Modernism and the Language of Philosophy

Anat Matar

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Modernism can be characterised by the acute attention it gives to language, to its potential and its limitations. Philosophers, artists and literary critics who worked in the first third of the twentieth century, on the one hand emphasised language's creative potential, but on the other, its impotence in conveying what was aimed at. In particular, modernists shared the belief that *philosophical language* was at a loss; that the kind of truth *sub specie aeterni* that was sought by philosophers is either meaningless or is more appropriately expressed by the arts – especially by literature and poetry. *Modernism and the Language of Philosophy* addresses the challenge this belief posed to philosophy, arguing that the modernist assumption rests upon a host of unacknowledged, repressed or denied dogmas or tacit images.

Anat Matar begins by investigating the ideas that bring out this crisis in philosophical language, through examining the relevant views of the early Wittgenstein, Carnap and Artaud. The book goes on to look at the roots of the modernist crisis, focusing on Frege and Husserl's innovative ideas and analysing the inner tensions in this pre-modern era. A contemporary solution is explored drawing on the work of Michael Dummett and Jacques Derrida. These two philosophers drive the narrative of *Modernism and the Language of Philosophy* and serve as lenses through which both past and present day philosophers are looked at. Through the perspectives of Dummett and Derrida a dialogue is formed between the two philosophical traditions of the twentieth century – analytic and continental – and Matar shows that the dynamics of thought about language, philosophy and philosophical language in these traditions cannot be detached from one another.

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For Doron

For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday*.
(Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 38)

"Routine things can be deadly, Vern, carried by extremes. I have a friend who says that's why people take vacations. Not to relax or find excitement or see new places. To escape the death that exists in routine things."
"What is he, a Jew?"
"What's that got to do with it?"

(Don Dellilo, White Noise, 248)

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Preface

Referring to Antonin Artaud's search for a true art, a new language, and even a renewed culture, Maurice Blanchot made the following statement: 'The importance of these preoccupations for Artaud cannot be overstated. Certainly he is not a professor, an aesthetician, or a man of serene thought. He is never on sure ground' (Blanchot 1993: 295). As we shall see, Artaud can be read as a 'last modernist' figure. On the one hand, his point of departure in thinking of language, truth and metaphysics reflects the basic tenets of modernism; on the other, the dynamics of his writings is such that it turns these tenets upside down, in a way that makes us wonder about their meaning, their truth, their worth. My aim in the present book is somewhat similar, hence I find it appropriate to open this book with a tribute to Artaud. Yet it is not merely in order to acknowledge Artaud that I chose this opening quotation. There is something in Blanchot's choice of words in describing Artaud's attitude that I wish to draw attention to. For I find that these words express my own attitude to the present work, that my preoccupations with modernism are immensely important to me precisely because I am far from being on sure ground here. However, Blanchot himself sounds as if he is treading on *very* sure ground himself when he so smoothly divides the world between the angst-ridden, self-criticising artist and the composed, self-assured 'professor'. What kind of image underlies this comfortable – *modernist* – division?

The journey below, from modernism to pre- and then to post-modernism, springs from a tormenting need to tackle, and try to overcome, what seems to me a very deep challenge to philosophy posed by modernists. Before discussing its details at length, let me just indicate, in an absurdly brief manner, what this challenge is about. Philosophers, artists and literary critics who worked, roughly, since the end of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of the Second World War, contended – having considered anew (after Kant, Nietzsche, Frege, Mallarmé) the nature of philosophy and of language – that philosophy can have no tongue, i.e. that there can be no philosophical language; that the kind of truth *sub specie aeterni* that was sought by philosophers is either meaningless or is more appropriately expressed by the arts – especially by literature and poetry. I find this modernist allegation very powerful; it surely betrays at least *some* truth. Yet it rests upon a host of unacknowledged, repressed or denied dogmas, or tacit images. Shedding some light on these modernist dogmas is what I attempt to do in the present book.

Philosophy is the only realm of thought that, in a sense, has always been 'modernist'. If modernism is generally identified by its strong awareness to form and by its incessant examination and destabilization of possibilities of expression, then surely philosophy, in its close attention to its own methodology and in its relentless dialectical movement should be counted as 'modernist' virtually from the moment of its inception. The flipside of this 'modernist' nature of philosophy is the philosophical nature of modernism. If philosophy is the home of self-reflection, the discipline that necessarily includes (or better: equals) its 'meta-level', then of course modernism must be seen as markedly philosophical. Yet binding philosophy and modernism together in this way soon leads us to an absurd result. The so-called 'death of philosophy' is one of modernism's fundamental themes; the crisis of representation, from which modernism springs, allegedly marks the end of the philosophical enterprise. If, as I have just suggested, modernism is indeed philosophical through and through, then it seems, at least *prima facie*, that it thus exerts a death-sentence upon *itself* as a trend of thought. A modernist reply to this is that the result is less troubling than it first sounds. Modernism may be read as mercilessly exposing the philosophical unwillingness to doubt everything, *de omnibus dubitantum*, as philosophy formally purports to do. Thus, ironically reminding philosophy of its duty to be ironic, modernism should be seen not as *philosophical* through and through, but as the proper *replacement* of philosophy, the *heir* of philosophy. The suicidal result is thus toned down by allowing that modernism does indeed leave *philosophy* – as an 'academic', 'professional' discipline – speechless (i.e. dead), but it does it, 'from outside philosophy', or 'after philosophy', as it were.

This thoroughly dual nature of modernism – philosophical *and* anti-philosophical – yields unrest, and indeed, it is here that the source of my disquiet regarding the modernist challenge lies. The result which has just been briefly sketched seems to me both convincing and evasive, for although I find large parts of the modernist criticism of self-assured traditional philosophy accurate, there is something too convenient – too serene – in the modernist position as well. As I shall argue, this serenity has to do with modernism's unquestioning acceptance of certain rigid divisions, the gist of which is echoed obliquely and inadvertently in Blanchot's words – surprisingly, since Blanchot himself is a very acute critic of some of the modernist dogmas. These divisions are intimately linked to some of the dogmas of traditional philosophy that are tacitly accepted and adhered to by modernists. Most interesting, perhaps, is the modernist acceptance of *philosophy* as a given, static being, rather in line with the traditional image of this discipline. These faults do not mean, however, that the modernist message is totally wrong. Quite the contrary. What they do mean is that in order for philosophy to regain its tongue, it must do so by uprooting the dogmas, images and divisions that underlie the modernist challenge. I shall try to do this by putting on stage, in Part I, three modernist actors, beginning with the ultimate formulation of modernism by the early Wittgenstein, through Carnap's struggle with the consequences of this formulation, and ending with Artaud as the point of modernism's disintegration. The stage's background is painted, in Part II, by two pre-modernists, Frege and Husserl; and the audience, throughout, but mainly in Part III, are two post-modernists, Dummett and Derrida.

It was in the heyday of modernism, in 1933, that R. G. Collingwood – then Chair of Metaphysics at Oxford – wrote the following words:

> Every piece of philosophical writing is primarily addressed by the author to himself. Its purpose is not to select from among his thoughts those of which he is certain and to express those, but the very opposite: to fasten upon the difficulties and obscurities in which he finds himself involved, and try, if not to solve or remove them, at least to understand them better. The philosopher is forced to work in this way by the inextricable unity of the object which he studies . . . in thinking of it, therefore, he must always be probing into the darkest parts, as a guide trying to keep his party together must always be hastening the hindmost. The philosopher therefore, in the course of his business, must always be confessing his difficulties. . . . [P]hilosophical writing [is] essentially a confession, a search by the mind for its own failings and an attempt to remedy them by recognizing them.
>
> In reading the philosophers, we 'follow' them: that is, we understand what they think, and reconstruct in ourselves, so far as we can, the processes by which they have come to think it. . . . The reader of a philosophical work is committing himself to the enterprise of living through the same experience that his author lived through; if for lack of sympathy, patience, or any other quality he cannot do this, his reading is worthless.
>
> In this respect philosophy resembles poetry.
>
> <div align="right">(Collingwood 1933: 209ff.)</div>

Resembles, rather than reduces to. Note how *post*-modernist Collingwood's words sound, in refusing to accept the traditional image of philosophy, or better, of philosophers – for indeed, the personal character of the philosophical work is a lesson well taught, albeit indirectly, by modernists. For Collingwood, a post-Hegelian, philosophy evolves, changing and fulfilling its essence as it 'envelops'. As with Hegel, this means, *inter alia*, that strict dichotomies are approached critically, dialectically. Philosophy isn't killed, or silenced, by poetry, but discovers within itself a poetical grain – as poetry would find within itself a philosophical grain.

It's a great pleasure for me to acknowledge the people without whose writings this book would never have been written. I was just beginning my research into modernism and philosophy when John Skorupski gave me a copy of his address to the Aristotelian Society, 'The Legacy of Modernism'. This short lecture sketched many of the lines I was to come back to in the present book. I am indebted to John for his ideas and for sharing them with me. Michael Dummett has been for many years an inexhaustible source of inspiration. I have read his work innumerable times and still wish to come back to them. I thank him for this continuous delight. I have never met Jacques Derrida personally, and sadly, I never will. But one of the many things I learnt from him is that it would not be as futile as it sounds to thank him, after he's gone. This list of acknowledgements would not be complete without

Abbreviations

The edition referred to appears under the date and title in the bibliography.

Derrida

Dis	*Dissemination*, 1981	
Lim Inc	Limited Inc, 1988	
MP	*Margins of Philosophy*, 1982	
OG	*Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction,* 1978a	
PC	*The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, 1987	
PGHP	*The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, 2003	
Pos	*Positions*, 1971	
SP	*Speech and Phenomena*, 1973	
WD	*Writing and Difference*, 1978b	

Dummett

EI	*Elements of Intuitionism*, 1977	
IFP	*The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy*, 1981	
FOP	*Frege and Other Philosophers*, 1991b	
FPL	*Frege: Philosophy of Language*, 1973	
FPM	*Frege: Philosophy of Mathematics*, 1991a	
LBM	*The Logical Basis of Metaphysics*, 1991c	
MV	'The Metaphysics of Verificationism', 1992	
OAP	*Origins of Analytical Philosophy*, 1993b	
SL	*The Seas of Language*, 1993a	
TOE	*Truth and Other Enigmas*, 1978	
VP	*Voting Procedures*, 1984	

Wittgenstein

BB	*The Blue and Brown Books*, 1958b	
CV	*Culture and Value*, 1980	

NB	*Notebooks: 1914–1916*, 1961
OC	*On Certainty*, 1979
PI	*Philosophical Investigations*, 1958a
PO	*Philosophical Occasions*, 1993
T	*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 1922, 1961
WVC	*Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle* (see under Waismann 1979)

Frege

FA	*The Foundations of Arithmetic*, 1950
FR	*The Frege Reader*, 1994
SJCN	'On the Scientific Justification of a Conceptual Notation', 1972

Artaud

CW	*Collected Works*, 1974, vol. 4

Carnap

LP	*Logical Positivism* (see under Ayer 1959)
LSW	*The Logical Structure of the World*, 1928
PLS	*Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, 1935

Husserl

LI	*Logical Investigations*, 1970

Introduction
Two genealogies of modernism

In his lecture, 'The Legacy of Modernism', John Skorupski notes that

> an important aspect of modernism was its own image as post-modern; that is, as constituting the beginning of a new epoch, succeeding that expressed in modern European philosophy, and described in modern European history. . . . Thus some who endorse the idea of the 'post-modern' are in fact expressing a continuing allegiance to one of the master-concepts of modernism. But for others, the idea of post-modernism is the idea of that which follows on the complete dissolution of modernism – the arrival of a time when modernism itself can be seen in totality as a historical phenomenon . . . One may in particular accept the important truth captured in the modernist conception of the postmodern, while still seeing modernism itself as a completed phase.
>
> (Skorupski 1990: 2)

All these views of the relation between modernism and post-modernism cohere. From a post-modernist perspective one may both pledge allegiance to the post-modernity of modernism, and yet refer by the term 'modernism' to a cultural phase that is bounded in time, that is, as far as cultural phenomena in general, and philosophical traditions in particular, may at all be bounded in time. Thus in what follows I refer by 'modernism' as a phase which took life in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and concluded sometime around the outbreak of the Second World War. The bold and least controversial characteristics of this phase are: attention to form as expressing content, self-criticism that embarks primarily from a critical appraisal of the means of criticism themselves, and the transformation of traditional forms/contents, in particular those shaped throughout modernity – i.e. from the seventeenth century onwards. In all these respects, post-modernism is certainly modernist, that is post-modern. Yet as we shall see, modernism itself is *aufgehoben* by post-modernists – which is to say that these modernist characteristics, although accepted by post-modernists, are read and shaped anew, ridding them of what are now conceived traditional residues within modernism itself.

In *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche forms a close connection between man's hubris concerning his linguistic ability and his philosophical hubris. I quote the relevant section in full:

> *Language as an alleged science.* The importance of language for the development of culture lies in the fact that, in language, man juxtaposed to the one world another world of his own, a place which he thought so sturdy that from it he could move the rest of the world from its foundations and make himself lord over it. To the extent that he believed over long periods of time in the concepts and names of things as if they were *aeternae veritates*, man has acquired that pride by which he has raised himself above the animals: he really did believe that in language he had knowledge of the world. The shaper of language was not so modest as to think that he was only giving things labels; rather, he imagined that he was expressing the highest knowledge of things with words; and in fact, language is the first stage of scientific effort. Here, too, it is *the belief in found truth* from which the mightiest sources of strength have flowed. Very belatedly (only now) is it dawning on men that in their belief in language they have propagated a monstrous error. Fortunately, it is too late to be able to revoke the development of reason, which rests on that belief.
>
> *Logic*, too, rests on assumptions that do not correspond to anything in the real world, e.g., on the assumption of the equality of things, the identity of the same thing at different points of time; but this science arose from the opposite belief (that there were indeed such things in the real world). So it is with mathematics, which would certainly not have originated if it had been known from the beginning that there is no exactly straight line in nature, no real circle, no absolute measure.
>
> <div align="right">(Nietzsche 1984: § 11)</div>

This paragraph makes it clear that for Nietzsche the Western vanity that created philosophy has its origin in a vain conception of language. In light of this insight, we would expect the philosophers, who came to terms with the lessons of modern thought, to work out their views of language and of philosophy alongside each other. After all, already at the end of the eighteenth century an attention to the centrality of language for thought – for philosophy – was given by several philosophers, notably Hamann and Herder. Herder's *Essay on the Origin of Language* (1772) and Hamann's *Metacritique on the Purism of Reason* (1784) both emphasised the intimate link between images and conceptions of language and those of metaphysics, i.e. philosophy. Throughout the nineteenth century it was clear that the essence of philosophy, its goal and its method cannot be conceived without taking language, its structure and its powers into account. Moreover, as hinted at in Nietzsche's paragraph, this intimate link must have immediate consequences on the status of the language of philosophy itself.

However, looking a hundred years back, an interesting discrepancy is observed by the twenty-first century onlooker. Two lines, foreign to each other, led to the awareness of the depths of the crisis of modernity and to the rejection of the traditional conceptions of language and of philosophy. Modernism was born when the intimate connection between these lines was finally conceived; and then, indeed, the very possibility of philosophical language was put in doubt. Frege's revolutionary examination of language had little in common with Nietzsche's radical ideas

regarding philosophy and its fate after Kant. Indeed, one should not ignore the deeply meta-philosophical insights that led Frege to his concept-script. It was clear to him that a dialectics worthy of its name could never advance without a thorough investigation of its own capacity – of what makes itself possible. His genius lies, first of all, in his recognition that although this basic methodological dictum (applied so thoroughly by Kant) has always been known to philosophers, no philosopher had ever gone as far as analysing the only essential 'tool' that makes philosophy possible: language. For language had mostly been taken as a transparent medium, contributing little if anything essential to the contents it delivered as a faithful messenger. Frege's novel analysis led him to the idea that metaphysical questions should be rephrased and answered as questions about the structure of language. Moreover, it was clear to him that for this purpose, a clear presentation of the language of philosophy itself – a 'conceptual notation' – is necessary. Like (and to some extent following) Frege, Husserl too thought about language on a completely new model, analysing (differently) its role in shaping thought and world. Yet both Frege and Husserl's logico-philosophical investigations did not go so far as to doubt the very possibility of philosophical language. As we shall see in the second part of the book, despite their attempts at rethinking philosophical method in the light of their novel understanding of language, their unquestioning tacit appeal to Platonic or Aristotelian principles prevented them from making a radical break with traditional conceptions of the essence of philosophy.

On the other hand, radical ideas concerning the nature of reason and the possibility of self-knowledge were not – the above paragraph notwithstanding – supplemented by thorough and detailed revisions of the traditional conception of language. Even in the work of Hamann and Herder, where traditional images of language as a faithful, transparent medium of representation are replaced by new and stimulating ideas about language as a net of activities, these ideas are only sketched in an impressionist manner, and are not thoroughly explored. This neglect was at least partly intentional. The point was that a systematic exploration of the essence of language is itself part of the traditional framework that should have been discarded; that systematic work in philosophy (and hence in the philosophy of language, too) is out of place if language is not primarily a representing medium. This idea greatly influenced the German romantics and then the modernists. Conjoined with the ideas of Nietzsche, Marx and Freud, it is responsible for the modernist suspicious, even hostile, attitude towards philosophy. Now these three fathers of modernism, in turn, shattered mythical idols, mainly concerning *logos*, and hence unavoidably touched upon language and its centrality in shaping man's self-understanding. Yet we hardly find in their writings a painstaking examination of *de*mythologised *language*, of what makes it possible, and – except in semi-enigmatic paragraphs like the above – of the relationship between novel understandings of language and metaphysical (or 'post-metaphysical') reflection. The crisis of language was deeply felt indeed, but – because it was part of a general collapse of logos, a mistrust of clear and reasoned philosophy – was not systematically formulated.

Thus, at the turn of the century, the year of Nietzsche's death, we find two separate philosophical genealogies – both rooted in Kant's philosophy (or even

Descartes'), both, that is, genealogies of modernity – and yet there is no dialogue between them. Kant's influence on the formation of modernism cannot be overstated. Here is how Clement Greenberg, a central figure in modernist art criticism, sums up Kant's 'modernism':

> I identify Modernism with the intensification, almost the exacerbation, of this self-critical tendency that began with the philosopher Kant. Because he was the first to criticize the means itself of criticism, I conceive Kant as the first real Modernist.
>
> The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of the characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself – not in order to subvert it, but to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence. Kant used logic to establish the limits of logic, and while he withdrew much from its old jurisdiction, logic was left in all the more secure possession of what remained to it.
>
> The self-criticism of Modernism grows out of but is not the same thing as the criticism of the Enlightenment. . . . It seems natural that this new kind of criticism should have appeared first in philosophy, which is critical by definition, but as the nineteenth century wore on it made itself felt in many other fields . . . and a Kantian self-criticism was called on eventually to meet and interpret this demand in areas that lay far from philosophy.
>
> (Greenberg 1965: 5)

Greenberg is both right and wrong in his evaluation of the fate of logic after Kant. For on the one hand, philosophers like Frege and Husserl did indeed continue their explorations into the nature of 'what remained' to logic. This genealogy, leading from Kant, through Bolzano, Brentano and other logicians on to Frege and Husserl, yielded an investigation of the means of philosophical criticism, i.e. of the logic of language itself, and of language's relation to logic, to thought, and to the possibilities of knowledge in general. Never before in the history of philosophy had such a thorough understanding of the problems relating to the essence of language as philosophy's 'proper area of competence' taken place.

But on the other hand, Greenberg turns a blind eye to the devastating consequences Kant's self-critical move had on metaphysics, or philosophy itself, i.e. to the other genealogy just sketched. He ignores the point, made so clearly by Nietzsche, that after Kant we cannot speak any longer of an 'area of competence' in which philosophy is 'entrenched more deeply' without deceiving ourselves in the Kantian manner, or at least, without a thorough meta-philosophical revision of terms, of philosophical language. Subversion must take place, then. But despite (perhaps because of) this radical, subversive criticism, Nietzsche was hardly followed by other philosophers at the time. It was modernist artists who first combined the interest in the nature of language with the results of Nietzsche's subversive criticism of traditional philosophy. A critical outlook of philosophical language was an immanent result of this combination, but it was merely an intuitive by-product of what Peter Childs calls the modernist 'obsession with language' (Childs 2000: 6). After all, philosophy was not the focus of these artists' interest.

Yet the modernists were indeed first to deal thoroughly with the potency of language as well as its impotence. They put in doubt the ability of language to perform its traditional role of representing a firm reality of *aeternae veritates* and stable, saturated subjects. They emphasised the enormous capacities for creating that are essential to language. And they tried to express, to 'perform', show, present, what ordinary language – and the language of philosophy – had failed to represent. Their reflections were implied in artistic practice. The language of literature, or poetry – artistic language – is a language that is conscious of the true nature of language, they thought, and artists are the only ones who, in their extraordinary, cheeky combinations of forms and words, succeed in touching anything real. Everyday language, on the other hand, being informational in essence, was conceived by such modernists as essentially doomed. Philosophical language was seen as part of this stale and untrustworthy language.[1]

An early example – paradigmatic, influential and important to what follows – can be found in Charles Baudelaire's review, 'The Salon of 1859: The Modern Public and Photography'. Note how philosophical language is classified. Note also the emphasis (made clear in the last sentence) on this malaise as a Western phenomenon.

> For us the natural painter, like the natural poet, is almost a monster. The exclusive taste for the True (so noble a thing when it is limited to its proper applications) oppresses and stifles the taste of the Beautiful. Where one should see nothing but Beauty . . . our public looks only for Truth. The people are not artists, not naturally artists; philosophers perhaps, moralists, engineers, connoisseurs of instructive anecdotes, whatever you like, but never spontaneously artists. They feel, or rather they judge, in stages, analytically. Other more fortunate peoples feel immediately, all at once, synthetically.
>
> (Baudelaire 1859: 19)

Thus modernists did not only understand how tightly content and form were interwoven, how non-neutral was 'technique', or 'medium'; they were also aware of the close connection between their new attention to and re-evaluation of form (or 'technique') and the need to rethink the nature of the different registers of language and their relations to man and world.

There is a close connection between modernists' emphasis on the creativity and autonomy of art, their focus on language and their critical outlook of realism and any conception of naive representation. All these attitudes stem from the kind of self-criticism mentioned above. This is a thread that goes through the different forms and genres of modernism, in literature and poetry as well as in the visual arts. Thus Greenberg writes: 'Realistic, illusionist art had dissembled the medium, using art to conceal art. Modernism used art to call attention to art' (Greenberg 1965: 6). Childs, too, emphasises the linkage between the 'autonomy of the poem' and the view of art 'as an escape from the grind of human reality, not a reflection of or on life but a step back from it' (Childs 2000: 95). The relation of modernism to realism will form a major issue in the discussion that follows. At the moment, it would only

be useful to cite this remark by Greenberg: 'It is not in principle that Modernist painting in its latest phase has abandoned the representation of recognizable objects. What it has abandoned in principle is the representation of the kind of space that recognizable, three-dimensional objects can inhabit' (Greenberg 1965: 6).

This telling statement brings us back to the question of the relationship between philosophy and modernism. For it is obvious that the ideas and insights that shaped modernism did not spring *ex nihilo*. They had their roots, as we have already noted, in the Kantian Copernican revolution, in the romanticist sensitivity to language and adoration of art, and in the different and complementary ways in which Marx, Nietzsche and Freud criticised the Western worldview – classical as well as modern. But behind the scene, modernist ideas were also influenced by what was gradually, very slowly, beginning to be perceived as a major breakthrough in philosophy: the Fregean insight that philosophical problems should be dealt with by paying close attention to the structure of language, since it is in language that they are posed. Although this 'analytical' influence was largely unacknowledged, or indeed even unobserved by modernist artists, it was there in the background, at least since the beginning of the twentieth century.[2] And it was manifested in various novel reflections on the limits of language, on possibilities of representing and presenting, on the unsayable, and so on.

But was this modernist merge of its two genealogies confined to the arts, philosophy being only a source of inspiration on the one hand, and a target of criticism on the other? Are there no modernist philosophers, whose philosophy unites both genealogies as well? A common reply to this question is that modernism is indeed a label of an artistic mood, or movement, which essentially bears its philosophical message within the works of art themselves. Modernist artists – predominantly writers and poets – lead the way, and are followed by schools of literary critics and theoreticians, such as formalism and structuralism. The philosophical spirit of modernism, be it romantic and post-romantic, is intentionally implicit in these artists' and critics' writings. Thus Michael Bell, in his essay on the 'metaphysics of modernism', emphasises the modernist resistance to concepts as such and the importance of the implicit dimension (Bell 1999: 10). For reasons already cited above, connected with the romantic tradition, conceptual analyses were not seen by modernists as able to convey the kind of multifaceted truth sought by philosophers and artists alike. Images (including literary images) were found much more suitable for this purpose. An 'especially primordial philosophical burden upon imaginative literature, and through that on literary criticism' (Bell 1999: 28) was created as a result. Literary criticism was 'an academic discipline partly sustained by a belief in literature as a primordial constation of values not to be reached or grounded by other means' (*ibid.*). F. R. Leavis is paradigmatic in this respect.[3] A similar idea is expressed by Greenberg:

> [T]he self-criticism of Modernist art has never been carried on in any but a spontaneous and subliminal way. It has been altogether a question of practice, immanent to practice and never a topic of theory. . . . Modernist art does not offer theoretical demonstrations. It could be said, rather, that it converts all

theoretical possibilities into empirical ones, and doing so tests, inadvertently, all theories about art for their relevance to the actual practice and experience of art. Modernism is subversive in this respect alone.

(Greenberg 1965: 9)[4]

Frederic Jameson also sees modernism as belonging primarily to the arts, but he mentions as relevant to the spirit of modernism – mainly to the resistance to the privileging of content – such philosophical currents as structuralism, logical positivism, pragmatism, phenomenology, existentialism (Jameson 1972: 196). In his latest book, *A Singular Modernity*, he singles out Heidegger as expressing the sense of crisis felt by modernists. Childs, in his discussion of Marx's influence on modernism, cites Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno (alongside Brecht, naturally) as expressing the radical aspect of modernist criticism. Skorupski too mentions the members of the Frankfurt School as natural candidates, although he of course proposes to include in this corpus also analytic philosophers working during the relevant period, such as Russell and Moore, the early Husserl, the early Wittgenstein and the philosophers of the Vienna Circle.

My own interest in this book consists in inverting the perspective. Instead of looking for contemporaneous philosophers who faithfully express, or theorise, the modernist spirit, or for philosophical positions cohering with artistic modernism, expressing or complementing it, I would like to turn attention towards some of the philosophical positions that made modernism possible, so to speak. I wish to focus on those philosophical assumptions underlying the modernist attitude towards philosophy, language, and especially philosophical language – its elimination and its 'replacement' by artistic expression. Following Skorupski, I think that such a perspective can make us see 'new elements of the modernist spirit, and familiar elements in new focus. . . . It is not a question of reducing modernism to its philosophical 'essence', nor of reducing the philosophical components of modernism to something non-philosophical' (Skorupski 1990: 3). Yet this reversed investigation may shed light on some common modernist themes – and enable us to judge and perhaps overcome them.

To recapitulate: I see modernism as emerging from a unity of two philosophical insights, which matured in the nineteenth century. The growing awareness of the loss of (or alternatively, liberation from) the transcendent, stabilising factor that enabled realist metaphysics led to novel conceptions of philosophy and of language alike. Any appeal, however tacit, to Platonist realms or to Aristotelian forms was out of place. Metaphysical realism had collapsed, and with it the stable image of every rational institution, including language-cum-representation. As Jameson puts it, with modernism we see a movement 'away from positive content, and from the various dogmatisms of the signifier', towards an acknowledgement of 'the gap between signifier and signified' (Jameson 1972: 195). Following Nietzsche, truth was to be approached through various, even contradictory perspectives. Any part of language that was conceived as a mere passive representation was looked at as unreflective and inadequate for expressing the richness of experience. All these post-*modern* themes, we shall see, are common to modernism and post-modernism. But with modernism, a

sharp distinction was formed, between the language of empirical discourse (including both ordinary and scientific discourses), which is based on conveying information, and poetic language, or any linguistic form that expresses, presents, the creative, world-shaping dimensions of language. As for philosophy, while its ideal – both classical and modern – was the orderly representation of the static 'being', in modernism we find the romantic ideal of disorder, of 'becoming', taking its place. Yet unlike certain philosophical trends in the nineteenth century, which blurred the edges of philosophy and drew its investigations closer to those of psychology, history, or the natural sciences, the modernist image of philosophy was purist. Faithful to the modernist emphasis on the autonomy of the different artistic genres, in modernist philosophy, too, an investigation into what has always been aimed at by philosophy – logic and ethics alike – had to be autonomous, independent of other intellectual disciplines. But while this purism was once achieved through realism and representation, modernists – having discarded these as incoherent – combined the autonomy challenge with their new emphasis on presentation and 'becoming'. The disappearance of conceptual, logical, systematic philosophical language, and the philosophical burden that was put on 'image' – upon arts taken as capable of presenting the multifaceted, perspectival nature of truth – all these stemmed directly from the above understandings. This is the modernist challenge: this part of the modernist picture that portrays philosophical language as vain, a relic of the old philosophical hubris. And it is this part that post-modernist philosophers try to overcome, by exposing its tacit, unspoken dogmas.

The first modernist station I discuss is what I take to be the pinnacle of modernism. It is Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* as expressing the ultimate understanding of the crisis of modernity. Childs mentions 1922 as the *annus mirabilis* of modernism, the culmination of this 'literary phase', since this year gave us James Joyce's *Ulysses*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Katherine Mansfield's *The Garden Party* and Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (Childs 2000: 14). But this magnificent year was also the year of the publication of the *Tractatus*.[5] By interweaving the twin genealogies just mentioned, Wittgenstein presents a definitive analysis of the Cartesian-Kantian-Fregean vision of man's place in the world and the possibilities and limits of reflecting about it. The *Tractatus* is a culmination of *modern* thought because it maximally crystallises it. It is, on the one hand, faithful to its most fundamental assumptions, but on the other, it is critical of the grave mistakes in previous attempts at formulating them and of negligence in drawing their consequences. Thus, for example, it brings forth a strong case against Descartes' mentalism and scientism, Kant's lack of attention to the role of language in philosophical enquiry, and Frege's conception of ideal language as external to human language. However, the core of the *Tractatus* is the core of modernity: it is its utmost expression.

Famously, the end of this analysis is an invitation to philosophical silence. Echoing, in a way, Nietzsche's insight quoted above, it reveals the depths of the hubris embedded in the Western conception of language, especially in its 'refined', modern stage. The *Tractatus* then shows that a modest understanding of the essence of language leads to an even more modest attitude towards the possibilities open to philosophers, i.e. that there is no room for a language of philosophy. Here lies its

modernism – in exposing the vanity of *modern* philosophical language. But despite the immense influence of the *Tractatus*, modernist reflections on the possibilities of a language for philosophy did not end in accepting the silence predicament. The two remaining stations are no less typical of modernist thought, are indebted to Nietzsche's vision above (as well as to other important elements of his thought), but they defy the verdict by rejecting, or reformulating, some of the most substantial presuppositions of the *Tractatus*. Carnap – as a representative of the Vienna Circle – indeed expels metaphysics as nonsensical. He aims at ridding our conception of language of its vanity by looking at language logically, i.e. as a metaphysics-less concept. The 'logical analysis of language' does not lead to, but rather *is* an 'elimination of metaphysics'. But for him the philosophical task of 'the analysis of the formal structure of language as a system of rules' (Carnap 1935: 99) is far from being completed. Philosophical talk is hence enabled as a non-metaphysical meta-language. I find that of all modernist philosophers, artists and essayists, the French playwright, director and thinker Antonin Artaud best expresses the last position of the movement just sketched. He, too, establishes a bridge between the two genealogies of modernism, in treating the issues of language, metaphysics and philosophical language as inseparable. The rescue he offers for metaphysical language is achieved through giving a new content to both terms: 'metaphysics' and 'language'. As we shall see, despite the immense differences between them, all three modernists share certain presumptions regarding the distinction between representation and presentation. It is through a criticism of this sharp distinction, which encapsulates a host of other modernist dichotomies, that Dummett and Derrida try to overcome the modernist overcoming of metaphysics.[6]

Part I

Acting, not speaking

Three moments of modernism

My thinking, like everyone's, has sticking to it the shrivelled remains of my earlier (withered) ideas.

<div align="right">(Wittgenstein, CV: 23e)</div>

1   Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*

Modernism in its essence

> The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence.
>
>   Thus the aim of the book is to draw a limit to thought, or rather – not to thought, but to the expression of thoughts. . . . [T]he *truth* of the thoughts that are here communicated seems to me unassailable and definitive. I therefore believe myself to have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems.
>
> <div align="right">(T: 3f.)</div>

Does 'the book' *draw* a limit, where none has existed before, or does it rather *reveal* a pre-existing closure, an invincible finality? Wittgenstein declares that the book aims at actively drawing the limit; yet he also says that as a result we reach unassailable and definitive truths. What is the status of this drawing, then? The draughtsman drawing the limit in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* aims at the ultimate sketch of traditional and modern Western philosophy – of Philosophy, by and large. He is an acute draughtsman, and, as he looks thoroughly at the object in front of him – at Philosophy – he realises that its basic shape is formed by several sharp dichotomies, which he discerns and delineates. Concealed in these dichotomies is the boundary line – the limit to the expression of thoughts – that it is his main aim to draw.

The *limit* to the *expression* of thoughts. The problem that preoccupies Wittgenstein most in his *Tractatus* is the status of the *language* that seems to defy, vainly, the walls of its cage: the language of philosophy. Metaphysical language, ethical language, religious language – all these aim at transcending limits, oblivious of the tragic fact that there is nowhere to cross to.

> My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless.
>
> <div align="right">('A Lecture on Ethics', PO: 44)[1]</div>

There are many conflicting interpretations of the move taken by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus*, i.e. of Wittgenstein's motivation for writing it and of his conception of his own achievement. Roughly, we can classify these interpretations into two big

groups. The first – and more traditional – school of interpreters believes that Wittgenstein was utterly serious when he claimed, in the *Tractatus*, that he had solved all the problems of philosophy. These interpreters take Wittgenstein to believe he has provided us with the best – indeed, ultimate – account of the structure of world, thought and language, an account which leads, alas, to its own nonsensicality. This account revolves around the strict dichotomy between what can be said, represented by linguistic signs, and what, on the contrary, can only be shown, what presents itself but is beyond our capacity to express in words. Since only contingent facts turn out to be capable of being represented, many propositions which, in philosophy, we take to convey deep truths, are discovered to be mere empty gestures of elucidation. The propositions of the *Tractatus* are among those, of course; they do not belong to 'natural science', i.e. they do not convey any empirical content, hence any content at all.

> My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognises them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.)
>   He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright.
>   (T: § 6.54)

Thus for the first group of interpreters, the ladder metaphor contains a paradox, since the *Tractatus* does convey truths, 'unassailable and definitive', however nonsensical their status turns out to be. The problem with these 'truths' is only that they are found to be linguistically inexpressible either by the humble words of ordinary language or by the inflated words of traditional philosophy – they transcend the bounds of sense that they themselves dictate. They must, then, be *shown*, not *said*. Hence the silence predicament. And when we ignore this predicament, we *ipso facto* run against the boundaries of language.

The other group of interpreters adopts an ironical stance in reading the book. What the ladder metaphor shows is not a deep truth about the structure of the world, or of thought, but rather, that the whole philosophical project is one that annuls itself completely. Rather than inviting silent replies, the questions of the *Tractatus* should not be asked at all. They are as nonsensical as a Lewis Carroll nonsense poem, but they allure their readers by pretending to be meaningful. Their meaningfulness has a transitional status: the minute we understand Wittgenstein's intention, we realise that his Tractarian propositions cannot be understood – cannot, indeed, be propositions; they are but shades of propositions. Our task as good readers is, then, to go through the alleged metaphysics of the *Tractatus* just in order to see how it crumbles under its own weight. Read thus, the purpose of the *Tractatus* is not to put forth the definitive solutions to all philosophical problems, but to *liberate* us from the very urge to seek such solutions, to phrase such problems – from the urge to run against the boundaries of language, to think that there are any such boundaries.

My aim in what follows is to look at the *Tractatus* from a point where both parties in the interpretative debate meet. Most interpretations agree on at least three crucial char-

acteristics of the book, although they attach different senses to them: (a) Wittgenstein's presumption regarding the *definitiveness* of the book's results and the philosophical *silence* that should follow them; (b) his special emphasis on the role of language in philosophy and the linguistic 'censorship' that this entails; and (c) the fact that the *Tractatus* was, eventually, a failure, albeit a partial one, in the eyes of its author.

(a) The unanimity regarding Wittgenstein's contention, at the time he wrote the *Tractatus*, that his book marks philosophy's final exit, can be based on the above-quoted paragraph from its preface. The leading notions of the book are 'final', 'definitive', 'limit', 'silence'. Now *prima facie*, a few paragraphs in the *Tractatus* seem to hint rather at a procedural, lively conception of philosophy. If 'philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity' (T: § 4.112), the activity of clarifying and elucidating propositions, doesn't this mean it is an ongoing activity? Such a conclusion may also be deduced from one of the *Tractatus*' closing paragraphs:

> The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science – i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy – and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions.
>
> (T: § 6.53)

Elucidation never comes to an end, then. But here we must remember that for the enlightened participant in this dialogue, the elucidation procedure is a *post mortem* one: he already knows that philosophy is doomed to silence, to the still of death. He engages himself in this seemingly lively debate only as an educational project, after he has climbed up the ladder and thrown it away, seeing the world aright. Opinions are only split, then, on whether Wittgenstein thought this end was achieved by reaching the unassailable truth and acknowledging its extra-logical nature or by presenting all philosophical problems and solutions as sheer nonsense. It should be noted that this consensus is also shared by interpreters who read the *Tractatus* as dialectical. Matthew Ostrow, for one, presents his reading as dialectical in the sense that the move it makes is based on self-cancellation: beginning with certain dicta, we reach a point where they are negated. The *Tractatus* is hence dialectical in the original, Platonic sense of this term:

> And so with dialectic; when a person starts on the discovery of the absolute by the light of reason only, and without any assistance of sense, and perseveres until by pure intelligence he arrives at the perception of the absolute good, he at last finds himself *at the end of the intellectual world*, as in the case of sight at the end of the visible . . . Then dialectic, and dialectic alone, goes directly to the first principle and is the only science which does away with hypotheses in order to make her ground secure; the eye of the soul, which is literally buried in an outlandish slough, is by her gentle aid lifted upwards.
>
> (Plato 1991: 532–3, my emphasis)

A final stage of the dialectical procedure *can* be reached; the rungs of the ladder are needed in order to be cancelled, for only with the activity of cancelling them do we reach that final stage, where by the 'light of reason' we 'see the world aright'. As we shall soon see, this sense of finality has directly to do with an implicit dogma adhered to by the young Wittgenstein.[2]

(b) The second point of convergence between both schools of interpretation is in assigning a role to philosophical language as responsible for philosophical problems. Indeed it is the combination of the Nietzschean emphasis on the vanity of language and the Fregean new logic that gives the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* its uniqueness. Nietzsche did not have Frege's analytical tool at hand, and Frege himself used it to promote a different, indeed opposite, agenda. Frege's aim was constructive. The conceptual notation served, for him, as an ideal language sharpened for philosophical and scientific use. It intentionally ignored the blurred, vague, 'psychology-ridden' side of language as irrelevant for his purpose. But Wittgenstein realised that precisely this attitude should be emphasised and exposed as exhibiting philosophy's tacit assumption about the *essential structure* of language, *our human* language. He therefore placed the Fregean logical concept-script at its base, as its necessary foundation, rather than as an external auxiliary to everyday language.

This move was performed with the aid of another important Fregean insight. Frege's so-called 'context principle' – the requirement 'never to ask for a meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition' (FA: x) – is repeated by Wittgenstein both in his early and his later phases.[3] It is this principle which marks the 'linguistic turn' that reversed the order of philosophical investigation. Metaphysics should be approached through an analysis of language – should be seen through it. Knowing the logic of our language is a prerequisite for a healthy philosophical attitude. Hence the order in which the *Tractatus* is written. The movement from metaphysics, via thought, to language, recaptures the traditional and modern conception; but as we read along, we understand that the order is to be reversed, that what dictates the shape of world and thought is actually (our image of) the structure of language, which Wittgenstein unfolds for us:

> An elementary proposition consists of names. It is a nexus, a concatenation, of names.
>
> Even if the world is infinitely complex, so that every fact consists of infinitely many states of affairs and every state of affairs is composed of infinitely many objects, there would still have to be objects and states of affair.
>
> (T: §§ 4.22, 4.23)

> The configuration of objects in a situation corresponds to the configuration of simple signs in the propositional sign.
>
> In a proposition a name is the representative of an object.
>
> Objects can only be *named*. Signs are their representatives . . .
>
> (T: §§ 3.21, 3.22, 3.221)

There must be objects, if the world has to have an unalterable form.
    Objects, the unalterable, and the subsistent are one and the same.
    Objects are what is unalterable and subsistent; their configuration is what is changing and unstable.
    The configuration of objects produces states of affairs.
    In a state of affairs objects fit into one another like the links of a chain.

<div align="right">(T: §§ 2.026, 2.027, 2.0271, 2.0272, 2.03)</div>

Objects are simple.
    Objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite.

<div align="right">(T: §§ 2.02, 2.021)</div>

Frege's symbolism imposes its structure on the world. It also serves as a way of overcoming philosophical confusions, since most of these are the result of the various ways in which everyday language disguises its foundation, its logic. For example,

> in everyday language it very frequently happens that the same word has different modes of signification – and so belongs to different symbols – or that two words that have different modes of signification are employed in propositions in what is superficially the same way.

<div align="right">(T: § 3.323)</div>

In order to avoid the errors that ensue, 'we must make use of a sign-language . . . that is governed by *logical* grammar – by logical syntax. (The conceptual notation of Frege and Russell is such a language . . .)' (3.325). Developing this notation as a manifestation of the Western tradition's understanding of the essence of world and thought – and eventually its inherent paradox – is, thus, the *Tractatus*' primary objective. That could not have been done before Frege. Yet Wittgenstein's perspective is exactly the Nietzschean one, quoted at the book's introduction. Compare the above quotes from the *Tractatus* to Nietzsche's characterisation of the traditional philosophical conception of language. In particular:

> [I]n language, man juxtaposed to the one world another world of his own. . . . To the extent that he believed over long periods of time in the concepts and names of things as if they were *aeternae veritates*, man . . . really did believe that in language he had knowledge of the world.[4]

Thus, the Tractarian decisiveness about the act of cancellation, the finality and purity of the result, the definitive silence, all are strongly anchored in the fundamental assumptions regarding the principles that are implicitly embedded in every station of Western thought. Wittgenstein's move consists in working out the ultimate formulation and the tiniest details of these principles, in order to reveal the status of the language that enables us to express them. But instead of finding a living and potent language, what he finds is a corpse.[5] Philosophical discourse – the

language of philosophy – is discovered not only as arrogant, but in effect as inherently dead. Now taking an interpretative consensus on these two points as our point of departure – and leaving for a moment the discussion of point (c), the *Tractatus*' failure – let us dwell a little on the conceptions of language and of philosophy that serve as the basis for Wittgenstein's road to philosophical silence. My contention would be that the total collapse of philosophical language in the *Tractatus* is conditioned upon an implicit acceptance of a certain persistent metaphysical picture. Whether Wittgenstein's wish was to draw this picture with the purest and clearest lines, believing it to be true but unsayable, or to expose its barren nonsensicality, he certainly believed that his drawing caught the essences of philosophy and of language, as traditionally conceived.

What is, then, the *Tractatus*' position, the one its ladder is made of, the one that enables the silence? Dummett's suggestion to read the *Tractatus* as realist is not very popular nowadays, and is strongly objected to by both principal schools of interpretation. Since it is obvious that Wittgenstein adopted the linguistic stance – reflections on language were certainly 'first philosophy' for him – it is argued that he could not have held a genuinely realist position.[6] However, I think that when read carefully, Dummett's suggestion succeeds in pointing precisely at the common root for all the diverse interpretations. If Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is taken to formulate the essence of Western philosophy, then it should reflect its most fundamental aspects: a realist metaphysical position, a logocentric view of thought, and a conception of language as necessarily based on representation. And indeed, for the young Wittgenstein, there *is* no metaphysics that is not realist, no conception of thought that does not place pure logos at its kernel, and no account of language that is not fundamentally representational; these are the prerequisites for any conceivable philosophy, and they are intimately connected. However, the *Tractatus* comes after Frege's linguistic turn and after Nietzsche's criticism of God-directed philosophy. It combines these two points of view in order to show the problematic nature of these connected tenets, by exposing them as nonsensical according to their own criteria. All three aspects of Western philosophy are analysed as dependent upon a transcendent meaning-conferring source; yet, as the book unfolds, all are also seen as denying its discursive legitimacy. Hence the tension in reading the *Tractatus*. It at the same time 'affirms' and 'denies' realism, logocentrism and representationalism.

Dummett himself is also a post-Fregean writer, of course. He therefore reads metaphysical theses, such as realism, as theses about meanings of statements. Such a reading stresses the fact that after the 'linguistic turn', metaphysics and epistemology must be defined semantically. For Dummett,

> the true criterion for a realist interpretation of any given class of statements is an acceptance of classical two-valued semantics as applying to them in its entirety, where this includes construing apparent singular terms occurring in them at face-value, to be explained in terms of their referring to elements of the domain of quantification. This has the advantage of doing better justice to the intuition that realism has to do with the existence of objects, while retaining

the insight . . . that rejection of bivalence is a salient feature of the deepest and most interesting forms of anti-realism.

(SL: 468)

Anti-realism is a procedural approach to meaning. 'The meaning of a statement, on such a theory, is determined by what has to be done by a speaker to vindicate the claim that he makes by means of that statement' (SL: 475). This seemingly innocent characterisation of the anti-realist approach has deep repercussions. For a procedural, rather than static conception of meaning, sees as arbitrary and unjustified 'the prejudice that there must be a complete description of reality' (TOE: 357). Since truth depends on human constructions and acts of justification, it cannot be taken in advance as covering every conceivable formulation. Thus the very idea of a complete description of the physical universe evaporates. For example, on such a constructivist view of the matter,

> the magnitude of any quantity, relatively to a unit, may be taken to be given by a particular real number, which we may at any stage determine to a close approximation by refinement of the measurement process; but no precise determination of it will ever be warranted, nor presumed to obtain independently of our incapacity to determine it. The assumption that it has a precise value, standing in determinate order relations to all rational numbers and *known to God if not to us*, stems from the realist metaphysics that informs much of our physical theory.
>
> (SL: 444, my emphasis)

Anti-realism hence not only rejects bivalence, but does so in a particular, *human-based* way. It is crucial to see that according to this classification, many traditional positions that would normally be regarded as idealist turn out to be essentially realist. Thus, for example, Berkeley's idealism – perhaps the best-known example of a non-realist position – is taken by Dummett to be realist *au fond*, because despite its reductive attitude towards the material world, its conception of the meanings of the statements to which the reduction is made is not a procedural one, but eventually appeals to God in order to secure stable truth. We therefore get 'the mirror-image of materialism: the doctrine that every truth is either included in, entailed by, or supervenient upon the totality of truths concerning what is immaterial' (SL: 464). The reduction of materiality does not radically change the nature of truth, and hence of meaning. And so, strangely, even for Berkeley, representation still remains the foundation of meaning.

Coming back to the *Tractatus*, its adherence to the realist dogma becomes now more salient. 'If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true. In that case we could not sketch any picture of the world (true or false)' (T: §§ 2.0211, 2.0212). The Tractarian draughtsman, the epitome of traditional philosophy, is required to be able to sketch a stable picture of the world. This is the most fundamental assumption of metaphysics, traditionally understood – by 'realists' and 'idealists' alike. The world thus has to have

substance, and objects must make up this subsistent, unalterable substance. Language cannot be detached from this stable reality. As a matter of fact (as we learned from Nietzsche), throughout Western philosophy, even in its 'idealist' stages, it is language that introduces God – the transcendent stabiliser – in order to secure truth, and eventually itself in return.[7] For language acquires its own stability from the stipulated correspondence to the stable reality it fathoms. Upon reading the *Tractatus*, we cannot avoid the feeling that, despite several concessions to the intricacy and livelihood of everyday language (4.002, 5.5563), the language conceived of in the *Tractatus* is straightjacketed. The reason for this is clear. Since the sense of a proposition cannot depend on whether another proposition was true, 'to have meaning *means* to be true or false: the being true or false actually constitutes the relation of the proposition to reality, which we mean by saying that it has meaning [*Sinn*]' (NB: 113). Thus, our metaphysical requirements from 'reality' dictate our account of language, which we project back to reality. 'A proposition must restrict reality to two alternatives: yes or no. In order to do that, it must describe reality completely' (T: § 4.023). The interconnected requirements of complete description and bivalence affect, in turn, the nature of the proposition, its essential purity, its analytical structure. The proposition has to be 'logical', uncontaminated by vagueness, evasive meaning, subjective interpretations, etc. It must be analysable into simple components.

> The requirement that simple signs be possible is the requirement that sense be determinate.
>   A proposition has one and only one complete analysis.
>   What a proposition expresses it expresses in a determinate manner, which can be set out clearly: a proposition is articulate.
>
> (T: §§ 3.23, 3.25. 3.251)[8]

The correspondence between propositions and facts is necessary, since for a proposition to have sense, it should determine a possibility that is either satisfied by the world or is not. The idea of isomorphism between the structures of language and reality is hence the cornerstone of the *Tractatus*, i.e. of Western thought in general, as Wittgenstein saw it. Thus realism (linguistically conceived) and representationalism are one and the same, reflecting the requirements of traditional logico-philosophical discourse.

> The solutions of the problems of logic must be simple, since they set the standard of simplicity.
>   Men have always had a presentiment that there must be a realm in which the answers to questions are symmetrically combined – a priori – to form a self-contained system.
>   A realm subject to the law: Simplex sigillum veri.
>
> (T: § 5.4541)

There are several other mentions in the *Tractatus* of presentiments 'men' have always had. Capturing such anticipations is, after all, a primary goal of the Tractarian

draughtsman. Closely connected to the same yearning for an *a priori* neat explanatory realm is the following paragraph:

> Thus people today stop at the laws of nature, treating them as something inviolable, just as God and Fate were treated in past ages.
>
> And in fact both are right and both wrong: though the view of the ancients is clearer in so far as they have a clear and acknowledged terminus, while the modern system tries to make it look as if *everything* were explained.
>
> (T: § 6.372)

This duality is crucial to understanding the position of the *Tractatus*. What is right in the modern systems is that they realise the non-explanatory role of God within their realist systems. What is right in the view of the ancients is that they understood the indispensability of God as securing those systems. In other words, '*How* things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself *in* the world' (T: § 6.432). Yet a tacit appeal to 'God' is essential. 'God' here is but another catchword for a cluster of interrelated concepts, all denoting placeless, timeless Ideas. These confer meaning on the world, hence on life, since 'the world and life are one' (T: § 5.621). A list of these transcendental substitutes is given in a note Wittgenstein wrote in 11.6.1916:

> What do I know about God and the purpose of life?
>
> I know that this world exists.
>
> That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field.
>
> That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning.
>
> That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it.
>
> That life is the world.
>
> That my will penetrated the world.
>
> That my will is good or evil.
>
> Therefore that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world.
>
> The meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God.
>
> And connect with this the comparison of God to a father.
>
> To pray is to think about the meaning of life.
>
> I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will; I am completely powerless.
>
> I can only make myself independent of the world – and so in a certain sense master it – by renouncing any influence on happenings.
>
> (NB: 72f.)

