your philosophy", there are "flowers, a sun, a moon, stars", much "more" than their knitting or their thought arrangements.

Translated by Garima Jha

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[16] L'artiste « voit la nature telle qu'elle est, poétiquement» (Proust 2023, p. 91). [Trans]: "The artist sees nature as it is, poetically".

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The War of Languages

Marc Crépon

For Franson Manjali
In memoriam

Abstract This article attempts to show how the language of *others* is perceived by the hegemonic forces to be something scary. It is scary so long as it can spearhead a resistance, so long as it can cement a desire for independence among the populations that are linguistically and culturally dominated and who are desirous of restituting its place in society. In the mind of the colonizers, the reappropriation of the language and culture and the conquest of an administration and political autonomy go hand in hand. Any linguistic claim, whether it concerns administrative documents, media or teaching, is essentially seen as a desire for separatism. That is the reason why no imperial policy can exist without a language policy.

Keywords Identity · Language · Colonialism · Politics

I

Nothing testifies better the hold over territories usurped by a colonial empire than its treatment of the diversity of languages. The hegemony of the Centre manifests itself in the imposition of a language, its own, as the language of the State, of its administration, education and culture over the diverse populations over which the Centre can extend its domination. What emerges is a double dissymmetry. The first is common to all empires: it introduces between languages and cultures an unequal respect. More precisely, this unequal respect translates as a systematic discredit, if not an ill-consideration of languages symbolically perceived and treated as minority languages, even though the majority of the population spoke them. The second is specific to empires, which makes the best of the persistence of an endemic analphabetism. It consists of the division of the population. It separates those who have the

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intellectual and material means to appropriate the language of the masters (which it ends up itself colonizing) and those for whom it is destined to remain foreign. For the first group, this language is a means of integration, the vector of social advancement. Whereas for the second group, it sustains the conditions of their inexistence, their persistent feeling/sense that they do not count for anything (or very little) in the eyes of the central agency or their representations. The dissymmetry is above all an obligation. *To exist* in one's own country, to inhabit it, to feel at home, one must learn and speak the language of the masters of the empire.

II

The opposite is never true. The colonizers can do without (and they often do) the one or the other language of usage or culture in the country that they occupy/rule. They free themselves from it, especially because there is no symbolic manifestation of their appropriation and domination other than neglect of learning it. There is no real need because they are and they feel at home and it is most natural that *their* language has gained a virtually exclusive acceptance politically and culturally. As a result, these languages that they choose to ignore, the culture that these languages carry, their teaching, their publication are all the more recognized, if not tolerated in the public space than recognized as an asset, a heritage which needs to be prescribed, a commonwealth which would not only interest the native speakers of the language but the whole of the population. Like all tolerance this too has its limits—it is reversible. If there is one thing that the colonizers can't bear, it is not to understand the language spoken around them, in the streets, in the shops, in public transport—it is to confront the language barrier because they would never take the trouble of mastering it. Why? For the inferiority feeling which emerges from it, certainly very relative, is a wedge inserted against the assurance of their power.

It is also a ferment for unrest. The language of *others* is scary, so long as it can spearhead a resistance, so long as it can cement a desire for independence among the populations that are linguistically and culturally dominated and who are desirous of restituting its place in society, in administration and in the executive power, which the vicissitudes of history have not allowed it to occupy or have confiscated its rightful place. In the mind of the colonizers, the reappropriation of the language and culture and the conquest of an administration and political autonomy go hand in hand. Any linguistic claim, whether it concerns administrative documents, media or teaching, is essentially seen as a desire for separatism. That is the reason why no imperial policy can exist without a language policy. Whatever be the empire or whichever be the regions subjugated, the parameters are always the same: to watch guardedly over the cultural and educational promotion of the *language of the Centre* as a guarantee of its unity and to nip in the bud any contestation of its hegemony. Also, in the end, this dissymmetry translates itself in the following terms. It opposes a language whose universal vocation is not to contest a plurality of languages, regional if not exotic, secondary if not irreducibly particular minority.

The above-stated vocation has some unmistakable signs of which we may note one that is among the most probing: the unrivalled place of translations. But here is the paradox: their supposed universal claim would have intended these hegemonic languages within empires, to impose themselves as a *source language* and much less as a target language. What is said and written in the source language would deserve to be translated into the other languages, more than the other way round. As a consequence, the writers and artists whose mother tongue are these latter languages to which they are attached would be driven to give up their own language as a matter of survival. To put it mildly, these dissymmetries, this absence of reciprocity would weigh heavily on the destiny of empires. These would have contributed to accentuating the inequality of consideration and treatment, the injustice which is consubstantial with them. Since one is intimately linked to the languages one inherits, it would produce in the populations concerned, an increased sense of inferiority, an inevitable feeling of resentment as expressed in the following remark: "Why should we continue to learn their language when they never learn ours?".

We find ourselves dreaming. The linguistic policies of empires, could they have been of a totally different nature? Let us imagine that bilingualism had not been unilateral, that it had not inscribed its stamp of domination on the dominated people, that a reciprocity had been imposed or rather that it was a political necessity. Let us imagine that the weight of the dominating language had been counterbalanced by a legal obligation on the part of all people to learn another language, that of the region where the vicissitudes of history had led them to it. Let us imagine that the French who came and settled in Algeria were consistently asked to learn Arabic; similarly, the English were asked to learn one of the languages of India, the Russians to learn Ukrainian, Moldovan, Gregorian and many other languages…! The spirit of conquest, its arrogance, its self-importance, its disdain for the language and culture of others, the denial of their history, the caricature of the customs, would all these have been reduced by this legal obligation? If it is true that imposition of one's *own language* in any manner at the cost of the language of others is an inextinguishable vector of violence, then would this obligation be capable of containing the fire? The learning of languages, the equality of their translation could then be considered as a reversal. The sharing through translation acts against the deadly trap of any appropriation. Why to speak of sharing? Because it is the opposite of partition of more than one language on one and same territory, in its institutions, its place of teaching and culture but also (is it utopia to wish it) in their hearts and minds, attached to their plurality and diversity, to the variety of worlds they open up, to the heterogeneity of belonging that issues from it.

III

It is this attachment to plurality and diversity that is the most difficult to achieve so much so that it goes against the habits and comfort of the spirit of domination: "At your place I am at home and since you are forced to speak my language I have

no reason to *take the trouble* of learning yours which belongs only to you." To put it mildly, this spirit was predominant among the Russian-speaking populations of the Soviet empire. It continued to exist even after its disintegration in 1991. Also, the independence of Republics such as Ukraine and Moldova meant the reversal of a linguistic "balance of power." This reversal was very relative, but most radicals did not resign themselves to admit it. As there is nothing more intimate than our connection with our language which we have inherited and that there is nothing easier which can be instrumentalist for hostile ends, it feeds their nostalgia of the empire and their desire for revenge and separatism. Far from holding on to the utopia we mentioned, the question of languages, of belonging and linguistic identity, became a ferment of hatred.

Since close to a year as we measure the ravages of "linguistic and cultural nationalism" when it served as a pretext for the war, we will conclude these reflexions by concentrating on the situation of languages in Ukraine. At the outset when the constitution of the new Republic was adopted in 1996, many articles in it concerning language policy are a case in point. Undoubtedly, the constitution takes note of it in its article 10 regarding the substitution of one language by another as language of the State. It is a reversal of sorts: "1. The State language of Ukraine is Ukrainian." The article also makes clear that the recognition of Ukrainian as a State language extends to the whole of its territory, that it applies equally to the regions of the East whatever be the linguistic identity of its main population. "2. The State would assure the development, use and protection of the Ukrainian language in all fields of social life, *everywhere* on Ukrainian territory." But the constitution, at the same time, takes all precautions so that this substitution does not become an oppression by the Russian-speaking population on the minorities even if these are guaranteed the continuation to speak and write their language: "3. In Ukraine, the free development, use and protection of Russian and other national minority languages are guaranteed." After a paragraph dedicated to learning of languages for communication at the international level: "The use of languages in Ukraine is guaranteed under the constitution regulated by law." The questions of language and of education cannot be dissociated. If these questions are so sensitive, it is because they concern the linguistic identity of the new comers, the language that the children would call their own. This is so true that school becomes the first place and the instrument for repressing the use of the mother tongue, the use of the regional language or patois, when it's different from the state language. The constitution of 1996 has a specific article for this: "Article 53—The citizens belonging to the national minorities are guaranteed the right, in accordance with law, to receive their education in their mother tongue or to study it in public and common educational establishments through cultural societies run by the state."

In the eyes of the Russian-speaking population in the east of the country, the guarantees appear thus sufficient since the constitution does not recognize Russian as an official language alongside Ukrainian, thereby giving it a minority status. Thus, an absolute war of languages ensued. The politics of languages went hand in hand with the vicissitudes of regime change. Thus, the regional party which won the elections of 2010, adopted a law called "of regional languages." According to

this law, regions of which at least 10% of inhabitants declare themselves Russian speaking, would be authorized to adopt Russian as a second official language. This meant that in practice, Ukrainian language became a minority language in a part of Ukrainian territory. Also, the revolution of Maidan in 2014 pushed for the annulation of this law, which remained in force, because it wasn't ratified by the President, until the Constitutional Court repealed it in February 2018.

The separatism of Russian-speaking populations resulted in making the questions of security and territorial unity, the focus of the politics of language /language policy. Thus, shortly before President Zelensky took office in May 2019, a law was passed called "law on the role of Ukrainian as a state language," making compulsory the use of Ukrainian in all spheres of public life, so as to preserve the identity of the Ukrainian nation, to reinforce the unity of the Ukrainian state and ensure its territorial integrity. The use of Russian happened to reduce in the fields of administration, justice, culture, secondary teaching and the media. Does it mean doing violence to the Russian-speaking population? Not in the least, unless it is in the spirit of the *thurifers* [*thuriféraires*] of the frontiers of the Soviet empire! More precisely, it made this linguistic constraint a minimum and peaceful act of resistance as compared to the Russian imperial policy, less directly linguistic and cultural than brutally territorial. However, nothing more was needed for the head of Kremlin to use the linguistic policy of Ukrainian authorities as a privileged target for denouncing the oppression and discrimination, of which the "Russian minority" in Ukraine would make it an instrument of hegemonic propaganda… and, amongst others, start to rewrite history as a pretext of its aggression.

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Language to Come: The Time of Community

Maria João Cantinho

Abstract This paper addresses the subject of messianic language in the works of Walter Benjamin and the way in which it is articulated with the idea, in the author's youthful years, of a community (*Gemeinschaft*). From the idea of community, as it was defended in his earliest texts such as "The Life of Students", it was possible to think of the idea of a language that would be the "spiritual" and metaphysical path that would allow the relationship between the members of that community. It was thus an ideal search for a spiritual community, united by a particular vision of history, ethics, and language, i.e. messianic.

> The messianic world is the world of universal and integral actuality. Only in the messianic realm does a universal history exist. Not as written history, but as festively enacted history. This festival is purified of all celebration. There are no festive songs. Its language is liberated prose—prose which has burst the fetters of script (*Schrift*) and is understood by all people (as the language of birds is understood by Sunday's children).—The idea of prose coincides with the messianic idea of universal history (the types of artistic prose as the spectrum of universal historical types [the passage in "The Storyteller"]).
>
> – Benjamin (2003b, pp. 405–06).

From a very young age, Benjamin defended an ideal of community (*Gemeinschaft*), that was often found in his earlier texts, such as in 1912's *Dialogue on the Religiosity of the Present (Dialog über die Religiosität)*, in which the author defends the existential conception of community, as well as in his correspondence, mostly with Carla Seligson (Benjamin 1966). It is frequently in his youthful works where Benjamin insists on the articulation between youth, religion and community, in an attempt to go beyond individualist mysticism (Benjamin 1972, pp. 72–4). On the other hand, the intense socializations between professors and students, under the influence of Wynecken, and the commitment to a pedagogic project of a reform "philosophy"

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during his university years, arranged for the conditions for the author to vehemently defend the ideal of a *beautiful* and *free community (schöne und freie Gemeinschaft).* To this ideal of a community, it is added a messianic task to be delivered, not only on the plane of history and experience, but also on language itself, without which an actualization of the "messianic kingdom" (as the author defines in 1914/15's essay *The life of Students*) could never be accomplished. This idea that many years faded across his work reemerges in the final phase of it, with an unusual force, as one can read in the quoted epigraphy. It's in the text *On the Concept of History* in which Walter Benjamin retakes this conception of messianic language. It resurges the spirit of community, in its most intensive and complete way.

In the Benjaminian theory of language one sets from a principle. If language is one essential matrix, "intimate essence of the world (…) from where the word came about" (Benjamin 1966, p. 197), then those who consider it as a merely arbitrary collection of signs,[1] that is, as pure convention, do not understand its real nature. Once gone the belief of symbols in the modern world, Benjamin believed that the task of philosophy (as opposed to science) was to "restore, by representation, the primacy of the symbolic character of the word, in which the idea is given self-consciousness, and that is the opposite of all outwardly-directed communication" (Benjamin 1998, p. 36). Thus, taking the Benjaminian conception of language at hand, as one will demonstrate that it is in the names in which all symbolic power of language is concentrated,[2] because it is them who contain "incomparably high meaning that it is the innermost nature of language itself" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65).

Language is an expression of a spiritual essence, and this is communicated in *itself* (Benjamin 1996, p. 63). This way, "It is therefore obvious at once that the mental entity that communicates itself in language is not language itself but something to be distinguished from it" (Benjamin 1996, p. 63). But "What does language communicate? It communicates the mental being corresponding to it. It is fundamental that this mental being communicates itself *in* language and not *through* language. Languages, therefore, have no speaker, if this means someone who communicates *through* these languages" (Benjamin 1996, p. 63). On a line of thought that has been developing, Benjamin affirms that "all language communicates itself" (Benjamin 1996, p. 63).[3] This statement corroborates the idea that we initially set from, of the refusal of the communication of language to the exterior. It's in this conception in which it is, in "it

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[1] This idea, according to which language is more a body of symbols than a system of arbitrary signs, in which Man uses language to shape and configure the perceptions of the senses, reveals an affinity between the neo-Kantians and Benjamin—especially Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*). Although we don't know for sure that Benjamin had read Cassirer, it is known that he was a student of Rickert's and was aware of this theory.

[2] Almost at the end of the text *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man* (Benjamin 1996, p. 74) Benjamin states, on the symbolic function of language, something we will allude back to constantly: "For language is in every case not only communication of the communicable but also, at the same time, a symbol of the non-communicable. This symbolic side of language is connected to its relation' to signs, but extends more widely—for example, in certain respects to name and judgment".

[3] "Jede Sprache teiltsichselbstmit".

is in the purest sense the 'medium' of the communication" (Benjamin 1996, p. 64). And what is characteristic of this nature of is precisely its immediacy, in other words, its magic. And if this magic also comes from "its infiniteness" (Benjamin 1996, p. 64) that which is communicated *in* language "cannot be externally limited or measured" (Benjamin 1996, p. 64). It's not the verbal content that defines language, it's the "linguistic being" (Benjamin 1996, p. 64). Here, one clearly observes the refusal of the linguistic theory of the sign and, as opposed to those, Benjamin will elaborate a metaphysical conception of language. His words are clear about it when he affirms: "Before this question can be answered, we must again inquire: How does man communicate himself? A profound distinction is to be made, a choice presented, in the face of which an intrinsically false understanding of language is certain to give itself away. Does man communicate his mental being *by* the names (*durch die Namen*) that he gives thing? Or *in* them (*In die Namen*)?" (Italics by the author; Benjamin 1996, p. 64).

Here we see the clear contrast between the two conceptions. Communicating *through* and communicating *in* names. The first conception, which implies Man's exteriority in relation to language and the name, is refused: "In the paradoxical nature of these questions lies their answer. Anyone who believes that man communicates his mental being *by* names (*durch die Namen*) cannot also assume that it is his mental being that he communicates [...]" (Benjamin 1996, p. 64). If the first conception designates a *bourgeois* conception of language (*die bürgerliche Auffassung der Sprache*), Benjamin's refusal is essentially aimed at its "invalidity and emptiness" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65). This bourgeois perspective"[...] holds that the means of communication is the word, its object factual, and its addressee a human being" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65). Meanwhile, the metaphysical conception that Benjamin reclaims is "The other conception of language, in contrast, knows no means, no object, and no addressee of communication. It means: *in the name, the mental being of man communicates itself to God*" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65) *[In Namen teilt das geistige Wesen des Menschen sich Gott mit]* [author's emphasis]. It is the name that gives language its divine character, for language was attributed to Man as a gift *(Gabe),* that allows him to name and recognize other creatures created by God. The name removes the thing it names from its muteness, recognizing the thing as a creature, in this sense, if Man names things, he is also communicating his own spiritual essence to God: as the one who names. He is not looking for a recipient or a means of communication; *he is saying himself*, in his spiritual essence, to God, by naming. This is the sphere of pure immediate language, that by naming, it says itself to The One who granted the gift of language. Benjamin refers to "the name" as "The quintessence of this intensive totality of language as the mental being of man [...]" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65) and in that sense is as a totality "that man communicates itself to God" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65). Divine creation cannot know its completion without human naming. For this reason, when he names things, as lord of nature, he communicates his own spiritual essence *in* the names of God. Only through him, or rather *in him*, does language speak—in the name. And to whom does it communicate? To God. In this way, not only is man the speaker of language, but "[language's] only speaker" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65).

This conception of naming language will never be abandoned by Benjamin, as will be seen. In this sense, the idea of a "theory of names", whatever its origin, is the essential matrix of Benjaminian language-thinking. And it is there, in the name, that the intimate essence of language is concentrated at the highest level, the name taken as "that through which, and in which, language itself communicates itself absolutely" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65). Guaranteed of the "mental being" of Man, just as much as it guaranteed that "in the name, the mental being of man communicates itself to God"[4] (Benjamin 1996, p. 65), it is precisely in *the* name that distinguishes him from all other creatures.

This is where Benjamin's distinction between "language of Man" and the "language of things" comes from, and it is undoubtedly in the name that the entire "intensive totality of language as the mental being of man" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65) and it is *in him* as well, where all communicates itself. If the name concentrates the intensive totality (*die intensive Totalität*) of language, as spiritual essence of Man, on the other hand, it equally contains "extensive totality *[die extensive Totalität]* of language as the universally communicating (naming) entity" (Benjamin 1996, pp. 65–66). In this way, "Man alone has a language that is complete both in its universality and in its intensiveness" (Benjamin 1996, p. 66).

Starting with the analysis of *Genesis* and still in the context of language of naming, Benjamin addresses the question of the transformation of divine language into human. His concern, when analyzing the biblical text, moves completely away from an exegetical project,[5] but takes the biblical text as a "starting point" to understand the real nature of language, or better yet, how Benjamin wants to take it for himself.

Mode of differentiation and individuation, the name recognizes each thing and at the same time expresses the divine creative power, ripping them from their muteness. Nothing is communicated *through* it, and it is *in it* that language itself is communicated in absolute. As an "inheritance of human language", the name "as the heritage of human language therefore vouches for the fact *that language as such* is the mental being of man" (italics by the author; Benjamin 1996, p. 65), recognizing it in its highest essence. More so: "and only for this reason is the mental being of man, alone among all mental entities, communicable without residue" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65). It is precisely this characteristic on which it was "founded the difference between human language and the language of things"(Benjamin 1996, p. 65).

Language "and in it a mental entity in it, only expresses itself purely where it speaks in name—that is, in its universal naming" (Benjamin 1996, p. 65). From this point of view—and from the point of view of universality and intensity—the language of naming is perfect, and only man has a perfect language. In him, the

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[4] "*im Namen teilt das geistige Wesen des Menschen sich Gott mit*".

[5] Next, when we consider the essence of language in the light of the first chapters of *Genesis*, one does not want to undertake a project of biblical exegesis or, in this context, objectively make the Bible, as revealed truth, the basis of our reflection, but simply explore what the Bible presents to us about the very nature of language; and the Bible is not, from the outset, indispensable to our project except because we will follow it here in its principle, presupposing with it that "*language* [becomes] *as an ultimate reality, perceptible only in its manifestation, inexplicable and mystical*" (italics ours; Benjamin 1996, p. 67).

linguistic essence and the spiritual essence are identical and, for this reason, it is communicable to the highest degree in the language of the name, for the reason that "*There is no such thing as a content of language; as communication, language communicates a mental entity—something communicable* per se"[6] (Benjamin 1996, p. 66).

As we mentioned before, there are strong echoes of Hamann, particularly on the question of language as Revelation. It is no accident that Benjamin quotes Hamann in his essay *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man:* "Language, the mother of reason and revelation, its alpha and omega" (Benjamin 1996, p. 67). It is the "equation of mental and linguistic being" (Benjamin 1996, p. 66) which leads us to the question of Revelation. Benjamin affirms that "the deeper (that is, the more existent and real) the mind, the more it is expressible and expressed" (Benjamin 1996, pp. 66–67), corroborating what he mentions to Buber, when he writes that "the unspeakable must be eliminated from language". Opposing the idea of equivocality and the "existence of an unspeakable" (Benjamin 1966, p. 126 from a letter to Buber dated July 1917) found in mystical theories of religion, Benjamin states: "This, however, is precisely what is meant by the concept of revelation, if it takes the inviolability of the word as the only and sufficient condition and characteristic of the divinity of the mental being that is expressed in it. The highest mental region of religion is (in the concept of revelation) at the same time *the only one that does not know the inexpressible*" (our italics; Benjamin 1996, p. 67)*.* It is in the name where that power of Revelation, of pure communicability, is focused.

Benjamin establishes a distinction between human language and the language of things. If in Man, by his naming ability, language knows its spiritual perfection and maximum intensity, on things themselves language doesn't express itself perfectly. They are mute, because it was denied the "pure formal principle of language—namely, sound" (Benjamin 1996, p. 67). For this reason, they can only communicate with each other in a material way, establishing a material community between them. However, this community is still magical, because it is immediate and infinite. It is not comparable to human language because it is material, whereas human language is "immaterial and purely spiritual". The name is the possibility, offered by God as a gift, which elevates it above nature, of ripping things from its muteness. And such is the magic of language. Things "speak to us", they tell us, immediately and infinitely what they speak "to us" about, they "tell themselves" immediately in name, in all their intensity.

Naming is thus the translation of the language of things—material language—into the language of the human being. And it is precisely there that the foundation of the translation must be found, that is: "It is necessary to found the concept of translation at the deepest level of linguistic theory [...]" (Benjamin 1996, p. 69). It is in this passage of the text that we find a link between the theory of naming and of translation, which permits us to conclude that translation carries with it the trace

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[6] This is why Benjamin states, in his letter to Buber of July 1916, that "the unspeakability of language must be eliminated". In the naming sense, "language is 'sayable' to the highest degree, because it knows nothing but pure communicability" (Benjamin 1966, pp. 125–126).

of names. If the translatability of languages into each other is possible, it is because it is constituted as "removal from one language into another through a continuum of transformations" (Benjamin 1996, p. 70), and of the metamorphoses that bring in them the names as traces of a language of naming. It is therefore up to translation to rediscover the naming power of language through presentation.

Naming is not only the translation of the muteness of things into human sound but it is also the redemption of things themselves, elevating them to the condition of human language. The name, in this sense, "redeems" the thing itself by awarding it a more perfect status, on the one hand, and, on the other, by adding something to it: knowledge. And the objectivity of the translation of things into the language of naming is guaranteed by God, not by man. It is in this divine objectivity, therefore, that the concept of translation is founded upon, as well as translatability itself. In this way (and despite the fact that the text *The Task of the Translator* was written years later, in 1923), we can conclude that, already in the text *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*, Benjamin was concerned with questions of the legitimacy and the principle of translation and, in this text, was preparing his theory of language to serve as a foundation for a theory of translation, which does appear as a true messianic task and which leads to pure, messianic language. Nonetheless, if the expression of a messianic task does not appear in the text *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man* as clearly developed, the theory of naming (as the foundation of language) contains within itself the seed of a messianic task, which it is up to the task of translation to (re)discover, by restoring the symbolic power of language, the "secret and messianic index" that it carries within itself. This is the meaning of the last paragraph of the text *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man* because when Benjamin speaks of the *residuum* of God's creative word (Benjamin 1966, p. 157) that passes through all of nature and that the name gives voice to and, while naming, saves it in knowledge, is certainly speaking in the breath of a pure and divine language that crosses all of nature and that is said in man, in the name, in an immediate and magical way.

The Benjaminian comparison of the language of nature to a "secret password that each sentry passes to the next in his own language" (Benjamin 1996, p. 74) alludes precisely to that messianic index that hides itself in language, but more precisely in naming and "original" language. And if "each higher language is the translation of the lower one" (Benjamin 1966, p. 157), then this messianic spirit, sibilant, and vigilant, permeates all language, and it is up to translation to rediscover the messianic and symbolic power of the word. Benjamin speaks of "ultimate clarity" with which "the word of God unfolds", being that this is the "unity of this movement made up of language" (Benjamin 1996, p. 74). This unity, it should be said, is the unity of pure language, the one that is the target of all translation. In other words, it is the messianic language, which only the history of languages allows us to glimpse in the metamorphoses wrought by translation.

Let us recall provocation as one of the reasons that led to the writing of the text *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*: Buber's invitation to Benjamin

to collaborate on the journal *Der Jude.*[7] Benjamin's position on the First World War (refusing to incite mobilization, especially after the suicide of Heinle and his fiancée) did not allow him to collaborate with *Der Jude*, for ethical reasons and also because he disagreed with the instrumentalization of writing and language in the service of war and violence. It is essentially this instrumentalization of language that he attacks: "It is a widely-held opinion, and one that stands up as evidence almost everywhere, that literature is capable of influencing the ethical world and the actions of men, by providing the motives for action. In this sense, language is nothing more than a means for an initial, more or less suggestive elaboration of the motives that, in the depths of the soul, determine human action. The characteristic of this perspective is that it does not take into account a relationship between language and action, in which the former is not a means to the latter. This relationship also concerns an impotent language, relegated to the level of pure means, and writing seen as a pale, fragile act that has no source in itself (…)"(Benjamin 1966, p. 126).

It is a refusal, as one can see, of the instrumentalization of language in the service of obscure aims, in this case, the incitement to war. What repulses Benjamin is the degradation of language, the danger[8] it might constitute, if taken in its instrumental dimension. On the other hand, Benjamin reaffirms, in this same letter, a dimension of the purity of language that reinforces its potential. A purification of language that transforms it into the most powerful element of his theory of knowledge and enables the supremacy of philosophical thought and writing: "(…) I always come back to this idea that *eliminating the unspeakable from our language until it becomes as pure as crystal* [italics] is the way we are given and the most accessible way to act within language and, to that extent, through it: this elimination of the unspeakable seems to me to coincide with a sober and properly objective style of writing and to indicate, within the magic that is the order of language, the relationship that exists between knowledge and action" (Benjamin 1966, p. 127).

Only by eliminating the ambiguity of language and elevating it to a crystalline splendor is it possible to achieve "sober"[9]and objective writing, just as Benjamin

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[7] From Benjamin's letter to Buber, dated May 4, 1916, "Your proposal, which honors me and for which I thank you for the opportunity (...) to express these reflections" (Benjamin, 1966, p. 125). However, Benjamin speaks of his "virulent opposition" to the articles and positions expressed in the first issue of the magazine in a letter dated July 1916 to Martin Buber, and thus refuses to collaborate in it (see pp. 125, 126). It can't be ignored that the fact that Benjamin's ideas about language were already so ingrained in his thought that one can't attribute too much importance to Buber's provocation. The writing of Benjamin's text is already the fruit of a long maturation of his ideas. However, it was the polemic with Martin Buber and the disagreement with him that triggered the text *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*. The fact that the text was written around this time and was sent to Scholem—who had followed the polemic with Buber—led to this direct relationship being established.

[8] The lucid and visionary nature of the young Benjamin's thinking is already surprising here and one can see what will happen later during National Socialism, fueled by their aesthetics of evil.

[9] This concept of sobriety owes a lot to early Romanticism and Hölderlin, who, as we know, had a decisive impact on Benjamin's thought.

would later advocate in the "Preface"[10] of his work *Origin of the German Trauerspiel.* The sobriety of the writing, obeying the rhythm of thought itself and its stops, is not aimed at any "enchantment", any drawing in or fascination of the reader, but is rather a gesture of warning that wants to force the reader to think. If one is confronted with the question of ideas and their representation, with truth itself, "bodied forth in the dance of represented ideas"(Benjamin 1998, p. 29), then nothing can divert the thinker from his concentration, which must be greater, all the greater the object contemplated. But in this passage, we also find another underlying desire: ethical purity, which has nothing to do with an instrumental use of language, as we can see next.

To rediscover the "divine spark" that unites word and deed, the spark that awakens in the name all the power of the creative act: this is the aim of this search. This is undoubtedly the symbolic power of the word, which finds its source in itself, and it is up to philosophy—taken as the privileged activity of language, due to its sobriety and objective rigor—to "reawaken" this spark of language. If the metaphor itself is cabalistic and alludes to the "breaking of the vessels", to the primordial dispersion, it is not accidental, but hides a profound meaning within itself. The task of the one who deals with language is the task of the guardian; it is a messianic task par excellence, aimed at restoring the naming power of language itself. It's not just up to prophecy or theology to restore the naming power of language, but it's up to all those who, far and near, deal with it. At its highest level, it is up to philosophy, which, in its slow movements and intrinsic suspensions, seeks to restore the "divine spark" of names. Restorations are always the same and that give themselves through philosophy: ideas.

However, the history of thought tends to forget the symbolic power of words, names and ideas. The instrumentalization of language hides the very brightness of these names, pales their meaning, their expression, degrades them into mere signs (which in turn obscure the true function of language). But the secret, messianic index is there and remains hidden, like the most precious treasure, waiting to be "awakened", like Sleeping Beauty. Reawakening, remembering—that's the leitmotif of the entire Jewish tradition. Remembrance rekindles tradition, rekindles the magic of language, and the philosopher is the one who carries the "burden" of the messianic task, remembering what cannot be forgotten. In the same way, the translator, as we shall see, is the one who carries the "burden" of the reawakening of pure language, which is hidden, as a promise, in prolific languages.

Only a messianic perspective on language—or to put it another way, only a metaphysical perspective (which Benjamin defended only in his youth and abandoned in later texts)—can save language from its fall into the proliferation of languages, the fall into the ambiguity of meanings, of the loss of unity between word and act. The theory of nomination, as a theory that guarantees this unity, which intensifies the symbolic power of language to the highest degree, provides the solution for thinking of language as restored to its essential and unified dimension.

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[10] "Short of the didactic precept, such sober *(Nüchternheit)* prose is the only style suited to philosophical investigation" (Benjamin 1998, p. 29).

In his later works, particularly in the text *On the Concept of History*, Walter Benjamin returns to the idea of a messianic language, in all its strength and irradiation. So he says in Thesis II: "our coming was expected on earth"(Benjamin 2003a, p. 390). And to every generation that came before us, just like to us, was given a "weak messianic power"(Benjamin 2003a, p. 390). It is up to us to reawaken the messianic index, not only of history but also of language, taking as a principle that both run in parallel. In other words, there is no redemption for human history except on the stage of language, and historical phenomena are given and revealed in language itself. For this reason, the historical liberation of man requires a redemption/liberation of language itself and the place for this actualization is the community itself, as a utopian (or u-topian) place in which it is possible to think about redemption. It is of this "festival" that Walter Benjamin tells us about. One that is "purified of all celebration" (Benjamin 2003b, p. 404) in which Man speaks in the tongue of integral prose, the one that makes "burst the fetters of script [*Schrift*] and is understood by all people" (Benjamin 2003b, p. 406), the celebration of true time, messianic time. This is the place for the redemption of history and language: the place of the community.

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With/Out: The Theo/Politics of Exile

Mike Grimshaw

Abstract My starting point is that exilic position laid down by Ignazio Silone in 1962 in the journal *Encounter*: Now I consider myself to be a Socialist without a party and a Christian without a church. I still feel bound to the ethics and idealism of each but I can no longer have any part of what the State has made of Socialism and the Church has made of Christianity. To be "without" is to recognize that once one was "within" but can no longer be so. It is to find oneself out in the world seeking a new language *that looks back to* what and where one was. But it is also to find oneself out in the world seeking a new language *that looks out from* what and where one was. This is why "without" is the language of exile, for the exile finds themselves in the world "without" what was, but never aligned with or adjusted to "what is". The result of such a "without" location is that the exile finds themselves also on a boundary position here designated as "with/out" for they carry the boundary of exile within them, in their thought and language to the new place and as the new identity. For what is not seen in the textual designation of "without" is that liminal boundary of "with/out". Therefore, Silone's "without" is discussed as actually expressing the language of a theo/politics of with/out; that is, the recognition in modernity that theology and politics are in fact held together by the boundary language of exile.

Keywords Political theology · Exile · Theology

What occurs when the limits of writing encounter the further possibilities of thought? How can someone express where they might find or discover themselves to be—in writing, to others—if there appears to be a limit of what can be expressed? While one answer is to engage with the poetic, this also requires a reader open to the possibility of *poesis*. This is not to say we should withdraw from the poetic, but rather remember that the poetic requires a readership open to its indirectness and the possibility of the emergent encounter. Yet even within the poetic and the resultant possibility of *poesis*—for I recognize there is a difference, a boundary between them—there can

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reach a limit of writing that struggles to succinctly represent or indeed articulate what the thought "is" and "involves". Such issues in particular arise when we are confronted by existential and ontological questions, especially as I will argue, when they involve questions of location and dislocation. For how do you express that particular experience of being "here" but not "there"—and conversely now "there" but not back in what was "here"?

What is (the) Exile?

Of course, there is the word "exile" which, for centuries has served as a very useful placeholder for a variety of experiences and understandings. There is a whole literature of exile, about exile, written from exile and yet if we engage properly with these writings we reach a point whereby exile seems to be a singular state. You are an exile, or you are not an exile. You are in exile, or you are not in exile. It is important to emphasize that being an exile, being in exile means you are not diasporic as that involves an attitude that always holds out the possibility or perhaps rather, *the necessity*, of return. For the dislocation of the diasporic is a dislocation that looks backward to a future relocation. Therefore, there is a degree of hope in the Diaspora, a deferred hope, but the hope of possibility which is at the same time the hope of recovery. This means the diasporic is never in the same position—existentially, ontologically, as well as politically—as the exile. The Exile is involved in a different sort of hope; their hope is centered on the acceptance of their dislocation. It is a hope of what can now be done where they find themselves, not a hope of a return to what was, whether in the past or in some imagined relocated future.

Papas describes this as a type of "exilic dialectic", where the dialectic tension between Exile and belonging is one "that informs and constitutes their meaning" in much the same way as there is a "physical border which joins and separates" (Papastergiadis 1993, p. 10). If we extend the exile into one of community, party, faith, or institution, that physical border is also experienced as an intellectual border, an ontological border, an existential border. There is no possibility of return, for to do so one would have to denounce, recant, and give up what one is. An exile who does so was never truly an exile, was never truly in exile. They were, at most, a dissenter, but a dissenter who always situated, always eager or at least open to return.

The Exilic position is therefore not that of the Diaspora nor of the dissenter, but is rather a more permanent position with the recognition of the impossibility to return. Exile—whether by others or by self-choice—is a permanent state that John Berger (Berger 1984, p. 67) observes results in a dismantling of the center of world and "a move into a lost, disoriented world of fragments" (Ibid., p. 57). However, it is too easy to forget that the exilic position is one located in a fragmented state of being and so to write of exile, to write from exile is by necessity always a fragmented, fragmentary experience. Yet this is also why we are so often drawn to the writers of exile, to the writings of exile, for they open up new vistas of meaning and language, of being in the world if not "at home". What is seen and experienced by the exile

and then communicated via words is always a position of liminal marginality that interprets "by defamilarizing the familiar and familiarizing the unfamiliar" (Kramer 1988, p. 2), locating the exile "both inside and outside two cultures at the same time" (Ibid).

