

Sublime in Question:
Discourse of Friendship and Democracy in
Contemporary Ethical and Aesthetic Perspectives

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By
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Certification

This dissertation paper entitled “**Sublime in Question: Discourse of Friendship and Democracy in Contemporary Ethnical and Aesthetic Perspectives,**” has been submitted by Kekhrielhoulie Yhome, to the Centre for Linguistics and English, School of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, and is an original work exclusively studied for the aforementioned criteria.

The dissertation may be placed before the Board of Examiners for their appraisal for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.

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Declaration

This dissertation entitled “**Sublime in Question: Discourse of Friendship and Democracy in Contemporary Ethical and Aesthetic Perspectives,**” submitted as part of the final requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full to any other educational institutions or universities elsewhere, for any other degree or diploma *as such*.

Dated: July 22, 2003.

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.



Kekhrielhoulie Yhome

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Prefatory Note:

In this roughly sketched and surveyed compilation of what is institutionally called a “dissertation” and one which caters to the industrial demands of educational and institutional systems, the arguments that chiefly follows are chapterized into three. The basis of departure, if there is anything called a time-bound, is based on the existing arguments of an *epoche* that is the post-end of philosophy.

Therein, in chapter one, the question of the “sign” has been evaluated to give an ample articulation of a language-based study of the political, whether it is “friendship” or “democracy.” And, of course, there exist already a vast field of research on the same subject and theme. The demand of this survey has therefore explored the ideas on “aesthetics” and the “sublime” to see the manifest of not only de-linking the established tradition of a threshold of the “sign” reduced onto post-speculative confirmation of skepticism, but also the resurgence of an infinitesimal burden that appears to be entrenched with the very problematic of the sign, posited into the background of a “return,” on the question to time.

For what is the political is also a question of what is democracy. The idea of democracy is therefore posited in the linear development of this study: as an art, as a mode of aesthetics, and democracy itself as the sublime. What concerns us is therein an experience of the sign, be it language or otherwise, an experience of the social, of democracy or friendship itself. Thereof, and the notion of experience is magnanimously inflated in an overtone of time, the experience of democracy is argued as a relation with time. Derrida talks about democracy “that is to come.” And in the context of *art*, the art of democracy, which is discussed, shall also question the representational, as it is in the aesthetic, with the presentational, as in the sublime.

The question of time is pertinent to an explanation that has been developed in the apprehension sublimating the sublime. And within this mould, the domain of explication or transversal,¹ we have an *aphoria* describing the entropy of democracy; for democracy is also an articulation of relation not only with time, but also with the impossible relation – friendship. On one level we have a classificatory reduction through the play of possibilities and impossibilities, and the correlating factors of infinitude and infinitude's finitude and, on another level, we have a social relevance of the ontological. These questions are addressed in chapter two.

It is from these propositions that the body of democracy is carved, sublimated after its aestheticization process, the elemental and juridical nullification process, whereby the thinking and thought of democracy itself is submitted. For, between the statecraft and the status of democracy, and friendship, to relate, is an appreciative inquiry that is surmounting the resolution of a conflict – the conversion of the other as the self, the self as the speaking other, or, rather, the other as the speaking self. This acknowledgement has come about chiefly in the works of Levinasian “there is,” which emerged from the Heideggerian “having-been-there.” The immanence of democracy, or friendship, in the representation politics has been treaded carefully here to summon whether the background of an event, or a fear-perception that is “bad” (or antithetical) to democracy or friendship that pre-existed any attempt to sublimate the same.

¹ Between language determination and communication, it has for long been contemplated as an exercise of rhetoric domain and a hermeneutic process. Scharg intervenes, “hermeneutics is delimited by the practice of rhetoric, and in turn both hermeneutics and rhetoric need to be refigured within the space of *what I shall term as transversal communication...*, *which* can split the difference between consensus and dissensus.” [emphasis mine] See Calvin O. Scharg, “Hermeneutical Circles, Rhetorical Triangles, and Transversal Diagonals,” in Walter Jost and Michael J. Hyde (eds.), **Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in our Time: A Reader** (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 133-46.

The proposal of this interrogation therein seeks to conflating and inflating sublimation of the self and the other as an aesthetic – the moralities of friendship – and its relevance as a sign called democracy that sublimates a status, an image, a certain thought. Whether it is through the a *de facto* aberration of nihilism or negation that argues for an *ad infinitum* positioning of the sign, wherein a movement that is beyond the synchronic or diachronic, as a flux. It is this flux, fluxation, fluxatory mode of non-producing an agency that is also curtailed in the infinitesimal, although different from vacuum, that an exposition, an expository, evaluation of *status quo* is presented. For, a representation that cannot represent, a representation that can only pave grid for a presentation, is also a psychologism that has crossed the barrier of transcendentalism but imprinted in a reversion of a status, a status quo that shall always be in a flux, unrepresentable and impossible and undecidable.

Chapter three analyzes the status and state of literature as a transfiguring momentum of articulating ethics as the limits of ontology. The “de-escalation of ontology politics” is therefore avowed with the practices of anthropo-mimetic philosophy in the determination of the being – the traditions of speculation and judgement in the overwhelming arenas of a social order, or understanding the movement of anarchy itself.

The intellect-industrial marker associative of democracy as a process, where there is no end to democracy or politics, or democracy as an art per se, either through its conceptual popularity or its activist propaganda, or through its otherwise weariness in history, and, over and above all, democracy as a project, is what has come to interest us. It has come to interest us because it has come to pre-occupy the pre-dominant images of our thought.

It has become a becoming that is at once a necessity to doubt and believe in the ruins of western metaphysics. Such aporias, such democracy! It has become the gentleness that is necessary to infringe its own descriptions and definitions. The lost nuptial congeniality of a broken governing system was therein raised from the very ruin that generated its own mephistophelean knowledge engineering systems. It is no longer the return that awaits

democracy but the very impossibility of a return that has exiled democracy. Is the democratic process an inventing process, a crisis of politics of friendship, the courting and courted bliss of handling issues and meeting points that are extreme and gentle on different planes of intersections? What is thought's relation to democracy and what is democracy's relation to thought? What fascinates the language of democracy and what is democracy's language? What is the role of desire in the becoming of and towards democracy? In as much, what is democracy?

What is of democracy? The jinx and the aporia-axiom intereseecting democracy have its relational basis and a genealogical root indeed from the practices of western governing systems and, more recently, the liberal views that has developed on an idea called 'civil society'. Democracy is a *fragmentary art* by the very conceptual praxis it conveys and the very lack its nihilistic desire expresses and, pertinent to both these two propositions, the value systems it attempts to define. Of course, whether it is the subject-hood of a mask that derides representation as theatrical art or the presenting status of the music in such art (and as artifact of our times) that attempts to derive a status quo is another question for the day.

Chapter One:

The Sign, the State, the Status, and the Sublime

“The concept of the sign, in each of its aspects, has been determined by ... opposition throughout the totality of its history. It has lived only on ... opposition and its system. But we cannot do without the concept of the sign, for we cannot give up this metaphysical complicity, or without also giving up the critique we are directing against this complicity, or without the risk of erasing difference in the self-identity of a signified reducing its signifier into itself or, amounting to the same thing, simply expelling its signifier outside itself.”

- Jacques Derrida²

“Anyone who tries to reflect on historico-political reality today (as always) comes up against names – proper names. These names form part of the treasure of phrases that he [she] has received in his [her] share of language and that he [she] may continue by allowing new phrases. For we have all of us a sort of debt, or a sort of rivalry, with respect to names.”

- Jean-Francois Lyotard³

In the processes of quarantining mutating and evolving signs of our times, and in the necessity of an “intrigue,”⁴ the introductory rationalization of “choice”⁵ as an industrial

² Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, (tr.) Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 281.

³ Jean-Francois Lyotard, “The Signs of History,” (tr.) Geoffrey Bennington, in Andrew Benjamin (ed.), *The Lyotard Reader* (London: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1989), p. 393.

⁴ In what is termed as an analysis of Levinas’ claim for the “anteriority of the ethical” and its “connection with the originality of ontology, and consequently of the

marker and a market syndrome, and the hurry to ontologize the semiotic, or, rather, entrenched ontology, has come to interfere a psychologism.⁶ It is in this tribunal resistance to a swelling epistemic reign that the conceptual forces (and energies) of a resonating 'internationalism' – or, "*chronostrategy*," to refer Paul Virilio's "speed politics" and its perpetuating agency as "information"⁷ – on "democracy" and "friendship" are surveyed, to begin with.

To begin with, how do we relate the interconnecting ontology or deconstructed ontology associated with the conceptual framing of the sign and its hyper-connectedness with the state (and the status of the sign) and the sublime? The critique of western metaphysics (of "presence") by Derrida has come to be respected and advocated in many ways. And, by all means, the question of the "sign" itself was the chief problem and the context from where we begin.

political," Ciaramelli cites the "intrigue" as the apparent answer to the tradition of debates on "origin, Being, phenomenon" in relation to what is the "Said." See, Fabio Ciaramelli, "The Riddle of the Pre-original," in Adriaan T. Peperzak (ed.), **Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy, Literature and Religion** (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 87-94.

⁵ Of course one derives choice from rational theory too quickly subsiding in the pragmatist and anglo-american tradition or on the basis of the "risk" involved and a pre-judged reaction to such gambling. And, of course, choice is another game theory for the market economy that appears too obvious. The use of "choice" here is however different in the sense that it refers to "chance," which Bataille had engrossed, "God is no chance" – because God is everything. See Georges Bataille, **On Nietzsche** (tr.) Bruce Boone (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), p. 96.

⁶ Agamben refers to this subject transcending language formulation as "Kantian psychologism," in Giorgio Agamben, **Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience**, (tr.) Liz Heron (London; New York: Verso, 1993).

⁷ See James Der Derian (ed.), **The Virilio Reader** (Massachusetts; London: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

In what is now posthumously a disabling of western tradition of logocentricism with “speech” as the prime conceptual focus of evaluation, Derrida himself however argues that “writing” is not an overture to replacing such displacement. For, this displacement of “mimetic perversions” in western metaphysics, the continued policy of privileging and the schemata of “white mythologies” and its ramified “philosophemes,” is based on centering the “logos” as foundational.⁸ What primarily interests us thereafter in this invocation of Derrida’s work therein is about the situating of the “sign,” which he also defends it in order not to endanger signification.⁹ And, at another level, it is the introduction of his economy of “differance” that has become very important, too.

In *the* critique of the “sign,” where the “speech” was intercepted, the phenomenology of writing comes into focus, which, and indeed, Derrida was actually never concerned with this issue. Rather, what preoccupies him most enduringly is what he calls as “perhaps” a “psychical writing” – or, “labor of writing which circulates like psychic energy between the

⁸ Jean-Luc Nancy bluntly argues that “[W]e still do not know what logos means” – although he identified the Greek’s usage of ‘logos’ as “the essence of language from the essence of Being” and Heidegger’s usage of the same as “the name of the Being of beings.” See Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World* (tr.) Jeffrey S. Librett (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 174.

⁹ Derrida is very conscious of the evaluation of foundational “concept of the sign” and at the same time the aporial need for fixing it:

“[T]he exteriority of the signifier is the exteriority of writing in general...there is no linguistic sign before writing. Without that exteriority, the very idea of the sign falls into decay. Since our entire world and language would collapse with it, and since its evidence and value would be silly to conclude from its placement within an epoch that it is necessary to ‘move on to something else’, to dispose off the sign, of the term and notion.”

See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (tr.) Gayatri Spivak (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1997), p 14.

conscious and the unconscious”¹⁰ – through notions like “traces” and “arche-writing.” In attempting to situate the dialectical ontology of the “sign” – “[F]rom the moment there is meaning there is nothing but signs... [W]e think only in signs” – and a strategy that is also pre-emptive of locating the engineering mechanism of language as outside and beyond knowledge or consciousness,¹¹ Derrida therein appears to be confronting a pre-textual zone of conceptual enterprise, wherein the demarcation of metaphysical writing, phenomenological writing, “congenital expressivism,” and a conception of metalanguage – “grammatology” – are most rigorously taken up.

The hyper-reality of language has thereupon come to perpetuate more than any other times in confronting the ramified issues of the sign. Therein the issue of literature and language has overworked more than ever and this systematic continuity has aroused a consoling evaluation of ontology most passionately. And the conceding frameworks only appear more appalling when the body politic of the social is engaged within or without. By contradicting and overwhelming the spatio-temporal differences pertinent to writing or speech, Derrida’s interlocution of “arche-writing” or “traces” brings in effect a momentum of metaphysics par excellence. The equivocating sublimation of “trace” as the “temporalization

¹⁰ The issue of determining the pre-determined concepts of the “sign” in the Western tradition is seen as the most contentious issues in many of Derrida’s work. Particularly so in the case where he takes up the challenge of neutralizing a speculative possibility wherein “phenomenal writing” may become or be read as an answer to his critics. This, Derrida is quite conscious. He went on to argue the likelihood of affirming “writing” as the sign of a sign, which he counter-attack by positing the failures of Freud. What Derrida calls as the “labor of writing,” then, is a short circuit version of what he claims of the sign as liking a “psychic energy between the conscious and the unconscious.” See Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 212.

¹¹ The struggle against the Hegelian tradition of “absolute knowledge’ and Husserlian “eidetic reduction” vis-à-vis language has been most pervasively conducted in Jacques Derrida’s *Glas*, (tr.) Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

of lived experience,”¹² or, and in a more outburst manner, preservation of “memory,”¹³ is therefore an area that is crucial for the complexities of not only any ontological enterprise but in describing the post-deconstruction status of metaphysics. It is this departure that introduces the systematic paraphernalia of thought and thinking engineering systems, and the “alterity” of thinking itself *per se*.

The overcoming of the ontological, or, rather, and properly, the onto-theological, occupies most of the preoccupation, today. For, this preoccupation is largely affected by the situation of the ‘differance’. Gasche,¹⁴ in his authoritative work on Derrida, cites Vattimo’s critique, in his consolidation of French theorist, today, as having forgotten Heidegger, the main source of inspiration, insofar the question of ‘difference’ is postulated.¹⁵ Therein a Derridean thought of “differance” has been critiqued by Vattimo on two counts: “an indifference of differance to all (ontic) differences between differences and an indifference to

¹² Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, op. cit., p. 65.

¹³ The issue of “trace” and “memory” has been anticipated by Derrida himself:

“Trace as memory is not a pure breaching that might be reappropriated at any time as simple presence; it is rather the ungraspable and invisible difference between the breaches. We thus already know that psychic life is neither the transparency of meaning nor the opacity of force but the difference within the exertion of forces.”

See Jacques Derrida, “Freud and the Scene of Writing,” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 200.

¹⁴ See Rodolphe Gasche, *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press, 1994).

Gasche’s revocation of Vattimo’s warning is based on the latter’s mentioning of Heideggerian “mediation on the ontological difference” as the opening of a debate, which is presumptuously coedified as an opening as well as a tradition. See “The Eclipse of Difference.”

Ibid., pp. 88-89.

the ontological difference, in that the latter is made to be a particular case of the general differing of *differance*.”¹⁶

Whereas, difference has been understood in the traditional sense as between “empirical effect” and the “structure of essence,” which Derrida intersects with his much neologized “*differance*” – one that is a question of “difference” and at another “difference,” thereby giving a symptomatic pathology of “spacing,”¹⁷ both affecting the conventional interpretation of space and time, of representation and presentation, of presence and absence, in the value of its “play,” “*ad infinitum*.” There are two componential articulation to this position.

For the first one, Gasche’s evaluation argues that “[A]lthough *differance* does not structurally reduplicate the gestures characteristic of the ontological difference, or of ‘difference as such’, but rather inscribes them within its own grid, the latter, with its tendency to withdraw into the two in the form of which it comes forth, and of thus having in itself no itself, has, undoubtedly, been a major simulation to Derrida’s conception of *differance* as the ‘space’ of cohabitation of a multiplicity of heterogeneous differences.”¹⁸ This analysis is contained through its potentiality and in its apparent opening of “closures” – although it cannot be conflated with Habermasian “politics of recognition.” Otherwise, its misleading

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁷ The concept of “spacing” is very crucial for an understanding of “difference” –

“[s]pacing is the simultaneously active and passive (the *a* of difference indicates this indecision as concerns activity and passivity, that which cannot be governed by or distributed between the terms of this opposition) production of the intervals without which the ‘full’ terms would not signify, would not function.”

See Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (tr.) Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 27.

¹⁸ Rodolphe Gasche, *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida*, op. cit., p. 268.

cognitive ontology has also no whatsoever bearings of assembling the tradition of Heideggerian thinking systems.¹⁹ It is rather, in the phrase of Gasche, the “indifference to the ontological difference,” where Heidegger’s ontic-ontological determination is not displaced but brought to the frame of a Derridean system, “an indifference to difference as the capital unifying and opening ‘ground’ for all difference (between beings, and between themselves)... [that] thought encounters the very limit of its limitlessness.”²⁰

Secondly, the Derridean “economy and strategy” of the “sign” surpasses the Nietzschean-Freudian-Heideggerian critiques, which “worked within the inherent concepts of metaphysics.”²¹ What Derrida has introduced therein is a sublation of critiquing western metaphysics of presence and appealing for a “play” that operates within the framework of “absence” and “presence.” The idea of this “play,” which is at once a denunciation of the structurally embittered opposition as in the example of Saussurean signifier-signified and at another the introduction of a deconstructionist new ethics of values, has been rigorously taken up by Jean-Luc Nancy, in his exploration of the “sense” and the “world.”²²

Nancy’s argument of Derridean “differ^{ance}” is inasmuch interpolated by the interjective “sense” wherein the former idea is posited as “the index of sense of sense as absent sense without any privation of sense” – still caught up in the “confines of

¹⁹ Heidegger says:

“Man can think in the sense that he possesses the possibility to do so. This possibility alone, however, is no guarantee to us that we are capable of thinking.”

See Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* (tr.) J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 3.

²⁰ Rodolphe Gasche, *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida*, op. cit., p. 106.

²¹ Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences,” in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 281.

²² Jean Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, op. cit.

philosophy.”²³ However, the instance of Derridean “differance” – of differing and deferring – is objectively *mala fide* of the Satrean formula or Michel Henry’s examination of *Prouisia*.²⁴ Rather, “differance” – which is not a “temporizing,” as shown – is the “interior spacing of the very line of time” (where the idea of a infinitude is its very corollary supporting to a finitude²⁵); “[T]he coming into presence of being takes place precisely as nonarrival of presence.”²⁶ The hyphenating of a separation is therefore a force visible, as in the ontico-ontological or onto-theological determination of the Being, the servitude play and judgement of essence and existence, in the Derridean economy and strategy of presenting “difference.”

And, yet, in a more rigorous survey of the same, Nancy highlights, after assembling the departure where Derridean differance *ad infinitum* is itself *finitude per se*,²⁷ that difference or “spacing, and thus writing, would be the law of the law” – where the “law is the essence without essence of writing.”²⁸ Thereupon the self-effacement is the chief vector in an “imperative” developed through the formula of the “traces” – and “thinking obeys what in any case commands it – from nowhere, and anywhere.”²⁹ And, for attaining this, the very acts

²³ See the chapter entitled, “Difference.”

Ibid., pp. 34-36.

²⁴ In a citation to Michel Henry, Nancy examines the differ/defer task of “Prouisia” “to defer the *para* (the near, proximity, presence) of the *ousia* (or *essentia*).

Ibid., p. 178.

²⁵ Elsewhere, Derrida has mentioned this forthrightly, “Infinite differance is itself finite,” in Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena* (tr.) David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 102.

²⁶ Jean Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, op. cit., p. 35.

²⁷ In a discussion following Nancy’s paper presentation on the theme “The Free Voice of Man,” Nancy informs Derrida that “difference already implicated the ethical,” in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *Retreating the Political* (tr.) Simon Sparks (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 53.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 49.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

of questioning – “of finitude” – is already encrypted and “maintained” as an “order,” an adhering aberration of “obeying.”³⁰

Thereupon the feasibility of equating “archi-writing” with the “sublime voice” becomes problematic. But, before dwelling on such complex intricacies, it is unassuming to reopen the issues of representation in the context of the sign. Although there is no hyperbole statement reassuring that the sign is *a priori* to signification – on the hinting basis of a mutually self-assuring and self-destructive sign that is “self-referential” at its core – the infinitude of a play that seize the sign is inevitably marked with a destruction of experience through signification and meaning or representation. This has been prelude[d] by the introduction of impossibility in the spatial temporality, both in the dimensions of time and space. The degradation of the ecological and anthropological spatiality affirms the dawn of “presentation,” in a subversive movement towards ethics and responsibility of the ever anarchic sign.

The recurrence effect, which Deleuze calls it as “repetition,” is therefore both typological and based on the foundation of its preceding ontological premises. A student of Derrida, Sartiliot, defends her teacher’s “dissemination” over polysemy by engaging a discursive study of *citation*. She argues that the notion of “iterability” grounded in Derrida signals “repetition” and “difference,” which is a motivated movement in opening “closures” *ad infinitum*, is fragmentary as in a “citation.”³¹ In a similar vein, Nicolas Abraham³²

³⁰ “What does this [‘freed voice of man’] sublime voice say? It only utters the question – of finitude. But more like a question. It says that the maintained question is an order. Derrida placed the maintenance of the question before ethic. The philosopher, then, perhaps still thought to hold on to something by this protection. In truth, he was already obeying. He was treating humanity, and philosophy, as an end. He was only doing his duty.”

Ibid., p. 51.

³¹ Claudette Stariliot argues:

investigates the “mode of appearing,” which appears to be a transversal conjuring of the elementary traditions of Jakobsonian “communication schema,” in the contrary model of “expressive consciousness.” What is however centrally different is, given the argument that it already rejects the cognitive-phenomenological and material aspects of content, the absorption, or, rather, the dismissal of the “medium” and the “object” when an “expressive (or poetic) consciousness acts.”³³ All expressions therein become a scaffold for the abrogation of an “unreal” experience, and the moment it is enacted it is no more representative. This opening and closing of the hymen is what Derrida calls the “archive of the ‘real’ and the archive of ‘fiction’”³⁴

“Citations are thus the eyes of the text, the eyes that allow it to work out of its structures without having to open the door to the outside, and without being seen looking. As such, these metaphors point to both the openness of the text to the outside and its closeness to that outside, if it does not indicate the weakness of this distinction.”

See **Citation and Modernity: Derrida, Joyce and Brecht** (Norman; London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 27.

³² Nicolas Abraham, “Outline of a Phenomenology of Poetic Expression,” in **Rhythm: On the Work, Translation, and Psychoanalysis**, (trs.) Benjamin Thigpen and Nicholas T. Rand (Stanford; California: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 1-63.

³³ Says Nicolas Abraham:

“Expressive (or poetic) consciousness acts *as if* it were in the presence of a content that would not have become present in and of itself. But this content is never sighted as present. It is grasped essentially as something unreal – the object of an image, or an empty cognition. The medium, to the extent that it has been perceived at all, has been drawn into or abandoned within the *unreal*. Unlike perception, the expressive (poetic) act proves to be essentially a de-realizing of both the object and the medium.”

Ibid., p. 11.

³⁴ “‘This Strange Institution Called Literature’: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” in **Acts of Literature**, (ed.) Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 24.

1.01. Memory, Nostalgia, and Eternal Return

“The world does not seek to have more existence, nor does it seek to persist in its existence. On the contrary, it is looking for the most spiritual way to escape reality. Through thought, the world is looking for what could lead to its own loss.”

- Jean Baudrillard³⁵

“When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning.”

- Jean Baudrillard³⁶

The ontological formulation concerning the history of philosophy in the shadows of the Being has come to be perturbed by what is now onto-theologically and anthropomimetically codified as the question of “eternal return.” That, whether philosophy has managed to emasculate and emancipate itself from the metaphysical tradition of philosophy is where the question of “eternal return” hurts most in contemporary engagements. Jean-Luc Nancy³⁷ has consistently exhibited and pronounced a juridical explanation for the teleological and tautological indebtedness towards the tradition that is always enmeshed in an explicating hope, an alleging exile, desiring and wanting for a return.

³⁵ Jean Baudrillard, “Radical Thought,” translated by Francois Debrix, in <http://www.ctheory.com/article/a025.html>

³⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, (trs.) Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), p. 12.

³⁷ Thought’s relation to meaning, in a pre-hyphenated play of pre-positional “of meaning” and “to meaning,” according to the translators’ “Preface,” is what concerns Jean-Luc Nancy in *The Gravity of Thought*, op. cit., p. xi.

And the “return” has been felt of its designs in terms of the Greco-platonic tradition, the impact of Greek to philosophy ever since its merging inception. The “return,” then, is a mark of “nostalgia”³⁸ – a practice of “memory”! The cryptically embodied metaphysics of “nostalgia,” which Nancy highlights, is, however, traced to the departures of Ulysses, the longing or pining for a “more archaic community that has disappeared.”³⁹ Thereupon the introduction and development of a “true consciousness” proper to this feeling for “loss of community” has always been Christian, more personified in the elemental desire for a “mystical body of Christ,” who died.

The Christian conception of nostalgia reigns on two anatomical dimensions – *deus absconditus*, where the “divine” disappeared and is “engulfed” of its representing relevance with the body, and *deus communis*, where the body is reincarnated as an “immanence of

³⁸ Taminiaux explicates an etymological derivation and clinical definition of the pathology in “nostalgia”

“*Le Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue francaise* by Bloch and Von Wartburg indicates that the word *nostalgie* appeared in French around the middle of the eighteen century; it was derived from a Latin medical term (*nostalgia*) created in 1678 by the Swiss physician Hofer by combining the Greek words *nostos* (return) and *algos* (suffering) and modeled after the other words ending in *-algia*, so as to translate the Swiss German word *Heimweh*, homesickness, a sickness then quite prevalent in the Swiss living abroad, especially the mercenaries.”

Therein, a conventional definition of nostalgia reads for “feelings of suffering in exile and painful longing for the return to a world where one belongs *in rupture* are the most obvious characteristics of nostalgia.” [My italics]. See “The Nostalgia for Greece at the Dawn of Classical Germany,” in Jacques Taminiaux, **Poetics, Speculation, and Judgement: The Shadow of the Work of Art from Kant to Phenomenology** (tr. and ed. by) Michael Gendre (Albany: State University of New York, 1993), pp. 73-74.

³⁹ Jean-Luc Nancy, **The Inoperative Community**, (trs.) Peter Connor et. al (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 10.

humanity.”⁴⁰ The explication for a petrifying nostalgia is thereof imprinted in the “experience” “that divinity was withdrawing infinitely from immanence... and that the divine essence of community... was the impossible itself”⁴¹ – which Holderlin, too, exercised – and henceforth the nostalgia. Like Lacoue-Labarthe’s⁴² survey of the Nazi nostalgia and subsequent destiny, the criteria for such enveloped thought was based on what Nancy terms as the “criteria for pure immanence.”

The introduction of nostalgia in German romanticism has been in the Goethe-Schiller-Holderlin schema, which, contrary to the Hegel-Schelling’s, is Greek-based. Goethe’s interpretation of “nostalgia” argues the “ancients” (Greeks) as “models that can be used for the inspiration of the present.”⁴³ For Schiller, drawing much from the “Rousseauistic idea” but prolonged by the Greek’s influence, feels that “nostalgia should sustain an activity of thinking... for transforming the exile into a meaningful dwelling place.”⁴⁴ Kant too advocated for “a return back from exile” to the Greco tradition in his philosophy of history,⁴⁵ which Schiller appropriates.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴² See, Lacoue-Labarthe, “Transcendence Ends in Politics,” in **Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics**, (ed.) Christopher Fynsk (Stanford; London: Stanford University Press, 1998).

⁴³ Jacques Taminiaux, **Poetics, Speculation, and Judgement: The Shadow of the Work of Art from Kant to Phenomenology**, op. cit., p. 77.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 82.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 83. Reference is to Kant’s **Critique of Pure Reason**, particularly on the notion of “aesthetic freedom.” Taminiaux distinguishes between Kant and Schiller’s notion of aesthetic freedom: for the former “the favor (*Gunst*) with which we contemplate the beautiful thing is the only free satisfaction” without any subjecthood whereas for the latter it is “the privilege of the beautiful soul in which tendencies and duty have been reconciled.”

Holderlin also admired the “Greek world” through Schiller and the “antithesis” that created a “space” for nostalgia is based “between Greece and modernity, along with the antithesis between homeland and exile.”⁴⁶ Moreover, the overcoming of a nostalgia for Greece in Holderlin is different from Schiller’s in that a “self-differing Oneness” – “one has to purify oneself from wanting to fuse [“the brightness of Greece and the darkness of the modern age”] into the limitless Oneness of gods and mortals.”⁴⁷ And, although the impact of Schiller is both on Hegel and Holderlin, the former (in collaboration with Schelling) argued for an absolutizing speculation of nostalgia, which is minus of any reference to the Greeks because the *Aufhebung* has already taken precedence.⁴⁸ The “moral system” is destined by motivation and it is this apparent delusion for a “return” per se that Bataille decries the thirst for return as de-motivating the “moment” and freeing “life” of “ends,” – “the mask of human entirety, a human desert wherein each moment is unmotivated.”⁴⁹

The evaluation of the ontological status of nostalgia in the history of philosophy thereof needs possession of two categories on the question of experience: the experience through memory and experience through language. The later appear to be more problematic. But common to both cases, is the mediating role it subsumes. As mentioned earlier, the status of the Derridean “trace” was problematized with the issue of “memory” – and a deconstruction of such metaphysics of presence has already enfolded the schema underlying the absolute presupposition of an unlivable or unrepresentable presence. Whereby, or whereas, the issue of the unlivable or non-re-presentable is based on the computing convulsion of a foundational experience – history itself, in its formal and proper expositions.

In the tradition of western thought, on the conceptualization of memory, the same is equated with a “store” of “images,” whereby the antiquity of such practices goes far back to

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 88.

⁴⁹ Georges Bataille, “Preface,” in *On Nietzsche*, op. cit., p. xxxiii.

the *mnemonic* systems propounded by Simonides. In modern times the same has been continued with the faculties and sensory modes of perception, testimony, knowledge and memory.⁵⁰ What inevitably comes to mind is the “uniqueness of experience” and the worst causalities of this thinking apparatus has been particularly formulated more than ever more from the soldiers who had had directly experienced “war” – and the agonizing fear of being forgotten haunts the revivalism of contradictions in Halbwachs’ sense of “collective” memory against “individual” memory.⁵¹ The philosophizing of the historical vis-à-vis the historical foundation has been argued by Henri Bergson, on the correlation of memory-image equation, as a “temporal continuum,” wherein “memory” is a direct bearing of and from an “action.” The idea of testimony comes in very strongly in idealizing “memory” because, and since it also involves a legacy of the perception/cognition structures of knowledge, the phenomenology of the event is attached with relevance for the bases of “memory as first experience” or on the questions of “authentic memories.”⁵² Martin Jay⁵³ examines the Bergsonian romanticizing of “memory” and attempts to bring what he terms “vision” for the inscription of the writs of memory’s modest role in “deforming” experience.

What imperceptibly comes with the category of memory and experience is a fear perception that endangers the security system incurred during counter-resurgence operations on ontology. This fear, perhaps, has been spelled more eruditely beyond its intuitive and para-cognitive schemas, and more obviously, in the interrogation of “sin,” by correlating the “good” and the “evil,” in Bataille. Other than this I have already examined Emmanuel

⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze too mentions about these “faculties” in the existing tradition of the “classical image of thought” as well as in intervening formulation on “the image of thought.”

⁵¹ See for a detail analysis, in Daniel J. Sherman, **The Construction of Memory in Interwar France** (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵³ Martin Jay, **Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought** (Berkeley: University of California, 1993).

Levinas in perspective (who is most pertinent for the issues discussed here) in a paper,⁵⁴ arguing that the resistance against the onto-theological understanding and responsibility of the “memory” in question is based on a fear-experience of *being* forgotten, as the case is with Christ.⁵⁵ The sentence of a self-mortifying Christ on the cross to redeem the pathological Other although falls into two classification: the launching of Christ as a momentum of selflessness and responsibility, thereby transgressing ontology itself, which Levinas seems to take cue; and, secondly, a reclusion that seeks a metaphysical order from an Other in the form of “father,” therein remaining faithful to the metaphysical tradition.

Wherein the metaphysical fear and swan-song requiem rendering a plea to be remembered, to violate the impossibility of forgetting, in Christ, is based not inasmuch on an “expression” but an advocacy for “impression” of the event itself. The chasm of self-mortification in the event has already been sublimated, and justified to many extend. *On Nietzsche* Bataille says that the “crucified Christ is the most sublime of all symbols – even at present.”⁵⁶ The undeletable mark of the event in the sacramental effects of crucifixion therefore renders the symptomatic fear-perception as overcoming ontology in the irresponsible value of *being always* remembered. Although in a different context but pertinent to this connection that Nancy evaluates Bataille’s critique of “nostalgia” – therein rendering “the schema of betrayal”⁵⁷ or, more promptly, “the denial of estacy.”⁵⁸ What Levinas has

⁵⁴ Kekhriehoulie Yhome, “In the Resistance of *to* Love, Sublimated as Proto-Ontology of Inclusionary Politics/Poetics, in Post-Holocaust/ Modern Construction of Memory and Philosophy,” Centre for Linguistics and English, Division for Semiotics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2001.

⁵⁵ “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, E-li, E-li, la-ma sa-bach-tha-ni? that is to say My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

See the King James Version of *The Holy Bible*, Saint Mathew 28:46.

⁵⁶ Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, op. cit., p. 17.

⁵⁷ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

attempted elsewhere is a corollary of this – to synchronize an irresponsible ontology, the impossibility of the event, as the *very* infinite possibility of creation.⁵⁹

Derrida argues that the notion of infinite is seen as a negation as well as inclusion. Sensing this intervention, Levinas, in the essay, “God and Philosophy,” which is an essay actually meant to reply Derrida’s “Violence and Metaphysics,” highlights the problem of the in-finite, infinity. Levinas argues that the “in-” of infinite is seen not only as a negation of the finite but also implies that the in-finite is found within or without the bounds of the finite.⁶⁰ In Descartes, the *cogito* discovers its being as finite only in relation to the doubts that arise from the relation with the infinite. Wary of this Levinas’s principle, under which the Other is accorded as the infinite, simply replaces the Cartesian subject/*cogito* – I as the finite being cannot think of the infinite – with an ethical determination where the issue of thinkable and unthinkable is transformed as thought – and no thought exists prior or outside of language.⁶¹ In fact, Bernasconi says of Levinas that he emerged from the shadows of Descartes – because the *cogito* not only interrupts the idea of the infinite but also it enables the “work of infinite negation, a movement of descent towards the *there is*.”⁶²

⁵⁹ Wall however argues that for Levinas the “correlation of experience” is a very casual occasion for many the latter’s arguments. See T.C. Wall, **Radical Passivity: Levinas, Blanchot, and Agamben** (Stanford; California: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 30.

⁶⁰ See Robert Bernasconi, “The Silent Anarchic World of the Evil Genius,” in John C. Sallis et al (eds.), **The Collegium Phaenomenologicum: The First Ten Years** (Dordrecht; Boston; London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), pp. 257-72.

⁶¹ Emmanuel Levinas, **Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority**, (tr.) Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), pp. 92-93/pp. 210-13.