These pronouncements are developed towards the end of the *Tractatus*. We learn of the importance of the eye, or the I – but also of God, or Father – as meaning conferring and as drawing the limit of the world (from the outside, of course) (5.5632ff.); of logic, whose transcendental necessity (6.13) yields the equal value of all propositions (6.4); of the mystical, God, the view *sub specie aeterni*, as limiting and thus

enabling the rational (6.432ff.); etc. 'Here it can be seen that solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism' (5.64). The assumed isomorphism between language and reality, the bivalence of propositions, the metaphysics of simple objects – in short, 'pure realism' – depend on a matching 'external' I, a metaphysical subject, that is, however, nowhere to be found (5.633). Realism and representationalism turn out to be justified only at the cost of basing them on what they exclude. They are hence both necessary and impossible.

This, though, brings out philosophy's collapse. Philosophical discourse cannot be maintained. It contains the grain of its own death within it. For on the one hand, language is conceived as a means of representation, hence it must stand in a relation of correspondence to a world juxtaposed to it. It is only the worldly, then, that language can capture. Philosophy, on the other hand, aims at capturing that necessary, transcendental, unworldly power, which endows the meaning and enables the correspondence.

> A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form: it displays it.
>   A picture represents its subject from a position outside it. (Its standpoint is its representational form.) That is why a picture represents its subject correctly or incorrectly.
>   A picture cannot, however, place itself outside its representational form.
>
> (T: §§ 2.172–4)

What philosophy aims at representing cannot be represented. Thus its first, defining step inevitably leads to its own necessary termination, to silence. Philosophy, then, is revealed as an impossible reflection, precisely because it is a meta-language that aims at depicting a whole, outside of which is nothing – yet it must place itself outside, in the void, at its alleged source. Philosophy's task is to make propositions clear and to give them sharp boundaries (4.112), but in order to draw this sketch, the draughtsman himself is nowhere to be found.

We have already noted that 'the world and life are one'. This 'one' is limited by its other – death. Three Tractarian paragraphs discuss the relationship between death, life and immortality. I read these not merely as relating to the death of an individual – be it even a solipsist, the 'microcosm' – but to the termination of philosophy's aspiration to the immortal and eternal. To death as to philosophy's death.[9] Read thus, we come to fully understand Wittgenstein's assurance of the finitude of his solutions, the definitive silence. Philosophy has reached its final stage, which was already inscribed into it at its very beginning. There is no use looking for a remedy, a change of terms.

> So too at death the world does not alter, but comes to an end.
>   Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death.
>   If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.
>   Our life has no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits.
>   Not only is there no guarantee of the temporal immortality of the human soul, that is to say of its eternal survival after death; but, in any case, this assumption completely fails to accomplish the purpose for which it has always

been intended. Or is some riddle solved by my surviving for ever? Is not this eternal life itself as much of a riddle as our present life? The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies *outside* space and time.

(It is certainly not the solution of any problems of natural science that is required.)

(T: §§ 6.431, 6.4311, 6.4312)

Thus, philosophical discourse completely fails to accomplish the purpose for which it has always been intended. This insight is beautifully and succinctly formulated in the 'Lecture on Ethics': 'I am tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition *in* language, is the existence of language itself' (PO: 43f.). Rather than to philosophers, eternal life belongs to those who live in the present; to those who speak simple 'first order' language. The marvel remains a marvel.

It is here that the famous distinction between saying and showing is so crucial. This, more than any other traditional distinction, gives modernism its *raison d'être* – or better, its *mode d'emploi*, its mode of *action*. For what is made manifest by the *Tractatus* is how immanent to philosophy is this distinction between saying and showing. And again, it was Frege's acute attention to what makes language possible, that paved the way to this insight. With the context principle in the background, the necessary distance between language and world, sign and object, established the representational function of language by formally alienating the representing subject from the represented object.[10] *Logos* did not, then, enable immediacy: neither subject nor object could 'speak for itself', present itself, in the logical-linguistic realm. The miracle of the existence of the world, *qua* miracle, must be captured immediately. It cannot, hence, be captured by any proposition in language, a proposition with ordinary sense and reference. Rather, this miracle *shows itself* in the very *action* of people using language. It is hence *ergos*, rather than *logos*, that is the proper medium for reflection *sub specie aeterni*, for reaching the 'origin' sought by philosophers. The say/show distinction is but another catchword for the old logos/ergos one, the word/deed distinction. And 'in the beginning was the deed', as in Goethe's *Faust*.[11]

Philosophy, in its *logical* aspirations, is found inherently inadequate to accomplish the job it took upon itself, since words cannot overcome the distance from their references. Showing, performing, acting – these are ways to overcome this distance. In other words, it is art, not philosophy, which eradicates the necessary abyss that is immanent to the representational medium. Note that this silencing of the *logico-philosophicus* voice brings us back to the point of convergence between the different interpretations. Indeed, the say/show distinction is the one traditional distinction that 'new' interpreters of Wittgenstein find it very hard to treat as nonsensical. Whether Wittgenstein 'seriously' shows us the inexpressible logical structure of the world, or, alternatively, 'ironically' points at the futility of this notion, philosophy's impotence is certain, and final, and it 'seriously' lays a heavy burden on the arts, on action, on presentation rather than representation. This is the core of modernism – and the reason for the reluctance (e.g. Bell's and Jameson's) to talk about modernist (rather than modern) philosophers at all.[12]

Let us resume the main plot of this chapter. The two major schools in Wittgenstein interpretation, I argued, agree on at least three points, albeit with different senses attached to these points. The first point was Wittgenstein's conviction of the finality reached by his *Tractatus.* The second had to do with the primacy of language in philosophical investigations. The third point, (c), was the *Tractatus'* failure in the eyes of the later Wittgenstein. I wish now to come back to this third point.

The failure of the *Tractatus* is as multifaceted as the *Tractatus* itself. We can start exploring it by connecting it to the first point just mentioned: the early Wittgenstein's assurance that his results are as final and definitive as the total silence that ensues; that there may be no remedy. Here, I believe, is where both schools of interpretation meet. Albeit via different readings, both reveal an inherent tension within the *Tractatus* between the death it purports to achieve and the flame of life that must remain burning in order to secure this death. The *Tractatus* reaches the desired finality, the end of philosophical discourse, by adhering to traditional dogmas concerning the nature of philosophy and of language. It consists of a presentation of the fact that philosophy – that purest voice, the most discursive discourse – has actually no genuine voice and is doomed to silence. According to the traditional line of interpretation, the final silence achieved by the *Tractatus* is gained through an unresolved paradoxical move: although we cannot say the truth it aims at, we do say it. Although we cannot understand it, we do. What can only be shown shows itself only after it was said, uttered by a self-canceling utterance. For the second school of interpreters, we do not understand any of the Tractarian propositions, since they are genuinely nonsensical. We only imagine, at first, that we do, but this is only a transitional state, and eventually this 'understanding' is indeed revealed as an illusion. However, it *is* true that, by exposing its inner mechanism, the *Tractatus* shows the instability of philosophical discourse.[13] What traditional interpreters believe they can show, not say, is taken by the new interpreters to be nonsense: from the atomistic structure of the world to the general form of propositions. The dogmas of Western thought are all rejected in the *Tractatus*, according to such a reading.

All but one. Upon coming back to philosophy in the late 1920s, Wittgenstein adopted a different attitude. This fresh attitude is explained very clearly in the lectures Wittgenstein gave in Cambridge in the early 1930s, as they are accounted by G. E. Moore. When he was asked about the meaning of the impossibility of certain constructions,

> Wittgenstein's answer . . . was that by proving that it is impossible to trisect an angle by rule and compasses 'we change a man's idea of trisection of an angle' but that we should say that what has been proved impossible is the very thing which he had been trying to do, because 'we are willingly led in this case to identify two different things'. He compared this case to the case of calling what he was doing 'philosophy', saying that it was not the same kind of thing as Plato or Berkeley had done, but that we may feel that what he was doing 'takes the place' of what Plato and Berkeley did, though it is really a different thing.
>
> (PO: 96)

The very thing Plato and Berkeley tried to achieve Wittgenstein 'claims' to be impossible. The 'content', one might say, is the same; but Wittgenstein 'negates' it, by exposing its nonsensical nature. This is why he relates to what he was doing as 'philosophy' – but also as the negative-image of 'philosophy', in its traditional sense. All this still coheres very well with the spirit of the *Tractatus*. But is the vanishing content the sole component that is shared by Wittgenstein and his philosophical predecessors? Moore documents also the following remark:

> He had also said that the 'new subject' did really resemble what had been traditionally called 'philosophy' in the three respects that (1) it was very general, (2) it was fundamental both to ordinary life and to the sciences, and (3) it was independent of any special results of science; that therefore the application to it of the word 'philosophy' was not purely arbitrary.
>
> (PO: 113)

This talk about a 'new subject' marks Wittgenstein's post-*Tractatus* period, where the finality is gone, and the limit-drawing draughtsman with the sure and decisive hand is replaced by a 'weak draughtsman', that all he can produce is a 'series of sketches', sometimes full of defects.[14] And while the above three attributes may be faithful to the Tractarian spirit as well, the mention of a 'new subject', such a lively spirit, is foreign to the dead silence of the *Tractatus*. For the leading notions we have started with – finality, definitiveness, limit, silence – mark the deepest difference between early and later Wittgenstein, the Wittgenstein who voices this exclamation: 'Running against the limits of language? Language is, after all, not a cage' (WVC: 117)![15] Where have the limits gone? Whence the resurrection of philosophical speech?

A few years after the *Tractatus* was published, Wittgenstein expressed his criticism of it in his conversations with Schlick and Waismann.

> One fault you can find with a dogmatic account is that it is, as it were, arrogant. But that is not the worst thing about it. There is another mistake, which is much more dangerous and also pervades my whole book, and that is the conception that there are questions the answers to which will be found at a later date. . . . The truth of the matter is that we have already got everything, and we have got it actually *present*; we need not wait for anything. We make our moves in the realm of the grammar of our ordinary language, and this grammar is already there.
>
> (WVC: 182f.)

How should we spell out this one dogma? Wittgenstein continues by citing as dogmatic his earlier hypothesis that the form of elementary propositions could be specified at a later date. However, this is but a minor example of a much more general hypothesis – the hypothesis that there is only one way for philosophy: the traditional way. According to this dogma, a realist, logocentric and representation-based philosophy is the only, hence tragic, way open for philosophy. In a certain

upsetting sense, it is the only way to render, conceptually, the notions of world, thought and language. Wittgenstein did mean to capture the essence of modern philosophy in his *Tractatus*. Whether he accepted its basic truths, and thought that they show the worthlessness of philosophical talk, or whether he rejected them – and thought the same. At any rate, his modernist position manifests itself in its being post-modern. My aim in this section was to expose the modernist dogma that the assumptions of traditional and modern philosophy are essential for philosophy *per se*, that there is no genuine philosophy unless it accepts them. The *Tractatus* – this epitome of modernism – did not eventually reach an absolute, final truth, since it was founded on a deeply rooted hypothesis: if we take philosophical talk seriously, this is what its content should be like; and this content, upon reflection, shows its own absurdity.

Wittgenstein's discovery at the end of the 1920s was precisely that this last assumption was nothing but a dogma.[16] 'New' interpreters of the *Tractatus* read this as the discovery that philosophical nonsense may have innumerable sources and may wear many guises. Traditional philosophy was only the most powerful and pervasive form of nonsense-manufacture in Western culture, but other forms may, and will, follow. There must therefore be an 'endless process of philosophical clarification' (Ostrow 2002: 134). This is why the later Wittgenstein's thoughts 'were soon crippled if [he] tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination' (PI: preface, vii) – as he did in his *Tractatus*. 'Orthodox' interpreters, on the other hand, read Wittgenstein's discovery as a realisation that the purity, strictness and clarity which characterised his early ideas were foreign to the nature of language, as they were for thought and world. Moreover, since these necessitated a version of transcendental solipsism, they completely ignored – as, indeed, did traditional philosophy ever since – the social character of language. The later Wittgenstein, according to these interpreters, adopted a more relaxed picture of language (whereas for the others, this relaxed picture was fully there already at the *Tractatus* stage). But again, both schools have this in common: after the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein deserted the dogma, which prevailed in his early thought, that metaphysics equals realism-logocentrism-representationalism. Metaphysical illusions are prone to appear in various forms, and hence an even greater sensitivity is required in order to unmask them. But this means that 'silence in this circumstance would betoken no more than a refusal to acknowledge the reality of our own confusion. Philosophy for us thus becomes not a ladder, ascended once and then permanently cast aside, but a *path* of clarification' (Ostrow 2002: 124). In other words, instead of silent philosophers, we now get stammering ones. This is where modernism gives way to its critics. The Tractarian silence, the muteness of philosophical language, the feeling that only 'presentation' is suitable for a vision of things *sub specie aeterni*, and that language, which is founded on alienated 'representation', is not – all these were discovered as resulting from a dogma, which was shared by traditional, modern and modernist thinkers alike.

2 Carnap

Modernism on its way out

'An Outside in which to be reflected'

What is the outcome of the *Tractatus* with respect to the hubris, which opened our discussion of modernism? Wittgenstein's effort to capture the essence of modernity as precisely and neatly as possible culminates in the way it pinpoints metaphysical language, the language of philosophy, as the ultimate source of this hubris. The language of the *Tractatus* is of course itself such a vain language, showing acutely – and ironically – the connection between the two meanings embedded in the term, 'vanity'. The vain language of philosophy is both empty (nonsensical) and arrogant. Vain language is stripped from its royal apparel and exposed as an imposture. It is a ghost-language, a parasite upon ordinary language, but devoid of any genuine meaning. Wittgenstein's modernist pessimism leaves us with a modest language. Not only God, ethics, aesthetics, the metaphysical subject and similar concepts – when reflected upon philosophically – are cast out of this language, but also the power of reflection itself. In the absence of an Outside, in which our language could be reflected, whatever is left of these notions must only *present* itself – it can never be said, i.e. *re*presented.

In his introduction to the bilingual edition of the *Tractatus*, Russell confesses the 'intellectual discomfort' he felt regarding Wittgenstein's ability 'to say a good deal about what cannot be said' (Russell 1922: xxiiif.). It is this, he writes, which causes his hesitation in accepting the position expressed in the *Tractatus*. This remark is sometimes taken as evidence of Russell's total misunderstanding of the *Tractatus*. Moreover, it may be interpreted as scorn based on the sort of commonsensical reproach that is expressed, for example, by Julian Bell in his satirical poem about Wittgenstein:

> For he talks nonsense, numerous statements makes,
> Forever his own vow of silence breaks:
> Ethics, aesthetics, talks of day and night,
> And calls things good or bad, and wrong or right.
>
> (quoted in Monk 1990: 257)

It may well be that Russell did not grasp Wittgenstein's intention, but he certainly took the *Tractatus* very seriously, and his discomfort should not be taken as

disclosing an ordinary, commonsensical criticism of Wittgenstein's attitude. The idea that something can *appear* as language that is *really not* so – this idea is not foreign to Russell's thought.[1] *Pace* Bell, Russell understands that what is shown in the *Tractatus* has to do with an immanent problem of language. The fact that Wittgenstein does use what seems to be a language, in order to speak about what cannot be spoken about, arouses for him a formal discomfort, reminiscent of the problems he himself had had regarding the use of meta-language in stating the principles of his *Principia Mathematica*. He therefore suggests breaking the closure of language using a formal tool: 'possibly there may be some loophole through a hierarchy of languages, or by some other exit . . . to this hierarchy of languages there may be no limit' (Russell 1922: xxiiif.). The loophole in the case of PM was the idea of 'ambiguous assertion'. The idea was to keep logic as universal, as *the* metaphysical truth about the world – and the loophole, for Russell, had to do with the fact that it is logic, and not language in general, which is universal in this respect. But Peter Hylton explains that this 'loophole' did not work well for Russell. On the contrary,

> here is one point at which we can see why the next generation of philosophically minded logicians took a more linguistic approach to the subject than Russell, for it is hard to see how to make his point clearly without talking about the assertion of all sentences having a certain form.
>
> (Hylton 1990: 316)

This, of course, is Wittgenstein's move in the *Tractatus*. For Wittgenstein aims precisely at such a universalist approach: he presents what in his eyes is the only structure that lends itself to philosophical presentation, the structure of every possible language, of our language, *the* language of empirical propositions. He unveils the structure of the general form of propositions,[2] all propositions. And whatever does not obey this form – whatever transcends the relation of picturing, for example – lies outside the limits of language; not one particular language, but language as such – that is, looked at philosophically.

As Hylton notes, the linguistic move brought with it, in its turn, the 'pressure to give up the idea of logic as universal, and to think rather in terms of a system formulated with meta-language; in the meta-language we can of course talk freely about the truth of any sentence of the object-language' (Hylton 1990: 316n.). 'Mr Wittgenstein would of course reply that his whole theory is applicable unchanged to the totality of such languages. The only retort would be to deny that there is any such totality' (Russell 1922: xxiv). Thus the pressure was felt already by Russell, but it was to be resolved with the Viennese positivists.

However, other modernist writers, coming from altogether different scenes, felt the same discomfort regarding a predicament about the closure of language. Ever since Mallarmé, writes Blanchot, 'we have sensed that the other of a language is always posed by this language itself as that by way of which it looks for a way out, an exit to disappear into or an Outside in which to be reflected' (Blanchot 1993: 337). That is, rather than the nothingness that lies beyond the limits of Wittgensteinian language, the Other that is here suggested is another language, a

meta-language. This language, as the one it reflects upon, is *a* language, not Language, the one and only. Blanchot continues by explicitly adopting Russell's 'loophole':

> Which means not only that the Other is already *part* of this language, but that as soon as this language turns around to respond to its Other, it turns toward another language; a language that, as we ought not ignore, is other, also has its Other. At this point we come very close to Wittgenstein's problem, as corrected by Bertrand Russell: every language has a structure about which we can say nothing *in* this language, but there must be another language that treats the structure of the first and possesses a new structure about which we cannot say anything, except in a third language – and so forth.
>
> (Blanchot 1993: 337)

From this analysis Blanchot draws the following consequences:

> (1) What is inexpressible is inexpressible in relation to a certain system of expression; (2) although there may be reason to regard the ensemble of things and of values as a whole (for example, within a given scientific and perhaps political conception), the virtual ensemble of the different possibilities of speech cannot constitute a totality; (3) the Other of any speech is never anything but the Other of a given speech or the *infinite movement* through which a mode of expression – always ready to unfold in the multiple exigency of simultaneous series – contests itself, exalts itself, challenges or obliterates itself in some other mode.
>
> (*ibid.*)

The problem discussed here by Blanchot is dubbed by him 'Wittgenstein's problem'. We shall return to Blanchot's insight regarding meta-language after examining the solution adopted by the logical positivists, especially Carnap, with its own modernist assumptions, its own way of overcoming the hubris.

The Vienna Circle

In a series of lectures delivered at the University of London in October 1934, Carnap set out to explain the Vienna Circle method of philosophising. The *Tractatus*' ladder is presented in those lectures as a challenge, as an invitation to overcome it, to negate it. Stated very briefly, the method of overcoming, or shall we say *Über-windung* – dubbed as *the method of the logical analysis of language* – consists in adopting a position (contrary to that of the *Tractatus*) according to which not only empirical sentences, but also formal ones, are meaningful.[3] The basic idea concerns the criterion for meaningfulness. Instead of the Tractarian criterion of the *picturing* relation, a *procedural* criterion of verification is presented. A statement is meaningful if verifiable in a recognised procedure; hence, tautologies and empirical statements are simply meaningful in different ways. The former are verifiable through a purely

formal procedure; the latter appeal also to external data. The result is that a state-ment lacking content is not necessarily meaningless. Now the logical status of statements obtained by logical analysis is mixed. Some of the statements are analytic, some are empirical; but they all form part of 'metalogic'.[4] And since such an investigation – logical analysis – replaces the traditional role of philosophy, the notion of philosophical language becomes intelligible too, in its new guise, as a language consisting of results of such analyses. We shall dwell below on some of the presuppositions underlying this solution. But first, a word on the wider vision informing Carnap's programme.

To an English audience attending the lectures, Carnap explained his idea of the rejection of metaphysics by appealing to Hume's precedent.[5] But the same idea was part of Carnap's *Logische Syntax der Sprache*, which appeared in German earlier that year, following several articles published in *Erkenntnis* in 1932. These articles, the well-known 'Überwindung der Metaphysik durch Logische Analyse der Sprache' and 'Psychologie in Physikalischer Sprache', mentioned a different source of inspira-tion, a more Continental one. The latter article attempts to establish, in accordance with the general programme of the logical positivists regarding the unity of science, 'the thesis that *every sentence of psychology may be formulated in physical language*' (LP: 165, original emphasis). Carnap is of course aware of the emotional resistance such a thesis may invoke. He therefore states explicitly what he regards as precedents, in whose footsteps he follows. He does that in order to prove that such resistance 'is always exerted against any thesis when an Idol is being dethroned by it, when we are asked to discard an idea with which dignity and grandeur are associated' (LP: 167). The list of precedents in bringing about this twilight of idols is telling:

> As a result of Copernicus' work, man lost the distinction of a central position in the universe; as a result of Darwin's, he was deprived of the dignity of a special supra-animal existence; as a result of Marx's, the factors by means of which history can be causally explained were degraded from the realm of ideas to that of material events; as a result of Nietzsche's, the origins of morals were stripped of their halo; as a result of Freud's, the factors by means of which the ideas and actions of men can be causally explained were located in the darkest depths, in man's nether regions. The extent to which the sober, objective examination of these theories was obstructed by emotional opposition is well known. Now it is proposed that psychology, which has hitherto been robed in majesty as the theory of spiritual events, be degraded to the status of a part of physics.
>
> (LP: 167)

This list shows how much the 'empiricism which we associate with between-war Vienna – a movement which began with Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and *reached its maturity in the work of Carnap*' belongs to the cultural modernism of the first third of the twentieth century.[6] It not only documents succinctly all the paramount forefa-thers of modernism, but also intentionally ignores such figures – as Descartes and Kant – who, despite their revolutionary dethroning of idols, still adhered to a meta-physical framework. For Descartes' notion of immediacy and his quest for certainty,

as well as Kant's thing-in-itself, actually form the crux of *modernity*, that spirit which modernists overthrew as preserving traditional hubris under a new guise. Copernicus, Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud set a genuinely new-fashioned framework, completely free from metaphysical shadows – or such at least was the impression of the modernists. This feeling of a newly-gained freedom, that is part of an overall, sweeping modernist attitude, is salient already in Carnap's preface to his *Aufbau: The Logical Structure of the World* – written in 1928. The clear, clean, 'scientific' orientation is contrasted with 'the attitude of the traditional philosopher', which 'is more like that of a poet' (LSW: xvi). Whence, asks Carnap, the confidence of the new programme's success, in face of the evidence of a revival of metaphysical and religious thinking?

> Whence then our confidence that our call for clarity, for a science that is free from metaphysics, will be heard? It stems from the knowledge or, to put it somewhat more carefully, from the belief that these opposing powers belong to the past. We feel that there is an inner kinship between the attitude on which our philosophical work is founded and the intellectual attitude which presently manifests itself in entirely different walks of life; we feel this orientation in artistic movements, especially in architecture, and in movements which strive for meaningful forms of personal and collective life, of education, and of external organization in general. We feel all around us the same basic orientation, the same style of thinking and doing. It is an orientation which demands clarity everywhere, but which realizes that the fabric of life can never quite be comprehended. It makes us pay careful attention to detail and at the same time recognizes the great lines which run through the whole. It is an orientation which acknowledges the bonds that tie men together, but at the same time strives for free development of the individual. Our work is carried by the faith that this attitude will win the future.[7]

Carnap is hence very much aware of his modernism, his alliance with artistic movements with which he shares 'the same basic orientation, the same style of thinking and doing'. He implicitly refers to the Viennese architecture of Adolf Loos, but some of the leading figures in literary modernism share the same 'basic orientation', although perhaps less so in Austria and Germany, where the influence of romanticism was apparent, e.g. in the modernist writings (and drawings) of the expressionists.[8] English and American imagists better express the tendency endorsed by the members of the Vienna Circle. Ezra Pound, in particular, criticised 'what he saw as the continuing vogue for second-hand Romanticism', which was to be rejected 'as metaphysical, indulgent, sentimental, mannered and overemotional, and its view of reality as inherently mysterious' (Childs 2000: 97f.). The alternative Pound favoured adopted the principles of objectivity and lucidity. 'The touchstone of an art is its precision', he wrote (Pound 1918/1920/1935: 48). 'Good writing is writing that is perfectly controlled, the writer says just what he means. He says it with complete clarity and simplicity. He uses the smallest possible number of words' (Pound 1918/1920/1935: 50). As for modern philosophy, 'since Leibniz (at

least since Leibniz) [it] has been a weak trailer after material science, engaging men of tertiary importance' (Pound 1918/1920/1935: 76).

Of all the precursors of modernism Carnap mentioned, he had a special inclination towards Nietzsche. The reason is that whereas other figures in the *Aufbau* list aimed at extra-philosophical achievements (i.e. astronomical, biological, sociological and psychological), and their anti-metaphysical radicalism was seen only as a 'side-effect', Nietzsche aimed directly at the heart of philosophy itself. His target was traditional Western philosophy, and especially its modern variant. His chief interest lay in re-evaluating the essence of philosophy itself. Nietzsche was primarily what is sometimes called an 'anti-philosopher'. Ironically, this is precisely what makes him a genuine philosopher, a so-called 'philosopher *malgré lui*' – and it is this trait that is common to him and to Carnap. As well as some of its particular manifestations: Nietzsche's criticism of metaphysical hubris, his emphasis on the distinction between representation and expression, and his artistic sensitivity. All these exerted immense influence on Carnap. The most famous and salient appearance of Nietzsche occurs in the 'Überwindung' article just mentioned. Carnap's memorable proclamation that 'Metaphysicians are musicians without musical ability' surely pays tribute to Nietzsche's discussion of music and metaphysical (Schopenhauerian) will in *The Birth of Tragedy*. It is far from a coincidence that this declaration is immediately followed by noting Nietzsche's success in avoiding the metaphysical error of conflating theory and attitude:

> A large part of his work has predominantly empirical content. We find there, for instance, historical analyses of specific artistic phenomena, or an historical-psychological analysis of morals. In the work, however, in which he expresses most strongly that which others express through metaphysics or ethics, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he does not choose the misleading theoretical form, but openly the form of art, of poetry.
>
> (LP: 80)

This tribute to 'the metaphysician who perhaps had artistic talent to the highest degree' (LP:80) is founded on one of the profoundest distinctions adhered to by modernists, namely that between representation and expression, words and deeds, saying and showing. We saw that it was this distinction which made the *Tractatus* possible, and it would hence be natural to infer that when the 'picture theory' was replaced by procedures of verification, the representation-presentation dichotomy had been abjured as well. But that was not the case. The Viennese did indeed take a step forward, but within the 'analytic' spheres it was not until Quine and the later Wittgenstein that this cornerstone distinction was seriously reconsidered and deconstructed. In the case of Wittgenstein, at least, this happened as a result of his grasping the consequences of giving primacy to action over representation in any account of meaning. In the next chapter we shall see that Artaud, while still maintaining a certain loyalty to the representational framework, marks the end of modernism in his own emphasis on the role of actions within (and in a sense without) language.

Carnap on relativism and realism

But the move away from pictorial form and truth-conditions to procedures of verification was connected to another essential departure from the *Tractatus*' view of language. Coming back to the notion of *Überwindung*, the Viennese way out of the *Tractatus*' impasse – the inevitable meaninglessness of philosophical talk – it gradually became clear that in the gist of Nietzsche's expulsion of idols, universalistic conditions of possibility, like those adumbrated in the *Tractatus*, were to be replaced by a more pragmatic, relativistic picture. As we have seen in the previous chapter, when Wittgenstein met with Waismann and Schlick, in December 1931, he was already aware of the *Tractatus*' mistake, of its 'dogmatism', which he characterised as 'the conception that there are questions the answers to which will be found at a later date' (WVC: 182). This understanding had brought him to his own overcoming of his previous metaphysical assumptions, i.e. to a full recognition of the idea that in philosophy there are no discoveries; 'we have already got everything, and we have got it actually *present*; we need not wait for anything' (WVC: 183). Wittgenstein was beginning, during that period, to shape the form of his departure from modernist dogmas – primarily, that relating to the representational character of language and the emptiness of philosophical talk. Yet it seems that, in criticising the dogmatism embedded in his *Tractatus* alongside that of Carnap, Wittgenstein was not sufficiently aware of the acute differences between his own previous attitude towards metaphysical assumptions and that of Carnap. Despite the clear (hence very misleading) similarities in detail between their programmes, Carnap's conception of the status of his inquiry was totally different from that of the early Wittgenstein. For while Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, aimed at exposing the kernel of Western metaphysical thinking in order to show its vanity, Carnap was already working out a novel philosophical framework, a 'post vain' one. As the above quoted paragraph from the *Aufbau*'s preface shows, Carnap conceived himself as part of a movement that had already shaken off metaphysical dust. His post-metaphysical interest lay in scientifically oriented epistemology – a field that had never been of any interest to Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein says:

> I used to believe, for example, that it is the task of logical analysis to discover the elementary propositions. I wrote, We are unable to specify the form of elementary propositions, and that was quite correct too. It was clear to me that here at any rate there are no hypotheses and that regarding these questions we cannot proceed by assuming from the very beginning, as Carnap does, that the elementary propositions consist of two-place relations, etc. Yet I did think that the elementary propositions could be specified at a later date.
>
> (WVC: 182)

But the *Aufbau*, i.e. *The Logical Structure of the World*, alluded to here, is not at all aimed at discovering the one and only, universal, general form of elementary propositions – in contrast to the *Tractatus*. Carnap's alleged 'assumption' regarding two-place relations serves only as a useful ground for justification, within the framework of his

'constructional system'. His aim is to present a *possibility* for a unified language for a unified science; its building blocks are taken as arbitrary. They simply mark the end of a justification procedure, and do not carry with them any overtones of metaphysical 'being'.[9] Moreover, this 'constructed' procedure does not even purport to be faithful to any actual procedure of acquisition of concepts – only logical considerations play a role in determining the basic relations.[10] It is hence not a 'discovery' in Wittgenstein's sense.

The arbitrary nature of Carnap's construction has several striking manifestations. Famously, Carnap presents two alternative bases for his systematic construction – a physicalist and a phenomenalist one. But the destruction of any essentialist, metaphysical loci goes much further than this. For example, 'it makes no logical difference whether a given sign denotes the concept or the object, or whether a sentence holds for objects or concepts. Actually, we have here not two conceptions, but only two different interpretative modes of speech' (LSW: 10). This is, no doubt, the seed of Quine's ontological relativity of the 1950s, according to which these arbitrary modes of speech determine ontological commitments, and the choice among them is guided only by 'tolerance and an experimental spirit' (Quine 1953: 19). But the lack of interest in the essential distinction between objects and concepts is only one facet of the general attitude we are interested in here. Another one relates to the neutrality of the basis of the system to a conceiving Cartesian ego. 'Ego', 'mine', 'you' – all these notions come, according to Carnap, only after the construction's basis has been laid. They are not required as a metaphysical starter. This is in stark opposition to one of the most fundamental modern assumptions, seen now – along with the assumption about an essential subject-object dualism – as a prejudice, resulting from the subject-predicate form of the sentences of our language (LSW: 105). This is one point where Frege's new logic brought with it substantial philosophical progress, according to Carnap. But another predecessor was, again, Nietzsche, quoted here (from *The Will to Power*) as claiming that it is 'merely a formulation of our grammatical habits that there must always be something that thinks when there is thinking and that there must always be a doer when there is a deed' (LSW: 105). Nietzsche is further quoted as denying any activity in the original state of affairs, any acting subject, a 'self'. Hence Carnap's post-modern ironical suggestion to replace the Cartesian dictum by ' "this experience; therefore this experience is", and this is of course a mere tautology. The self does not belong to the original state of affairs' (LSW: 261). It is postulated a posteriori; indeed, arbitrarily. How different this approach is, then, in any of these examples, from that of the *Tractatus*! Later, in *The Logical Syntax of Language*, we even face a conception of *logic* as relative and conventional, a matter of choice, a formal framework. 'Everyone is at liberty to build up his own logic, i.e. his own form of language, as he wishes' (Carnap 1937: 52). Thus, instead of the universalistic conception of logic, being at the root of the Tractarian silence predicament, Carnap's system is led only by pragmatic considerations and – it is important to remember – by the consistency restraint.

Now, all these moves are intimately coupled with the rejection of the static representational picture. For if the linguistic system that is built by the philosopher is arbitrary, what sense could there be to a realist foundation, allegedly represented

by its elementary propositions? No – the 'foundation', the 'protocol sentences', are conceived simply as end-points of a human procedure, the procedure of verification, which simply and pragmatically must – to use the later Wittgenstein's words – come to an end somewhere.[11] Verificationism means, first of all, that meaning is anchored in deeds, rather than in 'dead' representations; the introduction of epistemological procedures of justification instead of what may be seen as a static metaphysics of 'being'.

Of all forms of destruction of metaphysical idols ('foundation', 'self', 'universal logic'), Carnap is especially interested in the realism-idealism debate. That is, not in the metaphysical debate itself, of course, but in showing its philosophical insignificance. It is paradigmatic of the old way of thinking, of a debate that has no pragmatic effect at all, no conceivable verification or possible consequence.

> Does thinking 'create' the objects, as the neo-Kantian Marburg school teaches, or does thinking 'merely apprehend' them, as realism asserts? Construction theory employs a neutral language and maintains that objects are neither 'created' nor 'apprehended' but *constructed*. I wish to emphasize from the beginning that the phrase 'to construct' is always meant in a completely neutral sense. From the point of view of construction theory, the controversy between 'creation' and 'apprehension' is an idle linguistic dispute.
>
> (LSW: 10)

However, this indifference concerning the realism-idealism debate seems to evaporate in other contexts. *Prima facie*, phenomenalism seems to favour an idealist standpoint. Its language is subject-centred, and its objectivism is gained only through an effacement of the traditional epistemology that goes with it and an acceptance of experience that is not accompanied by 'something that experiences'. The suspicion that idealism sneaks into the logical positivist picture seemed to Carnap (under the influence of Schlick) alarming. He therefore explains that 'realistic and constructional languages are recognized as nothing but two different languages which express the same state of affairs' (LSW: 87). They 'have actually the same meaning' (LSW: 86).[12]

This is where Dummett finds the positivists' weakest point – precisely in their alleged metaphysical 'neutrality', which coheres so well with realism. Dummett deconstructs the positivistic phenomenalist position, by exposing the underlying realist tacit commitment that played a role in shaping the phenomenalists' choices, without their being aware that it was a choice at all. The phenomenalist position depended upon translation manuals to 'protocol sentences' and to subjunctive conditionals. The underlying logic used regularly was classical, bivalent logic. However, Dummett argues, since the system was supposed to be neutral from metaphysical assumptions, such as realist metaphysics, there was no reason that the logic governing these conditionals would be bivalent.[13] The phenomenalist view, then, which was traditionally conceived as the 'anti-realist' opponent of materialist, realist views, is really no more than a 'sophisticated realism', as opposed to the 'naïve realism' of the materialists. Dummett attributes this choice partly to confusion

between reductive attitudes (which may still be realist) and anti-realism. But this is not the sole explanation for the realist disposition:

> It springs also from a perception of the irrationality of the classical phenomenalist's position: he had neither ground nor motive for accepting strong bivalence for the subjunctive conditionals resulting from his translation of material-object statements. We can reasonably regard his having done so as due to a lingering attachment to a realistic view of material-object statements; and, so regarded, he was not genuinely an anti-realist. But we can equally view him as having failed to pursue his ideas to their natural conclusion.
>
> (SL: 254)

That, however, could not have been possible for Carnap and the other members of the Circle. This allegedly redeeming step could not have been taken for the simple reason that it would have meant admitting the worst pronouncement: no elimination of metaphysics has been achieved by the method of logical analysis of language. The whole point of the formal approach was precisely to overcome metaphysics, to show its futility and vanity. And that was a predominant modernist motivation.

Carnap on form

In order to get hold of the gist of Carnap's proposal – his way of overcoming metaphysics – it is crucial to understand the connection between the rejection of naïve representation and the insistence on the method of logical analysis. Logic, even given its new arbitrary nature, must play an important role in this picture. And indeed, Max Black sees the main advantage of the logical positivists over the *Tractatus* in their 'rejection of the substratum of atomic facts while preserving Wittgenstein's insistence of [sic.] the importance of logical structure' (Black 1934: 19).

> Rejection of the metaphysical presuppositions of the *Tractatus* is then pursued to the extreme limit of excluding all reference to the "content" of statements and the practice of a special "formal" mode of speech from which all such reference has been eliminated.
>
> (20)

Let us concentrate on this moment: the introduction of a strong notion of syntax and the exclusion of semantics, of everything that has to do with the 'content' of statements. 'We will call "formal" such considerations or assertions concerning a linguistic expression as are without any reference to sense or meaning' (PLS: 39). In this, Carnap says, he follows the example of Hilbert, who devised a mathematical system which is dealt with –

> as a system of certain symbols to be operated according to certain rules, and the meaning of the symbols is nowhere spoken of, but only the various kinds of symbols and the formal operations to which they are subjected. Now mathe-

matics is a special part of the whole of language, which includes many other and quite different branches. And the same formal method which Hilbert has applied in his metamathematics to the system of mathematics, we apply in our logical syntax to the whole language-system of science, or to any special part of it, or to any other language-system whatsoever.

(PLS: 40f.)

It is important to realise that Carnap does not proclaim that mathematics is 'genuinely' empty of content. Such a proclamation would be too metaphysical for him, since it aims at exposing an essence.[14] Rather, mathematics is treated syntactically, as a system whose statements are empty of content. Dealt with in this way, the representational element of it is bracketed. As a result, there is no point in talking about truth and falsehood. The truth-conditional discourse is hence replaced by a procedural, operational one. And the same is proposed for the 'language-system of science', or 'any other language-system whatsoever'.

This step squares well with the general emphasis put by modernists on form, at the expense of content, and with the correlated rejection of naïve representation. 'In modernist writing, mimesis is not so much an end in itself as an occasion for the triumph of poesis' (Trotter 1999: 74f.); and 'poesis', in this context, should be spelled out as form, or technique. Of course, 'form' here is not to be taken in its Platonic or Aristotelian sense. It has no independent existence, it is not an essence, let alone a transcendental one.[15] Rather, the formal perspective, for modernists of all kinds, exposes the deficiencies of representation. The tacit assumption is that the representational component of language (understood, eventually, in terms of correspondence) cannot be abolished, and indeed constitutes the foundation of language. Yet the truth it is seen as conveying, if at all, is arbitrary, limited, trite, and eventually boring. As necessary as it is to speech, it misses the deeper expressive component of language, which can never be reduced to its representational capacity. 'For between two absolutely different spheres, as between subject and object', to use Nietzsche's leading insight again, 'there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression; there is, at most, an *aesthetic* relation' (Nietzsche 1873: 86). What characterises modernists of all kinds is the emphasis they put on what cannot in any way be part of discursive content, what cannot be captured in words-as-representations. This component, form, which 'shows itself', expresses a deeper truth not only about language, but also about man-world (or subject-object) relation in general. The romantic streak of the *Tractatus* – that disembodied smile, with which we are left after the ladder has been thrown away – conveys precisely this conviction.[16] As we shall see, Artaud's conception of language – although interpreting the notion of 'form' in a very different manner – discloses a similar tendency. And so it is with the formal approach of Viennese logical positivism. Both Carnap and Artaud (and probably the early Wittgenstein as well) regarded the expression of what used to be seen as metaphysical insights as belonging rather to the domain of art. But Carnap was a logician as well as an optimist modernist philosopher, who believed that philosophy still has an important role to play. He therefore drew from the *Tractatus* the conclusion that the expressive potential in language, what shows itself and cannot be

said – form – is twofold. Whereas form as metaphysical *Unsinnich* (or 'will'), as what strives towards music, should indeed be left in the hands of poets and artists, form as logical *Sinnlos* could be used to strengthen the link between the procedural, conventional, anti-representational approach to language and world and the elimination of metaphysics. Following the Tractarian lead, the emptiness of logical form can be used for throwing the metaphysical ladder. This is, indeed, the Tractarian move in a nutshell: 'My fundamental idea is that the "logical constants" are not representatives; that there can be no representatives of the *logic* of facts' (T: § 4.0312). Wittgenstein actually declares here that the emptiness of *form*al logic is what stands at the root of the *Tractatus*. Carnap hence believed that the non-representational essence of logic is the flip side of the similar essence of art. Both are presentations, both inherit traditional metaphysics. This is the rationale of the method of the logical analysis of language.

Unlike the early Wittgenstein, Carnap adopts the Fregean attitude, according to which formal language can be built as an instrument *external* to natural language, an object of comparison, hence a reflective tool. In the preface to his *Begriffsschrift* Frege presented its status thus:

> I believe I can make the relationship of my *Begriffsschrift* to ordinary language clearest if I compare it to that of the microscope to the eye. The latter, due to the range of its applicability, due to the flexibility with which it is able to adapt to the most diverse circumstances, has a great superiority over the microscope. . . . But as soon as scientific purposes place great demands on sharpness of resolution, the eye turns out to be inadequate. The microscope, on the other hand, is perfectly suited for just such purposes, but precisely because of this is useless for all others. Likewise, this *Begriffsschrift* is an aid devised for particular scientific purposes.
>
> (*Begriffsschrift*, FR: 49)

Formal logic is not the hidden foundation of language, but an *external* general and abstract calculus.[17] However, there is a crucial difference between Frege's *Begriffsschrift* and Carnap's syntax. The latter, we recall, is treated as empty of content: meaning is nowhere spoken of. This precisely is its power. For Frege, the meaning of symbols was very important, and he vehemently opposed Wittgenstein's Tractarian idea of emptying them of their content – as much, indeed, as he opposed formalism in the philosophy of mathematics. One of his arguments against formalism is especially relevant to us here.

This line of argument goes roughly as follows:[18] A reflective language, consisting of meaningful propositions about what is taken by formalists to be devoid of content, is unavoidable. These propositions analyse legitimate and illegitimate moves in the domain of the 'empty syntax', prove theorems regarding its power, etc. Every language, by its nature, automatically yields such a meta-language. Now what could the status of the propositions of this meta-language be? They are certainly not empirical. They do not describe contingent states of affairs. On the other hand, they are not part of syntax either, and cannot be empty of content. They

are not arbitrary, since they aim at analysing the syntactical level. However, classifying them as 'analytic' *tout court* cannot solve the problem, for it only arouses the suspicion that the analytic sentences (i.e. 'moves') belonging to the *first* syntactic level are themselves laden with content. Their procedural, conventional character does not, eventually, exclude this possibility. The only way that can assure emptiness of form is hence to obstruct the construction of any external meta-level. Form as content-less must result only in Tractarian silence: it shows itself, and any talk about it is meaningless. (Or, paraphrasing the famous advice: If you have to show, show; don't talk!) Otherwise, if Russell's meta-linguistic 'loopholes' are admitted – as indeed they are, for Carnap and the other logical positivists – the distinction between form and content itself collapses.

This is the conclusion arrived at by Quine.[19] It is the very distinction between 'empty of content' and 'empirical' – or, 'analytic' and 'synthetic' – that is at the root of the problem. What we learn from Quine is that Carnap, in his desire to leave the Tractarian predicament behind and arrive at a liberated philosophy, an optimist modern*ist* philosophy, was still stranded by some dogmas belonging to *modern* philosophy – dogmas which indeed constituted modernity, but should now be discarded along with naïve representation. And the way the analytic-synthetic dogma appears in the context of formal language and its meta-language is typical, for it touches upon the modernist obsession with the unsayable and its relation to form. The following example may clarify the matter.

In the summer of 1954, Carnap wrote his replies to the contributors to the Schilpp volume dedicated to his philosophy, as part of *The Library of Living Philosophers*. In the course of preparing his reply to Quine's contribution, he wrote to the latter, asking him to clarify one point: 'The question is, which of your discussions are meant to refer to (a) natural languages, and which to (b) codified languages (i.e., language systems based on explicitly formulated rules)' (Carnap and Quine 1991: 435). Quine's (by now expected) reply was:

> It is indifferent to my purpose whether the notation be traditional or artificial, so long as the artificiality is not made to exceed the scope of 'language' ordinarily so-called, and beg the analyticity question itself. . . . The languages I am talking about comprise natural languages and any (used, or interpreted) artificial notations you like.

> (437f.)

This seemingly marginal, technical question, a matter of clarification, is actually the moot question of modernist vs. post-modernist conceptions of language: the question of the other of language, or of that 'outside, in which to be reflected'. A few years before that exchange, Carnap wrote that 'the analytic-synthetic distinction can be drawn always and only with respect to a language system, i.e., a language organized according to explicitly formulated rules, not with respect to a historically given natural language' (Carnap and Quine 1991: 432). It is only at this linguistic level that the formal, empty syntax plays a role. But Carnap's idea depends upon assuming the legitimacy of such a level as truly and fully 'external' to natural

language, in accordance with Frege's attitude as quoted above. It is the intelligibility of this idea, of a language totally outside the scope of ordinary language, which is debated here, and Quine's way of attacking Carnap is through his criticism of the analytic-synthetic distinction. Quine insists that the 'ideal language' that Carnap wishes to create in order to sharpen inexact concepts in our everyday language is nothing but another move in our already existing, or 'historically given', language. The sharp distinctions between form and content, syntax and semantics, analytic and synthetic, codified and natural languages, are all aspects of the same essential, traditional – as well as modernist – sharp distinction between language and its 'outside'.[20] Post-modernist Quine believes that we cannot transcend our language, reflect (on) it from any imaginary, or stipulated, 'outside' – for there may be no such meaningful outside. This is the core of Quine's holism.

Before leaving Quine for the moment, it should be noted *en passant* that his own position was exposed in turn as suffering from an equivalent fault – the fault of leaving the world-word distinction eventually intact. This precisely is Davidson's point in his classic article 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', where he argues for a more coherent holism, one that rejects what he now sees as a '*third dogma*', the (Kantian as well as Quinean) assumption that a distinction between scheme and content can be drawn; a holism, that is, that finally collapses the boundaries between world and language. Carnap's move came as a response to the *Tractatus*' predicament about the closure of language. The formal 'outside' was meant to break the closure. But Quine and Davidson's criticisms show that Carnap's break could not work. It actually duplicated the source of the closure: the stringent dichotomies we have been discussing.

Our way out of the *Tractatus* went through Blanchot. We may take up the thread we had left earlier, noting a very accurate remark Blanchot made on Flaubert. Flaubert, confiding his difficulties in writing, complained that language was insufficient, inadequate: 'We have too many things and not enough forms. This is what tortures those who are conscientious.'[21] Now Flaubert's complaint is reminiscent of Quine's theses about the under-determination of theory and indeterminacy of translation: 'To the same degree that the radical translation of sentences is under-determined by the totality of dispositions to verbal behavior, our own theories and beliefs in general are under-determined by the totality of possible sensory evidence time without end' (Quine 1960: 78).

Blanchot's reaction to Flaubert's statement starts in a way that is similar to that of Davidson to Quine's position. Flaubert, Blanchot says, creates an abyss between world and words. What is needed is to embrace the abyss, to bring it into language itself, into the essence of speaking, which must contain 'a lack that is the center and the life of meaning' (Blanchot 1993: 337).[22] But there is a substantial difference between Davidson and Blanchot. For unlike Quine and Davidson, who refuse to acknowledge that this immanent lack shows precisely that there is indeed a sense in talking about a hierarchy of languages – of otherness in relation to language – Blanchot maintains that this deficiency of the conceptual rather proves that there is a grain of truth in Carnap's insistence on the possibility – indeed, necessity – of an incessant construction of 'external', reflective languages, within our overall conception of language:

When Flaubert says, with naïveté and malice, 'too many things', 'not enough forms', he is not contrasting a richness (the richness of the unsayable real) to a poverty (the poverty of words that are too few and too awkward to say it). Although he does not know it, all he is doing is contrasting one language with another: one fixed at the level of its content and semantically full, the other reduced to its formal values and fixed in its pure signifying decision. This is an opposition he cannot affirm in either of these two languages, but using a third, and thus speaking from higher up, he pronounces his judgment: 'too many things', 'not enough forms'.

(Blanchot 1993: 460, note 5)

The thing is, though, that every language in this chain of languages, 'natural' or 'formal', 'object-language' or 'meta-language', is, according to Blanchot, not empty. Here we come back to the analogue of Hilbert's formalism. We saw that it was important to Carnap to stick to a content-less conception of his formal language, in order to avoid any representational element, and indeed, the dreaded metaphysical perspective of truth and falsehood. Only syntax, no semantics. Pure syntax is procedural in nature, as is the idea of verificationism. Semantics means representation, content, truth, and these notions are laden with metaphysics.

   However, the older Carnap realised the insufficiency of purely formal analysis of language and the instability of his earlier stance. As a result he dropped the 'only syntax' constraint. In sharp contrast to his past recurrent avowal that he and the other Viennese were reluctant to build theories of meaning, he now complained about philosophers belonging to his old school who were sceptical about the construction of a system of semantics. His words capture in a very precise way the motivation behind his, and his peers', earlier view:

They seem to think that pragmatics – as a theory of the use of language – is unobjectionable, along with syntax as a purely formal analysis; but semantics arouses their suspicions. They are afraid that discussion of propositions – as distinguished from sentences expressing them – and of truth – as distinguished from confirmation by observations – will open the back door to speculative metaphysics, which was put out at the front door.

(Carnap 1948: vii)

Now pragmatics – basically a descriptive theory of behaviour – is of course far removed from abstract 'form' or 'technique'. Yet it can be wholly dealt with in naturalistic, scientific terms, describing linguistic conventions as these are manifested in use. Pragmatics hence bypasses the trap of representation-cum-metaphysics. Syntax is empty of content by definition, and therefore cannot even be suspected of having a metaphysical grain. On the other hand, semantics, which involves, either directly or indirectly, a link between language and world, must contain such a grain in it. For how can such a link be investigated without taking a stance towards the nature of truth, reality, 'being'? The older Carnap, upon introducing his semantic theory, rationalises his latest move by adopting, towards semantics, the practical approach

characterising his conception of syntax. It is, he says, fruitful for empirical and mathematical research to use a method of abstraction in semantics, as that of syntax. Semantics can be as innocent as syntax regarding its metaphysical implications, if we only manage to treat its topics in a 'scientific' rather than metaphysical way (Carnap 1948: viii). It fills a lacuna in our understanding of the mechanism of language, being as abstract as syntax but yielding content, like pragmatics.

This scientific-pragmatic approach to the semantic investigations of the foundations of language was inherited and developed by Quine – but, as we might expect, in the opposite direction! Quine realised, as we saw above, that the positivist notion of syntax is no less metaphysical than the rejected semantics. He hence not only eschewed semantics, like the Viennese modernists, but also syntax, pure form, the notion of analysis in its glorious positivist sense. This opposite movement is another way of capturing the message of 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', equivalent to that concerning the debate about the status of 'external' language. And again, Davidson concurred with his abolition of linguistic conventions altogether as explanatory in our study of language.[23]

But exactly as in the parallel case of 'external' languages, one could agree with the gist of Quine's dismissal of Carnap's too clearly cut distinctions, without taking the radical anti-metaphysical route. In other words, a naturalist solution to the modernist pitfalls may indeed be an option; moreover, in the particular case of Carnap, it may be seen as faithful to his Nietzschean anti-metaphysical course, described above. But a different approach, a more metaphysical one, is also possible. It can draw on Frege's anti-formalism and Blanchot's loopholes. It may also read the modernist emphasis on technique not as a claim in favour of a sharp distinction between empty form and content, but, on the contrary, as an understanding that form bears a content as well, *a content that may only thus be expressed, a content that resists representation*. Here, again, we see the tensions within modernist thought, both in the *Tractatus* and the positivist phases. For, on the one hand, in different manners, both treated form with much respect, as the more crucial part of language, expressing itself, and expressing also, at the same time, its resistance to be represented. Yet on the other hand, the very emphasis on form's emptiness could be seen as a devaluation of form. Perhaps, then, it may be right to read into modernism itself a milder attitude.