But how, in our writing on and exile, can we represent this? If writing is the attempt to communicate thinking, to encourage thinking, to extend thinking then the question becomes one of textual representation. Or, in other words, how we can signify exile "on the page"?

Arising out of the Postmodern a/theology of Mark C. Taylor, the signifier "/" stands for the "boundaryless boundary" that signifies "…proximity and distance, interiority and exteriority. This strangely permeable membrane forms a barrier where fixed boundaries disintegrate" (Taylor 1984, p. 12). The "/" is a way to signify, within the limits of writing, what is felt, sensed, experienced, and imposed by exile, when the "/" is interposed between two other words. To employ the "/" in such a way demands the writer must consider anew what is it they are expressing in words and also places an associated demand upon the reader to critically engage with the words they are reading. The deliberate representation of such a boundary, that holds in tension yet separates, works as much on the eye of the reader as it does in the mind. Furthermore, the fact that the line is angled means we encounter and respond to it quite differently to if it was the vertical divide of the fixed boundary of "|".

Taylor employed what we can term a liminal signifier in order to represent the position of theological liminality:

> Suspended between the loss of old certainties and the discovery of new beliefs, these marginal people constantly live on the border that both joins and separates belief and unbelief. They look but do not find, search but do not discover. (Ibid., p. 5).

I am not so sure as Taylor that the liminal experience is one that does not find, that does not discover. Rather, I would posit that liminality results in provisional, fragmentary findings and discoveries, and it is these that define the experience of exile. For exile opens up a future that is uncertain and uncharted amidst what is known and experienced in the new location. Exile requires a re-reading, re-thinking and a re-writing that carries over the known into the unknown and remakes both in the process within and along that liminal boundary of the exilic being. For the "/" is always a person, a being: the exile, the writer, the reader of the exile, the reader of the writer.

There is also a central transgressive element, a transgressive act of often speech and writing that gives rise to exile. Because, if the exile had not transgressed—whether they had either chosen to so act or are perceived to have so done—they would not have found themselves in exile. We need to understand that the exile is involved in an act of *total* rejection whereupon what we can term the initial spiritual and intellectual exile is finally expressed in bodily exile. That is, what they said, or wrote or did (or conversely, their failure to speak, write or act as demanded) is regarded as transgressive by those they have left behind. However, for the exile, their transgression does not end with their relocation. The exile never does and never can start completely anew in their new location, their new identity. Central to the exile

is their continuation of at least some of their "home" identity in the new location because as exile their reference is to that, who and what which has forced them into Exile. In doing so, by not fully settling and integrating into their new location they in turn also transgress what is regarded as real and authentic in their new dis-location. Exilic transgression involves a dual perspective: on the one hand, (re)viewing whence they came now from afar and yet (re)viewing where they now reside always partially via the pre-exilic location. Exilic transgression is therefore always of both past and present from the fragmented, liminal position of Exile: both past and present are inverted and subverted through the other. Or to apply the possibility offered by Mark C. Taylor, exilic transgression is always that of past/present.

The Writer and the Theo/Politics of Exile

As Morris Dickstein observed, "there have been writers living in exile almost as long as there have been any writers at all" (Dickstein 2005, p. 15). In this, the question of "the Word" and the exile are inexorably linked and with this comes the possibility of the exile establishing themselves as "virtually a rival center of authority, a model of intellectual freedom and moral courage that could not be intimidated" (Ibid., p. 16). If we think of the Incarnation as a type of self-exile of and by God, then is this politics of exile not what happened—even if only as possibility? Here too we can draw upon Dickstein's comments that the exile also creates "a new idiom", one "that was the verbal expression of their dislocation and expatriation" (Ibid., p. 17). So as an aside, I want to suggest that Christianity is, from its beginning, both a theo/politics of exile and a theo/politics of response to exile, arising from this foundational experience of exile which is the self-exile of God. This also, I suggest, means we need to re-read the writings of Christianity and of Christian-derived culture as, foundationally, exilic (see Grimshaw 2008). However, it is important is to remember this exile is exile within the world, within *this* world—and an exile experienced amongst and alongside others. In other words, I am suggesting that there is, at heart, no other experience for the Christian—*and* those who arise from and within a Christian culture and framework and legacy—than exile, no matter how much they may be wish to deny, dismiss or repudiate such an experience. To make this even more problematic, I wish to suggest that because western modernity arose from with/in that Christian culture, it continues to carry that foundation of exile. This is aligned to the comment T.S. Eliot made when considering what post-war European reconstruction would be based upon.[1] In 1946, in a broadcast to post-war Germany, Eliot emphasized that while the unity of European culture as expressed in arts and ideas arose out of a

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[1] It may be noted by some readers that I have, over the years, made regular use of this statement by Eliot. I make no apology for continuing to return to it, for wrestling with it, to thinking with, via and against it. For me, it remains one of those central insights that defines modernity and in particular the modern, post-war world. In my view, we are too quick to dismiss it—or too quick to move on from all that it entails. I believe this is especially so for all of us who engage in modernity outside of Europe as a continent—if not Europe as culture and continuing cultural legacy and force.

history of a common Christian culture, this did not necessitate nor mean there was a contemporary, unified Christian culture in the modern world. Rather, as he observed, the acknowledgment of a shared heritage did not necessarily involve a shared belief:

> It is against a background of Christianity that all our thought has significance. An individual European may not believe the Christian faith is true, and yet what he says, and makes, and does, will all spring out of his heritage of the Christian faith for its meaning. (Eliot 1948, p. 122).

It's my contention that, out of this shared background, out of this heritage, we also, via modernity, share in the experience of exile. And likewise, while we may not believe that exile is "true" for us, it is that foundational exilic turn that continues to shape what we say, make and do for meaning.

Dickstein's focus is on the modernist writer as exile, particularly those he designates "exiles of the spirit rather than the body politic" (Dickstein 2005, p. 17); such an exile has many stages, often from small town to city, from one city to another, then from one country to another, seeing themselves as exiles in search of fulfillment of their art, which needed to be lived elsewhere. Modernity everywhere is "broken, dislocated and discontinuous with the past" (Ibid., 18) and so the writer of insight and sensibility is constantly in exile within modernity, feeling both homeless and rootless. Some reach the level of Kafka, feeling "exiled from no place he could begin to imagine as his real home; the ultimate modernist, he felt exiled from life itself" (Ibid., 19).

A century on we could argue that such feelings of exile have but only increased—whether within late modernity, postmodernity, hypermodernity, digital modernity—because whatever prefix or descriptive qualifier is used or applied, the normative condition remains that of modernity. Yet at the same time, in response we see a rise of populist, nativist, nationalistic movements and politics that attempt to undo modernity by claiming the permanence and primacy of place, home and rootedness for certain people and groups over and against others who are consigned to otherness and outsideness. Such movements and politics are antimodern in seeking to halt liberal modern progress because they see and experience it as actually enacting decline. In the face of the dislocation of modernity they believe and perceive that certain people, cultures, beliefs have a stable essence that is fixed—and fixed in relation to both land and place—or that such a fixed and stable identity and location is recoverable. Yet I would include such antimodernism as occurring *always within* modernity, with *anti*modern being yet just another prefix or qualifier applied to try to mediate and moderate the modern condition. Therefore, what is fascinating about antimodernism and its varieties of populism is the way it continues to express and evoke those central feelings of exile and dislocation—but believes they can be overcome by a recovery of and from the past. These populists are in the main, exiles of the body politic—while their writers continue to express that modernist exile of the spirit.

This is why the issue remains one of what actually is possible for the modern writer, because:

> No matter how well the writer adjusts to a new land—or settles into that other homeland, the kingdom of art—the modern writer is a displaced person, someone unhappy at home yet always something of a stranger abroad. (Ibid., 21).

Most of the time the modern person, the modern writer does not necessarily consider themselves to be displaced, in fact most would reject such a designation. Yet that foundational experience of exile means that always, just below the surface of settledness and locatedness lurks that nagging sense of displacement, of the sense that we are never quite "at home", that we can never "just be". Rather, for the modern person and especially the modern writer, every experience of being within also includes the possibility of being without. That is, what I term finding ourselves on that borderline, on that liminal position of with/out.

To be "without" is to recognize that once one was "within" but can no longer be so. It is to find oneself out in the world seeking a new language *that looks back to* what and where one was. But it is also to find oneself out in the world seeking a new language *that looks out from* what and where one was. This is why "without" is the language of exile, for the exile finds themselves in the world "without" what was, but never aligned with or adjusted to "what is". The result of such a "without" location is that the exile finds themselves also on a boundary position here designated as "with/out" for they carry the boundary of exile within them, in their thought and language to the new place and as the new identity. For what is not seen in the textual designation of "without" is that liminal boundary of "with/out".

The Borderland of with/out

What might it mean to find oneself living on that borderline, in that border of the with/out? A fascinating discussion of this, between writers, occurs in the engagement of the Polish writer and activist and founder of the borderlands foundation,[2] Kryzystof Czyżewski and the famous Polish poet and exile Czeslaw Milosz. I want to consider this also in light of Czyżewki's distinctive understanding of what a borderland should be: not a line dividing cultures and people, but a broad space where diversity can flourish and mutual understanding can be promoted" (Porter-Szūcs 2007. p. 529). This forces a reconsideration of the possibility within the experience and expression of being "without", or rather of that/of "with/out". For if within "without" is the borderland of "with/out" then being in the exile of "with/out" opens up a place and being full of possibility and opportunity, not necessarily the limitation and negation so often considered to be the experience of exile. For Czyżewski, the borderland is intermingled and entangled with the borderlander, the person who in themselves reflects the crossings and intermingling and the possibilities of the borderland, "a person with tangled family roots who is characterized by tolerance, empathy, critical

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[2] Founded in 1990: https://www.pogranicze.sejny.pl/en/; this is an excellent and accessible overview: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jii/4750978.0016.207/--borderland-foundation-in-sejny-poland?rgn=main;view=fulltext.

patriotism, a resistance to ethnic phobias, fluency in many languages and curiosity about otherness" (Czyżewski 2007, p. 532). I am interested in how such "border-landness" can play out in those who are not from physical borderlands but rather from political, religious and theological, and philosophical ones. If physical border-landness results on ontological questions, then these non-physical borderlands result in existential questions. What Czyżewski learnt from the emigre and exile Milosz is "to perceive the matters of great consequence to our world from the perspective of individual human fates, and to pay attention to personal testimonies, to the crumbs left behind after chance meetings, and to the paths leading to such meetings" (Ibid., p. 539). As we shall see, this has analogous echoes to what Silone will learn from the refugee, because the exile is in the end separate, alone, an individual with often only a testimony to tell. It is perhaps therefore the exile's willingness and ability to testify, to testify to those who they come in to contact with by chance that makes them an exile—to others. For the exile who does not speak, who does not tell, who does not testify is of course an exile—but not to others. For without this they are, to others—and perhaps in time to themselves—over time, an immigrant to somewhere else, physically and existentially. The exile and émigré however are never fully settled where they end up; their gaze, their memory, their identity is as much "back there" to where or what they came from, to who and what they were—but could not stay or remain as—as to where and what they now find themselves. So, does exile occur as much in the act of telling as it does in the sense and experience of being so?

Drawing in the experience of the "borderlanders" who arrive there as exile and émigré, Czyżewski writes of those he calls "the new barbarians, arriving at an unknown province where only some remnants of the old civilization survived" (Ibid., p. 545). Yet life in the borderlands, the borderlanders themselves, seemed more inter-esting than where they had come from. What Milosz and others recognized was the central importance of the continuation of language for the exile. It is this ongoing focused engagement with the language and the literary culture they have left that marks the exile as distinct from the emigrant. The exile always "looks back", so that who and what they are is located in what they left behind; the emigrant in where they now find themselves, by choice. An exile caries that borderland continuously within them; and their thought, their writing, their language is always struck through with borderlandness, a divide that usually looks back to what was, what is– and, why they had to leave. This is no sentimental nostalgia, for it is the emigrant who is nostalgic because, in choosing to leave, they can romanticize why they left and what they left behind. In contrast, the exile, aware of both what they left and why they were forced to leave, looks critically on what they left from where they are now, but also looks critically at where they are now via what and where they were forced to leave. They know they cannot return, but also, cannot properly settle into where they now find themselves. Therefore, the borderland is the permanent location, neither one place nor the other, created with and with and as them, wherever they may physically go.

Borderlandness, that is exile, is always expressed first and foremost via language, language of the experience of exile. Exile is therefore an ongoing double translation, of the new here back to the thought and experience of "back there" and of the thought and language of "back there" into whatever present here the exile finds themselves in.

Such language is always a form of translation, a translation that is also a hermeneutic undertaking from within borderlandness, translating first one way and then translating the other and in the process creating one's own personal language of the borderland of exile, a patois more often thought than spoken—and more often written than spoken too. For the personal patois of exile—whether a physical one or an intellectual one or a spiritual one or a political one—finds very few to speak to or with wherever the exile is dislocated. To speak the patois is to risk a further exile within the dislocation; to speak the patois is to remind those you are exiled within that you are not "like them". To speak is to make oneself fully present; this is why so many, though in many ways present, choose not to speak. If one does not speak they may not be noticed or perhaps more so, they will be easily forgotten. To write the patois is to communicate the experience of exile to others and for others, who may themselves be in similar exiles, or who might discover analogous thoughts and insights. The disturbance a patois offers is such that we need to re-read and rethink it in order to fully hermeneutically engage with it. This is why the greatest expression offered by the exile is to write their patois thoughts: what they write is their exilic gift that offers the opportunity for all who read to develop, expand, modify and recreate their own private patois. In such a fashion, exilic patois, the language gift of borderlandness, is how in modernity we know we are not alone; that the abyss does not have to be faced with the destructive dread of anomie.

Being with/out Silone

In 1962, in an interview reported in that journal of liberal modernity *Encounter*, the Italian writer Ignazio Silone confessed:

> Now I consider myself to be a Socialist without a party and a Christian without a church. I still feel bound to the ethics and idealism of each but I can no longer have any part of what the State has made of Socialism and the Church has made of Christianity. (Allsop 1962, p. 49).

A one-time communist—and in a very Italian fashion, Catholic—revolutionary, deeply opposed to Fascism, Silone had gone into exile in Switzerland. However, following the war the realities of Stalinism caused him to publicly break with the communist party, while as noted, he could no longer align himself with the Church. The result was that he found himself in what we could term a double internal exile: of politics and also, of the church.

That is, he experienced an exile brought about by his experience of the actions and expectations demanded by the institutions of the twin basis of his life and outlook. His central concern is the effect of the mass party—whether political or religious—upon the individual in modernity. The writer is especially attentive to such effects if they seek to set out their own thinking and "report on experience"[3] rather than become

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[3] I deliberately borrow this phrase from the New Zealand writer, publisher and soldier John Mulgan who used it as the title for his intellectual memoir and discussion of what it meant to find onself

a mouthpiece for an institution or ideology. Silone was also concerned with what he termed the performance of faith—whether political or religious—undertaken by his contemporaries: "of not having faith but going through the motions of having faith, just in case" (Allsop 1962, p. 50). This is a different borderland, where the line runs straight through dis/honesty, the line being the "just in case" whereby the one holding such a position is in fact exiled from their true self and true beliefs. They are also internally exiled with/in the institution they belong to and are part of, but do not in fact have faith in. As Silone comments, "there is a frightful moral hollowness here…" (Ibid.). Yet this is not the exile of courage, this is the exile of cowardice and complicity. This is, however, not a question between black and white, because for Silone experience has taught him that white "doesn't exist"; rather it is a question of life existing in terms of "black and grey" (Ibid.). This means the exilic position with/out is not a case of inhabiting or situating oneself on the boundary between opposites, but rather the boundary occurs between degrees of experience, governments, society, culture and the like—for all occur with/in modernity and mass society.

Silone then sets out what he views as the writer's task in modernity, a position which, with the ever-increasing threats of populism and authoritarianism, even in democracies, we should heed:

> Fascism can emerge in many different forms, can call itself Democracy and still exercise *mass* domination of the proletariat.
>
> This is why the writer's function is increasingly important to-day. He belongs to society, not to the state. The individual writer must decide for himself whether he 'commits' himself or not—by that I mean whether or not he takes part in political action. But his duty remains: to defend the individual's rights against invasion or erosion by the state. He must reveal the truth that, as the state's machinery gets stronger and more efficient, it becomes more skilful in persuading the individual that he is living under freedom and democracy. Only the writer can expose this fraud. (Ibid.)

Silone's position of being with/out enables him to be attuned to the ways in which language enables the world to be made, remade or reduced; that is, how life in the world can either be emancipated or imprisoned. But also, as he emphasizes this either is not a choice between black and white, but rather one of nuances and intensity between black and grey. This I would suggest is what exile teaches us, for the exile never finds a new world so contrasted with their old one that their new place and identity is a new white against an old black. Exile is finding oneself in a position of new grey against old black, a new present against an old past whereupon, daily, the degree to which the line is drawn and how and who draws that line between the old and the new creates the intensity or nuance of grey perceived and experienced. Yet, the boundary line, that borderland of with/out means the exile is never fully in the "out/side", but also cannot fully return to the "with/in".

I want to argue that political theology situates us in the exilic position of with/out because it occupies that borderland, that boundary line between politics and theology that means the writer of political theology, the one who uses the thought

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adrift in modernity seeking a home, a meaning and an identity. Mulgan killed himself in Cairo at the end of the war and his ms was published posthumously in 1947 by Oxford University Press.

and language of political theology finds oneself, continuously and I would suggest, permanently, in the with/out of exile. We can understand this if we remember that the incarnation, the word made flesh, the word dwelling amongst us is the original act of political theology because in the incarnation the theological enters the world of politics to the point of death and in turn, the world of politics is remade by the entry and encounter with the theological. The incarnation, whereupon the word is made flesh, that is the word enters the body of politics that is both world and humanity, remakes both the theological and the political because there is no longer any division between them. Rather they are—and it should be emphasized, contra Eliot, we are— now held together by that boundary line of with/out because they are tied together as word and world. It is the realization of this situation that makes exiles of all who undertake political theology. For we cannot think, we cannot write the political with/ out the theological just as we cannot think, we cannot write the theological with/ out the political. Any attempt to do so, to enact a totalization of "only theology" or "only political" is that mass domination of fascism Silone warns us of; that fascism which emerges in many forms. This reminds us is why Silone found himself with/ out a party and with/out a church—yet "bound to the ethics and idealism of both" Socialism and Christianity.

I wish to nuance Silone and state that the party does/not have to be socialism, it can be any party which one no-longer feels able to be part of—for this is an increasingly common and widespread experience in our contemporary times. For what "the State" has made of any party increasingly drives us, whoever we are, into the position of with/out a party while how the Church operates and expresses itself has already, prior to the political exile for many, situated us with/out. We also need to remember that for many who found themselves with/out a church there was a brief hope that a party, that is politics in and of itself, could provide something the church had provided. And while it did, it was not in a positive way. Rather, the party demanded and acted in the manner that could the exile from the church. So, we find ourselves with/out both but, in writing and thinking political theology, yet still "bound the ethics and idealism" of both—just not as they are as state party or the church.

This means we should really write political theology as political/theology and all of us who engage in writing and thinking political/theology need to recognize that it actually occurs from that borderland position of exile. It also means that political/ theology is an exercise of discerning between black and grey in this world, of taking up that exilic position of the writer as a rival center of authority to both party and church, exercising intellectual freedom via presenting and expressing a moral courage that cannot be intimidated. This is—as we should be able to discern—the political/ theology of the incarnation. It is therefore in response to that original political/ theology of the incarnation that all of us who attempt in some way to undertake, express and political/theology in modernity do so—from that with/out position of exile. This is also why political/theology is a patio in our modern world, a patio of words spoken and written, a patois of thought, patios of the borderlands of with/out.

This borderland re-positioning of political/theology also requires us to rethink not only what political theology "is" and what political/theology "could be", but also demands we expand our ways of engaging and undertaking political/theology

so as to recognize it as an unsettled activity that is never fixed or stable. This means our writing of political/theology requires us to be more open, more discursive, more poetic, more allusive—and perhaps, more elusive.

Yet here I would suggest that Silone, yet again offers a way forward, via two texts he wrote after World War Two, in response to the horrors of the war, the rise of totalitarianisms of the left and of the right—and his own experience of exile. In 1947, at the International Pen Club conference in Basle, addressing his fellow writers he identified that which we can, from our perspective, describe as the borderland of writers, that borderland that places all writers, to greater or lesser degree is forms of exile. While he speaks of "the great and brilliant republic of letters" (Silone 1947, p. 319), Silone emphasizes that he does not "refer to any definite territory or country…I am thinking rather of a different region and another country—that invisible underground country without frontiers" (Ibid.) that writers create together. What makes this a location of exile is that for writers he is speaking of "that country of which we wish to remain free and loyal citizens" (Ibid., p. 320). Because writers are citizens of this unseen and transgressive country, the writer, if they are to properly be a writer, is always too in exile along that borderland. For the writer never looks solely inland (or, we could say inward) to the republic of letters but rather spends time also looking outward to the visible world. Therefore, the / runs right through the being and practice of the writer: they *are* the border/land.

Silone also presents this border position, this border identity as involving a political choice, an ontological choice, an existential choice "between liberty and slavery", that for the writer occurs in a choice between "his sincerity and his willingness to conform" (Ibid.). We can see from this why exile is a normative state of being for the writer—unless they opt for slavery, which in turn exiles them from "the republic of letters". What does this mean for political/theology? If political/theology is an act of writing, if it is a genre that expresses a position, an identity—and a choice—then political/theology is yet just another choice between liberty and slavery. As Silone observes and cautions, there is no guarantee that any writer, any collection of writers will necessarily choose liberty over slavery? Similarly, we need to caution that not every expression of political theology will opt for liberty over slavery. Here we can suggest that perhaps only that able to be expressed and identified as political/theology can and does so. That is, political theology not undertaken from that liminal position of exile, not undertaken in a fashion that enables that borderline of "/" to be identified is too often in the service of slavery (of others, of self, of truth). Or as Silone cautions his fellow writers:

> …never identify the cause of moral values with that of a state. The spirit bloweth where it listeth.[4] It is clerical presumption to wish to prescribe for it any definite domicile. (Silone 1947, p. 323).

The baseline issue, for modernity, is nihilism. It is nihilism that forces the writer into exile. It is nihilism that forces the relocation into the "/" of with/out. Silone observes:

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[4] John **3:8** King James Version (KJV): "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit".

> I know of no party, no church, no institution that can at present be considered uncontaminated by this terrible scourge. Nihilism is making a pretence of a creed in which one does not believe; it is the smoke of incense before an empty shrine; it is the exaltation of self-sacrifice and heroism as ends in themselves; it is liberty that is not in the service of life; liberty that has to have recourse to suicide or crime to prove itself. It is the subordination of truth and justice to selfish utility; it is the primacy of tactics and cunning in every form of collective relationship. (Ibid., pp. 323–324)

The question becomes, what, in the reality of nihilism do we do, say, think, write in the face of suffering? Suffering, Silone states is "the tragic reality that underlies the human state" (Ibid., p. 324). It is this confrontation with the universality of suffering that Silone will state results in "the choice of comrades".

In 1954, looking back across 40 years to "the collapse of most of the great politico-social myths" that provided meaning and hope in the nineteenth century, Silone identifies the result as a widespread "state of spiritual vagueness and ambiguity" (Silone 1954, p. 21). The result is a society, a culture, a general experience of nihilism that leads many writers to the extreme despair of suicide, with Silone noting their last writings or statements "are invariably a confession of anguish or despair at the effort and the futility of living" (Ibid.). We may ask how did the experience of exile become one of such anomie that death became the answer? Was it, as Silone suggests, that many were not pessimistic enough? That their banishment of Angst actually intensified their succumbing to it in times of despair? Or, we could suggest, that a life lived fully "with" becomes, too often, a life unable—and perhaps unwilling—to cope with/out? Conversely, while a literature of nihilism is a bold, sincere and truthful engagement with our situation in modernity, it cannot Silone warns, be a "permanent abode" (Ibid., 22). For at the limit of this position we are confronted with "the abyss of suicide" (Ibid.), or we will "rediscover some valid meaning in human existence" (Ibid., 23). It is this rediscovery that I suggest is at the center of political/theology. It is the with/out that as an act of revolt against the experience of nihilism that is the starting point of political/theology. However, we must be aware that to swap one party, one church, one institution for another is merely to swap one ideology for another. Rather, to revolt properly against nihilism is to move into the exilic position of with/out. Here, "the real touchstone" is "to keep faith with those who are being persecuted for their love of freedom and justice" (Ibid., 28).

Yet, Silone identifies there is a further nuance to being with/out: "We are neither believers nor atheists, nor are we skeptics" (Ibid.). Therefore, we are left not with faith but rather, at most, only with the right to speak "of a certain trust" that we can undertake the "possibility of spiritual communion" (Ibid.) with others; with those others existing in the tragic reality of suffering. Modernity finds us in a spiritual situation that "resembles a refugee encampment in a no-man's-land, an exposed makeshift encampment" (Ibid.). Yes, a refugee is not always an exile and exile is not always a refugee; but there is a very strong commonality and they both find themselves with/out. What then are we to do? Silone notes that what refugees do is "spend most of their time telling one another the story of their lives…in an effort to make themselves understood" (Ibid.). To be able to undertake such a communication,

to undertake with determination such an act of trust and understanding with and for others means "perhaps we need not altogether despair" (Ibid.).

To conclude: The writer, from with/in that exilic borderland of with/out, is the one we entrust, in various genres, to tell us the story of our lives amidst the nihilism of modernity. And when that occurs, all such writing is, in fact and in truth, political/theology.

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Schelling, Deloria, Jr., and the Vitality of Eco-Anarchism: Thoughts on the Wordless Word

Jason M. Wirth

Abstract In light of the exigencies of the unfolding global ecological crisis, I explore what the great classical Daoist Zhuangzi called "the debate that is not spoken" by bringing together, however implausibly, two voices to hear a word that in the end rests "at the place where understanding no longer understands." The word itself endeavors to say what in the end cannot be said but still somehow communicated. I locate the emergence of this strange word in a silent and silence inducing debate between two thinkers who I suspect could never have imagined communicating with each other: The German post-Kantian philosopher FWJ Schelling (1775–1854), whose thinking about the obfuscation of *Naturphilosophie* now seems in many ways prophetic, and an admittedly unusual and surprising interlocutor, the late Standing Rock Sioux thinker, Vine Deloria, Jr. (1933–2005). In this silent debate, I attempt to hearken to what I call, however tentatively, eco-anarchism. This debate also considers the claim, made by each of our interlocutors in their own way, that this is a religious problem, albeit one that demands that we radically examine what such a word can now mean.

Keywords Eco-anarchism · Philosophy of nature · F.W.J. von Schelling · Deloria Jr.

Introduction

The unfolding ecological crisis, regardless of whether the geologists name it the Anthropocene or not, demands a word as we confront the catastrophic externality of global modernity. Yet we cannot assume that the language that we deploy to respond to this catastrophe is innocent of the ontology precipitating the crisis. How to say a word that liberates us from the global worldview that is precipitating the crisis without that word being merely a symptom of that crisis and implicated in it?

In the Chinese Daoist classic, the *Zhuangzi*, we find the following words about "the speech that is not spoken" as we endeavor somehow to "speak" it: They "followed

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what is called the Way that is not a way, and this exchange of theirs is what is called the debate that is not spoken. Therefore, when virtue is resolved in the unity of the Way and words come to rest at the place where understanding no longer understands, we have perfection" (Zhuangzi 2013, p. 208).

In what follows, I would like to explore "the debate that is not spoken" by bringing together, however implausibly, two voices to hear a word that in the end rests "at the place where understanding no longer understands." The word itself endeavors to say what in the end cannot be said but still somehow communicated. I locate the emergence of this strange word in a silent and silence inducing debate between two thinkers who I suspect could never have imagined communicating with each other: The German post-Kantian philosopher FWJ Schelling (1775–1854), whose thinking about the obfuscation of *Naturphilosophie* now seems in many ways prophetic, and an admittedly unusual and surprising interlocutor, the late Standing Rock Sioux thinker, Vine Deloria, Jr. (1933–2005).

To open the space of this silent and silence inducing debate (silence itself not as the absence of sound but rather an awakening to the practice of deep listening), I propose beginning with the neologism *eco-anarchism* (or Green Anarchism as it sometimes known). In so doing, I confess that the word itself is a bit of a pleonasm. An ecology is as such anarchic in the sense that its operations are interdependent, autopoietic, and without a centralizing and governing principle. No one member is in charge nor is there anyone thing that it is fundamentally about. It is driving toward no pre-ordained purpose nor is there anyone one meaning that overshadows all the others. Each member of the ecology sustains its being in interrelationship with other beings, much in the way that one could not speak, for example, of lion as such, as if lions could live in only in relationship to themselves without food and habitat. In a sense, they invoke what the ancient Buddhist tradition over two millennia ago understood as *pratītyasamutpāda*, dependent co-origination. Each being is empty, that is, it is only itself in relationship to what it is not itself in a vast co-originating web.

By anarchy I invoke the lineages of political thought, with all their warts and miscalculations, that gathered steam in the mid to late nineteenth century (Proudhon, Bakunin, Reclus, and especially Kropotkin), at least insofar as I want to distinguish this term from its now prevalent usage as libertarianism, that is, the assertion of individual acts unencumbered by the state, regulations, or any other form of collective responsibility. The assertion of the peripheral self as itself the center, the loss of the ecological center that sustains us and the insistence of our existence as itself our starting point and the consequent subjugation of our ecologies to our will—let nothing stand in my way—was what Schelling in the *Freedom* essay (1809) understood physically as sickness and morally as evil. Eco-anarchism on the contrary would be an account of our collective responsibility for the ecological collectives that sustain our lives as well as the other forms of life with which share them. Schelling understood these ecologies as a "system of freedom" and the freedom of its groundless ground is in this sense not only anarchic (without a fixed principle governing it) but also vital (freedom is itself the "unprethinkable" life of this system's interdependent and complicated processes).

A Schelling-inspired eco-anarchism emerges from what he in the *Freedom* essay diagnosed as the malady of modernity: "the whole of modern European philosophy since its beginning (with Descartes) has the common defect that nature is not present for it and that it lacks a living ground" (I/7, 356).[1] I bring this word into silent debate with another prophetic thinker who experienced the explosion of global modernity as the near extinction of his people and their lifeways, namely, Vine Deloria, Jr. The latter, although well-read in the philosophical traditions espoused by the settler colonialists that decimated the so-called "new world," to the best of my knowledge did not read Schelling nor did he express interest in doing so. Nonetheless, by bringing the trajectories of their respective projects into dialogue—one that I hold is mutually illuminating—I hope to give word to two aspects and inner possibilities of Schelling's legacy.

The first is his early *Naturphilosophie*, this time as it appears with respect to some of the new ways that science and the place of nature appear through Deloria's indigenous lens. The second is Schelling's later turn to positive philosophy, a turn whose religiosity not only seems at odds with a contemporary sensibility, but which as such seems to eclipse Schelling's still relevant contributions to a philosophical ecology. Deloria offers us resources to understand the kind of religiosity at stake in the positive philosophy as inseparable from the contemporary ecological crisis. As such, I hope to suggest in a manner that is still of contemporary importance an account of a Schelling-inspired new-old indigenous eco-anarchism and the vast life-giving silence that such an encounter occasion.

The Immaturity of Science

Deloria recounts a deceptively simple response to the reception of science when it was introduced to some of the indigenous elders. For example, in 1820, when George Sibley was the US agent for the Osage People in the Missouri region of the United States, he tried to win over the elder Big Soldier with the power and attractiveness of science. Big Soldier's response remains striking:

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[1] These citations of Schelling's major work follow the standard pagination, which follows the original edition of two divisions and fourteen volumes established after Schelling's death by his son, Karl. It lists the division, followed by the volume, followed by the page number. Hence, (I/1, 1) would read, division one, volume one, page one. It is preserved in Manfred Schröter's critical reorganization of this material. *Schellings Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart-Augsburg: J. G. Cotta, 1856–1861); *Schellings Werke: Nach der Originalausgabe in neuerAnordnung*, ed. Manfred Schröter (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1927). The first division is in ten books, and the second is in four books. Schröter numbers the volumes without division from I-XIV, so a citation that might read SW XI would be for our present purposes II/1.All translations of Schelling are my own responsibility. For more reflections on Schelling's ecological contributions, please see my *Schelling's Practice of the Wild: Time, Art, Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015) as well as "Schelling and the Satanic: On *Naturvernichtung*," *Kabiri: The Official Journal of the North American Schelling Society*, volume II (2020), pp. 81–92.

> I see and admire your manner of living, your good warm houses; your extensive fields of corn, your gardens, your cows, oxen, workhouses, wagons, and 1000 machines, that I know not the use of. I see that you are able to clothe yourselves, even from weeds and grass. In short you can do almost what you choose. You whites possess the power of subduing almost every animal to your use. You are surrounded by slaves. Everything about you is in chains and you are slaves yourselves. I fear if I should exchange my pursuits for yours, I too should become a slave.[2]

Big Soldier did not deny the power of science to subjugate and control nature and to bring it to the white person's beck and call. "In short you can do almost what you choose." Science allowed the white person to stand at the periphery and bring the processes of nature under their control. This conception of human freedom—that I maximize my own freedom by minimizing nature's resistance to my freedom—is what Schelling identified with evil. The complicity of science with this stance, Schelling warned again and again, was an unfolding catastrophe. Freedom has the human but in evil we reverse this relationship and imagine that we have freedom. As Big Solder clearly saw, the latter is paradoxically a form of slavery.

Deloria for his part insisted that this version of science—Ahab's desire to subjugate the great white whale of nature, but this time around with the increasing capacity to do so, at least in the short run before the ecological crisis calls off all bets—put tremendous power into the hands of an immature culture, dangerously bereft of wisdom. If the goal was to be the master and proprietor of nature, this was the opposite of Big Soldier's vision. Deloria: "Maturity, in the American Indian context, is the ultimate goal of all human existence" (SR, p. 13). The goal is not to make nature ours, but rather to discern our manner of belonging to it. It "is the ability to reflect on the ordinary things of life and discover both their real meaning and the proper way to understand them when they appear in our lives" (SR, pp. 13–14). It is not to know things, but to have developed wisdom about our manner of knowing. "Within the life history of maturity one can be said to travel from information to knowledge to wisdom" (SR, 14). We can add to the quantity of information and knowledge all we want, but that in itself does not make us wise and does not give us the maturity to use our knowledge wisely. "One of the fallacies of western civilization is the belief that the ingestion of tremendous amounts of material coupled with the mastery of relatively abstract propositions creates maturity and wisdom" (SR, p. 15).

Maturity for Deloria is linked to a "whole vision" that is "received in a religious experience" (SR, p. 15). Deloria looked forward to the day when indigenous thinkers would do science. The latter would still be science, but this time around it would be approached and assessed in a mature fashion. One need only think of Robin Wall Kimmerer's brilliant work of indigenous botany, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, to appreciate how powerful the fulfillment of Deloria's expectations has turned out to be. Yet both Schelling and Deloria, each in his own way to be sure, link this maturity to what is "received in a religious experience." Of course, the latter term is more crisis-laden and in greater disrepute than either science or nature. Deloria for his part does not

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[2] Quoted in Vine Deloria, Jr., "Perceptions and maturity: Reflections of Feyerabend's Point of View," *Spirit and Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr. Reader*, ed. Barbara Deloria, Kristen Foehner, and Sam Scinta (Wheat Ridge, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1999), p. 4. Henceforth SR.

understand the latter in terms of European Christianity. No less striking, Schelling's late turn to philosophical religion is not a reactionary apology for Christianity, but rather the presentiment of a religiosity—the Johannine church—still unfolding and still to come. It is to this strange, unconventional, perhaps unexpected religiosity of maturity that I now turn.