⁶² See Robert Bernasconi, “The Silent Anarchic World of the Evil Genius,” in John C. Sallis et al (eds.), **The Collegium Phaenomenologicum: The First Ten Years**, op. cit., p. 270.



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On another level the experience of language is what is pertinent to a repository of correlating the “uniqueness” that has always overshadowed the experience of memory. This, Derrida, too, has not been evaluated at length although. Rather, what has been set as trajectories in the appraisal of memory and nostalgia refuse to acknowledge or pacify the clarity of the romanticist imagination⁶³ as a tradition and the philosophy of history itself as a respite to under-evaluate or estimate such credence. What inevitably is most consistent to these two glaring contrasts is however the interrogation of the “event” – both as a punctuating label for memory and for language itself – with “experience” as the sort of common denominator.

The logo-centric preoccupation defiles this through an institutionalization of speech concept as a phenomenon and as a carrier of meaning. The “concept,” for Hegel, is embedded as “cognition,” giving means to “essence” and “finitude” of the meta-ontological Being. Whereas James Engell grounds the “concept” as imagination itself – of images and percepts.⁶⁴ And, yet, in this connection, “[I]nfancy,” says Agamben, “is an experience of language as such, in its pure self-reference.”⁶⁵ And yet it is with the same interrogating mood that Deleuze and Guattari also discuss the “concept” as a speaking “event” – which is “not the essence or the thing [but] pure event, a necessity, an entity: The event of the Other or of the face.” An understanding of the concept is therefore “defined by the inextricability of a finite numbers of heterogeneous components traversed by a point of absolute secrecy at

⁶³ For a rendering of German Romanticism, see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, **The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism**, (trs.) Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988) and, for English Romanticism, see Forest Pyle, **The Ideology of Imagination: Subject and Society in the Discourse of Romanticism** (Stanford; California: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁶⁴ See James Engell, **The Creative Imagination** (Cambridge; Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981).

⁶⁵ Giorgio Agamben, **Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience**, op. cit., p. 5.

infinite speed” – which is “absolute” and “relative.”⁶⁶ Agamben’s proposition on “infancy” is also a critique and the expression of the need to “redefine” Kantian tradition of the concept’s transcendentalism in its relation to language. For, in Kant, the equation of a transcendental “subject” is equated with or “given a substance or psychologized.” It is this Kantian “psychologism” of the subject that Agamben attempts to survey in relation to the experience of language. And, Kant deserves because it was his *Critique of Pure Reason* that is also the last place where the tradition of western metaphysics has its most explicated questioning on “experience,” “accessible in its pure form.” Therein, the focus is on the substance of an “inexperiencible” subject. This problematic has been identified as a surplus economy that relies on the “concept itself” as a market of “being-towards-concrete” – in the axiomatic chronology of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Benjamin, and finally Adorno. And, in reprisal to this category of materiality in language, a difference for the concept as “the concreteness of the concept itself” has been categorically discussed in the writings of Blanchot, Levinas, Deleuze, Derrida etc.⁶⁷

It was Hegel who took up the challenge of Kant and the former and reduced the experience of “consciousness” in the Kantian subject, thereby creating an “essence” of experience *per se* as the “new absolute subject” – which, of course, Heidegger too pointed out, as an explication of “consciousness” as a dialectical procedure.⁶⁸ In a differing position to this, Derrida had had documented the Husserlian “eidetic reduction” formula on “pure consciousness.”⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, (trs.) Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (London; New York: Verso, 1994), p. 21.

⁶⁷ See Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, op. cit.

⁶⁸ Frederic Engel’s root of natural dialecticism inasmuch is said to be rooted in this Hegelian direction. See Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, op. cit., pp. 32-34.

⁶⁹ For this account, see Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, op. cit.

By and large it was Hamann's critique on Kant that established insights, on the basis of a "purging of language" ("metacritique") that cannot be associated with an immanence of language (which, Kant's "critique" attempts to do so) because the resulting "thought" thereof "could be formulated only as a homology of reason and language." This Kantian "thought" as an irreducible "form" – paving a grid for thought as "self-identity of the form of entity" – has also been critiqued by Staten in, that the "unity" of "consciousness" has been contrasted with the "discontinuity of its contents as a given time."⁷⁰ The "transcendental subjectivity within language" of Kant, like Husserl's, too, therein "prevented" a contradistinction of the "transcendental" and the "linguistic." It is from this language-equals-subject-qua-experience formula⁷¹ in the tradition where Agamben develops and departs, for his "infancy" as the "wordless experience." The temperament of the "infancy" is conflated with the "human" thereby reasoning an "experience" as the "simple difference between the human and the linguistic."⁷² Whereas for such games, and Agamben is wary of Wittgenstein too ("The ineffable is, in reality, infancy"), "infancy destines language to truth, so [too] language constitutes truth as the destiny of experience." In fact, "truth and language" are constituted through a "historico-transcendental relation" whereby the "infancy" sets up a split between "language" and "discourse," as similar to [natural] "human language."⁷³ It is this infancy ("infancy") that also split the nature of "man's source" and brings a "discontinuity and the

⁷⁰ Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (London: Basil Blackwell Publishers, 1985), p. 12.

⁷¹ "The transcendental subject is nothing other than the 'enunciator', and modern thought has been built on this undeclared assumption of the subject of language as the foundation of experience and knowledge."

See Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, op. cit., p. 47.

⁷² Ibid., p. 50.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

difference between language and discourse.”⁷⁴ Inasmuch it is the formulations of formal linguistics or anthropologists like Benveniste, Jakobson, Chomsky, and whose mediatory agencies (myth, phonematics, universal generative grammar) between binary oppositions (semiotic-semantic, culture-nature, esosomatic-endosomatic), from whose models where Agamben interjected “infancy” as a binding – an “inversion” – between language and discourse, for “in-fancy” (“fairy tale,” as he uses) to find a “place where... each finds their own place in history.”⁷⁵

Commenting on Hegel’s “speculative consideration” of animal magnetism, where there persists a contradiction between “the ‘freedom’ of the spirit and its ‘being’ determined,” Nancy argues that “[T]he freedom that the speculative spirit grasps is self-determined, and so sublates all determination.”⁷⁶ Hegelian “determination” is also seen as a “heteronomy” and not as an “autonomy,” and the former is given the status of a “pathology.” It is of this “pathology” aspect that, Nancy says, “an insurmountable affection of its own freedom stymies it, fascinates it,” leading to two fold understanding: a “philosophical speculation” of pathology and the “general determination of affected being” as pathology. In whichever case, “both depend directly on thinking as freedom as the pure self-positing and pure self-production of waking consciousness.”⁷⁷ This, of course, leads to a problematic – “the soul’s impartation” – where the subject presents to itself but presence occurs “only by way of and for the sake of this presence of the subject.”⁷⁸

⁷⁴ And the primacy of this argument is sounded in the proposition where “man cannot enter into language as a system of signs without radically transforming it, without constituting it in discourse.”

Ibid., p. 55.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

⁷⁶ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, (trs.) Brian Holmes and others (Stanford; California: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 21.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

The threshold faced today is a crisis, which, in the words of Nancy, of relating the political with the aesthetic or vice versa, whichever comes first or last. This has been deducted from a propositional affirmation of “absolute relativization,” wherein the very “assumption of ontoaxiological responsibility for the infinite finitization and absolute relativization entailed by being-in-relation” brings a confrontation between or have the connection between the political and the aesthetic, both in terms of a “status” and a “ground” of “absolute relativity.”⁷⁹

The Kantian premises for the beautiful and the sublime differs in that for the former it is qualitative – presented in its very presentation – and, for the latter, it is quantitative – presentation is measured in terms of its movement.⁸⁰ Nancy argues that there is no Kantian aesthetics as such because there is “no object” but a “form forming itself” – the “*Bild* precedes all image” – and an explanation thereof would be that an “imagination that has to schematize without concept would schematize itself of itself an aesthetic judgement.”⁸¹ In this regard Nancy says that the Kantian “faculty of presentation (i.e., the imagination) presents nothing beyond the limit, for presentation is delimitation itself” and furthermore there is “nothing beyond the limit, nothing either presentable or nonpresentable,” which needs to be distinguished from the “dialectical thought” and “sublime thought.”⁸² What resonates in Nancy’s examination of Kantian notion of the sublime is the “end of art” whereby the schema for “beauty” is based on the “unity of the presentation” and the schema for the “sublime” is based on the “pulsation of the unity” – and the latter “deranged art and

⁷⁹ Jeffrey S. Librett, “Translator’s Foreword: Between Nihilism and Myth: Value, Aesthetics, and Politics,” in Jean Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, op. cit., p. ix.

⁸⁰ Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Sublime Offering,” in Jeffrey S. Librett (tr.), *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p.

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⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-30.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

offers another destiny outside itself” leading to a “putting an end to art in the presentation of truth.”⁸³

The disjunction in the Kantian “presentation” preoccupies any attempt to differentiate any radical departure for the “sublime.” For Kant, presentation “distances itself from itself” and the faculty of such possibilities is “imagination.”⁸⁴ This problematic incoherence mutates into what Nancy argues that the “subject” of the “sublime” is already inscribed into a certain subjectivity – “where reason and enjoyment matters,” *jouissance* – and, for Hegel or Kant, “presentation” revolves on a stricture of presenting “truth,” the “enjoyment of prefigure[d] unity.”⁸⁵ The sublation in this case is interesting because there is a parallel attempt to create not only a status of the sign but also a cohesive support for the status as a state/statement of the thought, the sublime. Similarly the conception of time – whether it is in the *a priori* or *a posteriori* effects – is conflated into a linear equation of unity as the truth and such frameworks is already consigned to a certain creation of auto-affecting modular, and the subject experiencing it is problematized. This presupposition of a unity, which Heidegger fabricated and pursued as the metaphysical ontology, therein is a closure of “truth of Being” or unity of a totality. The metaphysics shows that there is an “existence” of the Being but the very presupposition or transcendental effect does not indicate the “difference between being and existence.”

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 26-40.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 28.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

1.02.
**Violence
 and Thought.**

“No one engaged in thought about history and politics can ever remain unaware of the enormous role of violence has always played in human affairs, and it is at first glance rather surprising that violence has been singled out so seldom for special consideration.”

- Hannah Arendt⁸⁶

“Thoughts... which would come from a violence suffered by thought.”

- Claire Parnet⁸⁷

That it may not be true again; that it may not represent “us” anymore; that it may not “repeat” and recur again... more in tune with the tonality of an apologetic’s repentance. The affirmation of democracy as a disorder, a status, a state of the craft, has come to haunt. And, the renewal of such affirmation through a medium that is antinomies and aporias to itself. Such quasi-universalism grafting of measurement, calculation. And, according to Arendt, bio-zoologism has its own day and accountancy!

For, there are reasonable reasons why democracy, the thought of democracy proper, has come to be intensively preoccupying or lurking as a threat. First, the perceptible modes of trans-sanction and domesticated imagination that has come to be explicated in a variable

⁸⁶ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Allen and the Penguin Press, 1970), p. 8.

⁸⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, (trs.) Hugh Tomlison and Barbara Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 1987), p. 24.

form, as a genealogical enterprise. And, secondly, the very extension of that very *form*, as in the tradition, as an indispensable necessity to curb a non-repetitive order.

In the study of violence, Arendt intervenes with the perceptible mode of a phenomenon called “anthropo-theriomorphism,” which is interchangeably linked with “self-preservation.” Arjun Appadurai⁸⁸ affirms that this sort of unknowable dimension of such eschatology, which may change its energy-centric habitation (from nationalism) but will never be able to exhaust the limitations of its own being, presented in the substance of “patriotism” – a fidelity, a faith, a reason that is already grounded. The grounding of an order through violence is therefore preceded by the agency that is itself dialectical, and not otherwise. In connection to this statement, Arendt consciously shows how Frederic Engels (or even Marx for that matter) concedes that historical oppression was more important and violence secondary. Thereby in labeling the ruling class or the State as “instruments of violence” Marx and Engels “erroneously” rule out the “actual power” of the ruling class as based or relying on “violence.”⁸⁹

Thereupon Arendt’s study of “violence” in the “political realm” is but a study of power relations and “power” itself. The body politics of violence is responsible for the appearance and, subsequently, for the “disappearance” of power, too.⁹⁰ And, precisely, it is the very mephistophelean attributes of “violence” that destroys/annihilates power itself; making it an autotelic event – “the loss of power becomes the temptation to substitute violence for power.”⁹¹ The libertine co-relation of violence and therein “power” is unloosed – *spiritus* consciousness.

⁸⁸ Arjun Appadurai, “Patriotism and Its Future,” in **Public Culture**, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1993, p. 418.

⁸⁹ Hannah Arendt, **On Violence** op. cit., p. 11.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 56.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 54-55.

The symbolic order *qua* mythical interruption has therein always being introduced; both as maintenance of the social as well as the continuity of that maintenance. This has been supplemented by the intervening medium of the symbolic itself – in the form of power – as Claude Lefort traces, in the historiography of the theo-political tradition. Lefort argues that any political philosophy or science is a “reflection of power” and in its tradition nothing else is possible to create such thought other than this, which is also a trial for modern democracy to outreach the “empty place” between the order of the “symbolic” and the “real.”⁹² Therein Michelet’s “enigma [for] the monarchical incarnation” – where the body of the king is given as both a natural and a supernatural order – is put forth to analysis by Lefort, and which follows the “double operation” principle of “pleasure” and “sacrifice” (*jouissance*).⁹³ The establishment and institutionalization of the “image of the body” in the king or in the territorial body that is prescribed comes about with a “curious identification with the royalty of the spirit” as a unity – immanent – and the Ancient Regime is therefore entrenched in the religious as well as the political vis-à-vis power and the law that pronounces. Thereupon the law, which actually demands obedience and is an imprint of power, is conflated and transformed into a “loving submission to the monarch.”⁹⁴ The confrontation of the theo-political is therein the domain wherein “religion has put love in the place of Law.”⁹⁵

Concluding from Lefort’s statement, and he himself also posits similar problems, is the possibility and impossibility to de-link (which is already there) the theo-political domain from the onto-theological, and finally from the onto-metaphysical. For the thinking, or the thoughts, of Being, or Being-thought, has already been enmeshed in the entrenchment of the symbolic order (which is a discourse par excellence) but inevitably failing to transgress the representation to the real, again. A citation has already been marked in the proceeding chapter in what is thought’s relation to representation or presentation, itself.

⁹² Claude Lefort, **Democracy and Political Theory**, op. cit., p. 225.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 245.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 243.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 245.

We do not know for sure whether it is the thinking of the onto-anthropological that is chartered by a violent means or, whether it is vice versa. In the examination of Levi-Strauss, at least, such certain issues have been touched upon. What we have examined insofar however is thought's relation to ontology, the prescription and description of the Being, the notorious Heideggerian Being. Similarly, what has been equitable to our understanding of thought's demand or an anti-genealogical approach to the "human condition" has been primarily on the verifiable adherence to a certain relation; a relation that is also inscribed, encrypted, into the "thing" itself, or, nevertheless, the "thing" – different people calls it the sign, *langue*, concept, or 'proto-ontology', to assert/insert a coinage – again, nevertheless, writes itself of a certain infinite writ... the suffering of an unavoidable undecidability. Or, rather, it is the time of a relation that matters most than the determination of a relation with *the* (or, to be in-definite, *an*) Other. This, we shall term, is violence. For, here, it is the imperative category of the Other that operates an organization.

The Other, says Jacques Derrida, which would also mean a proper name, opens with the very moment of inscription.⁹⁶ The inscription is thereof the violence and writing de-announces or opens the closure of the "deferred" violence. Further, it is the Other that is the legitimate source of all violence. It is also in the opening of the Other as a discourse that inaugurates the coming of an intimacy of proper names.⁹⁷ The recurrent theme of this Other as the sign is often termed tautologically as the thing, or the "Thing Itself," as in the tradition.

⁹⁶ Jacques Derrida:

"The entire 'Writing Lesson' is recounted in the tones of violence repressed or deferred, a violence sometimes veiled, but always oppressive and heavy. Its weight is felt in various places and various moments of the narrative...in the relationship among individuals and among groups, among cultures or within the same community. What can a relationship to writing signify in these diverse instances of violence?"
Of Grammatology, op. cit., p. 107.

⁹⁷ Jacques Derrida:

For Alfred Jarry, whom Deleuze considers as a “precursor” to Heidegger, “the sign neither designates nor signifies... but shows... [I]t shows the thing.”⁹⁸ Therein “[t]he limit of language is the Thing in its muteness – vision. The thing is the limit of language, as the sign is the language of the thing... the nth power of language.”⁹⁹ The relation of the “sign” to the “thing” has been most rigorously examined by Giorgio Agamben. The “Idea of a thing is the thing itself” thereby exhibiting the “pure dwelling” of the “thing” in “language” per se.¹⁰⁰ Herman Melville’s *Bartleby*, who answers every demand in the phrase, “I would prefer not to,” has been a keen interest for both Agamben and Deleuze.¹⁰¹ For Agamben, *Bartleby* is the “extreme figure of the Nothing from which all creation derives” – whereas, for Deleuze, *Bartleby*, or the formula, is simple an “devastating” one, having preference categories on the basis of “indiscernibility or indetermination.” Heller-Roazen introduces the Agambenian category as “the zone of indistinction” and its machinic operational system as “equally one between the potential to be (or do) and the potential not to be (or do), a zone in which

“Violence appears only at the moment when the intimacy of proper names can be opened to forced entry. And that is possible only at the moment the space is shaped and reoriented by the glance of the foreigner. The eye of the other calls out the proper names, spells them out, and removes the prohibition that covered them.”

Ibid., p. 113.

⁹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Essays: Critical and Clinical*, (trs.) Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 96.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹⁰⁰ Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, (tr.) Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 76.