> So much of the artistic passion of the period was stirred by questions of technique, where 'technique' should *not* suggest attention to 'form' as *opposed* to 'content', but should imply rather the recognition that every element of the work is an instrument of its effect and therefore open to technical revision.
>
> (Levenson 1999: 3, my emphases)

This remark adopts the gist of Benjamin's view of technique, as the concept that overcomes the form/content distinction:

> In the concept of technique, I have named that concept which makes literary products directly accessible to a social and therefore a materialist analysis. At

the same time, the concept of technique provides the dialectical starting point from which the unfruitful antithesis of form and content can be surpassed.

(Benjamin 1934: 214)

Form conveys content. Syntax is metaphysically saturated. This is what the innocent formal analysis of Carnap did not allow: the inevitable metaphysical overtones of logical analysis. And this is where the shortcomings of formalism surface. This, precisely, is the insight gained by the last modernist we discuss, Antonin Artaud.

But before moving on to Artaud, it is of interest to note that a similar view of form as conveying content is also the locus of Dummett's criticism of Vienna Circle philosophy. For his criticism, discussed above, of the realism that hides beneath the 'conventionalist', 'anti-metaphysical' garb in fact comes down to an urge to recognise the metaphysics expressed by the choice of a particular formal system.

In an article bearing the ironic title, 'The Metaphysics of Verificationism', Dummett starts precisely from the point just cited: 'one can insist that an analytic proposition tells us nothing *about the world* . . . while resisting the suggestion that it simply tells us nothing' (MV: 130, original emphasis). Form tells. Like Quine, like Blanchot, Dummett also connects this idea with the distinction between what is internal to a language and that language's exterior. He starts, naturally, with Wittgenstein's challenge: we are trapped inside our language and hence cannot express its functioning, an expression which would have required us to occupy an impossible locality, outside. Dummett's reply to this challenge leans on Tarski's proof, that 'no semantic theory governing a language can be formulated in that language itself' (MV: 131), but he argues that Tarski's proof does in no way show the impossibility of meta-language. On the contrary. Like Russell, Carnap and Blanchot, Dummett sees the construction of a meta-language unavoidable: we do after all speak of our own language, and hence we have to speak from 'higher up', i.e. to construct a 'theory' that cannot be applied to itself. The statements of this theory are, hence, neither analytic nor synthetic, since these adjectives cannot be applied to its own statements; they are to be applied only to the object-language, lest a vicious circle is introduced. That this 'theory' is a language is clear; yet it is also clear that it is not treated in the same way our ordinary language is. Contrary to Quine and Davidson, then, Dummett aligns with Carnap in accepting something like the inside-outside demarcation. However, here enters the 'metaphysics of verificationism'. For we now realise that this 'theory' is nothing but a metaphysical system. There can be no innocuous reflections upon language – neither syntactical nor semantical.

Metaphysics attempts to describe the most general structural features of reality, but to do so as the outcome of pure reflection, unaided by empirical investigation. It can do this only by extrapolating from the most general structural features of our thought, or of our language: more exactly, by expressing the structural features of our thought or of our language as structural features of the world about which we think and talk.

(MV: 133)

But this, of course, is exactly the role of our reflective meta-'theory'. In other words, analysing the form and the type of content of our language 'as structural features of the world about which we think and talk' simply means advancing a metaphysical theory. Form conveys content. It is crucial to pay attention, though, to the clause '*as* structural features', etc. Dummett's argument rests on a pregnant assumption: the external language aims at a philosophical description of the object-language. In other words, 'metaphysics can be abolished only if philosophy is abolished: and that was an ambition the positivists never entertained' (MV: 145). Even if a scientific, naturalist account of our language is possible, it is outside the modernist scope. The language considered, philosophically, by Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Carnap and Artaud, is a philosophical language. When we read the correspondence between Carnap and Quine on the matter, this claim becomes evident. While the former insists on keeping a rather autonomic notion of philosophy, the latter aims at a thorough reduction. Dummett's claim is that given this attitude, Carnap could eschew neither semantics nor metaphysics.[24]

3 Artaud

Modernism: the last breath

Artaud: 'the poem of the act of the mind'

Carnap resisted the Tractarian dogma about how philosophy, and language – philo-sophically reflected – must look. He rejected the old representational model of language as a passive, deadly script, and of philosophy as 'repeating' *aeternae veritates*. He thus opened new possibilities by replacing the silence predicament with action, both extra-philosophical, artistic action, and philosophical, formal action. But as we have seen, what Carnap failed to see is that the actor on this new stage is nonetheless doing metaphysics. He should then aim at a new, radical and creative metaphysics, rather than ignoring its implicit presence. His metaphysics must be aware of its active essence. It cannot be conceived, any more, along Plato's metaphors of 'discovery' and 'light'. These metaphors convey a sort of passivity which should now be subverted, and the metaphysician working after Nietzsche and Frege should hence be seen rather as 'a metaphysician in the dark'. But this cannot be done within the limits of modernism. It remains to Artaud, our last modernist writer, to uncover this result and thus to mark the downfall of modernism. Perhaps under Artaud's influence, Wallace Stevens formulated this same insight in his very exact words, published in 1942:

> *Of modern poetry*
>
> The poem of the mind in the act of finding
> What will suffice. It has not always had
> To find: the scene was set; it repeated what
> Was in the script.
>   Then the theatre was changed
> To something else. Its past was a souvenir.
>
> It has to be living, to learn the speech of the place.
> It has to face the men of the time and to meet
> The women of the time. It has to think about war
> And it has to find what will suffice. It has
> To construct a new stage. It has to be on that stage
> And, like any insatiable actor, slowly and
> With meditation, speak words that in the ear,

> In the delicatest ear of the mind, repeat,
> Exactly, that which it wants to hear, at the sound
> Of which, as invisible audience listens,
> Not to the play, but to itself, expressed
> In an emotion as of two people, as of two
> Emotions becoming one. The actor is
> A metaphysician in the dark, twanging
> An instrument, twanging a wiry string that gives
> Sounds passing through sudden rightnesses, wholly
> Containing the mind, below which it cannot descend,
> Beyond which it has no will to rise.
>   It must
> Be the finding of a satisfaction, and may
> Be of a man skating, a woman dancing, a woman
> Combing. The poem of the act of the mind.

'Everything that acts is cruelty'. These metaphysical words were written by one of the two great luminaries in modernist theatre, Antonin Artaud. In a collection of essays, manifestos and letters entitled *The Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud puts forth his ideas on the 'theatre of cruelty' he wishes to establish. His objective is to show us where Western theatre has gone astray, and to call for a radical revision of it, a revision that would introduce a sensual theatre, working on the intellect by shaking the senses, the body. In two well-known essays, Derrida makes a clear case for regarding Artaud's writings as a major contribution to philosophy. Derrida deliberates on Artaud's Nietzschean distaste for the logocentric, theistic character of Western theatre, and the way it reflects the Western tradition in general. He agrees with Artaud's view that the Western theatre, with its emphasis on drama, i.e. the authority of the written text, was born anti-theatrical, because of the primacy it gave to speech over the stage. Artaud recklessly fights against *word-language*, which necessarily involves repetition and domination by a God, an always external 'author', dictating the events that occur on the stage, making everything that happens an 'interpretation'. The connection to Western philosophy is obvious. Let us now examine Artaud's views – and come back to Derrida's treatment of them a little later.

Artaud's proposal should be viewed through the dichotomy between life and death – especially the dead Western metaphysics vs. its lively Artaudian alternative. The theatre of cruelty is the alternative Artaud offers to Western theatre, but its title is misleading, and indeed – as is clearly manifested in Artaud's rich and documented correspondence – actually misled his contemporaries. For the title automatically suggests a picture of blood and torture, whereas it is precisely such linguistic automatism that Artaud asks us to leave behind. Artaud asks, '*philosophically* speaking, what is cruelty?' (CW: 78, emphasis added) – and replies by attaching a special sense to this term: cruelty is 'a kind of strict control and submission to necessity. There is no cruelty without consciousness, without the application of consciousness'. It is 'hungering after life, cosmic strictness, relentless necessity . . . in the sense of the inescapably necessary pain without which life could

not continue. . . . [It is] this blind zest for life' (*ibid.*), 'not personal life, that side of life where CHARACTER reigns supreme, but a kind of emancipated life, sweeping human personality aside' (89). Cruelty is, then, the intellectual conscious yearning to unite with the world, to grasp it – but not any actual, contingent aspect of it, not in this or that particular detail. Rather, it is a longing for the universal aspect of the world's potential, its energy, its metaphysical necessity. Cruelty, then, is in a way reminiscent of the epistemological quest. But in epistemology, secure foundations of knowledge are sought, as 'hooking' the subject to the world. These form part of a purely analytical, logical conception of the world and of knowledge. In the case of cruelty, intellect and feeling, the logical and the aesthetic, are united. The 'hooks' must be different, then.

Thus, it is through reflecting on his notion of a 'theatre of cruelty' that Artaud's metaphysical views emerge. Their starting point is modernist in their preoccupation with language, and in particular with the issue of representation vs. presentation, i.e. what can be expressed via a signalling medium as opposed to what can only express itself directly, immediately. Naturally, this issue finds an ideal home within the context of the stage. But Artaud's thoughts on the theatre are metaphysical through and through. Although he is not interested in planting 'profound clues to the show's thought' for the audience to decipher, his poetical theatre depends upon 'transcendental cosmic preoccupations' that 'must still be there' (CW: 71). Here is how metaphysical discussion is introduced in 'The Theatre and Its Double', Artaud's major essay:

> For whether we like it or not, true poetry is metaphysical and I might even say it is its metaphysical scope, its degree of metaphysical effectiveness, which gives it its proper value.
>
> This is the second or third time I have mentioned metaphysics. I also mentioned dead ideas above while speaking about psychology and I expect many people will be tempted to tell me that if there is one inhuman idea on earth, one ineffective, dead idea which means very little even to the mind, it is metaphysics.
>
> As René Guénon said, this is due 'to our purely Western manner, our anti-poetic, truncated way of regarding first principles (apart from the forceful, massive state of mind corresponding to them).'
>
> In Oriental theatre with its metaphysical inclinations . . . [sign language] must lead to thought adopting deep attitudes which might be called *active metaphysics*.
>
> (CW: 30f.)

Active metaphysics as living metaphysics. Showing that metaphysics, conceived along traditional Western lines, is dead, is, as we have seen, Wittgenstein's endeavour in his *Tractatus*. Artaud, like Wittgenstein, conjoins his metaphysical journey with an inquiry on language: metaphysics is construed with an eye to the maximal power and scope of language. In the *Tractatus*, world, thought and language are isomorphic: they share the same logical form. Hence, the thought and

the proposition can be *pictures* of the facts. 'A picture is a model of reality' (T: § 2.12). The possibility of a logical structure being shared by the picture (the thought, the proposition) and the state of affairs is the pictorial form.

> What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it – correctly or incorrectly – in any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of reality.
>   A picture whose pictorial form is logical form is called a logical picture.
>   Every picture is *at the same time* a logical one.
>
> (T: §§ 2.18, 2.181, 2.182)

Now although 'isomorphism' may be too strong and technical a term for describing the picturing relation between Artaud's world, thought and language, there exists a strong relation among the three. Artaud's world can in principle be grasped in thought, and in a sense, may be represented in language. Artaud exemplifies this in his analysis of a painting by Lucas van Leyden – *Lot and his Daughters*. The painting expresses in its own pictorial language profound metaphysical ideas about change, fate, chaos, the marvellous, and about the impotence of words. Artaud analyses in detail the painting's form in order to show what enables the work to represent, in 'language', abstract ideas about the world. A black tower rising to fantastic heights, a storm lighting spilling out between the clouds like an active 'evil intellect', colours and appearances 'forever remaining in our minds with a notion of ear-splitting noise', two shipwrecked vessels not yet sunk in the sea – all these combine to yield an impression of absolute disaster.

> Their tangible effect on us arises from the fact that they are metaphysical, that their mental profundity cannot be separated from the painting's formal, external symmetry.
>   Furthermore there is an idea of change in the different landscape details and the way they are painted, their levels annulling or corresponding to one another, that leads us into the mind in painting the same way as in music.
>   There is another idea about Fate, revealed not so much by the appearance of that sudden fire as by the solemn way in which all forms are arranged or disarranged beneath it, some as if bent beneath a gust of irresistible panic, the others motionless, almost ironic, all obeying a powerful intelligent consistency, seemingly nature's mind externalised.
>
> (CW: 24)

According to Artaud it is precisely this metaphysical aspect of the picture that confers on it its poetic greatness. This painting 'is what theatre ought to be, if only it knew how to speak its own language' (CW: 25).

Although the differences between Wittgenstein's and Artaud's 'pictorial forms' are clear – the one capturing a 'combination of objects in a state of affairs', the other capturing abstract ideas – the use of the notion of picture as a means of discussing the relation of language to world, by both Wittgenstein and Artaud, is not coinci-

dental. The picturing relation brings forth the point of convergence between presentation and representation. The root of the difference between the two thinkers is found in their conceptions of what happens at that point of convergence. For Wittgenstein, we saw, this is where language ceases to function; for Artaud, this is where it is intensified. In order to see this, we must go back to the *Tractatus* and dwell a little more on the comparison between the structures of both systems.

As I have argued, the *Tractatus* encapsulates Western thought – classical and modern – and brings it to the point of its disintegration. In Western thought, then, 'the totality of existing states of affairs is the world', 'The totality of existing states of affairs also determines which states of affairs do not exist', and 'The existence and non-existence of states of affairs is reality' (T: §§ 2.04–6). Wittgenstein here offers an *extensional* understanding of actual and potential 'states of affairs'. 'Potentiality' is dictated by classical logic and the internal properties of objects: 'If all objects are given, then at the same time all possible states of affairs are also given. . . . Objects contain the possibility of all situations. The possibility of its occurring in states of affairs is the form of an object' (T: §§ 2.0124, 2.014, 2.0141). What is the case is merely accidental, and there is no room either *in* the 'world' or *in* 'reality' for what is necessary. On the other hand, whatever lies *outside* the boundaries of empirical, ordinary language cannot be described – it is the mystical, and any thought of it, any linguistic attempt at expressing it, is doomed to be nonsensical. 'Propositions can express nothing that is higher' (T: § 6.42), and '[A]ll that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental. It must lie outside the world' (T: § 6.41). 'There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They *make themselves manifest*. They are what is mystical' (T: § 6.522). This precisely is why the final solution of all philosophical problems shows 'how little is achieved when these problems are solved' (T: 4). For what is of real interest for Wittgenstein – or perhaps, to Western culture – must remain *outside* the boundaries of the system. The very idea that brings it to life turns out to be that which kills it, for 'whenever someone . . . wanted to say something metaphysical' it would mean that 'he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions' (T: § 6.53). That was our point of departure in the present part.

Artaud too would adopt this as a faithful description of *Western* metaphysics, which following René Guénon he deems to be anti-poetic, truncated and limited. Like Wittgenstein and Carnap, he follows Nietzsche in accepting the distinction between life and death as a guiding contrast, a map for locating ways of thinking, and in criticising Western metaphysics as favouring death, the actual, finished state of affairs, 'being', over that which is swept in movement and change, 'becoming'. Wittgenstein's way of overcoming this predicament and seeing 'the world aright' is by pinpointing the metaphysical urge as an 'urge to run up against the limits of language' (WVC: 68), that is, by exposing the vacuity of metaphysical language. Carnap's way is by allegedly 'eliminating metaphysics' altogether and replacing it with models of language and of philosophy which are based on action rather than death. Artaud offers an alternative metaphysical vision, which draws from non-Western sources.[1] Again, like Wittgenstein, Artaud conceives of existing states of affairs as dull and dead; it is the *force* that moves reality, its *necessity*, what makes that

which happens non-accidental, that is alive. *This* is what metaphysics aims at. But whereas in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* this only comes to show the impossibility of metaphysics, since the world's necessity must lie outside it, in Artaud's oeuvre, this potential aspect, that of energy and life, must belong to the world, and accordingly must have its counterparts in thought and in language.[2] Thus a widening of the scope of thought and language is called for. This is the role of the theatre of cruelty – 'cruelty' being, recall, 'a kind of strict control and submission to necessity' (CW: 78).

My conclusion in the first chapter was that although Wittgenstein dismisses with repugnance the cornerstones of his philosophical tradition, his revolt against them has an affirmative undertone, which accepts them as having no alternative but total silence. As an answer for our metaphysical urge, linguistic representation is doomed. Only non-linguistic presentation, expression, is worthwhile. Like Carnap, and *pace* Wittgenstein, Artaud is not affirmative even in this slight sense. He does not accept the traditional Western conceptions of thought and language as an irresistible, irreplaceable 'given'. As they seem to be leading to their own death, they should be replaced by better conceptions. Artaud's revised, unconventional notion of 'cruelty' captures the need, the hunger, the *bodily and intellectual* yearning to feel, to think and to express those undercurrents of life, energy, that run beneath the stable actuality, and are no less real then they – those undercurrents that were forgotten by Western metaphysics. The theatre of cruelty is hence its needed substitute. As in the *Tractatus*, in Artaud's system too we learn about reality by studying the properties and possibilities of language. But Artaud's insistent, dogmatic requirement, that language should embrace life, dictates a novel vision of language. For precisely as his revolutionary notion of metaphysics 'reforges the links between what does and does not exist' (CW: 17), between 'being' and 'becoming', his language is not confined to its conventional or logical bounds, and reforges the links between representation and presentation. Ordinary language is supplanted by poetical language – a language that is not confined to the realm of words alone, and in which words themselves operate with different emphases than the usual ones. This language enables us 'to rediscover a religious, mystical meaning' (CW: 32) – precisely the kind of meaning that was expelled from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. No wonder, then, that metaphysics could not be expressed in it! For Artaud, in order to get to know the full scope of the world, we should understand better the full potential of language. But to do this, we must get rid of some of our dogmas regarding the essence of language.

> To make metaphysics out of spoken language is to make language convey what it does not normally convey. That is to use it in a new, exceptional and unusual way, to give it its full, physical shock potential, to split it up and distribute it actively in space, to treat inflections in a completely tangible manner and restore their shattering power and really to manifest something; to turn against language and its basely utilitarian, one might almost say alimentary, sources, against its origins as a hunted beast, and finally to consider language in the form of *Incantation*.
>
> (CW: 32, original emphasis)

Reacting in a habitual manner to words means an 'incapacity to draw all the inferences from words and . . . profound ignorance of the spirit of synthesis and analogy' (CW: 33).

According to Artaud, the problem with Western conceptions of language is twofold, for their restrictions operate on two levels. There are, first, the limitations on the potential of *word* language, and second, there is the narrow conception of language as confined to word language alone. Regarding the first limitation, Artaud hints at what would be a very Derridean insight when he claims that, in Western thought, 'word language, spoken words [have] no greater value whether spoken or merely written' (CW: 90). In 'La Parole Soufflée', Derrida rightly claims that 'it is metaphor that Artaud wants to destroy' (WD: 184). The picture of language guiding Artaud is Nietzschean. Nietzsche sees the formation of concepts as the establishing and freezing of metaphors: 'Every word instantly becomes a concept precisely insofar as it is not supposed to serve as a reminder of the unique and entirely individual original experience to which it owes its origin . . . Every concept arises from the equation of unequal things' (Nietzsche 1873: 83). Truths, then, are nothing but 'illusions that we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force' (84). Following this lead, Artaud says:

> Words have become fossilised, words, all words are frozen, strait-jacketed by their meanings, within restricted, diagrammatised terminology. . . . In view of their clearly defined, limited terminology, words are made to stop thought, to surround it, to complete it, in short they are only a conclusion.
>
> (CW: 91)

This description captures the essence of the word-language of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, with its extensionalism, bipolarity, the truth-functional nature of the logical connectives, and indeed, the very presence of classical logic as the scaffolding of language, i.e. its logocentrism. But for Artaud, this emphasis on the written, metaphorical character of words makes them capable of expressing only 'obvious ideas', ideas that are final, 'dead and finished' (CW: 28), ideas which have nothing to do with the 'becoming' aspect of the life-world. As long as speech is traditionally conceived, it is no great wonder that Wittgenstein arrives at his conclusion regarding metaphysics and language; given a fossilised conception of speech, 'we have come to long for *silence* in which we could listen more closely to *life*' (CW: 28, my emphasis). It is this conception of language and metaphysics that Wittgenstein accepts as inevitable and Artaud seeks to change.

This is why Artaud is interested in discovering a new language 'both active and anarchic, where the usual limits of feelings and words are *transcended*' (CW: 28, my emphasis). The first step in metaphysics is transcending the ordinary use of words:

> I demand the right to make a break with . . . usual verbal meaning, to break the bonds once and for all, to break asunder the yoke, finally to return to the etymological origins of language, which always evoke a tangible idea through abstract concepts.
>
> (CW: 77)

It is important to note at the outset that Artaud has no qualms about his own meta-physical talk. Although it cannot express, or embrace, the whole of his metaphysics, as we shall see, speech, employed freely, originally, forms an integral part of the needed expression. 'Theatre, like speech, needs to be emancipated' (CW: 91). Thus it is not primarily from words that he wishes us to be emancipated, and naturally, not from feelings as well – but from their limits, their strictness, their closure. Artaud's way out, so to speak, is gained by a continuous movement towards tran-scendence, by an endless procedure of expanding.

Yet this way out is not confined to word language, however emancipated. And here we touch upon the second dogma of the Western conception of language. Western culture

> acknowledges spoken language as the only language, that is, only ascribes the properties and qualities of a language, only permits it to be called language, with the kind of intellectual merit generally ascribed to that word when it is grammatically spoken.
>
> (CW: 90)

But speech is not enough for representing the 'becoming' side of reality. Another form of language must be added to it: spatial language. Sign language, spatial poetry and mime plays, which are very much influenced by Oriental languages and theatre, aim at covering this lacuna. Artaud's idea is that in the field of intellect and thought there are attitudes, which words cannot assume, which gestures can attain with greater precision.

> Sign, gesture and posture language [have their] own *ideographic values*. . . . [There are mime plays] where gestures, instead of standing for words or sentences . . . *stand for* ideas, attitudes of mind, aspects of nature in a tangible way, that is to say by always evoking natural things or details, like that Oriental language which portrays night by a tree on which a bird that has already closed one eye, is beginning to close the other. And another abstract idea or attitude of mind could be portrayed by some of the innumerable *symbols* in Scripture, such as the eye of the needle through which the camel cannot pass.
>
> (CW: 27, my emphases)

Note that Artaud is very explicit about treating signs, movements, gestures, voices, etc. as linguistic, and, being such, as representing. They are symbolic, and have countless meanings (CW: 72); 'Even lighting can have a predetermined intellectual meaning' (CW: 73); 'Theatre . . . is to be found precisely at the point where the mind needs a language to bring about its manifestations' (CW: 5); the 'stage ought to be allowed to speak its own concrete language' (CW: 25).

What is striking in this idea is first of all its defiance of the neat distinction, taken by Western culture as axiomatic, between what is essential to language – *logos* – and its Other. As we shall see in greater detail in the next part, the very same axiomatic distinction is exposed by Derrida as standing at the base of Husserl's

dichotomy between expression and indication, hence as founding his *Logical Investigations*. Derrida argues, in Artaudian manner, that Husserl's grammar 'is not sufficient to cover the whole field of possibility for language's *a priori*' (SP: 8), since it is 'interested in language only within the compass of rationality' (*ibid.*). Note that rationality here refers to the conventional, logical aspects of language, those, which Artaud refuses to detach from language's physical manifestations in an effort to exploit its full capacity. 'One cannot separate body and mind, nor the senses from the intellect' (CW: 66), says Artaud, in relation to the language he envisages, and Derrida concurs with this when he criticises Husserl for repressing the fact that '*all speech inasmuch as it is engaged in communication and manifests lived experience operates as indication*' (SP: 37f., original emphasis). The Western tendency to repress the *indicative* aspect of language is why – and this is Artaud again – 'in our present degenerative state, metaphysics must be made to enter the mind through the body' (CW: 76) – the language of metaphysics must be that of the theatre of cruelty. This way of 'entering the mind' through the body is no less intellectual than sensual; indeed, it embodies metaphysical first principles: 'these symbols . . . indicate what might be called philosophical states of matter' (CW: 35).

It is crucial to remember that we are still within the realm of language, and that this language naturally combines with other forms of language. 'The main thing is to create stages, perspectives between one language and the other' (CW: 86). Moreover, spatial language is a language precisely because of its representational capacity, its ability to reveal aspects of reality, which are otherwise doomed to be passed over in silence. Artaud does not, then, defy the dogma of language as representation, the nub of classical, modern and modernist thought. The dogma that explicitly guides the *Tractatus* and is implicitly adhered to by Carnap, in his tacit realist presuppositions, also directs Artaud's vision. But with Artaud, this dogma is pushed to its limits. It is here where we meet the new conception of representation, an original representation, representing something other than itself, but also uniting with it, letting it 'speak for itself'. It is at this linguistic level, that the Western distinction between representation and expression, or presentation, starts to collapse. Hence, as Derrida maintains, at this level we have both original representation and autopresentation. Colin Russell argues that the metaphysical concepts Artaud is interested in 'cannot easily be put into words because they are so profound, so deeply buried in the core of our being that they surpass the limits of expression, that their adequate expression is inconceivable, that they reside somewhere beyond words, and for Artaud, certainly beyond dialogue' (Russell 2001: 8). But Russell's quick inference from the romantic emphasis on the inadequacy of speech and dialogue to that of expression in general would be unacceptable to Artaud. The adequate expression of these metaphysical concepts finds its home within Artaud's envisaged expanded language. Hence it is a little misleading to say, as Derrida does, that '[t]he theatre of cruelty is not a *representation*. It is life itself, in the extent to which life is unrepresentable. Life is the nonrepresentable origin of representation' (WD: 234). The theatre of cruelty is indeed life itself, but at the same time it aims at representing – in its own idiosyncratic manner of 'representation' (i.e. original representation, which at its limit amounts to autopresentation) –

life's first principles, the origin, the metaphysics of life. It is, one might say, the point of convergence between representation and presentation.

Here the comparison with Wittgenstein is again illuminating. For Wittgenstein, i.e. for traditional Western metaphysics, 'a logical picture of facts is a thought' (T: § 3) and 'a thought is a proposition with a sense' (T: § 4). A thought is constituted by its being expressible in logical word-language. But Artaud, loyal to his wider under-standing of the essence of language, suggests that there are thoughts that words cannot express. Even poetical word language is insufficient for their expression. These thoughts '*can be shown* and materially *expressed* on stage' (CW: 26, my emphasis), via lighting, movement, body language, etc. In such cases, the *Tractarian* principle 'What *can* be shown, *cannot* be said' (T: § 4.1212) does indeed apply; but Artaud would disagree with the comprehensive connotation of Wittgenstein's 'saying'. For Artaud, what cannot be said, can be expressed in different linguistic forms. The *Tractatus* is clear here: 'What finds its reflection in language, language cannot represent. What expresses *itself* in language, *we* cannot express by means of language. Propositions *show* the logical form of reality. They display it' (T: § 4.121). The say-show distinction forms an either-or situation: the source of bipolarity, of classical logic. Here we come back to the notion of pictorial form.

> *That* is how a picture is attached to reality; it reaches out to it.
>
> It is laid against reality like a measure.
>
> Only the end-points of the graduating lines actually *touch* the object that is to be measured.
>
> So a picture, conceived in this way, also includes the pictorial relationship, which makes it into a picture.
>
> The pictorial relationship consists of the correlations of the picture's elements with things.
>
> These correlations are, as it were, the feelers of the picture's elements, with which the picture touches reality . . .
>
> A picture cannot, however, depict its pictorial form: it displays it.
>
> A picture represents its subject from a position outside it. (Its standpoint is its representational form.) . . .
>
> A picture cannot, however, place itself outside its representational form.
>
> (T: §§ 2.1511–2.174)

This is the crux of the difference between the modernism of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and that of Artaud: in the latter, the traditional Western strict dichotomies begin to disintegrate. The whole idea of Artaud's language of metaphysics yields a point where that 'it', that shows itself, and 'we', who express it, or display it in our language, become one. Language is not divorced from us: we express the 'logical' form of reality, i.e. its essential, necessary core, which is nothing but ourselves. 'I am God', says Artaud.[3] At this point, autopresentation goes hand in hand with our original representation, and expression is yet another form of representation.

Derrida refers to Artaud's 'original representation' as a 'closed space, that is to say a space produced from within itself and no longer organized from the vantage of an

other absent site, an illocality, an alibi or invisible utopia' (WD: 238). Indeed, the whole point of Artaud's theatre of cruelty is that there is nothing outside it: 'original representation' is the relationship holding between the whole of reality – actual and potential – and language. Moreover, language and reality become one in the horizon. The *Tractatus* accepts the tragic predicament that 'the sense of the world must lie outside the world' (T: § 6.41), hence the dependence on a vantage point of an other absent site. The nonsensical essence of any attempt to grasp it from within is a direct result of this dependence on an illocality. Artaud's Eastern streak opposes this view by insisting on expanding and inflating the inside more and more, in an incessant movement, with infinite energy. This is why Derrida emphasises Artaud's confrontation with the metaphysics of classical theatre as expressing

> the closure of classical representation, but also the reconstitution of a closed space of original representation, the archi-manifestation of force or of life. . . . The end of representation, but also original representation; the end of interpretation, but also an original interpretation that no master-speech, no project of mastery will have permeated and levelled in advance. . . . Representation, then, as the autopresentation of pure visibility and even pure sensibility.
>
> (WD: 238)

Whereas Wittgenstein would reject such language as transcending the bounds of sense, hence of thought and world, for Artaud even the 'mystical', the active, 'becoming' aspect of reality can be captured by language. Even on such moments, the harmony between reality, thought and language remains. For Artaud, the mystical (necessity, energy, life) is, or aspires to be, represented in symbolic language, a language that has its own grammar, its own rules:

> We must use nature's own distinctive language in place of speech, its expressive potential being equal to verbal language, while its source is taken at an even more buried and remote point in thought. *This new language's grammar is undiscovered as yet*. Gesture is its substance and mind . . . it springs from a NEED for speech rather than performed speech. But finding a deadlock in speech, it spontaneously returns to gesture. On the way it touches on a few of the rules of substantial human expression. It is steeped in necessity. It poetically retraces the steps which culminated in the creation of language, but increasingly conscious of those worlds disturbed by word language which it brings to life in all their aspects. . . . It reconstructs all the processes by which words have come to mean. . . . For I submit words do not necessarily mean everything, either in essence or because of their predetermined nature, decided once and for all, they stop, they paralyse thought instead of fostering its development.
>
> (CW: 84, my emphasis)

Note that the grammar of this language is yet to be discovered, rather than invented. In the conversation with Schlick and Waismann, which I mentioned earlier, Wittgenstein referred to his *Tractatus* as dogmatic, because of its assumption

that what lies at the basis of language and world *must* be there, and will – at least in principle – be discovered at a later date. 'It is held that, although a result is not known, there is a way of finding it' (WVC: 182). The post-Tractarian Wittgenstein objects to the idea that 'we can hit upon something that we today cannot see, that we can discover something wholly new. That is a mistake' (WVC: 183). This kind of positing Wittgenstein regards as the dogmatism that inevitably underlies any metaphysical position. Here lies a fundamental difference between Artaud and Wittgenstein, for unlike Artaud, Wittgenstein thought he managed to escape dogmatism in the later stages of his thought. By reminding himself again and again that 'nothing is hidden', he believed to have avoided metaphysical positions altogether. Artaud, on the other hand, was not bothered at all by his alleged 'dogmatism', by the fact that he leant on an idea of grammar 'yet to be discovered'.[4] His anguish was due rather to his notion that the moment had passed when Western society *could* discover it; but that does not mean that, for him, the idea of such grammar, of a language of metaphysics, was absurd.

Another, related aspect of Artaud's vision is the desired return to the origins of language – a desire, or need, that is strongly expressed in the above quoted paragraphs, or in the following one:

> But if we were to return, however little, to the active, inspired, plastic wellsprings of language, reuniting words with the physical moves from which they originated, the logical discursive side of words would disappear beneath their physical, affective side, that is to say instead of words being taken solely for what they mean grammatically, they would be understood from a sound angle or discerned in movements.
>
> (CW: 92)

Derrida sees Artaud in paragraphs such as this one as taking us back to a universal Ursprache, to the pre-metaphorical moment,

> back to the borderline of the moment when the word has not yet been born, when articulation is no longer a shout but not yet discourse, when repetition is *almost* impossible, and along with it, language in general: the separation of concept and sound, of signified and signifier. . . . This is the eve of the origin of languages, and of the dialogue between theology and humanism whose inextinguishable reoccurrence has never not been maintained by the metaphysics of Western theater.
>
> (WD: 240).

This drive towards the origin is taken by Derrida – as we shall see in the next part – to be also the guiding light throughout Husserl's philosophical development. Indeed, this urge – this passionate metaphysical urge – is acknowledged by Wittgenstein as well, when he sympathetically refers to Heidegger's *talk* about nothingness. Wittgenstein observes:

> We wish to begin philosophy with something that should serve as a foundation
> for all that follows, for all sciences, yet it should not serve as a 'foundation'
> simply in the sense of a basic layer of bricks in a house. . . . From this ambiva-
> lence arises the need to begin philosophy with an inarticulate sound.
>
> (TS: 302)

It is the same urge that Carnap also acknowledges, seeing it as an attempt to express
in vain – indeed regarding it as yet another form of vanity – music in words.
Artaud's way of overcoming is, then, by lifting the high barriers between language
and origin and expanding the notion of language to include music and shout as
moments in language.

Artaud is aware of Western scepticism towards the idea that his envisaged
language should seriously be taken to be language: 'Those who have some idea what
language is will be able to understand us. We write for them alone' (CW: 86).
Metaphysical assurance leads to a disregard of conventional meanings of terms, for
essences can be seen through them. Such a metaphysical assurance, and such an
approach to its communicability, is in no way unique to Artaud. We saw that
Wittgenstein, in the preface to his *Tractatus*, expresses a similar assurance: '[T]he
truth of the thoughts that are here communicated seems to me unassailable and
definitive' (T: 4). And like Artaud, he says, in the very first sentence of the *Tractatus*,
'[p]erhaps this book will be understood only by someone who has himself already
had the thoughts that are expressed in it – or at least similar thoughts' (*ibid.*).
Indeed, despite the huge differences in outlining their conceptions of world,
thought and language, these two modernist philosophers have much in common;
they did have 'similar thoughts'. They were preoccupied by similar problems, and
looked at them from similar perspectives. But Artaud's latter-day modernism
enabled him to deduce more radical conclusions from these similar thoughts. By
transcending the limits of what is taken to be 'ordinary language', a whole new
world, a new metaphysics, was opened to him, for reacting in a habitual manner to
words means an 'incapacity to draw all the inferences from words and our profound
ignorance of the spirit of synthesis and analogy' (CW: 33). The need for speech is
answered by new forms of language and novel understanding regarding representa-
tion and presentation.

It is at this point, though, that Artaud's modernism disintegrates, and is revealed
as a fantasy. Derrida, in his twin essays on Artaud, explains why the theatre of
cruelty must remain a fantasy – why the present must always offer itself in dialec-
tics. Derrida argues that despite the fact that Artaud dismantles certain
fundamental Western dichotomies, a basic dualism – that between life and death –
still governs his whole oeuvre. However, metaphysical language, which, like any
language, is based on repetition, penetrates and destroys this dichotomy. It mani-
fests that 'indefinite movement of finitude, of the unity of life and death, of
difference, of original repetition, that is, of the origin of tragedy as the absence of a
simple origin' (WD: 248). The sharp distinction between life and death, movement
and finality, becoming and being, is revealed as a very stubborn traditional distinc-
tion. It is where Nietzsche himself leans on a distinction so fundamental to Western

thought, that his modernist followers – like Wittgenstein, Carnap and Artaud – are bound to find themselves captive in the traditional trap. Artaud, as Derrida implies, was closer than any other modernist writer to realising that overcoming the Western dichotomies means also seeing how entangled are presentation and representation, becoming and being, life and death, 'music' and 'words'.

Of relevance here is the way Artaud articulates the differences between the languages of poetry (including his theatre of cruelty) and those of literature and drama. Acknowledging that every linguistic domain has its advantages and limitations, he candidly admits the limitations of spatial, or theatrical, language: It 'is less able to define a character, to narrate man's thoughts, to explain conscious states clearly and exactly, than spoken language' (CW: 28). On the other hand, 'poetry is anarchic inasmuch as it questions all object relationships or those between meaning and form. It is also anarchic to the extent its occurrence is the result of disturbances leading us nearer to chaos' (CW: 30). It is interesting to see that the spoken language Artaud refers to here is not only 'ordinary language', or the language of empirical science. It is *discursive* language by and large, including that of literature and drama. This discursive language serves not only to represent contingent facts, but also to express

> psychological conflicts peculiar to man and his position in everyday existence. His conflicts are clearly justifiable in spoken words and whether they remain in the psychological field, or leave it to pass over into the social field, drama will always concern morality . . . where words, verbal solutions, retain their advantage.
>
> (CW: 53)

Note that Artaud uses the term 'morality' in its 'ordinary' meaning, more or less, i.e. as having to do primarily with judgements of actions. It is interesting to bear this in mind while comparing his vision of literature to that of another modernist, and a great defender of the metaphysics of the novel: D. H. Lawrence. In an essay entitled 'Morality and the Novel', Lawrence does to 'morality' what Artaud does to 'cruelty' – he defines it philosophically, ignoring 'ordinary usage'. He thus professes that 'morality is that delicate, for ever trembling and changing balance between me and my circumambient universe, which precedes and accompanies a true relatedness' (Lawrence 1925: 174). That the novel is so intimately linked to morality, as it no doubt is, is now a completely different assertion. For Artaud, literature and drama, with their particularistic emphases on individuals, and their attempts at expressing emotions and feelings, belong to that sphere where words, arguments and justifications reign. It is clear, though, that not all literary and dramatic oeuvres are doomed to be confined to this 'dead' side of reality. Artaud's criticism is manifestly directed against the discursive drama that has reigned in Western theatre. He does acknowledge dramatic exceptions such as Ford's *'Tis pity She's a Whore*. The language of theatre does not belong with literature and drama. Yet it is important to emphasise, again, that this does not mean Artaud has given up on regarding it as a genuine language, relevant to the intellectual realm. Artaud simply enjoins us to assess whether there are attitudes, in the field of intellect and thought, which words

cannot assume, and that gestures and everything inclusive in this spatial language can attain with greater precision than literature and drama.

The rest is silence (or, is silence a rest?)

The *Tractatus* left us with silence, an allegedly redeeming silence, deadly silence that puts us to rest so that we won't be tormented with questions that cannot be asked. But later modernist thinking, including that of post-Tractarian Wittgenstein, uncovered this silence as illusive. There may be no place for the kind of saturated silence the *Tractatus* yearned for, a silence that presumes to be the Other of language, but is actually part of language, a language in itself. In his discussion of another arch-modernist, Franz Kafka, Blanchot points at the dishonesty of silence:

> We noticed that language is only real in the perspective of non-language: it tends towards a perilous horizon beyond which it tries to disappear. What is this non-language? That is not the question. But we should however bear in mind that, for all forms of expression, it is a reminder of their inadequacy. What makes language possible is that it strives for the impossible. Thus at every level it involves unavoidable conflicts and anxieties. No sooner is something said than something else must be said to correct the tendency of all that is said to become final, to insinuate itself into the imperturbable realm of objects. There is no end, neither at the level of simple sentences nor at that of complete works. Conflicts, which can never be resolved, are not a solution; but neither is silence a solution. Language cannot be achieved by silence; silence is a form of expression whose dishonesty forces us into speech. Besides, the suicide of words can be only attempted within words – suicidal obsession that can never be realized, that leaves them with the blank page or with the insignificance of vain words. Such solutions are illusive. The ruthlessness of language derives from its ceaseless evocation of a death it cannot achieve.
>
> (Blanchot 1982a: 37)

But here, it seems, we have parted ways from modernism altogether. The notions of object and representation seem to get a new meaning. Dichotomies collapse. The Other, although necessary conceptually, cannot really form a substantial otherness. Coming back, in a way, to Kant's transcendental, we remain with an always evasive goal, which on the one hand is Other, but on the other, is One: it never really leaves the This – there aren't two clearly marked, bounded, realms. The Other is intricately interwoven with the This, yet it forms an indispensable category. To put it differently, in a way that brings us back to the guilt that opened the present part: the hubris of philosophical language is immanent to language, indeed – to being human. The vanity lies, after all, less in the use of philosophical language than in the futile attempt to annul, deflate, or disguise it. This much, I suspect, was already known to Nietzsche, but less so to the modernists who were influenced by him.

Part II

Pre-modernism

The right turn that went wrong

Language is not just one of the many human possessions in the world; rather, on it depends the fact that human beings have a *world* at all.

<div align="right">(Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 443)</div>

4 'The way in which logic uses ideas'

The modernist crisis was enabled by Frege and Husserl's new attention to the role of language in philosophical inquiry. What was later dubbed 'the linguistic turn' – the recognition that an inquiry into the nature of language should become 'first philosophy' – was a necessary rung in the modernist ladder, and then in its disposal. What are the real consequences of the linguistic turn, then? How do philosophy and language look when the old dogmas are fully discarded? These questions cannot, I believe, be answered directly. In order to grasp the immense difficulty in replying to them, we should go back to the roots: to some of Frege and Husserl's specific ideas which first formed the linguistic turn. It is on some of the motivations, insights and presuppositions of this turn that I wish to focus now, in order to see a little better which of them infiltrated into the modernist picture, how they were reshaped, what threads have been left out – for post-modernists to come back to and pick up. It is impossible to overcome the modernist crisis of philosophical language without first having a clear view of its source. But a view is of a viewer; in our case, these are the post-modernist Dummett and Derrida looking at the pre-modernist Frege and Husserl.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the question of the relationship between psychology and philosophy was a major philosophical issue. Empiricists and naturalists of all kinds and bents regarded logical ideas, ideas used in judgement, as primarily psychological phenomena. Opposition to this way of thinking came from various directions: Hegelian idealists, logicians influenced by Lotze and philosophers who reacted to Brentano's pioneering work in philosophical psychology.[1] In 1883, for example, Bradley wrote the following words:

> In England at all events we have lived too long in the psychological attitude. We have taken it for granted and as a matter of course that, like sensations and emotions, ideas are phenomena. And, considering these phenomena as psychical facts, we have tried . . . to distinguish between ideas and sensations. But, intent on this, we have as good as forgotten the way in which logic uses ideas.
>
> (*Principles of Logic*, quoted in Hylton 1990: 60)

This common root, a combination of anti-naturalism and anti-psychologism, was crucial to what followed. As we saw in the previous part, modernist thinkers felt a

strong discontent, similar to that of Bradley, from the kind of forgetfulness pointed out by him in the above paragraph. Indeed they saw their role as philosophers as demanding an honest and radical investigation into 'the way in which logic uses ideas'. Taking 'logic' to mean 'the science of the pure Idea' (Hegel 1975: 25), and having the linguistic turn as a leading assumption, an honest and radical investigation meant, for modernists, a combined effort: getting a clear picture both of the idea of pure Idea, i.e. of philosophy itself, and of the language that could be used for this 'science'. While some of them took philosophy as more 'scientific' in spirit, aim and method, others drew it closer to the arts; some forged links with psychology, others avoided them; but for Wittgenstein and Carnap as well as for Artaud, logic could not be reduced to – explained by – either science or psychology. That was especially clear in the case of philosophical language. There was always a sense in which this language retained its uniqueness and refused to disintegrate into another, foreign discourse.

It is precisely here that the crisis surfaced. For, taking Bradley's principle seriously, the very question of the language of philosophy immediately poses a grave problem. Looking at language philosophically, and accepting the principle that philosophy is irreducible to any other discipline, means treating language as already in the service of 'Ideas', i.e. focusing on 'the way in which *logic* uses ideas'. Looking at language philosophically means examining it not merely 'as an object', 'in itself', but 'for us': as expressing thought, or perhaps as representing the world. In other words, this means that truth cannot be avoided in such an endeavour; that 'semantics', very broadly understood, is indispensable. For semantics is that framework of research into language which forms links between language and its Other, i.e. with what was traditionally understood as independent of language and even prior to it. Yet, as we saw in the preceding part, such a conclusion was regarded by modernists, at least *prima facie*, as necessarily preserving traditional metaphysics. In subjecting sign to truth, it seemed to betray the linguistic turn, the principle that yields *language* as primary.

The problem is genuine. To the early Wittgenstein it seemed to necessarily entail the abolition of philosophical discourse *in toto*. Carnap and Artaud offered other ways out of this vicious circle, emphasising, in different ways, the primacy of form over content, of sign over truth – thus creating new linguistic domains where philosophical discourse could somehow find a home. Yet we saw that – looked at from post-modernist perspectives – despite their genuine attempts and genius solutions, these modernists were still implicitly led by certain traditional dogmas. When carefully analysed, their radical moves are exposed as leaning on several distinctions that are only acceptable given the classical understandings of philosophy and of language. We remain with our problem, though: Is a focus on the way in which logic uses ideas at all compatible with the linguistic turn? An answer to this should wait for the next, concluding part; yet the problem itself guides my thoughts throughout the present part. It is, we may say, its river-bed.

Here is the objection continually addressed by Husserl against Kant, according to Derrida:

> If the transcendental is not merged originally with its empirical content, if it is
> not presented as parallel to experience itself, this transcendental, being thema-

tized outside experience, becomes logical and formal. It is no longer a consti-
tuting source but the constituted product of experience. It becomes
psychological and 'worldly'. To go back to such a transcendental subject as to
an absolute originarity, that is psychologism.

(PGHP: 10)

On his part, Dummett emphasises Frege's fundamental complaint against Kant's
failure to distinguish between subjective and objective ideas – or between what
Frege dubbed as ideas vs. senses. Dummett refers us (FOP: 142) to Frege's
Grundlagen, esp. to the long footnote to § 27:

An idea in the subjective sense is what is governed by the psychological laws of
association; it is of a sensible, pictorial character. An idea in the objective sense
belongs to logic and is in principle non-sensible, although the word which
means an objective idea is often accompanied by a subjective idea, which never-
theless is not its meaning. . . . It is because Kant associated both meanings with
the word [idea] that his doctrine assumed such a very subjective, idealist
complexion. . . . The distinction here drawn stands or falls with that between
psychology and logic. If only they themselves were to be kept always rigidly
distinct!

(FA: § 27n.)

Psychologism, so it seems, is the common enemy that unites Frege and Husserl. In
particular, both accuse Kant of committing an error which must yield an unwanted
mentalism, or subjectivism, and this accusation gives them their philosophical
impetus. Derrida's doctoral dissertation, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*,
is an attempt to write a consciously anachronistic interpretation of Husserl's philos-
ophy from the vintage point of the present. Derrida depicts Husserl's philosophical
development as guided by a single leitmotif, the engine behind Husserl's whole
oeuvre: the problem of genesis. This problem, in various guises, causes Husserl to
oscillate between two opposing directions – idealism (or Kantian formalism) and
empiricism – in an attempt to eschew both, to overcome both: one direction for
being too abstract, the other for its subjective relativism. Common to both direc-
tions is, Husserl believes, the need to evoke psychologistic explanations in order to
secure the explanatory base as a source for philosophical knowledge. What is
lacking, in order to properly set out from an originary lived experience, is the theme
of *intentional consciousness*.[2] Derrida – in this essay, as well as in his introduction to
Husserl's *Origin Of Geometry* and in *Speech and Phenomena* – shows both how Husserl's
decisions are led by the anti-psychologistic guideline and where they defeat them-
selves as a result of Husserl's unquestioned preconceptions.

Dummett, in his voluminous writings on Frege, is engaged in a similar project.
Like Derrida, his interest lies in a consciously *a posteriori* and teleological reconstruc-
tion of Frege's philosophical development. Dummett stresses that judging Frege as
philosopher entails considering topics of which Frege did not treat (IFP: xiii), and
that it would have been impossible to discuss Frege's linguistic turn the way he

himself does, earlier in the twentieth century (IFP: 71), i.e. before the heyday of the modernist phase. For Frege, the only way out of psychologism is the 'context principle' – the determination never to ask for a word's meaning in isolation: it is always in the context of a sentence that a word has meaning.[3] Dummett reads Frege with an eye to contemporary understanding of this principle and the anti-psychologistic motivation. He is thus able to see Frege's blind spots – the dogmas to which Frege was bound, consciously or not, and which eventually act against his own determination to put the inquiry of meanings – 'in the context of a sentence' – at the basis of any philosophical investigation. In other words, after the *Tractatus*, after logical positivism, after the *Investigations* and Quine, Dummett can see where Frege, against his will, fails to establish the 'context of a sentence' before other realms.

Both Dummett and Derrida emphasise, then, the rejection of mentalism as vital to Frege and Husserl. Both, in their own philosophical writings, are also faithful to this motivation. But if we focus more closely on one important theme that is essential to both contemporary philosophers – the turn away from metaphysical realism as guiding our explanations of language, philosophy and, eventually, philosophical language – it is interesting to see that they find traces of this theme, too, in the philosophies of Frege and Husserl, as left-out threads in the woven texture. Upon reading Derrida and Dummett's interpretations, it becomes clear that already in Frege and Husserl we find a discontent with naïve representational conceptions of language – the hard core of metaphysical realism: the picture of language as a passive representation of an already determined reality. The urge to dispel the charm of this picture, its hold on our thinking about language, is not yet an explicit and lucid goal, nothing like Frege and Husserl's direct and decisive attack on mentalism; however, it resides in their writings, accompanying their philosophical moves like a persistent shadow. This urge is repressed, though, when realism is called upon to secure what for both Frege and Husserl is the necessary core of philosophical thinking, or *logos*. This point is the fountainhead from which the rest of the tensions spring.

Thus Derrida shows that Husserl's phenomenology is derived from the need for metaphysical assurance, for an anchor in solid metaphysical foundation. The direction of entailment is clear: whenever Husserl's innovative ideas regarding language are understood by him as confronting realist metaphysics, it is the latter which dictates the result. For this reason, Derrida does not merely wish to uncover traditional *residues* in Husserl's thought, but to question its deepest roots: 'we shall not be asking whether such and such metaphysical heritage has been able, here or there, to restrict the vigilance of the phenomenologist, but whether the phenomenological form of this vigilance is not already controlled by metaphysics itself' (SP: 5). As I argued above, only with their modernist inheritors was a connection established between Frege and Husserl's criticism of the traditional conception of language and the devaluation of traditional metaphysics. For Frege and Husserl (especially the younger Husserl), despite Kant, despite Hegel and Nietzsche, metaphysical realism was never seriously put in question. Now given Derrida's resolute declaration, it would only be natural to expect that his criticism of Husserl would be directed against the metaphysical enterprise *in toto*. We shall see, however, that this is not the

end of the story, but rather its crucial beginning. Derrida indeed questions the most basic assumptions of traditional metaphysics; but he is fully aware that by doing so, he is himself inevitably committed to be an heir of such metaphysical thinking.[4] By raising our awareness to the immanent difficulties of such thinking, however, Derrida succeeds in diminishing the degree of our enslavement to it. Or, in his own words: 'For the present and for some time to come, the movement of that schema will only be capable of working over the language of metaphysics from within' (SP: 51). However, metaphysical *realism* is indeed totally overthrown by him. The same is true of Dummett – on the one hand, a relentless critic of metaphysical realism throughout his philosophical oeuvre; on the other, a no less persistent believer in a systematic theory of meaning, his own linguistic version of post-modernist metaphysics.