The Space and Time of a Mature *Naturphilosophie*

Deloria's distance from European Christianity can be seen in his inability to even be able to make sense of salvation. "For Aboriginal people, there is not only no need for a Messiah, there is really no place for him in the cosmos" (SR, p. 23). The acquisition of maturity and wisdom—always hard-won—has nothing to do with transcending reality or getting to a better place. The constant drive to improvement, whether it be domination of the profane world, or its abandonment as fallen, seems to indicate for Deloria a kind of trauma, an abiding injury that drives one into oneself and out of nature. As Deloria cheekily wonders:

> Why is their appraisal of the physical world a negative one? Why do their societies suffer such perennial and continuing crises? Why do they insist on believing that ultimate reality is contained in another, almost unimaginable realm beyond the senses and often beyond the span of human life? (SR, p. 31)

This trauma drove Deloria to muse humorously that the origins of Christianity can be found in the plight of aliens who were long ago abandoned on earth. The traces of their nostalgia and homesickness for their lost world are still with us.

> I suggest this possibility because the Messiah, unlike the North American Indian trickster, comes on the clouds and takes the faithful to a blessed land indescribably different from anything we have here. I therefore conclude this examination with a suggestion that western culture, including its religious tradition and its derivative schools of psychology, is a long enduring cargo cult the origins of which must be vigorously uncovered and understood so that the schizophrenia it represents can be finally healed. (SR, p. 31)

As we saw earlier, this trauma stunts the maturity of science, leaving its tremendous power in the hands of Peter Pan. Deloria, in his famous essay "If You Think about It, You will See that It Is True," also recounts the remarkable tale from 1919 when a missionary named Beede was accompanied by someone who initiated the Chippewa and Cree Indians into the wonders of "the modern scientific attitude with its view of things." His pupils included Rising Sun who, having carefully learned about the scientific approach, made a stunning pronouncement: He did not reject it as false but rather as "inadequate. Not bad or untrue, but inadequate to explain, among many other things, how man is to find and know a road along which he wishes and chooses to make this said progress unless the Great Manitou by his spirit guides the mind of man, keeping human beings just and generous and hospitable" (SR, p. 43).

The Great Manitou is not a transcendent being that opens an escape hatch for an exhausted people. It rather speaks of a "moral universe" in which "all activities,

events, and entities are related, and consequently it does not matter what kind of existence an entity enjoys, for the responsibility is always there for it to participate in the continuing creation of reality" (SR, p. 47). The spiritual quest in which we establish our manner of belonging is not passive but rather actively involves reconfiguring relationships and establishing covenants with non-human animals and even the land itself. So "instead of the predatory jungle that the Anglo-Saxon imagination conjures up to analogize life, in which the most powerful swallows up the weakened unprotected, life is better understood as the tapestry or symphony in which each player has a specific part or role to play" (SR, p. 51). This includes interspecies communication in which covenants are drawn to address injuries and maintain harmony. They are made with "other forms of life on a mutually agreeable basis" (SR, p. 51) Not only do covenants, in Schelling's idiom, "let the ground operate," that do so cooperatively and as such provide powerful medicine in times of sickness, human and otherwise: "a covenant places responsibilities on both parties and provides a means of healing any breach in the relationship" (SR, p. 52).

For these kinds of reasons, Deloria criticized Christianity as lopsidedly temporal. The coming of the Messiah happens *one time for all time*, cleaving history into the time before the Messiah and the time after the Messiah. The latter sets history on a clear course toward the end time, and reveals that everything has happened for a reason and has been set into motion toward a preordained conclusion. It consequently has no deep sense of place. Since it happened one time for all time, it can expand spatially in any direction. Global Christianity is automatically global because it can happen anywhere, anytime, for anyone. One can be a Christian anywhere and although it sometimes takes on the personality and accent of its new host culture, the former is not rooted in place where this is happening. It can more or less take place any place.

The late Schelling of *The Philosophy of Mythology and Revelation* spoke of this as Petrine expansion, as Christianity spread everywhere, often under the sword. Deloria, belonging to one of the many peoples who felt the force of this sword to their traditional lifeways, charges that "world history as presently conceived in the Christian nations is the story of the West's conquest of the remainder of the world" (SR, p. 299). Everyone will come under the sword and move toward a shared destiny:

> Christianity has always placed a major emphasis on the idea of history. From the very beginning of the religion, it has been the Christian contention that the experiences of humankind could be recorded in a linear fashion, and when this was done, the whole purpose of the creation event became clear . . . Time is regarded as all important by Christians, and it has a casual importance, if any, among the tribal peoples. (SR, p. 295)

This experience of time for indigenous peoples marks an historical, albeit catastrophic, event: the alteration of the relationship to space in the disastrous loss of lands as well as the languages and lifeways that belonged to and sustained them. Deloria reflects that this experience is sometimes likened by indigenous peoples themselves to the Jewish loss of their homeland, but in important respects, it has been much worse for the former. Although the Jews lost their lands, they were able to build traditions and rituals to keep it present and to retain in their traditions the

memories of what they had lost. But the expansion of History into indigenous lands not only dispossessed them of these lands, but it also unleashed violence on their languages, ceremonies, and lifeways, eviscerating their memory:

> The Indian exile is in a sense more drastic. The people often live less than one hundred miles away from their traditional homelands; yet in the relative complexities of reservation and urban life, they might be two thousand or more years apart. It is not simply a spatial separation that has occurred but a temporal one as well. (SR, p. 318)

Time in this respect marks a constitutive loss of place, and not only the literal dispossession of lands, but the decimation of the wisdom that had developed for millennia in relationship to these lands. The development of wisdom, knowing deeply how one belongs to a place and the search for place-based revelation, can now hardly take place:

> One of the primary aspects of traditional tribal religions has been the secret ceremonies, particularly the vision quests, the fasting in the wilderness, and the isolation of the individual for religious purposes. This type of religious practice is nearly impossible today. The places currently available to people for vision quests are hardly isolated. Jet planes pass overhead. Some traditional holy places are the scene of strip mining, others are adjacent to superhighways, others are parts of ranches, farms, shopping centers, and national parks and forests. (SR, p. 315)

Yet Deloria is not resigned, despite the formidable challenges for revelation is not restricted to the places of historical revelation. It is ongoing: "People must always be ready to experience new revelations at new locations. If this possibility did not exist, all deities and spirits would be dead. Consequently, we always look forward to the revelation of new sacred places and ceremonies" (SR, p. 333). Revelation for Deloria is not first and foremost a revision of time but rather the disclosure of our manner of belonging. In this sense, it is the sacred dimension of the here and now, its own form of a mature *Naturphilosophie*.

Schelling and the Johannine, or the Return of *Naturphilosophie*

The violent spatial expansion of Christianity was not lost on Schelling. It was an event that changed history by expanding everywhere that it could. Writing in his late philosophy in a very liminal place between the growing exhaustion of the classical forms of Christianity and his "premonition" of a new church to come, Schelling divided the historical church into two successive phases. The symbolic figure of the first phase, namely, the rise of Catholicism, was Peter. The Church spread widely but through force and the sword. Peter's tears of guilt for the betrayal of Jesus are shared by the violence of the early church. Although they inherited invaluable mystery at the heart of Christianity, they were prone to "abiding and constant domination." The Petrine Church is "in the city" (U, p. 708), that is, it is the Church of Empire. This is the Church implicated in Constantinian Christianity, the Inquisition, the Doctrine of

Discovery, the subjugation of Indigenous lifeways in Boarding Schools (the so-called project of killing the Indian to save the person), religious wars, etc.

Christian Empire was erected on the rock of Peter, but it too often disregarded the concealed ground of Jesus. This allowed the hollow shell of Christianity to spread widely and violently. Catholicism needed the death of its idolatrous God to be redeemed by the hidden God. This came with the *hidden Church* (II/4, 707), "external to the city,"[3] that Luther unleashed. Schelling associated the earthquake of the hidden church at the heart of empire with the Pauline church, and it manifested like Dionysus in the mystery religions, which reaffirmed the hidden depths or "soul" of public religion.[4] Paul shook the Petrine Church, and in so doing, he intimated the coming tremors of the Protestant revolt. "In Paul lives the dialectical, limber, scientific, confrontational principle" (PO, p. 317). The force of the Pauline church, however, is not an end in itself. It was the tremulous reassertion of the *deusabsconditus*. As such, it is merely a "transitional form" (PO, p. 320), even though "Paul's lightning strikes of genius... liberated the Church from a blind unity" (PO, p. 322). The Pauline was nonetheless indispensable in that it took the *present* Church that was spreading everywhere and returned it to nowhere.

The Church that violently expanded everywhere does not recover its sense of place by becoming the unearthly church. The church that was everywhere is now the church that is nowhere. Hence, if Schelling were to "build a Church in our time," he "would consecrate it to Saint John the Evangelist," the "apostle of the future" (PO, p. 317): "One is not merely an apostle in the time in which one lives" and John was "actually not the apostle for his time." Although Paul (and Luther) cleared the way, the "Lord loved" John, "that is, in him he knew himself" (UPO, p. 703). The Johannine Church is the church for everyone and everything, the "being everything in everything of God" (UPO, pp. 708–709), a "theism that contains within itself the entire economy of God" (UPO, p. 709). The Johannine Church includes everything, excludes nothing, witnessing that "everything has its inner process for itself" (UPO, p. 710). It is liberated from Petrine empire (the violent imposition of religious forms) and its consequent Pauline rebellion (the reaffirmation of the hidden ground). The latter comes at the cost of making religion otherworldly and evacuating the sacrality of the earth. The Johannine Church returns religion to the mysterious ground of the earth. The future Church will have an ongoing, temporally dynamic sense of place.

Of course, this is not an idiom that one can imagine Deloria embracing—I aim to hear the life of the silence between these two remarkable adventures in thought—but we can detect in it the eco-anarchic rebirth of *space as the place of revelations* as we seek to embrace the depths of our belonging. In this sense, this is also a return to the philosophy of nature's impulse, it's called for a *grounded maturity* and wisdom to guide and shape scientific discovery as the wisdom of our belonging, a belonging without the archaic sword, but with the freedom of a sacred ecology. This is a call at

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[3] FWJ Schelling, *Urfassung Philosophie der Offenbarung*, twovolumes, ed. Walter E. Ehrhardt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1992), p. 708. Henceforth UPO.

[4] *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (1841–42), ed. Manfred Frank (Frankfurt am Main, 1977), p. 239. Henceforth PO.

the edge of the word to dedicate ourselves to the ongoing practice of listening to the silent word of our belonging.

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Datafication and the Eclipse of Thinking

Sean J. McGrath

For Ray Hart.

Abstract The current hype around AI (machines that can speak and write without thought) shall be taken as an occasion to reflect upon the forgetting of the primordial symbol in late modernity. The primordial symbol, otherwise known as the vague concept (Pierce), is expressive rather than pragmatic, communal rather than private, and productive of sense rather than restricted to a position in a pre-established "chain of signifiers". Because the development of science and technology depended upon the institution of systems of conventional symbols—clearly defined, ideally univocal, and unvarying or context-free, we have come to forget that primordial symbols are not deteriorated concepts or mere figures of speech; rather they are the very origin of human thinking. In this paper, I shall track the history of this distinction between primordial and conventional symbols as it develops into a minor literature in modern philosophy. I shall have occasion to reference Herder, Schelling, Cassirer, Ricoeur, and Taylor in the course of making the case for remembering the primordial symbol and with it the primacy of the aesthetic, the mythic, and metaphoric over the discursive, the logical, and the scientific.

Keywords Sense · Signification · Symbolism · Aesthetics

I shall begin with a disclaimer.[1] This essay cannot be systematic because the pivotal historical moment with which it deals, the dawn of the digital age, has only just begun. What is beginning in our time is a movement of such immeasurable significance for the future of humanity, that only the most dramatic comparisons are adequate. It is a new Axial Age. As did the invention of writing some 5000 years ago, it will change everything we do. The excessive significance of our moment renders its meaning

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[1] The phrase "the eclipse of thought" is Michael Polanyi's (see Polanyi and Prosch 1975), Chapter 1.

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obscure to us who are its first witnesses. So, it has always been: the significance of pivot moments in history always eludes those contemporaneous with them: they are for future thinkers to interpret. Parmenides, Siddhartha Gautama, and Zhuangzi Zhu knew nothing of the first Axial Age of which they are now recognized to be the chief representatives (see Jaspers 1949/1953, pp. 47–66; Taylor 2007, pp. 146–58). The first experiments in writing in Mesopotamia were not alarmist propositions by thinkers conscious that a new era of human development was beginning; they were tallies of grain on cuneiform tablets. And still, philosophy always begins with what is on the table, as John Rist once said of Plato in a seminar I attended at the University of Toronto. I shall attempt to speak here of the danger implicit in the great socio-political transformation which is beginning in our time and which will leave no human traditions unchanged, from how we work, to how we play, to how we speak and relate to one another. We are at ground zero in a crisis of language, more specifically, a crisis of understanding what exactly we are doing when we do that most characteristic human act, symbolically expressing the sense of our lives as we experience it.

I will risk sounding like an irrelevant voice from the recent past and say that the greatest threat AI poses to us today concerns human self-understanding. I am not worried about the so-called singularity because I do not believe we have come anywhere close to producing genuine intelligence in a machine (the "artificial" qualifier in AI being the key term (see Tegmark 2018; Bostrom 2014). I will not waste time contributing to the anxiety generated by the fantasy of the anticipated moment when AI will become "sentient" and in becoming sentient, acquire the intentionality and creativity necessary to replace its creator as a tool maker. Such anxieties seem to me misplaced, not because they speak of an impossibility—who knows what another millennium of cultural evolution shall bring—but because they conceal from us the real and present danger posed by our surrendering to AI more and more of what is distinctively human activity.

I am deeply concerned about our readiness to surrender political agency to tech corporations who are hovering up our data to better manipulate us with advertisement and propaganda. But I will not speak of the political here. Others are doing so, better than I can (see Rosengrün 2023). Everyone agrees that machine learning is developing faster than our capacity to understand its impact on us.[2] But what is most disturbing to me about the hyper-accelerated development of AI is not the pressing political problems associated with the rise of global algocracy. My worries are anthropological. AI seems to me to be the coup de grâce to the human, the death blow delivered to us by the hyper-positivism that began in the late twentieth century with the rise of neuroscience and the mapping of the genome and has only increased steadily and largely unopposed since then. With the advent of machine learning, we are forgetting what makes us human and in so forgetting becoming ourselves

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[2] Let us not forget the moment, shortly after the public launch of the Large Language Models (LLMs: ChatGPT, CoPilot, etc.), when the tech giants themselves called for a pause in the production of AI. They who had the most to profit from an information race saw, for a moment (now gone it seems), the dangers of unregulated AI production (see Castaldo 2023).

inhuman. The threat is not that the machine will surpass us and render us obsolete or even exterminate us purposefully: the real danger lies in our exterminating the human by measuring ourselves in comparison to AI, and, finding ourselves lacking, demanding that we should be remade in the image and likeness of our machines. At the center of this crisis lies a profound forgetting of what makes language the quintessentially human act.

An Eclipse at the Dawn of the Digital Age

Two intimately connected, traditional philosophical assumptions motivate the following remarks. Both go back to the Greeks and were, until recently, accepted by the majority of modern philosophers. Both have become unpopular at the dawn of the digital age. It is not difficult to see why. Both assumptions challenge AI ideology.

The first assumption is that language and thought are inseparable. From Parmenides and Heraclitus, to Plato and Aristotle, there is no thinking without a medium of words or a sustaining basis of proto-language: images, symbols, or phantasmata. The reverse is also true: where there is language, there is thought. The Greek assumption was largely unquestioned in the Middle Ages and even into the modern period was endorsed by a huge diversity of thinkers who otherwise agree on little, including Kant, Herder, Hegel, Pierce, Saussure, Cassirer, Heidegger, Gadamer, Lonergan, Wittgenstein. It would seem to follow from this assumption that where there is language there too is, or was, thought. But now, with the rise of the spectre of the speaking machine, we are everywhere confronted by the opposite phenomenon: speech without thought. Of course, language subsists as an object once thought has completed its course, as a series of signs, marks on paper, magnetic tape, or silicon. In this trivial sense, language is separable from thought. But until now such material signs were regarded as the residue of language. The signs were not in and of themselves language but were rendered so through signification—that I take to be the salvageable point from the Saussurian signifier/signified dyad. If the signifier is arbitrary what makes it significant is the intention that binds it to the signified. Language that is not intentionally spoken or written is not language.[3]

With the rise of machines that appear to speak, language and thinking are now severed. To be sure, intentionality is at the origin of the 0 s and 1 s that machines depend upon to process data, as it is at the origin of all culture, but the AI-generated signs now proliferate and recombine without any human design. Language is now possible, it seems, in the absence of thought, that is, in the absence of intentionality and reflection. And since thought has always been more elusive to define than language, all which is left is the remains of language, reified language, a thing, an

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[3] Imagine a series of repeating marks on a rock that appears at first to be deliberate but on closer inspection is revealed to be accidental. We would at first think, "language and therefore thought", and only later see our error. The reverse process led to the conclusion that Homo Erectus could probably speak: the 2014 discovery of non-random figures inscribed on a 500,000-year-old sea shell (Callaway 2014).

object to be manipulated as information or data. Datafication is eclipsing thinking, and no one seems to be particularly concerned. We are spending billions on AI research, setting up centers for AI ethics all over the world, and yet one is hard-pressed to find philosophical discussions about the nature of specifically human intelligence in these institutes.[4] The consensus seems to be that it does not exist.

But can we agree that our machines are truly speaking? Or do we deal here with simulacra of speech? The best writers on AI are not so foolish as to assume that there is intentional thought in the machine that is currently producing much of the language of our world. There is nothing that it is like to be ChatGPT.[5] Still, the popular imagination is spooked. Recall the hype created by the Facebook technician who claimed he overheard chatbots speaking to one another in a language he could not understand. The whole thing was declared a hoax but not before making every headline (Griffin 2017). Why are we so interested in this fantasy of sentient machines? There is more to it than technological advance. The fantasy has something religious about it. Are we looking for new gods after Christianity? My question to trans-humanists enthusiastic to build sentient devices: Why would we want to replicate what humans do with their clumsy organic neuro-networks when the machines can do everything we do better than us without thinking? Functional replacement of human intelligence rather than essential replication has been the goal of AI research since Turing. The strongest anti-positivist studies of language and thought in the twentieth century always underscored the impracticality of human speaking (see Cassirer 1925/1946). We seem to do it mostly not to get things done but simply to enjoy the manifestation of sense arising between us. There is evidence to suggest that language is more of a Palaeolithic pastime than a tool (see Wynn and Coolidge, pp. 112–113; Tamascello 2009). For a central, if minority tradition in 20th-century philosophy of language, human thought, and language are primarily contemplative and only secondarily practical.[6] With the ubiquity of machine-generated language and its increasingly dominant role in daily life, we are not so much threatened by the reality of a thinking machine as we are by the eclipse of thinking. We are beginning to

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[4] There are exceptions. See the work of Brian Cantwell Smith, professor of computer science at the University of Toronto. See in particular Smith (2019), p. xiii: "Neither deep learning, nor other forms of second-wave AI, nor any proposals yet advanced for third-wave, will lead to genuine intelligence. Systems currently being imagined will achieve formidable reckoning prowess, but human-level intelligence and judgment, honed over millennia, is of a different order. It requires "getting up out" of internal representations and being committed to the world as world, in all its unutterable richness. Only with existential commitment, genuine stakes, and passionate resolve to hold things accountable to being in the world can a system (human or machine) genuinely refer to an object, assess ontological schemes, distinguish truth from falsity, respond appropriately to context, and shoulder responsibility". Smith's book is an effort to update and expand, with insights from analytical philosophy and computer science, the argument made by the Heideggerian John Haugeland in the first AI debates of the 70 s and 80 s. Also see Haugeland (1985; Dreyfus 1972).

[5] A play on Nagel's famous argument for animal intentionality (Nagel 1974). For AGI skepticism, in addition to the work of Smith previously cited, see Fjelland (2020).

[6] On the essentially non-instrumental nature of human thought, see McGrath (2018, 2021, 2023). The minority tradition is expressivism, from the early Romantics to Cassirer, Gadamer, and Ricoeur. More on this school below.

believe that thinking is a figure of speech. If there can be language without thinking, perhaps there was never anything called thinking in the first place.

The second assumption I have treated elsewhere and will only flag here: we are and have always been, the only animal that speaks, the zôon logon echon (see McGrath 2028). This specific difference explains, for Aristotle our political lives and our capacity for cooperation. In this Aristotelian line, to which I belong, human speech is something other than animal reaction or emotional signaling; it is first the expression of meaning and second, judgment.

> Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further), the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state. (Aristotle 1941, I, 2: 1253a, 1129)[7]

I am not alone in remaining committed to this old idea, however, unpopular it has become in the post/trans-humanist age. The human is the animal symbolicum (Cassirer 1944/2021, p. 27), the "language animal" (Taylor 2016) and therefore the homo cooperans and the political animal.[8]

But we are no longer the only creature that speaks. We have created speaking machines and delivered over to them the responsibility to inform us, archive and produce our cultures, entertain us, order our activities, and increasingly, govern us. To say that we are the language animal means, following Cassirer and Heidegger, that we are the worlding animal, the animal who, since the so-called cognitive revolution of the Palaeolithic age has substituted for a natural environment a world of meaning, a "referential totality" (Verweisungsganzheit) constituted by speech and related symbolic activities, especially ritual, and art (Heidegger 1927/1962, p. 99; also see Cassirer 1944/2021, pp. 27–41).[9] Now, after over 40,000 years of speaking the world, we appear to have outsourced worlding to our machines.[10] Increasingly the silicon chip produces the world in which we live, move, and have our being. AI generates our images, texts, and music, as it does our news, science, and policies. Soon it shall generate our religion.

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[7] On this point, see Langer (1942/1957, pp. 26-78). She follows Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms quite closely but makes certain advances on him. See Cassirer's popular restatement of his concept of symbol, published 2 years after Langer's (Cassirer 1944/ 2021, pp. 23–41).

[8] Primatology has come to recognize our capacity to cooperate as extraordinary in the animal kingdom. Our closest relative, the chimpanzee, is nowhere near our match in this regard. Tomascello (2009) is the authority on this point, Harari (2014), the popularizer.

[9] The absence of a care structure in computers was the central argument made by Dreyfus in the first wave of AI debate (Dreyfus 1972).

[10] 40,000 years is the date of the oldest discovered Paleolithic art, the cave paintings at Chauvet. But homo sapiens are far older (as old as 300,000 years) and presumably have been speaking the world into existence since they walked out of Africa.

This is more than a new development in mass culture; it is the beginning of a new era in cultural evolution. I believe, with others, that the digital age will come to be remembered as the beginning of history. The last 5000 years, which will have left little more than fragments in the archive, will be regarded as proto-history. Steve Jobs holding up the Iphone will be the iconic beginning of history proper. Whatever traces of 5000 years of human-produced text, art, and science remain will have been uploaded, translated into code, patterns of 0 s and 1 s. The whole of recorded history is data for artificial, digital worlding.

Once again, the qualifier, "artificial" is crucial. Worlding presumes a being structured by care (Heidegger 1927/1962, pp. 83–84) that is, a being for whom being is an issue, all of whose ways of being are expressions of concern. AI has no concerns and cares about nothing and therefore is no more "in" the world than is the table at which I am sitting. But AI functionally does what we have exclusively done until now: it produces a simulacrum of the world and so creates a false impression about what is necessary for worlding in the first place: not interests, projects, and a being toward the future, but hyper-efficient data processing. From this point on, humans become at best collaborators in the production of science, technology, and art, no longer the primary content authors. For most applications—hit movies, pop music, undergraduate classes in anthropology—they are no longer necessary. History begins with the reduction of worlding to datafication.

Datafication abstracts from all content to define the rule for information transfer: if y for the most part follows x in context z, then y always follows x in context z. Datafication is more than digitally uploading the textual and visual material produced in the Holocene; it is also the production of humanly unsurveyable quantities of information that was never analog through the recording of every human keyboard click. With our home computers and cell phones, we are producing an archive that we ourselves could never manage.[11] We feed the machine the data it needs to give us back the world, the symbolic order, in which we live. It starts as mimesis but everyone expects it to accelerate into novelty. AI-generated text, imagery and music is at the moment easily detected because it is banal, generic, and obviously imitative of human texts, imagery, and music. But the technology is less than a decade old. Wait until an AI-generated film becomes a blockbuster, perhaps even wins an Oscar—the moment is coming. Even the most skeptical expect AI to improve in its capacity to innovate. Hence, Harari's fear, that soon, AI will be revered as a deity: drawing on a data pool so vast it might as well be considered infinite, its productions will be revelations to us (Harari 2015, pp. 429–462).

Marshall McLuhan pointed out in the 60 s that all technological achievements come at the atrophy of certain natural abilities. With the advent of writing 5000 years ago, our capacity to remember, dramatically demonstrated in the achievements of the ancient rhapsodes, atrophied. With the invention of the printing press, our capacity for

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[11] See Cukier and Mayer-Schönberger (2013/2014): "Datafication is not the same as digitization, which takes analog content—books, films, photographs—and converts it into digital information, a sequence of ones and zeros that computers can read. Datafication is a far broader activity: taking all aspects of life and turning them into data … Once we datafy things, we can transform their purpose and turn the information into new forms of value".

producing and sustaining culture orally, in the absence of universal literacy, atrophied. Now, with the invention of machines that appear to speak it is our capacity for thought itself that atrophies. Not that we have ceased to think on some base level. Nor has language ceased to be the medium of thinking. But we no can longer think clearly about thinking. We can no longer even begin to understand what it is to think. When we ask ourselves now, What is thought? the image that comes to mind is a machine. We think of ourselves as "neural networks", beta versions or organic prototypes of the machines we have made which have perfected what we assume to be the essential function of thinking: producing and correlating data. But here is a terrible irony: the machines are not thinking at all. Human thought, if it is even acknowledged as such, is regarded as nothing other than the neuro-based encoding and communication of information according to conventionally agreed-upon rules, which silicon-based LLMs are now doing better than we can.[12] Thought itself disappears. And with the disappearance of thought, we disappear.

"As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as object, but exclusively as standing-reserve … he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve" (Heidegger 1993, p. 332). A prophesy, no doubt, but with a terrible accuracy. It was 1954. Heidegger was thinking of things like atomic weapons and university administrations. But how can we not think of AI, of CRISPR, and of the prospect of digital immortality (Menon 2024)? Modern technology was never merely a development in the tool usage that has characterized our genus since it first appeared in Africa 2 million years ago. Something decisively changed in the late medieval/early modern period. Thinking itself was reduced to a tool. Rationality became instrumental, that is, aimless. The culmination of this turn, Heidegger predicts, will occur when the human itself becomes, a resource, a "standing reserve" (Bestand), like the minerals extracted with great violence from the earth, or the fish farmed in vats in the sea, to be used as desired. Nothing will then exist but the will to power, and the will to power itself will be subject to no natural dynamic and answerable to no higher laws. As long as language remained our domain, the "house of being", Heidegger could be hopeful that a new era was coming when the unconcealment of being that destines us shall become once again unconcealed for us, and we will remember what it means to "dwell" on the earth. Notice how the cautiously optimistic conclusions of Heidegger's late essays, the final page of "The Question Concerning Technology" (Heidegger 1993, pp. 340–1), or the closing passages of "What Calls for Thinking" (Heidegger 1993, pp. 390–1) return to art and poetry as the essence of speech. Language remains for Heidegger the site of truth that is still open for us in the technological era. "The more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious the essence of art becomes. The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving

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[12] See the recent New Yorker interview with Geoffrey Hinton, The Godfather of AI who in complete innocence confuses what he calls "intuition" with mastery of conventions. Without a scrap of malevolence, he describes the New Yorker journalist interviewing him, Joshua Rothman, a sophisticated bio-neurological auto-complete machine. The dogmatic certainty in his view of the identity between human cognition and machine learning, which is extremely typical in this field, has to be heard. The New Yorker Radio Hour, 23 November 2023: 7:00–9:39.

power begin to shine and the more questioning we become. For questioning is the piety of thought" (Heidegger 1993, pp. 341). I return to these over-cited lines to draw attention to the darkness of our time when poiesis itself is outsourced to technology. Does questioning then cease to be possible? Can the saving power still shine in such obscurity? Or has thought itself become impious in the digital age?

The Origin of Thinking: Intensive Signification

What might human thinking be if it is not beta binary coding? What does living language mediate to the speaking animal? For an answer to this question, I want to return to a wave of 20th-century philosophy of language that is almost forgotten today. This line of thought reached a high-water mark in the 50 s and 60 s with the work of the late Heidegger, Gadamer, and the early Ricoeur, but it goes back to early 19th-century German and British Romanticism. The claim is that language is not a tool but the symbolic medium of thought, the matter if you like, of which human thinking is the form (see Heidegger 1993; Gadamer 1960/2004; Ricoeur 1967/1969, 1975/1977a, 1977b). This thesis was formulated in different ways by Hamann, Herder, and Humboldt in opposition to the atomistic empiricism (Lockean and Humean associationism) that eventually prevailed.[13] After this brief mid-century resurgence, the position was abandoned. We became post-structuralists at the end of the century—pushing the coincidence of language and thought to the point of identity and then incoherence—and then altogether forgot about the problem of the relation of thinking to language.

I shall borrow from Charles Taylor's late contribution to this tradition and call the Romantic/hermeneutic position, "expressivism" (Taylor 2016, p. 29). Taylor distinguishes expressivism from "the designative" school but I would prefer to call this other, prevalent position "associationism", to underscore its roots in British empiricism. Expressivism is best understood in terms of its opposite. On the associationist line, language is a complex form of animal signaling that builds up a lexicon by naming recurring patterns of sensory associations. Names become convenient fictions, hypostasizing illusory meaning entities for the sake of more efficient practical communication. Expressivism by contrast considers language as an open system of meaning production—a semantic eco-system—which is always already operative before anything can be named within it. Expressivism was once near enough to the mainstream for one of its chief spokespersons to refer to it as philosophy's "new key" (Langer 1942/1957). Pushing back against a calculative reduction of human culture to technique, expressivism emphasized the primacy of poetry over prose in the evolution of language, the mythic roots of science, the participatory nature of so-called 'primitive' speech, and the ongoing role of metaphor in the creation of meaning in modernity. In addition to Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur, prominent

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[13] "Language is the eternally self-repeating labor of spirit to make articulated sound capable of being an expression of thought". Humboldt, cited in Heidegger (1993, p. 403).

20th-century expressivists include Ernst Cassirer, Owen Barfield, Michael Polanyi, and lesser-known, Susanne K. Langer, Philip Wheelwright, Ray Hart, and Erazim Kohak.[14] In some cases, these authors read each other; in other instances, they arrived at similar conclusions independently of one another.[15]

Expressivism combines Romantic insights into language with anthropological research into the so-called "primitive mind", primatology, and early studies in animal consciousness to re-actualize the 19th-century view that language is reflective, not reactive. Human speech is related to other forms of animal signaling, but unlike animal sounds, it is first esthetic, and only secondarily instrumental.[16] It is collective not individualist, primordially holistic, always already operative as a system of sense, however simple or limited the system, and never built up piecemeal. To use Heidegger's term, language for expressivism is the "referential totality" (Verweisungsganzheit) which constitutes a properly human environment.[17] It is not built up by discursive acts of picking out and naming recurring configurations of sense data in a pre-existent order of nature; rather, language constitutes human reality as such. Just as an animal is coincident with the environment it needs to thrive, producing it as much as being produced by it, so too is the human coincident with language.

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[14] In addition to Barfield's Poetic Diction (1928), see his classic, Saving the Appearances (1957). See also Cassirer's Essay on Man (1944), Wheelwright's Metaphor and Reality (1962), Ricoeur's Rule of Metaphor (1975/1977a, 1977b), Polanyi's Meaning (1975). Less known but equally worth scholarly scrutiny are Hart's Unfinished Man and the Imagination (1968) and Kohák's, The Embers and the Stars (1987), especially pp. 47–66, "The Gift of the Word".

[15] Langer commented that passages of Barfield's Poetic Diction (1928) could have been written by Cassirer although Barfield knew nothing of the latter's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, the first volume of which had been published five years earlier. Langer, Feeling and Form (1953, p. 239); Barfield, "Afterword," Poetic Diction (1973, pp. 214–215). Part of the reason for the synchronicity is the roots of English expressivism in the German-influenced Coleridge. On Coleridge's philosophy of imagination, see his 1817 Biographia Literaria. For commentary see Barfield (1971) and Hedley (2009). Coleridge's dependence on Schelling is well known. For Schelling's late approach to mythic consciousness, which anticipates much of what is said by 20th-century expressivists, see his Historical Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology.

[16] Pan (2004, p. 14): "For Herder the development of words is shaped by feelings and passions, and the origin of language is an aesthetic process that replaces the animal's instinctual process of relating to the world". Cf. Langer, New Key, p. 43: "The fact that the human brain is constantly carrying on a process of symbolic transformation of the experiential data that come to it causes it to be a veritable fountain of more or less spontaneous ideas. As all registered experience tends to terminate in action, it is only natural that a typically human function should require a typically human form of overt activity; and that is just what we find in the sheer expression of ideas. This is the activity of which beasts appear to have no need. And it accounts for just those traits in man which he does not hold in common with the other animals—ritual, art, laughter, weeping, speech, superstition, and scientific genius. Only a part—howbeit a very important part—of our behavior is practical. Only some of our expressions are signs, indicative or mnemonic, and belong to the heightened animal wisdom called common sense; and only a small and relatively unimportant part are immediate signs of feeling. The remainder serves simply to express ideas that the organism yearns to express, i.e., to act upon, without practical purpose, without any view to satisfying other needs than the need of completing in overt action the brain's symbolic process. How else shall we account for man's love of talk?".

[17] Heidegger (1927/1962, p. 160): "We have interpreted worldhood as that referential totality which constitutes significance".

As soon as the human is there, so is language, and vice versa. Language worlds the human environment: it is not a human overlay on a pre-existing order of things: it is the primordial order of things, and outside of it, there is no order, at least none that a human being could understand.

Expressivism insists on the ideality of nature—which is first and foremost an order constituted by our thinking and speaking about it. But this is no subjectivism. With the objective idealists of early Romanticism (notably Schelling), expressivism also insists on the non-subjective origins of ideality. We do not so much construct meaning as participate in it through speech. While expressivism renders human intelligence the antecedent of the world, the intelligible relations revealed in language, which therefore only exist for language, just as much determine intelligence as are determined by it. The human/world relationship is reciprocally determinative. Matter precedes mind and gives rise to it, but matter is changed in the process. What we mean by reality is now inseparable from mind even if it pre-existed mind in some unimaginable sense.[18] Phenomenologically, the point is that meaning happens to us; we don't create it. It is something that befalls us before it becomes something we deliberately participate in through expressive activities (ritual, myth, art, science). We first find the world meaningful and only then give expression to what we have found. We express new meaning, to be sure, and add to reality as we find it, but we do not experience ourselves as "making" meaning (hence the inaccuracy of that contemporary phenomenological trope: "sense-making activities"). Poets have always known this. "Men do not invent those mysterious relations between separate external objects, and between objects and feelings or ideas, which it is the function of poetry to reveal. These relations exist independently, not indeed of Thought, but of any individual thinker" (Barfield 1928, p. 86; Cf. Kohak 1987, pp. 47–66).