¹⁰¹ See Gilles Deleuze, “*Bartleby; or, The Formula*,” in *Essays: Critical and Clinical*, *Op. cit.*, pp. 68-90; and, Giorgio Agamben, “*Bartleby, or On Contingency*,” in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, (ed. and tr.) Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford; California: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 243-71.

language, emancipated from both position and negation, abstains from referring to anything as such.”¹⁰²

And, it is precisely the entrenched language that relates an entrapment of a relation that defies and defines violence; and, at least, that was the status of metaphysics before its grounding.¹⁰³ And, such, that was philosophy itself, its manifest.¹⁰⁴ In a tribute to Emmanuel Levinas, “[whose] thought [that] can make us tremble,” Derrida¹⁰⁵ examines the “metaphysics that Levinas seeks to raise from its subordinate position” and one that departs from its Greek-ness.¹⁰⁶ Thereupon the “ethical relationship” advocated by Levinas – a “nonviolent relationship” – is possible once it is primarily subtracted of the Greek-connected “*archia*.” And, otherwise, the interventions of Bataille appear to be some of the most appropriate. For

¹⁰² See “Editor’s Introduction.”

Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰³ Rather than its immanence, the “materiality” preoccupies a certain respect in the un-seemingly innocent stature and status cohabiting language. For a cursory reading, see Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, **Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject** (Boston; London; Henlev: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977)

¹⁰⁴ The post-Heideggerian appraisal on the question of “end of philosophy” (particularly its ontology) stresses a lot on the very foundation of philosophy itself as per se to a perpetrating institutionalized body of thought.

¹⁰⁵ See “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” in Jacques Derrida, **Writing and Difference**, op. cit., pp. 79-153.

¹⁰⁶ Derrida calls the source of Levinas’ counter-Greco tradition, having bases from “the messianic eschatology,” as one “from within a recourse to experience itself.” It is this unconventional “recourse to experience” that “reaches a point at which exceeded philosophy cannot be brought into question.”

Ibid., p. 83.

Bataille, the question of time (and the same as in “future”) is no longer “a prolonging of the self through time but the occurrence of surpassing, going further than the limits reached.”¹⁰⁷

And *dialectics* was such a huge name before these counter-praxis operations began to be code-named, against the onto-theological Being. The exchange of, between, within, without, *relation* ruined the sacramental briskness – both in the levels on “nothingness” and “nihilism.” “Destiny,” was therein ended; the “end of exchange,”¹⁰⁸ as Baudrillard mentions, with and from destiny – or, most incomingly, the collapse of “metaphor” into “reality.” And this historical *praxis* – the spacing of time – however crude and fraudulent the word is, in the analyses of Baudrillard, the very “possibility to move out of history in order to enter into simulation is but the consequence of the fact that, basically, history itself was none other than an immense model of simulation.”¹⁰⁹ And, the order of simulation or the idea of simulacrum is “a conceptual weapon against reality”¹¹⁰

Against the recurrence of reality, the unrepresentable, we have the Levinasian notion of “persecution,” which “is not a generalization but is always rooted in a certain specificity,” one, which, of course, denies and “excludes” the pluralism of philosophy, other than “Greek and Hebraic traditions,” but one that has also framed “a philosophy that arises from the non-philosophical experience of being persecuted.”¹¹¹ It is this entrenching ontology – the

¹⁰⁷ Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche* (tr.) Bruce Boone (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), p. 5.

¹⁰⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, (trs.) Philip Beitchman and W.G.J. Niesluchowski (London: Pluto Press, 1999), p. 47.

¹⁰⁹ Jean Baudrillard, “Pataphysics of Year 2000,” translated by Charles Dudas, posted at <http://www.ctheory.com/article/a011.html>

¹¹⁰ Jean Baudrillard, “Radical Thought,” op. cit.

¹¹¹ Bernasconi highlights the exclusiveness that demands in a Levinasian kind of translating a history of philosophy, one that “excludes the possibilities of most cultures from contributing to philosophy.” See Robert Bernasconi, “‘Only the Persecuted...’: Language of the Oppressor, Language of the Oppressed,” in Adriaan T. Peperzak (ed.),

relation of democracy and violence – from where the premise of a certain good is added to the notion of democracy and violence is branded as a degree that not only witness the fall, evil, but also the failure of popular ideology in recent times to bring in the undercurrents of revolution into its fullness, the unity of the ideologue and the representative.

La Capra notes that the historiographic conversion or, rather, thawing of the post-modernism – as in its “critical theory” – subsists strongly in the enunciatory sensationalization of the “holocaust.”¹¹² The issues confronting of the “event” and the “thing-in-itself” are still spatio-temporally interconnected – for the background of the unlivable and the failure of western metaphysics are certainly coordinated by certain experimental measures to harness a quasi-universal appeal, which inevitable still continues to reverberates with the logico-imperative grandeur. Somewhat relevant to Arendt’s explications, the expectations that we have dealt with is in a limited manner, i.e., the idea of “return” and the idea or notion of “violence” that has come to be *represented* in a certain body of thought or in a classical image of thought – namely, the recent academic and intellectual purging of the “holocaust” – and, therein, it is still too easy for us to premise a departure that the

Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy, Literature and Religion (New York; London: Routledge, 1995), pp.77-86.

¹¹² Dominick LaCapra,

“Much recent debate in critical theory and historiography is recast if the Holocaust is perceived as at least one more or less repressed divider or traumatic point of rupture between modernism and postmodernism. In this light, the postmodern and the post-Holocaust become mutually intertwined issues that are best addressed in relation to each other.”

in **Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.188.

tradition of moral legitimacy and illegitimacy, or prudence of appreciable and delectable practices, are still nuances.¹¹³

¹¹³ In one of a United Nations agencies funded study of “democracy” in the world, the following conclusion forms part of the undecidable debate:

“Violence is antithetical to both democracy and social movements, but social relations are profoundly marked by violence because political power, like social dominance, is never completely governed by institutional rules.”

Alain Touraine **What is Democracy?** (tr.) David Macey (Boulder; Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), p. 58.

1.03.

Art
and Democracy

“Art is the technique of access to the inaccessible composition of a world, and its attempted opening (or tearing apart).”

- Jean-Luc Nancy¹¹⁴

“Presence is the act by which the thing is put forward: *prae-est*. It is put forward or in front of its nature as a thing, and of everything which immerses this nature in the world of its connections: origins, relations, process, finalities and becomings.”

- Jean-Luc Nancy¹¹⁵

“Modern democracy is... the only regime to indicate the gap between the symbolic and the real by using the notion of power which no one – no prince and no minority – can seize.”

- Claude Lefort¹¹⁶

Two analyses on methodological art? One “speaking,”¹¹⁷ and the other thinking,¹¹⁸ of art. For the first, art has been understood or “viewed” traditionally – Kantian normative

¹¹⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, “Speaking about Art,” a paper presented at the “Forum for the Essay on Art,” Sorbonne, December-1998, translated from the French by Franson Manjali, 2002.

¹¹⁵ Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Technique of the Present,” translated from the French by Alisa Hartz, at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/4/nancy.html>

¹¹⁶ Claude Lefort, **Democracy and Political Theory**, (tr.) David Macey (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 228.

¹¹⁷ Jean-Luc Nancy, “Speaking about Art,” op. cit.

philosophy of art – as “another language,” an “effect that it has produced *per se*,” the “*other* of all language.” In “speaking about art,” which should “symbolize,” it is possible only through the “effect” of “essaying” – of a discourse or writing – where a “composition” or “decomposition,” a “creation,” or, rather, a “cosmographic” of the world is opened. And, the role of the “symbolic” is only an “abyss” – it “refers to nothing, represents nothing” but acts as an inter-mediating linkage, a conjunctive togetherization of “organization.”

For the second, using Paul Virilio’s “speed” (“acceleration”) and Gianni Vattimo’s “aestheticization” through “mass media” as argument points, Figueroa argues that “[T]o think of art’ is to (be) opposed(ed to) the accelerated visual thinking.” And, therein, “to think of art” proposes “to side with the concepts where the image is not indispensable and, even less, exclusively constitutive of the artistic text.” The destruction/deconstruction of the “image” is thus ushered from its representative value. On this much Deleuze and Guattari also defend the art-think connection but argue further that “art” “thinks through affects and percepts.”¹¹⁹

Ever since¹²⁰ the “name of art” was detached from the “fine arts,” or, ever since the “obliteration” of the “fine” in the fine arts, art has resulted into “the suspension of the signification of ‘art’ as ‘technique.’” This has resulted into “art” as “establishing a meaning for

¹¹⁸ Jorge Figueroa, “To think of art,” in http://a-r-c.gold.ac.uk/a-r-c_Two/print_jorge.html

¹¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, **What is Philosophy?**, (trs.) Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (London; New York: Verso, 1994), p. 66.

¹²⁰ This “ever since” can also be seen as a marked reference to the “death of art,” as propounded by Hegel.

See Merold Westphal, “Hegel, The Old Secularism, and the New Theocracy,” in Peter G. Stillman (ed.), **Hegel’s Philosophy of Spirit** (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 187-88.

the word” or “affecting the retreat of a meaning which absents itself in the referential multiplicity as well as in the alterity of language.”¹²¹

How has the incessant and unprecedented valorization of a concept, a name, called “democracy,” in contemporary times, affected or brought into effect, onto thoughts and thinking as such? Is there an aestheticization project involved in such valorization? Has the craft of democracy become an *art*? Or, has democracy, of late, and to analogically invoke Nancy’s, become “like thought or the *art* of the world?”¹²² It is these unredeemable queries, the frontiers of a (mephistophelean?) permuting rhizome, or, the aphorisms that which are at once necessary and impossible,¹²³ that underlines the aesthetic engagement and discourse of democracy, or, rather, the thought on democracy. The (contempt-oratory) time of democracy concerns. The underlying equations of “art” and “democracy” thereof demand a neo-positivist as well as the autopoietic synthesis of the producing process, or technique, of an unrepresentable.

In the study of “mass culture,” Theodor Adorno¹²⁴ examines the “lack of conflict” that leads to the monopolization of “great arts,” in modern times. And, having proposed the liability of democracy to art, the intensity of the valorization that we mentioned before and the “schema” of Adornian of mass commodification remains exemplary for an imperative that argues not only a growing public opinion (mass seduction and education) and the stakes of ‘art’ involved in it but also locate the disorder of democracy that has always permeate a

¹²¹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Speaking about Art*, op. cit.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ In a multiplication of love’s time, between Romeo and Juliet, Derrida argues for its aphorism and the irreducible name: “[A]phorism: separation in language and, in it, through the name which closes the horizon. Aphorism is at once necessary and impossible.” See Jacques Derrida, “Aphorism Countertime,” in *Acts of Literature*, (ed.) Derek Attridge (New York; London: Routledge, 1992), p. 426.

¹²⁴ Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, (ed.) J.M. Bernstein (London; New York: Routledge, 2001).

signifying seclusion for its place in the sublime. Whereas, Adorno discuss “conflict” in terms of its Aristotelian framework of time’s unity.

In an interview Castoriadis says “that there is a thinking which is certainly not like art, but whose rules cannot be given *a priori*,” which, Florian Rotzer commented as true to Habermasian position.¹²⁵ Similarly, Norris has also attributed the need for thinking – for “[W]e cannot think the possibility of culture, history or knowledge in general without also thinking the prior necessity of writing.”¹²⁶ Guattari acknowledges that “subjective” factors have intermittently played a very crucial role in the extrication of history and feels that with the new inventory of a “global diffusion of mass media” has really posed a majoritive role. Inasmuch, the “constitution of complexes of subjectivation [...] resingularise themselves [...] a creation which itself indicates a kind of aesthetic paradigm.”¹²⁷

What is most crucial in the correlation, or analogicalization, or allegoricalization, of democracy and art should be wary of the dissolution of oppositions one the one hand and a reduction of universalism into an abyss of manufacturing possibilities and impossibilities. As if anticipating this problem, Guattari discusses the “failure to see that machinic segments are autopoietic and ontogenetic that one endlessly makes universalist reductions to the signifier and to scientific rationality.”¹²⁸

As though democracy is the “immanent” itself, the same has come to haunt us more than ever, more, but in the sense, different from the scepter that continues to haunt many,

¹²⁵ Florian Rotzer, “Introduction,” in **Conversations with French Philosophers**, (tr.) Gary E. Aylesworth (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995), p. 11.

¹²⁶ Christopher Norris, **Derrida** (London: Fontana Books, 1987), p. 5.

¹²⁷ Felix Guattari, **Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm**, (trs.) Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Sydney: Power Publications, 1995), p. 7.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

that it poses a threat to the very ecological landscape of the political¹²⁹ or the social relevance, in its infinitesimal manner, which Deleuze and Guattari call as the “capital.”¹³⁰ Whereas Nancy refutes the claims of “immanence” in declaring that the social space has always attempted to effectuate itself in “the absolute of the work” or “work” itself, creating and carving a “politics adequate to art.”¹³¹ Lyotard too measures the immanent qualification of “myth” and this has managed to perpetrate a “narrow and essential correlation between the art of politics and the fine arts.”¹³² The idea of “modern democracy” is therefore immanent with “the hegemony of the principle according to which the opinion of the masses must be seduced and led by [...] ‘tele-graphic’ procedures, by the various types of ‘inscription-at-a-distance’ descriptions and prescriptions.”¹³³

¹²⁹ The onto-ecological as a perspective of the social space has been argued by Michel Serres, *The Natural Contrast*, (trs.) Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998).

¹³⁰ Derrida has also felt the intensity of this feeling in his overwhelming funeral speech on Deleuze – the initializing of walking alone in the gaze of the Marxian scepter. See Jacques Derrida, “I’ll have to walk alone,” translated by David Kammerman, posted at <http://www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/1/derrida1.html>

¹³¹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, op. cit., p. 8.

¹³² Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, (trs.) Geoffrey Bennington and Rachael Bowley (Cambridge; Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), p. 75.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

Chapter Two
Relation,
Love, Friendship,
and the *presentation* of Democracy

“Friendship, this relation without dependence, without episode, yet into which all of the simplicity of life enters, passes by way of the recognition of the common strangeness that does not allow us to speak of our friends, but only to speak to them, not to make them a topic of conversations (or essays), but the movement of understanding in which, speaking to us, they reserve, even on the most familiar terms, an infinite distance, the fundamental separation on the basis of which what separates becomes relation.”

- Maurice Blanchot¹³⁴

“Recluses among recluses, where will we be then? Since it is certainly the case that that’s where, because of science, we’ll some day be. Where will human companions be found? It used to be we would look for a king, father, a judge for all of us – since we needed authentic kings, fathers, judges. Later on we’ll seek a friend, since human beings will have become splendid, autonomous systems, though remaining alone. Mythological instinct will then go looking for a friend.”

- Georges Bataille¹³⁵

“Democracy means, minimally, equality – and here you see why friendship is an important key, because in friendship, even in classical friendship, what is involved is reciprocity, equality, symmetry, and so on and so forth. There is no democracy except as equality among everyone.”

- Jacques Derrida¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Maurice Blanchot, *Friendship*, (tr.) Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford; California: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 291.

¹³⁵ Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, op. cit., p. 6.

The wounds of loneliness, opened ever since the existentialist formulated its epoch, or, more appropriately, and quite Pascalian too, the eternal fear for loneliness in the vast and mighty finite world, is the agony of a desire, a phenomenological desire that is at once an irreparable reduction of the 'social' or a problem intrinsic to the heterogeneous; and, at another level, there appears to be an axiomatic reduction or a juxtaposition trick of the same social *milieu* in the de-contextual of the particular. Indeed, the 'we speak the same language', *langue*, but cannot correlate with the *parole* of the other comes into extreme want of answer, a hunger, poverty of philosophical inquiries on language. Thereupon the formulae of the various traditions come to haunt the search for the relation; and relation is the friendship that determines and demands, and shall continue to be determined, as it's ever abyss and reaches of demands.

In the Greek tradition, which is both applicable to Aristotle and Plato, the demand for a relation is metaphysical – and it is the intervening in-explication that followed suit that an interjecting of virtue was endorsed and valorized. This tradition was thus able to inscribe a definition, an *episteme*, for friendship as both allegorical – in meaning and in practice – to the social as well as the ontological. Friendship was therein constituted because of a possible relation, catering to a definition of “essential virtue,” engaging a “usefulness,” and a preemptive dealing with “pleasure.”¹³⁷ And, of course, the distinguishing factors demanding such relation were structurally opposed thence. For, when Narcissus fell in love with his own image, it is at once a relation that is a problem of virtuosity and morality of relation, of love, friendship and the indispensable norms attaching such parameters of conduct were co-edified as a law of modesty and prudence. The supra-para-onto-experience of this relation on the

¹³⁶ Geoffrey Bennington's interview with Jacques Derrida, “Derrida Politics and Friendship: A discussion with Jacques Derrida,” University of Sussex, December 1997, posted at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/frenchthought/derrida.htm>

¹³⁷ These three categories of “friendship” are renderings of Aristotelian text by Jacques Derrida, in an interview.

Ibid.

bases of impossibility and possibility has since then not evaded the correlation of relation, of friendship, and its decaying paraphernalia metaphors.