5   Sense *and* reference?

There is a bitter controversy over the question how thoroughly linguistic – or how much of a turn – was indeed Frege's linguistic turn. Was Frege's conception of rule (of logic) Platonist? And how much so? Is there a representational conception lying at the basis of the Fregean and Tractarian phases? While there is a general interpretive agreement that there are traditional residues in Frege's conception, their nature is debatable. Dummett's principal criticism of Frege's conception of language is twofold: he rejects what he takes to be Frege's Platonism, or realism; and he mitigates Frege's anti-psychologism, arguing that Frege's barrier between the logical and the psychological was not only too rigid, but moreover, that it actually reflected its own deep-rooted psychologism. These two lines of criticism are, for Dummett, as they were for the later Wittgenstein, interconnected. Their upshot is that although Frege did intend to take language as primary in any philosophical inquiry, such traditional dogmas made him appeal to a 'language' that was not, exactly, language, and that as a result the right turn was taken in the wrong way.

We have already noted that Frege rejected the traditional conception of language, according to which meaning was anchored in mental images, and replaced it with the context principle. Indeed this is precisely the point of the principle: to avoid the conception of meaning as (dependent on) a *private* image. Anti-psychologism, then, is the unequivocal point of departure, an explicit insistence on the sharp separation between psychological and logical: if the principle of the primacy of sentences is not observed, Frege notes, 'one is almost forced to take as the meanings of words mental pictures or acts of the individual mind, and so to offend against the first principle as well' (FA: x). We comply with anti-mentalism, then, if, when we look for a word's meaning, instead of directing our attention to mental images we fix our attention on its contribution to the sentences in which it occurs. In his later writings, having introduced the sense/reference distinction, the context principle is not mentioned any more. It is left for Frege's interpreters to determine whether, and to what extent, the principle coheres with the addition of the distinction. Dummett deals extensively with this question. On his view, the answer is complicated. On the one hand, the addition both of the sense/reference distinction and the notion of assertion add to the *Grundlagen*'s coherence. 'Indeed, it is difficult to set out the doctrine of the *Grundlagen* without appealing to these amplifications' (TOE: 103). On the other hand, when it comes to determining the way the principle could be implemented

for the new notions, difficulties arise. As a principle concerning sense, there should be no problem: the principle 'amounts to the conceptual priority of thoughts over their constituents', and in this sense it 'governed Frege's thinking from start to finish' (FPM: 184). Yet when it comes to the notion of reference, the problem is acute. Although a version of the principle can, and should be maintained,[1] the crucial step of identifying a sentence's truth-value with its meaning was, according to Dummett, in complete disharmony with the context principle. However, Dummett does not dispense with the notion of reference, or even with its semantic nature. He sees it as important, indeed crucial, not only for Frege but also for his own philosophical solutions. In other words, in measuring Frege's achievements and mistakes, Dummett endorses a kind of linkage between language and world, meaning and truth – albeit not exactly the Fregean reading of this linkage: as we shall see below, the identification of truth-value and meaning is indeed harshly criticised.

Now Dummett's own philosophical worldview is deeply anti-realist, and hence it could reasonably be expected that from such a perspective it would be more natural to try to overcome the problems of the traditional, representational view of language not by linking meaning and truth, but rather by breaking all such links, and opting for an internal elucidation of words' meanings instead of the semantical approach. In a sense, this is the gist of the interpretation of Frege's writings that is offered by 'universalist' readers such as van Heijenoort, Dreben, Goldfarb and Floyd.[2] These interpreters argue that Frege presents us with a logical system that is meant to be all-inclusive, in a way that makes any appeal to this system's 'other' – to anything that is supposedly outside it – incoherent. In Goldfarb's words, 'there can be no external standpoint from which one may view and discuss the system'.[3] A parallel example of such an approach to language – almost contemporaneous with Frege's later writings – is Saussure's structuralist vision of meaning. For Saussure, words get their meanings by pointing at the total vocabulary of a particular language, rather than externally, at an independent, non-linguistic realm of reference. Both realism and mentalism are mitigated within such a framework. According to a structuralist theory of meaning, 'a linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern' (Saussure 1983: 66). This principle, when applied to speech (*parole*), seems to by-pass realism at the cost of mentalism, since, thus understood, 'the linguistic sign is . . . a two-sided psychological entity' (*ibid.*). However, this is only part of the semiotic theory, for 'language [*langue*] is never complete in any single individual, but exists perfectly only in the collectivity' (Saussure 1983: 13). Thus seen, mentalism is mitigated as well:

> It is a great mistake to consider sign as nothing more than the combination of a certain sound and a certain concept. To think of a sign as nothing more would be to isolate it from the system to which it belongs. It would be to suppose that a start could be made with individual signs, and a system constructed by putting them together. On the contrary, the system as a united whole is the starting point.
>
> (Saussure 1983: 112)

And the system as a whole is a system of values, which 'remain entirely a matter of internal relations' among themselves, 'and that is why the link between idea and sound is intrinsically arbitrary' (111). That, we could say, is precisely what the idea of giving primacy to language could mean. An internalist picture replaces language's role as representing another, external, and supposedly prior sphere.

Why, then, does Dummett, in what seems contradictory to his anti-realist motivation, embrace the sense/reference distinction as complementary to the context principle, instead of adopting such an internalist strategy? Recognising Frege's tendency towards realism, why does he not question Frege's fundamental semantical strategy, that of linking meaning with truth, language with the external world? Why, in other words, does he not come out against what appears as Frege's clinging to a conception of language that is based on the representation-relation? The reason for this resides in the fact that Dummett regards Frege's distinction between sense and reference as a very important step on the way to fulfilling the revolutionary linguistic turn, and hence as one which would eventually bring with it the desired anti-realist result. It is precisely such a language-world relationship, regulated by the (primacy of the) context principle, which provides the means necessary for establishing the right *metaphysical* role of linguistic expressions. Logic *is* metaphysics; that should never be forgotten. If we want the right metaphysics, we must insist on the right logic:

> Logic is not a clue to metaphysics. . . . When logic is taken in the broad sense in which it comprises the theory of meaning, understood as a branch of philosophy, the idea of a logic that has no metaphysical, that is, no ontological, component is a delusion. There cannot be an aseptic logic that merely informs us how language functions and what is the structure of the thoughts which it expresses without committing itself to anything concerning reality, since reality is what we speak about – the realm of reference – and an account of language demands an account of how what we say *is* about reality and is rendered true or false by how things are in reality.
>
> (IFP: 431)

In other words, Dummett cannot give up on the realm of reference because he needs this realm tailored to his own requirements. 'Unleashing' it would implicitly reintroduce realism, since there is no metaphysical vacuum. Positions adopting 'pure universalist syntax', 'no semantics', conceal realist metaphysics and representational semantics. The best example of such an internalist position is supplied in the *Tractatus* – and this of course is no coincidence: this is how Wittgenstein implemented Frege's ideas, giving rise to post-Tractarian universalist readings of Frege. Now with Frege read 'semantically', far from sticking to an old model of language as passive representation of a fully determined pre-existing reality, the sense/reference distinction may be used for establishing an *anti-realist* metaphysics.[4] This would be achieved by exploiting two important consequences of the Fregean distinction. First, the *world* may be conceived as essentially (but infinitesimally) given by language, *truth* by human procedures aiming at establishing it.

Metaphysics is then interpreted as an analysis of thought, which amounts to an analysis of language and its relation to reality, i.e. the world as it is for us. Primacy is given to language; but where there is primacy, there is also an order, a hierarchy. There *is* an Other, deprived of this primacy, which finds itself subject to language, at least in a sense. Indeed, common to Saussure's internal, 'syntactical' and allegedly metaphysics-less account of language, to universalist readings of Frege, and to Dummett's suggestion is that the worldly sphere is not independent of the procedure of signification. However, in the first two cases, since the realm of reference is totally deflated, this in turn dictates a static, independent conception of truth, which throws us back to realism.

The second consequence Dummett wishes to exploit is that the sense/reference distinction enables an openness of interpretation, yielded by the constant *distance* that must prevail, by definition, between the realms of reference and of sense. As we have seen earlier, this role of the realm of reference as the always-fleeting sphere which language can never fully contain is an essential mark of modernism. Yet with modernism (as influenced by Nietzsche, for one) the gap between language and reality served a different purpose: that of marking the tragedy of language in general, and of philosophical language in particular. It is essentially a gap between that which can be said and that which refuses to be. When we read in the *Tractatus* that 'logic fills the world', we are required to think of the fallacies and limitations of traditional metaphysics, discard them, and acknowledge the impotence of logic. But when we read Derrida's elliptical '*il n'y a pas de hors texte*', it serves precisely the opposite purpose: reopening language to new spheres. Let us dwell a little on these consequences of the sense/reference distinction, the way they are brought into play in Dummett's discussion of Frege. We shall then see how Derrida complements the picture in his analysis of Husserl.

In order to see how Frege's *prima facie* realist strategy discloses a turn *away* from representationalism, we have to go into some detail about the role of the notions of sense and reference in Frege's conception of meaning. Reference, according to Frege, is not an ingredient of meaning, yet it is a notion needed in order to give a satisfactory account of what it is that we know when we know a meaning, when we understand a sentence, when we use language. Dummett points out (FPL: 93) that a shortcut, identifying meaning with reference *tout court* (as in 'modest' theories of meaning, or 'code' theories), does not gain us any insight into the notion of meaning. The mere association of parts of language with parts of the world, rather than informing us anything about terms' meanings, simply entraps us in triviality, in pure repetition. And this, we should now realise, was the essence of the traditional picture of language as a passive representation of an independent reality. Frege made it clear that what we seek in a theory of meaning is, rather than the representation-relation itself, the *way* in which such an association is established. 'The sense is itself the route; the entire route, and nothing but the route' (SL: 227). Not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, since Frege's emphasis here is on a *dynamic procedure*. His interest in the route does not at all disclose a foundational tendency: Frege did not think of this route in manifestly epistemological terms, as of a way leading to a secure foundation. He did not – as opposed to

Husserl – aim at a primordial 'lived experience'. The 'route', then, does not lead towards any origin. Frege's approach was formal, logical. His distinction between sense and reference marks, then, disaffection from the static picture of representation *per se*, and in this respect is to be seen as an important corollary of his context principle. For what the distinction comes to avoid is – as with the context principle itself – the appeal to direct and passive representation in any explanation of what language is, i.e. of how it functions. When signifier and signified are tightly fastened to each other, no explanation of language is actually given. Positing the third component of sense between signs and reality aims precisely at keeping the two apart. 'A difference can arise only if the difference between the signs corresponds to a difference in the mode of presentation of the thing designated' ('On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*', FR: 152). This mode yields the 'route', or the 'way' to the apprehension of thing designated. This notion of a way hence points simply at what it literally is: being away. In other words, in order to ensure that our philosophy of language would not remain vacuous or adhere to a mysterious realm of 'thought' prior to it, we need the third component of reference; but then again, in order to ensure that this realm of reference would not be posited as what language 'simply represents', in a direct and unproblematic way, we need the notions of thought, or sense, or some other 'medium': a 'way'.[5]

A short paragraph by Blanchot on the nature of reading may clarify this matter. Think of the user of language, of linguistic signs, as a reader, and of the realm of reference as the text that he reads:

> In general the reader, unlike the writer, naïvely feels superfluous. He does not think he fashions the work. Even if the work overwhelms him, and all the more so if it becomes his sole concern, he feels that he does not exhaust it, that it remains altogether outside his most intimate approach. He does not penetrate it; it is free of him, and this freedom makes for the profundity of his relation to the work, the intimacy of his yes. But in this very yes, the work's freedom still keeps him at a distance. It re-establishes the distance which alone assures the freedom of the welcome and which is constantly reborn from the passion of the reading that abolishes it. . . . This distance gives the work for what it is.
>
> (Blanchot 1982b: 201)

The distance gives it its sense. Blanchot's conception of texts is far from being realist. Texts are not conceptually independent of readings, and certainly have a *vouloir-dire* component in them. Now Blanchot obviously does not think of reading in terms of naïve representation. The inexhaustibility, externality-by-definition, seeming independence, of the text – of reality, the realm of reference – is indispensable, in his eyes, precisely in order to retain an anti-realist, undetermined, playful conception of reality and language, reference and sense, text and reading. This is gained by the re-establishment of the distance between the two realms. What we get is a re-affirmation both of language's free nature and of metaphysics, of philosophical reflection, for that realm which is never fully open to view always includes an unfulfilled postponement, a gap between reality and our ways of relating to it. As

Julian Roberts says, 'in a sense, to reflect is to describe what is not, and to that degree it is metaphysical. But refusing to accommodate what is not describable (or "provable") can lead to worse metaphysical confusion' (Roberts 1992: 7). Such a view of reflection is, I believe, the one driving Dummett in embracing Frege's sense/reference distinction the way he does. Here we see, then, the inter-dependence between the conceptions of language and of philosophy. We realise that an omission of either sense or reference would abolish the needed distance, the necessary condition for an anti-realist conception of language and metaphysics.

This result can be pursued, though, in different ways. One such way is Quine's. Quine is loyal to Frege's dictum that words' meanings are to be given always in the context of a sentence, and, like Dummett, he reads this dictum in terms of a meaning-truth linkage. Moreover, he is faithful to the anti-mentalist framework that led Frege to this dictum, and also (and unlike Dummett) to the extensionalist spirit that governs Frege's logic. But Quine's most basic attitude is naturalistic.[6] Being – rightly – suspicious of traditional residues in Frege's linguistic theory, he comes to regard the very notion of meaning[7] as an Aristotelian essence, and hence prefers to render the analysis of meaning in more innocuous terms (such as significance and synonymy), capable of extensionalist accounts. The sense/reference distinction hence collapses, and we get an internalist picture, according to which, on the one hand, the transcendental level vanishes, and theory and world become one, within the total network of our theoretical schemes; but on the other, knowledge is still deferred, mediated: 'While Quine's view accepts that knowledge is mediated, there is no conception of a transcendental level on which this mediation takes place. There is simply our overall theory of the world, which is gradually modified from within over time' (Hylton 1993: 475f.). Such a view entails that no room is left for philosophy 'as a subject that is different in category from others' (*ibid.*). Thus Quine manages to retain the deference, otherwise enabled by the sense/reference distinction, in a naturalistic framework.

Quine's holism resembles Saussure's structuralism in this respect. Both create inter-related linguistic wholes, and both disclose a strong wish for the kind of distance formed by Frege's distinction between sense and reference. Referring to Saussure, Maurice Merleau-Ponty says the following:

> The reason why a language finally intends to say and does say [*veut dire et dit*] something is not that each sign is the vehicle for a signification which allegedly belongs to it, but that all the signs together allude to a signification which is always in abeyance when they are considered singly, and I go beyond them toward [sic.] without their even containing it.
>
> (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 88)

Yet while we know that Saussure must allow '*a surpassing of the signifying by the signified which it is the very virtue of the signifying to make possible*' (Merleau-Ponty 1964: 90, original emphasis), we are still travelling in his grammatical theory inside the world of concepts, rather than extra-linguistic world, or lived-experience. Quine, on the other hand, explicitly leaves his realm of 'experience' open: it is never contained in the conceptual scheme:

> The totality of our so-called knowledge or beliefs, from the most casual matters of geography and history to the profoundest laws of atomic physics or even of pure mathematics and logic, is a man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges.
>
> (Quine 1953: 42)

But the nature of this impingement relation between language and its other remains obscure. How precisely this extra-schematic content may affect sentences' meanings? Indeed, it is this fault, the unsettled nature and role of the extra-linguistic, that is criticised unanimously by Davidson and Dummett. Davidson proves that Quine's tension could be resolved by dropping the notion of reference altogether and by widening our notion of conceptual scheme so that it be all-inclusive,[8] leaving no Other at all. Dummett's solution points in the opposite direction, of course.[9] The otherness, the externality of experience, is acknowledged. But precisely since it is, it reveals a tension among Quine's different theses. Dummett reads Quine's 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' as presenting us with a model of language as

> an articulate *structure*, with some sentences lying at the *periphery* and others at varying levels within the *interior*. *Experience* impinges, in the first place, only at the *periphery*; but . . . the impact of experience is transmitted from the periphery some distance inwards to the *interior*.
>
> (TOE: 376, my emphases)

But a completely holistic model of language like Quine's makes it 'difficult to see how we can any longer maintain a distinction between periphery and interior' (*ibid.*) Holism cannot allow for hierarchies inside the model also because in order to sustain the structural hierarchy we need to appeal to inferential links of an analytic kind – the kind dispensed with by holistic theories of meaning, precisely because of its tacit acceptance of something like 'sense'.

Like Quine, Dummett also discovers traditional residues of ideal 'form' in Frege's thought. Yet his way of overcoming them is founded on the assumption that the subtle relation established by Frege between sense and reference should be respected at all costs, being so immanent to the very idea of the linguistic turn. It seems to Dummett that Frege fails to see that his revolutionary basis for a theory of meaning must yield anti-realist, rather than realist, metaphysics. In other words, Frege 'forgets' his dissatisfaction from representation as explaining meaning, whenever 'remembering' this would count as a threat to his realism. Hence when Frege does detect an unavoidable anti-realist outcome of his early writings, he retreats to the known terrain of traditional – and faulty – metaphysics.

Probably the most pregnant example of this is the case of proper names, where a realist understanding of the notion of reference – indeed, a naïve representational picture – seems to be most natural. After all, what could be more *object*-ive, more independent of humanly constructed language, than the category of *object* ('what the name stands for')? But, for Frege as well as for Dummett, the logical primacy of language over world has already been laid down by the context principle. Therefore,

even for the former, 'the application of the ontological category-term "object" is dependent upon the application of the linguistic category-term "proper name", and not conversely' (FPL: 69).[10]

We saw that Dummett noted a tension between Frege's context principle and the sense/reference distinction added in the 1890s. Yet it is not the later addition of the sense/reference distinction *per se* which entails realism. Rather, it is the identification of a sentence's truth-value with its meaning. In other words, it is the fact that at this later stage, Frege took the name-object relation, in what is essentially its traditional, representational form, to serve as his model for the rest of language. Instead of leaving the notion of representation as secondary to linguistic use and explaining the name-object relation in terms of human practice, Frege reinstated the primacy of representation, almost as it was conceived traditionally, thus re-invoking metaphysical realism. He did this by assigning sentences the status of complex singular terms, which 'represent' truth-values, so to speak. In Dummett's eyes, this is a 'retrograde step' (FPL: 7). Frege indeed succeeded in avoiding direct, naïve representation, as a result of the sophisticated nature of the sense/reference distinction. Any explanation of meaning already involves a movement between world and language, the realm of reference and that of sense, and such movement already necessitates going beyond an unabashed acknowledgement of the primacy of world over word. However, the traditional view, according to which it is basically via its representation-relation to the world that language is explained, was regretfully restored, and the revolutionary potential of Frege's context principle was wasted.[11]

What is particularly striking in Dummett's alternative way of expounding the case of the name-object relation is that Dummett, too, takes this case to be paradigmatic of language-world relationship. He, too, generalises his analysis of proper names over the rest of language – but his conclusion leads in the opposite direction to the Fregean realism. Dummett's perfectly deconstructive method presents the distinction between proper names and concept terms as a binary opposition, characteristic of traditional metaphysics. As such, it reflects a hierarchy, in which proper names are superior to concept terms, as representing the essence of language in its purity: directly capturing presence. Such an ideal view of language is, of course, the 'Augustinian picture', expounded and dealt with meticulously throughout Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. The traditional 'picture of the essence of human language' is this:

> The individual words in language name objects – sentences are combinations of such names. – In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands.
>
> (PI: § 1)

Wittgenstein continues by noting:

> Augustine does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of word. If you describe the learning of language in this way you are, I believe, thinking

primarily of nouns like 'table', 'chair', 'bread', and of people's names, and only *secondarily* of the names of certain actions and properties; and of the remaining kinds of word as something that will take care of itself.

(PI: § 1, my emphases)

Dummett pursues this critical line by putting proper names as they are traditionally conceived *sous rature*, 'under erasure'. He does this by subverting the primary-secondary hierarchy between names and concept terms. The starting point is Fregean: it is the novel understanding that reference is not an ingredient of meaning, i.e. that our linguistic faculty cannot be explained, even partly, by a mere association of something in the world with a word or expression.[12] Frege came to realise this while reflecting on statements of identity. Since he reached the conclusion that 'with a name must be associated a criterion of identity' (FPL: 73), he raised the famous question about the potential information contained in such statements. As Frege explains in his 'On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*', these statements could be saved from implausible triviality only by establishing a distinction between their senses and their references, and by connecting the notion of sense with procedures for recognition, i.e. by introducing a semi-epistemological aspect into the notion of sense. 'Hence two names may have the same referent but different senses: with the two names are associated two different methods of identifying some object as the referent of either name' (FPL: 95). These methods are of course the 'routes' enabling the distance we found earlier to be so essential to Frege's conception of language.

Two possibilities open up now that a distance is formed between names and referents. One is adopted by Russell, and is realist and foundationalist in nature, in accordance with Russell's epistemological bent. The idea is to impose a category of 'logically proper names', simple, unanalysable and indefinable, whose senses coincide exactly with the referents they 'stand for'. In this way, language is securely built: a basic category of anchors is established, at the point where the distance is nullified. The rest of language may be taken as reducible to this category. The principal motivation behind such an approach characterises traditional epistemology. It is to combat scepticism, since accepting such a picture of language enables us to cast out sceptical doubts: at the moment of the fundamental encounter with the name-bearer there are no epistemological gaps: 'When you are acquainted with that particular, you have a full, adequate and complete understanding of the name, and no further information is required' (Russell 1956: 202).

It is important to see that a descendant of this notion of a fundamental encounter, the moment in which representation and presentation meet, recurs in different versions in the modernist period – although there the struggle with the primacy of language is much more explicit. This encounter is naturally frustrated in the *Tractatus*, and the positivists, despite their pragmatic and linguistic approach, toy with it in their notion of protocol sentences. But it is certainly Artaud who brings it back to the theory of meaning in the most forceful and original manner. We shall see that Husserl, too, is fascinated by this idea.

However, Frege is free of such a quest for an originary encounter between word and world. He is not motivated by epistemological considerations, either traditional

or modern. He is not interested in replying to scepticism – at least not in its usual version. Rather, he wishes to understand the nature of 'the ultimate ground upon which rests the justification for holding [a proposition] to be true' (FA: 3); and since he focuses on arithmetical propositions in this context, then instead of primitive encounters we have 'primitive truths' (FA: 4), such as general logical laws and definitions. In other words, most primitive are *linguistic* creatures: propositions. For this reason, Frege is not interested in creating a special category of terms, for which there would be no distance between sign and truth, word and world. The result – which Frege himself did not fully recognise – is that the realm of reference loses its independent and rigid status and becomes immanently dependent upon linguistic use. For if the linguistic notion of the sense of a word aims at an 'external' realm, yet no 'stable epistemological basis' is secured first, what we get is a notion of representation devoid of any independent, primary explanatory power. On such a picture of the name-object relation, names do not yield any definite conditions, sufficient in themselves for determining reference. Rather, they are understood within a fuller practice, intra- and extra-linguistic. For example, their applicability depends on our (linguistic, cognitive) capacity to recognise them as appearing to us as 'the same again'. The appeal is to this practice as conferring sense on the name; there is no point in adopting a hypothesis about the reference as a fully predetermined, complete, saturated object. It is rather a sort of 'regulative idea', a realm that gains its fulfilment, its semi-saturation, only through our appealing to it 'again' and 'again'. The 'again-ness' is reaffirmed simply by our appeal. Now the argument just described is even more pregnant than what we *prima facie* notice. For now it becomes clear that a sharp line cannot in principle be drawn between knowledge of the sense of a proper name and the rest of the information we have about its bearer. This has been shown by Wittgenstein in his treatment of the name 'Moses': names are in no way more 'secure', 'fixed' and 'definite' than any other part of language.

> Has the name 'Moses' got a fixed and unequivocal use for me in all possible cases? – Is it not the case that I have, so to speak, a whole series of props in readiness, and am ready to lean on one if another should be taken from under me and vice versa?
>
> (PI: § 79)[13]

Dummett reinforces this last conclusion. Following Wittgenstein, he objects to singling out proper names 'as functioning in any markedly different way from words of other kinds' (FPL: 102). Instead, he generalises what was now found as characteristic to proper names over other categories of expression. He therefore notes 'the variations in sense attached by different individuals or at different times to the same expression, and . . . the haziness of the senses so attached' (FPL: 103). The 'great deal of play', the 'wide range of equally acceptable ways of explaining' any expression (*ibid.*), lead him to abjure the realist model of language altogether and to accept, instead, an understanding of language as primarily a human *practice*. Thus the hierarchical binary opposition built on the superiority of proper names is subverted, while use is still made of the sense/reference distinction. The Fregean

picture of sense and reference was shown by Dummett to yield an immanent lack of correspondence between signifier and signified. Although the notion of reference is indeed indispensable, it is a mistake to think of it as primary to our ways of relating to reality. Our linguistic and extra-linguistic encounter is never with an unmediated reference.

But for this reason, the very same conclusion leads Dummett to rebuff not only the primacy of static representation over human activity in our theory of meaning, but also the view that gets rid of any notion of reference altogether, or the one (famously, the Wittgensteinian one, shared also by Austin) which regards representation as just one among countless activities, equivalent in their role in any account of language. Although the primacy is gone, the realm of reference still has a central role to play in our understanding of language. Wittgenstein's objection to the notion of reference has several reasons; chief among them is his opposition to theories of meaning. Yet another – and closely connected – reason is his claim that 'nothing is hidden' (PI: § 435). 'Don't think, but look!' (PI: § 66), he advises the philosopher; for everything is open to view, there is no need for theories, hypotheses, an appeal to obscure depths. There is no need, in other words, for metaphysics. Dummett, on the other hand, claims that something is always hidden, and that the notion of reference helps us remember this. He therefore rejects the shallowness sought by Wittgenstein, believing that it distorts both (closely connected) dimensions: that of language and that of reality. And of course, it ignores the fact – with which we opened our present discussion – that metaphysics is unavoidably embedded in language. The only question is whether we are conscious of it, and whether we wish to shape it ourselves, where possible. But a more thorough discussion of this theme will have to wait until we examine Dummett's position in Part III.[14]

6   The apparent primacy of language

How does Derrida's Husserl fare with all this? It is an essential part of phenomenology that, despite the reduction of the 'real', there remains a distance between intention and intended. The immanence of the intended sphere must always accommodate some kind of transcendence. Hence it is crucial for Husserl to retain a distinction parallel to that of Frege's one between the realms of sense and of reference.[1] Husserl explains this precisely by attending to the above-mentioned inherent playfulness of undetermined language. Here, for example, is a famous paragraph that reflects this spirit:

> I see a thing, e.g. this box, but I do not see my sensations. I always see *one and the same box*, however *it* may be turned and tilted. I always have the *same* . . . perceived object. But each turn yields a *new* 'content of consciousness'. Very different contents are therefore experienced, though the same object is perceived. . . . In the flux of experienced content we imagine ourselves to be in touch with one and the same object; and this itself belongs to the sphere of what we experience. For we experience a 'consciousness of identity', i.e. a claim to apprehend identity. On what does this consciousness depend? [We must] reply that the different sensational contents are given, but that we apperceive or 'take' them 'in the same sense', and that *to take them in this sense is an experienced character through which the 'being of the object for me' is first constituted.*
>
> (LI V: § 14)

Husserl's words manifest his awareness of the demise of the traditional picture of language as a naïve representation of an independent reality. His 'again-ness' which constitutes objects is clearly not realist but subject-centred: it depicts the way in which subjects come into contact with objects. When we speak about objects, what matters is the subjects' meaning-intention, rather than any independent property of 'objects in themselves'. These latter are famously 'put in brackets' in Husserl's work. We *experience a claim to apprehend identity*, and that is sufficient in order that the object would subsist as such.

Derrida's discussion starts here. Using a strategy parallel to that of Dummett's, he focuses on names as exemplifying the traditional conception of meaning. Moreover, the names he focuses upon are those of geometrical objects, i.e. of ideal

objects. Derrida analyses Husserl's conception of geometrical objects, and then shows that Husserl actually generalises this conception over the whole linguistic range. The initial result points at an indispensable realism couched in intentional acts towards objects. It is an essential necessity of intentionality, Derrida says, that

> The *primordial* sense of every intentional act is *only* its *final* sense, i.e., the constitution of an object (in the broadest sense of these terms). . . . If the sense of geometrical sense is Objectivity or the intention of Objectivity . . . then the sense of sense in general is here determined as *object*: as some thing that is accessible and available in general and first for a regard or gaze.
>
> (OG: 64)

Would Frege object to the claim that the sense of sense in general is determined as object? One way of reading Dummett's criticism of Frege's realist dogma is by showing him to argue precisely that he would not. The argument, as in Derrida, goes through the question of givenness: is sense given to us in the same way that objects are? Dummett argues that for Frege, the answer is prima facie simple: 'we ought to say that grasping a sense is not an instance of being *given* an object' (FOP: 277), since unlike sense, an object is always given in a particular way – that way being the sense of the expression referring to the object. In other words, the gap, the distance defining the relationship between sense and reference, language and world, disappears when we enter the realm of sense – language – itself. It is not, of course, that we can directly gaze at sense in the platonic third realm. On the contrary, there is a constant deference, since we cannot attend simultaneously to all the details of a very complex sense; yet the accessibility is remarkably different in the case of sense (i.e. of the third realm) than in that of object (i.e. of the material world).

However, this kind of reasoning only points at the resemblance in Frege's thought between senses and objects. Because in both cases the answer to the question of givenness yields intentionality, an act of consciousness: adverting to a sense is like referring to an object. Dummett is never tired of emphasising the objectivity of thought (vs. the subjectivity of ideas) as axiomatic for Frege.[2] Dummett himself does not question this axiom; rather, he focuses on the way it brought Frege to adopt a realist philosophical stand in general and an untenable position regarding the subjective in particular. We shall discuss this topic in the next chapter; my intrusion here is just a preliminary note. At present it is worthwhile to think of Frege, too, as implicitly guided by a picture of sense as object.

Back to Derrida now, it is clear that in analyses like the above he aims at the core of phenomenology: 'the object in general is the final category of everything that can appear', the *Ur-Region* (OG: 64). The sting is, though, that – exactly as in Dummett's analysis discussed in the previous section – this only comes to show the impossibility of the very notion of *Ur-Region*, or of pure consciousness. Why is that so? Because establishing the object as the final phenomenological category discloses a strong assumption about the existence of simples, simples that are *prior* to every synthesis. This is what stands at the root of the phenomenological endeavour, this is the genesis sought by any phenomenological investigation. In his dissertation,

Derrida reaches this conclusion by quoting from Husserl's *Experience and Judgement*: 'The world, as it is always already pregiven entire in passive *doxa*, furnishing the ground of belief for all particular acts of judgement, is at bottom given in simple experience as a world of substances apprehensible simply by sense' (quoted in PGHP: 113). But such a conception frustrates the openness fundamental to language, with its 'infinite possibility of predication' (*ibid.*) – that openness that was admitted by Husserl, in the paragraph quoted earlier from the *Logical Investigations*. This idea of 'simple experience' which is pregiven to passive gaze leads to an interpretative dilemma, whose horns should both be devastating for Husserl, Derrida argues. One possibility is to read Husserl as suggesting a somewhat Kantian transcendental formalism – with an abstract concept preceding *a priori* passive belief. The alternative way suggests that the 'simple' experience is actually no more than an idealisation from *a posteriori* contingent and complex experience – 'a false infinite, produced through a conceptual negation of the sensible finite which precedes it in being and in time' (PGHP: 113). Throughout *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy* we encounter varieties of this dilemma – all pointing at the fact that the very idea of genesis – simple and pre-linguistic – frustrates the phenomenological attempt and forces Husserl to oscillate, again and again, between the formal and the empirical poles, both yielding, eventually, psychologism.

What does Derrida's analysis lead up to? The answer is stated very clearly in the Preface to the 1990 edition of PGHP, that is, by a much more mature Derrida:

> It is always a question of an originary complication of the origin, of an initial contamination of the simple, of an inaugural divergence that no analysis could *present, make present* in its phenomenon or reduce to the pointlike nature of the element, instantaneous and identical to itself. In fact the question that governs the whole trajectory is already: 'How can the originarity of a foundation be an *a priori* synthesis? How can everything start with a complication?
>
> (PGHP: xv, original emphasis)

Derrida is here gesturing at his own version of the context principle. '*Das Zeigen muss gezeigt werden*', as Brecht says, but no form of *presentation* could make the simple *present*. The gaze is never directed at a simple phenomenon, a saturated object. In other words, an object is never given as a simple presence, never on its own. It is always 'contaminated' by language, within linguistic contexts. '[S]omehow everything "begins" by "re-presentation"' (SP: 45n.). In one of the most penetrating paragraphs in *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida explains what, in his opinion, is the true outcome of the linguistic turn – what should the basic tools with which we think of language be, when traditional metaphysics is ousted.

> With the difference between real presence and presence in representation as *Vorstellung*, a whole system of differences involved in language is implied in the same deconstruction: the differences between the represented and the representative in general, the signified and signifier, simple presence and its reproduction, presentation as *Vorstellung* and re-presentation as *Vergegenwärtigung*,

for what is represented in the representation is a presentation (*Präsentation*) as *Vorstellung*. We thus come – against Husserl's express intention – to make the *Vorstellung* itself, and as such, depend on the possibility of re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*). The presence-of-the-present is derived from repetition and not the reverse.

(SP: 52)

This deconstruction of the presentation-representation distinction does not apply only to Husserl, of course. It is no less relevant for the modernist thinkers we have discussed in the previous part. The *Tractatus*, being an epitome of Western meta-physics, is obviously founded upon this classical distinction: the immediacy of presence, of what *shows* itself (and hence – this is its striking insight – cannot be represented in words) vs. the reproduction in words, the *saying*, which is always a projection, never an immediate relation. Even Artaud's picture of language-world relation, which at its limit merges presentation and representation, is, as we have seen, guided by the dichotomy – only to collapse it in the artistic horizon.[3]

In the original preface, the one written for the 1953/4 Dissertation, Derrida opens his analysis of Husserl's concept of genesis by paying attention to the contra-dictions immanent to it. On the one hand, we appeal to a prelinguistic instance. Yet on the other, for every genetic product, he claims,

It only is, it only has its meaning, when it is inscribed in a context which on the one hand is its own, that is to say, to which it belongs and in which it participates, with which it is in continuity, which in a certain sense it implies and at the limit entails, comprehends, knows, but which, on the other hand, goes beyond, which envelopes it from all sides.

(PGHP: xxi).

Derrida's later writings develop this train of thought, the multifaceted nature of privileging context over prelinguistic instances. But already in this quote we see not only the primacy given by Derrida to linguistic context over pure consciousness of a presence, but also the way this primacy reaffirms the required distance, on which we focused our attention in the last section. As we have seen earlier, speaking of a primacy of linguistic context *means* postulating an ever-evasive realm of reference, to which we return with every new utterance. Derrida exposes the fact that although Husserl begins his phenomenological research with an unqualified acknowledge-ment of this realm, he (unintentionally and unknowingly) betrays it in the course of his search for genesis.

This last point is made clear by another link formed between Derrida's earlier philosophical works and the more mature ones. This linkage is suggested by John P. Leavey Jr, in his preface to the English translation of Derrida's introduction to Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*. Leavey quotes a passage from *Positions*, in which Derrida associates 'old names' with his idiosyncratic notion of writing. Restating his concep-tion of names, he claims that 'a name does not name the punctual simplicity of a concept but the system of predicates defining the concept.' (Pos: 96). Naming

involves the setting-aside of a limited predicate within a given conceptual structure – a conscious, pragmatically motivated bound, and on the other hand a return to this structure, grafting and extending the application of this predicate. 'Setting-aside, grafting, extension: you know that this is what I called . . . *writing*' (*ibid.*). Thus, exactly as in Dummett's case, Derrida sees in the *name* a paradigm for the whole of language, but what he reads into this notion is far from being traditional, realist, or primordial.[4]

The idea that there is no prelinguistic simplicity recurs throughout Derrida's various critical essays dealing with Husserl's notion of genesis. It would of course be misleading to portray Husserl's phenomenology as playing down the importance of language. Quite the contrary. He regards language as indispensable already at the most basic phenomenological level. But what kind of language does he have in mind? In *Speech and Phenomena* Derrida shows how much Husserl's notion of language still bears strong traditional, logocentric traits. We shall come back to this point shortly, but at the moment it is important to see its relevance to the question of primacy. 'Logocentrism' is a catchword. Its role in the present context is to denote in a concise way a cluster of views that have not fully incorporated the linguistic turn, i.e. the primacy of language in philosophical thinking. For instance, one such view has to do with questions about translation: natural languages are conceived as secondary whenever we adopt dogmatic assertions about the possibility-in-principle of translation, full translation that leaves nothing meaningful outside its scope. For such a possibility is gained through an *a priori* sphere of an ideal language, preceding any factual, historical language. This ideal language is therefore pre-linguistic.[5] Now Derrida's claim is that Husserl's phenomenology both makes the leap and embraces the linguistic turn, and at the same time also betrays it and remains loyal to pre-linguistic evidence. 'Husserl might seem to reverse the traditional procedure and, in the activity of signification, attend to what – although it has no truth in itself – conditions the movement and concept of truth' (SP: 25).[6] Yet the same movement contains in Husserl another factor within it, one that confirms the classical metaphysics of presence. Phenomenology is governed by two major motifs: the purity of formalism and the radicality of intuitionism (Cf. SP: 16). Derrida's main argument in his *Speech and Phenomena* is that far from being contradictory, these two motifs actually complement each other, both disclosing a thorough logocentrism; both, then, comprising that implicit factor within phenomenology which goes against its revolutionary potential. The privileging of the notion of expression over that of indication – to be discussed shortly – is but a facet of Husserl's adherence to the idea of 'pure grammar', an idea dogmatically accepted by Husserl.[7] What is more, Husserl did not regard 'pure grammar' as a stipulated open-ended *telos*, but as an already-existing one, as ideal and pure form. Husserl's 'pure grammar' serves as a concealed foundation for natural language. As Derrida says, 'preculturally *pure Nature* is always buried. So, as the ultimate possibility for communication, it is a kind of inaccessible infra-ideal' (OG: 81f.). Now this picture of *Ur-Sprache* is but another way of presenting the Husserlian search for genesis and simple experience. No wonder that it gets its best formulation in Husserl's focus on 'solitary mental life', when the empirical worldly existence is

bracketed, when language is reduced to a monologue – as we shall see in the last chapter of this part. The subject's pure gaze gives him the best certitude, the certitude of inner experience. And this moment 'has no need to be signified. It is living consciousness' (SP: 43). Such a pre-linguistic moment in language does not exist in Frege's philosophy. Indeed, Husserl's 'pure grammar' is reminiscent of the metaphysics of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, rather than of Frege's notation, whose artificiality and rigidity are taken from the start as intentionally opposed to the features of ordinary language. The *Tractatus*' portrayal of traditional philosophy's dogmatic appeal to an existing, concealed infra-ideal, composed of simples and given to a gaze is easily applicable to Husserl's phenomenology. But of course, it implicitly hints at the fact that Frege's notation, too, was *au fond* bound by traditional metaphysics. There are, of course, important differences between the philosophical picture drawn by the *Tractatus* and that of Frege and Husserl. The most crucial difference concerns the language of philosophy – the language enabling philosophers to discuss their philosophical pictures. Wittgenstein's draughtsman, as we have seen, draws a picture that entails philosophical muteness: it can only be drawn, not said. This precisely is his modernist conclusion from the tensions that surfaced with Frege and Husserl's linguistic turn, having Nietzsche's bleak vision in the background. Husserl, at the end of his life, developed his own pessimism regarding philosophy. But his oeuvre, throughout his writings, reflects a dogmatic belief in the possibility of philosophical language. Before concluding this part with an investigation of the notion of language underlying this dogma, it is essential to examine a further implication of Frege and Husserl's mixture of traditional and revolutionary thoughts about the way in which logic uses ideas.

7 Leaving psychologism out
'Too rigid a barrier'

Derrida notes, rightly, that Husserl's approach has significant consequences upon the notion of subjectivity. Given his conception of language, what is subjective, the certitude of inner experience, becomes 'inaccessible to a direct, univocal, and rigorous language. Subjectivity is fundamentally ineffable' (OG: 82). Since it is open only to the subject's own inner-gaze, living consciousness is not merely in no need to be signified; it actually cannot be signified at all. For what we get is a notion of 'private language', precisely like the one Wittgenstein set out to resolve years later. Communication cannot convey 'my own' experience, and an Other's experience is only presented to me by an irreducible mediation.[1]

Husserl's phenomenology aspires to mitigate the sharp distinction between the realms of subject and object. As such, it aims at a thorough account of subjectivity and its role in shaping the world, rather than the traditional passivity that has been usually bestowed on it. Thus, for Husserl, Derrida's conclusion is devastating, since its upshot is that Husserl's phenomenology, as guided by a search for genesis, leads him back to the place he wanted to abandon, to psychologism.

Is Frege's fate different? On the face of it, Frege cannot be blamed for the same fault as Husserl, since he, by way of protecting his logical investigation from psychologism, intentionally cast out the subject from the scope of his enquiry. Nevertheless, both Derrida and Dummett think that Frege, too, is eventually led back to the psychologistic trap. Derrida does not devote much attention to Frege's fallacies, yet when he discusses Husserl's early psychologism, he explicitly treats it as a shield against the even trickier psychologism that he dubbed 'transcendental psychologism' – the formalist-logicist version of the Kantian and Fregean brand.[2] Derrida suggests that what Frege's absolute separation between the empirical subject and the objective laws of logic comes to is, on the one hand, a detached Platonism, and on the other, a necessary appeal to psychological subjectivism in order to explain the empirical subject's grasp and use of these objective and detached laws. A reconciliation of the subject's lived experience and the objectivity of logical meaning could only come about if they are not sharply separated in the first place.[3] Dummett's discussion of Frege naturally goes into much more detail; but although formulated differently, his main reasons for arguing that Frege ends up with the psychologism he so much wished to repudiate bear strong similarities to the ones just hinted at by Derrida. And like Derrida's, his conclusion – although

acknowledging the differences between Frege and Husserl – is eventually applied to both philosophers. For both, according to Dummett, failed in

> demarcating logical notions too strictly from psychological ones. Together, they quite rightly attacked the psychologism of their day . . . but, by setting up too rigid a barrier between the logical and the psychological, they deprived themselves of the means to explain what it is to grasp a thought.
>
> (FOP: 287)

In his early *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, Dummett compares Frege's attack on the 'imagist' theory of meaning – the one based on the representation-relation – with Wittgenstein's famous attack on it. Despite the similarities, and despite the fact that it was Frege's linguistic revolution that facilitated Wittgenstein's move, he rightly finds the latter's treatment of the traditional attitude much more coherent than Frege's. The reason is the basic dichotomy that still haunts Frege, and that leads him, implicitly or explicitly, throughout his writings, creating a set of unbridgeable opposites. Whereas the 'public' domain is governed by rules, is communicable and objective, and hence its meanings cannot be given by associations with mental images, the 'private' domain is precisely the opposite. Frege's claim is that for this reason, the incommunicable, private domain cannot be relevant to our understanding of public meanings in any way, but he leaves it open whether the images that two persons associate with a common term are identical or not. Wittgenstein – the later Wittgenstein – argued that this precisely is why these alternatives are not real: they do not mean anything. It is clear that what Wittgenstein gained by this 'private language argument' goes much farther than the mere abolition of the imagist theory; for with it came a final farewell to his earlier draughtsman, the one led by the traditional set of rigid dichotomies, which were dogmatically taken as essential to philosophy, defining its contours. On the other hand Frege, by leaving the dichotomy intact, by allowing significant private spheres, actually admitted a Trojan horse into his theory of 'public' meaning. Not only is private association possible, but further, it could now be argued that this private sphere actually serves as the foundation of the public one – that the private associations enable the common public use. And to this

> Frege could only reply that it was the public meaning he was interested in, not the private psychological mechanism by which each speaker contrived to attach this public meaning to the words of the language: he would have no ground to deny that such a private mental mechanism operated or was required.
>
> (FPL: 640)

Years later, in the context of his comparative study of Husserl and Frege on perception, Dummett came back to his criticism of the rigid barrier between the logical and the psychological, the 'objective' and 'subjective'. In 'Thought and Perception: The Views of Two Philosophical Innovators',[4] he claims that both philosophers offered accounts of the notion of perception, which were close to the truth of the

matter, but neither account is wholly satisfactory. Dummett notes that not only mature, speaking human beings entertain perceptual processes; so do also animals and infants, i.e. creatures devoid (yet) of language. Frege and Husserl's accounts of perception are conceptually too rich for accounting for these creatures' perceptual processes. Dummett stresses in this context one difference between human and animal thought-processes that is of particular interest: the former, unlike the latter, have a capacity to be detached from present activity and circumstances.

For a traditionally minded reader, this may look as an urge to found any account of human thought-processes on the primary notion of *presence*. What is conceptually too rich for animals should – it might be reasonably argued – be based on what is conceptually poorer, and common to lesser creatures or to infants not yet in possession of language. And from here the step to foundationalism looks minimal. But Dummett's point is far from being foundationalist – at least in this traditional sense; the account he seeks is not one that places the notion of presence as the basis of his theory of meaning. Rather, it is the modernist emphasis on *ergos* – as prior to logos – that is at work here. It is current *activity* that animals and infants' 'thoughts' are integrated with. The idea – indeed, a famous modernist streak, actually inherited from Goethe – is familiar from the writings of the later Wittgenstein. When in *On Certainty* Wittgenstein quotes Goethe's 'In the beginning was the deed' (OC: § 402), he does it precisely in order to exclude traditional foundationalism, to conceive 'certainty' not along Cartesian lines but rather 'as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, something animal' (OC: § 359):

> I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination. As a creature in a primitive state. Any logic good enough for a primitive means of communication needs no apology from us. Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination.
>
> (OC: § 475)

And so it is with Dummett's criticism of Frege and Husserl. The animal, primitive action is lacking in their logic. It is located behind that rigid barrier, thus obfuscating the nature of thought-processes both in men and in animals. Consider those of a car-driver, or a canoeist, for instance:

> It is not just that these thoughts are not in fact framed in words: it is that they do not have the structure of verbally expressed thoughts. But they deserve the name of 'proto-thought' because, while it would be ponderous to speak of truth and falsity in application of them, they are intrinsically connected with the possibility of their being mistaken: judgement, in a non-technical sense, is just what the driver and the canoeist need to exercise.
>
> (OAP: 122)

Dummett's argument leads both ways, then: our understanding of the 'logical' must take into account our animal aspect as much as our understanding of unverbalised thought should not succumb to a naïve imagist theory. The upshot of Dummett's

claim is that Frege and Husserl's understanding of intentional activity is dominated by *logos*. Emphasising the way in which logic uses ideas means, for them, turning a blind eye towards action, body, animal – to everything that cannot be conceived 'objectively', in their idiosyncratic sense.

We have seen earlier that Derrida and Dummett blamed Husserl and Frege for implicitly adopting an analogy between sense and object. This accusation is closely connected to the fallacy, common to both pre-modernist philosophers, of building too rigid a barrier between rational and animal, or between logical and psychological. Dummett explains the connection by examining Frege's understanding of the notion of grasping a sense. Or, to be more exact, his avoidance of it. For Frege, 'it is the sense that is the logical notion: grasping the sense of an expression or of a sentence is a psychological process irrelevant when our concern is to characterize the sense itself' (FOP: 275). Frege thus assumes that the grasping of sense is a mental act, directed at an object occupying the third realm. For Dummett, on the contrary, it is clear that grasping a sense is a kind of *ability*.[5] Such an understanding that is based on disposition to act naturally tallies with Dummett's 'low barrier' between animal and rational. Yet it also tallies, says Dummett, with some of Frege's own ideas about sense. Whereas Husserl's view was that meaning is a result of an interior act, Frege's emphasis on the primacy of language over thought meant assuming that words have their senses independently of our occurrent grasp of them. This occurrent grasp is then secondary to a dispositional notion of grasping the senses of linguistic expressions: 'what interests us is whether someone will understand the word when he hears it, and whether it will be available to him when he has occasion to use it, rather than whether he has its sense in mind at a particular moment' (FOP: 274). All this, although expressed by using non-Fregean terminology, suits Frege's position well. What, then, hindered Frege from developing the notion of grasping a sense along these lines? Dummett cites two reasons: Frege's realism and the eventual primacy he gave to thought over language.

Taking the understanding of meaning as ability entails that it is not an instance of being given an object, in the Kantian manner. Frege's strong urge to separate the logical from the psychological and to dismiss any account of understanding as irrelevant (being psychological) thus made him eventually assimilate sense and reference. Both were thought of as objects.

> Sense is distinguished from reference precisely by the fact that it can be grasped – can be apprehended directly, rather than in one or another particular way: were it not so, there would be no place for a notion of sense, as distinct from reference, at all. . . . It was [Frege's] realism that blocked him from construing a grasp of sense as an ability. A realist interpretation of sense has to link it, not with *our* procedures for deciding the truth-values of sentences, but with their determination as true or as false by the way things objectively are, independently of our knowledge. On such a view, therefore, a grasp of sense must consist, not in the ability to determine the truth-values of sentences, or to recognize them as having one or other truth-value, but in the *knowledge* of what renders them true or false. The notion of sense thus becomes an ineradicably

cognitive one: grasping a sense is not a practical skill, but a piece of knowledge. . . . The interpretation of a grasp of sense as an ability makes the grasp of sense the primary concept: any account of what sense is must be embedded in the account of a grasp of sense. On such a theory, sense is merely the cognate accusative of the verb 'to understand'; but this does not accord with Frege's mythology, which takes a sense to be an independently existing object with which the mind somehow makes contact.

<div align="right">(FOP: 278)</div>

This, then, is where our lines of argument meet: where innovative ideas about sense and reference clash with traditional realism, and the turn away from naïve representational empiricism and psychologism conflicts with stubborn dichotomies which should have been alleviated. And again, this theme is also connected with the question of primacy. For, as Dummett indeed indicates, taking the grasp of sense as an ability means that the primary notion we deal with is language, words, linguistic expressions – whose contributions to sentences is what we are *able* to estimate, to grasp. If – as Frege did indeed think – senses are not necessarily senses *of* linguistic expressions, if they can stand on their own in their 'nakedness', then the retreat back to an inner eye for explaining our understanding of them seems unavoidable. Already at the beginning of our discussion of pre-modernism it was clear that adhering to 'the way in which logic uses ideas' is *prima facie* in tension with taking the linguistic turn seriously. We saw indeed that Frege and Husserl, still captivated by leading axioms of the philosophical tradition, did not fully understand this tension and hence the instability of their positions. There are different aspects of this instability, and we have examined several of them. Let us conclude our discussion by focussing on one more aspect, a very significant one, which was hinted at throughout our discussion of pre-modernism. If a 'linguistic turn' is taken, if 'language' assumes a major role in philosophical inquiry, then it is crucial to have a clear view of Frege and Husserl's notion of language itself: what exactly is this language whose study precedes, or indeed even constitutes, any other philosophical inquiry?

8   'Determining the logos from logic'

Language as a monologue

Derrida writes: 'For Husserl, the model of language is the objective language of science. A poetic language, whose significations would not be *objects*, will never have any transcendental value for him' (OG: 82). This is true of Frege as well. Defending his 'formula language of pure thought',[1] he emphasises language's flaws whenever reason is at stake: 'Language proves to be deficient . . . when it comes to protecting thought from error' (SJCN: 84). It is not language's expressive power that drives him; it is the need to get insight into the inferential relations between truths, and their ultimate justification. 'The expression of anything that is without significance for *logical inference* has therefore been eschewed' (*Begriffsschrift*, FR: 49, original emphasis).