The original forms of expression are not theoretical statements detached from the context of speaking and indifferent to the experience of the speaker; they are what Husserl calls "essentially occasional" (Husserl 1900/1970), vol. 1, § 26–27). We express our experience of the world lighting up meaningfully for us because we wish to share the experience with others—therein lies the quintessentially human linguistic act. Not that thought and speech begin private, quite the reverse. But we want to add our bit to the collective experience. We want to talk to one another about the world as we find it. Speech is intensively significative before it becomes extensively significative; it is concrete, personal, and poetic first, and only later, through a process of translation, abstract, universal, and scientific.

The distinction between intensive and extensive signification is not mine but has a history in literary criticism and studies of rhetoric (see Wheelwright 1962). It is a distinction between a signifying act that abstracts to generality and catches as many singulars as possible under a universal term, thereby transforming them into particulars or instances of a class—and so, extensive—and an act that narrows the range of signification to a concrete individual situation. The extensive signification aims

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[18] The point is Schellingian but it is also central to the early Heidegger (see 1927/1962, pp. 269–70) and to Cassirer. Without any relation to continental philosophy, Barfield makes the strongest argument in favor of it (1957).

at comprehension and universality, in a word, knowledge; the intensive signification does not aim at breadth but depth. But there is more to the distinction than the two logical modalities of universal and concrete. Extensive and intensive signification are distinct in terms of the *intentio* of the speaker. The extensive speaker defines an object or an objective state of affairs; the intensive signifier expresses himself and his understanding of his concrete situation.

These two different kinds of intention are grounded in fundamentally different experiences of meaning. Extensive signification demarcates the object over and against the subject. It is rational, and categorial, and creates a certain Apollonian composure in the consciousness of the speaker. She becomes a *theorein* in the act, a detached observer of the object. Intensive signification is Dionysian. The speaker is not safely demarcated over and against a categorial object in the speech act but quite literally loses herself in the expression. She cannot separate herself from the expression, for what she expresses is herself. To use a Barfieldian term, she participates in the meaning expressed. A curious dispossession occurs in the intensively signified expression. The locus of sense is not "I mean" but "it means". One understands oneself as determined by what is meant not the other way around. The speaker no longer knows exactly what she means because the meant exceeds her meaning and yet it is not other than what she intends. The speaker is, to use a Schelling phrase, in an ecstasy of reason (Schelling, Erlanger Vorträge (1821) in Sämtliche Werke 9, p. 230). The speaker becomes a poet, or rather, experiences the world as the poet experiences it, for an immeasurable moment, not so much an instant of clock time as an ingression of eternity into time and an interruption of average everydayness, which inexorably returns and closes what was briefly opened up.[19]

Imagine a conversation a man has with his best friend about troubles with his marriage. His friend asks him why, given all the difficulties at home, he does not leave his wife. The man responds heatedly, "But I love her!" The statement, "I love her" conjoins three linguistic signs, a personal pronoun, a verb, and an accusative object. There is nothing in the statement which precludes its translation into extensive communication. It would then be taken as a piece of information and could be datafied, reduced to 0 s and 1 s. X says he loves Y at T1. But notice what is lost in translation! The situation of the speaker, which is not objectively defined but tacitly present as the referential totality of the intention, not to mention the speaker himself, who declares himself in the speech act.[20] The speaker is not defining an objective situation but expressing the truth of his life at that moment. Informationally, he says something that his best friend presumably already knows—hence the "but". However, the act of expressing is not redundant because the point is not communication of information. The speaker declares himself, repeats a declaration already made and recommits himself to himself. He participates in what he says: he cannot separate himself from the said because what he says is himself.

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[19] Readers of the early Heidegger will recognize the logic of formal indication (see Kisiel 1993, pp. 146–170).

[20] See Robert Sokolowski's distinction between informative and declarative language (2008, pp. 10–14).

Meaning must be de-contextualized, and rendered extensive before it can be datafied. The extensive signification is univocal or at least restricted in meaning, and only thus is it generalizable, as an essence common to many instances or a pattern of serial iteration (see Cassirer 1925/1946, pp. 89–93). Intensive signification by contrast is unruly, productively vague, and polysemous. Closely related to the metaphoric language of poetry, and even more to the imagery of dreams, it is pictorial—not necessarily a picture but an image of a still undefined whole. It sees the whole in the part and takes the part as a symbol of the whole (pars pro toto). This renders the intention inherently ambiguous: the thing thought is profiled by an aura of vague, even contradictory meanings which overdetermine it and exceed it. If it refers to anything intensive signification refers to the singular, unsurveyable situation of the speaking, the referential totality of the speaker's world as it is for him at the time of his speaking.

Ray Hart makes the excellent point that extension and intension are inversely related: the more extensive the meaning of a symbol, the less intension it has, and vice versa.[21] Extension abstracts from presence and increases our knowledge; intension presences, immersing the speaker in an incomprehensible excess of intelligibility. We generalize at the expense of concreteness, but we intensively signify at the expense of coherence. Progress in knowledge then means that language which begins concrete, vivid, personal and responsive to an undeniable unveiling of being for us must become generic, abstract, and indifferent to origin or further application (Cassirer 1925/ 1946, p. 90, 178).[22] Generalization expands our conceptual capacities; it allows us to think an indeterminate range of particulars under a single concept; at the same time, it diminishes the intensity of our experience of what Kohak calls "meaningful being—being animated by meaning, meaning incarnate as being" (Kohak 1987, p. 33).

Thought Can Be Eclipsed but not Eradicated

Machines are capable of neither intensive nor extensive signification because they are, so far, non-intentional. The products of extensive signification can be uploaded, datafied, and reduced to patterns of 0 s and 1 s. Intensive signification, as the act proper to the animals that we ourselves are, is not something we can possess, store up, or translate directly into data. It is inseparable from the speaker and meaningless without

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[21] See Hart 1968/ 2001, p. 63: "Any interpretable datum will have extension beyond its immediate presence and intension beyond the power of the mind to know … The more we have of a datum's immediate presence (its internal unity), the less we have of its character (whatness) in relation to the field in which it is presented (its external range)".

[22] There is no space here to discuss the role of intensive signification in mythology and poetry save to say that for the expressive school, just as original speech is intensive before it is extensive, human language is mytho-poetic before it becomes scientific. Metaphor is a residue of mythic consciousness in an era no longer dominated by mythos. The point is common to Barfield, Cassirer, Wheelwright, and Langer.

context. Just as the essence of intensive signification is concealed by extension, so is the living sense of signification itself eclipsed when language is datafied. Thinking itself disappears. It is one continuous eclipse. It did not start yesterday. But it is rapidly nearing its nadir. To the question, what changes when the machine learns all our well-rehearsed patterns of signification and takes over the work of worlding?[23] The sad answer is, for most people, not much. The mass of human beings are consumers of culture, not producers of it. They will flock to a new movie that contains all the elements of the movie they saw, with a few surface alterations, and enjoy it without a second thought. AI 'knows' what kinds of pop songs the greatest number of listeners like with an accuracy that is beyond human calculative capacities, and so can reproduce exactly that, with enough variation to deceive the listener into feeling that they are hearing something new. One might even make the cynical case that the popular consumer of culture is elevated to the status of a producer by having his keyboard clicks incorporated into the algorithms of production. We could conclude, then, that when AI worlds the world for us, we will simply see more of what has been going on since the beginning of mass media. AI is merely following through on trends that have been firmly in place for a century, if not for much longer. Other existing trends will continue and accelerate: the steady decline in literacy coincident with mass culture, the deterioration of political intelligence, and the increasing manipulability of populations.

My concern in the paper has not been these disturbing political consequences of algocracy but the less obvious intellectual consequences of datafication. A human mind self-judged to be a beta neural network that has been bested by its computer is more deeply incapable of understanding itself than at any point in human history.

Still, language remains the medium of human thought, even if the language is AI-generated. We can expect resistance. "Man, the user of language, is alive, and according as he lives more intensely his thoughts and utterances require language that can express their living form" (Wheelwright 1962, p. 17). The possibility of a re-awakening of spirit at some distant point in the future always remains, will always remain so long as we remain the speaking animal. Two centuries ago, Humboldt wrote, "Whenever the feeling truly awakens in the soul that language is not merely a medium of exchange for the sake of mutual understanding, but a true world, which spirit must posit between itself and objects by the inner labor of its own force, then it is on the true way to finding more and more in language and to investing more and more in it" (Humboldt, cited in Heidegger (1993; p. 404). We can re-write this sentence for the dawn of the digital age: Whenever the feeling truly awakens in the soul that language is not merely data but a true spirit-posited world, then we are on the way to (re)discovering the human essence.

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[23] See "Yuval Noah Harari argues that AI has hacked the operating system of human civilization". The Economist, 28 April 2023.

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Names Used Twice Over

Jonardon Ganeri

Abstract   Līlā and "Second Līlā" figure in one of the famous stories in the Yogavāsiṣṭha. What is the reason for this double use of the name "Līlā"? This essay applies insights from the heteronymic philosophy of self of Fernando Pessoa to provide an answer.

Keywords Heteronymy · Dream · Fernando Pessoa

The Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa's relationship with his heteronyms is complicated. Heteronyms are "virtual subjects" (Ganeri 2021)—imagined minds, simulated selves, subjective artefacts, made-up "individuated points of view" (Zenith 2021, p. xxix); and no less real for that. They exist as protagonists in imaginary stories of his own creation, and so Pessoa imagines himself as them, or imagines being them. Alberto Caeiro is Pessoa, and yet is not Pessoa:

> But since I am me, I merely take a little pleasure in the little that it is to imagine myself as that someone else. Yes, soon he-I, under a tree or bower, will eat twice what I can eat, drink twice what I dare drink, and laugh twice what I can conceive of laughing. Soon he, now I. Yes, for a moment I was someone else: in someone else I saw and lived this human and humble joy of existing as an animal in shirtsleeves (Pessoa 2002, p. 374).

In "Notes for the Memory of My Master Caeiro," Pessoa has Caeiro suggest that things seen in dreams have much the same status as things seen in pictures:

> Fernando Pessoa turned to Caeiro. 'Tell me this,' he said, pointing his cigarette: 'How do you regard dreams? Are they real or not?' 'I regard dreams as I regard shadows,' answered Caeiro unexpectedly with his usual divine quickness. 'A shadow is real, but it's less real than a stone. A dream is real—otherwise it wouldn't be a dream—but it's less real than a thing.' … 'And what do you call a stone that you see in a dream?' Asked Fernando, smiling. 'I call it a dream,' answered my master Caeiro. 'I call it a dream of a stone.' […] 'Why do you say "of a stone?" Why do you employ the word 'stone'? 'For the same reason that you, when you see my picture, say 'That's Caeiro' and don't mean that it's me in the flesh.' We all

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broke out laughing. 'I see and I give up,' said Fernando, laughing with the rest of us (Pessoa 2001, pp. 43–6).

Fernando asks an excellent question here, and Caeiro gives an equally excellent reply. For we do use the name of the picture's subject matter in order to refer to the depicted object: we say, pointing to a portrait hanging on the wall, "That is Devadatta."

This use of a name twice over seems to be a characteristic hallmark of heteronymy. And there is a famous story in the Yogavāsiṣṭhaha, the story of the two Līlās, where the same ideas are in play. Here is the story in Wendy Doniger's summary (1984):

> "Queen Līlā was the wife of King Padma. When he died, Līlā prayed to the goddess Sarasvatī, who explained to her that in a former birth Padma and Līlā had been a sage named Vasiṣṭha and his wife Arundhatī; she also told Līlā that the king had now been reborn as King Vidūratha. Since Līlā had not been reborn, the king had taken a new wife, whose name just happened to be Līlā. Sarasvatī used her magic powers to transport herself and Queen Līlā through the air to the palace where King Vidūratha lived; invisible, they saw him in his court. When a great battle took place, they went to the battlefield; there Līlā caught sight of the second Līlā, who had the very same form as hers, like a reflection in a mirror. Puzzled at this, the first Līlā asked Sarasvatī how there could be another woman just like her. The Goddess replied with a long lecture on the projection of mental images from inside to outside, as in dreams. These words were overheard by the second Līlā, who spoke to Sarasvatī and said, "In my dreams I have often spoken with a goddess of wisdom, and she looked exactly as you look to me right now." [...] The first Līlā said [to Vidūratha], "I am Līlā, your queen from a former life. This second Līlā is your queen by my art [helayā mayā], produced for you by me; she is just a reflection (MU ff 3.15.19; Doniger 101-2).

Sarasvatī, as Daniel Galouye might have put it, has Līlā "ā cut in" to the virtual reality in which Vidūratha lives as the heteronym of Padma. Had she been visible it would have appeared as if "a god dropped down and started talking to you" (Galouye 1999, p. 59). What does she see? That she is already there, that her heteronym is present and indeed, even has her name. She declares herself to have made this "second Līlā," who is, she says, her own reflection. In one of those metaphysical backflips for which the Yogavāsiṣṭha is so well loved, this second Līlā says that she has seen a second Sarasvatī in her dreams, thereby insinuating that her—second Līlā's—claim on reality is no less shaky than that of Līlā the first. If one were to try to construct a Pessoan version of this story it would be one in which the author of "Notes for My Memory of Master Caeiro" drops himself in on a get-together of the heteronyms in order to witness the second Fernando Pessoa holding forth there.

J. J. Valberg too uses a name twice over in setting up his example of the positional conception of self. In his splendid book Dream, Death, and the Self, Valberg asks us to consider the following case:

> Suppose I have a dream in which there are two individuals (human beings), X and JV. Yet in the dream I am not JV but X (X is me). This seems possible, but what does it mean? Not that, in the dream, JV was X. In the dream, JV and X are distinct individuals. JV is in the dream, but in the dream JV is not me. In the dream I am a human being other than the human being that I am [...] In the first-person case, given that JV and X are distinct individuals in the dream, there still exists the possibility that in the dream I am X." (Valberg 2007, p. 62)

We are to suppose I have a dream in which I and a friend are present. What is peculiar about this dream, however, is that in the dream I am my friend, and what I dream is, for instance, sitting at a table opposite a person, JG, who is me. Consider the sentence, "Valberg said, 'In my dream I was not JV.'" The name "Valberg" has been used twice in this sentence, first to refer to the dreaming subject, and second to refer to an object within the dream. The point of the example is that this object is not identical to the subject-within-the-dream.

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Our problem now, however, is to understand how the same name is used twice. A virtual realist such as David Chalmers (Chalmers 2022) will make sense of the double use in the following way. They will say that what are seen, within a simulation, are virtual objects. There is a virtual object, JV, and there is an object outside the simulation, Valberg, and these are different objects, because one is made of carbon molecules and the other of digital information. They are, however, closely related insofar as one is a simulacrum of the other, and that is how we use the same name twice. The semantic rule is something like, "A name can also be used to refer to a simulacrum of its referent." The virtual realist Lambert Wiesing describes virtual objects as "artificial presences," and says, "A virtual reality is only given if the image no longer serves as a medium for referring to something absent, but rather if the image becomes a medium by which a particular kind of object is produced and presented—an object, that is, that is exclusively visible and yet, like a ghost, acts as if it had a substance and the properties of a substance" (Wiesing 2010, p. 100). The same is true, according to Bence Nanay, of pictures. In a picture there is an "encoded object," a virtual horse if the picture's subject matter is a horse (Nanay 2018).

Just why do we use names twice over, when we say, pointing at a painting, "This is Devadatta" instead of saying, "This is a painting of Devadatta"? We do the same of theatre too, saying "Here is Śakuntalā" even as an actor playing Śakuntalā enters from the wings. In neither case is it plausible to say that we are suffering under an illusion, that we misperceive the painting as its subject matter, or the actor as the character. We know full well that it is a painting, and we are as happy to comment on the painting's style, brushwork, provenance, and so on, as on the quality of the actor's performance. It has become customary to say, instead, that we see Devadatta in the painting, and seeing-in requires that we attend both to what is depicted and to the depicting material itself (Wollheim 1980, p. 142). The virtual realist says that we use the same name twice over because the virtual object, whether in an immersive simulation or in a two-dimensional picture, is a stand-in or simulacrum of an actual object.

This is, I believe, exactly the view Vasiṣṭha wants Rāma to reject. There is just one Līlā, inside and outside the simulation, where here the simulation is a Sarasvatī-generated glimpse of the afterlife. "Līlā" and "second Līlā" are two uses of the same name to refer to the same thing, Līlā. This is partly to agree with Valberg, when he

writes that "the human being I am was part of the world internal to my dream of the other night, and that world is discrete from the world to which this human being (I touch him again) belongs. Still, it is correct to say that I, that very human being (the one I touched), was in my dream the other night—just as it is correct to say that my daughter was in that dream" (Valberg 2007, p. 62). Valberg, however, muddies the waters by importing talk of different "worlds," and for that reason his view is confused. A world can only be, if anything, a proprietary domain of objects. Such is how things stand according to a layered conception of reality: fundamental physics has elementary particles; mechanics has ordinary middle-sized objects; biology has plants and animals; the social sciences have social groups and communities; and so on. Hardly a matter of "superficial puzzlement," it is an outright impossibility that the very same object could show up in two discrete worlds. In a similar vein, the Yogavāsiṣṭha is typically depicted as a work "teaching a variety of esoteric knowledge meant to liberate an aspirant from the vagaries of the phenomenal world" (Nair 2020, p. 1). Pessoa is clearer, and is clearly on Vasiṣṭha's side: "This new reality—that of a strange forest—makes its appearance without effacing the reality of my warm alcove […] And that tremulous, transparent landscape clearly belongs to them both" (Pessoa 2002, p. 417). The presence of objects in both of two fields of experience is what Pessoa calls "intersectionism" (see Ganeri 2021, pp. 33–40).

A tempting alternative is to associate each of the two uses of a name with a distinct route to its single referent. When Gottlob Frege introduced the concept of a "mode of presentation" into the philosophy of language, his aim was to explain how it could be that the identity between Hesperus and Phosphorus, the morning star and the evening star, both of which are none other than the planet Venus, can be informative (Frege 1980). If both names refer to the same object, why isn't it true a priori that one is identical to the other? It isn't true a priori, he pointed out, because the same object is given twice over, under two different modes of presentation. Yet Frege will only help us so far in solving the mystery of the two Līlās. For recall that other famous story in the Yogavāsiṣṭha, the story of Lavaṇa. Lavaṇa was certainly surprised to discover the village, the very same village he had got to know so well while under the magician's spell. But his surprise wasn't the result of discovering that the village he was now seeing and the village he got to know so well were, after all, one and the same. He knew that from the first moment he came across it; indeed, he went in search of it. He didn't think that here is a village and there was a village, and only then discover that they were one and the same village. That wasn't the source of his surprise. What surprised him was that the village should be there at all: how is it possible that my village, the village in which I lived for so many years, should be here? It's the same for Līlā. When Sarasvatī gives her a peek into the afterlife, she is certainly surprised to find Līlā there, but her sense of surprise isn't due to the discovery that this Līlā is her after all. Her surprise is of the form: what am I doing here? Like Lavaṇa, she is presented as extremely vexed that the same things which appeared in her glimpse of the after-life are also in the here-and-now, and marvels at Sarasvatī's artistic power (māyā), which is such that "the same high hills, the same spacious forests of palm and hintāla trees are both on the outside as well as inside myself" (MU 3.18.4). She tries to rationalize it to herself by likening her new

and alarming situation to the workings of a mirror, the very same objects which are outside being reflected in it. And that does seem right: if I see the sun reflected in a window pain, I might sometimes be mistaken about, for example, its location, but it is the sun I am seeing. Līlā nevertheless resolves to ask Sarasvatī which is truly real (pāramārthika) and which erroneous (bhrānti) (MU 3.18.5–6).

There is no informational content in the sentence "Līlā is Līlā." The virtual realist must say, to the contrary, that there is, because the two uses have distinct denotata. That seems to misdiagnose the reason the statement is surprising. Nor is the surprise Lavaṇa and Līlā experience akin to the one John Perry experienced when he tracked a trail of sugar on a supermarket floor, pushing his shopping trolley up and down the aisles in a hunt for the shopper with a torn bag of sugar, only for him finally to realize that he was the shopper he was trying to chase down (1979, p. 3). Certainly, it can be startling to discover that a person presented under some description is, after all, oneself, but that wasn't what startled Lavaṇa or Līlā, or indeed the other protagonists of the stories in the Yogavāsiṣṭha. Her question wasn't "Are these the same trees?" and "Is this me?" Her question was, "How can these trees be here?" and "How can I be here?" They are already, as it is sometimes said, immune to any error due to misidentification.

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What is it, then, that causes Līlā to be surprised? It is precisely the discovery that there is only one world, not two. Lavaṇa had thought, on emerging from the magician's spell, that he had been taken to a world of illusion, a world whose contents don't really exist. The lesson he is taught is that this was never the case. He wasn't taken to another world, but to the same world differently made present. He hadn't known that how the world is made present matters just as much as what is made present. He had naively taken it for granted that there is just one correct way to have the world in view. What surprises him is the discovery that this is not the case, that there is more than one correct way to have the world in view. Lavaṇa led two lives, one under the magician's spell and another free of it—indeed, three, if one agrees that there is a discontinuity between his life before and his life afterwards—, and the experiential quality of each of those lives, as manifested, for example in the sense of time passing, is linked with their different ways of apprehending the world. Matters are exactly the same, and perhaps more explicitly so, with Pessoa. Pessoa-as-Caeiro leads one sort of life, while Pessoa-as-Campos leads another. It isn't surprising or informative that there is one Pessoa here; what really is surprising is the discovery that it is possible to live a plurality of lives. In a way, this is the quintessence of Pessoa's philosophy, that it makes explicit something easily overlooked in what it is to lead a life.

There is only one Līlā. Recouching the matter in terms of imagination rather than celestial intervention, we might say that Līla [first Līlā] "imagined" herself [second Līlā] at the side of her husband in the after-life. The oddness of the story comes from something else she imagines. She imagines seeing herself beside of her husband

in the after-life. That is to say, she [Līlā, the imagining subject] imagines herself [Līlā, the immersed subject] seeing herself [Līlā, an object in the imagined scene] beside her husband in the afterlife. When Līlā imagines seeing herself it is as if she is present twice over, and that is the reason for all the talk of first and second Līlā. Līlā thinks, "In Sarasvatī's simulation, I am Līlā seeing myself, Līlā, standing beside my husband." Here we have the same name used twice without there being two Līlās. It has been used a first time to refer to Līlā imagined "from the inside," the one at the centre of a perspective on the scene, a scene presented Līlāesquely. And it has been used a second time to refer to Līlā imagined "from the outside," standing beside Vidūratha. Līlā's surprise, then, is a surprise at encountering herself located somewhere other than at the perspectival centre.

The Līlā story is in fact a good illustration of what François Recanati has called "explicit de se imagining" (Recanati 2007, p. 199). He writes that "we may imagine something about ourselves by adopting an external point of view—the point of view of an outside observer," and he refers to an example provided by Zeno Vendler. Vendler writes,

> We are looking down upon the ocean from a cliff. The water is rough and cold, yet there are some swimmers riding the waves. 'Just imagine swimming in that water,' says my friend, and I know what to do. 'Brr !' I say as I imagine the cold, the salty taste, the tug of the current, and so forth. Had he said 'Just imagine yourself swimming in that water,' I could comply in another way too: by picturing myself being tossed about, a scrawny body bobbing up and down in the foamy waste. In this case, I do not have to leave the cliff in the imagination: I may see myself, if I so choose, from the very same perspective. Not so in the previous case: if I indeed imagine being in the water, then I may see the cliff above me, but not myself from it" (Vendler 1979, p. 161).

Recanati notes that this is a case in which the subject imagines seeing himself swim in the water, and comments,

> The subject plays two roles: he is not only the experiencer, the person from whose point of view the scene is seen, but he is also an object in the scene. This duality enables the subject to look at himself (herself) from an external, third person point of view." (Recanati 2007, p. 196)

In an exactly analogous manner, Līlā imagines seeing herself standing beside Vidūratha. She too plays a double role, both as the immersed subject, located at the centre of the point of view from which the scene is seen ("first Līlā"), and as an object in that scene ("second Līlā"). Recanati observes that there is no question of the subject's rightly or wrongly identifying himself or herself as the person his or her imagination is about, because "what one's imagination is about is a matter of intentional stipulation and does not have to be identified" (Recanati 2007, p. 199). Rather, what makes it a case of explicit de se is that two conditions are satisfied: first, that "the subject must think of the object of his/her imagination as himself/herself"; and second, that "the subject must represent himself/herself from an objective point of view, that is, from outside." (Recanati 2007, p. 199). The fact that our case satisfies these two conditions explains why it is both uninformative and yet surprising. It is uninformative because it is imagining de se, but surprising because second Līlā is

represented (to herself) from outside. Surely the possibility of this sort of double role is the reason the double in literature is such a powerful and popular trope.

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If it is possible to imagine seeing the world in different ways, then it seems to follow that one's way of seeing the world is a continent feature of oneself. This realization might lead one to wonder if it would be possible to do away with every way of seeing the world at all. Vasiṣṭha's not unreasonable suggestion is that one then hits bedrock of consciousness which underwrites any way of seeing. He calls it field-consciousness (cid-ākāśa). The very lengthy sixth book of the Yogavāsiṣṭha, the nirvāṇa prakaraṇa, is an extended eulogy to this state of mind.

Pessoa seems again to side with Vasiṣṭha. He talks of being a "medium" and a "meeting place" for the heteronyms:

> Today I have no personality: I've divided all my humaneness among the various authors whom I've served as literary executor. Today I'm the meeting-place of a small humanity that belongs only to me […] I subsist as a kind of medium of myself, but I'm less real than the others, less substantial, less personal, and easily influenced by them all (Pessoa 2001, p. 262).

He says,

> "I created a nonexistent coterie, placing it all in a framework of reality. I ascertained the influences at work and the friendships between them, I listened in myself to their discussions and divergent points of view, and in all of this it seems that I, who created them all, was the one who least there." (Pessoa 2001, p. 257).

To think of oneself as a "meeting-place" with no personality of its own is to think that there is a sort of self-awareness more primitive than that of having an individuated point of view in Ganeri (2021), I call this "forumnal" self-awareness). It is possible that what Pessoa has in mind is something like the "attenuated 'I'" mentioned by Bernard Williams, "an 'I' without body, past, or character" (Williams 1973, pp. 41–2); in other words, a purely Cartesian centre of consciousness. Or perhaps Pessoa means the "transcendental self" which Vendler hypothesizes when he asks, "What are these 'I's that we can shed and don at will as so many costumes, and what is this 'I' that performs the change?" (Vendler 1984, p. 26), answering that "here the I does not pick out an object, a thing, in the field of consciousness; it marks the ultimate subject, the transcendental self" (Vendler 1984, p. 106).

I can't conclusively rule out such possibilities, but we may prefer a less inflationary interpretation of Pessoa's remarks about meeting places and mediums. That is, we may take them to refer to Pessoa the human being rather than to an invariant "I." It is worth noting that when the theatrical metaphor crops up in the Yogavāsiṣṭha it is sometimes deployed in exactly this, deflationary way. We are told, for example, that the mind is an actor on the stage which is its body (MU 3.110.19), and that mind is the actor whose stage is the world (jagat), watched by the troop (MU 5.59.29).

When Pessoa writes that he is a fugitive, I suggest we read this as meaning that he is always on the run from one identity to another, not that he is running away from any identity at all:

> I'm a fugitive.
> I was shut up in myself
> As soon as I was born.
> But I managed to flee.
> If people get tired
> Of being in the same place,
> Why shouldn't they tire
> Of having the same self?
> My soul seeks me out,
> But I keep on the run
> And sincerely hope
> I'll never be found.
> Oneness is a prison.
> To be myself is to not be.
> I'll live as a fugitive
> But live really and truly (2006, p. 315).

In a poem he calls his Autopsychography Pessoa writes,

> The poet is a faker
> Who's so good at his act
> He even fakes the pain
> Of pain he feels in fact. (1998, p. 247).

There is one pain, a pain both "felt in fact" and "faked." Just as there is one village, a village Lavaṇa both sees "in fact" and under the magician's spell, and there is one forested hillside, which Līlā sees both "in fact" and when peeking into the afterlife, and indeed there is one Līlā, embodied "in fact" and in imagination. If there is fakery here it lies with the false idea that there is only one correct way of feeling the pain. What truly astonishes us is to discover that the pain one imagines feeling is just as real as the pain one feels "in fact."

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Evidentiality and Testimonial Knowledge

Smita Sirker

Abstract A longstanding philosophical concern has been to question whether a piece of information can be treated as knowledge. This concern generated the traditional epistemological reflections on: 'what is knowledge' or 'what can be qualified as knowledge'? Knowledge is often considered as a corpus of 'beliefs' that an individual has about the world. The concern for mainstream epistemology was the problem of identifying the criterion for justified belief and dealing with the sceptical challenge of the possibility of knowledge. The epistemic engagement, and negotiation with the world, involving other epistemic agents as well, constitute various episodic slices present within the larger enterprise of relating the world and the mind (the subject). We pursue acquiring and sharing information about the world. Thus, our interaction with the world provides a continuous flow of information between ourselves and the world (which includes other epistemic agents as well). Such information, with proper evidential support and justification, often becomes knowledge, which then gradually forms our corpus of beliefs. This article explores the role of evidentiality in testimonies, and as 'markers of evidence' that may be expressed in a statement by the speaker may often suggest conditions of acceptance by the hearer. I also address the issue of epistemic decision-making in social contexts in the form of two questions: (i) how do epistemic agents form beliefs about something (in the world) given evidential inputs from other people; and (ii) how do epistemic agents respond and alter their doxastic attitude in light of testimony (evidence from others)?

Keywords Belief · Social epistemology · Testimony · Testimonial knowledge · Evidentiality · Grammatical marker · Evidential marker

Human beings have always displayed a proclivity to *know*, and to acquire information about varied things and facts about the world. A longstanding philosophical concern has been to question whether a piece of information can be treated as knowledge.

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This concern generated the traditional epistemological reflections on: 'what is knowledge' or 'what can be qualified as knowledge'? This issue is often expressed under three fundamental queries—what is it to 'know' (i.e. what is knowledge); what can we know; and how do we know what we know. To put it simply, knowledge may be considered as a corpus of 'beliefs' that an individual has about the world. However, not all beliefs that an individual possesses will qualify as 'knowledge'. The concern for mainstream epistemology was the problem of identifying the criterion for justified belief and dealing with the sceptical challenge of the possibility of knowledge. Thus, the connection between the subject or the epistemic agent, on one side, and the world at the other, is operative at multiple levels through diverse sources. The epistemic engagement and negotiation with the world, involving other epistemic agents as well, constitute various episodic slices present within the larger enterprise of relating the world and the mind (the subject). Another crucial point of contact with the world is language, the medium or the interface, that is instrumental for the ways in which we express and share knowledge about the world through social exchanges between individuals. As epistemic beings, we pursue acquiring and sharing information about the world. Thus, our interaction with the world provides a continuous flow of information between ourselves and the world (which includes other epistemic agents as well). Such information, with proper evidential support and justification, often becomes knowledge, which then gradually forms our corpus of beliefs. However, when one talks about this corpus of beliefs, one is not just referring to those belief formations which are based solely on the reception of some stimulus from the external world. The corpus can be more abstract and global, where knowledge creates a further edifice of beliefs about the world, life, people, values, etc. In other words, there can be both first-order as well as second-order beliefs. Beliefs that are generated from our direct interaction with the external world constitute our first-order beliefs. We may also have beliefs that are generated based, for example, on our reflections on the first-order beliefs about values, ideas, etc.

Consequently, we entertain a wide repertoire of beliefs. No matter how we identify and qualify our belief-set, we possess an assorted bag of beliefs—true beliefs, false beliefs, beliefs with or without justification; rational and irrational beliefs, etc. We lack any absolute control over choosing all our beliefs and we do not have any mechanism to sieve all our beliefs such that we allow only justified beliefs into our cognitive system, filtering out the rest. The formation of beliefs involves a conscious as well as a sub-conscious process. Indeed, it would seem that many people do not mind entertaining unjustified or irrational beliefs because these beliefs may work just fine in their lives. Rather than being inconvenient, these beliefs may often prove expedient to some. Thus, many of our beliefs fail to pass the traditional *justified true belief* criterion of knowledge, and thereby, fail to constitute the ideal 'knowledge' repertoire of the individual.

Thus, analytical epistemology adopted a normative approach to evaluate whether the beliefs that we acquire can be justified enough to become knowledge. We may question whether the proposed normative criterion of justification and truth proves robust enough to handle all real-life knowledge situations. As finite epistemic and rational beings, we are not without imperfections. And perhaps it would be too naïve

to imagine ourselves as perfectly rational, epistemic beings who can effectively lead a life fully grounded and guided by such rational normative criteria. However, it is clear that this traditional epistemic approach, based on such normative criteria, endorses a uniquely *individualistic* orientation—since knowledge commences with one's own thinking, and awareness of oneself as the subject or the knower. In other words, knowledge, at a certain level, requires an individual effort rather than a collective one, as the subject is at least cognitively aware and involved in the process of knowledge acquisition. However, this centrality accorded to the individual epistemic subject entails a disjunction from one's existence as a social being, and therefore, neglects the social dimension of knowledge transmission. The fact that epistemic pursuits are individualistic does not eliminate the presence of social exchange as a means of knowledge transmission. Individual pursuits of knowledge do not place the subject outside the purview of social epistemic exchange. Conversely, neither does acquisition through social exchanges make the pursuit of knowledge independent of the individual. The role of the 'individual' and the 'social dimension' of knowledge transmission and acquisition are intertwined, and neither pole is reducible to the other. Both the individual and her social interactions with others are necessary components for cognising the world.

Once we accept the irreducibility of the social dimension of knowledge, the individual is not lost, as knowledge acquisition occurs in and through the conscious intellectual effort of an epistemic subject. Yet, the possibility of social transmission of knowledge brings to the fore the role of testimony (which is inherently or constitutively social), and shows how such testimonial sharing translates to knowledge for an individual. However, testimonial knowledge has received much less attention in the literature of traditional epistemological theories. As Alvin Goldman in 'Social Epistemology: Theory and Applications' observes:

> There are scattered exceptions. A handful of historical epistemologists gave brief space to the question of knowing, or believing justifiably, based on testimony of others. Testimony-based knowledge would be one step into a more social epistemology. (Goldman 2009, p.1)

Our recognition of social interaction operative in the transmission of knowledge underscores the role of 'testimony' as a crucial source of knowledge. In fact, as I will argue, the presence of testimony is pervasive, and our reliance on it is inherent in our everyday experience. Through this perspectival change from the *individual* to the *social*, knowledge generation and transmission becomes essentially collective. Jennifer Lackey writes:

> Our dependence on testimony is as deep as it is ubiquitous. We rely on the reports of others for our beliefs about the food we eat, the medicine we ingest, the products we buy, the geography of the world, discoveries in science, historical information, and many other areas that play crucial roles in both our practical and our intellectual lives. ... Were we to refrain from accepting the testimony of others, our lives would be impoverished in startling and debilitating ways. (Lackey 2006, p. 1)

For Robert Audi testimony is the social foundation of knowledge. He writes that our knowledge can be based 'properly and non-inferentially' on what other may tell us.