The exigencies defining a de-framed aesthetic of friendship, which Derrida interrogates using “wisdom” and “will,” also identify the Aristotle-Kant-Blanchot and Montaigne-Nietzsche connections as the “seismic revolution” that has become an “inherited” heritage of “upheaval” for the evaluation (and evolution?) and “revolution of *the* political.”¹³⁸ Basing on this Derrida invokes the much publicized and quoted Nietzschean “O my friends, there is no friend,” which is a “rapture already inscribed in the speech it interrupts.”¹³⁹ And the reasons that interest the rapture is because of Nietzsche’s “new logic [that] leaves its mark on all the necessarily contradictory and undecidable statements that organizes these discourses and give them their paradoxical force.”¹⁴⁰ Formulated from this “paradoxical” announcement, then, is the engagement of “questions in advance with the other” – *future philosophers* – and the heightening of a “moment when the disjunction between thinking and knowing becomes crucial.”¹⁴¹ It is on the premises of these intervening passing of “theoretical knowledge or determinant judgement” that Derrida attempts to flush out (through Nietzsche) the “truth” (or the classic signs of western metaphysics, again) that has been cancerously infected (the Greek or Christian “canon of friendship”) by “a certain politics or a certain type of democracy”¹⁴² – which, in its all appalling and all pervading real sense, is a “friendship” that is not “political” at all.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Jacques Derrida, “Loving in Friendship: Perhaps – the Noun and the Adverb,” in *Politics of Friendship*, (tr.) George Collins (London: Verso, 1997), pp. 26-48.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁴³ Here, Derrida, for once and for all, brings a very close apprehension of his other philosophical writings with his most explicit involvement and expression on political debates. See Derrida’s interview by Geoffrey Bennington at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/frenchthought/derrida.htm>, op. cit.

Derrida affirms that his conception of “democracy” is a challenge posited against the understood and existing conceptual frames and, at the same time, is not a proposal for a “future democracy.” In other words, what Derrida argues about a democracy “that is to come” is a framing of what he calls an “authentic democracy” – having the status of a “promise” – and one which will dissolve all preexisting modes or traditional thinking of relating on democracy *per se*.¹⁴⁴ What Derrida often conflates together in his projection for a “dream” democracy is the issues concerning a “politics of hospitality” as equivalent to “politics of citizenship,” where the parallelograms affecting the ‘grammatology’ of “hospitality” is “the very first opening of my relation to the Other: to open my space, my home - my house, my language, my culture, my nation, my state, and myself. I don't have to open it, because it is open, it is open before I make a decision about it: then I have to keep it open or try to keep it open unconditionally.”¹⁴⁵ Derrida consciously involves the debates concerning international laws on immigration and the prevailing order of international relations (particularly European Union¹⁴⁶) and he explicitly mentions further that “hospitality should be neither assimilation, acculturation, nor simply the occupation of my space by the Other.”¹⁴⁷ It is precisely here where the areas of determining an “anti-genealogy,” the “canonical” modes of friendship and “fraternity” are posited in the contest of an “economy” – the “capital” –

“... because the qualification of singularities will always have been one of the political dimensions of friendship, of a becoming-political of friendship which may not be political through and through – not originally, necessity or intrinsically. With this

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Of course Derrida, throughout the interview, mentions about the need for referring his book, **The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe**, (trs.) Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992).

¹⁴⁷ See Derrida's interview, at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/frenchthought/derrida.htm>, op. cit.

becoming political, and with all the schemata that we need to recognize therein – beginning with the most problematic of all, that of fraternity – the question of democracy thus opens, the question of the citizen or the subject as a countable singularity. And that of a ‘universal fraternity’. There is no democracy without respect for irreducible singularity or alterity, but there is no democracy without the ‘community of friends’ (*koïna ta phiton*). Without the calculations of majorities, without identifiable, stabilizable representable subjects, all equal. These two laws are irreducible one to the other. Tragically irreducible and forever wounding. The wound itself opens with the necessity of having to count one’s friends, to count the others, in the economy of one’s own, there where every other is altogether other.”¹⁴⁸

Whereby the democracy, like the “law” of “literature,”¹⁴⁹ Derrida talks about exceeds any knowledge or, rather, any pre-existing knowledge.¹⁵⁰ Derridean response to democracy is however not on its affirmation for a “political theory” or “deconstruction of politics” that matters but a “performative commitment” – which means to say “[A] personal commitment at a certain moment, in a certain form, in a singular fashion” – “to speak and to act.”¹⁵¹ Nancy Fraser, by projecting two most trusted lieutenants of Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, argues that the “political,” for Derrida or “French Derrideans,” is the premise of the “retrait,” wherein it attempts and announces a “double gesture” – of dis-engaging politics directly (*la politique*) but at the same time questioning the “essence” of the political, politics

¹⁴⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, op. cit., p. 22.

¹⁴⁹ Elsewhere Derrida explicitly says that the reduction of the “I” threatens the law – and literature begins from that moment onwards, the moment the “law is produced in the space of this non-knowledge.” See Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, op. cit., p. 205.

The analogue between “democracy” and “literature” as a belonging of a certain domain producing effects of non-knowledge is certainly part of this paper’s consistent demands, in the question of ethics or the sublime.

¹⁵⁰ See Derrida’s interview, at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/frenchthought/derrida.htm>, op. cit.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

itself (*le politique*).¹⁵² And, yet, in another instance, Morrison calls Derrida's writing as "vampiric quality."¹⁵³

On the other hand, it is the reverberating dissonance of Bakhtinian festivity, dialogism, dialogicality, or, Blanchotian conversation, "infinite conservation," that constitutes an idea, an experience of an idea exposed to democracy, the experience of democracy. And, assuming that friendship is essentially and extra-exponentially a disruption of a relative mode of intersections between singularities and pluralities, structures and difference, which enumerates an equity in the form of what Levinas calls for an "experience of justice" that at once "assumes the experience of love," the fostering, fraternizing, and elucidating of an idea of democracy has been (en)coded in the paternity of friendship. At least that has been the decisive and interrogative schemata adopted in linking, inter-linking Derridean Democracy and Friendship.

Lyotard's¹⁵⁴ critique of Kant *Sensus Communis* defies the anthropological, phenomenological and sociological modes of transacting the polyphony consequences of voices. It attempts for a destruction of the relation that precludes the Kantian *Sensus Communis* communication schema. The universalist argumentation of Kant is based on a non-responding, unquestionable enterprise of the voice, the demand of the judgement *a priori*. Therein, the moral claims of reason in Kant was mediated by the concept and, thereupon, the

¹⁵² See Nancy Fraser, "The French Derrideans," in Gary B. Madison, **Working Through Derrida** (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1993).

¹⁵³ In a review of Derrida's **Politics of Friendship**, Morrison comments:
 "[W]hat we are left with in this text [Friendship of Politics] is *the endless apologising, the infinity of disclaimers, the slow sensitivity in approaching the possibility of actually saying something, this way of hiding his intent behind the voice of others [italics mine].*"

See http://www.ndirect.co.uk/~variant/7texts/Ewan_Morrison.html

¹⁵⁴ See Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Sensus Communis," in A. Benjamin, **Judging Lyotard** (London: Basil Blackwell, 1992), pp. 1-24.

aesthetic is not binding to any subjective category. Lyotard's refusal, then, in the "*tautegorical*," is a categorical liberation of the subject that speaks its own voice, most impinged to the freedom exposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, but delinked from any auto-affection but, rather, towards an hetero-affection. The "inhuman substratum of the nature of the pre-subject" – the basis where Lyotard argues the economy of transcendence as uncontrollable or unmanageable – therefore counters the Kantian positioning of "enlarged thought" whereby the subjective reasoning takes an intro-retrospective flight towards a subjectivized objectivity. What is most important to this area of departure is the introduction of thinking systems reacting to both "amnesia" and "forgetfulness," thereby disclaiming the latter as a necessary evil, and sublimating the former as a "*differend*" that speaks for the voiceless, silence, incapable of even articulating in the gaze of a non-speaking "sign" – in reference to Adorno's 'micrological writing'.¹⁵⁵ The "silent world," says Levinas, "come to us from the Other." This Other – *Autrui* – is also the "evil genius" and is the "inverse of language," whose silence terrifies.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Inhuman Conditions: Reflections on Time*, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁵⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, op. cit., pp. 90-91

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**The Subject,
 and the Relative Space Outside**

“When I speak to the Other, the speech that relates me to him [or her] ‘accomplishes’ and ‘measures’ that inordinate distance (a distance beyond measure) that is the infinite movement of dying, where death puts impossibility into play. And, in speaking to him, I myself speak rather than die, which means also that I speak in the place where there is a place for dying.”

- Maurice Blanchot¹⁵⁷

Substance ontology that preoccupied a tradition too long is now exposed to an outside, outside the frame of a space and time of the subject, an outside gaze, a “face,” which Derrida mentions: “[T]he face is neither the face of God nor the figure of men: it is their resemblance. A resemblance which, however, we must think before, or without, the existence of the Same.” This self-abnegating gaze of the non-existence face, the metaphysics of absence, has already been forewarned, of a subject’s subjectivity-genealogy as the impossible, by Blanchot,¹⁵⁸ from whom Derrida also draws much sustenance. Which is to say, the haunts of Heidegger’s determination of the Being and his conclusion that an alterity cannot be had, has been impugned by what Blanchot affirms as “dialogue” as “presence” – *a fortiori* opening of “relation.” The emptiness of inter-subjectivity matters to this relation with the outside.

Although the constitution of the outside of the subject/Being has been most explicitly formulated by Levinas, the tracing of the Being *per se* as “irreducible” existence has been

¹⁵⁷ Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, (tr.) Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 72.

¹⁵⁸ A parallel reading of the similar conclusions can be found in Leslie Hill’s *Blanchot: Extreme Contemporary* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997).

invoked by Kierkegaard.¹⁵⁹ The existentialist *form* attempted by Kierkegaard differs from the essential criteria for the form posed by Kant – and there is an evangelical undertone in the ‘post-modern’ construction of the “sign” or “concept,” which, by and large, are evolved deliriously from this remnant, although subtracted of any essence or existential priorities. Even the clarity that has subsided now in the post-deconstruction phase mutated in the anthropo-philo-centric devaluation on the one hand and a contestation of the agency in the metaphysical sense. And it is here where we find the correlates of Levi-Strauss/Derrida and Heidegger/Levinas associates.

The early writings of Derrida is much more on the interrogation of language and the problems of knowledge *inscribed/described* in the foundation/humanism of western metaphysics, it is the anthropic terrain and “historico-problematic terrain’ that occupy the actuarial relevance of situating the “outside” here, although it is not exhaustive by no means. For, at the same time, it is not the structurally and mutually opposites that concerns us nevertheless, but the determination of the Being that is man, which was perfectly entrenched in the Hegelian-Husserlian-Heideggerian anthropological philosophy, that matters.¹⁶⁰ The introduction to the “history of concepts” was also an opening for the “history of the concept of man,”¹⁶¹ beholden with superfluous impediments since the Enlightenment Project, more accurately. Derrida maintains that for Hegel “consciousness is the truth of man [and] phenomenology the truth of philosophy – and phenomenology remains inasmuch a votary of positivist science.” This is this domain where the *Aufhebung* is located, consolidating and appropriating “man’s *telos* or his *eschaton*, in the unity of his death.” The ends of man, therefore, are difficult for Derrida, to be identified or assimilated within the “dialectics of

¹⁵⁹ See Jacques Derrida’s article on Kierkegaard in **Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader**, (eds.) Jonathan Ree and Jane Chamberlain (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

¹⁶⁰ See Jacques Derrida, “The Ends of Man,” in Paul Kurtz (ed.), **Language and Human Nature: A French-American Philosophers’ Dialogue** (St. Louis; Missouri: Warren H. Green, Inc., 1971), pp. 180-206.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

truth or negativity... which is not a theology in the first person plural.”¹⁶² Similarly, for Husserl’s “transcendental anthropologism,” “consciousness [was] imagined without man” – Kantian ‘*telos*’ - and leading to a metaphysical determination of the Being within the ends of a “teleological reason” (history) to bring an effectual meaning, which is “escho-teleological” by its very intentions. And, finally, Heidegger’s ontico-ontological *Dasein* (Being and being), which actually attempts to break from the Husserlian-Kantian axis, remain as a “thought of man,” but is not man, beyond its essence.¹⁶³

This anthropo-ethnological energy that questions the interruption of myth in Levi-Strauss’ inability to think (“unthinkable”) what comes when culture and nature (or “incest” and “taboo”) conflates for a meaning is therefore the limitations of liminal intersections bounded by a sheer question of time. Derrida observes that Levi-Strauss’s failure to comprehend the discourse of the mythological is itself a contradictory dialectics, wherein a reply to the same problematic is the ability of the mythological order to “reflect[s] on itself and criticize[s] itself,” which, thereby, is a question of *the* “language of a language,” as “myth” escapes the “proof of experience.”¹⁶⁴ This treacherous assigning of the subject, Being, to “privileged references, to an origin, to an absolute archia,” Derrida mentions, is a manifest “void,” which Levi-Strauss too anticipated but refused to question.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 191.

¹⁶³ The ontic-proximity of presencing in Heidegger, Derrida says, “is guided by the motif of Being as presence, understood in a more original sense than in the metaphysical and ontic-determinations of presence or of presence in the present, and by the motif of the proximity of Being to the essence of man.” “The *Dasien*,” therefore, “is not man,” and “is not,” again, “other than man.”

Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁶⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Structures, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences,” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 278-94.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 278-94.

Levinas starts with Martin Buber in analyzing the relation of the Being with the other, the outside.¹⁶⁶ Buber proposed the objective and subjective anxieties relation on two levels: the relation of “I-Thou” and “I-It” – the first is an active interplay and the second passive. Levinas, in response to these defined relations, says that it underscores the possibility of inter-subjectivity because of the alleged existence of “temporized” (*sich zeitigen*, in German)¹⁶⁷ autonomy in relationship. The “I-Thou” axiom, feels Levinas, is already inscribed with “objectiveness” because there are “no interlocutors” for the “Thou.” This lack of “reciprocity” in Buberian schema is fundamental to the very question of the impossibility of an unprejudiced “theory of knowledge.” At the objective level, since there is no reciprocity, the “truth” is not a content or contestable with “words” – which ultimately belongs to the Other, and inevitably becomes the Other – the gaze of the Other, as the ultimate, as in the Absolute in Hegel, and the existence of “pure consciousness” in Husserl. Similarly, at the subjective level of Buberian “I-Thou” relation, Levinas demonstrates the gaze of the Other (the “face”). At this relation, there cannot be inter-subjectivity, too, and hence the doubtful responsibility for the “I,” as Buber’s “I” is attributed as an experience of inter-subjectivity without *Umfassung* (or inclusion). The responsibility in such entrenched relation (humanism) is therefore an operation of the “I’s” “personal commitment” whereas the Other is never opened, aesthetically or otherwise.

The upgradation of Being into or as relation takes place in Levinas. There is “no interlocutor” as compared to the Buberian schema in this relation because relation of the “I-Thou” is not psychological but ontological.¹⁶⁸ Levinas says that for Buber “truth” is not a

¹⁶⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, (ed.) Sean Hand (Oxford; Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

¹⁶⁷ The word “temporalize,” observes Levinas, is to “serve to highlight better the specific sense of time, which is not a ‘something’ that exists or unfolds, but which is the very ‘effectuating’ of existence.” See footnote five, in Emmanuel Levinas, “Martin Heidegger and Ontology,” translated by the Committee of Public Safety, posted at <http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/dia/26.1levinas.html>

¹⁶⁸ Emmanuel Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, op. cit., p. 61.

content and language or words cannot summarize it. It is subjective in whichever case for Buberian model. And it remains objective again because the “truth” does not belong to the subjective but belongs to the Other. Levinas therein introduces the notion of *umfassung* or inclusion, which is the ultimate nature mediating “experience” of the “I” and the Other.¹⁶⁹ Whereby the “I” is “responsibility” per se, a “personal commitment” in Buberian “I-Thou,” and it necessary to discard the subjectively. For, at this level of discourse, the sense proper of a “metaphysical responsibility” is a responsibility for language and metaphysics is therein a language with God.¹⁷⁰ The “desire or anticipation” enshrined in the relationship cannot be captured on a model, a “conceptual structure,” and it is only with the erasure (“vanish”) of the same that the “I-Thou” becomes possible. The “irreducible alterity of the Other” (which Levinas refused to call “alter ego”) is Derrida’s comment in this regard and it is the “Other” that opens the space of the transcendental and liberates the metaphysical.¹⁷¹ Further, Derrida observes, Levinas modellization of the relationship is based on a “mystery” and it is neither “non-spatial” nor a case of “inside or outside.”¹⁷²

The problematizing of relations and subjectivity in Levinas is therefore avowed with a pre-foundational responsibility, as already entrenched, neither rooted nor inscribed but simply there – “there is.” Levinas attempts to exemplify the radicalization of the Being and the Other by disseminating Being as the Other – through the deduction of essential elementalism like “desire” or “anticipation” (Derrida terms this as “violence”), in the absence of any “conceptual structure,” and the Being is accorded as always, infinitely, and irreducibly responsible to the Other, as a relation. This “infinite responsibility” therein opens with “proximity.” The theme of Levinasian “proximity” alludes to the problems enshrined in relations and subjectivity, and it is quite interesting. Levinas uses “proximity” to deconstruct

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁷⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 116.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 112.

relations: “proximity is not knowing relations but already in narration.”¹⁷³ It is not certain in what relevance we can assuage the term “narration” used by Levinas, but in another context Manjali¹⁷⁴ has argued for an understanding of “narration” in recent times in human sciences, and its post-emergent studies, too, especially those of the Nancy’s, where the “mythic” and “fictional” are seen as “mutually necessary and mutually implicated.” And yet, for Levinas, this “narration” appears to be the “mystery” that demonstrates his ethics and responsibility. Further to the question of “proximity,” in another account, Levinas says, “... proper signification of subjectivity is proximity, but proximity is a very signifyingness of signification, the very establishing of the [Being?]-one-for-the-other, the establishing of the scene which every thematized signification reflects in Being.”¹⁷⁵ The establishment of a relation where “passivity is pertinent,”¹⁷⁶ therein, absolves the destruction of immanence, the transcendence of thought: the meta-narrative of proximity.