We have seen that Dummett's criticism of Frege's use of his sense/reference distinction was based on proving that the category most convenient for traditional representational theory – proper names – was dependent for its articulation upon an essentially anti-realist (hence anti-traditional) principle. We have also seen that Derrida's criticism of Husserl's phenomenology was analogous to Dummett's criticism of Frege in this respect. The determination to avoid psychologism and formalism, the phenomenological reduction – all these are frustrated when the realist dogma, or one of its equivalents, comes into play. But at this point it is crucial to emphasise that what has been attacked by Dummett and Derrida was not Frege and Husserl's philosophical endeavour *per se*. Not even the search for the *a priori* of language is at stake. Rather, as Derrida says, it is the fact that Husserl's grammar (and Frege's grammar is no different from it in this respect) 'is not sufficient to cover the whole field of possibility for language's *a priori*' (SP: 8), since it is 'interested in language only within the compass of rationality, *determining the logos from logic*' (SP: 8, my emphasis). This last turn of phrase is revealing. Derrida, in a statement that directly associates him with Nietzsche, notes the deep-rooted tendency in Western thought to equate logic with logos – whereas the scope of logic is actually much more inclusive:

> When we speak of the purely grammatical, we mean that system of rules which enables us to recognize whether or not a discourse is, properly speaking, a discourse. Speech, to be sure, must make *sense*; but do falsity and the absurdity of contradiction (*Widersinnigkeit*) necessarily make it unintelligible? Do they necessarily deprive discourse of its experienced and intelligible character,

thereby rendering it *sinnlos*? This grammar concerns only the *logical a priori* of language; it is *pure logical grammar*.

<div align="right">(SP: 8, original emphases)</div>

There is sensible (logical) language that is not formally (logically) sound. Derrida uses the term 'logic' to cover the *a priori* of language in general. Logic, as Hegel uses the term, is everything the philosopher is interested in. Dummett, too, follows this Hegelian notion, when he equates logic with the philosophy of language.[2] An extreme case of pushing the limits of what had been included in the scope of this term was that of Artaud, whose 'cruel' notion of logic was a remarkably daring attempt to overturn the tradition. But that, of course, was a modernist reaction to the pre-modernist unstable revolution regarding classical conceptions of logic and language. For Husserl and Frege, on the other hand, 'logic' still refers merely to *logos*: that which offers itself to *formal* investigation alone. This is the most fundamental streak of their thoughts that is the source of the tensions within their philosophies; what makes the founders of the linguistic turn eventually unfaithful to it. And indeed, Dummett raises against Frege a similar accusation to the one Derrida does against Husserl. As his philosophy developed, Dummett claims,

> Frege became more and more insistent that thoughts, and not the sentences that express them, formed his true subject-matter. Natural language came to appear to him more of an obstacle than a guide in logical and philosophical enquiries. . . . Thus, in November 1906 he wrote to Husserl that 'The main task of the logician consists in liberation from language', and in the article 'Erkenntnisquellen', completed in the last year of his life, he said that 'a great part of the work of the philosopher consists in . . . a struggle with language'.

<div align="right">(OAP: 5f.)</div>

Dummett explains this growing hostility towards natural language as arising, specifically, from Frege's inability to find a satisfactory solution to Russell's paradox. Frege's mistrust was the result of the 'illusory' nature of language, which enables the construction of syntactically correct but substantially misleading expressions such as 'the extension of the concept F'. But the fact that this feature of language did not lead Frege to the opposite conclusion, namely to the view that the scope of logic is much wider than he had surmised, shows how entrenched was the equation between logic and logos; and how remote was language taken to be from that which forms the philosopher's tool. Thus we find already in 1879, in the preface to Frege's *Begriffsschrift*, this revealing paragraph:

> If it is a task of philosophy to break the power of words over the human mind, by uncovering illusions that through the use of language often unavoidably arise concerning the relations of concepts, by freeing thought from the taint of ordinary linguistic means of expression, then my *Begriffsschrift*, further developed for these purposes, can become a useful tool for philosophers.

<div align="right">(*Begriffsschrift*, FR: 51)</div>

The philosophical task of breaking the power of words was dogmatically accepted even much later, as we have seen in our discussion of modernism. The idea that a contradiction can be intelligible, that it does not necessarily render discourse *sinnlos*, was not even an option to be contemplated and rejected. Despite Nietzsche's influence, acknowledgement of vivid, 'ordinary' language – let alone poetic language, or contradictory discourses – as having an operative value for philosophical reflection did not surface even in the *Tractatus* or in the work of the members of the Vienna Circle. Wittgenstein believed logic equalled logos, and precisely because of that was driven to his silence predicament wherever matters of importance were at stake. Carnap relegated paradoxical, *unsinnig* speech to the arts. Only Artaud, first and foremost an artist, was sufficiently open-minded to broaden the scope of logic, i.e. language-cum-metaphysics. Yet this idea did appear in the 1930s, not only outside 'institutional' philosophy, but also in the work of the post-*Tractatus* Wittgenstein, who was beginning to realise that the trinity of realism-representationalism-logocentrism was not the only way open to philosophy – was not, that is, a definitive mark of philosophical discourse. A few years after Frege's confession about his struggle with language, in 1931, Wittgenstein wrote exactly the same words: 'We are struggling with language. We are engaged in a struggle with language' (CV: 11e). But despite the use of the same word, Wittgenstein had a completely different struggle than that of Frege's. Here is how it was expressed a few years later, in 1933/4:

> I think I summed up my attitude to philosophy when I said: philosophy ought really to be written only as a *poetic composition*. It must, as it seems to me, be possible to gather from this how far my thinking belongs to the present, future or past. For I was thereby revealing myself as someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do.
>
> (CV: 24e, original emphasis)

What is it that Wittgenstein cannot quite do? He cannot break the power of logos over his words. His struggle with words, then, is not Frege's struggle, but exactly its opposite. Instead of trying to break words' power over pure logic, he struggles – not very successfully – with the domination of logos over words, over language's *a priori*. Whereas in the *Tractatus* he only uncovers the fact that the logocentric dogma necessarily frustrates intelligible philosophical discourse, and therefore opts for silence, in his later writings Wittgenstein struggles more openly with the nature of the *logical* in language. In this he influenced post-modernist thinkers such as Dummett; but our present detour via Wittgenstein's later phase is meant to shed some light on the dogmas shared by a previous philosophical phase: that of the post-modern but pre-modernist Frege and Husserl.

Derrida's explorations into Husserl's logocentric dogma revolve mainly around the notion of sign and the role it plays in Husserl's phenomenology. This notion, for Husserl, covers two different concepts: expression and indication. In reality, in actual communicative speech, the two cannot be separated from each other. Yet the separation is essential for Husserl, since it seems to secure nothing short of the philosophical, phenomenological enterprise itself. Although it is presented as

arising from language, and as a consequence enabling us to derive philosophy's possibility from the possibility of language, the real entailment goes the other way round, Derrida argues. Husserl's rationalist tacit assumption dictates his narrow conception of language. The assumption is manifest in the emphasis he puts on 'expression', at the expense of 'indication'. It is this emphasis that invites Derrida's deconstruction. He attempts an analysis of the general notion of sign, an analysis neglected by Husserl, who begins his own analyses with the twin notions of expression and indication, 'forgetting', as it were, their common 'family name'. Now Derrida is of course aware that a general analysis might be suspected as essentialist. After all, our use of a single word to cover several concepts that have nothing in common and are irreducible to any single concept is a lesson that every reader of the later Wittgenstein is familiar with. Isn't Husserl's avoidance, then, an anti-essentialist move? In order to show us that it is not, Derrida sets up to prove that 'sign' must precede the dichotomy; that, as with every dichotomy, the moment it is introduced, one member of the pair is taken as prior, privileged, and that, as with every traditional metaphysical system, concentrating upon and consecrating logos, it is the purely logical concept of expression, rather than the more bodily 'indication', that is privileged in Husserl's system, colouring all his philosophical endeavour.

Except from pointing at its axiomatic roots, Derrida does not challenge this privilege directly. Rather, he shows 'expression' to be infected, through and through, by 'indication'. Again, as with Dummett and Derrida's treatment of names, the overthrow of logocentrism here as well is not achieved by effacing 'expression' altogether, but by inverting the subordination relation, and then pointing at the ultimate impossibility of the separation, which turns out eventually to separate nothing. Derrida reads Husserl's *Logical Investigations, Book I* closely, gradually unravelling the real scopes of the concepts of expression and indication. Expression is that aspect of meaning that is purely logical. It is the wanting-to-say (*vouloir-dire*) of a transcendental ego, which relates to an ideal object, a rule, a form. It thus is essentially conscious, intentional, voluntary. It is what animates the dead signs of a language. Rationality and logic are its *telos*: it aims at absolutely ideal objectivity, at truth, within the scope of demonstration, or rational proof. Indication, on the other hand, belongs to the psychic, or worldly self. Although it has signification, it does not convey anything. It is an empirical phenomenon, empirically interwoven with expression, but since it relates to the totality of the events in discourse in an involuntary causal association, it falls outside the scope of truth, i.e. the province of logic, as Husserl sees it. What Husserl excludes from the realm of truth is thus everything that escapes the pure spiritual intention – in other words, whatever is visible and spatial, whatever belongs to the body: facial expressions, gestures, etc. These, being preconscious or unconscious, have no meaning, and cannot be brought into meaningful speech.

Now, since the possibility of *logos*, its purity, is only conceivable without any notice of either the physical aspect of speech or the manifestation of mental experiences, it turns out, astonishingly, that the very notion of *communication* is extrinsic to expression. The reason for this has to do with Husserl's strong wish to avoid any kind of mentalism – or with that rigid barrier he sets between logical and psychological.

He thus drives out of his notion of 'pure expression' everything that has no direct implication on logical purposes.[3] Everything that is secondary to the content itself is counted as inexpressive. However, 'everything that is secondary to the content itself' is a very broad characterisation – much more inclusive than the bodily alone:

> All speech, or rather everything in speech which does not restore the immediate presence of the signified content, is inexpressive. Pure expression will be the pure active intention (spirit, *psychē*, life, will) of an act of meaning (*bedeuten*) that animates a speech whose content (*Bedeutung*) is present. It is present not in nature, since only indication takes place in nature and across space, but in consciousness. Thus it is present to an 'inner' intuition or perception.
>
> (SP: 40)

So, apart from that ingredient in speech that *immediately* reveals the content, everything else – whatever serves as concealment, whatever is implicit – has no bearing on logic, despite its being linguistic. The notion of immediacy – presence – is crucial here; and it brings us back to Derrida's main line of argument against Husserl: against the idea of origin, of genesis, as impeding Husserl from adopting full-bloodedly a genuine *linguistic* turn. The pure, logical concept of language is given only to the 'pure gaze' of the transcendental ego, and is thus divorced from any actual, or even potential, communicative action. Indeed, 'only when communication is suspended can pure expression appear' (SP: 38). The indicative–expressive distinction we began with can now be articulated as one between the superficial 'surface' of language and its depth. Whatever is indicative is in effect redundant; it is only the depth that is relevant for truth. But looked upon closely, the result we have just reached is nothing but the separation between signs and their meanings. Signs, we now realise, *are* indications! The purity of expression, of the logical aspect of language, is thus kept only in monologue, in solitary mental life, which is sign-free.

Now if meaning is what gives life to a sign, indication – or communication – is 'the process of death at work in signs' (SP: 40). Thus meaning, presence, self and life are interconnected, as do sign, communication, other and death. What is common to all these latter notions is their exterior nature, which makes them also inferior. They are secondary to the former. This crucial hierarchy of life vs. death, as a leading metaphor in forming a conception of language as secondary to 'meaning' is embedded also in Frege's thought. Here is how Wittgenstein conceives of Frege's underlying hierarchy in 1933:

> Frege ridiculed the formalist conception of mathematics by saying that the formalists confused the unimportant thing, the sign, with the important, the meaning. Surely, one wished to say, mathematics does not treat of dashes on a bit of paper. Frege's idea could be expressed thus: the propositions of mathematics, if they were just complexes of dashes, would be dead and utterly uninteresting, whereas they obviously have a kind of life. And the same, of course, could be said of any proposition: Without a sense, or without the

thought, a proposition would be an utterly dead and trivial thing. And further it seems clear that no adding of inorganic signs can make the proposition live. And the conclusion which one draws from this is that what must be added to the dead signs in order to make a live proposition is something immaterial, with properties different from all mere signs.

But if we had to name anything which is the life of the sign, we should have to say that it was its *use*.

(BB: 4)

It seems to me that Wittgenstein is here implicitly beginning to mount an argument against the rigid life-death dichotomy, by linking it to the sign-meaning distinction and showing that it is but a version of mentalism.[4] We shall see in our discussion of Derrida's view how far-reaching this argument may be. But at this point, we are back to Dummett's criticism, since here is where he aligns with Wittgenstein and Derrida. Exactly as Derrida shows Husserl's 'expression' to be, on the one hand, detached from communication, and on the other, immersed in it, i.e. in 'indication' – so does Dummett with central notions used by Frege.

Dummett's starting point is *prima facie* simpler than that of Derrida's. It is rather clear that Frege takes the notion of idiolect to be primary in a theory of meaning, and that he sees language as nothing but an overlap of many idiolects. The unit for an adequate description of language is, for him, indeed a monologue: 'the sense which any one person attaches to a given expression is something which relates only to his propensities to associate certain truth-conditions with sentences . . . [i.e.] to what *he* knows' (TOE: 424). The route from here to mentalism is quite short – as Wittgenstein indeed shows. However, Dummett only notes this route *en passant*;[5] his refutation of the primacy of monologue aims at uncovering this idea not merely as haunted by traditional faulty mentalism but as utterly absurd. In order to show this, Dummett uses two different examples: the notion of place-names and the role of the sense-force distinction in Frege's theory of meaning.

The aim of the first example is a deconstruction of the notion of idiolect, by showing its dependence on that of shared language, i.e. on the notion that is assumed as secondary to that of idiolect. As we saw in our previous discussion of sense and reference, what is essential to language, and must be maintained at all costs, is that in our account of the meaning of expressions a possibility be built of appealing to a scope wider than one's particular use, or knowledge; that, in other words, meaning would not be 'closed'. It is difficult to account for such an openness when idiolect is taken as primary in our theory of meaning. This is true in general; but it is particularly true when we think of the way names, and especially place-names, get their meanings. If we try to bypass blatant mentalism (as indeed Frege does), we have to analyse idiolects in terms of truth-conditions. But knowledge of a list of truth-conditions is clearly beside the point in the case of place-names. For the required knowledge includes not only maps and atlases (and knowledge of their use), but also many cultural and social details. Dummett gives 'Rome' as an example: 'no one can count as adequately understanding the name "Rome" if he knows nothing of the Roman Empire or the Papacy: not only must he know these

things, but he must also know that they are generally known' (OAP: 145). But of course, the same kind of knowledge is required for every name of a mountain, river, city and neighbourhood. Hence 'the use of a place-name is not something that anybody could *know* in its entirety. . . . We have here the clearest of all instances in which the use of language exists only as interwoven with a multitude of non-linguistic practices' (OAP: 146). The openness required is gained, then, by blurring the border between linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. 'Our talk gets its meaning from the rest of our proceedings', said Wittgenstein (OC: § 229). Now this openness of language, compared to the relative closure of idiolect, does not only show that the notion of language is better suited as the basic explanatory unit of the theory of meaning. It actually deconstructs the notion of idiolect altogether. For exactly as 'expression' was found to be logically dependent on 'indication',

> there is no describing any individual's employment of his words without account being taken of his willingness to subordinate his use to that generally agreed as correct. That is, one cannot so much as explain what an idiolect is without invoking the notion of a language considered as a social phenomenon.
>
> (TOE: 425)

But a further consequence of this is that what lies at the basis of our theory of meaning is not even a single language: for this notion, too, is relatively closed and limited. The appeal to the social factor draws us towards the farthest thing from a subject's idiolect: it is 'the maximal set of languages connected by the existence of standard translations between them (that is, of a large fragment of one language into one of the others)' (OAP: 153). The notion of translation is hence central in establishing the basic unit for the theory of meaning, i.e. in delimiting but also opening the scope of 'logic' and in attributing it to the widest conceivable community.[6] Dummett sums up this point:

> If the approach to the philosophy of thought through the philosophy of language is to serve the purpose of safeguarding the objectivity of thought without a platonistic mythology, language must be conceived as a social institution, as the common possession of the members of a community.
>
> (OAP: 147)

Note the assumption. It is a version of Frege's first *Grundlagen* dictum ('always to separate sharply the psychological from the logical, the subjective from the objective'), adapted to a post-modernist view, i.e. to a view that is based on a thorough understanding of the consequences of the linguistic turn. Dummett does not question the philosophical motivation of Frege – he is interested in logic-cum-metaphysics, in a non-psychologistic and non-scientistic conception of both language and philosophy; yet he wishes to update it according to what it really means to approach philosophy via language, i.e. 'without a platonistic mythology'. The battle against idiolect is hence not merely one against mentalism, but also about other residues of the tradi-

tional conception – in particular, the Platonism that camouflaged mentalism and the logos which took over logic.

It is in this spirit that Dummett approaches the other example exposing Frege's implicit commitment to the notion of community and to the *a priori* of language as a social practice, a living practice, rather than a private, idealised monologue. Frege's theory of meaning is famously based on the distinction between content, or thought, and assertion (or, more generally, force). Assertion is introduced for it creates the logical room for expressing a thought 'without laying it down as true' ('Thought', FR: 329). It is needed, then, for two reasons, both reflecting the requirement that a gap be maintained in our account of language between signifier and signified. One aspect of this requirement is that a close connection be maintained between the notions of meaning and of truth, i.e. between language and world; the other aspect is that this connection would not be too close, i.e. that it would be possible to understand a sentence whose content is false. The notion of assertion creates the needed differentiation, then. The matter is further clarified in an unpublished fragment written by Frege in 1915, a few years before the publication of 'Thought'. In 'My Basic Logical Insights' Frege appeals to the (Kantian) idea that the word 'true' does not make any essential contribution to the thought. It is redundant to prefix our assertions with 'it is true that . . . ', he says. This (by then) almost trivial fact is very significant for Frege's conception of logic, or theory of meaning; it is especially so regarding the role of assertion. I quote at length:

> This enables us to recognize that the assertion is not to be found in the word 'true', but in the assertoric force with which the sentence is uttered. This may lead us to think that the word 'true' has no sense at all. But in that case a sentence in which 'true' occurred as a predicate would have no sense either. All one can say is: the word 'true' has a sense that contributes nothing to the sense of the whole sentence in which it occurs as a predicate.
>
> But it is precisely for this reason that this word seems fitted to indicate the essence of logic. Because of the particular sense that it carried any other adjective would be less suitable for this purpose. So the word 'true' seems to make the impossible possible: it allows what corresponds to the assertoric force to assume the form of a contribution to the thought. And although this attempt miscarries, or rather through the very fact that it miscarries, it indicates what is characteristic of logic. And this, from what we have said, seems something essentially different from what is characteristic of aesthetics and ethics. For there is no doubt that the word 'beautiful' actually does indicate the essence of aesthetics, as does 'good' that of ethics, whereas 'true' only makes an abortive attempt to indicate the essence of logic, since what logic is really concerned with is not contained in the word 'true' at all but in the assertoric force with which a sentence is uttered.
>
> ('My Basic Logical Insights', FR: 323)

The failure (the miscarriage, the abortive attempt) that is essential to logic, according to Frege, is the unsuccessful attempt to explain the particular thought

using the word 'true'.[7] Acknowledging the close connection between the abstract notions of meaning and truth, we wish to use this word; but for any particular thought, or sentence, this abstract level does not help us in any way. In other words, we need the 'baby' since we must go through the abstract level, in which meaning and truth are intimately connected. But having done so, we still feel we made no progress in understanding the particular thought whose meaning we wish to give an account of. There is a delicate point here, which should be clarified.

The famous distinction between semantics and pragmatics rests on a picture that is, in a misleading way, reminiscent of the one drawn here. According to it, meaning is determined in a two-tier procedure. While semantics gives an account of the sentence's 'literal' meaning, i.e. out of any particular context, pragmatics complements this account by adding what is relevant to the meaning of the sentence in the particular circumstances in which it is uttered. Traditionally, semantics is given in terms of truth-conditions, and pragmatics in terms of use. Now Frege's discussion of the 'failure' of using the notion of truth in order to explain the particular thought may sound as a statement in this spirit – as claiming that the semantic level is not enough in order to render a full account of the meaning of 'thoughts', or sentences; that unless we have dealt with the pragmatic level, with the specific context, we are in the dark regarding the thought's content. What Dummett stresses – without using this comparison – is that the matter is more complicated, since the notion of assertion penetrates, in Frege's account of meaning, the semantic level as well.

In his famous 'On Referring', Peter Strawson distinguishes between a sentence and a use of a sentence. The sentence is the string of words recurring in different contexts; the use of a sentence is sensitive to the particular context in which it is uttered. Now meaning, says Strawson,

> is a function of the sentence or expression; mentioning and referring and truth or falsity, are functions of the use of the sentence or expression. . . . The meaning of a sentence cannot be identified with the assertion it is used, on a particular occasion, to make.
>
> (Strawson 1950: 68f.)

All this creates the impression that Strawson appeals here to the semantics–pragmatics distinction, and excludes the relevance of the notion of assertion in the semantical level. However, his explanation marks a substantial deviation from this traditional doctrine: 'For to talk about the meaning of an expression or sentence is not to talk about its use on a particular occasion, but about the rules, habits, conventions governing its correct use, on all occasions, to refer or to assert' (Strawson 1950: 69). Strawson's words manifest his post-Fregean understanding of the linguistic turn. What was only implicit in Frege, what utterly contradicted other threads in Frege's thought, has now become 'official': it is not to the empty notion of truth that we appeal in any level of our account of meaning, but rather to language as it is used in social circumstances, by a community of speakers. Now back to Dummett: he could be read as advancing the claim that the position just

extracted from Strawson is part and parcel of Frege's own conception of meaning, as is shown in paragraphs like the one quoted above, although it is in tension with other positions held by Frege. If the word 'true' 'only makes an abortive attempt to indicate the essence of logic, since what logic is really concerned with is not contained in the word "true" at all but in the assertoric force with which a sentence is uttered', then exactly as the word 'beautiful' indicates the essence of aesthetics, the word 'assertion' is the one indicating that of logic, of the *a priori* of language. The very notion of truth, in the most abstract and general level, is hence bound up with that of assertion, i.e. with language's essence as a social institution. A statement is true if, and only if, an assertion of it is justified.[8]

Note that this does not make the word 'true' a redundant one (as it would be in the context of aesthetics and ethics, where it has *prima facie* no relevance for the terms 'beautiful' and 'good' – on Frege's view of the matter). On the contrary. As Frege says in the above quoted paragraph, it is precisely its unique kind of emptiness which makes 'true' appropriate for the generality of logic. It gives a hint of the aim, the point, of our linguistic game, or 'play': of assertion. It cannot do more, for otherwise it would have been too specific, too much content-laden. Yet it cannot do less; it cannot forfeit its privileged status. Here, Dummett seems to ally with Frege, in contrast to the later Wittgenstein and to John Austin. Wittgenstein, famously, did away with the notion of assertion altogether, replacing Frege's 'forces' with his indefinite list of language games, such as reporting an event, giving orders, play-acting, making a joke, etc. – all on a par (PI: § 23). Austin, in his *How to Do Things with Words*, expresses a similar tendency, for example when he states: 'Stating, describing, &c., are *just two* names among a very great many others for illocutionary acts; they have no unique position' (Austin 1975: 148f.). For Wittgenstein and Austin, relinquishing traditional metaphysics and adopting a thorough linguistic turn – replacing the representational model of language with that of language as an activity – means robbing assertion of its privileged status. For Dummett, though, the strong linkage between meaning and truth is still needed in order to safeguard the metaphysical dimension of language, i.e. logic. Yet he does struggle to have a logic that is not fully dominated by logos, a logic that resides within vivid language, rather than in an ideal monologue.[9]

Another facet of Frege's disregard of the social essence of language has to do with his distinction between sense and tone – a distinction that is very similar to Husserl's one between expression and indication, and certainly motivated by the same basic interest in the logos of language. As Dummett puts it, according to Frege, 'to the sense of a sentence belongs only that which is relevant to determining its truth or falsity; any feature of its meaning which cannot affect its truth or falsity belongs to its tone' (FPL: 2). Again, Dummett does not challenge the distinction *per se*. He remarks, briefly, that a sentence can be incorrect in several ways, only one of which is its being untrue. He also questions the unity of this Fregean category of 'tone'. But his principal worry regarding this category is not with the sense/tone distinction itself, or with the way tone is excluded from contributing to truth. Frege's problem with the notion of tone lies elsewhere:

He accounts for tone as a matter of the association with a word or expression of certain 'ideas' (Vorstellungen), by which he means mental images. This is not a particularly plausible explanation of the phenomenon: we indeed speak of words which carry the same sense as having different associations, but we should be hard put to it to describe the distinct mental images called up by hearing the words 'dead' and 'deceased', or 'sweat' and 'perspiration', still less by 'and' and 'but'. Frege makes a poor explanation worse by suggesting that mental images are incommunicable in principle: no two people can ever know that they have the same mental image. It would follow that tone was a feature of meaning which was, in principle, subjective.

(FPL: 85)

Dummett points here, again, at the fact that traditional residues implicitly control Frege's thought. We saw earlier that Frege shaped the distinction between sense and reference in a way that disclosed his loyalty to his deeply entrenched realism, preferring to stick to it whenever it seemed to clash with other principles, such as the context principle. We also realised that even the traditional representationalism was not fully discarded. It was indeed abandoned within the compass of rationality, in the realm of logos. There, Frege argues against it very powerfully. His critical approach to the representational model of language is actually based on the fact that concepts are communicable in language – i.e. on the most basic insight of the linguistic turn. But that rigid distinction between the logical and the psychological, which we examined in the previous chapter, yields also this artificial distinction between sense and tone. 'Tone' is far from being relevant to meaning, which has an essential objectivity in it. And by 'objective' Frege means, in this context,

what is independent of our sensation, intuition and imagination, and of all construction of mental pictures out of memories of earlier sensations, but not what is independent of reason, – for what are things independent of reason? To answer that would be as much as to judge without judging, or to wash the fur without wetting it.

(FA: § 26)

So on the one hand we get a clear-headed 'anti-realism', an assured denial of any role to representation; but this assurance evaporates whenever we concentrate our attention on 'what is purely intuitable', what is 'not communicable' (*ibid.*) – i.e. whenever we leave the realm of logos. The notion of tone belongs here, according to Frege.

Dummett's criticism of Frege on this issue then combines all the ingredients we have discussed in this part. It does not relate only to the idea that tone is to be accounted for via a representational model of meaning. It goes much further than that. When he claims that Frege 'was mistaken in supposing mental images to be incommunicable in principle' (FPL: 85), he challenges his very first axiom in *Grundlagen* – or at least the dogmatic and rigid application of it by Frege.[10] The rigid distinction between logical and psychological, as Frege treats it, discloses the fact that he was ambivalent regarding the question of primacy of language, and that

his conception of language – of natural language, not merely the ideal concept script invented for sharpening and clarifying it – is dictated by a narrow, 'logical' perspective. The same result is reached by Derrida regarding Husserl, who was supposed to be much more aware of lived experience than Frege. And indeed, if Frege explicitly looks down on natural language and finds formal language to be the only reliable linguistic tool for his philosophy, Husserl's attention to natural language should have yielded a much more relaxed philosophical language. Even this, however, is put in doubt by Derrida.

Phenomenology is a methodology that involves radical criticism. Radical, literally speaking: it is aiming at the root.[11] Yet Derrida exposes a deeply hidden blind spot in Husserl's phenomenological project: the problem of its own language. This is the undercurrent running throughout our discussion of Derrida's reading of Husserl. Paying attention to Husserl's terminology, Derrida observes that the genealogy Husserl wants to portray is not empirical – it is not a factual history. Hence it cannot seriously make use of any temporal concepts like 'before' and 'after'. On the other hand, it struggles to avoid the traditional static, normative language of necessary conditions of history. It brackets its terms, then, neutralising them as it does to the 'thing in itself'. But is this a genuine cure?

> The language of genesis could well seem fictive at this point. . . . [Is] not the interconnecting of transcendental necessities, even if *narrated* according to how it develops, at bottom the static, structural, and normative schema for the conditions of a history rather than history itself?
>
> (OG: 65)

Husserl's language betrays the fact that the phenomenological search for origin is impossible to maintain, yet he does not pay heed to this fact, to the idea that it is not only impossible to describe the root, the origin, which by definition is pre-linguistic, extra-linguistic (that much he does, of course, acknowledge), but also, that it is impossible to relate even the phenomenological movement towards a pure origin, or indeed, to render in words the very idea of purity. Such an articulation must go against its own language. Now *prima facie*, this obstacle is set aside with the aid of the precautionary 'quotation marks'. Phenomenology's reduction, its abstention, promises a modesty not only regarding 'things in themselves', but also regarding the terminology that consciously refrains from hypothesising them. Husserl believes that the attention he gives to the language he uses, the precautions he takes – '(distinctions, quotation marks, neologisms, revaluation and reactivation of old words, and so on) will always be sufficient guarantees of rigor and nonworldliness' (OG: 68n). But that would not do, according to Derrida. The reduction should eventually affect its own language. This would indeed be the most radical moment, and although Husserl is aware of the difficulties that arise at this moment – the need to reduce the irreducible necessary eidetic, that of pure consciousness – he 'says nothing about the language of this ultimate science of pure consciousness, about the language which *at least* seems to suppose the sphere of formal logic that we just excluded' (OG: 68n). However, as we have seen all along,

nothing can eradicate the fact that in phenomenology consciousness is primary, language secondary.

> Therefore, to the very extent that language is not 'natural', it paradoxically offers the most dangerous resistance to the phenomenological reduction, and transcendental discourse will remain irreducibly obliterated by a certain ambiguous worldliness
>
> (OG: 68f.).

Derrida reminds us that immanent to language is its ability always to demand the articulation of the dogmas that are reflected by the senses to which a given vocabulary implicitly adheres. In the case of phenomenology, he explores mainly the senses of 'history' and 'genesis', and brings their immanent tensions to light. However, at this point he adds a very striking remark:

> It is rather significant that every critical enterprise, juridical or transcendental, is made vulnerable by the irreducible factuality and the natural naiveté of its language. We become conscious of this vulnerability or of this vocation to silence in a *second* reflection on the possibility of the juridico-transcendental regression itself.
>
> (OG: 69f., note 66)

Derrida's analysis points at three different stages that are essential to critical enterprises: first, an inherent vulnerability; then, an invitation to silence; but finally, a second reflection. A second reflection, which is executed in a language fully aware of the formidable task it faces: articulating, and at the same time leaving an immanent opening for undermining this articulation, only to be bounced back eventually into the first articulation. In other words, engaging in metaphysics, that is to say, in dialectics; being both dogmatic and critical, in a sort of circular manner reminiscent of Husserl's *Rückfrage*,[12] the return inquiry marked by a communication from a distance. Or perhaps, the procedure is not very remote from the one suggested here by Frege, who – like Husserl – is not unaware of the new difficulties introduced along with the linguistic turn, yet is not fully aware of their depth. Summing up his justification of his conceptual notation, Frege writes (and compare the historical tone to Derrida's note above; it is as if transcendental became empirical history):

> It would be easy to worry unnecessarily about the feasibility of the matter. It is impossible, someone might say, to advance science with a conceptual notation, for the invention of the latter already presupposes the completion of the former. Exactly the same apparent difficulty arises for [ordinary] language. This is supposed to have made reason possible, but how could man have invented language without reason? Research into the laws of nature employs physical instruments; but these can be produced only by means of an advanced technology, which again is based upon knowledge of the laws of nature. The [apparently vicious] circle is resolved in each case in the same way: an advance in physics results in an advance in technology, and this makes possible the

construction of new instruments by means of which physics is again advanced. The application [of this example] to our case is obvious.

<div align="right">(SJCN: 89)</div>

Neither Frege nor Husserl contemplates silence, even upon reflecting on the difficulties that arise at the most fundamental level of their inquiries. The crisis of philosophical language had not yet surfaced. But Derrida is right in pushing the sway to the extreme point of silence. For the three stages of his analysis are not only conceptually correct, but moreover, they represent quite accurately the factual post-modern historical development: from pre-modernist vulnerability to modernist silence and then to post-modernist second reflection.

Part III

Modernism *aufgehoben*

The inseparability of speaking and acting

Running against the limits of language? Language is, after all, not a cage.

(Wittgenstein, WVC: 117)

9   Representation and presentation in the present

> If it is asked: 'How do sentences manage to represent?' – the answer might be: 'Don't you know? You certainly see it, when you use them.' For nothing is concealed.
>
> How do sentences do it? – Don't you know? For nothing is hidden.
>
> But given this answer: 'But you know how sentences do it, for nothing is concealed' one would like to retort 'Yes, but it all goes by so quick, and I should like to see it as it were laid open to view'.
>
> (PI: § 435)

Wittgenstein, in his *Philosophical Investigations*, mocks the naïve theory, which uncritically uses the word 'this' for ostensive definitions. No object simply shows itself without further ado. Empiricists are wrong in assuming that language rests upon a foundation of raw data, which can, on command, be pointed at unequivocally using the word 'this'. Names cannot be easily analysed into simple components referring to some kind of presence; and the same is true for definitions of other allegedly simple terms, especially those that denote sensations or phenomenal qualities (colours, pains). 'How do I recognize that this is red? – "I see that it is *this*; and then I know that that is what this is called." – This? – What?!' (PI: § 380). The sensation does not present itself directly to us without a proper linguistic setting, or particular use. The foundationalist fallacy rests upon a mistaken – representational – conception of name-thing relation. And that mistaken starting point leads philosophers into endless blind alleys.

> Naming appears as a *queer* connexion of a word with an object. – And you really get such a queer connexion when the philosopher tries to bring out *the* relation between name and thing by staring at an object in front of him and repeating a name or even the word 'this' innumerable times. For philosophical problems arise when language *goes on holiday*.
>
> (PI: § 38, original emphasis)

This last paragraph shows the kind of link that Wittgenstein forges between representation-based conceptions of language and the language of philosophy, a language that he believes is detached from the commerce of our lives and 'goes on holiday', where queer things happen to our ordinary words. Philosophical language is founded on a phantasm, on appeals to hidden realms, and thus it generates problems rather than curing them.

We have seen in the first part of the book that the representational model of language is a major source of modernist fallacies. But the notion of representation does not come alone. It is both enabled and rejected by the presence of its partner: the notion of presentation. *Darstellung* and *Vorstellung* complement each other. Thus the myth of representation cannot be seen as the only one obfuscating philosophers; an equal blame lies on its twin myth, that of presentation. The above quotes from PI hint at the connection: objects do not simply present themselves upon being pointed at by a 'this' that is meant to establish a representation-relation. For such a 'miracle' to occur, we need a context, a practice, something that surrounds the presentation, something that impairs its purity. But this is true not only of objects. We cannot conceive of anything that simply presents itself upon being stared at, no matter how hard we stare. Presentation always needs a setting; appearing is made possible within context.

Now the dialogue in paragraph 435 of PI, which opened the current section, is immediately followed by this comment:

> Here it is easy to get into that dead-end in philosophy, where one believes that the difficulty of the task consists in our having to describe phenomena that are hard to get hold of, the present experience that slips quickly by, or something of the kind. Where we find ordinary language too crude, and it looks as if we were having to do, not with the phenomena of every-day, but with ones that 'easily elude us, and, in their coming to be and passing away, produce those others as an average effect'. (Augustine: Manifestissima et usitatissima sunt, et eadem rusus nimis latent, et nova est inventio eorum.)

The Augustinian quote is taken from Augustine's *Confessions*, XI, 28. Here is Outler's translation: 'They are quite commonplace and ordinary, and still the meaning of these very same things lies deeply hid and its discovery is still to come.'[1] Wittgenstein regards this philosophical position, which appeals to a hidden realm that allegedly lies beyond what is manifest, as leading to a dead-end. But isn't the quick abolishment of Augustine's position too reminiscent of the traditional, fallacious dogma regarding the unproblematic nature of ostensive definition, the straightforwardness of what is manifest? If sensations do not present themselves directly to our gaze without a proper linguistic setting, doesn't the whole idea of the clear and manifest need rethinking? Is it at all possible for us simply to obey Wittgenstein's dictum 'Don't think, but look!' (PI: § 65)?

A streak of modernism still seems to be leading Wittgenstein even in his mature writings. 'My thinking, like everyone's, has sticking to it the shrivelled remains of my earlier (withered) ideas', he wrote circa 1932–4 (CV: 23e). Wittgenstein's ironical use of Augustine's words may be too straightforward rather than dialectical: Augustine, for him, expresses the traditional but erroneous metaphysical view, according to which philosophers should look for concealed truths, as if they were some special kind of scientists, investigating unknown terrains; yet in philosophy 'nothing is concealed'. We saw that modernist philosophers – the young Wittgenstein himself is paradigmatic – exposed the problems of traditional, realist

philosophy. But in the course of doing so, they made an opposite mistake. Paying great attention to form, they felt that content can indeed be abstracted, that form can appear as such, can 'present itself'; that pure 'presentation', one that is independent of 'representation', is possible; that a gesture may replace words. In other words, modernist thinkers were too quick to adopt the approach that where philosophical truths are concerned, nothing indeed is hidden: to an attentive gaze, the deep truths sought by philosophers make themselves manifest, they are 'clear and common' and open to view. Thus, traditional and modernist philosophies, in opposing manners, trivialised what Brecht had called 'the position of the presentation' ('die Haltung des Zeigens'). Traditional philosophers totally ignored the fact that there is no naïve, natural presentation – that every presentation is part of an external Other, which is, in itself, not naïve nor natural. Modernist philosophers, on the other hand, treated the presentation position itself as something to be gestured at rather than talked about. This is clear in the case of modernist painting. 'What it has abandoned in principle is the representation of the kind of space that recognizable, three-dimensional objects can inhabit' (Greenberg 1965: 6). The ordinary, dogmatic 'kind of space' is gestured at by painting alternatives to it, by presenting the position of the presentation. But when we leave the realm of painting, what then? If what we are interested at bringing to our consciousness is not space, as in Greenberg, but rather time – to take an Augustinian example used by Wittgenstein in exactly this context[2] – how can we point at the way it is presented to us, to the position of its presentation, to alternative ways of thinking about it? Does time simply 'show itself' in our actions and gestures? This is Augustine's puzzle. Its presentation depends on the eye of the beholder; and in order for this eye to behold, it must use some means of representation. The position of the presentation must be given, at least partly, by language, and 'this language, like any other, is founded on convention' (PI: § 355). Now continuing the modernist line of thought and the analogy with painting, it may be argued that it is in literary rather than philosophical texts that positions of presentations should be shown. Derrida, for one, would partly concur: acts of literature are sometimes best to expose such positions. But does this mean that philosophical texts never are? Not according to Derrida and Dummett. The question we started from was whether Wittgenstein was right in his exclusion of philosophical language as suitable for this task. In the paragraph quoted above, Wittgenstein mocks the philosopher who 'believes that the difficulty of the task consists in our having to describe phenomena that are hard to get hold of', whereas they are actually trite, commonplace, ordinary. The remains of his earlier, modernist ideas lead him to believe that there is nothing deep to look for here; he is not bothered by the means of presenting the position of the presentation, its alternatives, its dogmas. But such a presentation of alternatives, through which we may get a clearer view of our notion of time, is precisely what Dummett does in a series of articles, uncovering – philosophically – the realist dogmas underlying our usual image of time, and offering anti-realist alternatives to them.[3]

For Dummett and Derrida, Augustine's words about the future discovery of philosophical meanings are to be read ironically, but the irony should be dialectical rather than straightforward: expressing a realist mythology, the Augustinian ideas

should indeed be rejected; yet their rejection should not lead to a total dismissal of the deep truth they nevertheless disclose. There is a sense in which philosophical truths are 'commonplace and everyday', but at the same time they are also 'deeply obscure and the discovery of the solution is new'. They are expressed in philosophical language, they form a philosophical text, and this text – *qua* text – is to be taken seriously rather than quickly dismissed as void, nonsensical, since the notion of such void – the notion of nonsense – is too tightly interwoven with the notion of presence.

> A text is not a text unless it hides from the first comer, from the first glance, the law of its composition and the rules of its game. A text remains, moreover, forever imperceptible. Its law and its rules are not, however, harbored in the inaccessibility of a secret; it is simply that they can never be booked, in the *present*, into anything that could rigorously be called a perception.
>
> (Dis: 63, original emphasis)

The distinction between presentation and representation, gesture and talk, is overcome by such a post-modernist conception of *text*. This is the basic insight that enables Dummett and Derrida to overcome the pitfalls of modernism and its invitation to philosophical silence, or naïve presentation, unmediated gesture. For modernism, too, is to be read ironically. It is to be *aufgehoben*.

As 'beholders', Dummett and Derrida are very different from each other; different bibliographies, vocabularies, styles of writing – therefore, different ways in which modernism is conceived and overcome. Yet as we have seen in the previous two parts – with regard to Dummett and Derrida's reading of pre-modernists and modernists alike – their criticism comes from similar starting points and leads to several common results. In particular, their views on the inevitability of metaphysics and its connection to the idea of language are remarkably similar.

10 Dummett

(Almost) nothing is innocent

Spectres of Marx

In his *Specters of Marx*, Derrida writes about Marx, Marxism, its past and future. Spectres are the best symbol of the non-presence that is always present in multiple ways. For Derrida they represent something else as well:

> If I am getting ready to speak at length about ghosts, inheritance, and genera-tions, generations of ghosts, which is to say about certain *others* who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us, it is in the name of *justice*. Of justice where it is not yet, not yet there, where it is no longer, let us understand where it is no longer *present*, and where it will never be, no more than the law, reducible to laws or rights.
>
> (Derrida 1994: xix)

Dummett's voluminous writings – like those of Derrida – comprise much more than philosophical essays on thought, language, mathematics, time. He writes also about racist immigration policies, the (im)morality of deterrence and the role of the Catholic church in the present world order. Justice and its non-presence, its neces-sary but also impossible dependence upon contingent laws, norms and habits occupy a great deal of his thought. Here, for example, is how this impossible necessity is reflected in a remark about a notion that has close connections with that of justice: voting procedures. 'There is no available, indeed, no conceivable, definition of an ideal voting procedure of which it would not be provable that no such procedure could exist; we can hope for no more than a rough approximation to the ideal' (VP: 12). A just voting procedure, or more generally, a real democracy, is essentially impossible to attain.[1] This essential impossibility does not deter Dummett, though; on the contrary, it drives him to an incessant search for a better understanding, an attempt to better implement the ideal, for 'an underlying democracy is a *requirement* of justice' (Dummett 2001: 14, my emphasis). Yet Dummett also notices that such a search is rarely undertaken. This is not, he thinks, because of its inherent impossi-bility, but rather due to 'a failure to realize that there is anything which *requires* much thought' (VP: 12, my emphasis), a failure that originates in the treacherous power of what is, as in Augustine, 'clear and common'. Anti-intellectualism, lack of

criticism, acceptance of the familiar, are attitudes that pay no heed to the first prin-
ciple of philosophical inquiry: 'what seems at first sight obvious is often false' (VP:
298). This principle, one could say, is the everlasting philosophical requirement.

These two sides of the philosophical coin – an insistent resistance to the 'obvious'
and a requirement to look for an impossible articulate alternative – form the heart of
Dummettian anti-realist thought. Anti-realism is dialectics. We shall see below
how this understanding operates at various levels of Dummett's views. But
lingering a little longer on the margins of philosophy, i.e. on the 'marginal' issue of
democracy and voting procedures, let us look closer at Dummett's principal claim in
his book *Voting Procedures*.

> Proportional representation has the object of making Parliament more repre-
> sentative: rival systems are to be judged, in the first instance, by how effectively
> they achieve this. It ought, then, to be the first task of any discussion of elec-
> toral reform to make precise what is meant by calling a parliament
> representative; yet the question is virtually never posed. Rather, it is taken for
> granted that everyone knows what 'representative' means; the assumption
> appears to be that a parliament is representative if its composition, by political
> party, corresponds closely to the composition of the electorate. . . . This
> assumption embodies a possible definition of the word 'representative', as used
> in this connection; it is far from obvious that it is the right definition to give.
>
> (VP: 6)

So it is the representation relation again that is the focus: representation as a corre-
spondence-relation of composite parts. The principal aim of *Voting Procedures* is to
prove that the reality that is to be represented is not given in advance of the voting
procedure itself; that the 'majority preference' does not have a 'correspondent' definite
composition prior to the procedure. Now a Tractarian modernist, in an alleged loyalty
to the linguistic turn, would reverse the order in the representation relation, and
conclude that the representing medium is logically prior to the represented realm.

> We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc.) as a
> projection of a possible situation. The method of projection is to think of the
> sense of the proposition. . . .
>   And a proposition is a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world.
>
> (T 3.11–3.12)

Such an idea, as progressive as it is, would only lead us half way, though. For as we
have seen in our discussion of modernism, and as we can see again in the assumption
present in the above quote from Dummett, what is established – or indeed, implic-
itly presupposed – by this reverse order is, eventually, a realist metaphysics based on
the celebrated Tractarian correspondence of components and their compositions.
The logic of the *Tractatus* is what it is because it reflects its realist presuppositions,
its dogmatic assumption that no philosophy is possible that does not rely on a corre-
spondence between word and world. The real upshot of the linguistic turn is that

primacy is given to the notion of (linguistic) procedure over that of (linguistic) representation, and what we get as a result is not merely a change in the subordination relation, but an alternative system altogether.[2] This insight – drawn in line with the views of the later rather than early Wittgenstein – reflects a new way of grasping the very notion of law. Hence it is not a coincidence that it cuts so deep in Dummett's writings about the political system. An anti-realist conception of democracy – or more generally, of law – consists in a double movement: in prioritising procedure it also acknowledges its immanent imperfectness, the essential non-presence of the goal it aims at, the irreducibility of the Law into laws. Therefore, unlike modernist procedural liberalism, it does not let form – the procedure itself – be a substitute for truth. Procedural liberalism is essentially positivist. As we saw in our discussion of Frege's conception of the sense/reference distinction, anti-realism must assume a gap between the procedure and its goal; positivists' procedural conceptions of meaning eliminate this gap, thus making bivalence an unbreakable rule. This, we saw, results in implicitly assuming realism as the underlying metaphysical principle. For an anti-realist, on the other hand, the primacy of procedure over representation means a continuous appeal to the disintegration of the Law, the One. Derrida writes:

> Plato, we recall, always associates speech with law, *logos* and *nomos*, and laws speak. . . . What is the father? we asked earlier. The father is. The father is (the son lost). Writing, the lost son, does not answer this question – it writes (itself): (that) the father *is not*, that is to say, is not present. When it is no longer a spoken word fallen away from the father, writing suspends the question what is, which is always, tautologically, the question 'what is the father?' and the reply 'the father is what is.' At that point a flap is produced that can no longer be thought about within the familiar opposition of father to son, speech to writing.
>
> (Dis: 146)

The continuous procedure of writing thus precludes, with Derrida, presence: the presence of voice, of speech, of Law, of absolute commandment.[3] A whole set of traditional conceptions, oppositions and problems is cast out by the same movement that prioritises procedure in the anti-realist radical manner. This idea concerning the evasiveness of presence is closely connected to Dummett's alternative vision of time, mentioned above. Discussing the phenomenalists' necessarily realist tacit assumption, ensuing from their emphasis on sense experience, i.e. 'of the present', Dummett remarks that 'the present is a mere boundary between two non-existents' (LBM: 6). Thus instead of presence, this movement reverses the order, tries to bring *non*-presence to the forefront. Yet this is obviously impossible, unintelligible, hence it *ipso facto* reorganises the relationship between forefront and rear, between *is* and *is not*. One crucial result of this dialectical movement is that the most fundamental philosophical question 'What is . . . ?' must change its meaning. Nevertheless, it is not dismissed. 'We are swimming in deep waters of metaphysics', Dummett concludes from his musings about time and presence; 'How can we attain the shore?' (LBM: 8).

Dummett and Derrida are both acutely aware of the enormous metaphysical burden that words, sentences, visions, theories and reflections unavoidably carry with them; but they take this awareness into very different alleys. Dummett starts out by treating those metaphysical views that underlie our linguistic habits and activities as images, i.e. by emphasising their pictorial impact. He then presents philosophers with the opposite challenge to that famous dictum enunciated by Jean-Luc Godard: 'Il faut confronter des idées vagues avec des images claires'.[4] Philosophers, Dummett says, must have it the other way round: they seek to counter vague images with clear ideas. A conceptual inquiry aims, then, to replace implicit vagueness by an explicitly formulated clear view. But is there a clear view? How can it be attained, if everything is laden with metaphysical images? In order to understand Dummett's intention we need to dwell a little more on his various uses of the term 'metaphysics'.

Dummett never tires of emphasising that nothing is innocent, nothing is free from metaphysical implications – or almost nothing. In *The Logical Basis of Metaphysics*, for example, he presents the task of philosophers as that of formulating such implications in a maximally systematic manner, within a theory of meaning and understanding, since what a metaphysical controversy directly concerns is precisely how we ought to understand the controversy itself.[5] Philosophical inquiry, then, should embark from the pictorial impact of metaphysical pictures and move towards a clear pronouncement of a 'general model of meaning', in which we should 'scrutinise our own linguistic practices with close attention' (LBM: 13). Such a description 'will lay bare what makes something a *language*, and thus what it is for a word or sentence to have a meaning' (*ibid.*). Now underlying such pronouncements is Dummett's proclaimed assumption that having comprehended the content of the metaphysical doctrines, we shall have a way to settle all metaphysical controversies.

> Once resolved in favour of a particular doctrine, the picture of reality that goes with the doctrine and that gives it its metaphysical expression will automatically force itself upon us; but it has no additional content of its own. Its non-metaphysical content consists in the model of meaning which it suggests; however powerfully the picture impresses itself on us, we have to bear in mind that its content is a thesis in the theory of meaning, and that, beyond that, it is no more than a picture.
>
> (LBM: 15)

Metaphysics as picture plays here a similar role to the one played by ideology in Marx's writings. For Marx, ideology consists in certain forms of social consciousness, whose function is to legitimise the concepts and values of the ruling class. As Terry Eagleton puts it, ideology is 'that complex structure of social perception which ensures that the situation in which one social class has power over the other is either seen by most members of the society as "natural", or not seen at all' (Eagleton 1976: 5). Note the role of the visual in Eagleton's words. Now this kind of domination of a 'natural' picture, one that is 'not seen at all', is what Dummett recognises – and defies – in metaphysical pictures. Leaving aside the discussion of the role of pictorial

art in this scheme,[6] it is clear that for Marx the way out of the dominating ideology lies in a *conceptual* understanding of it. The ensuing result is, then, ideology-free. When Dummett writes about metaphysical pictures and their allure, he thinks of them as ideological in Marx's sense. It is the non-metaphysical, non-pictorial, non-ideological content of a model of meaning that he is seeking. The pictorial power indeed has an undeniable, perhaps even crucial rhetorical role, but it is the task of philosophers to understand the power encapsulated in the picture through a detailed and systematic theory. It is Dummett's fundamental assumption that only a conceptual investigation may supply a reasoned and definitive argument to challenge commonly accepted views, i.e. ideologies, metaphysical pictures.

It is interesting to see the points of resemblance and differences between Dummett's conception of the matter and that of the later Wittgenstein. For the need to dismantle metaphysical pictures and their enthralling spell in order to settle all metaphysical controversies is certainly in line with Wittgenstein's idea that 'the clarity we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But this simply means that philosophical problems should *completely* disappear' (PI: § 133, original emphases). Wittgenstein, too, sees philosophy as analysing metaphysical pictures that lie within our language and 'hold us captive'.[7] Yet there is a crucial difference. Wittgenstein says: 'The picture is there; and I do not dispute its correctness. But what is its application?' (PI: § 424) – 'And the best that I can propose is that we should yield to the temptation to use this picture, but then investigate how the application of the picture goes' (PI: § 374). Dummett, on the other hand, does not make do with a clear view of the content suggested by the commonsensical picture and its application; he does wish to dispute its correctness, otherwise there is no point for him in investigating the picture at all. In other words, the primary motivation behind Dummett's attempt to understand the different pictures' applications is to weigh them against each other. And this – again, *pace* Wittgenstein – is the basis of his stubborn quest for systematic rival theories of meaning.