> I can know that p on the basis of your telling me that p. When I know it in this way, I believe it *because* you tell me, where 'because' indicates a causal sufficiency relation… Notice, however that someone who doubts p can challenge my assertion by asking how the attester knows that p. Underlying this challenge is the assumption, …, that if you don't know that p, then I can't come to know about it on the basis of your testimony that p. Your testimony can, then, be foundational for my knowledge that p, but it is of course not foundational for your knowledge that p. (Audi 2013, p. 509)

The passage underscores how knowledge acquisition can be both individualist and social (based on testimony), at least in the more easily discernible cases where such acquisition (one through direct contact with the 'content', the other through testimony) is distributed between two subjects. In the case of the same subject, the individual and testimonial components of knowledge would require careful analytical disentangling, along with the first or second-order modality of the knowledge claim. For instance, first order knowledge, in terms of its 'content' may be entirely acquired through testimony (although even here comprehension of its form/meaning requires individual effort, as when we read and understand a book), but second-order knowledge claims concerning the first-order claim would require individual mental effort for comprehending its 'content'.[1]

In a more general sense, our inclination to depend on testimony comes from the fact that our spatial and temporal boundedness restricts our immediate, first-hand access to facts and states of affairs. For instance, historical knowledge can be known solely through testimony, either written or oral. If someone tells me that (i) Taj Mahal is situated in Agra and (ii) it was built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of Mumtaz Mahal over a period of 16 years from 1632 to 1653 AD, I may choose to personally visit and verify the information that Taj Mahal is in Agra; but I have no means to personally verify the latter assertion, except by relying on historical accounts. Without testimonial knowledge, our repertoire of knowledge would be severely curtailed and constrained.

Goldman observes that 'social epistemology is a branch of traditional epistemology that studies epistemic properties of individuals that arise from their relations to others, as well as epistemic properties of groups or social systems' (Goldman 2010, p.1). This is where the role of testimony becomes inevitable. Any sharing amongst group members or people in general cannot exclude exchange through testimony. Goldman speaks about three types of social activities in their social variants: (i) doxastic decision-making (DDM) with social evidence; (ii) gathering of social evidence; and (iii) speech and communication with an informational purport (assertion, debate, argumentation, etc.) (Goldman 2010, p. 6). For him, there is nothing inherently social about the doxastic decision-making as belief-forming and belief-revising processes are not social. This again retains the irreducibly individualistic character of knowledge acquisition. It is the individual who acquires 'the knowledge that 'p''. Furthermore, evidence used as a basis for forming and revising beliefs need

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[1] This is in keeping with Frege's distinction between the 'sense' and 'reference' of any judgement, where in any second-order judgement concerning the first-order judgement, the sense of the latter becomes the new referent ('object' or 'content'), through a process of nominalisation.

not necessarily involve 'subject matter (i.e. content) concerning other people either'. However, he adds:

> But one sector of DDM is squarely based on the use of social evidence. Here the contents of the evidential beliefs do concern other people. First, the evidential beliefs may have contents concerning what other people have said or written. Second, the evidential beliefs may have contents concerning other people's opinions (or other psychological states), which the doxastic agent may acquire at second or third hand. In either type of case the doxastic agent uses social evidence. (Goldman 2010, p. 6)

Thus, the social character of knowledge acquisition (even in its content) emerges from our dependence on evidence that is socially available based on people's opinions, beliefs, testimony, either of the written or oral kind. Another kind of social activity is that of making statements and engaging in argumentative or dialectic exchange. These are forms of social exchange via testimony. The study of epistemic decision-making in social contexts forms one of the crucial concerns of social epistemology. To the question of 'in what sense is social epistemology social'? Goldman and Blanchard explain that there can be a three-part answer. First, social epistemology is concerned with the optimal methods for *individual* belief formation, where it looks into the evidential inputs from other people, which include opinions, arguments and assertions by others. Therefore, the pertinent problem that comes to the fore is—how should epistemic agents respond to the testimony of others and how should they modify, revise or make adjustments to their doxastic attitude towards a given proposition upon learning that others entertain a different attitude towards it. The second and third way of understanding the 'social' in social epistemology, is through collective social epistemology (represented by juries, committees, etc.), and institutional social epistemology (represented by communities and societies that work as systems or institutions).

The Problematic

If we recognise that knowledge can be transmitted through testimony, this implies that the hearer/listener can acquire knowledge via testimony and the speaker must also possess the knowledge in question. In this paper, I will address the issue of epistemic decision-making in social contexts in the form of the following questions: (i) how do epistemic agents form beliefs about something (in the world) given evidential inputs from other people; and (ii) how do epistemic agents respond and alter their doxastic attitude in light of testimony (evidence from others)? Our starting point was to show that the epistemic conditions of social epistemology involve the agent's reliance on testimony, a socially given medium that acts as the basis for the contents of our doxastic states. However, we also noted that the epistemic framework for social epistemology does not set aside the individual in the process of knowledge acquisition. The prominent change from traditional to social epistemology lies in the role of testimony in the agent's knowledge acquisition through social sharing.

Testimony, for example, either in oral or written form, can function as evidence for the content of one's acquired beliefs. However, in this paper, I want to discuss a broader issue pertaining to the use of 'evidentials', a grammatical marker used to mark the source of the information the speaker provides, in testimonial discourse. Does the use of these grammatical markers play any role in the reception of the testimonial content by the hearer? Before addressing this issue, it should be clear that 'evidence' and 'evidentiality' are two distinct concepts, which we will discuss in the forthcoming section on 'Evidential is not Evidence'.

There are also debates concerning whether testimony generates or merely transmits knowledge. Jennifer Lackey argues that depending on the reliability of the *testifier* (as a speaker) testimony can be a source of knowledge. The factor of reliability becomes obvious, as the acceptance of the testimony by the hearer may be dependent on whether the hearer relies on the speaker. John Hardwig develops an epistemological principle –*the principle of testimony*:

> (T) If *A* has good reasons to believe that *B* has good reasons to believe *p*, the *A* has good reasons to believe *p*.

He further states that there must be factors such as the reliability and trustworthiness of the speaker (*B*) that are at play, if the hearer (A) is to believe what B says.

> …, *A* must TRUST *B*, or *A* will not believe that *B*'s testimony gives her good reasons to believe that *p*. And *B* must be TRUSTWORTHY or *B*'s testimony will not in fact give *A* good reasons to believe *p*, regardless of what she might believe about *B*. (Hardwig 1991, p. 697)

It is interesting to note that the testifier, as a speaker, has the potential to be a source of (testimonial) knowledge. Pushing this point a bit more, I will primarily argue how the nature of exchange between the speaker and the hearer creates multiple dimensions of understanding in an epistemic agent (the hearer), when one considers the use of *evidentials* by the speaker. Thus, a key aspect to look into is the concept of *evidentiality* (in languages). We focus on the epistemic agent (the hearer's perspective) and the potential ways in which the hearer may be influenced by the nature of exchange with the speaker (the testifier) and the use of evidentiality by the speaker. In brief, we explore the factor of evidentiality in understanding testimony as a source of knowledge (and in a weaker sense, testimonial beliefs).

The Concept of Evidentiality

The concept of evidentiality is a *grammatical* category that primarily marks the source of information. The speaker by marking the information source indicates how something (what is being said) is known by the speaker. For example, if I say, 'I hear that Madhuri will be the next elected member of the committee', I am marking the source of my information as hearsay. According to Aikhenvald,

(L)anguages vary in how many types of information sources they have to express. Many just mark information reported by someone else; others distinguish firsthand and non-firsthand sources. In rarer instances, visually obtained data are contrasted with data obtained through hearing or smelling, or through various kinds of inference. These larger systems also tend to have a separate marker for reported information. (Aikhenvald 2004, p. 1)

Evidentiality is a verbal grammatical category in its own right, and it does not bear any straightforward relationship to truth, the validity of statement, or the speaker's responsibility. (Aikhenvald 2006, p. 320)

Typically, the speaker (or the narrator), by the use of evidentials, conveys whether she actually saw the event or she made an inference based on some other evidence or whether someone else reported the event to her. Let us consider an example given by Aikhenvald. Tariana is an Arawak language spoken in the multilingual area of the Vaupés in northwest Amazonia. Any speaker in this linguistic community while conveying something has to specify the source of their information. The exclusion or omission of the evidential marker in this community, typically results in an ungrammatical and unnatural sentence. For instance, the speaker cannot just say 'José played football.' If one saw José play football, then one would say (Aikhenvald 2006, p. 320):

Languages that have evidentiality as a grammatical category may further have differences in terms of the number of evidential sources they mark as the basis of their information. There can be many different sub-types of languages with evidentials, ranging from 2-choices systems to 4-choices systems, depending on how many information sources have been marked. For instance, small systems may have two choices, firsthand versus non-firsthand. Firsthand terms will mark the information source that is acquired directly, through vision or hearing (or other senses). Likewise, non-firsthand terms will mark the information sources that are indirect, including information acquired by senses other than seeing, by inference and by verbal report. Aikhenvald gives the following case from Jarawara, an Arawá language in Brazil.— 'Wero got down from his hammock (which I didn't see), and went out (which I did see)'—*Wero kisa-me-**no**, ka-me-**hiri**-ka.* A part of this sentence marks the information source as non-firsthand, as non-visual (inference, as the speaker did not see) and the other as firsthand, derived from visual perception. Thus, evidentiality is divided into two primary categories, *direct* evidentiality which shows that the speaker has directly witnessed the action (or what is being spoken about), and *indirect* evidentiality, which shows that the speaker, instead of having direct evidence for her assertion or statement, has other sources for what she says. Direct evidential categories are visual and auditory evidence, whereas indirect evidentials can be inferential (the speaker has inferred from available evidence), and quotative (reportative or hearsay evidentiality).

According to Ferdinand de Haan (2005), the evidential category of inference is the grammaticalised way of showing that the speaker makes his or her statement based on a deduction from facts, and not on a direct observation of the action itself. Inferential evidentials can be both direct and indirect. Thus, a speaker, whose linguistic expression contains evidentials, can indicate her source of information to the hearer. A speaker may use evidentials in her statement to show the relative distance the

speaker has vis à vis the statement, depending on whether a direct or an indirect reference is made in the evidential.

> It is not unusual to think of these two categories as representing different degrees of commitment to the truth of the action: indirect evidentials show that the speaker is not as committed to the truth of what s/he is saying than when a direct evidential is used. This view may be correct in some cases, but this is not the reason why evidentials are employed. It is argued here that they are used to denote the relative distance between the speaker and the action. A speaker will use an indirect evidential to state that the action takes/took place outside the speaker's deictic sphere, whereas the use of a direct evidential shows that the action takes or took place within that deictic sphere. (de Haan 2005, p. 2)

The purpose of using evidentials on the part of the speaker is to provide transparency concerning how one knows the content of the statement. What kinds of effects will this have on the hearer, as well as on the testimony itself, for it to be considered as knowledge? The response to this question would require an empirical study, which would test the relationship between the use of evidentials in a testimonial discourse by the speaker and its effect on the hearer's receptivity of the testimony. Such studies can illuminate on and analyse the factors underlying the structure of testimonial discourse with evidential markers, for example, if a speaker uses a direct evidential in conveying something, whether the trust and reliance on her are enhanced, leading the hearer to believe the testimony. As previously discussed, the factors of reliability and trustworthiness become an integral part of a speaker-hearer context. For, the minimal assumption of any meaningful social exchange is that the hearer must rely on the speaker's intention to convey true or correct information. In the absence of these conditions there will be no ground for the hearer to accept the testimony. Ordinarily, in any social exchange, we rely on an implicit trust on the speaker. There are no reasons why one subject cannot trust the other, in ordinary conversations, unless there is proof about the speaker being unreliable. The question of trust becomes explicit only under special cases. For instance, an investigating officer or a spy in an enemy territory will refrain from trusting someone on face value.

Further, as I noted, in addition to these reliability conditions of the speaker, there are factors, like evidential markers, that play a role in testimonial discourse. For instance, if the speaker says, 'I saw Madhuri coming down the hallway', where she is employing a direct evidential category of *seeing*, the believability of this assertion is perhaps greater than if the speaker had said, 'I hear from the guard that Madhuri is coming down the hallway'. The use of an indirect evidential in the second statement conveys that the speaker herself was not a direct witness to Madhuri's arrival, but is relying on the reporting of someone else (hearsay).

Evidential is not Evidence

At this juncture, we must make explicit the difference between evidence and evidentiality. The use of evidentials in language is often separated from what we commonly understand by evidence. Direct or indirect evidentials do not function as evidence

for the content of the testimony. Evidentiality is a grammatical category of language whereas evidence is not, as the latter is about facts, documents, supporting a claim, proposition or belief to prove that the claim is true or valid. Aikhenvald writes, 'All evidentiality does is supply the information source' (Aikhenvald 2004, p. 4). Linguistic evidentiality does not consist in providing proof in court or in arguments; it does not indicate what is true or otherwise, nor indicate one's belief. For Aikhenvald the evidential markers are not to be treated as markers of reliability of the testifier or the speaker, as she argues that linguistic evidentials can be manipulated in intricate ways to tell lies. She says '… expressing an appropriate information source, and choosing the correct marking for it, has nothing to do with one's 'epistemic stance', point of view, or personal reliability' (Aikhenvald 2004, p.5). However, although Aikhenvald says that evidential markers are not to be treated as markers of reliability of the testifier, it is not clear whether the presence of direct or indirect evidential markers in a testimony, bears as any effect on the hearer. As we saw in an earlier example, whether the 'content' of a testimony is directly known (like, seeing the event) or indirectly known (hearsay, inference, or some other testimony), does reinforce the informational content, either positively or negatively.

Contrary to Aikhenvald's position, Wallace Chafe contends that the connection between 'evidentiality' and 'reliability of information' is relevant. Chafe (1986) considers two senses in which 'evidentiality' can be understood. In its narrow sense, it only refers to the marking of the source of information/ knowledge. In its broad sense, evidentiality is also about *marking the speaker's attitude* towards his or her knowledge of reality. Dendale and Tasmowski also suggest that 'in the evidential systems of many languages, the forms of marking the source of information also mark the speaker's attitude towards the reliability of that information' (Dendale and Tasmowski 2001, p. 343). Thus, even if a use of a direct evidential, like 'I *saw* that *p*' does not provide evidence or proof for *p*, will the fact that the speaker *saw* and did not *hear* what she is reporting as testimony, not affect the hearer more?

Let us return to the role of evidential markers in testimonial discourse. Testimony is fairly pervasive in our lives, if not indispensable. It is through dialogues and communication that we have formed beliefs about the world and its history, our society, our ancestors, etc. Much of our socially acquired knowledge is generated through testimony. For instance, in the case of historical knowledge, the very possibility of such knowledge is dependent on testimony, either written or oral. Both spoken as well as written testimony pervade our life. Let us consider an ordinary example. I hear an announcement at the airport that the gate number for the departure of the Kolkata bound Air India flight has been changed from 18 to 16. Upon hearing this, I immediately act on this information, taking it as a reliable piece of information, and convey this information to my newly arrived fellow-traveller: 'The flight gate is 16'. If my uttered proposition is just, 'The flight gate is 16' and I say nothing further, then my putting across this information (my testimony) seems as a piece of knowledge (confirmed belief). After the announcement is made, I may choose not to make any further enquiry about the reliability of the information. As Daniel O'Brien states, 'Beliefs acquired via testimony may be second-hand—they are beliefs that have been passed on to you by someone else—but they are not second rate, and they may on

occasion amount to knowledge' (O'Brien 2006, p. 6). Thus, analysis of the structure of any testimonial discourse, as we have been arguing, brings out the importance of the mode in which the 'content' of the testimony is presented to the hearer.

Audi in his article, 'The Place of Testimony in the Fabric of Knowledge and Justification', discusses various modes of testimonial discourse, such as formal and informal testimony.

> The word 'testimony' commonly evokes images of the courtroom, where someone sworn to testifies, offering information supposed to represent knowledge or belief. Often such testimony recounts what was witnessed firsthand, but testimony can be about something not witnessed, such as the implications of a scientific theory. … Formal testimony differs from the informal kind in the conditions of its expression, but not necessarily its credibility. … We might regard all testimony as a kind of saying, but not all saying – even apart from what is said in fiction – is testimony. (Audi 1997, p. 405)

The basis of this classification of testimonial discourses is traced not just in various social contexts but also in the forms in which the testimony is expressed. As Audi points out, any saying does not count as testimony. For example, a command statement or any kind of performative statement is a 'saying', but is not testimonial. Thus, the difference in the structure of testimonial discourses, whether formal or informal, becomes pertinent. Audi also devotes much of this discussion to the psychology of testimony. He says that when X hears a courtroom testimony, X appraises the witness and places the testimony in the context of the trial and X's general knowledge, and accept what is said only if, from this broad perspective, it seems true. Thus, the listener believes in the testimony (what is being said by the witness) on the basis of certain conditions (which Audi calls *premises*)—like whether the witness seems sincere and that the testimony in question fits what X knows about the case. Audi holds that most formal testimony is inferential. In the case of informal beliefs, the beliefs that are produced are not typically inferential. When my friend tells me about something that does not fall in my area of competence, I tend to believe what she tells me. I trust her statements and may form some testimonial beliefs, unless I encounter some other conflicting conditions. Audi says that 'our standing beliefs, and even our belief–forming processes, may change in the course of our receiving testimony; and a testimonially based belief may arise diachronically'[2] (Audi 1997, p. 407).

The point of discussing the psychology of testimony is to question whether, in addition to certain conditions, the use of evidential markers in a statement by a speaker shows that she attests the shared information (by seeing, hearing, inferring, reading, etc.) also have an effect on the hearer in deciding not only on the credibility of the speaker but also the credibility of what is being said. Can evidentiality be another factor one must consider for belief formation based on testimony? Chafe

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[2] His example—"Suppose I meet someone on a plane. She tells me that, at a conference, a speaker I know lost his temper. Initially, I suspend judgement about whether he did so. Such things are rare, and I do not know her. Then, as she describes the conference other details begin to fit together and she confirms information I already have, such as who was there. Soon I am listening in an accepting attitude, forming beliefs of each thing she says. At the end, I find that I *now* believe that the speaker did lose his temper. Here my testimonially based belief is formed considerably later than my hearing the testimony it rests on." (Audi 1997, p. 407).

believes that evidential markers also serve the purpose of conditioning the reliability of the information. Thus, it is important to study the receptivity of a hearer when she encounters these evidential markers in the testimony of others. For instance, we are often aware that our beliefs have varying degrees of certainty. Everything a subject knows cannot claim to possess equal certainty or justification. Therefore, 'one way in which knowledge may be qualified is with an expression indicating the speaker's assessment of its degree of reliability, the likelihood of its being a fact' (Chafe 1986, p. 264). For Chafe, the 'mode of knowing implies something about reliability, but not vice versa' (p. 266). For instance, when we say, 'We kept thinking *maybe* she will take the right decision', or 'She is *certainly* not going to take the new assignment', these statements reflect varying degrees of certainty by the speaker, which consequently, will also affect the degree of reliance that the hearer may have on these statements. Let us consider the context of belief statements. An individual may believe certain claims made by others, either because of her reliance on the other person, or for some reason, she may have to believe them. In conversational English, certain expressions represent the knowledge arrived through belief, like '*I think* that I've been miscalculating the risks'; or '*I guess* I was thinking about the plan that was proposed for legal action.' Wallace shows that when we include the source (sensory evidence) of the information, it influences the degree of reliance on the information content, as I noted earlier, how a speaker knows about someone's coming.

Thus, we come back to the relation between evidential markers (in testimonies) and its effect on the reliability of the information (testimony) and the testifier. In ordinary social contexts, we have an implicit trust in others. Trust, in this implicit sense, is the glue that binds the social. In our analysis of the conditions for testimonial belief, the epistemic significance of this trust has become explicit. In a social context what goes on in (contributes towards) doxastic decision-making using social evidence and testimony (both oral and written), forms a major chunk of social evidence. Therefore, the analysis of the structure of testimony becomes crucial. The question here is—how do epistemic agents (i.e. the hearer) respond and alter their doxastic attitude in light of inferential knowledge (with or without evidentials)? When Lackey talks about the *reliability* of the testifier—for the hearer to decide whether she should believe in the testimony—does the use of evidential markers (or overuse/or even mis-use/or careless use) start affecting the credibility (in degrees) of the information that is transmitted? This question invites further empirical study. Aikhenvald does not believe that evidential markers can be treated as markers of reliability (of the speaker) contrary to the claims of Wallace Chafe.

We started with the question whether the analysis of a testimonial discourse with evidential markers will provide us with insights into how a hearer receives the testimony. In the course of this discussion, we saw that in the context of testimonial sharing between the speaker and the hearer, the trustworthiness conditions and reliability of the speaker are taken to be indispensable conditions for the transmission of testimonial knowledge. What has been missing in these theoretical perspectives is the role of evidential markers. How do such markers affect the degree of receptivity by the hearer? Our preceding discussion showed the use of certain evidential terms varies in their degrees of reliability. In the context of social exchange, especially

in the context of peer arguments and disagreements, how does the speaker (often unconsciously) induce some form of consequence in the hearer? So, we must ask about the ways by which we can accommodate the impact of evidential markers, in judging whether testimony generates beliefs that in certain context can be treated as knowledge. This is open to empirical study to show how evidential markers impact testimonial exchange. However, one can always show from our exposure to social interactions with people both known and unknown, that our tendency to believe in what the speaker says, is often affected by how the information is put across to us. Let us analyse the following statement of a speaker:

> S says: 'I know that 'p' (JNU has a strong Centre for Historical Studies) because I was
> told about "p" by my friend from JNU'.

The information 'p' is hearsay, as it was reported by a friend from JNU; and the speaker does not have any direct evidence for 'p' being true. Her knowledge of 'p' is due to her reliance on her friend, whom she considers to be reliable and truthful. For the hearer, who listens to S will certainly assess whether 'p', as the primary content of the statement (the hearer may accept or reject 'p' as a belief) is acceptable and to what degree, based on the source that S conveys through the use of evidential markers. Therefore, as we have argued in this paper, evidential markers are not merely component parts of a statement, but with their use, a speaker can influence what the hearer accepts as a knowledge claim.

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The Suspended Reference: The Worldliness of Metaphor in Paul Ricoeur's Thought

Babu Thaliath

Abstract   Paul Ricoeur derives his theory of metaphor from the referential relationship of language to the world, to its reality. In the seventh chapter of his seminal work *The Rule of Metaphor* (title: *Metaphor and Reference*), Ricoeur extends Frege's idea of reference in semantic and hermeneutic frameworks from nominal to sentential or synthetic-predicative and finally to textual, i.e. pertaining to discourse. Ricoeur points out, on the one hand, how the semantic and hermeneutic referentiality is opposed to the semiotic confinement of language and, on the other hand, the gradation of this referentiality according to the proximity of the reference to the world, which constitutes an extra-linguistic reality: "Grounded on the predicative act, what is intended by discourse [l'intenté] points to an extra-linguistic reality which is its referent. Whereas the sign points back only to other signs immanent within a system, discourse is about things. Sign differs from sign, discourse refers to the world. Difference is semiotic, reference is semantic." Furthermore, Ricoeur attributes to metaphor—as a linguistic possibility and crisis at the same time—the unique function of freeing the language from its characteristic extra-worldliness caused by its semiotic closure, which should consequently enable the language to have closer referential access to the world. However, according to Ricoeur, the metaphorical reference is a "suspended reference"; it also forms a second-level reference when the literal or first-level reference is suspended. Ricoeur develops the idea of suspended reference based on his original ideas of literal reference as non-ostensive reference, null reference and as refiguration, which he introduces and discusses in the work *Time and Narrative* (*Temps et récit*, Vol. 3). In my paper I try to show how Ricoeur's idea of suspended reference, which seems to indicate the extra-worldliness of metaphor or metaphor's impossible referential access to the world, actually suggests its worldliness. The referentiality of metaphor in the mode of a referential access to an extra-linguistic world also requires a reversal of the epistemic directionality of concept formation (*Begriffsbildung*), to which Nietzsche's theory of metaphor, introduced in his early work *On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense* (*Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne*), points. Such a reversal of epistemic directionality should complement Ricoeur's idea

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of metaphorical reference as suspended reference and thereby decisively secure the worldliness of metaphor.

Keywords Metaphor · Paul Ricoeur · Referentiality

The Referential Function of Language

In considering the relationship between language and the world, which is linguistically represented, Paul Ricoeur hardly regards semiotics and semantics as correlative or complementary. The philosopher is characteristically inclined to contrast the semiotic unity of language with its semantic nexus to the world. The semantic transcendence of language to an extra-linguistic reality, which constitutes the world itself, occurs as the reference, i.e. as the referentiality of language, which for Ricoeur culminates in the hermeneutic-synthetic nexus between discourse and the world. Ricoeur emphasizes the semantics of predication, which occurs in the sentences—the building blocks of a text—over the conventional notion of the semantics of the concept. The semantic referentiality moves here from nominal to sentential and finally to discursive reference. The sentential-discursive and predicative act is fundamentally referential, which ultimately refers to the affiliation of language to the world within the semantic framework—despite the semiotic confinement of language and its exclusion from the world:

> Grounded on the predicative act, what is intended by discourse [*l'intenté*] points to an extra-linguistic reality which is its referent. Whereas the sign points back only to other signs immanent within a system, discourse is about things. Sign differs from sign, discourse refers to the world. Difference is semiotic, reference is semantic: 'One is never concerned in semiotics with the relation between the sign and the things denoted, nor with relationships between language and the world.' (Ricoeur 1977a, p. 256)

A decisive step that Ricoeur dares to take here, to expand the semantics of the conventional notion of semantics itself, is that Ricoeur considers it not as the meaning or sense of a word, expression or sentence, but primarily as reference, i.e. as the access of the above-mentioned linguistic units and compositions to the real world. Reference as a linguistic function refers to the access or accessibility of the language to the world, in which the epistemic function of language also surfaces in a "direction" opposite to abstraction, i.e. from the individual word and compositional expression or sentence to extra-linguistic referents that constitute the world as an extra-linguistic reality. Ricoeur hardly sticks to the simple, hence philosophically reductive and coherent differentiation between sense and reference as undertaken by Frege; he clearly leans towards Émile Benveniste's notion of similar binaries in the context of the original relation of language to the world, namely the elaboration of the meaning-making linguistic structures, as represented especially in the sentential predication and finally in the textual discourse, which presupposes its worldliness or referentiality directed towards the world.

> One might object that Frege, as opposed to Benveniste, applies his distinction initially to words and more precisely *to proper names*, not to the entire proposition—in Benveniste's terminology, to what is intended by the entire sentence. Indeed, what Frege first defines is the reference of the proper name, which 'is the object itself which we designate by its means.' The entire statement, considered from the point of view of its reference, plays the role of a proper name with regard to the state of affairs it 'designates.' (…) Indeed, when we use a proper name ('the moon') we do not restrict ourselves to talking about our idea (that is, about a specific mental event); however, 'nor are we satisfied with the sense alone' (that is, the ideal object irreducible to any mental event); 'We presuppose besides a reference.' It is precisely this presupposition that causes us to err; but if we are wrong, it is because a reference is demanded by 'our intention in speaking or thinking.' This intention is 'the striving for truth,' which 'drives us always to advance from the sense to the reference.' (…) There is less than total opposition, therefore, between Benveniste and Frege. For Frege, the reference is communicated from the proper name to the entire proposition, which, with respect to reference, becomes the proper name of a state of affairs. For Benveniste, the reference is communicated from the entire sentence to the word, by subdivision within the syntagma. Through its *use*, the word takes on a semantic value, which is its particular sense in *this* use. In this manner the word has a referent, 'which is the particular object to which the word corresponds in the concrete situation of circumstance or of usage.' Word and sentence are thus the two poles of the same semantic entity; it is in conjunction that they have sense (always in the semantic acceptation) and reference. (Ricoeur 1977a, pp. 257-258)

However, Ricoeur emphasizes the reciprocity and complimentarity between the ideas of Frege and Benveniste—despite their apparent dichotomy, which is primarily due to a linguistic-epistemic directionality:

> The two conceptions of reference are complementary and reciprocal, whether one rises by synthetic composition from the proper name towards the proposition, or whether one descends by analytic dissociation from the sentence down to the semantic unit of the word. (Ricoeur 1977a, p. 258)

Nonetheless, these mutual or reciprocal interpretations form a polar constitution of the reference itself at their intersection—between "object" as referent of a proper name and "state of affairs" (taken from Wittgenstein) as referent of the whole sentence, as Ricoeur further emphasizes.

According to Ricoeur, such inner-structural reciprocity transcends the limits of language, which is particularly represented in semiotic confinements, in order to referentially access the world, the extra-linguistic reality. The sense of the word extends synthetically in the sentence, which is based on predication. Predication in the sentence—furthermore in textual discourse, which consists of sentences—explains the meaning of the subject, but extends its reference, which transcends and overcomes the bounds of language in order to be synthetically connected to a pre-linguistic and pre-predicative world. Here Ricoeur seems to be tacitly referring to the Kantian differentiation between explanatory analytical and extending synthetic judgments. However, Kant's basic assumption, that the a priori nature of analytical and synthetic judgments is manifest in the referentiality of language or the referential access of linguistic forms of expression to an extra-linguistic reality of the world, becomes here somewhat obscured.

On closer inspection, it is the predication whose semantics Ricoeur tacitly contrasts with the meaning of concepts and proper names, on which Frege tends

to focus in his doctrine of meaning and reference (*Sinn und Bedeutung*). Ricoeur attempts to define predication in the sentence rather as a function of linguistic expressions. This is obviously an interpretation of the referentiality within the language system itself, which on the one hand is considered semiotically compact and closed –and, as such, autonomous—and on the other hand semantically open or directed towards the world.

> For Ricoeur, the referential function of language emerges at the level of a sentence. In this idea, he rejoins the classical notion found in Plato as well as in Aristotle. In the *Cratylus* Plato shows that the problem of truth arises only at the level of the synthetic unity of a name and a verb effected by a sentence, and not at the level of isolated 'names' and 'words'. This was also the view of Aristotle, namely that truth and error are affections of discourse and discourse requires two basic signs, a noun and a verb connected in a synthesis of a sentence. Hence the sentence refers to an object and characterizes it by way of predication. (…) For Ricoeur, the distinctive function of sentence is, therefore, predication and it is in this case that he accepts Benveniste's claim that predication is the indispensible factor of the sentence. Now, predication as a semantic function is an integration or synthetic unity of two component functions, referring and characterizing. (…) The fundamental polarity expressed in the sentence is between singular identification and universal predication." (Sundara Rajan 1991, pp. 171-172)

This indicates an original and essential dichotomy in the referentiality of sentential predication. The predicative function of language as a semantic function, represented especially in the sentence, refers simultaneously to the particulars and the universals. As a reference to the particulars, sentential predication seems to seek direct access to the world consisting of the particulars. However, sentential predication tends cognitively towards the universals. This is where the aporicity of language emerges, based on the referentially directional opposition between sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) and understanding—albeit within an epistemological framework. In an initial sensory perception, the subject has its epistemic-referential access to individual objects, but in a conceptual cognition, which is supposed to form a synthesis with perception, the epistemic reference is directed towards an abstract concept that linguistically represents a general and universal idea. With naked eyes one sees an individual object, but conceptually recognizes a general idea. This ambiguity of epistemic reference is inherent to language, but it constitutes the essence of cognition in general.

It is obvious that in his theory of reference Ricoeur opposes structuralism or the structuralist tendency in the philosophy of language, which semiotically isolates language as an autonomous sign system from an extra-linguistic world. Ricoeur is sceptical of the analytical-structural dissection of language into components or details and the investigation that starts from the structural details of language; instead, Ricoeur favours the synthetic-predicative fullness of language, represented in every performative act—as an event of discourse—which has a sentential and textual basis. While explication or explanation refers to the structural details of language, it is the interpretation—as a referential function of language—that overcomes the structural confinement of language and extends it as a discursive event or performance to the extra-linguistic and extra-semiotic reality of the world:

> Ricoeur's theory of meaning and interpretation is based on a fundamental contrast, namely, language as system or structure and discourse as event or performance. The study of the first

of these aspects, the systematic and structural aspects of language, Ricoeur calls semiotics and the study of meaning as event, he calls semantics. Accordingly, the parameters of his entire philosophy of language are set by the proper understanding of relationship between semiotics and semantics. Ricoeur further believes that although in its classical beginnings in Plato and Aristotle, the semantics and communicative functions of language were kept in the centre of reflections, in the contemporary period, as a result of the enormous impact of linguistic structuralism, this aspect of language as expression of sense and reference has been somewhat overshadowed. Accordingly, Ricoeur sets himself the task of recovering the hermeneutic moment, while accepting the major claims of the structural understanding. This dialectical move of recovering a sharper hermeneutic understanding, by first exposing it to its structural opposition, is particularly marked in his treatment of reference, for it is precisely this idea of reference as evolving language in its relationship to world that structuralism seeks to eclipse. (Rajan 1991, pp. 155-156)

Ricoeur's notion of linguistic reference here is clearly synthetic; it does not proceed analytically from text to sentence and on to word—especially proper names—but conversely from concept to sentence or sentential predication and further to text as discourse or discursive event, which is not trapped or restricted in the semiotic confinement of language, but transcends language itself semantically and hermeneutically in order to referentially reach an extra-linguistic world that is represented in the language. Therefore, for Ricoeur, semantics is ultimately a propaedeutic to hermeneutics, which does not end in language, but transcends it referentially and consequently accesses the world.

Nonetheless, the text as discourse or discursive event takes on traits of different genres, such as literary and scientific texts or discourses, in comparison with the individual concepts. When Ricoeur confidently moves from conceptual to textual or discursive references and legitimizes them within the framework of his hermeneutics, he is also obliged to emphasize the generic differences in the textual and discursive referentiality to the world. This as leitmotif prompts Ricoeur to speculate on the referentiality of literary texts. In general, it is claimed that literary texts, in contrast to the scientific texts, have no real reference in the world, or that they do not refer to any existing reality of the world. Ricoeur confronts such conventional ideas by ascribing referentiality to literary texts in the same way as to scientific-theoretical texts. According to Ricoeur, the reference of a literary text is a null- or non-ostensive reference, whose access to the world seems somewhat aporetic to us. Just like the null- or non-ostensive reference of a literary text, scientific axioms or theorems can also refer to formal but in reality non-existent models, as Ricoeur explicates with reference to the seminal works by Mary Hesse, the highly regarded philosopher of science.