It is the ontological derivatives of Heideggerian ontic-ontological assumptions that concerns most in Levinasian approach to the anthropo-philosophic Being and its relation with thought. For the thought, as well as the *im*-thought, is unknown, infinite – always an exteriority of the Being (as Derrida highlights that the interiority of the Being is already limited by the very logocentric metaphysics).¹⁷⁷ The outside relation, the Other, “the

¹⁷³ Emmanuel Levinas, **Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence**, (tr.)

Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht; Boston; London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), p. 83.

¹⁷⁴ See Franson D. Manjali, “Infinite Narration,” in Raghwendra Pratap Singh (ed.), **Reason, Dialectics and Postmodern Philosophy: Indian and Western Perspectives** (Faridabad: Om Publications, 2001), pp. 143-57.

¹⁷⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, **Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence**, op. cit., p. 85.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 83. On the question of “passivity,” see Thomas C. Wall, **Radical Passivity**, op. cit.

¹⁷⁷ Jacques Derrida’s obligation to Levinas has been expressed in his essay on the latter, “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” in **Writing and Difference**, op. cit., pp. 79-153.

infinitely-other,” therefore, “cannot be bounded by a concept.”¹⁷⁸ It is the limit of Being’s interiority, which Heidegger was advocating, that, as a passing, the “trembling,” the paraphernalia of shuddering takes place, accelerating the impossibility of phenomenological ethics, or, “ethics as metaphysics,” “first philosophy.”¹⁷⁹

The “relation” that Levinas refers to recounts even in the accounts of Blanchot, which he calls as the “third kind” – *the* relation with emptiness but the radicalized Being, which relates neither to “me or myself” but as an “infinite movement of dying, where death puts impossibility into play.”¹⁸⁰ Or, where, in the words of Nietzsche, “[B]eing ineluctably compelled to wait.”¹⁸¹ It is this eschatological possibility that Blanchot refers as the “neutral” space or relationship – a “relation without relation... the relation of the one to the Other is doubly dissymetrical.”¹⁸² In Nancy’s parlance, “presentation” would therein imply the giving of “coordinates” – wherein the “self subtracts itself.”¹⁸³ By deriving the problem out of the double-creation, an essential and the meta-ontological, Derrida calls this act as a “gift,” wherein the “denial that involves renouncing the self,”¹⁸⁴ is ascribed as an first order “inscription” of “responsibility” based on a “sacrifice.” On a more self-conscious relegation

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁸⁰ Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, op. cit., p. 72.

¹⁸¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and EcceHomo*, (trs.)

Walter Kauffmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1989), p. 47.

¹⁸² Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁸³ The logico-imperative for this conclusion has been presented in the format of:

“Space-time is the unity of that which is outside itself in its very unity (or rather: outside it). It is the opening of the world, of creation – but creation without a creator, without which space and time would only be in God, and thus, being in him, led back to a subsisting unity with neither space nor time.”

See Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Technique of Presence,” op. cit.

¹⁸⁴ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, (tr.) David Wills (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 30.

towards responsibility, Levinas remembers Dostoyevsky's "[W]e are all guilty for everything and everyone, and I more than all the others."¹⁸⁵

Against the hyper-frames of "revolution," Baudrillard discuss about "devolution" – "[m]assive de-volution of the will" – where the "deepest strategy is perhaps the wish to hand one's desire over to another. A strategy of disillusion with their 'own' will, a strategy of ironical investment, of expulsion towards others of philosophical, moral and political injunction."¹⁸⁶ For, "[s]eduction is still ceremonial, love is still pathetic but sexuality is no longer anything but relational."¹⁸⁷ Speaking against auto-affection, of "love," Baudrillard introduces the concept of "seduction" – which is not linked to any "affects but to the fragility of appearance."¹⁸⁸ The stake today then is a demand for "love" – which is "the end of the rule and the beginning of the law" – a time when "cruelty" is required.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, (trs.) Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshaw (London: The Athlone Press, 1998), p. 105.

¹⁸⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, (trs.) Philip Beitchman and W.G.J. Niesluchowski (London: Pluto Press, 1999), p. 96.

¹⁸⁷ Jean Baudrillard contradistinguishes "love" and "seduction" and "sexuality"

- "Love (passion) is the era of a moral and affective sexual difference."
- "Sexuality is the era of psychological, biological and political difference between the sexes."
- "Seduction is the era of an esthetic and ceremonial difference between the sexes" and it is "not mysterious; it is enigmatic. The enigma, like the secret, is not unintelligible."

Ibid., pp. 106-7.

¹⁸⁸ Jean Baudrillard anti-model of the seductive economy:

"Seduction is linked not to affects but to the fragility of appearance; it has no model and seeks no form of salvation – it is therefore immoral. It obeys no morality of exchange; it is based rather on the pact, the challenge and the alliance, which are not universal and

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- Love -

the Demand of Thinking Thought

“Philosophy is the wisdom of love at the service of love.”

- Emmanuel Levinas¹⁹⁰

“[T]hinking is the condition for everyone, the human condition... we all carry this weight. Or, rather, we do not carry it! We *are* this weight... Thinking enjoys and suffers without any representation... This is intolerable, unbearable (one bends, collapses under the weight of what is to be thought, that is, of what just is), and yet this has no heaviness, it is the lightness itself (one can think whatever one wishes). This is grave...”

- Jean-Luc Nancy¹⁹¹

“The image of thought retains only what thought can be claimed by right. Thought demands ‘only’ movement that can be carried to infinity. What thought claims by right. What it selects, is infinite movement or the movement of the infinite. It is that constitutes the image of thought.”

- Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari¹⁹²

natural forms, but artificial and initiatory ones. It is therefore frankly perverse.”

Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁹⁰ Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁹¹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Gravity of Thought*, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

¹⁹² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit., p. 37.

The constitution of an order, a schemata, ontic-methodology of an onto-absolute one, has been accorded to Heidegger's "What Calls for Thinking?"¹⁹³ wherein he questions the relation of Being and "thinking," the quantitative driving impulse of "thought-provoking," and the return of thought or thinking itself. Departures from this definition have already been posited by as many as... and conjunctions and disjunctions, similarly, have been already identified, labeled, and liberated.¹⁹⁴ The tragic demise ("ends") of Heideggerian 'philosophy' – accountable to the "unthinkable" in Levi-Strauss – is therefore seen as partly a deficit/deficient onto-ontic Being and the valorization of the *mutbos*. The haunts of a non-essential, a non-immanent thought, and its wandering "exile," one which Levinas refers as "a suffering truth," therein, demands.¹⁹⁵ Levinas - the "necessity of thinking."¹⁹⁶

This brazen and graven demand of thought itself is the "fear" itself – the inexplicable "trembling" – an exposure to the diurnal. And, yet, fervently, the feverish being-afraid of being-thought, to think.¹⁹⁷ And, this is precisely where, the wandering lust of the thinker-in-

¹⁹³ Martin Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?" in **Basic Writings**, (ed.) David Ferrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 365-92.

¹⁹⁴ Jacques Derrida questions the limits of thought and the beyond language that was suffered by Heidegger:

"The last impossible does not signify that the beyond metaphysics is impracticable; on the contrary, it confirms the necessity for this incommensurable overflow to take support from the metaphysics. A necessity clearly recognized by Heidegger...[I]t marks that only difference is fundamental, and that Being is nothing outside the existent." In **Writing and Difference**, op. cit., p. 318.

¹⁹⁵ "Belief," says Emmanuel Levinas, "always exists with a suffering truth," in **Existence and Existents**, (tr.) Alphonso Lingis (The Hague; Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978).

¹⁹⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, **Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence**, op. cit., pp. 3-8.

¹⁹⁷ Dennis Hollier creates an onto-fear-perception with this spelling statement:

exile that “philosophy” itself asks the proto-nomadic question of an “a priori” “homeland” for thought, “[W]hat is thought’s relationship with earth?”¹⁹⁸ Thinking, as in Nancy, at once, is ascribed with and isolated to a quasi-onto-universal nonevent. But, at the same time, its moment of birth has been denied/betrayed by its very appearance.¹⁹⁹ This unlimited “linguistic dispersal” operates within/without the sign, the gaze of the irreducible sign, the “ineluctable,” which Derrida terms it as “desistance” – signifying at once a “mimesis” and a “double” – where the saying perturbs an act but is engulfed immediately by “the new ‘question of the subject’” that “calls for another experience of truth.”²⁰⁰ This instant death – a finite’s infinitude – procreates the moment it dies, a creation that is associated with the eschatological – impossible dying, or, in other words, the infinite death, the relation with the gaze, the face, the voice.

The question of dying an infinite death for the Other, says Levinas, is not present in the Heideggerian *Dasein*. Rather than “dying in the place of the other,” the *Dasein* “privileges

“One thinks a lot when afraid. And even more when one is afraid of being afraid. And even more when one is afraid of what thinks. Afraid to think. Afraid of the thought.”

See “Foreword,” in Dennis Hollier (ed.), *The College of Sociology (1937-39)*, (tr.) Besty Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. viii. See, also, Jacques Derrida, “By Force of Mourning,” (tr.) Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naus, in *Critical Inquiry* 22 (Winter, 1996), pp. 171-92.

¹⁹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari summon:

“Philosophy is inseparable from a Homeland to which the a priori, the innate, or the memory equally attest. But why is this Fatherland unknown, lost, or forgotten, turning the thinker into an exile? What will restore as equivalent of territory valid as a home? What will be philosophical refrains? What is thought’s relationship with earth?”

In Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, Op. cit., pp. 68-69.

¹⁹⁹ Although Heideggerian – “appearing” or *Darstellung*

²⁰⁰ See “Desistance,” an introduction to Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe’s

Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics, op. cit., pp. 1-42.

his own death.”²⁰¹ Further, the death of *Dasein* is simply a passage of “being-towards-death within the horizon of the question of being” – death as “annihilation.”²⁰² Similarly, in response to Freudian psychological death Deleuze and Guattari formulates an antithetical antimony that seeks “body without organs” – a “death that desires.”²⁰³ The aftermath of this eschatological experience opens the spheres of “responsibility”...

The attention Abraham paid to the “voice,” which Derrida considers as visible in Kierkegaard as an attempt that reconsiders all void of the “ethical,” thereby opens the closure of responsibility, or “duty,” as often and properly referred, too.²⁰⁴ Although Derrida had never embarked on a definition for the ethical (for it will tantamount to absolutizing, in contradiction to his opening of closure, ethic itself), for Derridean scholars, the “ethical” and the “juridical” have been always a site of contestation whereby Drucilla says that Derrida is more interested in the juridical – the legal, justice, responsibility, undecidability, etc. – rather than in reducing the ethical to a nihilistic perspectivalism.²⁰⁵ If, therein, this holds the water, “allegory” (although “empty”) is pertinent to *the* communication theory Derrida is based upon.²⁰⁶ And, nonetheless, it is not much in hunting for an “empty signifier,” or “floating signifier,” to employ Deleuzian and Guattarian terminology, that is associative of “reading,”

²⁰¹ Emanuel Levinas, quoted, in Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, op. cit., p. 42.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁰³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, (tr.) R. Hurley et. al (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 332.

²⁰⁴ Emmanuel Levinas assessment and thereupon objection to Soren Kierkegaard is because the latter generalizes “ethics” – and the singularity is void in the milieu of the general codification. This contending departure has been translated by Jacques Derrida, in *The Gift of Death*, (tr.) David Wills (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 78.

²⁰⁵ See Drucilla Cornell, “The Violence of the Masquerade,” in Gary B. Madison, *Working Through Derrida*, op. cit.

²⁰⁶ For an exclusive interpretation of the “allegorical,” refer Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

but, rather, in the words of a translator, Derrida is “seriously” engaged “to challenge the ideas that govern the way we read.”²⁰⁷ Derridean ethics therein lies... in the para-frames of reading the tradition, the tradition of responsibility and the call.

Derrida examines Kierkegaard’s fear and trembling – “*mysterium tremendum*”²⁰⁸ – this “secret,” is the Christian “terrifying mystery” “in the experience of the sacrificial gift,”²⁰⁹ that calls. It is this “secret” that continues to “describes the non-history of absolute beginnings” and which finds a “lineage” of responsibility and faith generation after generation.²¹⁰ Elsewhere, this fragmentary continuity has been codified as the “genre of generation” – the becoming of literature, the exhaustion of literature, the law of literature itself; of the law.

The “excessive beginning” (overtures) of “responsibility” (or “excess vision,” in Bataille) is that it goes hand in hand with “faith” because it “should” “exceed mastery and knowledge” – and this is “history” itself.²¹¹ The politics of the Greco-Platonic tradition that the European inherited is therein minus this responsibility – and thereof a passage of choice between the “democratic” and the “totalitarian,” says Derrida.²¹² The shimmering passageway of such encountering was already announced by Nancy’s “partage” – that is, “passibility,” to sense and an irreconcilable affinity in representation

²⁰⁷ Alan Bass, “Translator’s Introduction,” in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. xiv.

²⁰⁸ Jacques Derrida, “Whom to Give to (Knowing Not to Know),” in *The Gift of Death*, op. cit., pp. 53-81.

²⁰⁹ Derrida says:

“This trembling seizes one at the moment of becoming a person, and the person become what it is only in being paralyzed, in its very singularity, by the gaze of God.”

Ibid., p. 6.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²¹¹ Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

Unlike Carl Schmitt, Patocka advocated for the possibility of a “Christian or European-Christian politics.”²¹³ The themes of this grounding of course revolves around Saint Mathew’s “love your enemies” to “pray for those who persecute you” to issues of “revenge,” in Leviticus, in the backdrop of Christian crusade war with the Muslims. And, using Nietzsche’s economy of “the contractual relationship between creditors (*Glaubiger*) and debtors (*Schuldner*),” Derrida derides that the western conceptions of responsibility and justice were already self-destructed either by its “make-believe” rhetoric or “what believing means.”²¹⁴

²¹³ Ibid., p. 103.

²¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 113-15.

Chapter three:

**Fluxes,
Analogue Speed,
and De-escalation of Ontology Politics**

It seemed to us that politics is at stake as well and that in a social field rhizomes spread out everywhere under the arborescent apparatuses.

- Gilles Deleuze²¹⁵

Politicization and aestheticization impose themselves today as ferociously competing imperatives indistinctly positioned in a realm of uncertain values. Both politics and aesthetics are dimensions of the world that are quasi-universally considered – at least to some degree – important or valuable. But there is very little consensus on the sense and value of each dimension relative to the other.

- Jeffrey S. Librett²¹⁶

Although it is rather unnecessary to define the meta-language or the extent to which two historicized evaluations – “democracy” and “friendship” – can be correlated to the very arguments posited in the political and the aesthetic, or the literary for that matter, an issue that has come to pose us most persistently in the critique of western foundationalism is the crisis woven in-between the alleged closure of an idea of “universalism” and the opening of a debate on “multiculturalism.” For, at the same time, we have since recently mentioned and talked about plurality and

²¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze, “Preface,” in Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, op. cit., p. ix.

²¹⁶ Jeffrey S. Librett, “Translator’s Foreword: Between Nihilism and Myth: Value, Aesthetics, and Politics,” in Jean Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, op. cit., p. vii.

singularity, too. This problematic has also been pervasively aided by the ontological argument – anthropo-philosophically – in the search for locating the concept of the being as well as in its conceptual ontology of existence/or meaning. And, before going further, the allegorical, if not axiomatic *aporias*, inter-linking the infinitesimal finitudes of democracy and friendship, the political and the aesthetic, universalism and multiculturalism, or whichever be the case first, is, again, a hazard of counterpoising not only differences but also relations. It is here that the dimensions of the ethical counter-react. However it is within the overtures of these tautology ridden concepts that a frame of speed,²¹⁷ as against the static undertones of/in time, is introduced, to estimate the knowledge engineering systems of the social as in the political (democracy) and the political as in the social (friendship) and to measure the preponderating craft of allegory the superstructures presents itself.

The critique of western metaphysics has been highlighted in the preceding chapter on the basis of the “play,” the Derridean intermittent “absence and presence” and of the question of “trace.” In this specific respect, it is also a token of dismantling the *a priori* and embedded diachrony of the universal. The universal then is also an arrogant self, having the permuting capacity to inflict as well as totalize. In a work by Ernesto Laclau, the anti-foundational resurgence against the western idea of universalism (as in belittling defence of multiculturalism) argues for a definite infinitization, “the notion of the universal as an empty but ineradicable place.”²¹⁸ Arguably, the defence for the universal, after its deconstructed surface or “decontextualized terrain,” is based on the potential anticipation for differences (as in

²¹⁷ Once the parameter of speed is introduced, the mathematical expression of rendering, which Paul Virilio calls “dromology,” or the auto-nihilistic but open-ended reification, which Jean Baudrillard comments in the context of the simulacra, “simulation” – comes into conflict with the established relations of movements, as in the popularly argued question of the sublime or “repetition,” as in Gilles Deleuze.

²¹⁸ Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (London; New York: Verso, 1996), p. 58.

multiculturalism) to be “constitutive.”²¹⁹ “equivalent logics” for “a true democratic politics”²²⁰ The basis for a “democratico-hegemonic” is on the principle of the particular having an open-ended affiliation and desire for the “undecidability,” which the empty universal opens.²²¹

Laclau’s displacement of the “logic of difference” (as in multiculturalism) and the advocacy for the “logic of equivalence” (as in his deconstructed universalism) is based on the linear mutation or “transient articulation” of a fragmentary and transcending “identity” vis-à-vis “right” towards rating “equals” with others.²²² This “dimension of universality,” he argues, is, therefore, “just an empty place unifying a set of equivalential demands.”²²³ On a similar vein, it has been observed that the “right” always tends to maintain a status quo of the traditional form of the political whereas the “left” is seemingly interested in appealing against this tyrannical ideologue. Of course, there exist opposition between these two categories of the political, and it is a “difficult strategy” to align with the “left.” “There is no decision nor responsibility without the test of aporia or undecidability.”²²⁴ Asked on the political ambiguity of democracy and the consequences of such ambiguity, Derrida says that “democracy” is the only name that calls “for a political regime which

²¹⁹ Laclau is here conscious and partially wary of the “postmodernist” rejection of the idea where “the requirements of a politics [ought to be] based on a universality” since “there is an implosion of all meaning and [there is already an] entry into a world of ‘simulation’.”