Wittgenstein objected to the idea that philosophy should advance any kind of theory. His objection was based on what he took to be fundamental to philosophy – the fact that there must not be anything hypothetical in philosophical musings. On this assumption is based his dictum: 'We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place' (PI: § 109). Instead of advancing a general theory, we should be 'looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognize those workings: *in spite of* an urge to misunderstand them' (*ibid.*). Instead of positing hypotheses, different arrangements of what is already known should be sought. For Wittgenstein, this is the pinnacle of the linguistic turn. Whereas his modernist phase led him to the understanding that the philosophical voice has nowhere to speak from, no conceivable focal point – hence the silence predicament, the later Wittgenstein wishes rather to be everywhere, to speak from every conceivable focal point, changing his location according to the problem he is tackling. 'A thinker is very much like a draughtsman whose aim is to represent all the interrelations between things' (CV: 12e), Wittgenstein remarked in 1931. Philosophy cum dialectics cannot afford dogmatism, and Wittgenstein's way of overcoming the dogmatic attitude is through his multi-focal perspective. In 1937

this idea was expressed thus: 'I find it important in philosophising to keep changing my posture, not to stand for too long on *one* leg, so as not to get stiff' (CV: 27e). The change from *nowhere* to *anywhere* is the most fundamental difference between early and later Wittgenstein.[8] What is common to both phases of his thought is that no particular meta-linguistic point is adopted. There is no room for a specially demarcated jargon standing opposite the rest of language, forming *a* language of philosophy. Such a linguistic tool would, for him, inevitably yield the unwanted dogma he was trying so hard to avoid.[9]

But note the implicit distinction Wittgenstein is relying on: description vs. explanation. In order to fight the temptation to misunderstand the workings of our language, we should try to concentrate our gaze on phenomenological description alone. As if, by doing this carefully enough, we can simply describe the phenomena philosophers are interested in, their origins, their pitfalls, and thus dismantle the philosophical problems and free ourselves of the dogmas that are forced upon us by language.

Writing about 'descriptive' painting in seventeenth-century Dutch art, John Molyneux makes a strong case for linking bourgeois, capitalist societies with the middle-class demand for paintings which depict simple things and scenes from ordinary life. Yet, he notes, 'painting is never simple photographic reflection (neither is photography), and there is no unproblematic or neutral realism' (Molyneux 2001: 51). Here are the specters of Marx. For what Molyneux points at is how deeply the unnoticed realist ideology is embedded in the presumptuous stand of 'neutral stand' or 'description alone', and how this neutralism serves to present the superiority of one social class over the others as 'natural'.[10] Realising the non-neutral nature of 'description alone', we may now ask: When does description end and explanation begin? How do arranging and theorising differ? How can we tell understanding the workings of our language from misunderstanding them? And once we know the answers, why should we continue to use the same picture even if it is founded on a misunderstanding?

As already noted, Dummett, contrary to Wittgenstein, wishes not only to understand but to overcome the power of ideological, metaphysical pictures such as realism, and he suggests that this can only be done by being aware of the unavoidable dogmas we must adhere to in the course of our systematic conceptual enquiry, i.e. of the particular philosophical language we use.

> A piecemeal description of the use of a particular expression or form of sentence will inevitably presuppose an understanding of much of the rest of the language: only a systematic theory can reveal on what basis it is possible to explain in general what linguistic meaning is. . . . But such a study, if it is to yield illumination, cannot accept whatever is normally or frequently said as immune to criticism. . . . [I]t is not enough merely to confine oneself to describing what may be observed to happen, or of assembling reminders of what everyone knows, as Wittgenstein claimed that a philosopher should do: *the distinction does not draw itself, but requires some theoretical apparatus.*
>
> (SL: 182f., emphasis added)

This necessity of taking *some* metaphilosophical stand – the impossibility of giving neutral descriptions – yields Dummett's other use of the term 'metaphysics'. Metaphysics thus used seems indispensable on every level of the philosophical discourse, including the desired final one. The reason for this is as follows:

> Metaphysics attempts to describe the most general structural features of reality, but to do so as the outcome of pure reflection, unaided by empirical investigation. It can do this only by extrapolating from the most general structural features of our thought, or of our language: more exactly, by expressing the structural features of our thought or of our language as structural features of the world about which we think and talk. More particularly, a semantic theory will tell us what, in general, makes a statement of one or another kind true, if it is true: in virtue of what it is capable of being true. At least, in view of the intimate connection between the concepts of truth and of meaning, it must tell us this unless it eschews the notion of truth altogether. Viewed in one way, a thesis about what, in general, makes a statement of a given kind true is a semantic thesis, determining the type of content attaching to statements of this kind. Viewed in another way, it is a metaphysical thesis, telling us what is the substance of a certain sector or reality: what kind of thing, or, better, what facts, constitute that reality.
>
> (MV: 133)

Dummett concludes from this analysis that the distinction between metaphysical statements and those belonging to semantic theory is 'more one of style than of content' (MV: 133). Metaphysical writings usually pay no heed to their thorough linguistic nature; researches in the theory of meaning suppress the fact that it is not language *per se* that they investigate. Contrary to linguistics, the discipline that studies language as an object, an object of study, semantics is not one among other scientific disciplines. For through its study of the nature of judgements it reveals the way in which language discloses reality to us. It is hence precisely its intimate relations with metaphysics that makes semantics what it is. Yet both metaphysics and semantics tend to conceal their inter-relations. Bearing in mind this concealment, we may now resolve Dummett's *prima facie* contradictory uses of the term 'metaphysics'. Dummett's urge to overcome metaphysics equals his urge to overcome semantics, when these terms are taken in their traditional senses, when they suppress their inter-relations, i.e. when metaphysics is taken simply as a 'picture', semantics – as a scientific area of study. But having forged the link between them, in a manner well suited for the linguistic turn, Dummett wishes to regain them. He does this by exposing their nature and emphasising how metaphysics and semantics, properly treated, are not merely unavoidable products of the reflection that language yields, but are also, as hinted by the Marxian stroke above, a tool for criticism and change.

In order to see how this is done, we need to dwell on the linkage between different facets of Dummett's thought: the exact sense in which he should be seen as an *analytic* philosopher, his thoroughgoing anti-realism, his conception of meta-language and his insistence upon its systematisation. None of these positions is

trivial, or easy to defend. The starting point is stated above. It is Dummett's assumption that all metaphysical controversies can be resolved in favour of a particular doctrine, i.e. that philosophers aim at Truth: not one that is conditioned by contingent circumstances but a timeless metaphysical truth. Dummett confesses: 'Philosophy would interest me much less if I did not think it possible for us eventually to attain generally agreed answers to the great metaphysical questions' (LBM: 19). Note the tone in which these words are written: rather than substantiating it, Dummett states a desired postulate. Yet the desire is of course not a mere whim. It reflects Dummett's allegiance to that point of view of Bradley's, mentioned earlier – an allegiance to 'the way in which logic uses ideas'. Logic here draws its meaning from the contrast with its opposite catchword: psychology. And although, as we have seen in Part II, Dummett – like Derrida – wishes to play down the logic-psychology barrier as it is traditionally positioned, he – again like Derrida – does not wish to abolish it altogether. Rather, a new relationship between the absolute ('logical') and the partial ('psychological') perspectives is at stake. It is important to recall that the logical point of view was not forsaken by the modernists whose views we discussed earlier. On the contrary, logic, i.e. the absolute point of view, was adopted as a postulate by them as well. The modernist point was, however, that being what it is – absolute, universal, total – logic cannot be aptly expressed by linguistic, conceptual means (as we ordinarily use them). These, being immanently linked to the concept of representation, constitute an external viewpoint from which they aim to represent logic; yet logic, being total, may have no Other, nothing is external to itself, and hence cannot be represented. The absolute can only be shown, not said. This insight is common to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, Carnap and Artaud, as well as to universalist interpretations of Frege. The insight gained by post-modernists – primarily by Wittgenstein himself, in the later stages of his philosophical development – was that the strict dichotomy on which modernists based their conviction, the saying-showing dichotomy, was itself a naïve dogma, reflecting traditional assumptions about language and representation, and therefore presentation too. Since it is not the case that words simply represent and images merely present, the expression of the absolute, logical point of view cannot be restricted to artists 'showing' it. This is how this insight is expressed by Wittgenstein in 1930:

> But it seems to me too that there is a way of capturing the world sub specie aeterni other than through the work of the artist. Thought has such a way – *so I believe* – it is as though it flies above the world and leaves it as it is – observing it from above, in flight.
>
> (CV: 5e, emphasis added)

So Wittgenstein believes. And Dummett emphasises:

> it is a *starting-point*. We start with the existence of a distinction, or distinctions, between how things appear and how they really are, and we want to take it as far as we can, or, at any rate, to see how far it can be taken.
>
> (SL: 377, original emphasis)

A description of things as they are in themselves plays an important role in our thinking, especially in reflective moods, he claims.[11] The idea is that the absolute point of view – the way of capturing the world *sub specie aeterni* – is part and parcel of our self-consciousness, the overall understanding of understanding. Dummett once remarked that philosophy at the end of the twentieth century was still engaged in a struggle to find out whether there can at all be a non-Platonic philosophy. Philosophy being philosophy, it cannot renounce the reflective viewpoint, or degrade it to a set of mere contingent, relative ones. It must keep some kind of absolutist streak, being loyal to that way in which logic uses ideas. Taking a non-Platonic path, though, means that it cannot content itself with an external, transcendent truth, independent of our thought, our language. This dilemma echoes the position arrived at by Hegel. Dummett would fully embrace the following Hegelian analysis in his own *Logic*:

> It may seem as if philosophy, in order to start on its course, had, like the rest of the sciences, to begin with a subjective presupposition. The sciences postulate their respective objects, such as space, number, or whatever it be; and it might be supposed that philosophy had also to postulate the existence of thought. But the two cases are not exactly parallel. *It is by the free act of thought that it occupies a point of view, in which it is for its own self, and thus gives itself an object of its own production*. Nor is this all. The very point of view, which originally is taken on its own evidence only, must in the course of the science be converted to a result – the ultimate result in which philosophy returns into itself and reaches the point with which it began. In this manner philosophy exhibits the appearance of a circle which closes with itself, and has no beginning in the same way as the other sciences have.
>
> (Hegel 1975: 36, original emphasis)

Note how crucial it is for establishing the logical point of view that philosophy is not 'like the rest of the sciences'. As Wittgenstein notes, right after the quote above, 'man has to awaken to wonder – and so perhaps do peoples. Science is a way of sending him to sleep again' (CV: 5e). But if the logical point of view is essential, and not a subjective presupposition, why is it necessary to believe in it, have faith in truth, in there being a way of capturing the world *sub specie aeterni*? Because, as Fichte already understood, there is freedom at the most basic level – a decision has to be taken whether to take the first step, the fact/act, the *Tathandlung* – or to avoid it. The first step is not a proposition, but an act that requires faith, and what Hegel, Wittgenstein and Dummett express in the above passages is their decision to take this step, to adopt the logical point of view, to awaken to wonder. The question is, then, how is this wonder to be expressed in post-modernist terms, by philosophers who attempt to flee Plato's field, while remaining loyal to philosophy?

As we shall see, Derrida deals with this problem by linking the battle lines between sophists and philosophers with questions on writing and truth. 'In many ways', he says,

and from a viewpoint that does not cover the entire field, we are today on the
eve of Platonism. Which can also, naturally, be thought of as the morning after
Hegelianism. At that specific point, the *philosophia*, the *epistēmē* are not 'over-
turned', 'rejected', 'reined in,' etc., in the name of something like writing;
quite the contrary. But they are . . . assumed and at the same time displaced
into a completely different field.

(Dis: 108)

What is Dummett's parallel reply? How, in his eyes, does the eve of Platonism look
as the morning after Hegelianism, in his eyes?

   Hegel, famously, claimed that his philosophy had reached the long-awaited final
truth of philosophy, and no genuine development was conceivable from that point
onwards. His claim resulted from his understanding that logic, by its very nature,
must be everywhere. Thus it cannot be merely formal, and cannot serve just as a
method on the way to metaphysical truth. It must be – indeed, must have been
already – converted to a result. At this point the similarities and differences between
Hegel and Dummett are crucial. As the introduction to *The Logical Basis of
Metaphysics* makes clear, Dummett too does not take logic, in its broad sense (i.e.
including the theory of meaning), to be merely a formal device. Like Hegel, he
regards its aim as that of providing us with an overall theory, a comprehensive meta-
physical system. Yet his view of this system is less holistic and more structured than
that of Hegel. It is here that his being an analytic philosopher comes into play. Since
metaphysical disputes are deeply rooted in disputes over meaning, what we need in
order to solve them, according to Dummett, is a firm basis, consisting of 'a set of
general principles governing the formulation of a meaning-theory' (LBM: 16). Only
upon this ground will we be able to draw up the complete meaning-theory, i.e. the
metaphysical system itself. This is why Dummett cannot yet envisage finality in
philosophy. He denies that full self-consciousness has already been achieved: it is
only on a programmatic level that we have come closer to it. He does however
believe that we are at long last on the right path towards the resolution of philo-
sophical controversies (TOE: 458), to laying down the fundamental layer. What
hindered philosophers from taking it before was the diversity of conceptions of the
aim of philosophy and its method (TOE: 457), but Frege's metaphilosophical
insight about the primacy of language in any metaphysical inquiry put us eventu-
ally on the right track. The road to metaphysical system is now paved. Dummett's
interpretation of Frege included his famous claim that in order to make the revolu-
tionary step that he did, Frege had to break with Hegel's idealism. But in the heat
of the debate about the right interpretation of Frege, it has gone unnoticed that, in
the manner he proffered his case, Dummett virtually acknowledged his own over-
whelming debt to idealism. This is particularly evident in the last page of the
second edition of *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, where Frege's overthrow of Hegelian
idealism is introduced as a historical necessity, a dialectical stage on the way to
achieving the right conception of a systematic theory of meaning. Frege's major
contribution was in enabling us to reformulate the antithesis between realism and
idealism 'as an opposition between two accounts of what, in general, an under-

standing of our *language* consists in' (FPL: 684, my emphasis). For this linguistic turn to occur, Frege needed to diverge from Hegel's homogeneous, non-structured conception of metaphysics, and it was natural to do so by breaking with Hegel's idealism altogether and by reintroducing a kind of background Platonism, that seemed to be needed in order to secure the objectivity of meaning. But now that the primacy of language has been achieved, Dummett brings idealism back, rephrasing it in a linguistic guise.

This guise he dubs anti-realism. There are various ways of introducing anti-realism, but perhaps the most accurate way – the capsule that contains the germ of the rest – is Dummett's concise suggestion, 'that we must abandon our prejudice that there must be a complete description of reality' (TOE: 357). We can detect here the metaphysical viewpoint that refuses to accept existing practice as a directive – it may well be a prejudice; the strong linkage between reality and the way we conceive it; the role of language (description) in this conception; and of course the rejection of saturated description, of completeness, of the Oneness so emblematic of realism. This latter element also hints at the dialectical nature of anti-realism. Yet Dummett's more 'official' introduction of anti-realism would be a statement about the strong connection between the truth of statements and our ability to recognise it. This is the 'official' introduction since, for Dummett, it explicitly points at the metaphysical and semantic burden of the realism/anti-realism debate:

> The relation of truth to the recognition of truth is the fundamental problem of the theory of meaning, or, what is the same thing, of metaphysics: for the question as to the nature of reality is also the question what is the appropriate notion of truth for the sentences of our language, or, again, how we represent reality by means of sentences.
>
> (TOE: 314)

Such reference to reality, its representation and our ability to recognize truth actually means a radical change of perspective. The shift sought by anti-realists from truth to the recognition of truth is a shift from taking the essence of language to be a representation of reality to regarding it first of all as a human practice, and then explaining its power of representing as secondary to its being an activity immersed in other, related actions. This change of perspective clearly follows the later Wittgenstein's footsteps, embracing an important aspect of his conception of the linguistic turn: for Dummett, as well as for Wittgenstein, seeing language as primarily an activity means getting rid of the traditional illusion regarding the nature of language itself.

> The illusion is threefold: in thinking, first, that this representative power can be isolated from all the other features of language; secondly, that those other features can be explained in terms of it, or left to take care of themselves without explanation; and thirdly, that the representative power consists in the speaker's being in the correct interior states.
>
> (SL: 187)

But this formulation still misses crucial aspects of the anti-realist view. For now it may seem as if the notion of language as representation is not really important in understanding what language is, what its metaphysical import is. Yet it is a crucial component of the anti-realist theory of meaning that it deals very seriously with the representative power of language, i.e. that it is required to give an account of how it is that we are able, by means of language, 'to impose an order on reality as it is presented to us, to employ concepts whereby we can apprehend aspects of reality not apparent to gross observation' (TOE: 309). The reason for this anti-realist interest in representation is twofold. First, there is the 'therapeutic' aim of clearing up the remains of traditional metaphysics that reside in our language; and second, as we have seen in our previous discussion of sense and reference, an awareness of the representational function of language, with the cluster of problems that accompanies it, is necessary in order to keep the metaphysical tenor of the theory of meaning, to avoid the reductive, realist-cum-pragmatist consequences that naturally ensue from a purely procedural account of language. This is why Frege's role in Dummett's thought is so vital – his agenda as well as his mistakes.

Dummett's preferred direction of the philosophical investigation is 'from bottom upwards', from the principles governing the logical basis to the full metaphysical picture. Here, he believes, is where his situation is better than that of Aristotle and Hegel, his acknowledged predecessors in stressing the immense importance of an appropriate logical basis for metaphysics.

> Where modern analytical philosophy differs is that it is founded upon a far more penetrating analysis of the general structure of our thoughts than was ever available in past ages, that which lies at the base of modern mathematical logic and was initiated by Frege in 1879.
>
> (LBM: 2)

In order to represent world-thought relationship correctly, an appropriately sophisticated portrayal of the notion of thought is needed. Frege's analysis of thought, based on the notation of quantifiers and variables, sets up for Dummett the logical framework, thus enabling him to build a firm foundation for metaphysics. Yet Dummett is far from adopting Frege's logic in its entirety. Actually, he diverges from it in one of its most essential components, believing that Frege misunderstood the far-reaching consequences of his own achievements: for a genuine linguistic turn to occur, the logic underlying it cannot be Platonist. It is here that Hegelian thought returns to centre stage, having been shelved until it could be rephrased in more appropriate, Fregean terms. Dummett's way of overcoming Frege's cardinal flaw is, famously, by introducing *intuitionist* logic at the basis of metaphysics. It is crucial to see that this move, far from introducing a somewhat debatable technical instrument into philosophy, is motivated rather by metaphilosophical considerations of the kind mentioned above, regarding the relationship between truth and its recognition. Intuitionist logic at the basis of metaphysics yields a whole array of deep revisions. Its repercussions resonate throughout Dummett's work, shaping not only his views of language and of mathematics, but also those of the constitution of reality, time,

vagueness and phenomenal qualities.[12] It would be too long a diversion to give a detailed account of how intuitionism, taken as a logical foundation of the theory of meaning, creates the sought-after metaphysical system for Dummett. Yet on our way to understanding Dummett's understanding of the language of philosophy one short detour is indispensable. It has to do with the notion of the theory of the creative subject – a notion that occupied many logicians in the post-Brouwer intuitionist tradition, and which is thoroughly discussed in Dummett's (1977) *Elements of Intuitionism* (335–59). The initial discussion sounds formal and technical. Nevertheless, it soon turns out that it has some pregnant metaphilosophical consequences.

Following Brouwer, Dummett holds that 'a mathematical statement is rendered true or false by a proof or disproof, that is, by a construction, and constructions are effected in time' (EI: 336). A new sentential operator, $\vdash_n$, is introduced, indicating time segments, where $\vdash_n$ A means 'At the n-th stage we have a proof that A'. This step, as Dummett remarks, involves us in a non-extensional context, and hence bears comprehensive results on the nature of logic. Under extensionalist and holist assumptions, the new operator $\vdash_n$ leads to a self-referential paradox; but if we replace these assumptions with their opposites, i.e. divide time into stages punctuated by our effecting constructions and impose a hierarchy upon these constructions, the paradox is avoided. Deliberating on the results of this move, Dummett reaches the following insight:

> To suppose that we can ever arrive at a range of statements closed under the application of this operator is to invoke an intolerably impredicative notion. The introduction of choice sequences defined effectively in terms of the notion expressed by '$\vdash_n$' . . . represents an *extension* of the notion of a construction or a lawlike sequence: although it is a legitimate extension, we have no right to pretend that we have a grasp of any domain of sequences or functions closed under the application of this device.
>
> (EI: 347)

The theory of the creative subject thus precludes the existence of ranges of statements closed under intensionalist operations. The time factor, the inherent appeal to the notion of proof as a way of explaining the truth of statements and the temporal hierarchy imposed upon proofs, rule out any *final extension* of any lawlike (i.e. intensional) sequence. Later in the book, under the heading 'Concluding philosophical remarks', Dummett spells out what this formal result boils down to. It is here that we fully grasp the radical implications intuitionism has on our notions of mathematics, logic, and – since the latter serves as its basis – metaphysics and its theory of meaning.

> The totality of the methods of proof, within a given mathematical theory, is likely to be an indefinitely extensible one: certain methods of reasoning intuitively acceptable to us can be carried out only after we have achieved a formulation of some range of methods of proof not including them. This means, of course, that mathematics undergoes a continual process of evolution.

> This remark is in itself banal, and would be interpreted by a platonist as meaning that we constantly make advances in our knowledge of the unchanging mathematical reality which we are describing. On any constructivist view of mathematics, on which its subject-matter is our own mathematical activity, and meaning is given to our statements by reference to the methods of proof that we possess, this evolutionary process must be understood more radically, as entailing that the very meanings of our mathematical statements are always subject to shift.
>
> (EI: 401)

There is of course no strict analogy between the above claims about the mathematical realm and claims about the nature of philosophy. However, one should not be too quick to dismiss the genuine similarity between the two reflective discourses either. In particular, Dummett himself is rather *forced* to such a comparison, because of his professed own Fregean use (as opposed to Hegel's) of a structured hierarchy in his conception of metaphysics, where a *formal* consideration of logical principles serves as a basis, outlining the most general features of the theory of meaning. The fact that our model is taken from mathematics rather than pure logic should not hinder us: Dummett frequently derives significant consequences from the mathematical case and applies them to logic. For a constructivist, any kind of truth (and so, therefore, philosophical truth) is closely related to the notion of proof, or justification. We have seen this in our primary discussion of anti-realism. The upshot of this principle is that in order to gain insight on philosophical truth, a study of methods of proof in philosophy itself must be relevant.

As we have seen in the opening paragraphs of this section, Dummett's anti-realism is bound up with an open-ended conception of law. This is the double-edged nature of anti-realism, the place where representation is both a crucial element and a perpetually deferred one. Democracy is never really attained, but an incessant search for an always better implementation of the ideal of democracy is a requirement of justice. The disintegration of the One is, we saw, the real upshot of the linguistic turn, of giving primacy to procedure over representation (rather than dismissing the latter notion altogether). Now the intuitionist theory of the creative subject, as it finds its place in Dummett's overall system of thought, is a fusion of Hegel's understanding of the nature of philosophy, Frege's formal contribution to the analysis of thought, Wittgenstein's insights about meaning, use, rule and representation, and Brouwer's creative conception of mathematics. Reflecting on this, however, one cannot but conclude that an important principle of Dummett's must be given up: the finality of philosophical results, and our ability to ever actually reach the final truths of metaphysics. Read with philosophy in mind, instead of mathematics, the quoted paragraph from *Elements of Intuitionism* makes it clear that wherever discursive thought obtains, methods of justification are likely to form an indefinitely extensible totality, evolving in time. The subject matter of philosophy is our own thought, as it manifests itself in our activities, and these are naturally prone to be shaped and reshaped as a result of previous activities as well as our reflection upon them. Since the meaning and the truth of philosophical statements could not be

obtained by reference to any unchanging reality, a One, it must be bestowed on them by our ever-developing forms of life and of thought. And the meanings of these are then always subject to shift. As Collingwood writes in a similar context: 'in philosophy, because every new discovery reacts upon what we knew before, the whole body of knowledge must be remade from the foundations at every step in advance' (Collingwood 1933: 180).

There is hence for Dummett no alternative but to acknowledge the results of his own revolutionary logical basis of metaphysics: philosophical truth itself is an indefinitely extensible concept. What Dummett says of the Platonist conception of infinity applies here as well: 'the question is not . . . resolved by the mere utterance of a metaphysical credo' (EI: 58). Philosophical ideas, like mathematical objects, 'can be apprehended only in thought' (*ibid.*), and hence whatever philosophical achievements we may have gained up to a certain stage in time must form only a legitimate extension of the open notion of philosophical truth. This, of course, does not affect the objectivity of the results, nor does it lessen their truthfulness. Intuitionistic logic, especially in its Dummettian version, is Hegelian in its intensional emphasis, its serious treatment of time and development, its conception of the subject's role in creating truth, but also in the objectivity and truthfulness of mathematical results. But once a hierarchy is imposed within the logical basis of metaphysics – once Hegel's holism is substituted by a Fregean structure whose elementary layer is more formal – we get a notion of philosophical truth that is under a continuous process of envelopment, a One that is being constantly disintegrated. After all, 'the whole point of our being in time is that we do not have *one* point of view; our point of view is constantly shifting. We do not merely have an experience of succession, but a succession of experiences' (Dummett 1994: 360). It is inconceivable that such a profound metaphysical insight should not bear on the nature of metaphysics itself. Indeed, from very early on in his career, it is the rethinking of the status of the discourse of Truth itself that Dummett has offered. Already in 1959 he has urged the 'dethroning [of] truth and falsity from their central place in philosophy and in particular in the theory of meaning' (TOE: 19); and once this is achieved, 'we can abandon realism without falling into subjective idealism' (*ibid.*).

This result is directly connected to the discussion of the status of philosophical language – and it is here that we come back to Dummett's reply to the modernist challenge: the Tractarian silence predicament or its formalist, Viennese successor. We have seen in our discussion of Carnap that Dummett exposes the metaphysics inherent in logical positivism. He does so by using Tarski's diagnosis that metalinguistic languages form what we dubbed, following Blanchot, 'an outside in which to be reflected' – this outside validating Carnap's appeal to the concept of metalanguage on pain of recognising its indispensable metaphysical character. Now we can link this with the consequences of Dummett's own intuitionist appeal to the creative subject. The semantic-metaphysical meta-language aims at giving an account of how the rest of the language works – 'all of it save that part serving solely to construct the theory' (MV: 133). But reflection never stops, and in order to understand and analyse *that* part, we need – as we saw with Russell, Carnap and Blanchot –

another meta-language. The discussion of the creative subject drew our attention to the fact that this succession of languages is naturally built *in time*, as also to the fact that there may be no close range of statements that would form a final extension of metaphysical laws. In other words, philosophical language is never *a* language, but a series of ever-evolving 'outsides', reflecting upon their predecessors. It is crucial to see the anti-realist nature of this dialectical solution, unlike that of Carnap's. For meaning in Dummett's model is intimately bound with practice – both philosophical and 'ordinary', first-order – and since every new 'outside' uses novel philosophical terminology, what we get – as with the constructivist view of mathematics – is a constant shift, or better, *Aufhebung*, in the meanings of our vocabulary – philosophical and 'ordinary'. But Dummett's solution – unlike Hegel's – leaves this process always open-ended, perpetually aiming at truth, never finally gaining it. This, indeed, is one respect in which Dummett's conception of philosophy, language and philosophical language represents, in Derrida's words, 'the eve of Platonism. Which can also, naturally, be thought of as the morning after Hegelianism.'

We have seen the intimate link between Dummett's conception of metaphysics and semantics, his anti-realism, the room he makes for philosophical language, his belief in systematic philosophical work, his will to appeal to philosophy as a tool for change and the unavoidable result of all this – the open-ended nature of philosophical truth. I will close this section with one example of Dummett's use of a philosophical term. This example shows the connection between Dummett's positions just described and our discussions on similar topics in Parts I and II. In *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, Dummett defends his appeal to the Fregean notion of sense. The details of this defence are far beyond the scope of our discussion – they cover over seventy pages of his book, and deal with questions of subjectivity and objectivity, proper names, tone and literary effects, etc.[13] My aim here is only to focus on Dummett's appeal to a notion, which is 'theoretical' (rather than 'ordinary') – that is, it is a paradigmatic example of an item in the philosophical vocabulary that is meta-linguistic, semantic, and hence metaphysical: the notion of sense.

'Sense' is needed, according to Dummett, as a result of the link between informative content, the justification of statements and the continual revision of our body of knowledge. 'If we simply amassed knowledge in a linear, cumulative manner, no attention to sense would be necessary' (FPL: 104), and the notion of reference alone would suffice for a theoretical account of language. But since this is not the case, the references of the expressions contained in the statements whose justification we are after cannot be taken to be fixed in advance. 'Sense' gives us the stability we need to reconstruct parts of our language. 'The notion of sense is thus of importance, not so much in giving an account of our linguistic practice, but as a means of systematising it' (FPL: 105). Systematisation, then, is – as we have already seen – required for revision; but in his discussion of 'sense' Dummett links it explicitly also with the role of meta-language as a tool for theoretical reflection and revision. The meta-language – in our case, the use of 'sense' – serves as a reminder of the role of the ideal in our language. This semantic, metaphysical fragment of language creates 'an ideal picture', and hence a distance from non-reflective use and a goal to which our practice can approximate. The words 'true' and 'false' are similarly used in the

theory of meaning as ideals, Dummett notes, as are the intuitionists' proposals for changes in the established use of certain expressions (FPL: 108f.). In reflective moods, all these must be separated from our 'object language' and form a philosophical language. However, this *prima facie* Platonist tone is immediately mitigated by Dummett's Hegelian strokes. He thus reminds us that this separation itself is merely an ideal. Here is how our circle is closed, and the metaphysical picture of the philosophical One is opened, disintegrated:

> It is . . . unreal to maintain a sharp distinction between the practice of speaking a language and the construction of a theory of its working. . . . [W]hen the language is our natural language, such a separation of object-language and metalanguage is only a picture. In practice, we cannot effect it, for the simple reason that we do not have any alternative language, richer than natural language, to employ as meta-language: any new linguistic device, of superior expressive power, or with richer conceptual or ontological content, which we may introduce automatically becomes part of our own language, that is, of the natural language which we happen to speak, and, in view of the intercommunication between speakers of different natural languages, corresponding expressions rapidly become part of every natural language. This means, of course, that we can never succeed in constructing a complete theory of meaning or semantics for any natural language: but that is of no importance.
>
> (FPL: 106)

The case of translation

Part of the picture just described had to do with the intercommunication between speakers of different languages, i.e. with the notion of translation. Let us then examine Dummett's view of philosophical language from yet another angle, reading his criticism of Quine's ideas on the indeterminacy of translation. The issue was touched upon *en passant* in our previous discussion of Quine's reaction to Carnap's modernism. But here, it is on the modernist stance of the *Tractatus* that I wish to embark. Translation is not a major issue in the *Tractatus*, yet its appearance is archetypal:

> A gramophone record, the musical idea, the written notes, and the sound-waves, all stand to one another in the same internal relation of depicting that holds between language and the world.
>
> They are all constructed according to a common logical pattern . . .
>
> There is a general rule by means of which the musician can obtain the symphony from the score, and which makes it possible to derive the symphony from the groove on the gramophone record, and, using the first rule, to derive the score again. That is what constitutes the inner similarity between these things which seem to be constructed in such entirely different ways. And that rule is the law of projection which projects the symphony into the language of musical notation. It is the rule for translating this language into the language of gramophone records.

> The possibility of all imagery, of all our pictorial modes of expression, is contained in the logic of depiction.
>
> (T: 4.014, 4.0141, 4.015)

> In a proposition there must be exactly as many distinguishable parts as in the situation that it represents.
>
> The two must possess the same logical (mathematical) multiplicity . . .
>
> This mathematical multiplicity, of course, cannot itself be the subject of depiction. One cannot get away from it when depicting.
>
> (T: 4.04, 4.041)

What we see in the above passages is the strong linkage between a certain – traditional – view of translation as projection according to a rule, and two prominent Tractarian themes: the logic of depiction and the impossibility of representing it, the 'closure of representation', to borrow Derrida's term. This is indeed the bottom line: there can be no outside from which one (philosopher) can depict, or describe, or say, the form that is common to the texts translated. The translation simply lays it in front of our eyes.

Quine's treatment of language through the issue of translation reflects a similar denial of the possibility of standing 'outside' of language in order to understand its mechanism. Yet as we have seen in his debate with Carnap, Quine's position originates from a source opposite to that of the *Tractatus*. He rules out the idea of an external viewpoint from which language can be inspected on the basis of post-modernist, rather than modernist, arguments. His attack of the analytic-synthetic distinction is closely connected to this denial, as we have seen in our discussion of Carnap. Now although for Quine translation is very far from being a simple procedure of tracing similarity in logical composition, or in mathematical multiplicity, he does hold the view that translations expose essential properties of language, bypassing the traps of meta-language. Realising that we are always speaking from within language, the closest thing to an external perspective can be achieved through examining ways of moving and manoeuvring between different languages.

This approach may sound reminiscent of the one Derrida expresses in his famous essay on translation, *Les Tours de Babel*, which is a reading of Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'. Benjamin presents in that article a view of translation that is much less traditional than the crude one in the *Tractatus*. No wonder – since the *Tractatus*' aim is at the clearest expression of the traditional metaphysical conception, in order to expose its vanity. Benjamin presents his own modernist understanding of language and its relation to the world. I shall not discuss it here, but merely remark briefly that Derrida's reaction is directed, among other things, to Benjamin's mystical version of realism, that is expressed in his essay on the task of the translator. The essence of language, Derrida suggests, is seen through the phenomenon of Babel:

> language itself as a Babelian event, a language that is not the universal language in the Leibnizian sense . . . it is the being-language of the language,

tongue or language *as such*, that unity without any self-identity, which makes for the fact that there are languages and that they are languages.

<div align="right">(Derrida 1991: 30)</div>

This essence of language is naturally seen only from within a particular language, since otherwise its translatable character as such would be lost: it would be replaced by an adherence to a source, an origin, an ideal. And such an ideal is precisely what is left 'within brackets' in the process of the translation, for 'no other completeness in the world can represent this one' (*ibid.*). Is Quine's post-modernism, then, similar to Derrida's, when the issue of translation is at stake? I think it is not.

Dummett discusses Quine's notion of translation in 'The Significance of Quine's Indeterminacy Thesis'.[14] By 'the indeterminacy thesis' he means, of course, Quine's thesis on the indeterminacy of translation; but Dummett's target is not the issue of translation *per se*. He aims at understanding Quine's model of meaning, his philosophy of language. He therefore complains about the indirect means chosen by Quine: the fact that his semantical account is embodied in a discussion of schemes of translation from one language into another rather than being a direct meta-linguistic account, an explicit presentation of his views on meaning:

> The direct account . . . sets out what knowledge of L consists in in a way in which translation scheme does not, and is therefore philosophically more interesting. Unless it were maintained that a direct account, in the sense here envisaged, is in principle impossible – and it is wholly obscure on what grounds such a denial could be based – the interest of any thesis concerning the form which a translation scheme must take or the criteria by which it should be judged must principally lie in the consequences such a thesis has for the character of a direct account.
>
> <div align="right">(TOE: 384f.)</div>

Prima facie, Dummett seems to ignore the most fundamental Quinean point: that a meta-language cannot have a privileged status – that it is nothing but another language, hence that translation is the only means of reflection about the language L, or at least the primary one. The truth is, however, that rather than ignoring Quine's point of departure, Dummett challenges it. Having extracted the two main theses of Quine's views regarding translation – the thesis of indeterminacy of translation and the 'inextricability thesis', according to which 'convention and experience cannot be disentangled as determinants of our linguistic dispositions' (TOE: 387) – Dummett proves that these can be dealt with by reference to one language alone, i.e. that the problems these theses point at can be posed, analysed and solved by speakers of the language, the same language L, without a necessary detour via a foreign one. 'The thesis of indeterminacy of translation constitutes merely a picturesque way of expressing a thesis that could be stated by reference to the language L alone' (TOE: 389). Translation – as it serves Quine – becomes a *metaphor*, then. Quine is thus presented as deceivingly intimating that a direct analysis is impossible, through his predilection for giving us an image, where a direct conceptual analysis is sought. We shall shortly see that when Dummett himself appeals to the notion of translation, this is a 'primary' rather than 'secondary'

appeal: translation there cannot be reduced, precisely as it cannot in Derrida's conception. By formulating Quine's theses in one language, L, Dummett not only challenges Quine's assumption, he also offers an insight regarding the relationship between philosophical images and conceptual analyses: we learn that Quine's 'picturesque way' is possible only because we can understand its conceptual message.

I shall not go into Dummett's analysis of Quine's theses in detail, but a few points are worth mentioning. Assuming that Quine's aim is neither the known fact that natural languages are indeterminate nor the trivial observation that exact translation is impossible, Dummett concentrates on Quine's view regarding speakers' ability to detect an indeterminacy of practice underlying a disagreement between their linguistic judgements, and to convince each other to accept their own standards. Dummett's point is that given enough awareness and reflection, a divergence in use – and its source – may be brought into light, although the source of the disagreement itself cannot necessarily be removed, having to do, perhaps, with disagreements about very fundamental issues. But this latter difficulty is not the one Quine is preoccupied with; rather, he is interested in what he takes to be an impossibility in principle to track down the difference at all. This belief Dummett deems as stemming from a failure to appreciate the strength of natural language, which is, in this respect, essentially and deeply different from formal languages. Quine is, perhaps, misled by a false analogy between natural and formal languages.

> Although we cannot clamber off the raft to examine it at leisure from terra firma, natural language is rich in devices (of which the notion of meaning, which is of course a word of natural language, is one) to enable two disputants to render some section of the raft relatively stable while they examine some other part of it. . . . We should also reflect on the fact that natural language is not closed in a way which a formal language is. Relative to a given interpretation, the conceptual resources of a formal language are fixed: its power of expression may be enriched only from the outside. Natural language has, by contrast, the power to enrich itself: new concepts – sometimes of fundamental character – are repeatedly being introduced.
>
> (TOE: 399)

What we get is a sequel to the debate between Quine and Carnap, discussed above, in Part I. We saw that whereas Carnap appealed to a notion of meta-language, Quine insisted that there might be nothing like a language external to ours to appeal to. We also saw Dummett pointing at a third way: Quine is right in claiming that no language is really external to natural language; yet Carnap is right in his claim that a language of reflection is necessary and cannot be ruled out. The language of reflection, the language of philosophy, stays within natural language, yet it forms a special zone, 'a *theory* explaining how the rest of the language worked' (MV: 133, original emphasis).

At this point it may be useful to remind ourselves of that famous paragraph from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* dealing with the question of meta-philosophy:

> One might think: if philosophy speaks of the use of the word 'philosophy' there must be a second-order philosophy. But it is not so: it is, rather, like the case of

orthography, which deals with the word 'orthography' among others without then being second-order.

<div align="right">(PI: § 121)</div>

Interpretations of this paragraph tend to emphasise Wittgenstein's view of philosophy as a therapeutic activity, yielding no philosophical statements, or results. Philosophy cannot serve as a basis for a second-order philosophy since there is no 'object-language' for such a second-order language. The so-called 'object-language' – the language of philosophy – is nothing but a ghost language, as is the language of metaphilosophy.[15]

This is a plausible reading of Wittgenstein, taking into account his frequent pronouncements against philosophical language's idleness, its being a language 'on holiday'. The cost of this reading is, though, that with it, the possibility of a reflective language is driven off the board. There is no second-order language at all. At best, there is a series of question marks, or even some locally formulated insights, masquerading as genuine sentences. This perhaps is a way of expressing Quine's position too.[16]

Thus Quine and Wittgenstein, adhering to our motto in this part – 'Language is, after all, not a cage' – offer a picture of a whole with no limits, no outside, and precisely because of this, no reflective viewpoint.[17]

Other paragraphs from the *Investigations*, though, offer different possibilities – both in reading Wittgenstein's intention and in making room for philosophical language. Here is a small sample of such paragraphs:

> Logic . . . takes its rise . . . from an urge to understand the basis, or essence, of everything empirical. Not, however, as if to this end we had to hunt out new facts; it is, rather, of the essence of our investigation that we do not seek to learn anything *new* by it. We want to *understand* something that is already in plain view. For *this* is what we seem in some sense not to understand.
>
> <div align="right">(PI: § 89)</div>

> Our investigation is therefore a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing misunderstandings away.
>
> <div align="right">(PI: § 90)</div>

> But I want to say: we misunderstand the role of the ideal in our language. . . . [W]e . . . are dazzled by the ideal and therefore fail to see the actual use of the word 'game' clearly.
>
> <div align="right">(PI: § 100)</div>

> The *preconceived idea* of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole examination round. (One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need.)
>
> The Philosophy of logic speaks of sentences and words in exactly the sense in which we speak of them in ordinary life when we say e.g. 'Here is a Chinese

sentence', or 'No, that only looks like writing; it is actually just an ornament' and so on.

> We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm. [*note in margin:* Only it is possible to be interested in a phenomenon in a variety of ways]. But we talk about it as we do about the pieces in chess when we are stating the rules of the game, not describing their physical properties.
>
> The question 'What is a word really?' is analogous to 'What is a piece in chess?'

<div align="right">(PI: § 108)</div>

What Wittgenstein seems to be admitting here into his language, which Quine prohibits, is a role for such notions as essence, grammar, logic and the ideal in our language: the semantical-metaphysical notions. Ultimately, translation for Quine is not essentially different from empirical discovery – on the contrary, it is on a par with scientific activities: the linguist is virtually an anthropologist, and the fact that it is language that he wants to arrange into his scheme is inessential. This is the very idea of Quine's holism. To put it differently, in Quine's recurrent formulations of his views on language, the notion of structure is lacking, or is deeply concealed. Indeed Dummett, analysing the earlier views presented in 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', blames Quine for not doing enough by way of preventing an interpretation of his position as advancing two contradictory theses. One (which Quine does indeed hold, according to Dummett) is that '*language forms an articulated structure* with some sentences lying at the periphery and others at varying levels within the interior' (TOE: 376, my emphasis).[18]

The other (which is mistakenly attributed to Quine, Dummett believes) urges the abolition of any formulation of the analytic-synthetic distinction. But 'a thesis which denies the existence of analytic sentences calls in question the existence of any inferential links between non-analytic sentences' (TOE: 377), thus undermining the idea of structure. Moving on to the later *Word and Object*, Dummett points at a similar difficulty. Quine ignores the privileged status of schemes of translation, i.e. of grammar, of convention. By bringing home the notion of radical translation – by applying it to the situation of two speakers of the same language – he obliterates a crucial distinction, that between the status of a set of rules and the status of an individual's interpretation of it. The set of rules need not be explicit, determinate, sharply bounded, a model of 'crystalline purity'. It can be ambiguous, ill-defined, even self-contradictory. Yet its special status must be acknowledged. What Quine ignores is the role of the ideal in our language, or *the way in which logic uses ideas*.

Holism is often portrayed as offering a more flexible, less dogmatic picture of language, than the one insisting on the distinction in status between grammatical and empirical. It is argued that by eradicating the boundaries between these categories, by letting the contingent sphere mix irrevocably with that of the logico-linguistic rules and conventions, we get a pragmatic structure, a theory in constant flux, in the spirit of Quine's closing words in 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'.

Dummett challenges this common opinion as well. He argues that Quine has not succeeded in replacing a static account of language by a dynamic one, one that aims at explaining linguistic change.

> Thus, while a supporter of the view which admitted analyticity as a feature of language was at the disadvantage that he had no clear account of the way in which the changes he was forced to regard as changes of meaning came about, Quine's account resolved the problem only by denying that there was any genuine linguistic change at all: all that had happened is a very radical revision of truth-assignments.
>
> (TOE: 411)

Quine sees in language a holistic theory. Dummett evokes Frege's more organic, structured or fractured account of language, thus leaving room for different kinds of status. He then complements and revises Frege's account in the light of intuitionist insights, in order to account for linguistic change and development, through the theory of the creative subject. As we have seen above, intuitionism yields an evolutionary process, whose result is that the meanings of our statements are always subject to shift. It is now Quine's turn to accuse his opponent in appealing to metaphors. Intuitionism, a view belonging to the larger family of conceptualist philosophical stands, cannot but 'assume universals, classes, irreducibly as values of their bound variables' (Quine 1953: 127). It conceals this fact using the metaphor of the creative subject.

> [I]n the conceptualist theory the universe of classes is limited cheerfully and drastically in terms of a metaphor of progressive creation. It would be a mistake to suppose that this metaphor really accounts for the classes, or explains them away. . . . The heroic or quixotic position is that of the nominalist, who forswears quantification over universals, for example, classes, altogether.
>
> (Quine 1953: 127f.)

But what would a non-metaphorical account of linguistic change be? This precisely was the question with which we started the present section. Quine's advocacy of nominalism is overtly supported by his scientific ascent, as is his rejection of those terms which seem to him too reminiscent of Platonist or Aristotelian notions, such as 'essence'. It is of course the same tendency that leads him also in his insistence on translation as expressing the right account of language, vs. a direct, meta-linguistic one, that must acknowledge the meaning of 'meaning'. Dummett's positions too are intimately interconnected. His intuitionism yields the required 'metaphor' of linguistic change and makes room for a dynamic and direct account of language. The same move also enables him to overcome the false dilemma between the two alternative static accounts: the Platonist conception of rules, grammar and convention, and the nominalist one, in which these notions lose their privileged power completely. And since such intuitionism creates the room needed for 'grammar', there is also room for reflection about it:

> We do not, as it were, merely wait to see what our linguistic reactions are to unexpected developments; rather, the process of uncovering the underlying

mechanisms of our language, in order to determine whether, and how, our assessments of truth-value require revision, is one on which we are constantly engaged, and is intertwined with that of using the language inferentially in accordance with those mechanisms. The process is a quite familiar one, and is carried out, not only by linguists and philosophers of language and of science, but also by theorists of all kinds and by people engaging in ordinary discourse. Intertwined though it be, and partly prescriptive in character as it also undoubtedly is, the distinction between a first-order use of language and a second-order use to comment on or to systematize the first-order use of another part of the language is neither obscure nor esoteric. Quine's account demands an obliteration of this distinction.

(TOE: 414)

Notice how close in spirit this paragraph is to the ones quoted earlier from Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. For Wittgenstein does hint at the dynamic nature of any appeal to grammar, linguistic convention, etc. His critical remarks point to the right way of understanding the role of the ideal in our language. This way should avoid the dilemma of choosing between both static accounts: the one that totally reduces the ideal and the one that casts it outside of language, to the realm of crystalline purity.[19]

Philosophical language is part of our language, not external to it. The language of reflection is a product of our linguistic abilities, of the grammar of language, meaning, rule – and grammar, too. Spoken and written philosophy, the language of reflection, is thus but a sector of the rest of language. It is not marked *a priori*. Coming back now to PI: § 121, we can see that Wittgenstein's view, rather than obliterating the language of philosophy, is that such language should never lose sight of what makes it a *language*. There is no second-order philosophy precisely because philosophical language is already second-order, and its character as a language of reflection is such that any refection on itself is already included in and by itself.[20]

This echoes Hegel's insight brought at the beginning of our discussion of Dummett, that it is '*by the free act of thought that it occupies a point of view, in which it is for its own self, and thus gives itself an object of its own production*' (Hegel 1975: 36, original emphasis).

Thus read, Wittgenstein's views are closer to those of Dummett than to those of Quine. The deep issue setting Dummett apart from Wittgenstein remains, then, the desired attitude towards systematisation. Does the fact that the language of philosophy must always remember its character as language, our language, entail that philosophy should never aim at a systematic formulation? Is it only viable through 'philosophical remarks', without forcing on it a 'single direction'? But these questions, we saw earlier, are closely connected to the ones regarding the task of the philosopher: that of confronting vague images with clear concepts: understanding the pictures holding us captive, or challenging them?

This takes us back to the topic with which we opened this section, the question of the notion of translation as essential to language. Having regained a language of

reflection, we can see how crucial the notion of translation is to understanding what language is. In our discussion of Husserl and Frege's neglect of the social aspect of language, these philosophers' basic attitude to language as idiolect was contrasted to that of Dummett, for whom it is *translatability* that must lie at the basis of the theory of meaning. Dummett indeed acknowledges Quine's contribution to our understanding of meaning in bringing to our attention the centrality of the notion of translation in any account of language.[21]

Yet he believes that Quine eventually retreated to the idiolect, since his appeal to this notion is actually metaphorical, aiming to be a substitute for a theory of meaning for one language, since, famously, '[o]n deeper reflection, radical translation begins at home' (Quine 1969: 46). Thus Quine failed to exploit the full potential of his own insight, namely that 'the existence of accepted standard translations between languages is itself a feature of linguistic practice of which account would have to be taken in any complete description of that practice' (OAP: 153). The appeal to the social factor draws us away from the subject's idiolect and towards its opposite: it is 'the maximal set of languages connected by the existence of standard translations between them (that is, of a large fragment of one language into one of the others)' (*ibid.*). The notion of translation – between languages rather than idiolects – is therefore key to establishing the basic unit for the theory of meaning, that is, to delimiting but also opening the scope of 'logic' and attributing it to the widest conceivable community.

11 Derrida

The stable instability of language and philosophy

A matter of life and death

Derrida's 'Tympan', the opening essay of *Margins of Philosophy*, begins with three quotes from Hegel. The second and the third quotes are remarks about the essence of and the need for philosophy. The first and leading quote, though, concerns the logic of thesis and antithesis, and associates it with the mutually conflicting assertions, 'that a *limit is* [*eine Grenze ist*], and that the limit has a beyond with which however it stands in relation [*in Beziehung steht*]' (Hegel's paragraphs from *Science of Logic* are quoted in MP: ix). The tension manifested here in the philosophical concept of limit sets up Derrida's overall agenda, as it is explicitly expressed in an interview given to Henri Ronse:

> I try to keep myself at the *limit* of philosophical discourse. I say limit and not death, for I do not at all believe in what today is so easily called the death of philosophy (nor, moreover, in the simple death of whatever – the book, man, or god, especially since, as we all know, what is dead wields a very specific power).
>
> (Derrida 1971: 6, original emphasis)

Margin, limit, but not death. It is through Derrida's attitude to these notions that I wish to work out his post-modernist way of overcoming the modernist silence predicament and of reopening a space for philosophical language. In order to do that, a reminder of the relationship between limit, the life/death dichotomy and the status of the language of philosophy according to modernists and pre-modernists is due. Derrida's 'Tympan' deals extensively with these connections, as conceived by 'philosophy', i.e. by philosophy as traditionally practised. For Derrida regards it as essential for any version of traditional philosophical discourse to aspire 'to know and to master its margin, to define the line' (MP: xxiv). Moreover, the margin, '*its* margin, *its* outside are empty, are outside: a negative about which there seems to be nothing to do, a negative without effect in the text' (*ibid.*) Now Derrida argues that this logic, the logic of the limit, the urge to be master of the limit, defining it, annihilating its 'outside' as totally irrelevant – yet being in constant contact with it – is closely connected to an acceptance of the life/death dichotomy as a leading metaphor. It is crucial to realise that this characterisation of philosophical discourse

encompasses all phases of philosophy, including those pre-modernist and modernist stations we have gone through. We may recall, first, that Wittgenstein attributed to Frege an attitude that closely connected the life/death metaphor to what gives meaning to a sign. Frege's dogma was for the later Wittgenstein – in 1933 – paradigmatic of traditional philosophy, including the one exposed in the *Tractatus* as leading to its own death. Written symbols, according to this conception, 'would be dead and utterly uninteresting, whereas they obviously have a kind of life' (BB: 4). Sense, or thought, makes a proposition live. The natural conclusion from this picture would be that 'what must be added to the dead signs in order to make a live proposition is something immaterial'; but, Wittgenstein says, 'if we had to name anything which is the life of the sign, we should have to say that it was its *use*' (*ibid.*, original emphasis). This later suggestion defies the need to appeal to an external source of meaning and life, i.e. to the logic of the limit that stands at the basis of traditional conceptions of language and of philosophy. It marks Wittgenstein's later alternative, the playful conception of language. To Derrida's version of such an alternative we shall soon arrive.