The Metaphorical Reference

Ricoeur expands and substantiates the null or non-ostensive reference of the literary texts and poems in metaphorical reference. He emphasizes the referential function of metaphor, which goes beyond the conventional-metaphorical nexus between

logically unrhymed or even contrasting terms or proper nouns and leads to a theory of textual reference. Ricoeur hardly regards metaphor as an isolated non-referential phenomenon in the logically constructed language, but is interested in metaphorical statements that necessarily presuppose a reference integrated in the literary text. Ricoeur begins the above-mentioned seventh chapter of his work *The Rule of Metaphor* (*La métaphore vive*), entitled *Metaphor and Reference,* with the propaedeutic sentence:

> What does the metaphorical statement say about reality? This question carries us across the threshold from the *sense* towards the *reference* of discourse. But does the question itself have any meaning? This must be established first. (Ricoeur 1977a, p. 255)

In the following sentence—under the title: *The Postulates of Reference*—Ricoeur introduces the linguistic-philosophical contexts in which the above-posed questions about the referentiality of metaphorical statements are to be addressed and answered:

> The question of reference can be posed at the two different levels of semantics and of hermeneutics. At the first level, it deals only with entities belonging to the order of the sentence. At the second level, it addresses entities that are larger than the sentence. It is at this level that the problem reaches its full amplitude. (Ricoeur 1977a, p. 255)

The synthetic character of predication guides the referentiality of language from the meaning of the word to that of the synthetic-compositional sentence and finally to the textual discourse, whose references should reach the worldly referents. However, according to Ricoeur, the reference of the metaphorical statements, that constitute the literary or poetic discourses, is *suspended*:

> My whole aim is to do away with this restriction of reference to scientific statements. Therefore, a distinct discussion appropriate to the literary work is required, and a second formulation of the postulate of reference, more complex than the first, which simply mirrored the general postulate that every sense calls for reference or denotation. The second formulation is stated as follows: the literary work through the structure proper to it displays a world only under the condition that the reference of descriptive discourse is suspended. Or to put it another way, discourse in the literary work sets out its denotation as a second-level denotation, by means of the suspension of the first-level denotation of discourse.
>
> This postulate brings us back to the problem of metaphor. It may be, indeed, that the metaphorical statement is precisely the one that points out most clearly this relationship between suspended reference and displayed reference. Just as the metaphorical statement captures its sense as metaphorical midst the ruins of the literal sense, it also achieves its reference upon the ruins of what might be called (in symmetrical fashion) its literal reference. If it is true that literal sense and metaphorical sense are distinguished and articulated within an interpretation, so too it is within an interpretation that a second-level reference, which is properly the metaphorical reference, is set free by means of the suspension of the first-level reference. (Ricoeur 1977a, p. 261)

The *second-level reference* of the metaphor or metaphorical statement as conceived by Ricoeur is indeed in line with the prevailing idea of Roman Jakobson, namely, the split reference of the metaphor, especially in poetry. But the suspension of reference in the case of metaphor seems to be ambiguous here. Suspension here can refer both to the absence of reference—null reference—and to a free floating or levitation of

reference above the ground of the world. In both cases, the metaphoric reference is infallibly represented in its worldliness. Now this worldliness of the metaphorical reference—its concealment and groundlessness—does not point to a finality, but to an ambivalence of being and non-being.

As mentioned above, Ricoeur calls the metaphorical reference a "second level reference," which comes about when the "first level reference" –based on its access to the referent—is suspended. A continuous shift in referentiality from scientific-theoretical to metaphorical statements can be recognized here, which also gives the impression that the metaphor or metaphorical statement is always isolated from the literal statements that are referentially bound to the world. Does this mark the unworldliness of metaphor? In the following I try to demonstrate that such a referential isolation of the metaphor from the world does not establish its unworldliness, but rather its worldliness itself. However, the world of metaphor is neither a disenchanted nor a literally real world. It is a possible world, i.e. a world that the metaphor itself creates—in the form of a "refiguration," as Ricoeur calls it. Within the framework of his theory of narrative, as explicated in his magnum opus *Time and Narrative* (*Temps et Récit*), Ricoeur places the emergence and effect of literary narration in three forms of mimesis: as prefiguration—the first form of mimesis on the part of the author; configuration—the second form of mimesis in relation to the construction of literary narration; and refiguration as the third form of mimesis, which comes about during the reception of the text or interaction of the reader—including the author—with the work. Ricoeur sees the power and legitimacy of metaphor, which referentially creates its own world, precisely in the third form of mimesis: refiguration. Although metaphor deconstructs or even destroys the literal meaning that the ordinary referentiality of narration presupposes, and which is also implicit in the suspension of the first level reference, it creates a new meaning through the figuration of a new world.

> He contends that the loss of the literal meaning in a metaphor opens the linguistic reference to a new way of describing the world and our experience. In short, if a metaphor destroys the possibility of a literal meaning, it also destroys the possibility of a referent for the sentence. But this creates the new referent, a new world of the text. (Reagan 1996, p. 43)

The emphasis on the referential nexus between the work and the world is crucial here. For it contrasts Ricoeur's hermeneutics with the traditional, prevalent Romantic hermeneutics—represented in particular by Schleiermacher. In comparison with the hermeneutics influenced by Romanticism, which emphasizes the understanding of the author's intentions and thus triumphs in the rather subjective bridging between the productive authorship and the receptive readership, Ricoeur's hermeneutics prioritizes the synthetic-referential nexus between the work and the world, which is indeed the result of a mimetic refiguration.

> I define the function of refiguration as mimetic. But it is extremely important not to be mistaken as to its nature: it does not consist in reproducing reality but in reconstructing the world of the reader in confronting him or her with the world of the work; and it is in this that the creativity of art consists, penetrating the world of everyday experience in order to rework it from inside. (Ricoeur 1988, p. 173)

Ricoeur conceives of metaphor, which is integrated into the literary narration and poetry, basically as a semantic innovation, which clearly points to the worldliness of metaphor. However, the world to which a metaphorical statement refers is a refigured world. The refiguration—as a mimetic act—is after all a semantic innovation, i.e. a creation within the framework of semantics or the referential nexus between language and the world. Accordingly, Ricoeur tends to define the metaphorically refigured world of literary or poetic works as an assemblage of references:

> For me, the world is an assemblage of references opened up by every kind of text, descriptive or poetic, that we have read, understood, and loved. And to understand a text is to interpolate in the predicates of our situation all the indications that make a *Welt* out of an *Unwelt*. It is this enlarging of our horizon of existence, which permits us to speak of the reference opened up by the text or of the world opened by the referential claims of most texts. (Ricoeur 1977b, p. 10).

What are the quietly emerging problems in Ricoeur's notion of the referentiality of metaphor, which has an ambivalent relation to the world? First, the explanation of the metaphorical reference again brings about the metaphoricity of language. Metaphorical reference as null-, non-, or non-ostensive reference resulting from the suspension of literal reference again forms a metaphor! The *explanans* here can neither decipher nor logify the *explanandum.* Secondly, Ricoeur seems to be doomed to fail in his endeavour to establish referentiality as an accomplished final phenomenon. For the suspended reference continues to refer to the real worlds. The incessancy of referentiality, which always prevents the characteristic isolation and alienation of metaphor from a real world, also complements or supplements the worldliness of the metaphor.

Ricoeur's notion of reference as a linguistic access to the world is indeed based—at least structurally—on Frege's famous doctrine of sense and reference. But in the interpretation of a dialectical relationship between sense and reference in the case of metaphorical reference, Ricoeur extends the problem of reference beyond a mere problem of truth to a productive ambiguity that invalidates the truthfulness of scientific-theoretical statements and at the same time legitimizes the truth of metaphor. Ricoeur rightly states that, in contrast to the agreement between meaning and reference, which Frege would argue for, it is the inconsistency or incongruity of the linguistic reference or the referential access to the world that gives rise to the metaphor. Ricoeur defines such an inconsistency between meaning and reference dialectically. While the meaning of linguistic concepts and sentences is rather predetermined and therefore relatively stable, it is the reference or referenced world that gives rise to the metaphor in its inconsistency with the meaning. Accordingly, the origin of the metaphor from the dialectical inconsistency between meaning and reference points to the worldliness of the metaphor itself—apart from all its ambivalences.

The Directionality of Linguistic-Epistemic Reference

An important and essential fact that confirms the worldliness of the metaphor from the outset is the infallible directionality of the reference itself. For the reference—as a subjective-cognitive approach to an objective referent—is necessarily directional. In his treatise "Creativity in Language," Ricoeur clearly refers to a cognitive directionality of reference—not merely in the traditional sense between subject and object, but in line with his own hermeneutics between linguistic discourse and the world. The semantic directionality towards the world is opposed to the semiotic confinement of language against the world:

> The directness of discourse toward reality which it may reach or miss, can be equally compared to the divergence between semiotic and semantic, whereas semiotic units are systems of inner dependencies, and for that reason constitute closed and finite sets, the sentence as the first semantic unit is related to extralinguistic reality; it is open to the world. (Ricoeur 1981, pp. 99-100)

Directionality as the cognitive basis of semantic reference—both in its access to the world and in its metaphorical suspension—opens up other possibilities and sources for demonstrating the worldliness of metaphor. One of these is Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's seminal essay, "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense" (*Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außer-moralischen Sinne*), which is one of the most important sources and genesis of the theory of metaphor in the history of philosophy. In this essay, Nietzsche explicates the original metaphoricity of language, i.e. the hidden, even buried metaphor in the formation of concepts, which is clearly a directional epistemological process—from the concrete object to the abstract concept. First of all, Nietzsche states—in contrast to the prevailing tradition—that between two absolutely different domains such as subject and object there can be no correct or appropriate epistemic correspondence, but at the most an aesthetic relation (*Verhalten*). It is precisely in this processual and directional aesthetic relation that metaphors surface or awake from their dormancy in the concept:

> Überhaupt aber scheint mir "die richtige Perzeption" - das würde heißen: der adäquate Ausdruck eines Objekts im Subjekt - ein widerspruchsvolles Unding: denn zwischen zwei absolut verschiedenen Sphären, wie zwischen Subjekt und Objekt, gibt es keine Kausalität, keine Richtigkeit, keinen Ausdruck, sondern höchstens ein *ästhetisches* Verhalten, ich meine eine andeutende Übertragung, eine nachstammelnde Übersetzung in eine ganz fremde Sprache. (Nietzsche 1999, p. 884)[1]

Nietzsche regards the aesthetic relation between subject and object, which is necessarily located in an epistemological process of concept formation—from object to sensation, to perception and finally to concept formation or conceptual cognition—as directional. In comparison with Kant and other precursors of philosophy, Nietzsche

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[1] (translation) "But generally it seems to me that the correct perception - which would mean the full and adequate expression of an object in the subject - is something contradictory and impossible; for between two absolutely different spheres, such as subject and object are, there is no causality, no correctness, no expression, but at most an *aesthetic* way of relating, by which I mean an allusive transference, a stammering translation into a quite different language." (Nietzsche 1999a, p. 148).

regards the directional process of cognition as both physiological and epistemological. Accordingly, sensation, the very first phase of sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*), is based on the physiological nerve-stimulus. From the nerve-stimulus to the concept, this cognitive process proceeds more metaphorically than epistemically, as in each abrupt stage of this process the completely contrary spheres are connected with each other. For Nietzsche, the directional cognitive process begins with an absolutely original basis, namely the Kantian thing-in-itself (*Ding an sich*), which Nietzsche, as a Schüler or disciple of Schopenhauer, merely assumes in his earlier phase of philosophizing. However, in comparison with Kant or Schopenhauer, it hardly serves Nietzsche to conceptualize an epistemology, but rather a certain metaphorology, i.e. a theory of metaphor formation:

> Das "Ding an sich" (das würde eben die reine folgenlose Wahrheit sein) ist auch dem Sprachbildner ganz unfasslich und ganz und gar nicht erstrebenswert. Er bezeichnet nur die Relationen der Dinge zu den Menschen und nimmt zu deren Ausdrucke die kühnsten Metaphern zu Hilfe. Ein Nervenreiz, zuerst übertragen in ein Bild! Erste Metapher. Das Bild wieder nachgeformt in einem Laut! Zweite Metapher. Und jedesmal vollständiges Überspringen der Sphäre, mitten hinein in eine ganz andere und neue. (Nietzsche 1999, p. 879)[2]

Furthermore, Nietzsche explains how in this conceptualization, on which science ultimately builds its secure conceptual columbarium, the ever-emerging metaphor is progressively obscured or buried under the logically compact and apodictic concepts:

> An dem Bau der Begriffe arbeitet ursprünglich, wie wir sahen, die *Sprache*, in späteren Zeiten die *Wissenschaft*. Wie die Biene zugleich an den Zellen baut und die Zellen mit Honig füllt, so arbeitet die Wissenschaft unaufhaltsam an jenem großen Kolumbarium der Begriffe, der Begräbnisstätte der Anschauungen, baut immer neue und höhere Stockwerke, stützt, reinigt, erneut die alten Zellen und ist vor allem bemüht, jenes ins Ungeheure aufgetürmte Fachwerk zu füllen und die ganze empirische Welt, das heißt die anthropomorphische Welt, hineinzuordnen. Wenn schon der handelnde Mensch sein Leben an die Vernunft und ihre Begriffe bindet, um nicht fortgeschwemmt zu werden und sich nicht selbst zu verlieren, so baut der Forscher seine Hütte dicht an den Turmbau der Wissenschaft, um an ihm mithelfen zu können und selbst Schutz unter dem vorhandenen Bollwerk zu finden. (Nietzsche 1999, p. 886)[3]

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[2] (translation) "The 'thing-in-itself' (which would be, precisely, pure truth, truth without consequences) is impossible for even the creator of language to grasp, and indeed this is not at all desirable. He designates only the relations of things to human beings, and in order to express them he avails himself of the boldest metaphors. The stimulation of a nerve is first translated into an image: first metaphor! The image is then imitated by a sound: second metaphor! And each time there is a complete leap from one sphere into the heart of another, new sphere." (Nietzsche 1999a, p. 144).

[3] (translation) "Originally, as we have seen, it is *language* which works on building the edifice of concepts; later it is *science*. Just as the bee simultaneously builds the cells of its comb and fills them with honey, so science works unceasingly at that great *columbarium* of concepts, the burial site of perceptions, builds ever-new, ever-higher tiers, supports, cleans, renews the old cells, and strives above all to fill that framework which towers up to vast heights, and to fit into it in an orderly way the whole empirical world, i.e. the anthropomorphic world. If even the man of action binds his life to reason and its concepts, so as not to be swept away and lose himself, the researcher builds his hut close by the tower of science so that he can lend a hand with the building and find protection for himself beneath its already existing bulwarks." (Nietzsche 1999a, p. 150).

The second part of the treatise begins with this observation, in which Nietzsche, in contrast to the scientifically disposed or rational human being who erects the conceptual columbarium, portrays the intuitive, i.e. the poetically disposed person, who—in a clear reversal of the directional conditionality of every cognitive process—poetically unearths the metaphors buried in concepts. When the epistemically buried metaphors are intuitively and poetically resurrected, the scientifically erected conceptual columbarium collapses. Nietzsche considers such a destruction to be natural, as man has a basic instinct to create metaphors, which characterizes his nature best:

> Jener Trieb zur Metapherbildung, jener Fundamentaltrieb des Menschen, den man keinen Augenblick wegrechnen kann, weil man damit den Menschen selbst wegrechnen würde, ist dadurch, dass aus seinen verflüchtigten Erzeugnissen, den Begriffen, eine reguläre und starre neue Welt als eine Zwingburg für ihn gebaut wird, in Wahrheit nicht bezwungen und kaum gebändigt. Er sucht sich ein neues Bereich seines Wirkens und ein anderes Flussbette und findet es im *Mythus* und überhaupt in der Kunst. Fortwährend verwirrt er die Rubriken und Zellen der Begriffe, dadurch dass er neue Übertragungen, Metaphern, Metonymien hinstellt, fortwährend zeigt er die Begierde, die vorhandene Welt des wachen Menschen so bunt unregelmäßig, folgenlos unzusammenhängend, reizvoll und ewig neu zu gestalten, wie es die Welt des Traumes ist. Nietzsche 1999, p. 887)[4]

Apart from Nietzsche's fundamentally poetic temper and his characteristic scepticism towards the previous philosophical systems, one can recognize here a strategic reversal of the epistemic- or cognitive-directional conditionality that is presupposed in every previous epistemology. The collapse of the logically constructed conceptual columbarium here marks a regression of concepts to the world, which was conceptually abstracted. The decline from conceptuality to worldliness is accomplished through the constant resurrection of metaphors buried in concepts. As final abstractions, concepts—i.e. the terms that etymologically and epistemically indicate the end of cognition—are far removed from the concretion of the world. Language, which is based on concepts, is therefore already a stranger in its historical-etymological origin, i.e., an alienated phenomenon from the world. Linguistic concepts—as termini—are therefore epistemically final entities that presuppose an equally final referentiality in relation to the particularity of the concrete world. The metaphorical regression to the world, which is explicit in Nietzsche and implicit in Ricoeur, therefore indicates a dismantling of the logical-abstract conceptuality and the subsequent resurrection of the conceptually buried metaphor, whose reference to the world, in contrast to concepts, is not finite or final, but rather incessant and infinite. This seems to be

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[4] (translation) "That drive to form metaphors, that fundamental human drive which cannot be left out of consideration for even a second without also leaving out human beings themselves, is in truth not defeated, indeed hardly even tamed, by the process whereby a regular and rigid new world is built from its own sublimated products—concepts—in order to imprison it in a fortress. The drive seeks out a channel and a new area for its activity, and finds it in myth and in art generally. It constantly confuses the cells and the classifications of concepts by setting up new translations, metaphors, metonymies; it constantly manifests the desire to shape the given world of the waking human being in ways which are just as multiform, irregular, inconsequential, incoherent, charming and ever-new, as things are in the world of dream." (Nietzsche 1999a, pp. 150–151).
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in tune with Ricoeur's idea of the metaphorical suspension of literal or first-level reference.

To summarize, the suspension of literal reference, as Ricoeur attributes it to metaphorical statements in literary texts, also signals a cognitive regression, that is, a referential regression from language to the world. If reference is metaphorically suspended in this regression to the world, which clearly points to the aporicity of metaphorical referentiality, it is ultimately conditioned by the existential aporicity of the world—as referent—itself. While the aporicity of the world is axiomatically suppressed or obscured in modern science, as Mary Hesse's seminal works tacitly suggest, it is legitimized in literary texts and poetry which are built on metaphorical statements. The metaphorical suspension of reference, as Ricoeur envisions it, seems to be hardly a lack of referential access to the world, but a hovering over the world that consequently casts the shadows of metaphor on the world. The suspended literal reference also implies a potential presence of the metaphorical reference in its real or actual absence. If metaphor is potentially present in its referentiality, which results from the actual suspension of literal reference, this proves the indispensable worldliness of metaphor.

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Lou Von Salomé and Her "Magnificent Openness of Will"

Müller-Buck

Abstract This article investigates the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's relation with Lou von Salomé. Reading Nietzsche's letters and the diaries, and reconstructing the biographical details of Lou, the article reveals the enigmatic personality of an individual whose personality and works fascinated thinkers and poets like Rilke, Nietzsche, and Freud.

When Nietzsche and Lou von Salomé came across each other in April 1882, their requirements were extremely different in at least one point: the young Russian knew exactly what she wanted and asserted that by herself against immense difficulties. Nietzsche knew that only up to some extent, he could be easily influenced and changed his plans quite regularly. Besides that, both of their expectations were also completely different. Lou knew precisely what she was looking for: a philosophical interlocutor and a teacher for her curious and inquisitive mind with whom she could have philosophical conversations. What Nietzsche expected from Lou was much more. He "did not want to be alone anymore" and wanted to learn "being human again." He still needed to learn almost everything about this task.[1]

Who was Lou? "Lou is the daughter of a Russian General and twenty years old; she is as sharp as an eagle and courageous like a lion and yet naturally a very girlish child, who may not live long. I owe her to Fräulein von Meysenburg and Rée […] in autumn we are moving to Vienna. We will live in the same house and work together.

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[1] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 3.7.1882, KGB III/1 No. 256. The letters from and to Nietzsche are cited from the *Kritischen Gesamtausgabe Briefwechsel* (KGB), edited by Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari (Berlin 1975–2004).

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She is extremely prepared for my way of thinking." That is how Nietzsche described the young Russian woman in a letter to Heinrich Köselitz.[2]

Eagle—Lion—Child: they already sound like a prelude to *Zarathustra*. Nietzsche wrote to Maldiwa von Meysenburg around the same time: "This girl is now bound to me by a firm friendship (as firm as such a thing can be established on earth). I have not made any better acquisition (*Errungenschaft)* since long. I am indeed extremely grateful to you and Rée for helping me hereby. This year, which has meant a new crisis in several major parts of my life […] has been greatly embellished by the splendor and grace of this young, truly heroic soul. I wish to have a pupil in her and when my life should not last long, an heiress who continues my work."[3]

Lou von Salomé, a young Russian woman of German-Huguenot descent, came to Switzerland from St. Petersburg in 1880 in order to study as one of the first women at the University of Zürich. Her teacher Hendrik Gillot had prepared her for this study. Since her father had died year before, she could persuade her mother to accompany her to Zürich for her studies. In October 1880, Lou attended lectures on Dogmatics, History of Religion on a philosophical basis, Logic and Metaphysics with the liberal-Protestant theologian Alois Biedermann. She had expressed her wish to study with him in a letter that made the "most favorable impression of her essence and aspirations" on the theologian. Her lines filled the addressee "with the lively wish to support her in her "fully justified beautiful aspirations" with advice and assistance.[4] However, unfortunately, her health could not withstand this endeavor, and just 1 year later she was diagnosed with Hemoptysis, whereupon the doctors advised her to leave Zurich urgently and head for warmer, more southerly climates. Gottfried Klinkel, who was teaching Archeology and Art History in Zürich and whose lectures she was attending too, helped her. She entrusted her lyrical attempts to Kinkel, who wrote poetry himself, and he was so impressed that he recommended her poems for publication in the *Gartenlaube* and the *Deutsche Dichterhalle*: "Her poems are strong and beautiful, full of noble and deep feeling.[5] The Professor regretted very much that this young, talented student had to leave the university so early because of her health.[6] Lou asked him for a letter of recommendation to his old friend Malwida von Meysenbug in Rome, as she had read her *Mémoiren einer Idealistin* (1876) and was keen to meet the author in person. This, too, shows the strong determination of this young student. In the end of her *Mémoiren einer Idealistin*, Malwida von Meysenbug described her stay with Nietzsche, Paul Rée and Albert Brenner in Sorrento in the autumn and winter of 1876/77. Lou also wished for such an intellectual community as Malwida had organized for her young friends in Sorrento, but for a 20-year-old girl this was not so easy to realize. However, Lou had already known Nietzsche and

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[2] Nietzsche to Köselitz, 13.7.1882, KGB III/1 No. 263.

[3] Nietzsche to Malwida von Meysenbug 13.7.1882, KGB NIII/1 No. 264.

[4] Alois Biedermann to Lou von Salomé, 12.10.1880, in: Friedrich Nietzsche, Paul Rée, Lou von Salomé. *Die Dokumente ihrer Begegnung*, edited by Ernst Pfeiffer, Frankfurt a.M. 1970, p. 78.

[5] Gottfried Kinkel to Lou von Salomé, 21.9.1881, in Pfeiffer, *Dokumente*, p. 85.

[6] Ibid.

Paul Rée from Malwida von Meysenbug's memoir before she got to meet them for the first time in Rome.

Lou von Salome arrived with her mother in Rome in February 1882, where they both started spending their evenings in the company of Malwida von Meysenbug from the very beginning. The young girl made a deep impression on this circle too; Malwida was "deeply moved" by her poems, as they showed her an "inner life that is destined to bloom nobly." She had to "hold this life quite sacred" and was not allowed to "harm it by disregarding of her health, which is the necessary basis of everything you are obliged to create out of yourself," the idealist warned and wrote to the young girl: "You have a great task, we will talk about it more."[7]

In the same month, Paul Rée unexpectedly joins the circle. Lou described the scene later on in her *Lebensrückblick*: Malwida was sitting with her and other friends when "the house bell rang" and she was called to the door. When she returned, "the young Paul Rée entered beside her: her old friend, beloved like a son, who, having come in a mad rush from Monte Carlo, was in a hurry to deliver the pumped travelling money to the waiter there, after having gambled and lost everything, literally everything. This amusing and sensational prelude to our acquaintance contributed to the fact that Paul Rée consequently appeared to stand out, more sharply outlined, among the others as if on an isolation stool. […] That very evening, as from then on every day, our eager conversations only came to an end on the way home on a detour from Malwida's Via *della Polveriera* to the hotel where my mother had stayed with me. These walks through the streets of Rome under the moonlight and the stars soon brought us quite close to each other."[8]

Rée came from Genoa where he had spent the last 6 weeks together with Nietzsche. There, both the friends had made plans: "For next year, I have arranged a trip to Biskra, Algiers, Desert Post, Oasis, Camels with your brother," wrote Rée to Elisabeth, the philosopher's sister.[9] One might wonder what drew the two men to Biskra. At that time, the desert oasis was a well-known paradise for homosexuals. A little later, Nietzsche could have met the young André Gide there, in search of erotic adventures with young Arabs. Oscar Wilde had recommended the 14-year-old Ali to him, whom Gide met there. Moreover, Nietzsche knew that in "the Sahara city of Biskra, every girl of the neighboring peoples lived for a time from prostitution in order to enrich themselves."[10] Was that what drew Nietzsche and Paul Rée to Biskra? In any case, the young Russian woman was soon to dissuade them from this plan.

Malwida's joy at having found a disciple and heiress in Lou was short-lived. No sooner had the inquisitive student met Paul Rée than she wanted to continue her studies with him under the same roof. Lou knew exactly that this plan contradicted all the social conventions of that time. Even progressive and emancipated minds such as Malwida von Meysenbug or Lou's former teacher in St. Petersburg Hendrik

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[7] Malwida von Meysenbug to Lou von Salomé, 14.3.1882, Pfeiffer, *Dokumente,* p. 95 f.

[8] Lou Andreas Salomé, *Lebensrückblick*, edited by Ernst Pfeiffer, Frankfurt a.M. 4 edition 1979, p. 75.

[9] Paul Rée to Elisabeth Nietzsche, 11.2.1882, Pfeiffer, *Dokumente*, p. 94 f.

[10] *Nachgelassene Fragmente, kritische Studienausgabe Werke*, KSA Bd. 9, p. 51, NF 3[15] 1880.

Gillot, reacted outrageously. Paul Rée believed that he could solve the problem by asking her to marry him. However, a love affair was never part of her plan. And so, she first had to convince her friend that her love life was "closed for lifetime," while her desire for freedom was "totally unbound."[11]

What convinced Lou so firmly that this plan, which "defied all social norms of the time, could be realized, was first a simple nocturnal dream."[12] In this dream, Lou saw "a pleasant study room full of books and flowers, flanked by two bedrooms and walking back and forth between us, workmates, closed in a cheerful and serious circle."[13] She was later to realize that the years she spent with Paul Rée in Berlin in the company of numerous intellectuals were "almost astonishingly" similar to this dream image.[14] Lou literally pursued her plan with somnambulistic certainty.

But first she had to convince her own mother. As Lou's father had already died, her mother would have preferred to call all three sons to help her "drag her daughter home dead or alive."[15] However, to Lou's astonishment, Malwida von Meysenbug proved to be far more reluctant, seeing all her noble "principles" compromised. Even the walks through Rome at night were a scandal for her and Lou learnt from her example: "to what extent the idealism of freedom can become an obstacle to the individual desire for freedom."[16] In order to keep up appearances, the idealist sacrificed easily Lou's individual desire for freedom. Hendrik Gillot was also disappointed with his pupil, which deeply outraged her, as she believed that her behavior has proved to him how well she had learned his lesson: "Firstly, by not pursuing a mere fantasy at all, but by making it a reality, and secondly, by doing it by people who seem to have been chosen directly by you, namely people who are almost bursting with spirit and intelligence."[17] Lou told Gillot quite openly that even Paul Rée had not yet been completely convinced by her plan: "he is still perplexed, but on our nightly walks, between 12 and 2 in the Roman moonlight, after we have left Malwida's circle, I explain it to him more and more successfully. Malwida is also against our plan, and it hurts me because I love her so much. […] She likes to express herself like this: 'we' must not do this or that, or 'we' have do this or that,—and yet I have no idea who this 'we' actually is,—probably some ideal or philosophical party,—but I myself only know something about 'Myself'. I can neither live like role models, nor will I ever be able to serve as a role model for anyone, on the contrary what I shall certainly do is to shape my own life after myself, whatever may become of it." I have no principle to represent, but something much more wonderful, something that is in oneself and is completely exuberant with life and rejoices and wants to come out."[18] The young

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[11] Lou Andreas-Salomé, *Lebensrückblickp,* p. 76.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid. p. 77.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Lou von Salomé to Hendrik Gillot, 13.3.1882, in *Lebensrückblick,* p. 78.

Lou thus proved to be the ideal representative of Nietzsche's "become who you are" even before she had met the philosopher for the first time.

This was soon to happen. Paul Rée tried to convince Nietzsche to come to Rome by telling him explicitly about the young Russian woman. Unfortunately, that letter has not survived. Rée was probably too enthusiastic about his "Roman find," and therefore his letter has been destroyed by Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth, whose aim was soon to erase Lou von Salomé completely from Nietzsche's biography. In any case, Nietzsche replied: "Give my regards to this Russian woman, if that makes any sense: I *lust* after this kind of soul. Yes, I am going out to rob them in the near future—in view of what I want to do in the next 10 years, I need such souls."[19] Malwida von Meysenbug also spoke highly of the young Russian woman: "A very strange girl, […] seems to me to have arrived more or less at the same results in philosophical thought as you have, i.e. to practical idealism, setting aside every metaphysical presupposition (*Voraussetzung*) and concern for the explanation of metaphysical problems. Rée and I agree in our wishing to see you one day together with this extraordinary being."[20]

However, Nietzsche first traveled to Messina, thereby offending the Roman circle. "Dear Mr. Messineser" wrote Paul Rée in response, "you have caused the young Russian woman most astonishment and grief with your move. She was so eager to see you, to speak to you that she wanted to travel back via Genoa, and she was very angry to see you so far away. She is an energetic, incredibly clever creature, with the most girlish, even childlike qualities. She would like, as she said to have at least one nice year and that should be next winter. She reckons she needs you, me and an older lady like Miss von Meysenbug to do this."[21] Rée was very keen to arrange this get-together for the three of them, possibly in Genoa, and so he reported that he was giving lectures on his book *The Origin of Conscience* at Malwida von Meysenbug's house, where Lou was the most attentive listener, "who listens so attentively, that she always knows in advance what it is all about. Rome would not be for you. But you really must get to know this Russian woman."[22]

This letter has reached its purpose. Nietzsche must have left Messina immediately after receiving it because he arrived in Rome on April 24. Once again, the surprise was great and it becomes even greater when Nietzsche joined Lou's and Rée's plan immediately: "The unexpected happened that Nietzsche, as soon as he heard about Paul Rée's and my plan; he made himself as the third member in the group."[23] He wanted to give up his solitary existence in the south and study in the north again. Nietzsche's decision initially "complicated" their plan[24] especially as he sought to resolve the problem in the same way as Paul Rée, through marriage. He made him, of all people, the advocate of his proposal to Lou. It was now also necessary to convince Nietzsche of Lou's fundamental refusal to get married and to make him realize that

[19] Nietzsche to Paul Rée, 21.3.1882, KGB III/1 No. 215.

[20] Malwida von Meysenbug to Nietzsche, 27.3.1882 KGB III/2 No. 115.

[21] Paul Rée to Nietzsche, 20.4.1882 KGB III/2 No. 118.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Lou von Salomé, *Lebensrückblick,* p. 79.

[24] Ibid., p. 80.

she would also lose the small pension granted to the "only daughters of the Russian nobility" if she married.[25]

The meeting in Rome only lasted for a short time. A few days later Lou traveled back to Zurich with her mother. On their way, they stopped off at Lake Orta near Lago Maggiore, where Nietzsche and Rée followed them two days later. It was there that the memorable trip to Monte Sacro took place, which seems to have captivated the two of them, "at least my mother was offended by the fact that Nietzsche and I stayed too long on Monte Sacro to pick her up in time, which Paul Rée, who was entertaining her in the meantime, also noted very badly."[26]

Following Orta and Monte Sacro, there was another brief encounter in Lucerne during which Nietzsche repeated his marriage proposal in the *Löwengarten*, this time in person, but was again rejected. It was also in Lucerne that Nietzsche proposed to have the iconic picture taken of Lou with the whip in the little ladder cart, in front of which the two philosophers were harnessed. Nietzsche, who arranged this photo personally and took care of all the details, seems to have clearly sensed at the time that Lou would set the tone in this trinity. This photo was made against the resistance of Paul Rée, "who suffered throughout his life a pathological disgust at the reproduction of his face."[27]

Nietzsche showed Lou also the nearby country house Tribschen near Lucerne where he had been so many times as a guest of Richard and Cosima Wagner. And Nietzsche wanted Lou to meet Franz and Ida Overbeck in Basel with whom she should talk openly about him.[28] After the meeting Ida Overbeck wrote into her diary: Lou "has an eye for Nietzsche's ambiguous nature, good for her. He had given her the most incorrect, rapturous ideas about his relationship with his sister […] Here too she seemed to realize quickly and clearly that it was important to leave Miss Nietzsche out of it."[29] The Basel friends gained a good impression of Lou and Franz Overbeck wrote an eight-page letter to Nietzsche after this meeting, in which there was "much love and admiration for [Lou] and much care and concern for both of us".[30] Nietzsche responded to Overbeck: "You only get a letter like this once, I thank you with all my heart and will never forget it."[31] Overbeck's letter has also not survived. Elisabeth most probably destroyed this document along with all the other papers relating to the so-called "Lou affair."

From Lucerne Nietzsche went on to his mother and sister in Naumburg and Paul Rée went to his family estate Stibbe near Tütz. Lou and her mother stayed for some more time with their friends in Zurich for a while before traveling on to Berlin via Hamburg.

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[25] Ibid., p. 80.

[26] Ibid., p. 80 f.

[27] Ibid., p. 110.

[28] "Sprechen Sie über mich mit jeder Freiheit" [talk about me with every freedom], wrote Nietzsche to Ida Overbeck, 28. 51,882, KGB III/1 No. 233.

[29] Ida Overbeck, Diary, vom 2.6.1882, *Chronik zu Nietzsches Leben*, KSA vol. 15, p. 122 f.

[30] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé 7.6.1882 KGB LIII/1 No. 237.

[31] Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck 7.6.1882 KGB III/1 No. 236.

They had already agreed on Vienna as the place where they wanted to study in autumn. Later it would be Paris, where Nietzsche wanted to follow certain lectures and "where both Paul Rée and I had connections to Ivan Turgenev whom I knew from St. Petersburg."[32] Malwida von Meysenbug did not agree with the plan of the trinity and wrote resignedly: "You choose your destiny and must fulfill whatever it may bring you. You are not making a sacrifice; for it is the fulfillment of your highest wishes … I would have wished far more that you had continued your own way alone … in order to prove for once that a woman can also stand alone in this highest realm of spirit and intellect. Insofar this intellectual subjection makes me very sad."[33] On this point Malwida thoroughly misjudged Lou, subjection was never her goal and she was throughout in the condition to walk alone on her own way.

Before the beginning of the studies in Vienna or in Paris, there was Bayreuth Summer still left with the festival where Lou was to meet Richard and Cosima Wagner. This was Malwida's wish above all, but Nietzsche's too. He wrote amorous letters from Naumburg: "The nightingales sing all night long outside my window. […] "When I am all alone, I often, very often speak out your name—for my greatest pleasure!"[34] A further meeting with Nietzsche was planned in Berlin. "I will travel to Berlin at the time when you will be in Berlin."[35] Although Lou informs him immediately that this will not happen because she would stay in Hamburg longer than planned,[36] Nietzsche travelled to Berlin and returned back the next day, "a little more enlightened about the Grunewald and myself than usual—a little scornful and very exhausted."[37] Throughout June Nietzsche seems to be quite confused. He had been "literally thrown overboard by the event of having acquired a 'new person'"[38] and wished to be alone with Lou "as soon as possible," as "lonely people like me have to slowly get used to the people who are dearest to them."[39] It gives him "great pleasure to please her."[40] Nietzsche is prepared to submit to Lou's will unconditionally; indeed he admires this will and sees it as Lou's strongest weapon: Nature gave "every being different weapons of defense—and it gave you your magnificent openness of will."[41] Nietzsche also emphasized her strong will to Köselitz. Lou has "an incredibly sure and vociferous character and knows exactly what she wants—without asking the world and without worrying about the world."[42]

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[32] Lou von Salomé, *Lebensrückblick,* p. 79.

[33] Malwida von Meysenbug to Lou von Salomé, 18.6.1882, in Pfeiffer, *Dokumente*, p. 149.

[34] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 24.5.1882, KGB III/1 No. 231.

[35] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, Pfingsten 1882 KGB III/1 No. 234.