Ibid., p. 59.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 65.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 65.

²²² Ibid., pp. 48-49.

²²³ Ibid., p. 56.

²²⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Intellectual Courage: An Interview,” by Thomas Assheur, translated from the German by Peter Krapp, posted at http://culturemachine.tees.ac.uk/frm_fl.htm

declares its historicity and its perfectibility, in that it carries [in] its concept the dimension of inadequation and of that which is to come.”²²⁵ Thereupon it is the site of “democracy” *per se* that “allows us in all liberty to invoke these two openings publicly in order to criticize the current state of all so-called democracy.”²²⁶

The relation or the interrelation between literature and the political has seen its most explicit forms of expression and discourse in the trails following the “liberation” of France and the prosecution of the collaborators, through the written, the most desiring objective. An interesting study therein linking the “purge trials” of the “collaborators” and “the status of language” has been accounted by Philip Watts, who says that it laid a “foundation for literary studies in the second half on the twentieth century.”²²⁷ This persecution of writers therein depend on the “final argument” whereby “establishing a theory of literature” is seen as a necessary competition to defend political identification and legal “punishment”²²⁸ – one that “came to establishing a direct link between words and acts.”²²⁹ In relation to the simulacrum of thought, mediated through the “agony of the concept,” Baudrillard says that “[I]t is terrifying to suddenly see the idea coincide with reality... The epiphany of the real is the twilight of the concept.”²³⁰ Therein the state and status of language or writing – or, “the fusion of thought,” as he calls it – is the “living illusion of meaning, the resolution of the misfortune of meaning operated through the good fortune of language. This is the only political or transpolitical act that a writer can accomplish.”²³¹

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Philip Watts, **Allegories of the Purge: How Literature Responded to the Postwar Trials of Writers and Intellectuals in France** (Stanford; California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 58.

²²⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

²³⁰ Jean Baudrillard, “Radical Thought,” *op. cit.*

²³¹ Ibid.

The literary theory of Sartre²³² is seen as “a response to the purge” and those of Blanchot’s a demand for reflection “on the historical event while veiling [the] event” – a resonance of, referring to Paul de Man, an “intersection between the space of literature and the site of the tribunal.”²³³ For a foundationalism that was laid by Sartre in the canonical form of asking questions, the most deliberative one in literature is linked to the writer’s “commitment,” which was commented upon by David Caute in the following words: “A writer, if he is wise, will depict the social class which he knows most intimately; as often as not this class will be his own.”²³⁴ The “commitment” of the writer, then, forms the core preview of a physiological understanding of “what is literature?”²³⁵ For, again, this was highlighted in the writer’s “artistic calling,” coming close to Pascal’s “matter of knowing what one[s] [wants] to write,” towards a “‘true’, ‘pure’ literature, a subjective thing which reveals itself under the aspect of the objective, a discourse so curiously contrived that it is equivalent to silence, a thought which debates with itself, a reason which is only the mask of madness, an Eternal which lets it be understood that it is only a moment of History, a historical moment which, by the hidden side which it reveals, suddenly sends back a perpetual lesson to

²³² Although Jean Paul Sartre is more notably famous for his other works, one particular work comes to mind here on the question of literary theory and literature, and the role of the writer, in particular, see **What is Literature?** (Methuen and Co. Limited, 1967).

²³³ Philip Watts, **Allegories of the Purge**, op. cit., pp. 104-105.

²³⁴ Jean Paul Sartre, “Introduction,” in **What is Literature?**, op. cit., p. xiv.

²³⁵ It is to this code of “truth” of/in literature in/of the writer that Blanchot intervenes:

“[O]ne can certainly write without asking why one writes. If he happens to ask himself questions as he [Sartre] writes, that is his concern; if he is absorbed by what he is writing and indifferent to the possibility of writing it, if he is not even thinking about anything, that is his right and his good luck.”

See “Literature and the Right to Death,” in Maurice Blanchot, **The Work of Fire**, (tr.) Charlotte Mandell (Stanford and California: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 300.

the eternal man, but which is produced against the express wishes of those who do the teaching.”²³⁶

Therefore, Sartre’s definition of poets as “men who refuse to utilize language” or what Denis Hollier says of Sartre’s “resistance to poetry” has been contextualized in terms of the “response to a rival form of committed literature,” meaning the French Resistance poets. For, on the one level the prosecution of the collaborating writers was seen as an attempt to “cleanse” “the political and journalistic milieu” and, on the other level, to “purify French literature.”²³⁷ This “classical rhetoric,” Watts observes, is based on Sartre’s commitment to a “materiality of language” but “an opacity that [it] must be excluded from political discourse.”²³⁸ Whereas, severely coming against Jean Paulhan, Watts says that he “understood the necessity and the difficulty of making political choices” and tried to be “convinced that literature could not be subjected to the same constraints.”

Watts argues that by the end of Second World War “Sartre had transformed responsibility into an ethical and juridical category...realigning his thinking with the tenets of the purge authorities.”²³⁹ Wherein, for Celine and Blanchot, Watts traces, both “divest their literature from mimesis, transitivity, and an economy of representation.”²⁴⁰ Observing this, Watts further comments that post-1943 situation in France defines “responsibility” as “caught between an ontological lexicon on the one hand and on the other the political or juridical meaning.”²⁴¹ Heidegger has had emancipated the remnants of these phenomenological undertakings and its revisionist phase.

²³⁶ Jean Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?*, op. cit., p. 21.

²³⁷ Philip Watts, *Allegories of the Purge*, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

And, of course, Heidegger and his ontological arguments have been grounded in today's parlance with much infamy and disclaim. The clarification that has become necessary because of the "new teachings [of Martin Heidegger] which has casts a spell over the youth" – "the notion of existence and its relation with time" – the core of Heidegger's thoughts.²⁴² It is the "analytic of the *Dasein*" (being in the world), which is at once seen as a departure from ontology and phenomenology itself that concentrates the most vociferous and keen interest of Levinas as well as Lacoue-Labarthe. The curious disjunction of representation and presentation of the "Being" (or "being) – as the *Dasein* contemplates – are of interest to both.

For Levinas, the *Dasein*'s "fundamental possibility of existing in the state of dereliction. It understands possibility adumbrated throughout its very existence but with an understanding always already shifted toward its possibilities of everyday life, always already lost in things."²⁴³ The transcendental analysis of the "man" in the ontology of the phenomenological writing is therein a possibility (an "event") that is paramount to "existence." The structures are already underlined in order to segment and elucidate a "consciousness" for the *Dasein* – or the being that is existential/"existentiel." Therein a "theory of knowledge" already pre-existed and is "integrated" with "ontology." Levinas argues this is doubling effect was caused by a certain "reduction of time" – "supratemporal" – wherein a "relation" was made possible or established through the "reduction of existence," which he frames it as "fundamental ontologism." The "originary phenomenon of moral consciousness" or the "authentic understanding of the self" – "a mode of authentic existence" – therein, by curious stakes as Levinas examines, escapes the very conventional "time-category" or "scientific time."²⁴⁴ Levinas calls this categorial and Heideggerian

²⁴² The most notable critique of Martin Heidegger by Emmanuel Levinas, entitled "Martin Heidegger and Ontology," translated by the Committee of Public Safety, appears in *Diacritics* 26.1 (1996), pp. 11-32. It is also available at <http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/dia/26.1levinas.html>, op. cit.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, Emmanuel Levinas, *Diacritics*, p. 27.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

reductionism as “an existential time” whereby it produces a “temporalization [*temporalization*] (*die Zeitigung*).”²⁴⁵

It is the “passage from *existentiel* understanding to *existential* understanding” that Levinas acclaims Heidegger’s contribution – a problem of conflating the primacy of “ontology” over “philosophy.”²⁴⁶ The fear perception category (“anguish”/*angoisse*) of this movement/“passage” towards an “uncategorizable understanding” is however not in the interiority of the *Dasien* but in its very portentous exteriority.²⁴⁷ The dubious implication of this attempt has been codified as “a knowledge that comes about throughout its very existence” – “throughout its effectivity” – the sublimated aestheticization of “effective existence,” and not necessarily the phenomenological or “psychological” estimation of existence.²⁴⁸ Insofar Heideggerian determination of the Being/being (*Da-sein/Dasien*) conjures an “essence” of man in “existence” – presencing or *Vorhandenheit* – at the limits of *Dasein* (“being right-there”) and not through *Daseindes* (“a be-in right there”).²⁴⁹ Each mode of transacting man’s “existence” is therefore expressed through “verbal form” of man’s “essence.” The technique of presenting/presentation therein interests disclaimers. Before that the assessment of aestheticization process, whether it is the anthropo-empty signifier or the “floating signifier” in the ontological dimension of the apolitical concept, and its correlation in the aftermath of its simulated and sublimated effect needs survey.

The “ceremony” – “ceremonial” – crucial to Baudrillard’s correlation of the simulation effect, the tirade against the orderly moralizing of “existence,” and the same has “no meaning, it has only esoteric rules. It has no end, since it is initiatory.”²⁵⁰ Thereupon

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 29.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁵⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, op. cit., p. 166.

“every detail of existence and *essence* [my italics]” is a ritual of the ceremonial “marked with a necessary sign, a discrimination, a secret distinction” – and this “initiatory” course of the ritual is its very “metamorphoses,”²⁵¹ nothing else, but the “ineluctable sign of its apparition,” for any changes to take place. The status of language is considerably threatened – “the denouement of language immanent to language” – as in the pure object and irony of language, “*Witz*.”²⁵²

The status of the language – its hyper-real²⁵³ conditions with literature – as a sign system – as an ontological consequence – or, as an axiomatic para-allegorical system of thought – have been highlighted in parts before. For Blanchot, “literature” is cognitively seen and psycho-consciously expressed as an “experience of the illusionary” (like the experience or relevance of the mythical order) wherein it’s very engagement for such purpose is an “effort not to express what one knows but to experience what one does not know.”²⁵⁴ The illusionary or the mythical is, in this contextualization of experience of literature, an implied “presence between the beings of fiction and their meaning [and] not the relationships

²⁵¹ Even for “disappearance to take place” it has to abide by the “metamorphoses.”

Ibid., p. 175.

²⁵² The *Witz* – “Fragments of language unknown to each other, without causal links, meet there as if by enchantment and discover with delight that they were ‘neither one nor the other’.”

Ibid., p. 135.

²⁵³ This term is very much Baudrillardian:

“The hyperréal represents a much more advanced phase [than Surrealism], in the sense that even this contradistinction between the real and the imagery is effaced. The unreal is no longer the dream or fantasy, of a beyond or a within, it is that of a hallucinatory resemblance of the real with itself.”

See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, op. cit., p. 142.

²⁵⁴ Maurice Blanchot, “The Language of Fiction,” in *The Work of Fire*, op. cit., p. 79.

[between] the signified and the signifier.”²⁵⁵ “Myth,” in other words, for Blanchot, is a make-believing act or seem-appearing act of meaning, “endlessly *reconstituting* itself” [my italics].²⁵⁶ It is this “poverty of infinite ignorance” that is the “essence of fiction.”²⁵⁷ Blanchotian notion of the “sign” or the “verbal reality” of words is a reduction the supra-fictional, meta-mythical, wherein there is no longer the requirements of a signifier to represent a causation of meaning or verity but a “nothing” that designates its imperative for the same. The movement towards nothingness of the Being, quite Sartrean, is thereof interesting, but quite different because it employs the mythical to supplement the “sentiments” or “traces” (as in Derrida) of the sign, fictional, being without essence or existence. The explosion of the Surreal is most pertinent to the devolution of Being into nothingness, in Blanchot.²⁵⁸ Baudrillard examines this economy of the mode of producing a devolution or revolution, as the case may be, as important because “power, like truth, is the empty place.”²⁵⁹

And, speaking about “revolution” and the “empty signifier,” Blanchot discusses about the transitional and *dietetic* filtration that becomes necessary of the word, the sign, the momentum of a proper name and its fidelity, in times of terror revolution. And, thereupon, all “speech [becomes] violence,” in want of proper “word names.”²⁶⁰ The consequence of such trans-symbolic existential determination is therefore not less the tedious identification

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 78.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 78.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 75.

²⁵⁸ Blanchot argues on the surrealist form:

“Surrealism if one of those attempts by which man claims to discover himself as a totality [and that it] is a search of a kind of existence that is not that of the ‘given’, of things as they are” [like Spinoza’s complete man].

Ibid., “Reflections on Surrealism,” p. 92.

²⁵⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, op. cit., p. 79.

²⁶⁰ See “Literature and the Right to Death,” in Maurice Blanchot, *The Work of Fire*, Op. cit.; *The Infinite Conversation*, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

(as in the ideological sense) but on the basis of presenting the sign without misrecognition. The experience of literature, of the word counts here for the extreme situation. Using the mythological experience as in *Igitur*, this experience or, rather, affirmation has to be marked with “impotence” – presence as the “absence of all power” – and this is exactly where the movement towards “death,” the impossible dying, is initiated – the experience of the “night” that is life and silence, a space and time already outside after its conceived displacement and non-response.²⁶¹ The extreme situation (Blanchot refers to this as “eternal,” here) is therefore the presentation of death itself, the name itself – the technique, which, elsewhere, has been read on the lines of the *Ceasura*.²⁶²

The “technique” of “art” is a “calculated operation” whereby the “artifice produces” with a “view to its very production, that is, its exposition.”²⁶³ It is, of course different from the *techné* or *mimesis* of the *mythos*, which Lacoue-Labarthe also discussed in the context of Heidegger, where the “infinitezation or absolutization of the subject” pave a grid for “self-formation or self-production.”²⁶⁴ Of the *logos* versus the *mythos*.²⁶⁵ The question of “art” is its “disposition” wherein it “disposes the thing according to the order of presence. It is the productive technique of presence.”²⁶⁶ On another contrast the equation and equivocal

²⁶¹ See “The *Igitur* Experience,” in Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, (tr.) Ann Smock (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 108-19.

²⁶² In reference Auschwitz, and to Blanchot’s mentioning of the same as “event without response,” Lacoue-Labarthe ranks the order of the *ceasura* as a “would be that which, within history, interrupts history and opens up another possibility of history, or else closes off all possibility.”

For more details, see “The *Ceasura*,” in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art, and Politics*, op. cit., pp. 41-46.

²⁶³ Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Technique of Presence,” op. cit.

²⁶⁴ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art, and Politics*, op. cit., p. 70.

²⁶⁵ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Nazi Myth,” translated by Brian Holmes, *Critical Inquiry* 16.2 (Winter, 1990), pp. 291-312.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

expression of this “technique” (or its “presentation”²⁶⁷) and its attributes with communication models have been measure in that “no human language or speech (*langage*) could compete with the speed of light.”²⁶⁸ In the virtually-real sense of the phrase or word, the sublime is therein a given “pure present of time” – “pure presence” – “negativity of the passing”²⁶⁹ Here, the speed or vulgar time is antithetical to the conventional dimensions of space and time, which actually do not create. Rather it is in the “spacing of time” where creation takes place. And the technique that offers this creation is “to recreate the creation that has not taken place” – “chronomorphic poiesy.”²⁷⁰ The ordering of the spatio-temporal – where “space is the origin of time” – is therefore a “spacing of time.”²⁷¹

On an analogues intervention, the “order-word,” which was actually in a defiance of Benveniste communication model or Austin’s speech acts – also operates on a departure that pragmatics is not part of the linguistic or, unlike the hailing, in Althusser, as a sign of transformation. Rather, these order-words or “assemblages” are like “commands” like “social obligation,” which establishes an “instantaneous relation between statements and the [immanent] incorporeal transformation or noncorporeal attributes they express.”²⁷² It is this order-word permutation that is responsible for giving an enunciating role for the word; and the moment enunciation of the word takes place, it gives a “power of variation in relation to

²⁶⁷ “*Presentation*,” as employed by Hegel, comes in three conceptual word-categories in German: *Vorstellung*, *Darstellung* and *Gegenwartigung*.

See John Sallis, “Imagination and Presentation in Hegel’s Philosophy of Spirit,” in Peter G. Stillman (ed.), *Hegel’s Philosophy of Spirit*, op. cit.

²⁶⁸ Jean Baudrillard, “Pataphysics of Year 2000,” op. cit.

²⁶⁹ Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Technique of Presence,” op. cit.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

²⁷² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (tr.) Brian Massumi (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 79-81.

the bodies to which the transformation is attributed.”²⁷³ The self-referentiality of language expression has thereof being absolved in that the very expression is “immanent to language” itself. What Deleuze and Guattari highlighted was the duration of the occurrence of the expression – the immediacy, the instantaneous – that establishes a relation and at the same time is measure by its localizable immanence. This possibility has been identified with painting, or presenting painting (and, on analogues term we can say the presenting of friendship or democracy, as aesthetico-ethical realms): “Each canvas, size and color, only detaches itself from the others, opening between them the series, the rhythm and the syncopation of presents. Difference in the identity of the present.”²⁷⁴ The self-referentiality and auto-destructive immanence of “being-in-relation” has been attributed as “an ultraethical gift of desire”²⁷⁵ The principle of opening, the speed of the opening (of closures), of presentation, and the ethical components that defy the socio-semiotic space, is often linked to the movement of imagination, the faculty-ontology of thought itself.