But it is of course in the *Tractatus*, the heroic attempt to encapsulate the gist of traditional philosophy in seven pronouncements, that the connection between limits, the life/death dichotomy and philosophical language is best exposed. In our discussion of the *Tractatus* we have seen that it portrays philosophy as founded on a cluster of interconnected concepts and distinctions. A necessary yet impossible *external* viewpoint reigns over all of them. What is outside sometimes appears as the human subject (or its eye), sometimes as God or father; sometimes its role is to confer meaning on the inside – on the world, on life; sometimes it is to enable logic and rationality by drawing a limit to them. All these functions manifest Otherness and its crucial metaphysical role in different forms. We have also seen how essential to this conception of philosophy – the Western conception of philosophy, by and large – are realist assumptions and dogmas concerning representation. It is the combination of all these intertwined ingredients that brings philosophy to its unavoidable death, according to the *Tractatus*, since in order to represent representational form, as it should, it must be positioned in this non-location, outside of the world, of life, of meaning.

What is common to modernist conceptions of philosophical language is a realisation of this predicament. Language, or more exactly, logical, conceptual language, the representational medium, is found inadequate for expressing 'the miracle of the existence of the world', in Wittgenstein's words. It can only act within the limits, inside – but cannot touch what lies outside. Thus what philosophy aims at needs to be shown, rather than said; presented, rather than represented – by art, i.e. by what succeeds at breaking the conceptual constraints dictated by language.[1] A version of this insight is endorsed by Artaud. For him, poetical language and bodily and forceful theatre are the means for rediscovering metaphysical meanings, for expressing life's first principles, or rather life itself as a first principle. Artaud, we recall, defied the rigidity of the limits of language, of words and their ordinary meanings. Unlike Wittgenstein, he challenged the closure they seem to be dictating, the closure of representation, and hence pushed further and further

towards transcendence, by an endless procedure of expanding, an 'indefinite move-
ment of finitude, of the unity of life and death, of difference, of original repetition,
that is, of the origin of tragedy as the absence of a simple origin' (WD: 248). Yet
Derrida, we have seen, has pointed out that the Nietzschean emphasis on the
dualism between life and death, becoming and being, still governed Artaud's
oeuvre, making it impossible for him to fully overcome the dogmas of Western
philosophy.

Now here, in 'Tympan', Artaud is accorded the role of the total stranger, the one
who has transcended every conceivable limit. Derrida quotes Artaud's poem,
'Hematographic Music', preceding it with the following statement:

> To luxate, to tympanize philosophical autism is never an operation *within* the
> concept and without some carnage of language. Thus it breaks open the roof,
> the closed spiral unity of the palate. It proliferates *outside* to the point of no
> longer being *understood*. It is no longer *a* tongue.
>
> (MP: xv, n.)

Artaud's metaphysical language is here classified as something along the lines of
Wittgenstein's 'inarticulate sound'. In 1929, Wittgenstein dictated to Schlick a
comment regarding Heidegger's famous expression, 'das Nichts nichtet':

> We wish to begin philosophy with something that should serve as a foundation
> for all that follows, for all sciences, yet it should not serve as a 'foundation'
> simply in the sense of a basic layer of bricks in a house. . . . From this ambiva-
> lence arises the need to begin philosophy with an inarticulate sound.
>
> (TS: 302)

Wittgenstein's main concern here is philosophy's relation to other discourses, to
what he calls in general 'sciences'. 'Sciences', we remember, is Wittgenstein's catch-
word for philosophy's Other: 'Philosophy is not one of the natural sciences. (The
word "philosophy" must mean something whose place is above or below the natural
sciences, not beside them.)' (T: § 4.111). Wittgenstein's question is one about loca-
tion: is philosophy 'inside' or 'outside', immanent or transcendental to 'sciences'?
And how could it occupy either location, if what it really aims at is occupying both
locations at once? An inarticulate sound exemplifies this strange predicament, being
both a sound, belonging in a way to language, or better, to the origin of language,
yet being still inarticulate, non-conceptual. Thus what for Wittgenstein is no longer
a tongue, just an inarticulate sound, is materialised in a voice. The voice speaks
(from) the limit. It captures the moment sought by philosophers, that unrealisable
moment of convergence, for a subject, of words and world. And indeed, for Derrida,
the logic of the limit is the logic of the voice, and overcoming both must come
through the notion of writing, of 'différance'.

Derrida launched his meticulous analysis of the above interconnections with his
critical interpretation of Husserl. The first steps were introduced in our discussion
of the way Frege and Husserl's strict emphasis on the logical aspects of language

made their conception of language resemble a monologue, rather than a full blown language. In Husserl's *Logical Investigations* this result was born out of his insistence on the distinction between indication and pure expression, the latter consisting in what is relevant to logical discourse. 'Pure expression will be the pure active intention (spirit, *psychē*, life, will) of an act of meaning (*bedeuten*) that animates a speech whose content (*Bedeutung*) is present' (SP: 40); but this entails that indication, or virtually any other part of language that has to do with communication, with someone other than the speaking self, is 'the process of death at work in signs' (*ibid.*). Thus Husserl represents, *prima facie*, a philosophical attitude that is the exact opposite of Artaud's: while for Husserl the indicative part of language is its death, it is precisely this part that introduces life into language, according to Artaud. For Artaud, uncovering and unleashing the unconscious, animal forces that make language possible and meaningful is the metaphysician's main task: this is the moment when presentation and representation meet and the source of life reached. However, digging a bit deeper, Derrida uncovers what is implicitly common to Husserl and Artaud: the relics of the metaphysics of presence they both tried so hard to suppress, in their different ways. Of phenomenology Derrida says that it 'can only make sense if a pure and primordial presentation is possible and given in the original' (SP: 45n.); but that is of course true of Artaudian metaphysics as well, as we have seen in Part I. In both cases a moment of 'pure presentation', of what Derrida later on calls 'auto-affection', is the leading principle, the principle that gives life to signs, and requires the exclusion of what is taken to be the death working in signs: in Artaud's case, the conceptual, and in Husserl's, what prevents the conceptual from appearing. In both cases, then, there is an appeal to full and simple presence, and that, Derrida says, 'makes of phenomenology as accomplice to classical psychology – indeed constitutes their common metaphysical presupposition' (*ibid.*). But a moment before we switch to psychology let us see how the voice comes in, and then leaves.

Derrida conceptualises Wittgenstein's intuition: there is a strong connection between voice, presence and ideal form.

> An ideal object is an object whose showing may be repeated indefinitely, whose presence to *Zeigen* is indefinitely reiterable precisely because freed from all mundane spatiality, it is a pure noema that I can express without having, at least apparently, to pass through the world. In this sense the phenomenological voice . . . does not break with the order of *Zeigen* but belongs to the same system and carries through its function. . . . Phonic signs . . . are heard . . . by the subject who proffers them in an absolute proximity of their present.
>
> (SP: 75f.)

Thus the voice is the best *expression* of the ideality that characterises logos. It captures precisely the moment sought by both Husserl and Artaud, the moment of convergence between presentation and representation: the origin, life. Note that although Derrida's words are meant to capture the spirit of Husserl's phenomenology, they are strikingly similar to what he says in his discussion of

Artaud in 'La parole soufflée' (WD: ch. 6). For, despite the huge differences, despite the contradictory emphases, what is common to Artaud and Husserl is decisive. Note also how similar Derrida's following words are to the later Wittgenstein's characterisation of both Frege and Heidegger's implicit assumptions, quoted above:

> The signifier, animated by my breath and the meaning-intention . . . is in absolute proximity to me. The living act, the life-giving act, the *Lebendigkeit*, which animates the body of the signifier and transforms it into a meaningful expression, the soul of language, seems not to separate itself from itself, from its own self-presence. It does not risk death in the body of a signifier that is given over to the world and the visibility of space. It can show the ideal object or ideal *Bedeutung* connected to it without venturing outside ideality, outside the interiority of self-present life.
>
> (SP: 78f.)

All the ingredients are here: voice and signs, life and death, interior and exterior, presentation and representation. This is the logic of the limit that Derrida sets out to defy by his notion of 'différance', which 'produces sameness as self-relation within self-difference; it produces sameness as the nonidentical' (SP: 82). This is Derrida's own 'linguistic turn': introducing writing, rather than speaking, as better expressing the 'essence' of language, thus breaking the metaphysics of the limit.

This logic of limit, life and death stretches far beyond the specific philosophical figures we have met. It is essential for Derrida to cross the limit and analyse the philosophical pictures leading writers who are usually considered at the margin of the traditional philosophical curriculum. Freud – undoubtedly a key figure in modernist thought – serves as an example for Derrida in his treatment of bipolarity. In his 'To Speculate – On "Freud"', Derrida discusses Freud's 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle', written in 1921, a year before that famous *annus mirabilis* of modernism. He dwells upon the paradox ensuing from Freud's distinction, in his article, between the pleasure principle and the reality (or death) principle. Marian Hobson rightly argues that Derrida's point in this discussion of the pleasure principle is 'negotiating in non-exclusive fashion between the exclusive and non-exclusive negations' (Hobson 1998: 165). The expression 'non-exclusive' occurs here twice. The former qualifies Derrida's manner of philosophising; but in order to understand it, we should first elaborate on the latter occurrence of 'non-exclusive'. 'Non-exclusive negation' is Derrida's answer to the strictness of the exclusive life-death dichotomy, as it guides Freud in his essay. According to Derrida, far from being an opposition to the pleasure principle, the reality principle should in fact be seen as a modification of it:

> [I]t is by limiting the possible intensity of pleasure or un-pleasure that the PP conquers its mastery. The PP takes its profits only from moderation. . . . If it is to assure its mastery, the principle *of* pleasure therefore first must do so *over* pleasure and at the expense *of* pleasure. . . . Pleasure loses in *measure* itself: in which it brings its principle to triumph. . . . It loses on every turn, it wins on every turn *by measure*: its unleashed intensity would destroy it immediately if it

did not submit itself to the moderating stricture, to measure itself. . . . It limits itself in order to increase itself. But if it limits itself, it does not increase itself. If it limits itself absolutely, it disappears. Inversely, if it can be put thus, if it liberates something as close as possible to the *pp* (a theoretical fiction), thus if *it does not limit itself*, not *at all* [pas du tout], it limits itself absolutely: absolute discharge, disbanding, nothingness or death.

(PC: 400f., original emphases)

Freud, Derrida says, could not overcome the opposition between 'pleasure and unpleasure, life and death, within and beyond' (*ibid.*) The logic of contradiction held him captive, but involved him in self-defeating formulations. Derrida resolves these tensions by abolishing this opposition, i.e. by introducing the 'non-exclusive' negation. But before examining this resolution, let us leave Freud's article for a moment and dwell a little more on exclusive negation.

Derrida, throughout his writings, develops this notion, plays with it, and stretches it to cover different discourses, in order to see how deeply it is embedded in them. The issue that comes up again and again is one of domination and control. Thus philosophy, in its constitutive desire to understand – i.e. to master – everything, has always transgressed the limit it had posed itself. '*Its own limit* had not to remain foreign to it. Therefore it has appropriated the concept for itself; it has believed that it controls the margin of its volume and that it thinks its other' (MP: x). However, the crux of the matter is that no such control is possible. Philosophy's need for its margin and what lies beyond it frustrates every attempt at stopping the external from penetrating inside. The border police cannot be effective, and its guarding mission is revealed as pathetic.

Inside, guarding its limits, is the law. A metonymical chain of terms, substituting one another, ensues from this keyword. King, God, father; stability, rationality; *eidos*, substance; source, voice. All these terms conform to one logic, the logic of the one. The principle of unity lies beneath every case of exclusive negation in philosophy.[2] Derrida's battle against exclusive negation, against the logic of the limit and the life/death distinction, passes through an analysis of the fallacies ingrained in the notion of unity. Some of his initial insights here follow those of Frege in his *Grundlagen*, and of course those of the later Wittgenstein in his treatment of rule-following. Frege was first to expose that the notion of unit is nothing but 'an artful manipulation of language', which is unconsciously adopted by those who wish to account for the foundations of arithmetic without noticing the essential disunity of the notion of unit. The difficulty this notion conceals is that if we use it 'to stand for each of the objects to be numbered, we make the mistake of assigning the same symbol to different things. But if we provide the [unit] with differentiating strokes, it becomes unusable for arithmetic' (FA: § 39). The need for repetition is built into the notion of unit, since it necessarily refers to different occasions, which are then subsumed under one 'law' (or '*eidos*', or 'principle', etc.) as identical, as the same. But if they are seriously treated as the same, they cannot of course be counted! Sameness, in other words, needs plurality, not merely in the sense of Saussure's conceptual analysis of signification through differences, but in a deeper

sense, in a manner that defeats it altogether. This is precisely what Derrida means by talking of sameness as self-relation within self-difference. Now although dealt with by Frege, the inner tension in the notion of sameness did not lead him to forsake the logic of exclusive negation and move to a logic of différance. It was for him only a step in his way to emphasising the significance of an appeal to language – rather than thought – in the course of definitions. For an abstraction like 'unity' must be secondary when our gaze is turned to language. It was Wittgenstein, in his remarks on rule-following, who derived painstaking conclusions from the dismantling of 'unity'. Wittgenstein, throughout his discussions of rules in his later writings, put the emphasis on what he defined already very early in his philosophical career, long before he realised how to implement this vision: 'My method is not to sunder the hard from the soft, but to see the hardness of the soft' (NB: 44e). The oneness of rules is dissolved. Unity is penetrated by difference. And this, of course, is Derrida's point in his article 'Différance', where he analyses the structure of the sign, a structure that 'presupposes that the sign, which defers presence, is conceivable only on the *basis* of the presence that it defers and *moving toward* the deferred presence that it aims to reappropriate' (MP: 9).

Derrida treats the incoherence of the notion of unit as a first bead on a string. The dismantling of unit means for him primarily the fact that it is never fully present. Its strong appeal to presence always hides non-presence, always bears traces pointing at a distance. Other metaphysical notions crumble under a similar adherence to presence, hiding their deeply non-present nature. An outstanding example is the notion of *mnēmē*, live memory as it presents itself, immediately, to the mind. Derrida argues that for live memory to be true, it must repeat truly. 'The true is repeated; it is what is repeated in the repetition, what is represented and present in the representation' (Dis: 111). But once the logic of unity has collapsed, not only that which repeats, *mnēmē*, must split the logic of presence; this is no less true of the repeated source of truth itself, the abstract *eidos* that gives the particular live memory its unity, that which makes it into One. Derrida thus uncovers the way that the external source, the law that dominates numerous particular instances, cannot retain their plurality within itself. They overflow it, and consequently they turn the domination relation upside down: the One becomes dependent on the many. Instability is introduced into the transcendent stabiliser.

This is where we get from the instability immanent to the logic of unity and exclusive negation to the predicament of silence, the nonsensical nature of any language that wishes to be both a logical discourse and a faithful representation of its source. We are by now familiar with the archetypal example of this kind of reasoning, of course: bivalence is the leading principle of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. Without mentioning this example, though, Derrida generalises its devastating conclusion:

> And since one cannot speak of that which enables one to speak . . . one will speak only of that which speaks and of things that, with a single exception, one is constantly speaking of. And since an account or reason cannot be given of what *logos* (account or reason: *ratio*) is accountable or owing *to*, since the capital

cannot be counted nor the chief looked in the eye, it will be necessary, by means
of a discriminative, diacritical operation, to count up the plurality of interests,
returns, products, and offspring.

(Dis: 82f.)

If we follow the logic of exclusive negation, we cannot speak of the one that is the
external, pure and unified source of meaning, of that which is 'beyond'. We can only
speak of what is within, of the plural, the different. This is the *Tractatus*' conclusion.
However, Derrida's conclusion from the same analysis is *not* that while transcendental
talk is abolished as nonsensical, speaking of the worldly is legitimate and full of
sense. What Derrida argues is that since this reasoning – the one aiming at uncov-
ering the vain nature of traditional metaphysics – is itself inherently nonsensical,
incoherent, its fallacies cannot be interpreted as calling for modesty in language, but
for an overall change of our model of language. It is the model governed by the logic
of the limit, the logic of strict dualisms like internal/external, life/death, presenta-
tion/representation, and of course speech/writing, that must be replaced. As we have
seen, the early Wittgenstein's unacknowledged realist, representational dogma
prevented him from turning to an alternative model of language and of philosophy,
having exposed the paradox lying at the basis of traditional philosophy. The alterna-
tive came up only once the realist dogma was discarded, in the late 1920s.

Derrida was never bound by this dogma, and already in his early writings he set
out to offer an alternative way of thinking about language, about philosophy, and
hence about philosophical language: 'To write otherwise' (MP: xxiv). His alternative
vision resembles in its general outline that of the later Wittgenstein, who made
'game' a catchword for understanding both language and philosophy:

Doesn't the analogy between language and games throw light here? . . . And is
there not also the case where we play and – make up the rules as we go along?
And there is even one where we alter them – as we go along.

(PI: § 83)

For Derrida, too, language and philosophy are both guided by an emphasis on *play-
fulness*, 'a play in which whoever loses wins, and in which one loses and wins on
every turn' (MP: 20). Yet Derrida emphasises innumerable times that his playful
alternative does not stand in opposition to seriousness. Rather, his is a serious play,
not a whimsical, arbitrary one; and this conception of serious play thus maintains
'certain necessary relationship with the structural limits of mastery' (MP: 7). The
notions of limit and of mastery bring us back now to our main track.

Our discussion of the fallacy of exclusive logic started from Hobson's remark that
in dealing with Freud's pleasure principle Derrida 'negotiates in a non-exclusive
fashion between the exclusive and non-exclusive negations' (Hobson 1998: 165). It
was the second occurrence of 'non-exclusive' in this phrase that we set out to explain.
'Non-exclusive' here referred to Derrida's criticism of the strictness of the exclusive
life-death dichotomy. But the playful, non-exclusive model, as we may loosely call
Derrida's alternative, cannot totally exclude the exclusive model – otherwise it would

fall back into the logic of the limit and exclusive negation! It must hence, on every turn, both negate and affirm its opponent: both win and lose. This indeed is what Hobson means by the *first* occurrence of 'non-exclusive': a novel way of negotiating. Two steps compose this new way: first, it uncovers the instability inherent to its opponent. It exposes the inescapable traces of the other that this opponent insists on annulling yet must put up with. But the second step is that of reaffirming the indispensability of the opponent's view nevertheless, thus restating its (now inherently instable) stability. This, I believe, is the gist of deconstruction, that movement that combines *de*struction and *con*struction in each single, playful turn.

We may now continue to look at Derrida's treatment of Freud and the pleasure principle. Freud, we saw, is entrapped within 'the opposition between pleasure and unpleasure, life and death, within and beyond' (PC: 401). Derrida resolves the tension immanent to the pleasure principle by abolishing this opposition. What threatened the pleasure principle was its other, the reality principle, which forcefully penetrated its dominion. The problem is removed once the notion of différance is introduced into the Freudian system. Instead of two opposing principles, one dominating the other, we have an awareness of the role of repetition as immanent to pleasure; and repetition yields

> something other than mastery, something completely other. In order to be something completely other, it will have not to oppose itself, will have to not enter into a dialectical relation with the master (life, the PP *as* life, the living PP, the PP alive). It will have to not engage a dialectic of master and slave, for example. This non-mastery equally will have to not enter into a dialectical relation with death, for example, in order to become, as in speculative idealism, the 'true master'.
>
> (PC: 318)

Note the irony in Derrida's words. His solution is presented as the radical other of the logic of otherness, a stark opposition to the logic of opposition. But such a radical other cannot, by definition, win without also losing. For if it presents itself as an opposition, it enters the dialectical move it aims at abolishing. Derrida has a definite aim: to remind us that although we are engaged in a radically different ballgame, we are still playing in the same park. No matter how distant we are from metaphysics, we are, in a certain sense, still within its province; within its province, but at its limit, the limit of philosophical discourse – as we saw in the quote with which we opened our present discussion. And this, of course, is another version of the same irony: Derrida positions himself at the limit by proposing a new logic for philosophical discourse, a logic that defies the logic of limit.

It is from Hegel's assertions on thesis and antithesis that the paradox of the logic of limit is taken. It is of course Hegel who presents us also with the dialectical relation between master and slave (or life and death) – the relation Derrida does not wish to engage, as we have just seen. How is Hegel to be overcome, then? We saw that Dummett overcomes Hegel through adopting the analytic philosophy stance: a structured system that acknowledges certain general principles governing the foundation of

a meaning-theory as primary in every philosophical enterprise. This layered approach enables Dummett to defy Hegel's finality. Derrida's way is different, more radical. At stake is the problematic of *truth*, and it can be approached through the figure of Socrates. Derrida depicts Socrates in terms that echo the Holy Trinity. Socrates, he says, is 'neither a father, even though he takes the father's place, nor a son, even though he is the son's comrade or brother and obeys the paternal voice of God. Socrates is the supplementary relation between father and son' (Dis: 153). Derrida analyses Socrates' role carefully, reminding us of his perpetual double function as both destabiliser and tranquilliser. However, Derrida argues, the Platonic tradition suppressed this contradictory role, and cultivated the figure of Socrates in one privileged route, that of *logos*, thus betraying not only one side of his double identity but moreover, the very fact that the Socratic figure has a stubborn anti-logical grain in it. The Platonic Socrates 'must thus submit to *logos*. And is so doing, it must do violence to itself' (Dis: 154).

Hegel's philosophy suffers from a similar fault. The unity of his dialectics, his craving for resolution as total and final mastery, his allegiance to the problematic of truth, his determination to be 'serious', all these must do violence to his own project precisely because they eventually mark an other in such an exclusive way that contradicts the dialectical principle that is the very heart of the project. In this Hegel follows the Platonic tradition and betrays the playfulness inherent to Socrates – to Socrates *as philosophy freed from the life-death dichotomy*. Hegel's finality is thus exposed as working, despite itself, in the direction of *presence*. This means that it obeys the logic of origin, and hence the source of truth that creates an abyss between life and death.

Read thus, Hegel is closer to Plato than we usually think. And it is with Hegel *cum* Plato that Derrida wishes to avoid a dialectical relation of master and slave; it is against this Hegel, i.e. against Plato, that he wishes to introduce 'something completely other'. Yet knowing very well the other Hegel, the dialectical Hegel, he also knows that he must negotiate with the Platonic Hegel – with Plato, that is – in a non-exclusive fashion. He must read it, or actually write it, otherwise. Thus Derrida's other, to be negated and reaffirmed wearing a new guise – a new garment, with a new texture – is *the Platonic text*. It is crucial to understand the importance of this modification.

> Like any text, the text of 'Plato' couldn't not be involved, at least in a trivial dynamic, lateral manner, with all the words that composed the system of the Greek language. Certain forces of association unite . . . the words 'actually present' in a discourse with all the other words in the lexical system, whether or not they appear as 'words,' that is, as relative verbal units in such discourse. . . . But in going beyond the bounds of that lexicon, we are less interested in breaking through certain limits, with or without cause, than in putting in doubt the right to posit such limits in the first place. In a word, we do not believe that there exists, in all rigor, a Platonic text, closed upon itself, complete with its inside and its outside.
>
> (Dis: 129f.)

Its being a text means, then, that its texture is open-ended. It defies the logic of the limit. The text can never be surveyed, firstly thread by thread and then all at once. It can never be read without an accompanying act of writing. Text, even (or indeed above all) the Platonic text, has no voice. For this mythical source, voice, is either an inarticulate sound, an Artaudian radical otherness, with which no commerce is possible, or already a text, a full-blooded text, not an imaginary Ur-text; and as such it must submit itself to articulate reading. But reading is always 'secondary' to writing. Or better, realising this priority of writing over reading is nothing but realising that reading and writing are on a par, are two mutually entangled actions. This, in a nutshell, is how Derrida conceives of the linguistic turn, how he understands its upshot. The primacy given to language in a philosophical investigation means, first of all, rearranging traditional hierarchies, thus uncovering logical connections hitherto ignored. An analysis that points at the similarity in the logic that governs presence, exclusion, limit, thought, ego and life does precisely this.

The non-exclusive opposition between 'Plato' and deconstruction is dealt extensively and beautifully in Derrida's 'Plato's Pharmacy'. Derrida advances his new vision through a careful reading of Plato's *Phaedrus*, one of the most beautiful philosophical texts ever written. I emphasise this double beauty here because it is important for me to present my present 'mode of presentation' – to emphasise the limited perspective from which I currently look at these rich texts, that offer so much more than is here exposed. My present purpose in appealing to Derrida's text is just to bring to light the connections between the life/death dichotomy, the logic of the limit, Derrida's writing and eventually his way of regaining a language for philosophy.

A leading thread may be the character of Thoth, son of Ra in the Egyptian mythology. Ra is god-king, the hidden sun, creator, father, the source of life. Ra, in short, is the idea of Idea, of *Eidos*, of the external. His son Thoth, however, is not simply his 'opposite' within a logic of exclusive negations. He is indeed the god of death, but also the god of writing, science, numbers, and moreover, the inventor of play. Derrida brings the figure of Thoth into play in his reading of the *Phaedrus* following Socrates, who makes use of it in the dialogue as the inventor of writing, which is meant to serve as a *pharmakon* against memory loss. Yet while the Platonic Socrates treats this representative of representation, of writing, as passive, secondary and inferior to speech and live memory, i.e. as a member in a simple couple within a logic of exclusive negation, Derrida appeals to the Egyptian mythology in order to present Thoth rather as a first bead in an endless metonymical chain that eventually overturns this logic altogether.

> Thoth extends or opposes by repeating or replacing . . . and this messenger-god is truly a god of the absolute passage between opposites. . . . In distinguishing himself from his opposite, Thoth also imitates it, becomes its sign and representative, obeys it and conforms to it, replaces it, by violence if need be. He is thus the father's other, the father, and the subversive movement of replacement. The god of writing is thus at once his father, his son, and himself. He cannot be assigned a fixed spot in the play of differences.
>
> (Dis: 93)

Using a metonymical substitution, Derrida actually replaces the figure of Socrates as he reads it – as against Plato's reading – with the mythological figure of Thoth, which represents philosophy more clearly: 'He would be the mediating movement of dialectics if he did not also mimic it, indefinitely preventing it, through this ironic doubling, from reading some final fulfilment or eschatological reappropriation . . . Every act of his is marked by this unstable ambivalence' (Dis: 93). Socrates, we saw, is also taken as the supplementary relation between father and son. Note how the Holy Trinity is introduced again as inviting, or indeed suggesting, a similar deconstructive move. Derrida intimates that 'the god of nonidentity', 'the floating signifier', is an immanent part of any crucial station of Western thought. Thoth thus rematerialises in the half-material-half-immaterial figure of Christ. This reappearance has a special significance in our context, i.e. in shattering the rigid barrier between life and death through the notion of return:

> This god of resurrection is less interested in life or death than in death as a repetition of life and life as a rehearsal of death, in the awakening of life and in the recommencement of death. This is what *numbers*, of which he is also the inventor and patron, mean.
>
> (Dis: 93)

This smooth passage from Platonism to Christianity regarding the volatility of the life/death dichotomy reveals the depths into which we may look when searching its source. The inherent instability of Christ – man's corrective – reflects a much older, deeply entrenched shakiness right at the foundation of the Western tradition. But no less interesting is the direct continuation, as a matter of course, from the instability just pointed at to the nature of numbers. Numbers offer the best example of the new logic Derrida wishes to advance. We have seen that the notion of unit is paradigmatic in breaking the logic of the limit. In its immanent dependence on recurring instances, which in turn necessitate its 'transcendence', unit both penetrates the world of contingencies and lets it penetrate the 'pure' external realm of the abstract, the source, the law. But numbers defy the logic of life and death not only in their illusive appearance as units, as prime examples of repetition. Their cultural role has been that of arch-stabilisers, the cornerstones of science, because of their ideal nature and their purity. Yet being loyal to their ideal nature means refusing to bestow on them any property of the kind material objects have. Dummett has written extensively on number as an indefinitely extensible concept. The intuitionist conception emphasises the deep difference between definite concepts and concepts, like that of number, that determine an intrinsically infinite totalities. The point is not a scholastic one; it has direct consequences on our conception of matter. For in applying intuitionism to our view of the physical universe we find ourselves in a position where

> the magnitude of any quantity . . . may be taken to be given by a particular real number, which we may at any stage determine to a closer approximation by refinement of the measurement process; but no precise determination of it will

ever be warranted, nor presumed to obtain independently of our incapacity to determine it.

(SL: 444)

Material reality is an open-ended rather than a stable one, then: 'we have no business to assume the existence "in reality" of a specific limit to the theoretically possible sequence of ever narrower determinations' (Dummett 1994: 353). This is the point Derrida drives at with the figure of Thoth, emphasising that numbers, these traditional stabilisers, have no location, are no substance, and cannot be used as a metaphysical backbone of a stable, saturated reality.

At stake here is the feeble notion of substance. And it is here that we move on, with Derrida, from Thoth to the *pharmakon*. Thoth, the god of science, numbers and the passage between life and death, is also the god of medicine – this term taken to mean both remedy and poison. In the *Phaedrus*, the *pharmakon* that is handed to the king by Thoth is writing. Writing, that according to Plato is a repetition, always signifying the same, and is also, as Derrida notes (Dis: 65), a game (*paidia*). For Derrida, the *pharmakon* is but another name for philosophy – for philosophy as serious playfulness. This conception of philosophy points backwards, offering a way of reading traditional texts, and also forwards, inviting future philosophising. What is it, in the *pharmakon*, that makes it such a successful metaphor for philosophy?

> The *pharmakon* would be a *substance* – with all that that word can connote in terms of matter with occult virtues, cryptic depths refusing to submit their ambivalence to analysis, already paving the way for alchemy – if we didn't have eventually to come to recognize it as antisubstance itself: that which resists any philosopheme, indefinitely exceeding its bounds as nonidentity, nonessence, nonsubstance; granting philosophy by that very fact the inexhaustible adversity of what funds it and the infinite absence of what founds it.
>
> (Dis: 70)

Philosophy is possible, we would like to say, because of what language is. We now realise the seriousness of 'serious play'. Derrida's playful conception of language and philosophy is not just a blasé 'French' attitude, a carefree way of looking at things, preferring jesting over seriousness. Rather, playfulness is a serious matter, since it draws directly from the Fregean (and subsequently Husserlian) distinction between sense and reference, read anti-realistically.

As we have seen in a lengthy discussion in Part II, Frege's distinction, which establishes a relationship between language and world, leans on the subtle analysis brought at the beginning of his 'On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*'. Realising that language is founded on differences, he reaches the conclusion that 'a difference can arise only if the difference between the signs corresponds to a difference in the mode of presentation of the thing designated' ('On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*', FR: 152). A gap, a distance, between the realms of language and world must be opened, because of the differences immanent to linguistic signs and the primacy granted to language in philosophical inquiry. With this gap the nature of 'world', that distant realm, is

established as an always-fleeting sphere which necessarily resists language. This quandary led modernists, we remember, to their devastating conception of the immanent failure of language in general, and the vacuous nature of philosophical language in particular. But such a conclusion is accepted only if language is conceived, *au fond*, as primarily a representational tool, realistically understood. This is what Derrida has in mind when he writes that the *pharmakon* 'would be a *substance*', a 'matter with occult virtues . . . refusing to submit their ambivalence to analysis', a realm of reference, realistically understood, as modernists did indeed conceive of it. Yet for post-modernists, *pharmakon* is antisubstance. Like Blanchot's 'work', it is an inexhaustible text, an adversity which constantly challenges the philosopher as 'reader', i.e. 'writer', by always pointing to a seemingly independent 'outside' that invites an openness of interpretation. The 'hidden', the illusive 'cryptic depth' is an immanent part of the notion of *pharmakon*, and this follows directly from its textual texture, as we have seen in our discussion of Augustine and Wittgenstein in the opening section of the present part.

The term *pharmakon*, moreover, has an exemplary role. The right attitude to the language of philosophy is also manifested, 'presented', in the manner Derrida plays with this term. 'Presented', in inverted commas, because without the explicit philosophical analysis – and playful analysis is serious analysis – that accompanies it, its role would have been different. We saw above Derrida's insistence on his right to appeal to 'all the words that composed the system of the Greek language', to chains of associations between words in the lexical system. But this restless movement inside language eventually creates a distant, idiosyncratic use of terms. It stretches beyond the bounds of 'ordinary language' through an incessant ramble within them. However, it does not aim at creating its own external linguistic enclave, but rather at injecting its *pharmakon* back into 'ordinary language' in order to expose its fractures, its open texture. *Pharmakon* is thus a necessary tool for reflection. As are other beads in the metonymical chain: writing, différance. This is the language of philosophy, as Derrida conceives (of) it.

A word of comparison with Wittgenstein is due here again. Wittgenstein's use of the term 'grammar' has some affinities with Derrida's *pharmakon*. Its role is established through the 'ordinary' lexicon but it eventually serves to underline ordinary language's 'structure', i.e. to make us 'see' its workings, to help us become more sensitive to our own language. Thus this term, too, is a tool for reflection and a primary example of a philosophical language. However, Wittgenstein seems to have insisted (at least part of the time) that he was using the term 'grammar' in its ordinary sense.[3] This insistence coheres with the declaration that 'What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use' (PI: § 116, original emphasis). Two Wittgensteinian statements, reflecting in a similar spirit, need to be mentioned here. The first echoes Wittgenstein's attitude towards Augustine's puzzlement discussed above – the insistence that in philosophy nothing is hidden. 'If there were theses in philosophy . . . they would have to be put in such a way that everyone would say, Oh yes, that is of course obvious' (WVC: 183). The second continues the line that ensues from the clarity Wittgenstein is aiming at: 'The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I

want to. – The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring itself in question' (PI: § 133). Now compare these with Derrida's promise at the beginning of 'Tympan': 'To write otherwise'. He later spells this promise out:

> To delimit the space of a closure no longer analogous to what philosophy can represent for itself under this name, according to a straight or circular line enclosing a homogenous space. To determine, entirely against any philosopheme, the intransigence that prevents it from calculating its margin, by means of a *limitrophic* violence imprinted according to new *types*. To eat the margin in luxating the tympanum, the relationship to itself of the double membrane. So that philosophy can no longer reassure itself that it has always *maintained* its tympanum. . . . The issue here is *maintenant* [maintaining, now]: it travels through the entire book. How to put one's hands [*mains*] on the tympanum and how the tympanum could escape from the hands of the philosopher in order to make of phallogocentrism an impression that he no longer recognizes, in which he no longer rediscovers himself, of which he could become conscious only *afterward* and without being able *to say to himself*, again turning on his own hinge: I will have anticipated it, with absolute knowledge.
>
> (MP: xxivf., original emphases)

So, for Derrida, philosophy does not merely uncover previous metaphysical errors and empty traditional philosophical alleys. It is called to indefinitely regenerate 'its own tissue behind the cutting trace, the decision of each reading. *There is always a surprise in store* for the anatomy or physiology of any criticism that might think it had mastered the game' (Dis: 63, my emphasis). The only chance of entering into the game is 'by getting a few fingers caught – the addition of some new thread' (*ibid.*). At every philosophical juncture we are called to look behind, look forward, and read/write. This is Derrida's way out of the silence predicament. It comes from an awareness that the switch in the conception of language from representation-based to activity-based abolishes also the presentation/representation distinction, and hence leaves no room for self-assured 'presentation', a final gesture that solves a philosophical problem once and for all, with complete clarity that could have been anticipated in advance and leaves the reader with no surprises. Wittgenstein was indeed the first to make this switch in the conception of language; but his debt to his former modernism did not allow him to realise its consequences, especially those regarding the liveliness and freshness of philosophical language.[4]

Metaphor? Metonym!

> Nietzsche's procedure (the generalization of metaphoricity by putting into abyme one determined metaphor) is possible only if one takes the risk of a continuity between the metaphor and the concept, as between animal and man, instinct and knowledge. In order not to wind up at an empiricist reduction of

knowledge and a fantastic ideology of truth, *one should surely substitute another articulation for the (maintained or erased) classical opposition of metaphor and concept.*

(MP: 263, my emphasis)

The life-death dichotomy has not died; rather, it should be resurrected in the form of a philosophical language – an alternative articulation – that overcomes the logic of the limit. The above paragraph suggests that one way of doing so is by introducing continuity instead of former schisms. (Another is, as we have seen, by inserting ruptures where 'unity' had prevailed.) But continuity is not enough; mere continuity results in irresponsible epistemological theories and debases truth.[5] What is needed in order to overcome the schisms is a new articulation, a new philosophical lexicon, as it were, that would substitute for the classical one. Thus, not only continuity between metaphor and concept is sought, but a third term that would deconstruct the two. This third term, its status and the view of philosophy that it embodies stand at the focus of the present section.

In the preceding section we saw that Derrida's *pharmakon* both belongs to the lexical Greek system, i.e. to natural, ordinary language, and at the same time transgresses it through its potential for relentless metonymical movement. So does another Derridean 'philosopheme': writing. *Pharmakon* is not, primarily, a Derridean term. On the contrary: its power in Derrida's text is due to its appearance in Plato's, and of course in the Greek lexicon. Only having the traditional use at the background, *pharmakon* is analysed as shaking its foundations. But ordinary language is put in doubt – looked at from an estranged, remote perspective – not only in a deconstructive discourse. The same happens also when Artaud candidly asks: 'philosophically speaking, what is cruelty?' (CW: 78), and replies: 'Everything that acts is cruelty'.[6] Such extraordinary uses of ordinary terms by philosophy seem laden with metaphoricity. Actually it seems that we can generalise this linguistic phenomenon: 'metaphor seems to involve the usage of philosophical language in its entirety, nothing less than the usage of so-called natural language *in* philosophical discourse, that is, the usage of natural language *as* philosophical language' (MP: 209). In 'White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy', Derrida therefore sets out to reveal the place of metaphor in philosophical discourse. Loyal to his notion of philosophical writing, the results themselves express a duality of the kind we have already encountered. On the one hand, these results are themselves remote and estranged; the philosopher no longer recognises, rediscovers himself in them. 'What is the father?', we asked with Derrida earlier, in our discussion of Dummett's position. We saw that the question 'what is . . . ?', virtually igniting any first step taken in philosophy, turned out to be the least innocuous question possible. Traditionally, it formed a distance that tacitly took it for granted that 'the father is', that there is a set of oppositions ready to be employed as an answer to this question. With Derrida, writing (the lost son) was supposed to overcome this question, the question 'what is'. But this means that in trying to analyse the place of metaphor in philosophical language, the question 'what is metaphor?' itself cannot be answered – written – by Derrida without a complete methodological reorganisation of hierarchical orders. On the other hand, however, the ensuing results of the enquiry into the concept of

metaphor – an enquiry that aims at substituting another articulation for the (maintained or erased) classical opposition of metaphor and concept – turn out to yield an insight into the notion of metaphor, eventually suggesting, in a strange way, an answer to the 'what is' question. Writing therefore defies the death of philosophy by implementing the method discussed in the previous section: offering an alternative to the logic of exclusion. The term that does the trick this time, the one that overcomes the opposition of concept and metaphor, and with it several other exclusive distinctions that lie at the basis of traditional conceptions of philosophical language, is *metonymy*.

We said that *prima facie*, philosophical discourse is metaphorical through and through, because of the estranged, generalised and abstract way in which it uses ordinary language. Such an insight is implicit in many classical philosophical works whose task is to trim philosophy of its illusive and aloof metaphysical language, a language that is severed from any actual use. This approach is manifested, for example, in Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*. As we have seen, the later Wittgenstein invokes this strategy as well, urging philosophers 'to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use':

> When philosophers use a word – 'knowledge', 'being', 'object', 'I', 'proposition', 'name' – and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is its original home?
>
> (PI: § 116)

In 'White Mythology', Derrida chooses Anatole France's *The Garden of Epicurus* as representative of this kind of critique against philosophical language.

Derrida reads France's attack on the language of philosophy as a claim against the metaphorical use it makes of ordinary terms. France's idea is that sensory and concrete figures are abstracted, used (up) by philosophers, in order to attain the generality that is required by the detached and absolute perspective they seek. In this critical vein Polyphilos, one of the participants in France's dialogue, says:

> I was thinking how the Metaphysicians, when they make a language for themselves, are like [image, comparison, a figure in order to signify figuration] knife-grinders, who instead of knives and scissors, should put medals and coins to the grindstone to efface the exergue, the value and the head. When they have worked away till nothing is visible in their crown-pieces, neither King Edward, the Emperor William, nor the Republic, they say: 'These pieces have nothing either English, German or French about them; we have freed them from all limits of time and space; they are not worth five shillings any more; they are of an inestimable value, and their exchange value is extended indefinitely.' They are right in speaking thus. By this needy knife-grinder's activity words are changed from a physical to a metaphysical acceptation. It is obvious that they lose in the process; what they gain by it is not so immediately apparent.
>
> (France is quoted in MP: 210. The parenthetical comment is Derrida's.)

This kind of attack on metaphysical language is, we have seen, a key characteristic of modernist thought. Mistrust of language that aims at a steady transcendental realm is a common thread leading from Nietzsche through modernist poets, writers and philosophers until it gets a twist in Artaud's thought. France, in this respect, is a precursor of modernism in a sense that Frege is not, despite the fact that both lived in the same period: Frege from 1848 to 1925, France from 1844 to 1924. Note how close to this modernist spirit is France's Polyphilos, when he says, upon examination of the symbolical character of metaphysical terms:

> I think I have at last made you realize one thing, Aristos, that any expression of an abstract idea can only be an analogy. By an odd fate, the very metaphysicians who think to escape the world of appearances are constrained to live perpetually in allegory. A sorry lot of poets, they dim the colours of the ancient fables, and are themselves but gatherers of fables. They produce white mythology.
>
> (MP: 213)

Upon examining the modernist objections to the language of philosophy through Dummett and Derrida's criticisms of Wittgenstein, Carnap and Artaud, we have reached the conclusion that these objections implicitly presuppose realism and its corollary: the representational conception of language. A similar analysis of France's text leads Derrida to uncover two interconnected presuppositions underlying his attack on the metaphorical nature of metaphysical language. First, Derrida says, it is clear from Polyphilos' speech that he takes for granted an origin of language, a purity – rich, sensual, primitive – that characterises the particular, before it is contaminated and loses its vivacity through abstract conceptualisation. Second, Polyphilos' text is ridden through and through with dualisms. It is governed by distinctions between physical and metaphysical, normal and exceptional, literal (conceptual) and metaphorical, particular and general (or abstract). We have seen earlier that such dichotomies are inherent to any philosophical position that obeys the logic of the limit. Such a position is governed by the rule of 'unity' and, consequently, exclusion.

   Derrida's analysis is critical, of course; in fact it has far reaching consequences. Its upshot is no less than an undermining of every philosophical critique that aims at debunking philosophical terminology as bloated relative to some 'everyday' standard. Such a 'therapeutic' critique, Derrida intimates, leans on a strict distinction between philosophical and everyday terminology, which it tacitly takes to be *a priori*, neutral and free of metaphysical burden. Yet this assumption is not only metaphysical in itself; it is – as we have seen in the two previous chapters – bound to collapse under its own assumptions. Derrida deals extensively with this claim in 'Signature, Event, Context' – his famous discussion of Austin, and consequently in 'Limited Inc abc' – his rejoinder to Searle's rejoinder. He points at the fact that 'an "ordinary" language [is] defined by the exclusion of the very law of language' (Lim Inc: 17). This insight is shared also by Dummett, in his insistence that nothing is innocent, no language is free from metaphysical implications. And as Molyneux has pointed out, the 'neutrality' of the everyday is but a camouflage for realism.

How does, then, the edifice built by those criticising philosophical language for its metaphoricity collapse? Derrida appeals here, naturally, to Nietzsche. 'Nietzsche's procedure', as in the quote opening this section, is the generalisation of metaphoricity to the realm of truth *in toto*. In an often quoted paragraph, Nietzsche poses the question 'what then is truth?' and replies:

> A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions we have forgotten are illusions; they are that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.
>
> (Nietzsche 1873: 84)

Nietzsche's point is that the idea of language's origin and the hierarchies built into conceptual language entail a much more thorough result than the one assumed by France, for one. The originality of the origin excludes generalisation and conceptualisation from any immediate encounter with reality. Concepts, hence, must come afterwards and be based on similarities, i.e. on analogies. 'A word becomes concept insofar as it simultaneously has to fit countless more or less similar cases – which means, purely and simply, cases which are never equal and thus altogether unequal' (Nietzsche 1873: 83). Thus the rich, multifarious origin is forgotten; individual differences are erased and discarded, upon the arrival of words. At this point we should remember that Nietzsche is one of the major sources of influence on modernist thinkers; that his spirit reigns over the modernist emphasis on the failure of conceptual language, and especially philosophical language, to represent reality. It is the vain conception of language, according to him, that reflects the vanity of philosophy, which is nothing but an aspect of the vanity of man, his sense of superiority over animals, his certainty that he holds scientific knowledge that is much more secure than mere intuition. Nietzsche's criticism of this vanity leads to a relaxation of the tension between the notions of animal and man, intuition and knowledge, and indeed metaphor and concept. But the modernists adopting his attitude did not notice the sophisticated double-edged character of Nietzsche's argument. In positing high barriers between ordinary (or scientific) language and metaphysical language they actually betrayed Nietzsche's argument. Of the modernists we have discussed in Part I of this book, only Artaud – the artist-metaphysician – remained loyal to Nietzsche's insight regarding the continuity between conceptual languages in general and the language of traditional Western philosophy, the white mythology.

What is Derrida's stand? How does he treat the continuity with which we started the present discussion? Several commentators regard Derrida as embracing the view – also attributed by them to Nietzsche – that the point of uncovering this continuity is to show that all language is metaphorical through and through, i.e. that the distinction between metaphors and ordinary texts is totally undermined.[7]

Thus, for example, Garver and Lee attribute to Derrida the view that 'all discourse possesses an irreducible metaphorical component' and that it 'entails that there is no ordinary language, and hence no standard meanings' (1994: 59). This may well be true; indeed, we mentioned Derrida's criticism against the very notion of 'ordinary language'. The question is, though, what follows from this description of Derrida's view. Garver and Lee are intrigued by 'the challenge of metaphor', i.e. by the problem of explaining the differences between ordinary, literal uses of language and extraordinary, metaphorical ones. For them, therefore, Derrida offers no genuine answer, of course. My interest lies rather in the challenge of modernism – the problem of the *prima facie* vanity and emptiness of philosophical language. In answering this challenge, I think, Derrida has a lot to offer.

To claim that Derrida forms continuity between metaphor and concept *tout court* is, I believe, to miss the ironical, dialectical twist of his position, thus equating it to the fantastic ideology of truth he explicitly shuns. Derrida's argument, let us not forget, started from the assumptions regarding the originality of the origin and the logic of exclusion – assumptions Derrida attributed to Anatole France. It is on the basis of these assumptions that Derrida reached the conclusion that metaphor governs conceptual discourse *in toto*. Yet we know of course that Derrida himself does not accept these dogmas of traditional metaphysics, at least not at face value. What then is his view on metaphor and its dominance, both in language and in philosophy?

> Here, instead of venturing into the prolegomena to some future metaphorics, let us rather attempt to recognize in principle the *condition for the impossibility* of such a project. In its most impoverished, most abstract form, the limit would be the following: metaphor remains, in all its essential characteristics, a classical philosopheme, a metaphysical concept.
>
> (MP: 219)

We are back in the familiar playground of traditional metaphysics, the philosophy of the limit and of exclusion. That is, we are back not as ordinary players, aiming at some transcendental understanding in Kantian-like critique. Rather, we play now the role of Thoth, the inventor of play, the messenger of the playful conception of language and of philosophy, of deconstruction. And indeed, as in the previous section, the deconstructive movement exposes that the logic of the limit fails, again, in its attempt to exceed its own limit. The concept of metaphor itself, says Derrida, is both a product and a condition of metaphysical discourse, a discourse aiming at its exclusion. It is enabled (and excluded) by the distinctions it represents best. We have seen this logic at work several times already, from the Platonic exclusion of writing to Husserl's exclusion of indication. It is the same logic that defeats the notion of unit. And the same procedure is at work here as well. The network of philosophical terms and dogmas that creates the notion of metaphor thus

> cannot dominate itself, cannot be dominated by what it itself has engendered, has made to grow on its own soil, supported on its own base. Therefore, it gets

'carried away' each time that one of its products – here, the concept of metaphor – attempts in vain to include under its own law the totality of the field to which the product belongs.

(MP: 219)

In other words, the notion of metaphor creates a metaphysical image, a picture of reality, a metaphor. Fredric Jameson opens his study of certain modernist movements, *The Prison-House of Language*, by noting that the 'history of thought is the history of its models' (1972: v). A model (e.g. the clock, the organism, the computer) organises our understanding of the natural world as well as human reality. It creates a jargon, opens up a set of problems and optional solutions. This is how the notion of metaphor acts in opening up the metaphysical discourse. Thus, applying the inverse of Godard's principle, as we did in our discussion of Dummett, we should counter the vague image yielded by the metaphor of metaphor with clear ideas about its content. And indeed, Derrida continues in a manner roughly parallel to that of Dummett in inquiring into the content of the metaphor of metaphor – he engages himself in a scrutiny 'with close attention'[8] of the general model of meaning that is suggested by this metaphor and counters it with his own model of meaning, his alternative articulation. However, we should bear in mind throughout this journey its dialectical nature, since for Derrida, following Hegel, there is a sense in which meaning and image cannot be disentangled.[9] There are two stages to this inquiry, then. In the first, the 'conceptual' presuppositions of the notion of metaphor are analysed and spelled out as yielding a model of language. In the second, we realise that this notion carries its own impossibility within itself, and an alternative notion is suggested.

What Derrida shows, first, is how the basic distinction between metaphor and concept, image and meaning reflects a set of metaphysical distinctions that are actually but the very source of metaphysics itself. It encapsulates other distinctions: sensible and intelligible, implicit and explicit, thought and statement, and – we shall soon return to this – signifier and signified, the fundamental distinction of semantics. All these distinctions lead to a focal point: the distinction between the hidden and the apparent, obscurity and clarity, darkness and light. As we have seen all along, this is the most fundamental distinction of metaphysics. The sun, again, is discovered as the origin of metaphysics and all its metaphorical appearances. It is 'the paradigm of the sensory *and* of metaphor: it regularly turns (itself) and hides (itself)' (MP: 250). Derrida now draws a progressive set of models that obey the metaphorical rule of the sun: from metaphysics to its language, the language of philosophy, and from philosophical discourse to language in general. The three are tightly connected.

The very opposition of appearing and disappearing . . . of day and night, of the visible and the invisible, of the present and the absent – all this is possible only under the sun. Insofar as it structures the metaphorical space of philosophy, the sun represents what is natural in philosophical language. In every philosophical language, it is that which permits itself to be retained by natural language. In

the metaphysical alternative which opposes formal or artificial language to natural language, 'natural' should always lead us back to *physis* as a solar system, or, more precisely, to a certain history of the relationship earth/sun in the system of perception.

(MP: 251)

Metaphor is hence a metaphor of the sun; a representative of Ra, the god-king, the father, the law, the idea of Idea, of *Eidos*. It creates a differentiation that lays the foundation of the traditional, representation-oriented, realist conception of meaning. The starting point this time is with Aristotle, both in the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*. In both works, Aristotle treats of metaphor as part of his theory of *lexis*, the act of language. Here is how he defines 'metaphor' in the *Poetics*: 'Metaphor [*metaphora*] consists in giving [*epiphora*] the thing a name [*onomatos*] that belongs to something else [*allotriou*]' (MP: 231. Derrida quotes from Aristotle's *Poetics* 1457b). Aristotle thus poses metaphor within his theory of meaning, a theory that is based on the centrality of the name-thing relation, the dualism between signifier and signified. This is the heart of semantics, traditionally conceived. Nouns signify things, independent unities with clear boundaries between themselves and their others. Here, says Derrida, is 'a certain systematic indissociability of the values of discourse, voice, noun, signification, meaning, imitative representation, resemblance' (MP: 237).[10] All these, of course, get their proper place in a theory of truth.