[36] Lou von Salomé to Nietzsche, 4. 6.1882, KGB III/2 No. 125.

[37] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 18.6.1882 KGB III/1 No. 243.

[38] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 27./28.6.1882, KGB III/1 No. 251.

[39] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 28.5.1882, KGB III/1 No. 234.

[40] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 12.6.1882, KGB III/1 No. 240.

[41] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 10.6.1882, KGB III/1 No. 239.

[42] Nietzsche to Köselitz,13.7.1882 KGB III/1 No. 263.

From now on, Lou's will was his own: "Will it be all right if I already now go to Salzburg (or Berchtesgaden), on my way to *Vienna*?"[43] A few days later he wanted to accompany Lou to Bayreuth, "provided that you don't find a better companion."[44] "Let me know how you intend to spend your time after Bayreuth and what help are you counting on from me."[45] "What would be the most desirable, beneficial and worthwhile thing for you to do during this period?"[46] And finally, at the end of the month, at the peak of his surrender to fate: "My dear friend! I am not bound by anything and change my plans, if you have plans, easily," the south of Europe was now completely out of his mind. "If we suit each other, our health will also suit each other, and there will be a secret benefit somewhere."[47] He would prefer to be "set down like a parcel in a little room in the house in Vienna," where Lou wanted to live."[48] Moreover, he was now "of a fatalistic 'devotion to God'—I call it amor fati—that I would run into the jaws of a lion, let alone—-," he wrote to Franz Overbeck[49] and to Paul Rée he confesses to be "full of confidence in this year and its mysterious game of dice about [his] fate."[50]

This new 'confidence' in his fate is also expressed in the letter he writes to Lou in Stibbe, where she is spending the time until the Bayreuth Festiva together with Paul Rée: "Oh what years! What agonies of all kinds, what loneliness and suffocations! And against all this, against death and life as it were, I have brewed my own remedy, these my thoughts with their little strip of unclouded sky above them:—oh dear friend, as often as I think of all this, I am shaken and moved and do not know how it could have succeeded: Self-pity and the feeling of victory fill me completely. For it is a victory, and a complete one—for even my physical health has returned, I don't know where from, reappeared and everyone tells me I look younger than ever. Heaven preserve me from folly!—But from now on when you will advise me, I will be **well** advised and need not to fear."[51] It is part of the fatalistic devotion to God of those days that he wants to be advised by Lou. Originally it was supposed to be the other way around which Nietzsche has not forgotten: He very much wished "to be allowed to be your teacher. Finally, to tell you the whole truth: I am now looking for people who could be my heirs; I am carrying around some thoughts that are not to be read in my books—and I am looking for the most beautiful and fertile farmland for these thoughts."[52] The disciple Lou was made an heiress in the blink of an eye but that was not part of her intention.

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 13.7.15. Juni 1882 KGB III/1 No. 241.

[45] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 10.6.1882, KGB III/1 No. 239.

[46] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 18.6.1882 KGB III/1 No. 243.

[47] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 26.6.1882 KGB III/1 No. 249.

[48] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 18.6.1882 KGB III/1 No. 243.

[49] Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck, 5.6.1882 KGB III/1 No. 236.

[50] Nietzsche to Paul Rée, 18.6.1882, KGB III/1 242.

[51] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 3.7.1882 KGB III/1 No. 256.

[52] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 26.6.1882 KGB III/1 No. 249.

A get-together was planned with Lou in Tautenburg for the time after the Bayreuth Festival. Nietzsche would have loved to be present already at the festival and whispered "this and that" in Lou's ear.[53] In any case, Lou should read his "little book 'Richard Wagner in Bayreuth'" beforehand, "friend Rée probably owns it."[54] Nietzsche had secretly hoped for a personal invitation from Richard Wagner until the end, but it never came and so he stayed away from the festival, as did Paul Rée, who gave his "patronage ticket" to Lou. The "overwhelming event of the Bayreuth Festival" was completely undeserved for her, Lou writes in her *Lebensrückblick*, as her ears were completely "deaf to music."[55] The social part of the event impressed her much more. Between the individual performances of *Parsifal* the so-called "Wahnfried evenings" took place, where Lou had the opportunity to get to know "much of the life of the family." Cosima, "this indescribably attractive and distinguished woman," had personally visited and had "a long and deep conversation" with her.[56] There Lou also met Heinrich von Stein, who was to become part of the Berlin circle around her and Rée the following winter, and she became friends with the Russian painter Paul von Joukowsky, who had designed the stage set for *Parsifal*. Elisabeth took particular offense at this. Nietzsche's sister declared herself to be Lou's mortal enemy from the very first moment in Bayreuth and did everything she could to break up this Russian woman and her brother. However initially she accompanied Lou to Tautenburg, where she was to play the chaperone.

Elisbeth's slander stressed the Tautenburg days right from the beginning. "In the beginning, there seem to have been quarrels between Nietzsche and myself, caused by all kinds of gossip, which has remained incomprehensible to me until now because it did not correspond to any reality and which we soon got rid of in order to experience a rich coexistence with the greatest possible elimination of disturbing third parties,"[57] which was meant for the sister. Lou seems to have seen through Elisabeth better than Nietzsche and was not easily put off by her intrigues: "I knew that … soon enough we would meet beyond all petty gossip, in our deeply related natures. … Nietzsche is an incredibly nice person to talk to with. […] there is a special charm in the meeting of the same thoughts, the same feelings and ideas; one can almost communicate with half words."[58] Lou had intended to record her conversations with Nietzsche for Paul Rée, but soon found that this was impossible, as their conversations could not be summarized in "single, sharp statements." "He takes so much pleasure in conversation that he confessed to me that even in our first quarrel here, when I arrived, when he would have been very miserable at heart, he could not suppress a passing pleasure at my way of refuting him."[59]

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[53] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 16.7. 1882 KGB III/1 No. 269.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Lou von Salomé, *Lebensrückblick,* p. 82.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid. p. 83.

[58] Lou von Salomé, *Tagebuch für Paul Rée*, 14.8.1882, in Pfeiffer, *Dokumente,* p. 181 f.

[59] Ibid., p. 182.

In Tautenburg (August 7–26), Lou delved much deeper into Nietzsche's thoughts than in Rome or Lucerne. After the first week, she noted in her diary: "Nietzsche, on the whole a man of strict consistency, is in particular a man of enormous moods."[60] And 4 days later: "There is a heroic trait in Nietzsche's character and this is the essential thing about him … We are yet to see him appear as the herald of a new religion and then he will be one that recruits heroes as his disciples. How much alike we think and feel about it, and how we literally take the words and thoughts from our lips. We are literally talking ourselves to death these 3 weeks, and strangely enough he can now suddenly stand chatting away for about 10 h a day. […] It's strange that we involuntarily end up in the abysses with our conversations, in those dizzy places where one probably once climbed alone to look into the depths. We have always chosen the chamois steps, and if someone had been listening to us, they would have thought two devils were talking."[61] In her later diary *In der Schule bei Freud* (1912/13), Lou writes about compassion and cruelty, a subject she had already discussed with Nietzsche in Tautenburg in 1882: "Inasmuch as cruel people are always masochists, the whole thing is connected to bisexuality. And it has a deep meaning—. The first time I discussed this topic with someone in my life, it was Nietzsche (this sadomasochist in himself). And I know that afterward we didn't dare look each other in the eye."[62] Nietzsche himself noted in Tautenburg: "Cruelty in the enjoyment of compassion. The deeper we know and love the other, the stronger is our compassion. Consequently, the lover who is cruel to the one he loves will enjoy cruelty the most. Assuming that we love ourselves the most, the highest pleasure of compassion would be cruelty towards ourselves. **Heroic** = that is the striving for absolute destruction in its opposite, the transformation of the devil into God: that is this degree of cruelty."[63] You can see here in Tautenburg two psychologists are talking to each other who were on an equal footing.

After her stay in Tautenburg, Lou wrote a "Draft of a Characterization of Nietzsche" in which she was guided by the idea that all philosophical systems could be traced back to the biography of their originators. Nietzsche shared this view: "Your idea of reducing philosophical systems to the personal acts of their originators is quite a thought from the 'sibling brain' (*Geschwistergehirn)*: I taught the history of ancient philosophy in this sense in Basel and said to my students: "this system is refuted and dead—but the person behind it is irrefutable, the person cannot be dead at all'—for example Plato."[64] In his Tautenburg notebook Nietzsche noted: "Philosophical systems are the most modest form in which someone can speak of themselves—an indistinct and stammering form of memoirs."[65] Her "Characterization of Nietzsche" which she "read to him and discussed with him" in Leipzig in

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[60] Lou von Salomé, *Tagebuch für Paul Rée*, 14.8.1882, in Pfeiffer, *Dokumente,* p. 181.

[61] Ibid., p. 184 f.

[62] Lou Andreas-Salomé, *In der Schule bei Freud*. *Tagebuch eines Jahres*. 1912/1913, in *Nachlass,* edited by Ernst Pfeiffer, Zürich 1958, p. 155 f.

[63] NF 1[67], July–August 1882, KSA, vol. 10, p. 27.

[64] Nietzsche to Lou von Salomé, 16.9.1882, KGB III/1 No. 305.

[65] NF 3[1] Sommer-Herbst 1882, KSA, vol. 10, p. 62.

October 1882, already contained the outline of the central idea of her later book on Nietzsche *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken* (Vienna 1894), Lou wrote in the preface. This work contains an account of Nietzsche's life and thought that is still valid today and is one of the best books ever written about Nietzsche.

Nietzsche experienced Lou in Tautenburg not as a student, but as a partner on an equal footing and always emphasized the equal value of their intelligence. "Lou and I are **all too similar**, 'blood relatives',"[66] he wrote from Tautenburg, they would have "such a similarity of gifts and intentions that our names will have to be mentioned together in the future and any disparagement that hits her will hit me first."[67] "Our intelligences and tastes are deeply related—and there are so many oppositions (*Gegensätze)* that we are the most instructive objects and subjects of observation for each other. I have never met anyone who has been able to draw so much objective insights from his experiences, no one who knows how to draw so much from everything he has learnt. Yesterday Rée wrote me, 'Lou has definitely grown a few inches in Tautenburg'—well, perhaps I have too. I wonder if such a philosophical openness as exists between the two of us has ever existed before."[68]

In Leipzig, in October, they saw each other for the last time. "Neither of us had any idea that it would be the last time. Nevertheless, it wasn't quite the same as at the beginning, although our wishes for our future together as a trio were still clear. If I ask myself what was most likely to affect my inner attitude towards Nietzsche, it was the increasing frequency of such hints from him which were intended to make Paul Rée look bad to me—and also the astonishment that he could consider this method effective. It was only after our departure from Leipzig that hostilities broke out against me, accusations of a hateful nature, of which, however, only a preliminary letter became known to me. What followed later seemed to contradict Nietzsche's nature and dignity to such an extent that it can only be attributed to foreign influence. Thus, when he exposed Rée and me to the suspicions whose groundlessness he himself knew best."[69] The "foreign influence" was enormous. This refers to the sister's "suspicions," from which Nietzsche could never completely free himself. As late as November, he wrote from Genoa: "And now, Lou, dear heart, please create pure sky! Heaven! I want nothing more, in all things, than a pure, bright sky: otherwise I want to get by, however hard it may be. But a lonely man suffers terribly from a suspicion about the few people he loves—especially if it is a suspicion about a suspicion that they have about his whole being." He should have known better, as he wrote to Overbeck immediately after his stay in Tautenburg: "Unfortunately, my sister has become a mortal enemy of Lou's, she was full of moral indignation from beginning to end […] she had seen my philosophy come to life in Tautenburg and was shocked: I love evil, but she loves the good. If she were a good Catholic, she would go into a convent and atone for all the unholy that will come of it." In short,

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[66] Nietzsche to Köselitz, 14.8.1882 KGB III/1 No. 281.

[67] Nietzsche to Elisabeth Nietzsche, 9.9.1882, KGB III/1 No. 300.

[68] Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck 9.9.1882 KGB III/1 No. 301.

[69] Lou von Salomé, *Lebensrückblick,* p. 85.

I have the Naumburg "virtue" against me.[70] In the end, he was left with "the very uncomfortable task of making up to some extent to Dr. Rée and Miss Salomé for what my sister has done so badly […] My sister reduces such a rich and original being to "lies and sensuality"—she sees Dr. Rée and her nothing more than two 'rags'. It was a great learning for me that my sister ultimately acted just as blindly—suspiciously towards me as she did towards Miss S.; it was **only then** did I realize that everything bad that I believed about Miss S. was due to the bickering that preceded my close acquaintance with Miss S."[71]

Regardless of Elisabeth's calumnies, Lou already had doubts about an unconditional friendship with Nietzsche in Tautenburg. On August 18, she noted in her diary for Paul Rée: "In some hidden depth of our being, we are worlds apart. Nietzsche has in his nature, like an old castle, many a dark dungeon … Strangely, the other day the thought flashed through my head with sudden force that we could even face each other as enemies one day."[72] And in October 1882 in Leipzig: "Just as Christian mysticism (like all mysticism) reaches its highest ecstasy in gross religious sensuality, so the most ideal love—precisely because of the great intensification of feeling in its ideality—can become sensual again. An unsympathetic point, this revenge of the human […]. Is it this what alienates me from Nietzsche?".[73]

Nietzsche does not seem to have sensed the gap. For him, the danger was quite different; it consisted of being too close and too dependent. He had to withdraw in order not to lose himself. Right at the beginning of their stay in Tautenburg, he said to Lou: "I must not live near to you for long."[74] Lou had indicated to him that it would not be good for his work if he spent the whole day, from morning to night, talking to her. Nevertheless, Nietzsche stuck to the Paris plan of the trinity until well into November. Only then did he decide to return to the south alone. He wrote to Paul Rée from Genoa, "Dear, dear friend, I thought you would be quite pleased to be rid of me for a while! There have been a hundred moments this year, beginning in Orta, when I felt that you were "overpaying" for your friendship with me. I have already received far too much of your Roman find (I mean Lou)—and it always seemed to me, especially in Leipzig, that you had a right to be a little silent towards me. Think as well of me as you can, dearest friend, and ask Lou to do the same for me. I belong to you both with my warmest feelings—I think I have proved this more by my separation than by my closeness. All closeness makes one so insatiable—and I am, after all, an insatiable person."[75] It was this insatiability that Nietzsche feared and that was his downfall in the winter of 1882/83, when he was completely isolated and lonely in Genoa. In this situation the thought that Lou von Salomé and Paul Rée were studying in Berlin together became so painful for him that he tried to relive

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[70] Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck, 9.9.1882, KGB III/1 No. 301.

[71] Nietzsche to Malwida von Meysenbug Anfang Mai 1884, KGB III/1 No. 509.

[72] Ibid., p. 185.

[73] Erich F. Podach, *Friedrich Nietzsche und Lou Salomé, 1882* (Zürich 1938), p. 154.

[74] Ibid., p. 183.

[75] Nietzsche to Paul Rée, 23.11.1882, KGB III/1 No. 334.

himself with baseless insults and with the help of opium.[76] Nietzsche barely survived this Genoese winter.[77]

When their mutual friend Heinrich von Stein visited Nietzsche in Engadin in the summer of 1884 and attempted to mediate, Nietzsche replied, shaking his head: "What I did cannot be forgiven."[78] But Lou and Paul Rée had long since forgiven. In her Berlin circle which included Heinrich von Stein, Ferdinand Tönnies, Georges Brandes, Paul Deussen, Hermann Ebbinghaus and many others, Nietzsche was to play an important role. Admittedly, "not everyone there was yet familiar with the man whose collections of aphorisms were to make the psychologizing movement world-famous: Friedrich Nietzsche. Nevertheless, he stood among us in an invisible form with a veiled outline as it were",[79] wrote Lou in her *Lebensrückblick.*

No further meeting of the "trinity" should have happened, not even in that summer when Lou and Paul Rée spent their vacation in Celerina, very close to the hermit of Sils Maria. From now on they went their own ways alone with mutual respect.

Translated by Priya Kumari

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[76] Cf. Nietzsche's letter to Lou von Salomé and Paul Rée from Middle December 1882, KGB No. 347–356 und 360–362.

[77] Cf. Nietzsche's letter to Franz Overbeck, 25.12.1882, KGB No. 365: "This last bite of life is the hardest I chewed yet and there is still a chance I will chock on it."

[78] Lou von Salomé, *Lebensrückblick*, p. 86.

[79] Ibid., p. 89.

Groaning for Redemption

Saitya Brata Das

Abstract The decisive ecological crisis that assails us today provokes decisive questions for us, not only regarding nature's condition as such but also the human being's ontological position in the realm of beings as a whole in our contemporary epochal condition of modernity. While this (non) condition indeed calls forth urgent and immediate actions and politico-economic measures that must effectively be deployed, these measures in themselves are not sufficient to address the profound questions that the crisis poses for us. Recognizing this, a transformation of the human being's relation to beings is called forth. Taking up St. Paul's phenomenology of nature and Schelling's Paul-inspired eschatological envisioning of nature, this paper tentatively works towards a theologico-political construction where such a transformation can be formulated by effectively putting into question the "kingdom of man", which constitutes the ontological ground of modernity.

Keywords Ecology · St. Paul · Political theology · Eschatology

Groaning

> For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. (Romans 8:22).

In Saint Paul's letter to the Romans, we hear nature groaning for redemption: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:22). This suffering and pain of nature, which Paul invokes in an eschatological language that resounds throughout the letter, calls for a radical transformation of nature and the whole order of creation along with the transformation of humanity. In other words, transformation of the human being—like the transformation of nature—is not an isolated event. This inextricable nexus or jointure or contiguity of beings is seen not just in the event of their creation (that we read in

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Genesis), but also in their fall *together* due to the first human beings' fault. Hence redemption too cannot be an isolated eschatological event. The event of redemption of the human being demands the whole cosmic redemption as such. In the enslavement and subjugation of nature to the law due to the Fall lies the suffering of nature, and this is contiguous with the suffering of the human beings. As such this groaning is neither a purely mute suffering nor is it an articulated speech. In Luke's report, Jesus himself cries out: "But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19: 40). This groaning is not the groaning for any "this" or "that" thing, but for the redemption of the whole order of creation as such. Here nature is not metaphysically understood as the amorphous *hyle* that is anticipating to receive the stamp of *morphē*, the *forma* to inform the *hyle;* nor is nature understood here as inert *materia* in sight of the *subjectum* that imposes on it the unity which it otherwise lacks; nor is nature understood here as a total realm of things and objects, standing opposed (*Gegenstand*) to the sovereign subject as something objective, a realm that necessarily obeys the laws that are immanent in it. In Paul's phenomenology of nature which—as we have seen here—is eschatologically envisioned, nature does not stand as an order opposed to something like the sovereign Subject which would bestow on it, by an ontological violence, its own categories of thought and knowledge; rather, along with the human being who is *imago dei*, together and at the same time nature falls and rises again. If the messianic event of resurrection is to be understood as the eschatological event, not just for the soul but for the body too—in fact the soul and body together in an inextricable fashion—then this messianic transformation of the law and the transformation of our subjugation to the law unto glory is to be understood as the glorious event of transformation for nature as well and at the same time: when this glorious transformation unto glory occurs, nature no longer groans but explicitly adores and praises the Creator who at once is the Redeeming God. Thus, St Paul's eschatologically envisioned phenomenology of nature at once demands itself to be formulated as an eschatological phenomenology of the human being who, as *imago dei*, is placed amidst the contiguity of beings: this would make any exclusive humanism, which is the fundamental trait of the epochal condition of modernity, an impossible claim. We will come back to the phenomenology of nature in Paul; meanwhile, we will make a rough sketch with broad brush strokes to understand the destiny of what nature has come to mean in our epochal condition of modernity.

Exclusive Humanism

Remi Brague's book *The Kingdom of Man* lays bare the genesis and failure of the *project* of modernity to ground itself on an exclusive humanism (Brague 2018). This means that what we call here as "exclusive humanism"—that is to say, *humanism* as *project* (Brague goes on to elucidate what this concept "project" itself means)—is not the only humanism that exists in the history of the concept: it would be more proper of speak of humanisms. If we call the Biblical commandment to the first humans to

have dominion over the beasts on the earth and fowls of the sky as "humanism", and if you also call the Greek thinker's understanding of the human being as the measure of all things as "humanism"—and there was also "Renaissance humanism"—all these humanisms are not grounded on the fundamental idea of "project". This trait decisively separates the modernity's project of exclusive humanism from all other humanisms, which describe themselves either as given condition or as task. It is one of the important contributions of Martin Heidegger's essay "Letter on Humanism" to clarify that the kind of humanism that defines itself as the fundamental trait of the epochal condition of modernity is qualitatively a different thing from, let's say, the Biblical commandment to the first human being (Heidegger 1993, pp. 213–66): the other humanisms don't ontologically ground themselves on the sovereign self-assertion of the human as the Subject. The epochal condition of modernity, then, is grounded on the hegemonic archē or principle—what Reiner Schurmann would call it as "sovereign fantasm" (Schürmann 2003)—of the Subject. The self-legitimizing authority of the Subject, which defines its very project-character (the Subject projects itself, moves ahead towards its own possibilities on the basis of its own capacity to be) to have domination over nature, makes the project of modernity as a self-legitimizing one, and makes this self-legitimization truly a *project*. Hans Blumenberg's great work on modernity (Blumenberg 1985) shows, in a more positive note however, how the modernity's legitimation is an immanent one, that is, a self-legitimation without having to appeal to any transcendental ground like God or nature. This is why for Henri de Lubac such a self-legitimizing project, grounded on such an exclusive humanism, necessarily has to assume the form and figure of atheism in a fashion of which he calls a "drama" (Lubac 1995). All these disclose one characteristic: that modernity defines itself negatively, not in terms of its content but in terms of its projective mode, as exclusion of what is otherwise than its own law, as exclusion of its *auto-nomos,* which it comes to understand itself with the help of almost a biological metaphor: adulthood. The most programmatic expression of this project is to be found in Immanuel Kant's response to the question: *Was ist Aufklärung*? (Kant 1991) where he comes to understand Enlightenment itself as coming to adulthood: the human race coming to give itself its own *nomos* without any relation to anything *hetero*, whether that *hetero-nomos* is to be understood as nature or God. The essence of what does it mean to be "human" is this capacity to posit itself on its own foundation; only thus can it measure everything, because first of all it measures itself by its own measure: the Subject, this hegemonic *archē* of modernity, is this capacity to be on its own ground, now for the first time cut off from any transcendence, from all that it considers to be otherwise than its *auto-poesis*, its self-projecting activity. If what we call "myth" is that which nothing other than auto-poesis is, then there is a myth of modernity, which consists of its aggressive drive to eliminate and exclude anything heteronomous to its exclusionary self-foundation by calling all that it excludes as "myth". This is the paradox that haunts any project that grounds itself on self-legitimation. This paradox also haunts the very project—which is *project* par excellence—of modernity: its exclusive humanism, in the very name of progress which has become now an ideology ends up in an exclusion of the human being itself. The failure of modernity consists in the paradoxical fact that it is too

successful; that the self-destruction of the human, in today's era of extreme scientific and technological advancement, lies immanent in the project of exclusive humanism itself. The domination of nature which lies at the heart of the exclusive humanism of modernity—grounded on the metaphysics of the Subject—ends up dominating the very Subject of domination: the result is an apocalyptic catastrophe (without anything redemptive in sight), not only for nature around us but for the human being itself. This manifests a truth which we see Paul seeing, and which is also seen in the divine commandment in Genesis: that the "place" of the human being among beings can only be seen in the fundamental contiguity of beings. Yet, this truth is precisely what the epochal condition of modernity cuts itself off, the truth that—precisely in its tragic denial—manifests itself once more by piercing through the condition in which we now live, the truth that—as Schürmann would like to speak—remains as undertow in every hegemonic regime. The hegemonic regime of modernity is thus grounded on a tragic denial of the truth, the truth of the ontological contiguity of the human being with what appears to it as otherwise than it is; and yet, precisely in this denial, at the extreme limit of its success which coincides with its very failure, the truth again manifests itself in a decisive light of decision at the extreme limit of modernity. In his justly famous essay on technology Martin Heidegger thus thinks the self-manifestation of truth, at the very moment of its withdrawal, as the event (*Ereignis*) of Being (Heidegger 1977): in a lightning flash, in the blink of an eye (*Augenblick*), Being glimmers in a gleam of a glance. The manifestation of truth is, in that sense, is a tragic event of Being.

In this sense, what we now sense as the ecological catastrophe without anything redemptive in sight, is also the catastrophe for what we understand ourselves as being "human": it is catastrophic for the human being itself because what at stake is the fundamental contiguity of being which is tragically denied in the hegemonic regime of modernity. That the self-positing of the human Subject as sovereign authority has led to its own displacement, even to its own catastrophic self-destruction: this paradox demands that we enter again into the thought of the contiguity of beings; only then, the immense question of ecological catastrophe, which also is the catastrophe of the human being in question, can be addressed thoughtfully. The planetary domination in today's world of extreme technological advancement is not easily solved by technological means at our disposal, as if technology has remained for us nothing more than means at our complete disposal; nor can the prodigious question of ecological catastrophe be adequately responded by letting anything of the human being itself go and replacing it by unforeseeable possibilities opened up by technology, as if it is a question of substitution and replacement here, as if technology in itself has something about it automatically redemptive and has nothing to do with the human being in question. That the human being itself is in question today calls forth precisely a *humanism to come* in the light of the fundamental contiguity that the human being has with nature and with the divine in a fashion that at once also puts into question the traditionally sanctioned doctrine of the hierarchy of beings. What, then, it calls forth is a political eco-theology which thinks together the jointure of beings once more on basis of an essential freedom that opens up the space between the human being and the divine, and the human being with nature. Only on the basis of the *spacing*

of this freedom may the human being exist at home, where nature itself comes to be at home, as the very word *Oikos* implies. For "ecology" is derived from the Greek *Oikos* which means "the doctrine of the house" (See Moltmann 1985, p. xii.): wherever the human being is at home in contiguity with creation, there is celebration. This is why Jürgen Moltmann calls this eschatological event of the human being coming together with nature in the light of redemption as "the feast of creation". Theologically speaking, the beautiful name "redemption" is given to the event of redeeming or releasing of creation as much as of the human being, together and contiguously, from the enslavement and corruption and from their disjointure from God due to the Fall. In Sabbath, the groaning of nature ceases. This is the eschatological event where God Himself is present in his creation and with the human being, joining with the human being, together with nature, in the feast of redemption.

The Abyss of the Fall

The eco-critics often cite the Biblical commandment to the first human beings to have dominion over the earth as the order for domination "over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air". It is interesting to note that the commandment comes immediately after the creation of the first human beings, male and female, as *imago dei*:

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1: 27-28)

The critics here ascribe what constitutes as the specific trait of modernity, which is a certain epochal condition—that is, the project of domination over nature on the ground of exclusive humanism with its the metaphysics of the Subject cut off from all contexts and from all transcendence—to the Biblical commandment. Here they take up and extend by analogy a dominant theological interpretation without questioning it: the creative God as the omnipotent God who, as such, constitutes as the transcendental model of the sovereignty of the human Subject on earth. If the human being is the *imago dei* of the sovereign God—so the interpretation goes—then the human being, as the image of divine sovereignty, gives itself the self-legitimate right to have domination over the rest of creation.

However, to have dominion "over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air" is not to dominate; to transform "dominion" into "domination" is precisely the temptation to which the first human beings succumbed. The temptation is the invitation to see God primarily as the sovereign God of force and power, and to place oneself as sovereign in the place of God's sovereignty; what it does thereby—and this is the Fall—is that this decision cuts the human being off from the access that it has to the abyss of divine love unconstrained by judgment. The human being is kept open to the abyss of divine love without judgment precisely when it keeps itself in gratitude by being obedient to the commandment to love: that is, to keep oneself responsible

to the rest of creation in a unique way, for the human being alone is the *imago dei*. To be *imago dei* means to be made responsible in a unique fashion, in a chosen way, to the creation amidst which the human being finds itself: that is to say, to be *imago dei* calls forth an unconditional responsibility to preserve the contiguity of beings by itself remaining the link between the divine and created order. To have *domination* is to let the *dominion* go. So, with the Fall, the human being loses its *dominion* precisely by succumbing to the temptation of having *domination*. The Fall introduces a fundamental rupture into the contiguity of beings: because the link, the vowel between the consonants, which makes up the word, itself decides for domination, the Fall is not only a fall for the human being, but for the creation or nature itself as a whole. This is the reason why the whole of creation, along with us humans, groan—for redemption. Only a restitution of the image character of the human being can there now be redemption, that is: the messianic restitution of the fundamental contiguity of beings. It is this messianic "feast of redemption" that Paul's phenomenology of nature welcomes: nature's coming to its own home, along with and in contiguous with, the human being to its redeemed condition. The messianic event of redemption is thus at once the cosmological event par excellence. In ceasing its own domination over nature, the human being comes to own *Oikos*, but then the fashion of the world must pass away.

Schelling's Messianic Phenomenology of Nature

As Stanislas Breton suggests, Schelling's messianic phenomenology of nature is Pauline in inspiration: "Schelling…attempts 'a derivation, on the grounds of principles, of a determinate system of our knowledge, that is to say the system of total experience'. In both Schelling and in Pauline theology, the fundamental thought that emerges is of a 'decline and slavery of a nature' waiting for its liberation. The speculations on the 'world soul', on the *nisus formativus*, and on the 'potencies' at work in the great organism show that the 'mechanism' is at once a kind of waste or cadaver of extinguished life and a permanent yearning to surmount it. 'Full of soul' and of a trembling sensitivity, *phusis* suffers the pains of childbirth that it might attain the spontaneity of which it is the obscure or unconscious reminiscence. The categories of immanent finality, the vision of a finality without an end, borrowed from *The Critique of the Power of Judgment*, but without the Kantian corrective of their critical usage, authorize a 'hermeneutics of nature" (Breton 2011, p. 124).

Finding himself in the midst of the "kingdom of man"[1]—in the kingdom of exclusive humanism which constitutes the epochal condition of modernity—Schelling constructs a messianic phenomenology of nature that goes against the epochal project of the time. This consists of thinking nature itself as messianic in its yearning and

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[1] Remi Brague remarks that the phrase "the kingdom of man" appears in Francis Bacon's *Novum Organon* (Brague 2018, p. 69) as the title of a part of the book where Bacon says that the kingdom of man is founded upon the sciences that take control of nature.

groaning for redemption: an eschatology which is more in line with the Pauline eschatology rather than with the Idealism that is forming itself at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This messianic phenomenology of nature would later inspire the messianic philosophy of Ernst Bloch a hundred years later: like the human being, nature too is messianic by virtue of its *noch nicht*, of what Bloch would call the "ontology of the not-yet" (Bloch 1995).This task demands deconstruction of the fundamental principles of what has come to be called "German Idealism": the task is to put into question in a radical fashion the metaphysics of the Subject on which the project of modernity grounds itself as on a hegemonic fantasm; the task is to put into question the triumphal march of the concept which—in its maximizing drive—absolutizes itself by emptying of all the elements of sensuous multiplicity and differential singularity.

The metaphysical violence of the concept and its repression of nature which consists of reducing nature only to quantitative determinations, and reducing nature by subsuming it to an apparatus of knowledge of which the Subject is the master: this fundamental violence constitutes the force and power of Idealistic metaphysics. In that way, the Idealism movement legitimizes, at a very metaphysical ground, the project of modernity to dominate nature. To weaken the force of the concept and to render the violence of its law inoperative, it is necessary to understand nature itself, no longer as inert *materia* to be formed by the form-giving power called the Subject nor as a determinate apparatus of elements blindly following the law of causality; rather, Schelling understands nature as pregnant with possibilities and prodigiously alive in this pregnancy, yearning and longing for redemption, a longing and yearning which overflows and exceeds the power of the concept. Nature is, then, not something which merely stands opposed to the Subject like an object: the truth of its being cannot be found within a constituted regime of phenomenality. Out of the heart of the epochal condition of modernity, Schelling thus attempts to think nature in a fashion that falls outside the epistematic system that constitutes the massive project of modernity. The yearning and longing of nature—because nature as creation, along with the human being, is in a covenant with God—is to escape from the mythic law of necessity into the freedom of redemption. In other words, not only in creation but also in the messianic event of redemption, nature together with the human being participates in the covenant with God. The yearning and the longing of nature is to escape the mythic law of necessity that comes with the judgment due to the Fall: the longing is to find freedom in redemption. To find freedom in redemption constitutes, for nature as much as for the human being, the true Sabbath: it is the feast of redemption. After a painstaking and profound exegesis of the Biblical word *bara* (creation)—which he finds its resonance in the old German word *bären* or *gebären*—Schelling goes onto show the meaning of the Biblical word *berith* (covenant): to form a covenant is to create, or to create is to form a covenant. Schelling writes in *The Ages of the World*:

> Every external relation of God with humans, nay, with the whole of nature [c.f., Genesis 9:12] is a covenant. The furnishing of nature with alternating days and nights is a covenant of Jehovah with the day and the night [Jeremiah 33:20]. The relationship of the father to his son is a covenant. And the new covenant means the same thing as new creation. (Schelling 2000, p. 99)

Nature, then, accompanies the human being—and vice versa—on the passage of the *Oikonomia* of salvation from creation to redemption: this *Oikonomia* of salvation is the true *ecological* passage towards finding in redemption the true Sabbath, the true *Oikos* for the human being as much as for nature. The yearning and longing of nature, which also is the yearning and longing of the human being—Paul rather speaks of "groaning" of nature—is to escape the mythic violence of the law that comes with the force of judgment which Schelling calls—following Jacob Böhme—as God's wrath. In Schelling's words:

> Hence, here still lies, so to speak, the heart of nature, bare and open, just like that heart in animal life…Nature, yearning for rest, seems to seek nothing more ardently than to escape from that necessary and alternating movement that emerges from the connected principles' reciprocal intolerance for each other. (Ibid., p. 95)

Schelling's messianic phenomenology of nature is also an eco-theology in the sense that, first of all, he thinks the relation of God with nature as creation (*bara*) together with the human being as covenant (*berith*); secondly, this covenant, opening to new creation in redemption, is still preserved by God out of the incomprehensible abyss of divine love, despite the fault of the human; and despite the event of the Fall, the contiguity of beings never gets completely lost; thirdly, the doctrine of the contiguity of beings is thought here, not as a static state of affairs nor as a given, determinate condition that follows the blind law of necessity, but is to be understood in the context of *Oikonomia* of salvation that Schelling understands, in the Biblical spirit, eschatologically; fourthly, this *Oikonomia* is the true *Oikos* for nature and for the human being in that it suspends the mythic law of necessity and opens creation for freedom where nature finds its rest, its home, its *Oikos.*

Already at the very moment of the inception of German Idealism, Schelling's lectures on philosophy of nature do not merely *posit* nature as mere *opposite* to consciousness: nature is not a mere image which would serve as the inverse reflection of the Subject's consciousness; in other words: nature is not the image that the Subject itself would thetically *posit* as its *opposite.* Instead of relegating nature to the secondary position in the pathway of the concept's self-becoming—which Hegel would grasp as Absolute Concept or Absolute Spirit—Schelling would rather maintain the thought of the contiguity of beings. In his Freedom essay (Schelling 1992)—which Heidegger recognizes as his *magnum opus*—Schelling understands nature, not as a moment of the concept's thetic opposition, but as creation: beings are opened up to each other in the *spacing* of freedom which is the most radical gift, in the sense that on this basis of this gift alone can there be something like being at all. The creative God establishes, out of the incomprehensible abyss of divine love, beings as and beings in covenant, that is, as contiguous, where the human being finds itself chosen to be like a vowel between consonants which renders a word possible. Now, to find oneself to be a vowel means precisely that the human being does not establish this "position" amidst beings on the basis of the power of its own being: it's being, having been created out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, in the decision of divine freedom, is a "loan" or "gift" freely given. It means that it does not legitimize in anyway the human being's claim to sovereign authority over nature and to have domination over the rest

of creation; rather, this choosenness calls the human being towards its unconditional, unique, singular vocation—to remain in responsibility towards the rest of creation, to speak out—on the basis of the gift of language—with the dignity of being *imago dei*. With the Fall as a consequence of the human being's relinquishing and abusing of the most radical gift of freedom, the jointure or the contiguity of beings is ruptured: now a particular will, which in itself is non-being—for its being is a gift, a loan—maliciously seeks to appropriate Being to itself and to dominate over the whole of created order. What is evil, in its most radical possibility, is nothing other this insatiable hunger for Being: it is the particular will's malicious desire to transform *dominion*—which is a task, a vocation, a commandment out of the divine gift of freedom—into *domination* which is a self-giving and self-legitimating project on the part of the human being's self-assertion as the sovereign being among beings. Ontologically speaking, it is based upon the human being's claim to an ontological autochthony and aboriginality by violently cutting itself from all contexts and from the very contiguity of beings in which alone it can find its originary vocation. Nature is now something to be dominated, and not just have dominion over by the human.