In the Greek tradition, the Platonic and Aristotelian opinions on imagination differs. For Plato, “imagination” is not considered as a valid or “genuine mode of knowledge” because it offers “no real knowledge of any object.” Therein the status of imagination is relegated to the “lowest form of cognition” and it is attributed with a manifest suspicion. Whereas in Aristotle, we find that “imagination” is regarded as a “faculty that mediates between sensation and thought or understanding” – “an indispensable [imagination] and pervasive operation by which sense perception[s] are recalled as images and are made available to discursive thought as the contents of our knowledge of the physical world.”²⁷⁶ It

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 82.

²⁷⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Technique of Presence,” op. cit.

²⁷⁵ Jeffrey S. Librett, “Translator’s Foreword: Between Nihilism and Myth: Value, Aesthetics, and Politics,” in Jean Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, op. cit., p. xv.

²⁷⁶ Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 144.

is this Greek preservation that Kant, and Hobbes in particular, inherited. In correlating our objective experience, Kant says, imagination is required and thence the creative nature of imagination. Johnson observes that Kant conceived imagination as a “capacity for organizing mental representations (especially images and percepts) into meaningful unities that we can comprehend.”²⁷⁷ Thereof the generating of imagination connects “structures” – and its utility is of two kinds: “shared meaning that is not reducible to conceptual and prepositional content alone” and those “that can be shared by communities of people.”²⁷⁸ Commenting on this Romantic tradition, Forest Pyle argues that “the imagination, as it undertakes an articulation or tries to speak the language of community, necessarily points to the prior existence of a rift, a fissure, a disjunction that must be crossed or healed.”²⁷⁹ Le Goff posits that “imagination” is “embodied in words,” and words are but “history itself” – the revelation of the community in history.²⁸⁰

The role of image or the imaginative in the creation of a “field of perception,” which subsequently opens “the political intelligence of war” and “the political intelligence of society,” does not depend on the “technoscientific” today – images. For, in reference and resistance to war theorist Claude Von Clausewitz’s “war is politics by other means,” Paul Virilio argues that “war” is no longer a relevance, but “integral accident” – the “continuation

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 161.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 161.

²⁷⁹ Forest Pyle, *The Ideology of Imagination: Subject and Society in the Discourse of Romanticism*, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

²⁸⁰ Jacques Le Goff comments:

“The phenomena of the imagination are embodied in words, hence analysis of vocabulary can reap major dividends. Every idea is embodied in words, and every word reflects some reality. The history of words is history itself. When terms appear or disappear or change their meaning, the movement of history stands revealed.”

In *The Medieval Imagination: 400-1500*, (tr.) Arthur Goldhammer (London; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 12.

of politics by other means.”²⁸¹ On another plane, Deleuze and Guattari talk of the semiotic of the “primitive societies” where a “particular assemblage of power” can shake and coordinate the entirety of a body politic through a deterritorializing movement – “polyvocality.”²⁸² Observed from these two judgments we have the “exfoliation”²⁸³ of the general thought through a “mass media” and the latent-potent privileges of un-token singularities. The patency of such privileging discourse has therein inscribed a *la mode*, a *modus operandi* rationale that is avowed with a deconstruction of ontology and at the same time a de-escalation of variable discourse as a continuity of a certain war mechanism. And the conditions of “war,” as Deleuze and Guattari often remind, is not the objectification of “battle” as the primacy, but the simultaneous creation of “something else.”²⁸⁴

It is the de-contextual precision of this “something else” that has “firmly entrenched” the privileges of discourse in the destruction of ontology that the demands of “democracy” appears to be on the verge of a “‘democratic’ totalitarianism.”²⁸⁵ The de-escalation of an entrenched *sui generis* therein is the gaze of the ever bewildering “capital” and “a struggle of universalism against universalism.”²⁸⁶ It is this perspectivalism, which Alan Badiou terms it as

²⁸¹ Ctheory Interview (John Armitage) with Paul Virilio, “The Kosovo War Took Place in Orbital Space,” translated by Patrice Riemens, at <http://www.ctheory.com/article/a089.html>

²⁸² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, **A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia**, op. cit., pp. 174-76.

²⁸³ “Exfoliation...describes the way in which the body is always already unfolding into the spaces it occupies, and the examples given in the text develop the potential of this fruitful concept.”

See Jose Gil, **Metamorphoses of the Body**, op. cit., p.viii.

²⁸⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, **A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia**, op. cit., p. 423.

²⁸⁵ Alan Badiou, **Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil**, (tr.) Peter Hallward (London; New York: Verso, 2001), p. lv.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

“ethical ideology”²⁸⁷ of western societies, which can be contrasted against the longing of a void.

Derrida mentions succinctly that the technique of “aporias as tragic suffering,” “tragic sentiments,” which are opposites of “metaphysics of history,” are actually “conditions” of questionings.²⁸⁸ Such aporias, one can say, operates... Badiou has traced the dependency problem of the “radical evil” – the “supposition” of the Nazi extermination program – as in the “simulacrum” or “terror” effects – “nihilism” – of the “event” *per se* thought.²⁸⁹ The succeeding schema and three-tier phase of this panoptic gaze, or reproduction, of the simulacrum is to terrorize believers (“followers”) of a “false event,” betray the “truth” it confess to undertake, and encounter a “disaster” (to believe in a truth that never was and shall be) that is the “unnameable” itself.²⁹⁰ The persistence of “evil” is therefore justified in the context of the advocacy of the ethical – and this comes about because there exists analogues and aporial thinking, or “thought-praxis,”²⁹¹ or “space of thought.”²⁹²

The framing of the ethical ideology in western societies, which includes Levinas, too, therefore treads on “variations of ancient religious and moral preaching, at worst a threatening mix of conservatism and the death drive.”²⁹³ The permutation of “ethics,” in the instance of Levinas, is an “enterprise” “to turn ethics into the principle of thought and action [as always] essentially religious.”²⁹⁴ The formula for ethics thereof in the tradition (since Greeks) is the annulment of “philosophy” by “theology” giving way to “ethics” itself. This,

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

²⁸⁸ Jacques Derrida, “Intellectual Courage: An Interview,” op. cit.

²⁸⁹ Alan Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, op. cit., p. 62.

²⁹⁰ “The Problem of Evil,”

Ibid., pp. 58-89.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p. 106.

²⁹² Ibid., p. 28.

²⁹³ Ibid., p. 90.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

Badiou went on to say, “culturalism” of an “essential ‘objective’ basis of ethics rests on a vulgar sociology” and the metamorphoses of the “very idea of consensual ‘ethics’” is, therein, “a powerful contribution to subjective resignation and acceptance of the status quo.”²⁹⁵ The idea of status quoist approach in Badiou’s critique of ethics is very crucial because he discusses about the “emancipatory project” of the “hitherto unknown possibilities” as getting co-opted into the systems of the “consensual.” And, on the other hand, to the effect of these productive modes, “discourse,” says Derrida, “can only negate itself to affirm itself.”²⁹⁶ What we have therefore from these two opinions – Badiou’s hegemonic regime of the “consensual” and Derrida’s “discourse” as an effectuating simulacrum – is the *time* of the experience of language itself by different constituencies. Of course, Badiou firmly defends that the issue of differences by rebuking that it “applies only to those differences that are reasonably consistent with this identity [of discourse].”²⁹⁷ The double meaning experience, in reference to Deleuze and Guattari’s “becoming-animal,” Jose Gil calls this spatio-temporalization of simulation encounters as “becoming-primitive.”²⁹⁸ The becomings – “metabolism of the infinite” – are therein “a threat to transcendence, a politics of immanence,” and the ontological category of the “flux” has already been there in the “ontological heterogenesis.”²⁹⁹

The adjustment of a dispersal flux – one which Guattari terms as “the discursive finitude of energetico-spatio-temporal Fluxes” – operates with two machinic complexities: “the sensible finitude of existential Territories” and the “trans-sensible infinitude of the Universes of reference bound to them,” which are perpetually and inordinately thrown into

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 130.

²⁹⁷ Alan Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁹⁸ “Becoming-primitive is to understand oneself experiencing – and grasping in theoretical images – the circuits of intensity that emerges as one leaves, via a kind of methodological breakout, the domain mapped out by our signs.”

Jose Gil, *Metamorphoses of the Body*, op. cit., p. ix.

²⁹⁹ Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, op. cit., p. 125.

the chasm of “negotiation between complexity and chaos.” This occurs without arriving at any tangent point or receding the infinite speed – whereby two “ontological consistency” are exposed – “heterogenetic being-quality and homogenous being-matter-nothingness.”³⁰⁰ The affection of this heterogenesis cannot take into complete rhythm because its plurality is not prescribed or given by the singularity that attaches the order of the chaos, too. The formations of “power relations” are also all differently arranged. It is these “machinic productions of images” affecting the ontological heterogenesis at different levels, obscuring the *fin de millenium*, that a “new material of subjectivity” is also “now returning as a leitmotiv.”³⁰¹ This entrenching politics of ontology has been arrived at in the ordering and movement of the simulacrum “whereas representation tries to absorb simulation by interpreting it as false representation [and, again] simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation as itself a simulacrum.”³⁰²

Guattari says that this “capitalist Signifier, as simulacrum of the imaginary power, has the job of overcoding all the other Universes of value.”³⁰³ And, “subjectivity is standardized through a communication which evacuates as much as possible trans-semiotic and amodal enunciative compositions.”³⁰⁴ Of course this model has been adopted as an “aesthetics of fragmentation,”³⁰⁵ say, as in the working principles envisioned in democracy, or friendship, too. The *modus operandi*, the “symbolic Law,” has always confronted and challenged the “capital” – the “phantasmagoria of the social contract.”³⁰⁶ The “existential refrains,” as the “ecosophic cartography” is retrospect upon, is “thus not to signify or communicate but to

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 110.

³⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 133-35.

³⁰² Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, op. cit., p. 11.

³⁰³ Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, op. cit., p. 105.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

³⁰⁵ Jeffrey S. Librett, “Translator’s Foreword: Between Nihilism and Myth: Value, Aesthetics, and Politics,” in Jean Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, op. cit., p. xvii.

³⁰⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

produce assemblages of enunciation capable of capturing the points of singularity of a situation.”³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, op. cit., p. 128.

Conclusion

“We are on the edge of disaster without being able to situate it in the future: it is rather always past, and yet we are on the edge or under the threat, all formulations which would imply the future – that which is yet to come – if the disaster were not that which do not come, that which has put a stop to every arrival.”

- Maurice Blanchot³⁰⁸

Inasmuch we are dealing, perhaps, with what Gil cited as the “effects of forces” or “energy” and “field of overpower,” yes, at a time, a period, when there are “upheavals caused by the emergence of the state in the regime of signs, in social exchanges, in legal processes, and in the ‘space of the body’.”³⁰⁹ Lefort says that “the symbolic dimension of the social”³¹⁰ is still an “enigmatic” problem for modern democracy. The “difficulty,” then, is because “it reveals a movement which tends to actualize the image of the people, the state and the nation, and because that movement is necessarily thwarted by the reference to power as an empty place and by the experience of social division.”³¹¹ And, against the totalitarian forms, when one argues that “democracy is the most powerful political system,” as Gil appropriates, we are not exceeding the limits of empirical or knowledgeable experience but have “reduce[d] the facts that it offer us.”³¹² Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe too refer to Lefort’s “political” as “a manifestation of the social to itself.”³¹³ For Arendt there exists no politics, although it is a radical sign, and it disappears (as it appears) without any “trace.”³¹⁴ A summation of ordering

³⁰⁸ Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of Disaster*, (tr.) Ann Smock (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 1.

³⁰⁹ Jose Gil, *Metamorphoses of the Body*, op. cit., p. xii.

³¹⁰ Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, p. 6.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

³¹² Jose Gil, *Metamorphoses of the Body*, op. cit., p. 5.

³¹³ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *Retreating the Political*, op. cit., p. 129.

³¹⁴ Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, op. cit., p. 6.

the symbolic into its virtual real contents have been given best by Baudrillard, who insists that one “exist only in the other’s trace, but without his knowledge; in fact you follow your own trace almost without knowing it yourself.”³¹⁵

These are changing trends, which are indicated well. The failure of meeting the demands of representational politics, and the need to evaluate the modes of how the social is constructed, which is always in a more complex terrain, has all together brought an all pervading limits to the analyses of language, literature, or philosophy itself. Philosophy, says Agamben, is not a “vision of the world” but, rather, it should be “a vision of language” – and, as typical of “meta-language,” philosophy “can only lead thought to the limit of the voice; it cannot say the voice” in question³¹⁶ The question of “subjectivity” that was previously engaged in its material, substantial form, is now schematically questioned at the logico-ontological level. The perplexities that are therein conforming to the specialized studies are therefore confronted with the auto-ends of ethical parameters and paradigms. It has already been traced out that the infinite possibilities of the impossible, in the interrogation of the heterogeneous, or plural, is based on a certain correlation of time, the very “indeterminacy” of time itself. It is the opening that is seen as a transgressive model of accommodation (or “hospitality,” as Derrida often uses) – which in its all pervading quasi-universal sense is *ad infinitum* – but, there again, there is a criterion problem because the construct of this “zero level” or “pure time” is inasmuch entrenched and tattered by what Walter Benjamin calls, the “ruins of history.” Of course there is a sharp spell of difference here: Guattari says that “any reading of the past is inevitably overcoded by our reference to the present.”³¹⁷ The simulation of the real and the imaginary therefore consistently interjects and intervenes a politics within the political deconstruction of ontology.

³¹⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, op. cit., p. 129.

³¹⁶ Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 43.

³¹⁷ Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, op. cit., p. 99.

Baudrillard says that the “real” and the “imaginary” have been “confused” and this “esthetic fascination is everywhere.” The “subliminal perception” therein is no longer about the “distance of the art” but has become “magnetized by the signs” where there is a certain elevation to the “second level” (the “second power”), which is maneuvered and controlled in “the anticipation and immanence of the [very] code.”³¹⁸ The polarity between the real and the simulacrum is therein like a “tactical hallucination.”³¹⁹ Thereafter, there is a revisionism on the question of “subjectivity,” but one that is modeled in the “production of proto-alterity,” “incorporeal genetic filiations,” which inadvertently get caught up in the web of the “movement of processual creation.”³²⁰

... ..

“Democracy... maintains a split between law and justice: it accepts the fact that justice is ‘impossible’, that it is an act which can never be wholly grounded in ‘sufficient’ (legal) reasons.”³²¹

... ..

“literary communism”³²²

The question of the trans-ontological floating signifier has been examined and the ineluctable, indeterminable contractual has been highlighted too – as Deleuze and Guattari also suggest, “that which cannot be thought and yet must be thought... in order to

³¹⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, op. cit., p. 150.

³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 117.

³²⁰ Guattari’s “aesthetic paradigm has ethico-political implications,” here, because “to speak of creation is to speak of responsibilities...[an] ethical choice [that] no longer emanates from a transcendent enunciation.”

See Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, op. cit., p. 107.

³²¹ Renata Salecl, *The Spoils of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 97.

³²² Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, op. cit.

show... the possibility of the impossible.”³²³ Of course in their dispositions, thinking is equated as “truth.”³²⁴ And it is in this modular expectation of producing, the incessant possibilities of creation itself, that there cannot be a theory of knowledge, as the pervasive “order of simulacrum is obscene or forbidden.”³²⁵ And within this simulacrum effect, the presenting/presentation, or the speed politics involved in the identification of art, that a medium of undecidability, unknowability, and transgressive Othering of the Self takes place. The basis of this moment – the opening of responsibility – has been called “hospitality” – or, “grace” – “of the unconditional gift and without return”³²⁶

And all these take place within a certain domain – an *inoperative community* – along its terrain, the terrain of description and the unavowable, too. At least, since Longinus to Kant, as Lacoue-Labarthe has pointed out, to represent the non-representable was the classical axis.³²⁷ The criterion of the social therein, from the spatial or temporal category of the solitude, the abyss, the “asylum,” to the “multidimensional space of coexistence,” as Gauchet and Swain say of the paradox of “a socializing machine,” one that overshadowed the “tragic singularity” and yet, nevertheless, exposed the “social authority.”³²⁸ For the criterion, the impossible knowing, of the social is also entrapped by the emptiness it opens. We have used the analogue machine to effectuate this – Bennington also refers to the “frontiers” of language/literature, at once exposing it to a vulnerable geo-stratagem – of a beginning and an

³²³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, op. cit., p. 60.

³²⁴ “Everyone can think; everyone wants the truth.”

Ibid., p. 61.

³²⁵ Jean Baudrillard, “Radical Thought,” op. cit.

³²⁶ Derrida, “Intellectual Courage: An Interview,” op. cit.

³²⁷ Lacoue-Labarthe, “Sublime Truth,” in Jeffrey S. Librett (ed.), *Of the Sublime*, op. cit., pp. 71-108.

³²⁸ Marcel Gauchet and Gladys Swain, *Madness and Democracy: The Modern Psychiatric Universe*, (tr.) Catherine Potter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 101.

ending – but at once limited by its own limits – the real and the symbolic.³²⁹ The intangible ... the craft of “learning,” as Deleuze points out, “it the true transcendental; structure which unites differences to difference... introduces into thought ... in the pure form of an empty time in general.”³³⁰ And, also, “learning,” has been propounded, too. The end-craft of pedagogy, maybe. So... this intangible learning is about the “flux,” – Badiou calls this as “paralysis of philosophy zigzagging between historiography and relocalization”³³¹ – or, Derridean *ad infinitum*, which describes the sign, the affair of the sign, and the status of the sign, too, as ineluctable, ineffable, “something intensive, instantaneous and mutant – between a creation and a destruction.”³³²

³²⁹ Geoffrey Bennington, “Frontiers: Of Literature and Philosophy,” Professorial Lecture, University of Sussex, 4 June 1996.

³³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, **Difference and Repetition**, op. cit., p. 167.

³³¹ Alain Badiou, **Manifesto for Philosophy**, (tr.) Norman Madaraz (Albany: State University of New York, 1999), p. 113.

³³² Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, **Dialogues**, op. cit., p. 50.

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