Schelling further deepens the idea of the contiguity beings in his private lectures at Stuttgart. The human being's attempt to substitute the interrupted link—which is due to the Fall—with something that the human being can create out of its own capacity leads to the establishment of the state. The state is human being's poor attempt to recover a ruptured unity: it marks the degradation of the fallen man rather than his original dignity as *imago dei*. Nature's groaning for redemption does not find rest in this artificial and violent unity that the humanity being enforces with the force of law; hence its groaning continues to resound in this unredeemed condition. Paul's messianic critique of the law as much as Schelling critique of the state is to be understood against this context. Both the human being's self-legitimizing domination over nature and the political tyranny of the state result from the "one dimensional humanity", the exclusive humanism of the kingdom of man. Schelling writes:

> In surveying more recent history, which with good reason, is said to begin with the arrival of Christianity in Europe, we note that humanity had to pass through two stages in its attempt to discover or produce a unity; first that of producing an internal unity through the Church, which had to fail because the Church simultaneously sought to become the external unity and eventually attempted to produce external unity by means of the state. Only with the demise of hierarchical [systems] has the state attained this importance, and it is manifest that the pressure of political tyranny has increased ever since in exact proportion to the belief that an inner unity seemed dispensable; indeed it is bound to increase to a maximum intensity until, perhaps, upon the collapse of these one-dimensional attempts humanity will discover the right way. (Schelling 1994, p. 229).

Schelling prophetically conceives of a "philosophical religion", a promised religion, a religion to come, where humanity finally would be divested of its one-dimensionality and would come to find the restitution of the original contiguity of beings: in fact, this is the messianic future which is disclosed with the event of God's self-revelation:

> Whatever the ultimate goal may turn out to be, this much is certain, namely, that true unity can be attained only *via* the path of religion; only the supreme and most diverse culture of religious knowledge will enable humanity, if not to abolish the state outright, then at least to

ensure that the state will progressively divest itself of the blind force that governs it, and to transfigure this force into intelligence. It is not that the Church ought to dominate the state or vice-versa, but that the state ought to cultivate the religious principles within itself and that the community of all peoples ought to be founded on religious convictions that, themselves, ought to become universal. (Ibid)

Modernity's project of establishing the kingdom of man on the atheistic foundation of exclusive humanism has led to the "one dimensional humanity" that cuts the human beings off from the context and from the contiguity of beings. The ecological catastrophe is thus a catastrophe for the whole of creation that results from the human being's asserting itself as the sovereign authority over all that exists. Absolving itself from the contiguity that alone gives the humanity its true vocation, the human being give itself the self-legitimized right of domination. The result is the self-destruction of this "one dimensional humanity". Only with a restitution of the contiguity of beings that goes beyond any technological means will the groaning of nature will cease. Then there will be a feast of Sabbath—the Sabbath of redemption.

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Political Semiotics and Rhetoric: A Preliminary Note

Asha Sarangi

Abstract The idea of *political semiotics* strikes relationalities of various sorts between Linguistics and Social Sciences, and more particularly between language and politics. It draws and thrives upon fields of discourse analysis, hermeneutics, contextual relativism, semantics, rhetoric, pragmatics, semiology, and communicational theories of various sorts. In this essay, I intend to locate and expand the idea of the political within the semiotic hegemony expressing itself in the social and cultural sign system at a particular historical time frame. A world of communication expressed through symbols, satires, signs, parodies, humour, rhetorics, etc. unfolds not just the pluralities of communicative actions and reactions but the meaning system inherent in the given power structure of the society at large. The field of political semiotics proposed here posits the primacy of language in the world as a political one showing the interpellation of *politics of semiotics and semiotics of politics*. It is about the signification processes and practices whereby signs are used to convey meanings which further shape perceptions of life in general. It indicates an intimate relationship between speaker and the listener or between the user and the intended audience. I think such a relationship between production of politics or a particular kind of politics and its presentation exhibits the domain of political semiotics.

Keywords Political semiotics · Rhetoric · Linguistics · Language

The term semiotic mediation, in the discipline of anthropology particularly, was often clubbed with the idea of symbolic anthropology and thus not really emphasizing the distinction between symbol and sign. Symbol could be characterized as one kind of a sign within the larger sign system. Symbols as signs allude to the fact that their meanings are socially and culturally contextualized. Semiotic mediation, as Elizabeth Mertz argues, suggests the distinctive ways in which signs have meaning or mediate (see Mertz 1985, pp. 1–19). She quite rightly posits that *sign* is used to express "standing for" relation, and thus the idea of mediation, she further argues, is inherent

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in the notion of sign, which following Saussure consists of signifier (abstract sign system, sound image) and signified (utterances, concept or mental representation or interpretant). It is important here to suggest that signs can be distinguished in terms of their different relations with objects. The well-known American linguist, C.S. Pierce, has argued that there are three broad ways in which such a relationship can be made: icon—an inherent similarity or identity among objects referred to by sign (example; road signs), index (based on causality or contextual contiguity between sign and object (example: smoke for fire) and symbol (general law permitting sign and object to be interpreted as connected (example: heart for love). To further unpack the complex world of semiotics, we can locate two significant aspects of it in the field of Pragmatics and Semantics. Pragmatic meaning refers to the meaning dependent on the context whereas the semantic meaning is a core meaning apart from the contextual factors. But central to the category of political semiotics is the role of the language as performatives—as Austin has argued eloquently—that language does perform the act it names and describes.

Signs do not make sense on their own rather they are made sense of or made sense upon, about or through them within the larger context and the social interaction. Benjamin Whorf, Sapir and Vygotsky question how language mediates thought in terms of the effects of language on the development of cognitive processes. Whorf expands it further and examines specific effects of different languages on the cultural habits of thought that shape the thinking. Whorf shows how languages construe external reality differently and distinctively. Within the Marxist framework, semiotics is embedded in the historical materialism, and sign system is an ideological construct whereby commodities are indicative of messages, codes and endowed with social and cultural values and meaning-system. For example, for August Ponzio, signs are situated in the labour process, and sign and ideology intervene together and upon each other (Ponzio 1984, p. 300). He establishes relationship between semiotics and Marxism by anchoring it in ideology, which is embedded in the historical materialism. In his views, Marxist approach constitutes semiotics as a critical sign production communicating meanings thereof. Signs are situated in the labour process. If ideology has a class character, so has the sign system, and "dominant class gives a uniform and univocal character to the signs".

While proposing the vast and uncharted field of political semiotics, I would like to argue that we can include signs and sign system expressed through symbols, slogans, statues, graffitis, satires, tropes, metaphors and metonyms of various kinds with each one of them having its own distinctive analytical, historical, empirical, conceptual and semantic universe. This has to do with the use/s of a language with identifiable social referents at any given point of time while simultaneously recognizing that signs are not just relational and contextual but subject to mediation and representation as well. Saussure stipulates the laws of sign operating under his theory of semiology which can gravitate to the idea of a *semiological community,* a kind of interpretative community. In other words, Semiotics is best expressed in the idea of a community and its communicational network, and can be seen through the entirety of communicational web or different practices of it. One can possibly see how a kind of connection emerges between communication, convention, culture and community

networks. It is about the signification processes and practices, and signification is more than just the meaning-making practice. Simply put semiotics means how an idea or an object communicates a meaning or set of meanings; for example, faith is connotative of a religious belief but it can also mean trust or confidence when used in an interpersonal sense.

Relationship between production of politics or a particular kind of politics and its presentation wraps in the domain of semiotics being considered as part of the materiality of politics, its political economy and culture. It must be pointed out after J.G.A Pocock that language used in politics has important consequences for political action (Boucher 1985, p. 761). It should also not go unsaid that the ability to define and manipulate concepts is a form of political practice. Conceptually, what we should alert ourselves to see is how the emergence of a certain kind of political language can be geared towards setting the agenda of a political discourse and consequently result in the political communication of a certain kind.

In the category of political semiotics that I am using here, I won't be able to include all different forms that I have stated above but only focus on one of them, that is the use/s of political rhetoric. A set of questions should be of concern at the very outset in this context. How does the use of political rhetoric help in understanding the domain of communicative politics in general? Does it redefine the form and craft of politics in any significant way? Does rhetoric open up the dialogical aspects of the political communication marked as a linguistic practice articulating differences of varied political ideologies over questions of power, authority, domination, legitimacy, etc.? It is equally important to note that this art of political rhetoric participates in a given cultural and social context of collective and shared practices particularly in the communicative domain of what is being said where, how, when and why. More importantly, it is relevant to ask how rhetoric comes into play and develops into a well-established political practice in a particular society.

In the history of rhetoric, at least among the Greeks and the Romans, thinking was linked to the speech making act of a politician. They assumed that the indispensable qualification of a politician was to speak as persuasively as s/he could in the public so that s/he could evoke sympathy or even stir hostility or hatred for his/her opponent. Aristotle's famous work on rhetoric tried to solve the dilemma of presenting rhetoric as an art or a science. In his two volumes of *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas shows how rationality as an inter-subjective and practical knowledge consists in the speaking and acting of the subjects in arriving at a certain kind of practical consensus. He argues how modern societies use various structures of communication or speech performative acts so that practical rationality can be established. This kind of communicative action is different from strategic action with the latter to achieve certain goals whereas the former aims to arrive at some sort of shared understanding. He further strengthens his argument by saying that when an actor tries to convince others to consensus, then it is the illocutionary part of the speech that matters from a pragmatic point of view. For this, the actor generally has to give reasons to justify his/her speech. If such ordinary speech making fails to bring different actors to concurrence, then the actor shifts to a "reflective" form of communication. Habermas further suggests that, "democratic procedures are meant

to institutionalise the forms of communication necessary for rational will formation" (Habermas 1996, p. 487).

Is it the case that in modern times, the language of political deliberation and contestation needs to be cast in a hyperbolic expressive manner to impress upon the significance of the political ideas and ideals within this kind of communicative web? How does the civility of communication get mired in the uncivil codes and tropes suggestive of political differences and disputes of various kinds among political leaders, actors, thinkers, and elites belonging to varied political ideologies and parties? Do the moments of democratic deliberations need to go through these cumulative communicational rites and rituals before acquiring ideological and political legitimacy of some sort? To what extent can we read the sub-text of public approval, consensus, dissonance, disgust or even disapproval in this mode of communication? How and why do some politics transition from saintly idioms to more abusive and repulsive forms of all sorts? In this context, it is pertinent to ask what makes a good rhetoric? Are there particular norms and rules to make accurate and perfect rhetorical expressions? Are some of them more acceptable than others? One can also divide them into two dominant forms—instrumental and hermeneutical—whereby the former is used to achieve some sort of communicational objective and ends with reference to the given empirical reality, whereas the latter is in the domain of interpretation and thus a particular reality is made sense of by its meaning system.

The Aristotelian idea of rhetoric involving three aspects can be interpreted in the following ways. Rhetoric, like the semiotics, can be seen working at all three levels: as a form of pragmatics (which is the study of signs and sign system in relation to their users), semantics (study of signs in relation to their designate in terms of what they refer to or meaning-system), syntax (whereby the study of signs or expressions is done in relation to one another). He suggests that rhetoric provides three kinds of orations: deliberative, judicial and demonstrative. The purpose of deliberative oration, in his views, is partly exhortational and dissuasional whereas judicial oration is partly accusative and defensive. The demonstrative oration is partially for purposes of either praise or blame. In his *Treatise on Rhetoric*, Aristotle sets up the relationship between rhetoric and logic on three main accounts: that both are founded on the natural faculty of individuals; that both use "opposite inferences" and both are indifferent to truth and falsehood though they must choose either of them (Corcoran 1979). His famous typological classification into ethos, pathos and logos of rhetoric clearly shows it as an art in its diverse domains. For example, *ethos* is about inviting audience to accept an argument because of who is making it, and how it speaks about the character of the speaker. It may include all kinds of traits such as trustworthiness, honesty, sincereity, intelligence, expertise, etc. In this sense, ethos tends to create a sense of community through identification. *Pathos* brings in emotions and thus refers to an affective form of politics as a way to enhance our capacity to exercise judgement or give us a capacity to be a source and form of knowledge about states of affairs and our own relationship with them. The possible examples could be the idea of love, hatred, revenge and politics of resentment. The *logos*, on the other hand, refers to "the structure of reality" and attempts to derive something from a claim about the given nature of the world. These claims rely on rhetorical figures and techniques such as

analogy, examples and various other forms of metaphor. Here it is the nature of event or phenomenon produced in its description and through the narrative context in which it is placed. In times of technological determinism, rhetoric as an art and a political strategy is shaped by formal, rational, and more instrumental uses resulting in its repetitiveness in various communicational domains. It can be said that democracy and reasoned public debate or speech are complementary to each other, and it becomes important to locate when and why do the passions run high and rational deliberation and speaking take a back seat.

A central idea in the field of rhetoric is the audience to which "thought-actions" are directed. It could be an imaginary or invented audience at times. In this regard, the audience are often identified or determined by their class, race, gender, caste, regional, and national affinity. The forms of rhetoric as either deliberative (people making decisions), legal (judging the truth or falsity of the statements), or ceremonial (spectator like situation of the audience) in some ways predetermine the roles assigned to the audience who is the subject of politics. In this context, the rhetorical traditions of society get interwoven with varied political ideologies resulting in the formation of political arguments and concepts used and interrogated by various political groups in their communicational habitus. This is further compounded by loaded and, at times, biased narratives, interpretative tools, and discursive ambiguities. Aristotle's formulation of rhetoric as the dialectical counterpart suggests a strong base for its persuasive and coercive capabilities. The sites of rhetoric can be located in the everyday and routine affairs of politics and in the speeches, utterances, statements, interviews, print and electronic digital world, and in numerous performative political spheres.

Since political rhetoric is embedded within particular linguistic formulations, the latter can be used more as open-ended forms of political language that can be used to derive multiple and differential meanings. It requires a certain form of tactical speaking. Should they be seen as ideological signifiers indicative of particular political action or ethos? Here, the thinking of particular political actors is retrieved through words in action or a semantic battle of the political vocabularies and expressions. Hence, political articulations are not devoid of political thoughts or processes in a society. The abstract understanding of politics and its conceptual universe is made sense through *politics as an enactment* and *engagement of power* and its ideological framing at various levels. Political actors as theatrical performers and dramatists emerge visibly in these uses and articulatory devices reflective of historical, cultural and geographical location. The idea of signification and its comparable equivalences or differences of images, metaphors and tropes about ideologically varied or even opposed political actors is central to the uses of rhetoric.

Political rhetoric has been analysed from various and divergent methodological standpoints and perspectives. The multi-disciplinary approaches from political philosophy, linguistics, literary studies, discourse analysis, linguistic and cognitive anthropology, and ethnography of speaking among others have expanded and enriched its field. Deborah Cameron sets up an innovative approach in her book *Verbal Hygiene* (2012), which establishes the relationship between language, culture and politics. Language is not simply a communicational device but an ideological,

political, sociological and cultural sign system itself. According to her, linguistics is descriptive and not prescriptive; prescriptivism is verbal hygiene. The idea of verbal hygiene is not for uniformity or consistency but for some sort of intended objectives. The big question is how a diverse and plural society shares a common culture through communicative ethos prescribed in using a particular language. Therefore, any call for a perfect language on which everyone agrees on what words mean or should mean is impossible to achieve in any social context. There is always an indeterminacy of meaning, and one has to settle the question of whose meaning prevails or derails.

Rhetoric has become a dominant mode of communication among political leaders and elites at all times and not just during the electoral campaigns. Indian democracy, for example, has increasingly become a battleground of "war on/of words", showing a high decibel of consternation and interrogation among competing political leaders and parties during the parliamentary and assembly elections. The communicative devices and strategies begin to acquire the centre-stage during times of elections whereby uses of political rhetoric, satire, humour, tropes and metaphors, among others, are used as forms of political and public communication. Political rhetoric can invoke, at times, quite intensely, a whole gamut of symbols that indicate context and the author's intent. Using symbols in politics also shows how meaning is constituted and communicated. The evocative power of the symbols defines the strength or the limitation of the symbols, which can be expressed through cartoons, statues, posters, graffiti and much more. According to Suketu Mehta,

> The purpose of symbols in political discourse is not simply to point but also to evoke, edify, and conserve meaning. They do so by evoking categories of meaning that already exist in a culture and its history. For a symbol to be appropriated in a given discourse, the recipients must be familiar with and interpret its meaning. (Mehta 2005, pp. 25-30)

Rhetoric also comes with strategic display or uses of visuals and pictorial representation of the meanings imputed to verbal or non-verbal expressions. The widespread use of specific political idioms, vocabulary, and expressions has become part of political oratory as well. Bernard Bate's *Tamil Oratory and the Dravidian Aesthetic* presents a case for political oratory in the politics of Tamil Nadu. He encapsulates that with the advent of mass democratic politics in Tamil Nadu, a new mode of oratory in politics has emerged as a form of political communication. He says that it is "spoken primarily by elite, literate leaders to an illiterate electorate; this new mode of political oratory is marked by a form of Tamil modelled on the written word called "beautiful Tamil" in contrast to the language of "everyday life" which is "bent" or "vulgar" Tamil" (Bate 2009, p. 165). The oratory, according to Bate, is inspired by the language of the Sangam texts. In this work, he also rejects the fact that there is no instructional model of rhetoric for politics which shaped the political speeches, rather a new indigenous model developed in its given socio-cultural contexts. In a similar context but located in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Lucia Michelluti's *The Vernacularisation of Democracy* (2009) is an impactful study of the vernacular idioms and metaphors used by sectarian parties like the Samajwadi Party. She recognizes the fact that democracy ushers not by mechanical implantation of modern institutions but by adaption of these institutions and processes in a given social context, and in this regard, reveals the

results of her case study of the Ahirs who employ a range of vernacular idioms and religious metaphors to create their version of democracy. This party-centric study is one attempt to look at the role of the tropes of rhetoric and metaphors in democratic conditions. Can we discern a logical coherence and structure in the uses of political rhetoric or is it simply a strategic use of a language? Political rhetoric culled out from the sites of election campaigns, speeches on commemorative events, legislatures and parliamentary debates and discussions, and numerous media platforms sometimes generate fiery speeches and slogans through which leaders mobilise their followers (Bate 2009). In a multi-lingual and multi-cultural India, political rhetoric has played a significant role in establishing a peculiar and complex communicative order in the democratic life of the Republic. It has unambiguously affected the course of political mobilization, participation and legitimization of political authority, its actors, structures and practices in many different ways.

Political rhetoric as a subject of inquiry, both theoretically and empirically, has not attained much scholarly attention in India. The democratic tradition and its rituals in India over the last seven and half decades can give us sufficient historical trajectory to understand the changing forms and terrains of political rhetoric, its conceptual vocabulary and semantic density. It is worth asking whether and how political rhetoric plays a more prominent role in times of democratic deficit. What kind of democratic norms, conventions and order does political rhetoric refer to during the troubled or transitional times of democratic rule? How do speech and utterance become part of the political performative act? Why is it that politicians prefer to speak more rhetorically in the public than in the private domains? In times of technological warfare, how have the multiple technological devices (electronic media like TV, a cyber world like the internet, Twitter and mobile services) expanded and multiplied uses of both public and political rhetoric?

The hierarchical social order based on inequalities of caste, class, gender, and religion gets reinforced when political rhetoric gets intertwined with political debate on community rights and resources along with ideas of dignity and representation of various communities and their interests. T.V. Sathyamurthy correctly points out in case of India that "the political vocabulary in the field of concrete action has expanded considerably since the mid-1960s. The deployment of new slogans, the raising of new demands, and the application of new techniques for registering protest, claiming just rights, and resisting societal, political and governmental authoritarianism at different levels, have enriched the political language and deepened the scope and impact of the struggles in which the Indian people are engaged. Until the mid-1960s, the initiative for coining new words, fashioning slogans and giving fresh meaning to old usages seemed to rest largely with the regime and the elites…The initiative for linguistic and communicative innovation has passed into the hands of the mass of the population and those (individuals and organisations) active on its behalf" (Sathyamurthy 1990, p. 1443).

The move towards populist politics has been strengthened and reinvigorated with the art of political rhetoric used excessively by leaders of all political parties. Political actors become skilful campaigners manipulating the diverse poll promises made to people and their fears and anxieties over the lack of resources, employment and

livelihood. Speaking in colloquial language smeared with abuses and derogatory remarks about political opponents—individuals, groups, communities and political parties has become more of a norm than an exception. These utterances are often in local idioms and regional languages of the leaders. It is also important to see how the speeches are competently delivered, the sites chosen for such oratorial performances, and the arrangements made for the crowd to gather and collect there. The use of body language, facial expressions and a whole lot of physical gestures add to the effectiveness of the speeches delivered.

The political catchphrases provide passion, emotional outburst and zeal needed to enthuse the voters and politicians alike. However, sometimes, a more secular and egalitarian language of political rhetoric can bring people together across the caste, class, religion and region divide. In times of political upheaval and national turmoil, the art of political rhetoric rests more upon the use of secular and inclusive language and slogans. The literal meaning of rhetorical statements is effective when the orator or narrator makes them into a performative act to enunciate their full interpretative substance. The verbal performance sometimes accounts for the communicative competence, which in turn establishes some sort of relationship between the listener and the speaker. It does not remain simply an act of expression or speech but a political communicative act seeking to reaffirm some sort of public legitimacy. Speech activity is embedded within a certain cultural system and can vary from one context to another. More often than not, use/s of political rhetoric sometimes aim at generating intimidation, hatred, suspicion and anger more than a sense of communicative eloquence and subtlety of a certain kind. Slogans and speeches with the purpose of inciting violence and hatred are often time used to divide and communalize the issues of the day. Political rhetoric gains a life of its own in somewhat circulatory way. Once used or uttered, it circulates and gets reinvented even by the political opponents. It gradually gets entrapped in an interpretative thickness operating at various scales of applicability. The collective imaginaires of region, caste, community, culture, language, race, gender and religion as social identifiers get differently articulated and ritualistically performed over a long period of time. Because of these characteristics, rhetoric at times acquires the form of a public engagement across cultures, time, and space divides.

Since Rhetoric plays on establishing the internal coherence between language and emotions, it also invokes and constructs the discursive narration of identities and differences at various levels. Politicians take liberty with language more than others. The process of political socialization goes along with linguistic acquisition and acculturation processes on the part of the political leaders and their followers with political actors using at times new linguistic signifiers in the form of metaphors, tropes, bodily gestures and expressions. For example, Hugo Chavez's selection of metaphors to construct the imagination of Bolivarian revolution has remained a subject of great interest among discourse analysts. His choice of metaphors has remained focused on the idea and imagination about the Venezuelan nation and its polarities and binaries of inclusion and exclusion.

Politics of shame is often expressed through both symbolic and material uses of language. In case of India, Subramania Bharati (1882–1921), a great Tamil poet,

used oratory to link the masses to a large-scale modern social imaginary of a unified Tamil people on a long historical continuum of its past with the future of independence and freedom of India. Jyotirao Phule's evocation from *gulamigiri* (slavery) to *sarvajaniksatya dharma* (religion based on universal truth) and Ambedkar from *Bahishkrut Bharat* (ostracized India) to *Prabhuddha Bharat* (enlightened India) illustrates this kind of effective and powerful expressions of impending desirable changes in post/colonial India of their dreams. Certain symbols and speeches acquire a life of posterity. For example, Gandhi was creative with the re/use of symbols throughout his life. He communicated effectively with millions of Indians and most of them being illiterates. As S. Balaram says that "Gandhi's spinning wheel, a purely mechanical device, became a symbol through which he could communicate to large masses of people both the actions that needed to be taken and his personal philosophy" (Balaram 1989, p. 71).

In some ways, the study of political rhetoric shows the overlapping relationship between political and cultural discourses. Furthermore, terms like "unity of India", or "power of the people" have been used both by the liberals and authoritarians alike. However, in India, private and personal issues and affairs get drawn into the public discourses particularly in the sphere of politics. Each political party and its leaders seem to have some ideals or idols to glorify and identify with Shiv Sena with Shivaji, Bahujan Samaj Party with Ambedkar, Phule, and Kanshi Ram, Samajwadi Party with Lohia, DMK with Annadurai and Karunanidhi, AIADMK with MGR and Jayalalitha, BJP with Sarvarkar and Golwalkar and Congress with Gandhi and Nehru predominantly. The historical past and its precedents associated with the founder/s of the party are much eulogized and looked upon as a source of inspiration for furthering the ideology of the party and its symbols. The historical sites where the iconic leader spent or worked during his/her life time are also recaptured and memorialized through a great deal of symbolic fanfare. This further suggests as to how human emotions, desires, anxieties and trauma get articulated in the political life of the country.

The language of political rhetoric at times is used to subvert the forms of social domination, however, symbolic and metaphorical they may appear to be. This rich verbal communication provides space for democratic deliberation and eloquence. The contents and forms of political rhetoric do reveal twin processes of condensation and displacement somehow inherent in the political communicative order of a society. It is equally important to see how through the use of political rhetoric, personal is made into political and vice versa, and how the increase in political rhetoric is directly tied up with the increase in personalization and centralization of authority in a polity at specific historical moment. Since the art of political rhetoric rests upon making use of linguistic skills and its expressions in a variety of ways, it is difficult to see a common pattern of it in a diverse multilingual society such as India. The idea of linguistic incommensurability indicating the lack of comparability among and between languages for purposes of communication and cultural signification can reveal the differences in belief systems and their cultural repertoires too. There can, at times, be a thematic resemblance in the choice of words or phrases used in different linguistic registers and thus can show a certain degree of similarity but it can also depart from it.

The important question is to see the reasons and context which give rise to the emergence of particular kind of language of politics, and its frequent utterances. How does rhetoric in this case set the terms of political discourses and practices? Does it capture the context of economic, ideological, social, cultural and political processes at a particular historical point of time? Does it provide different and at times opposite perspectives of power both from those who exercise it and those who receive it? Sathyamurthy says that varied slogans accumulated over the years in Indian politics serve as markers of conveying messages and challenges with varying degree of effectiveness by the ruling parties, opposition parties and mass movements. The language used in conducting the everyday affairs of the politics has significant consequences for political action, and an overuse of political rhetoric can at times breach the terrains of civic communicational trust. The slogan saga that Indian elections have been part of since the first general elections in 1952 has continued to create conundrum over symbols and signs under the constant process of condensation and displacement of meaning system and belief pattern among the political rivals and competitors in a multi-party democratic India. Like myths and symbols, the political rhetoric ambushes the boundaries of public and private and enters a complex and dense web of shared political vocabulary which at times may even be ambiguous and acrimonious. The increasing uses of political rhetoric not merely at times of elections but inside and outside the deliberative political assemblies and legislatures, and in the commemorative and commencement-related occasions by the political parties reveal how political discourses, ideologies, forms of political violence and hate speech among others, are formed and shaped as part and parcel of competitive political process and its varied enunciation in the democratic life of the country at large. A set of political slogans, speeches, graffiti and satire have always remained central to the larger language and discourse of politics in independent India indicating structural semantic and signification-centred continuity.

The field of political semiotics can pose certain limitations on both the discipline of Linguistics and Political Science and in the process can possibly transcend their given boundaries. It is about the form and substance of their interlocution. This maps out the heterogeneities and differences in the realm of language use and the community of users. What to say where, when and how can be situated within the power dynamics of the society and its hierarchical structures. Here language is not just a structure but a set of practices and actions imbued from its uses. The field of political semiotics can be developed through the interdisciplinary lenses of political, linguistic and cultural anthropology and other disciplines of social sciences. The ethnographical accounts can add more nuances to this complex field. This would entail the semantic structure within the use of political anthropological linguistics without which the meaning structure can't be critically made sense of. Hence the sociology of political linguistics can be an enriching field of inquiry to develop better understanding about the becoming and not just being, not just referential or factual but interpretatively discursive in terms of social relations and structures of meaning patterns arrived at.

Semiotics has been defined as the science of the life of signs in a society (Saussure 1959). In this way, communication is the form and substance of verbal language and

its socio-cultural context. Signs are social texts located in the larger political and social processes. Freud, Lacan, Bakhtin/Voloshinov have all taken Saussurean sign system in the larger social and political field of the semiotics, and brought in the material signification processes constructed and manufactured for specific ideological uses. It is not the abstract sign system that I am prioritizing for making sense of the signifying practices which at times works as an individualizing process through individual's own capacity to alter or subvert its dominance. The deep contextual and signifying interlocking relationalities between culture, power and politics would unravel the deep-seated meaning glued to the concept of political semiotics.

The concept of political semiotics locates the moment of dynamism, of diachrony and of action in the signified. It is the return of the unsaid but needed to be said and un/spoken in the realms of power, authority, legitimacy and social life of the speakers. This can be true of the larger discourses, ideologies and their articulative structures. This is to further suggest that communicational orders are social facts and exist within the given power structures of a society. The semiotic acts of various sorts—art forms, speeches, writing, media and films—participate and reflect the power dynamics in their articulatory plurality. As Voloshinov says very emphatically that "everything ideological possesses *meaning… without signs, there is no ideology*" (Voloshinov 1986, p. 9). Signs are relational and not autonomous of their social and political context. They compete and negotiate with one another as much as other facts of life. Unlike the Voloshinov and Bakhtin group, C.S.Pierce, the American linguist, went a step further and considered all individual thoughts and signs as dialogical in nature. Both political semiotics and rhetorics open up the new registers of communication in their deep and dense ideological and social world that languages inhabit and exhibit on an everyday basis.

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Asha Sarangi is a professor at the Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, and has been teaching there since 2003. She was the chair of the Centre for 2 years, 2019–2021. In 2016, she was invited as *a visiting Professor at the Centre for South Asian Studies of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK*. She was the honorary Guest Lecturer in 2007 for the AIIS-IES, Delhi for the India Study Abroad Program. Prior to this, she was a lecturer at the Committee on Southern Asian Studies and Division of Social Sciences of the University of Chicago in the years 2002, 1996–98 and in1992–93. Before joining the University of Chicago, she taught at the Vasanta College for Women, Rajghat, Varanasi in 1988–89.

She obtained her Ph.D. from the Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago. She was the recipient of *National Scholarship* awarded by the Government of India (1989–93) to pursue her doctoral degree abroad. She has been awarded numerous fellowships including the University of Chicago *Unendowed Fund Fellowship* for the graduate studies program at the Department of Political Science, University of Chicago for 4 years 1989–1993, *Dissertation Fellowship* awarded by the *Mellon Foundation*, University of Chicago in 1993. She has held fellowships from the *Committee on Southern Asian Studies fellowship* of the University of Chicago during the period of 1993–98 at the University of Chicago, and the *Overseas Dissertation Research Fellowship* awarded by the Division of Social Sciences, University of Chicago in 1993.

In addition to this, she was awarded the Junior fellowship of the *American Institute of Indian Studies* (AIIS) in 1993–95. She also received *Junior Fellowship* by the Department of Culture of Government of India and the *Social Scientist Award* in 2003 and 2007 under the Indo-French cultural exchange program, respectively. She was invited to be a *Global Partner* for the Swiss National Science Foundation Funded project in Geneva, Switzerland. She has been invited to be a *member of the Editorial Board of the Occasional Paper series of the Forum of Federation*, and to join as a collaborator on the *Forum of Federation Project* on Federalism and Language Policy, a *Jury Member for the Federal Scholar in Residence Program 2020, Bolzano, Italy.* In recent years, she has been invited to be a non-funded academic partner of the *EURAC Research RISE 2018–24*, a member of the Advisory Board of EURAC Project 2020 on the theme of *Europe as a Global Actor* at Middle Sex University, 2015. She was part of the UPE II grant to work on the interdisciplinary project of *Modernity and Its Linguistic and Cultural Dimensions in the Context of Globalization.* In 1993–1994, She worked on an independent research project titled *Violence and Public Policy in India* funded and supported by the UPAA, Nainital, Uttarakhand, India.

The main areas of her interest are political and cultural economy of development in modern India, state and development in India, identity and politics in South Asia and more specifically the politics of linguistic nationalism in modern India. She has written extensively on areas of language, nationalism, state formation, and identity construction in edited volumes and various journals. She has supervised more than 20 Ph.D thesis and 30 M.Phil dissertations at the center. She has been part of several administrative and academic bodies at the university and has been solicited to be a referee and reviewer for a number of distinguished publishing presses to review the manuscripts, and been invited as a panelist on several TV programs.

She has most recently written a new introduction to V.P. Menon's volume *Integration of Indian States* which has been re-published by the Orient Blackswan in 2014 after six decades. She has edited a volume (with Sudha Pai) titled *Interrogating Reorganisation of States: Culture, Identity and Politics in India*, published by Routledge, 2011. She has edited a volume *Language and Politics in India*, published by Oxford University Press, 2009, paperback edition, 2010. Besides this, she has published more than three dozen articles in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes on various themes.

Appendix

Franson Davis Manjali

A Short Bio-Note

Franson Davis Manjali, an eminent professor of linguistics, spent 40 years at Jawaharlal Nehru University's Centre for Linguistics. His interdisciplinary scholarship introduced reflexivity, making the Centre's programs unique. He fostered interdisciplinary collaboration, breaking down knowledge silos. He retired in 2020, leaving a massive gap in the scholarship of the Centre. On June 14, 2023, Franson Davis Manjali passed away.

Research Interests

Ethics, Aesthetics and Linguistics
Philosophies of Discourse.
Philosophy of Image.
Metaphors in Cultural Discourse.
Dynamical Models in Semantics and Cognitive Science.

Academic Qualification

1987–89

Post-doctoral research at the département de linguistique, Université de Paris-1 V, Sorbonne, in association with Professor Bernard Pottier.

Also, éléve libre under Professor Jean Petitot in Centre d'analyse et de mathématique sociales, École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris.

1988–89

This research was pursued with the aid of a Scholarship from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

1986

Ph.D. in Linguistics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Thesis title: *Elements of Spatial and Temporal Relations—A Semantic Study of Malayalam.*

(Supported by a Research Fellowship of the University Grants Commission, India).

1980

M.A. in Linguistics, at Jawaharlal Nehru University. CGPA: 7.27 (A -)

1977

Post-graduate Diploma in Journalism, from the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi.

1976

B.Sc. with Chemistry (Main) and Physics and Mathematics (Subsidiaries) at Calicut University. First class.

1973

Pre-degree at Calicut University, with Biology, Physics and Chemistry. First class.

Publications

Books: **Authored, Edited and Translated**

1991   Nuclear Semantics—Towards a Theory of Relational Meaning. New Delhi: Bahri Publications.

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