> In the truth, language is to be filled, achieved, actualised, to the point of erasing itself, without any possible play, before the (thought) thing which is properly manifested in the truth. *Lexis* is itself, if we might put it thus, only at the stage when meaning has appeared, but when truth still might be missed, when the thing does not yet manifest itself in act in the truth. This is the moment of possible meaning as possibility of non-truth. As the moment of the detour in which the truth might still be lost, metaphor indeed belongs to *mimēsis*, to the fold of *physis*, to the moment when nature, itself veiling itself, has not yet refound itself in its proper nudity, in the act of its propriety.
>
> (MP: 241)

Note how close this picture of language is to that of Husserl. Language has the potential of hiding and revealing, but at any rate, it is *secondary* to truth. Its proper aim is eventually to erase itself in order to reveal truth. Thus the presuppositions that yield the concept of metaphor are immanent to metaphysics in general. The structure of a hidden truth that is concealed by a somewhat deceptive signifier is common to both notions: metaphysics and metaphor. Both appeal to the idea of a unity that is in principle capable of being fully present, but which is usually falsely presented by language.[11] Both do not only need the name-thing relation but also the sharp boundaries and clear identities of name and thing: definitions. Both metaphysics and metaphor, that is, need the distinction between essence and accident. Only given this dualism are they made possible. 'No philosophy, as such', Derrida remarks, 'has ever renounced this Aristotelian ideal. This ideal is philosophy' (MP: 247).

> Aristotle recognized that a word may have several meanings. This is a fact. But this fact has right of entry into language only in the extent to which the polysemia is finite, the different significations are limited in number, and above all sufficiently *distinct*, each remaining one and identifiable. . . . A nonmasterable dissemination . . . belongs to what is outside language.
>
> (MP: 247f.)

And indeed, no philosophy has renounced this ideal. Frege, the 'grandfather of analytical philosophy' (as Dummett calls him), the originator of the linguistic turn, zealously obeyed these rules in shaping his *Begriffsschrift*, despite advocating the primacy of language in metaphysical inquiry. Thus Frege – the philosopher who more than anyone else throughout the history of philosophy dethroned Aristotelian logic – was eventually faithful to its ideal, to the metaphysical picture it aimed at articulating.

The same is of course true of the logic that dictates the structure of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, that capsule of Western metaphysics, of the white mythology. Indeed, as we have seen, the upshot of the *Tractatus* is a realisation of the limits of the logic of limit. Fully understanding and accepting these limits leads to philosophy's self-exclusion, which is the core of modernism.

However, Derrida does not accept this predicament as the end of his analysis. He continues to uncover its conflicting, self-destructive presuppositions, those that lead to the death of metaphor, i.e. of traditional metaphysics and conception of language. Metaphor relies on identifiable, unequivocal unities that serve as the origin of its analogical operation. It has an endpoint. Or so it should, according to Aristotle's metaphysical picture. But Derrida finds one exception to this picture in Aristotle's own examples of various kinds of metaphor. This one eventually breaks the logic of metaphor altogether. It is called by Aristotle 'qualified metaphor': 'Having given the thing the alien name, one may by a negative addition deny of it one of the attributes naturally associated with its new name' (MP: 243, quoting from Aristotle's *Poetics* 1457b30–33). Why is this form of metaphor so destructive? Since it breaks the unity – the essence – that was taken for granted by the metaphysics of metaphor. For it is clear that the attribute that is negated by 'qualified metaphor' must be essential to the thing referred to by the new name; otherwise the whole metaphorical process could not have taken place. Yet it is negated. Essence may be broken, then. What was taken to be a finite unit, an atom, a 'simple' in the Tractarian jargon, is suddenly imbued with indeterminacy. The negative procedure described by Aristotle therefore has no end. Any end is only arbitrary. This result exposes the impossibility of metaphor, Derrida claims – or indeed metaphor as it is conceived by the network of traditional metaphysical assumptions.

> This name is no longer the proper name of a unique thing which metaphor should *overtake*; it already has begun to say the multiple, divided origin of all seed, of the eye, of invisibility, death, the father, the 'proper name', etc. If Aristotle does not concern himself with this consequence of his theory, it is doubtless because it contradicts the philosophical value of *alētheia*, the proper

appearing of the propriety of what is, the entire system of concepts which invest the philosopheme 'metaphor,' burden it in delimiting it. And do so by barring its movement: just as one represses by crossing out, or just as one governs the infinitely floating movement of a vessel in order to drop anchor where one will.

<div align="right">(MP: 244)</div>

The disintegration of metaphor must bring with it a list of other collapses. If the distinct, final units that metaphor counts on are merely a phantasm, if the metaphorical procedure is stopped only arbitrarily, then the thing-name relation is also seen in a new light. This means that the distinction between signifier and signified cannot be depicted as it is, say, in Saussure's writings.

At stake is semantics. This should not come as a surprise at this stage. We have seen Dummett emphasising that within a discourse of truth, a semantical thesis is a metaphysical one. We have gone through Derrida's analysis of the notion of metaphor as intimately linked to the traditional metaphysical discourse. Metaphorical symbolism suggests an interest in concealed content, in a hidden 'thing' whose name evades us, in a sort of depth that adds life to the otherwise dead sign. Thus the disintegration of metaphor must mean a parallel crisis in the semantic theory that is based on such a representation relation, on dead signs and live thoughts, or truths. The relation between signifier and signified cannot be a simple relation of correlation anymore, since both signifier and signified are found to be arbitrary, far from the saturated unities they are supposed to be in classical semantics.

At this stage one wonders how formal logic fits in. Derrida mentions 'the science of logic' as falling victim to the same self-destructive movement as the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle and Descartes (MP: 268). We have mentioned earlier the metaphysical alternative which opposes formal or artificial language to natural language. The problem inherent in such formal languages is that they posit themselves as metaphors, as abstractions that gain their power – their truth – from their distant perspective. Yet it is clear that this alienation must bring with it a loss of meaning. Indeed, this is the loss of meaning acknowledged by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*, where logical formulations cannot but be senseless, *sinnlos*.[12] The deep truth of logic turns out to be, contrary to its sublime image, vacuous.

This is all true in a framework governed by semantics. Now opposed to the semantic interest – the discourse that is based on linking meaning with truth, name with thing – is an interest in *syntax*, i.e. in the manner in which linguistic signs are related to each other within the linguistic system. The idea of syntax helps to expose the double-edged conundrum of metaphor. On the one hand, facing a metaphor, we know we confront an awkward shift that must be repaired. We wish to restore the proper meaning, to come back to the literal, the right word-concept relation. Thus the order we ultimately seek is a syntax-less order; indeed, it is an order in which language is secondary, almost superfluous. However, without syntax, without language, metaphor is naturally lost. On the other hand, acute attention to syntax in our attempt to understand metaphor reveals the arbitrariness of any stopping point on the metaphoric chain.

> As soon as one admits that all the terms in an analogical relation already are caught up, one by one, in a metaphorical relation, everything begins to function no longer as a sun, but as a star, the punctual source of truth or properness remaining invisible or nocturnal.
>
> (MP: 243f.)

Thus, metaphor as a steady semantic phenomenon, as the phenomenon of semantics, loses on both counts.

Where semantics fails, syntax reigns. In the absence of semantics, the representation-relation disappears; metaphor is gone, as is, of course, metaphysical discourse. Traditional philosophy is replaced by modernism. The philosophy of Carnap is surely the best example of this approach. Carnap's emphasis on form, instead of content, results precisely from an awareness of the unbearable metaphysical burden of semantics, and, explicitly following the *Tractatus*' lead, from an awareness of the emptiness of logic. Instead of the name-thing relation, or the one between propositions and states-of affairs, we get conventional procedures of verification that are stopped arbitrarily, pragmatically. Instead of a full-blown metaphysical language, we get a minimalist approach to philosophy as an empty procedure of elucidation. However, we have seen that Dummett exposes the semantical (i.e. metaphysical) assumptions that the minimalism of Carnap rests upon. Indeed, we may now complement Dummett's analysis with a note on Carnap's naïve confidence that he can tell literal meaning from metaphor, clarity of formulation from obscurity, natural language from metaphysical discourse. Derrida, in his rejoinder to Searle, says: 'Those who wish to simplify at all costs and who raise a hue and cry about obscurity because they do not recognize the unclarity of their good old *Aufklärung* are in my eyes dangerous dogmatists and tedious obscurantists' (Lim Inc: 119). Like other dogmatic distinctions, the clarity/obscurity distinction, so popular among modernist philosophers and poets alike, obeys the laws of the metaphor of metaphor. Thus this result is but a corollary of Dummett's attentiveness to the realism that stands at the basis of the logical positivist position.

What, then, may be the way to overcome this impasse, the dilemma between a metaphysical rule of semantics and a modernist, minimalist rule of syntax? In his classic article, Roman Jakobson (1956) had introduced the distinction between metaphor and metonym as two aspects of language. Metaphor is a family name of various occurrences of substitution; metonym – of sequence. While the notion of metaphor has to do with a movement between two realms of meaning, one standing for (i.e. representing) another, that of metonym is simply a nominal movement forward. Metaphor is taken to be a 'vertical' concept, pointing at a depth; metonym works on a more syntactical, horizontal axis. Metonym, then, seems to be the key for the alternative articulation sought by Derrida. This primarily means directing our attention away from semantic 'depth' and towards the system of language itself, its positional combinations, its never-ending vivacity. The deference and differences that make up différance, then, are caught by the notion of metonym. In other words, whereas metaphor both generates and is generated by realist metaphysics, metonym is similarly bound with anti-realism. When the realm of truth as independent of

language vanishes, it is linguistic use – rather than some external source – that gives life to signs, as the later Wittgenstein has suggested. Metonym indeed is simply a catchword for linguistic use, for the primacy of language, of writing, of the linguistic turn. Here is how Derrida characterises it in 'Plato's Pharmacy': It is

> a process of substitution, which thus functions as a pure play of traces or supplements or, again, operates within the order of the pure signifier which no reality, no absolutely external reference, no transcendental signified, can come to limit, bound or control.
>
> (Dis: 89)

However, this is not the end of the *Aufhebung* procedure. For although Derrida discovers metaphor, semantics and traditional metaphysics, with their exclusions, divisions and presuppositions, to be self-destructive, he cannot rest content with the minimalism of syntax either. His idea is to use metonymy as a deconstructive tool, in order to overcome the pitfalls of semantics and metaphor. Upon first introducing Jakobson's metonymic aspect of language, in the context of exposing the problematic dogmas of metaphor, Derrida hastens to add:

> However, the issue is not, symmetrically, to reaffirm what Polyphilos chooses as his target; it is rather to deconstruct the metaphysical and rhetorical schema at work in his critique, not in order to reject and discard them but to reinscribe them otherwise, and especially in order to begin to identify the historico-problematic terrain on which philosophy systematically has been asked for the metaphorical rubrics of its concepts.
>
> (MP: 215)

The issue, then, is not the elimination of metaphysics through an emphasis on syntax, but the setting up of a totally new articulation, as in the remark concerning Nietzsche's procedure, with which this section was opened. Derrida's new articulation thus 'passes through a supplement of syntactic resistance, through everything (for example in modern linguistics) that disrupts the opposition of the semantic and the syntactic, and especially the philosophical hierarchy that submits the latter to the former' (MP: 270). Metaphor is resurrected, then, through the notion of metonym. Its death came as a result of the abolition of language that was immanent to it, the rule of truth that it had assumed. At this point we may look again at Dummett's intuitionist alternative to classical logic, and at what it purports to bring about. Dummett suggests that his alternative 'involves dethroning truth and falsity from their central place in philosophy and in particular in the theory of meaning' (TOE: 19); yet as with Derrida, it is not the *abolition* of truth, semantics, or metaphysics that Dummett seeks. Such a task would be impossible for a philosopher. His is rather an attempt to let syntax rule over semantics, thus rethinking the terms in which semantics – and hence metaphysics – is to be defined, according to the first principle of the linguistic turn: primacy in philosophical investigation is given to an attention to language.[13] But as we have seen all along, where there is primacy, there is also

inferiority. A philosophical – rather than scientific – interest in language always means reinstating 'the way in which logic uses ideas'. This means that the dualism between present and absent is restored, albeit in a new way, within a different system: an open-ended and fractured network, where no 'unity' survives, and instead – a metonymical movement of disintegration and construction rules. Thus with the new articulation, having overcome the obstacles of metaphor and concept, a combined anti-realist alternative conception of language and philosophy is offered. What about the language of philosophy, then? What place does it occupy in this new system?

First, it is clear that boundaries collapse: philosophical language is not, as in Polyphilos' allegory, a detached sphere of eroded terms with effaced values. Words in general, we have seen with Nietzsche, may be thus regarded – but only if we confine ourselves to the traditional metaphysical rules of metaphor. When the question of origin is removed, philosophical language regains its value. It does not aim, of course, at any representation of a sublime hidden realm. Rather, it writes. Writing, this never-ending procedure of manufacturing texts which react to texts, is succinctly represented by the notion of metonym and its movement within language. Being metonymical it also breaks the logic of the limit. 'This supplement of a code which traverses its own field, endlessly displaces its closure, breaks its line, opens its circle, and no ontology will have been able to reduce it' (MP: 271).

This analysis of the role of metonym in Derrida's conception of philosophical language is not merely abstract. It is of course manifested in Derrida's writing itself, as we have seen from the quoted paragraphs throughout the present book. The point is, however, not Derrida's style of writing *per se*, but what it suggests for philosophical inquiry. Those metonymical chains of interchangeable terms are to be read as always pointing towards an argument, which is opened up through them, but is never (can never be) fully present. Here, to wrap up, is the final point I wish to make regarding Derrida's ideas about the language of philosophy.

We are back to 'Plato's Pharmacy' – to *logos*, the logic of the limit, to metaphor, and to the question: what is a father? It should come as no surprise at this stage that the concept of father cannot be taken by Derrida as standing outside any relation to a system of metonyms, one replacing another. There is no 'natural' priority to the more commonsensical, ordinary concept of father over, for example, that of the more metaphysical one of *logos*. The father/son relation gets its significance from a *logical* system.

> In other words, it is precisely *logos* that enables us to perceive and investigate something like paternity. If there were a simple metaphor in the expression 'father of logos', the first word, which seemed the more *familiar*, would nevertheless receive more meaning *from* the second than it would transmit *to* it. The first familiarity is always involved in a relation of cohabitation with *logos*. Living-beings, father and son, are announced to us and related to each other within the household of *logos*.
>
> (Dis: 80f., original emphases)

So the discourse of the father is part of logical discourse. But the father has been used by us throughout as a metonymical abbreviation for definition, rule, law.

Having just crushed the privileged position of 'ordinary language' within the limits of *logos*, Derrida returns to the logic of the limit and examines its exclusions. Who indeed it is whose exclusion is so crucial to Plato? Against whom does he so fervently guard the household of *logos*? Derrida's claim is that the set of hierarchies built by Plato as buttresses is directed against sophists. It is the battle of that which takes itself as 'rational' against the 'irrational', 'truth' against 'illusiveness', 'logic' vs. rhetoric. In his discussion of these dichotomies, of Plato's battle against the sophist, Derrida writes the following remark in parentheses. It is here that the eve of Platonism and the morning after Hegelianism are brought in.

> (It could be shown, but we will spare ourselves the development here, that the problematic today, and in this very spot, links writing with the (putting in) question of truth – and of thought and speech, which are informed by it – must necessarily exhume, without remaining at that, the conceptual monuments, the vestiges of the battlefield (champ de bataille), the signposts marking out the battle lines between sophistics and philosophy, and, more generally, all the buttresses erected by Platonism. In many ways, and from a viewpoint that does not cover the entire field, we are today on the eve of Platonism. Which can also, naturally, be thought of as the morning after Hegelianism. At that specific point, the *philosophia*, the *epistēmē* are not 'overturned,' 'rejected,' 'reined in,' etc., in the name of something like writing; quite the contrary. But they are, according to a relation that philosophy would call *simulacrum*, according to a more subtle excess of truth, assumed and at the same time displaced into a completely different field, where one can still, but that's all, 'mime absolute knowledge,' to use an expression coined by Bataille, whose name will enable us here to dispense with a whole network of references.)
>
> (Dis: 107f.)

Derrida is here advancing two claims, both presenting philosophy as 'the Platonic text' *per se*. The minor claim is that this text, traditionally positioning itself as a text with rigid boundaries, cannot defend itself from its closest other, the enemy beyond the border, the sophist. The dichotomies just cited merge into one another. But Derrida's point is not to suggest a victory for the sophist over Plato; nor is it just the claim, thoroughly discussed in the previous section, about limits falling apart, contradictory zones merging. His major claim about philosophy as 'the Platonic text' draws an alternative to these alternatives, suggesting a serious play, a philosophical argumentation that is written otherwise. It is not 'literature', yet not 'philosophy' either, when these terms are taken to represent two enemies, beauty vs. truth, rhetoric vs. logic. And this has to do, directly, with the language of the Platonic text. More exactly, it has to do with the fact that it is a text, a language. For we have already seen that Derrida actually denies the existence of 'a' Platonic text, 'closed upon itself, complete with its inside and outside' (Dis: 130). But that should not mean that the Platonic text

> is leaking on all sides and can be drowned confusedly in undifferentiated generality of its element. Rather, provided the articulations are rigorously and

> prudently recognized, one should simply be able to untangle the hidden forces
> of attraction linking a present word with an absent word in the text of Plato.
> Some such force, given the *system* of the language, cannot *not* have acted upon
> the writing and the reading of this text.
>
> (*ibid.*)

It is crucial to see that this analysis reads the whole history of philosophy otherwise, *reads* it, as a text. And a text, we already said, 'is not a text unless it hides from the first comer . . . the law of its composition and the rules of its game' (Dis: 63). Writing thus – in the first paragraph of a text dealing with Plato's philosophy and offering the playful alternative – about game, law, rules and the hidden, is both an ironical and a very serious gesture. This is Derrida's language of philosophy.

'White Mythology' ends with an equivalent serious-ironical remark about two patterns of philosophy's death, recurring throughout history, interlacing and complementing one another. This ironical gesture links directly with the figure of Thoth, 'the god of non-identity', 'the father's other', who has implicitly governed Western thought – through the figure of Christ, *inter alia*. Thoth, we know, is the god of death, of resurrection, of return, of life and death intertwined.

The first pattern is the traditional one. It is the closure of representation, and indeed, the moment that is shared by Platonism and Hegelianism. It is this death that is so brilliantly captured in the *Tractatus*. This end of philosophy marks an achievement, an eternal *sophia*, or rest, when solutions to all philosophical problems are found, hence no *philo-sophia* is conceivable any longer. This teleological discourse is traditional, metaphysical discourse, 'which constructs the philosophical concept of metaphor, coordinates metaphor with the manifestation of truth, with the production of truth as presence without veil' (Dis: 270). It aims at the sun, the source of light, desiring to master, interiorise it, thus in effect annulling it. It is interesting to note that Derrida seems to follow Hegel in counting the great poets, Homer and Sophocles, as belonging to this discourse. Dummett's proclamations about the expected solution of philosophical problems certainly call for regarding him as belonging to this discourse as well. It was, however, my contention that Dummett's anti-realism rather breaks this closure and aligns him with the second course of philosophy's eternally returning death.

This second pattern of philosophy's death is the one that comes to terms with dialectics being the game of failure, yet also the game of always overcoming it. It is the switch to this pattern that marks the end of the Tractarian period for Wittgenstein, as we have seen. 'This self-destruction still has the form of a generalization, but this time it is no longer a question of extending and confirming a philosopheme, but rather, of unfolding it without limit, and wrestling its borders of propriety from it' (*ibid.*). This is the anti-realist pattern, the one that 'disrupts the opposition of the semantic and the syntactic, and especially the philosophical hierarchy that submits the latter to the former'. Derrida counts Nietzsche and Bataille as belonging to this pattern, and implicitly suggests that he himself should be counted as exemplifying it as well. After all, the names he cites – Plato, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bataille – serve only as metonymical abbreviations, he says.[14] His new,

playful, metonymical philosophy cannot succumb to closing, petrifying definitions; and using these names suggests a direction to be continued, developed, constructed – nothing that already exists within *a priori* boundaries.

This bears a direct consequence on the relationship between the two courses of philosophy's death. For one thing that is interesting in this distinction between the patterns is how 'these two deaths repeat and simulate one another in the heliotrope' – in the all-inclusive yet at the same time open-ended discourse that draws its light from the sun. This is what it means to be a 'metaphysician in the dark', in Wallace Stevens' words. For whether in the Dummettian version or the Derridean one, a contemporary, post-modernist awareness to the philosophical predicament – which is of course not death, not exactly, for it also bears a seed of life within itself, a necessary meta-language, in which to be reflected – is also an aware-ness of the crossing of the boundaries between them. There is a choice. Or actually, there isn't. And this much we know if we think of the language of philosophy.

> The heliotrope can always be *relevé*. And it can always become a dried flower in a book. There is always, absent from every garden, a dried flower in a book; and by virtue of the repetition in which it endlessly puts itself into *abyme*, no language can reduce into itself the structure of an anthology. This supplement of a code which traverses its own field, endlessly displaces its closure, breaks its line, opens its circle, and no ontology will have been able to reduce it.
>
> (*ibid.*)

Indeed, as Derrida concluded already much earlier, 'it remains, then, for us to *speak*' (SP: 104) – that is, of course, to write.

Epilogue
Words as dogmas

'A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably' (PI: § 115). In this famous passage Wittgenstein refers to what he dubbed 'Augustine's picture of language': the traditional model of language as representing a pre-given reality. *Philosophical Investigations* is about the impossibility of separating the Augustinian picture from the picture of philosophy that resides in it, the conception of philosophy as yielding *a priori* truths about fundamental features of the world. The picture that held us captive, then, is nothing but the metaphysical model that governed Western thought and was so accurately captured in the *Tractatus*, there shown to annihilate itself. As a result (or was it rather a primary cause?) philosophical language, the language that tried to represent the world from a logical point of view, was exposed as vain and nonsensical. I have argued throughout the book that towards the end of the nineteenth century the traditional model of language was replaced by another, and that despite the fact that the new model was wholly justified in its criticism of the old model, it still shared a lot with the one it replaced. This modernist model was presented to us by philosophers, artists, poets and writers, working mainly around the first third of the twentieth century. Their writings – philosophical, theoretical and literary – repeated this model to us inexorably, and as a result it held (at least some of) us captive. Indeed, some of us are still held captive by the modernist picture, and understandably so, for it is a powerful picture, tempting in its boldness, profundity, purity, radical spirit and poetic sensitivity.

The modernist model consists in a certain image of philosophy and a certain image of language. Their combination results in the eradication of philosophical language as we know it and the relocation of its heir in the artistic province. The details of these images have been exposed and discussed widely above; I wish to sum up by tying together some of the main threads. I have argued, first, that the modernists, who make anti-dogmatism their first principle, are unaware of their own strong dogmatism, their unquestioning acceptance of a particular (problematic) picture of philosophy and of language. Their view of philosophical language and its desired relocation is a direct consequence of accepting this picture. I have then tried to show that modernist anti-dogmatism suppresses the dogmatic predicament: the fact that words are dogmas, that, being the linguistic creatures we are, we are doomed to succumb to pictures that hold us captive. Finally, I have argued that

philosophical language is a wonderful tool for uncovering these pictures. It incessantly frees us from dogmas – but naturally, only to find ourselves tacitly adopting new ones.

Modernists typically hold a picture of philosophy as stale, academic and dogmatic. Their critical approach to the language of philosophy stems partly from this picture. Here it is, expressed by D. H. Lawrence: 'Philosophy, religion, science, they are all of them busy nailing things down, to get a stable equilibrium. Religion, with its nailed-down One God . . . philosophy, with its fixed ideas; science with its "laws" . . . But the novel, no' (Lawrence 1925: 174). This picture echoes Kant's criticism of dogmatic philosophy, philosophy that is decayed since it does not put itself in question. It is also a parallel picture to the one drawn by Nietzsche at the beginning of our journey. Contrasting 'being' with 'becoming', philosophy is paradigmatic of 'being'. It ignores the richness of reality and rubs out differences, as we have read in Anatole France's picturesque account of philosophy; it presents us with 'a preconceived idea to which reality *must* correspond' (PI: § 131, Wittgenstein's emphasis). Indeed, according to Cora Diamond – who reads philosophy with a Tractarian accent – it is a system of *requirements*, an *a priori* decision that something must be so – be it in language, in reality, in mathematics, in the moral realm, or even in a work of art. Behind all these there allegedly lies a system, a rigorous form of argument, a definite set of rational principles. This attitude, Diamond says, betrays a 'mistrust of language', 'a reluctance to see all that is involved in using it well, responding well to it, meeting it well, reluctance to see what kind of failure it may be to use it badly' (Diamond 1991: 380). Now when we think of the subtlety and playfulness of Berkeley's appeal to language in his *Dialogues*, Spinoza's defiant use of terms, Hume's witty 'deconstruction' of necessity, Kant's invention of the synthetic *a priori*, his creative theories of arithmetic, time, beauty; when we think of the linguistic status of Fichte's *Tathandlung*, the fact-act of the self-positing I, or Hegel's 'metaphorical' treatment of lordship and bondage – this modernist image hardly seems justified. Do these philosophers manifest a mistrust of language, an allegiance to fixed ideas and a wish to nail things down with the aid of philosophical language? Or is it rather the case that their use of language is no less inventive, daring and challenging than that of any other writer of their time, or ours? Does Dummett's attention to the tacit assumptions underlying the language that dictates a fixed picture of the past, or Derrida's examination of the linguistic twists that serve Kant's notion of the sublime, betray stale and dogmatic thought? A preconceived idea to which reality *must* correspond? 'Being', rather than 'becoming'? Or is it rather the modernist conception of philosophy that is too fixed and dogmatic, ignoring the richness of philosophical reality and the way philosophers actually use language?

But it is not only a fixed picture of the essence of *philosophy* that holds modernists captive; for we have seen that their picture of *language* implicitly presupposes a realist and representation-based model of language, that is, the very model they aimed to abolish. Another (and closely related) bold trait of this picture of language, shared by modernists, philosophers and artists alike, is the deep cleavage between 'ordinary' language, the language of propositions – including that of the sciences – and 'poetic'

language, an extraordinary language that breaks altogether with the logic of 'ordinary' language, defies its 'fixed' rules, categories and requirements, presents rather than represents. This poetic language breaks the fixity of its 'other' and reminds us of the metaphorical, physical and instinctive origins of language.

It is these conceptions of philosophy and language that make philosophical language least suitable for expressing what it actually aims to express, i.e. what allegedly transcends the ordinary, merely functional frame of thought. Being *logical* – the term read modernistically, with a strong emphasis on the nature of logic as *logos*, as 'being' rather than 'becoming' – the language of philosophy cannot do what poetic language can: deal with ethics and aesthetics, religion and wonder, and indeed, it cannot deal with the very notion of reflection, i.e. with philosophy itself. It cannot look the chief in the eye. Lawrence, expressing his longing for ancient times, when philosophical language was still poetic, notes: 'It seems to me it was the greatest pity in the world, when philosophy and fiction got split. . . . The two should come together again – in the novel' (Lawrence 1923: 145). For as we have read above, the novel – unlike philosophy (or science, or religion) does not nail things down. Referring to the same kind of transcendent, extraordinary goal, Diamond writes that

> we have something which cannot be referred to by an ordinary description. . . .
> This is a grammatical characterisation of a special sort. . . . It is the "grammar"
> of a "language" in which we could talk about what makes language possible.
> Looked at another way, it is the grammar which shows us what kind of question
> it is we are trying to answer . . . and to be a great riddle is to "allude" to a
> language whose full transparency to us is ruled out.
>
> (Diamond 1991: 281f.)

This characterisation could have referred to the language of philosophy as a meta-language, but this could not have been Diamond's intention; the way she thinks of both philosophy and language cannot square with this view of 'grammar' as meta-language, as a full-blown philosophical language that enables reflection. Her modernist conception requires clear and marked distinctions between sense and nonsense, between ordinary, 'normal', discourse and creative discourse, between question and riddle, between description and evaluation, and between description and explanation. Thus at the basis of the modernist notion of a non-dogmatic, free and creative spirit stand the most rigid of distinctions, as *a priori requirements*. Diamond's statement that 'to be a great riddle is to "allude" to a language whose full transparency to us is ruled out' implies that *ordinary* questions and descriptions are indeed written in a fully transparent language, that there is indeed such a possibility in language. Thus the sharp break between the ordinary and extraordinary, assumed in various versions by modernist thinkers, reflects their acceptance of the possibility of full presence and a self-frustrating romantic longing to *present*, to be in the presence of, a pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic origin. Eliminating philosophical language and regarding literature as the modern substitute for fulfilling the traditional philosophical tasks are the direct consequence of yielding to this picture.

In a way, this was already understood by some of the modernists themselves. Deliberating on Artaud's preoccupation with life and death, Derrida writes favourably of Artaud's strong affirmation of life. 'This is what distinguishes the affirmation of cruelty from romantic negativity; the difference is slight yet decisive' (WD: 233). Artaud, we remember, resisted the death sentence early modernism pronounced on metaphysical language. The affirmation of cruelty is nothing but a resolute rejection of the defeatist mood typical of earlier modernists, the mood that drove philosophers and poets to silence. Derrida contrasts this mood with romanticism. And indeed, as we have seen at the beginning of our discussion, early modernists were influenced by the 'romantic negativity'. The same romantic tendency survives also in later, even contemporary modernist writings.

Artaud was, however, a modernist. He was still captivated by strong dualisms and by the image of an origin, and hence he did think that it was only as an autonomous artistic form that metaphysical ideas should be expressed. It is interesting to see how this spirit reappears in Blanchot's writings. Blanchot is aware of the dogmatic distinctions that control the modernist vision, yet he does not wish to abandon them, and so rephrases them in a subtler manner. Both movements are visible in the following beautiful paragraphs: he first criticises the modernist discourse and then goes on to reaffirm it:

> The poem is thus a calling into question of a nonrational nature, which is not linked to its 'objective meaning'. . . . On this point modern aesthetics has brought us all kinds of insights. To summarize them, in two words, it is enough to recall that beside language, as a value of practical exchange, one supposes another form of language that does not tend toward action, that is not determined by meaning, and, rather than the useful substitute of an idea or an object, is a sum of physical effects and patent possibilities. *That is clear, too clear*. This distinction in fact leaves us far from the relationships that in poetry associate words with values of a new nature.
>
> (Blanchot 2001: 137, my emphasis)

So Blanchot explicitly criticises modernism with its 'too clear' demarcations. 'We often think that the distinction of two languages has first a negative value', he writes, yet he immediately restores the early modernist – actually romantic – picture. The argumentation is not as simplistic as that, but the deep contrast between 'daily language' and 'poetical language' is fully reinstated; note the *philosophical* role poetical language assumes:

> We understand very well that the poet rejects daily language, if habit and the determinations of ordinary life have the effect of removing all material reality from this language. We also understand that the poet wants to restore language as its own value, that he seeks to make it visible, that he separates it from all that annuls it . . . he seeks to give a form to the intimacy that common speech distorts. Poetic language seems to him associated with a possibility that not only corrects and erases the values of daily discourse but also corresponds to

what language is in its essence, in its capacity of naming things, of expressing our nature in its depths. . . . It is toward this language that poetry directs us by destroying daily language, and from now on it has a double ambition: it aims to found discourse, and, as its supreme object, it gives it silence.

(Blanchot 2001: 137f.)

Philosophy is to be appropriated by poetry as a result of the contradiction immanent in it: the discrepancy between philosophy's noble aim and its restricted language, a language that is too logical, too rigorous, to be able to fulfil its task. This paragraph echoes and explains Blanchot's words, quoted above at the beginning of the Preface, contrasting Artaud, who is 'never on sure ground', with the figure of the professor, or the aesthetician, 'a man of serene thought'. These words, I have argued there, are characteristic of modernist dogmatism.

Now in 'How is Literature Possible?', Blanchot quotes the following words by Jean Paulhan: 'Flee language, it will pursue you. Pursue language, it will flee you' (Blanchot 2001: 81). Paulhan surely succeeds in linking the mutual frustration of philosophy and literature/poetry. For what both try to achieve through their words is necessarily evasive, resisting complete articulation. We have seen this essential resistance throughout our discussion, mainly in the works of Dummett and Derrida. But Blanchot, in appealing to Paulhan's phrase, seems to ignore the fact that despite their similar predicaments, philosophy's desire is *not* the same as that of literature, and hence cannot be appropriated by it. There is something essentially concealing in literature and poetry, and something essentially explicit, unveiling, in philosophy. Both desires are thus doomed to remain precisely that: desires. But the pain that these frustrated desires yield arises from different yearnings: the movement of dialectics is not that of the arts. Trying to answer the incessant call of Concept is essentially different from attempting to answer that of Image, as we have seen in contrasting Godard's challenge with that of Dummett. Literature – especially as conceived by modernists – draws towards image, even towards music. This is why it both flees and pursues language. It is because of this that 'in the heart of every writer there is a demon who pushes him to strike dead all literary forms, to become aware of his dignity as a writer insofar as he breaks with language and with literature' (Blanchot 2001: 81). But the frustration of philosophy is different. It is its dialectical urge, the incessant need for articulation, of systematisation, that necessarily betrays itself. It is because it always wishes to master its limit that it flees language, and pursues it. Thus, *pace* Carnap, metaphysicians are *not* 'musicians without musical ability' – their passion is different. And this is precisely what keeps philosophical language alive: 'Dialectics is always that which has finished us, because it is always that which *takes into account* our rejection of it' (WD: 246). Thus by assimilating philosophy and literature we lose their unique voices, their conflicting aspirations.

We have seen, then, the dogmas that inform modernist thought and the way they entailed the elimination of philosophical language. It is worth noting, in this context, the strong affinities between the romantic and the formalist versions of modernism. For 'literary positivism' shares many assumptions with 'logical posi-

tivism'. Whereas Carnap and Schlick adopt the logical analysis of language as their way of eliminating metaphysics, Leavis, Blanchot and Diamond appeal to literature for exactly the same purpose. All are modernists, all critical of traditional values, expressions, and ways of thinking. And all are, as strange as this may sound, positivist. Positivism urges the elimination of metaphysics via a reduction and relocation of its language. After exposing most of this language as vacuous, it channels what remains of it to an alternative discourse, be it scientific, logical, or artistic. Now as we have seen in Carnap in particular, the positivist motivation is anti-conservative, aiming at shattering traditional idols. However, its insistence on reducing metaphysics, in order to eliminate philosophical language, is not merely based on a dogmatic picture but it also obstructs criticism and safeguards its status as a domineering picture, one that is 'not-seen-at-all', to use Terry Eagleton's characterisation of ideology. It thus transforms itself into the kind of metaphysics Dummett, for one, sets out, in a Marxian spirit, to dismantle.

This brings us to my second claim in this conclusion. The modernist spirit is decisively anti-dogmatic; so much so, that it takes no notice of the fact that language essentially comes along with dogmas, that words are interwoven with pictures which hold us captive, that our being speaking and writing creatures forces on us a perspective. When Wittgenstein thinks of dogmas, this is what he has in mind:

> The effect of making men thinking in accordance with dogmas, perhaps in the form of certain graphic propositions, will be very peculiar: I am not thinking of these dogmas as determining men's opinions but rather as completely controlling the expression of all opinions.
>
> (CV: 28e)

But Wittgenstein, even as late as 1937, is still in the thrall of the modernist dogma, and does not therefore acknowledge the fact that what he describes is a general and unavoidable phenomenon, a necessary result of our having a language. Postmodernist Dummett and Derrida are aware of this phenomenon, since they know that ignoring the dogmatic predicament means unconsciously yielding to the traditional view of language as representation and its corollary regarding the possibility of naïve presentation. Dummett, for example, emphasises that in using language, people must succumb to a theory, and 'even if most of them have only smatterings of this theory, it will colour the way they find it natural to think about the world' (SL: 392). He compares the denial of this fact to 'the myth of the noble savage'. And Jameson, deliberating on the modernist dogmas we have just discussed, makes the following observation:

> The New Critics' elevation of poetic language (presumably non-narrative in its very essence) over the other, generally narrative forms of discourse, turns out to be validated by a historical grand narrative that is something like a conservative 'philosophy of history', the unity of sensibility of the old English yeoman agricultural order (Eliot, Leavis). . . . Nor is this secondary narrative some mere secondary ideological supplement. I would want to press for a stronger formal

conclusion, namely that the very refusal and repudiation of narrative calls up a kind of narrative return of the repressed and tends in spite of itself to justify its anti-narrative position by way of yet another narrative the argument has every interest in decently concealing.

(2002: 6)

Derrida's non-exclusive logic is at work here. For what Jameson suggests is that modernism defeats itself in its insistence on the exclusion of meta-language, of reflective language. It must adhere to an essentially theoretical (philosophical, meta-physical, metaphorical) core – a 'narrative form of discourse' as opposed to a fragmentary one, or a poetical one – on its way to exclude such cores. Among the many examples Jameson brings to substantiate his point, Blanchot is again a case worth highlighting: the way two philosophical concepts used by Blanchot – 'la mort' and 'l'angoisse' – are brought into play in order to promote an ideology. In a manner typical of philosophical discourse, these concepts are first taken out of 'ordinary use', purified and assigned a role: they dramatise a certain kind of aesthetic autonomy. This autonomy then implicitly results in radical changes in the content of the concepts of the political and the existential.

Now the new ideology will be sealed by an exchange between these terms: that of aesthetic autonomy will be ratified by its replication in the form of the existential or the political, which promotes it to something like a supreme value; while the very content of the existential and political categories will be imperceptibly withdrawn and volatilised by their aesthetic analogue, leaving an ambiguous situation in which modernist affirmation can still be endowed with political or existential justification when need be, but where existential commitment and political praxis to come (May '68) are somehow already suspiciously 'aestheticized', as Benjamin put it in a memorable pre-war moment.

(Jameson 2002: 188)

I shall not go into the details of Jameson's analysis. My aim here is simply to expose the inevitable ideological – i.e. metaphysical – nature of modernism. Before going on to the final point I wish to make in this epilogue, it is worth noting that the anti-realist and playful philosophies of Dummett and Derrida are immune to such criticism precisely because it is essential to both that they acknowledge the indispensability of metaphysics, of the dialectics that always takes into account our rejection of it. Thus, as Derrida says, Plato is not over – and that is because he cannot be. Platonism is always within us, since in being linguistic creatures we are doomed to be unconsciously dogmatic, to be led by ideals, by the pictures embedded in our words; after all, to paraphrase Wittgenstein's characterisation of dogma, *words* control the expression of all opinions. Yet what Derrida shows in his reading of Plato is that in being Platonic we are always also Socratic, Socrates being an immanent part of Plato: when the traditional model of language as representation is replaced by the playful conception of language, by language as an activity, the Socratic aspect of Plato is not suppressed, and the dogmatic predicament is

supplemented by the ironic, doubtful, unstable, uprooting dimension that is also essential to language, and hence to us as linguistic creatures. And like the old model of language, the new image of language too goes hand-in-hand with a new understanding of philosophy.

Finally then: philosophical language is – and has always been – successful in uncovering the pictures that hold us captive. It incessantly frees us of dogmas – but naturally, only to bind us to new ones. The philosophical work of the two main protagonists in this book – Dummett and Derrida – supports this claim. Both emphasise the requirement to challenge what is 'clear and common', not only in the level of 'ordinary language', or science, but also in the way we read philosophy, its history and its language. Both read by writing and write by reading; their readings and writings reveal that philosophical language is far from representing a preconceived idea to which reality must correspond. And in reading the work of both philosophers, and also in writing about it, one cannot but remember that writers – novelists, poets – are also readers, and readers of philosophy in particular. Nietzsche reminds us of 'literature's many roots in philosophical ideas' (Childs 2000: 61); and, since we have mentioned modernist literature's aspiration to the condition of music, it is worth quoting the following paragraph from *Human, All Too Human*:

> No music is in itself deep and full of meaning. It does not speak of the 'will' or the 'thing in itself'. Only in an age that had conquered the entire sphere of inner life for musical symbolism could the intellect entertain this idea. The intellect itself has *projected* this meaning into the sound.
>
> (Nietzsche 1984: § 215)

Thus when Blanchot assigns to poetry the mission of correcting the values of daily discourse and expressing *what language is in its essence*, he can only do so after philosophical language coined not only 'will' and 'thing in itself' but also 'essence'. It is philosophy that projected silences into Mallarmé, Kafka and Rilke, to cite just a few examples dealt with by Blanchot. It is crucial to emphasise at this point that I do not mean to imply a hierarchy between philosophy and literature, assigning philosophy any kind of primacy. The playful model of language and of philosophy does not make room for such supremacy. We know by now – and modernism itself significantly contributed to this knowledge – that there are no pure concepts as there are no pure images. There is, in addition, no clearly demarcated 'ordinary language', no 'full transparency' anywhere. The idea of such clearly demarcated zones belongs to the logic of exclusion we have tried, with Derrida, to exclude, in a non-exclusive way. And since – again with Derrida – taking the risk of continuity should not wind up in reduction, this does not mean that the three – philosophy, literature, ordinary language – become one, collapsing one discourse into another. This is another facet of the playful model of language. And it also ridicules any attempt to reject dialectics, exclude philosophy, dislocate it or censor its language according to some allegedly 'anti-dogmatic' requirements. I have referred to Blanchot's Russellian 'loopholes' several times in this book. And indeed, Blanchot's own insights can be applied to overcome his own modernist dogmas when it comes

to the characterisations of philosophy, literature and even 'ordinary language'. In a discussion of Jean Giraudoux's *Littérature*, Blanchot says of poetry that it is a 'confidence in human language' (Blanchot 2001: 94). Giraudoux, Blanchot writes, 'willingly expresses an act of faith in the profound correspondence between words and universe'; he holds 'a firm belief in the metaphysical virtue of the rules and capacities of language' (*ibid.*). As a typical modernist, Giraudoux confines his faith to poetry (meaning also literature and drama), to which he assigns a metaphysical role, just as Artaud does. However, once we free ourselves of the modernist dogmas, the same confidence in human language can be reinstated in philosophy as well. We have seen that philosophy tries to articulate that which necessarily resists complete articulation. There will always be 'an outside, in which to be reflected', a loophole in the metalinguistic order. Every language is controlled by the dogmas that colour the way we think about the world; this is its Platonic aspect. Yet the flipside of the linguistic coin is its Socratic aspect, the never-ending possibility of breaking out of the order these dogmas enforce. This double aspect explains why there is no contradiction between the frustration of the language of philosophy and its confidence in human language. Blanchot suggests that by betraying language, literature eventually liberates and recreates it. And despite the differences, this is no less true of philosophy. As in the case of poetry, the reflection offered by philosophical language must involve a certain break with the 'ordinary use' of words; but its way of making this break is different from the poetical one. Where poetry brings words together, philosophy takes them apart. By using words extra-ordinarily as they do, philosophers draw metaphysical pictures. These 'images' owe their 'pictorial' nature to the way in which radically different uses of terms are intertwined within a complicated network. By emphasising certain traits in ordinary use and blurring others, by distorting and reinventing ('ideal') languages, philosophers direct our attention to the possibility of seeing the world from novel perspectives. They thus liberate language from its dogmas. Wittgenstein is right; philosophical problems do arise when language goes on holiday. But the detachment from the commerce of our lives is not as harmful as Wittgenstein, *cum* modernist, believes. This detachment – the language of philosophy – is rather badly needed, as post-modernist writer Don Dellilo realises. Holidays are needed for escaping the death that exists in routine. Yet even here we cannot find rest. Because, as Derrida's unsettling analysis shows, the *khairein*, the vacation given to the myths in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 'takes place in the name of truth' (Dis: 69). The myths reappear, come back from vacation, interrupting the 'serious' discourse, in the name of writing. They wish to warn us, perhaps, not to use our vacation to create a new logic of exclusion, or to restore the old dogmatic demarcation created in 'the name of truth'.

Notes

Introduction

1 Nietzsche's influence on these views is of course clear, yet as I have noted, early modernists – and some of the later modernists as well – drew extensively also from early nineteenth-century romanticism. See e.g. Mallarmé's lamentation over the fact that in his days 'the romantic tradition of the first half of the century only lingers among a few surviving masters of that time', those who cherish 'the old imaginative artist and dreamer' (Mallarmé 1876: 43). I find that these romantic overtones are not always at one with Nietzsche's views. Nietzsche was of course, after 1878, critical of the sort of emotions that were expressed by German romantics. In this respect, as well as in others, Nietzsche can – and should – be read as a precursor of both modernism and post-modernism, I think. See Staten's (1990) reading of Nietzsche along a similar line.

2 G. E. Moore's relationship with the Bloomsbury Group is an example of a possible channel for disseminating the new 'analytical' ideas. Later on, of course, it was Wittgenstein's presence in Cambridge.

3 See for example Leavis' 'Mutually Necessary' and 'Memories of Wittgensetin' in *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher* and *The Living Principle*. See also Bell's own *F. R. Leavis*.

4 It should be mentioned, though, that many modernists felt a need to complement their artistic deeds with a theoretical reflection. I'm thinking in particular of the various manifestos by futurists, surrealists, imagists, etc. I actually believe that this point is telling and worth attention, but will not elaborate on it here.

5 The relationship between the *Tractatus* and modernist art is explored, for example, in Janik and Toulmin (1973), Bramann (1985), and several articles in Allen and Turvey (2001).

6 This selection of modernist representatives undoubtedly sounds odd. In recent years, we have been offered several readings of the triangle Carnap–the early Wittgenstein–Heidegger. I intentionally avoid this triangle here. It creates a context in which the predominant questions concern nothingness, the primacy of negativity, *Angst*. There is nothing wrong with such an existential emphasis, of course, and it surely reflects faithfully a predominant modernist preoccupation. Situated in the company of the early Heidegger, the points of similarity and divergence between Wittgenstein and Carnap automatically get a distinctive colour. But the spirit of modernism is richer in colours. When compared to Artaud, different traits, parallelisms, distinctions, problems, become salient, others blurred. And since what interests me here is mainly the question of presentation and representation, I find it fruitful to keep the stage in mind. The difference in temperament between the pure philosophers, writing in German, and the artist, writing in French, is also fruitful: it serves as a reminder of what it is to think about the same topic in two different languages.

1   Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: modernism in its essence

1 A less bleak formulation appears in WVC: 80: 'This running up against the limits of language is *ethics*'. The emphasis is Wittgenstein's.

2 Note the tension in Plato's text between 'being' and 'becoming' as revealing the nature of truth. As I shall argue in the third part of the book, it is only when a balanced attitude towards these conflicting notions is adopted, that philosophy is kept alive. In the *Tractatus*, though, it is the deadening side of 'being' that eventually wins, as I have just argued.

3 E.g. in the *Tractatus*, 'An expression has meaning only in a proposition' (T: § 3.314).

4 Nietzsche's words on the status of logic, whose assumptions 'do not correspond to anything in the real world' are also matched by the Tractarian conception of the subject. See especially T: §§ 5.473, 5.4731.

5 Peter Hacker's *Insight and Illusion* is a paradigmatic example of the first kind of interpretation discussed here. Matthew Ostrow's *Wittgenstein's Tractatus* clearly represents the second one. Both contain detailed and systematic analyses of central paragraphs in the *Tractatus* along the lines just described, although, naturally, the sense of cancellation towards which the *Tractatus* leads, the sense that colours the whole move, is different in each case.

6 See e.g. Hacker 1989: 62ff.; Diamond 1991: ch. 6 passim, but esp. p. 202f. A similar argument is raised (e.g. by Hans Sluga and Joan Weiner) against Dummett's reading of Frege as realist. On the other hand, Patricia Hanna and Bernard Harrison (2004: 91–4) advance the claim that Wittgenstein's position in the *Tractatus* is indeed realist.

7 The linguistic realm, we remember, is 'a place which [man] thought so sturdy that from it he could move the rest of the world from its foundations and make himself lord over it' (Nietzsche 1984: § 11).

8 This, again, captures Berkeley's conception no less than it does that of Locke. And indeed, it is this myth of the purely logical, non-psychological nature of language, which Hume – Nietzsche's predecessor – was first to shatter. His insights were absorbed much later, though.

9 The death of traditional metaphysics as 'the death of God' is Nietzsche's point, e.g. in his famous paragraph 125 in *Beyond Good and Evil*.

10 See a detailed discussion of this issue in the section entitled 'Sense *and* Reference?' in the second part below.

11 Quoted by Wittgenstein much later in his life, in OC: § 402.

12 Note that it is essential to modernist art too to preoccupy itself with questions regarding its own ability to express what it wishes – rather than merely hint at it. I have chosen as an example a poem by Rilke, written in 1906. Rilke was admired by Witttgenstein and was one of his beneficiaries in 1914. Like the *Tractatus*' ladder, the steps in this poem serve to question the writer's ability to capture in words what he wishes to touch:

> *Die Treppe der Orangerie Versailles*
>
> Wie Könige die schließlich nur noch schreiten
> fast ohne Ziel, nur um von Zeit zu Zeit
> sich den Verneigenden auf beiden Seiten
> zu zeigen in des Mantels Einsamkeit –
>
> so steigt, allein zwischen den Balutraden,
> die sich verneigen schon seit Anbeginn,
> die Treppe: langsam und von Gottes Gnaden
> und auf den Himmel zu und nirgends hin;
>
> als ob sie allen Folgenden befahl
> zurückzubleiben, – so daß sie nicht wagen
> von ferne nachzugehen; nicht einmal
> die schwere Schleppe durfte einer tragen.

> Like kings who simply pace at certain hours / with no more purpose than the habitude / of showing the double-rank of courtly bowers / their presence in their mantle's solitude – : // even so this flight of steps ascends in lonely / pomp between pillars bowing eternally: / slowly and By the Grace of God and only / to Heaven and nowhere intermittently; // as having ordered all its retinue / to stay behind, – and they're not even daring / to follow at a distance; none may do / so much as hold the heavy train it's wearing.

> (Trans. J. B. Leishman)

The same theme appears already in the later works of Mallarmé, as Frey shows in his reading of them:

> The poem as something that comes into being is completely incompatible with what it expresses. If what it expresses were actually true, then it could not have come into being. In this way, everything that is expressed is questioned by the fact that it is expressed, just as, on the contrary, the positivity of expression is itself questioned by what is expressed. The ontological status of the poem . . . constitutes itself as its own annulment.

> (Frey 1996: 58).

13 Cf. Ostrow 2002: 70.
14 Cf. PI: preface, vii.
15 This is said in 1930, only one year after the Lecture on Ethics was given! That lecture represents the early Wittgenstein quite remarkably. Obviously, Wittgenstein's thought was at the time in a state of transition.
16 That became clear via the colour problem, which showed that the bivalent, realist structure of the *Tractatus* could not accommodate colour exclusion. This is an important detail, for it proves that for Wittgenstein, the main problem had to do with realism – bivalence – and representation, i.e. that the dogma was the dogma of representation-based metaphysics. Two other relevant factors that prompted the change in Wittgenstein's views were his encounters with what he saw as 'non-bourgeois' thinkers, whose philosophical outlook was totally different with the 'bourgeois' attitude of Russell and Ramsey. There was Sraffa's 'anthropological' way of looking at philosophical problems, and Brouwer's lecture on intuitionist mathematics. Ramsey treated Brouwer as 'the Bolshevist menace'. All these aspects of Wittgenstein's inner struggle with different modernist trends of thought are discussed in Monk 1990: 246–61.

2 Modernism on its way out

1 See, for instance, his annoyed response to Strawson's criticism of his 'On Denoting' (Strawson 1950), where Russell (1957) expresses his hostility towards adhering to 'common sense' in philosophy.
2 Cf. T: § 6.
3 Cf. LP: 73.
4 Cf. LP: 77f. See also his criticism of the *Tractatus* result in this respect in PLS: 38.
5 PLS: 35f.
6 These words are Quine's! Cf. Quine 1963: 385, emphasis added.
7 How reminiscent this paragraph is in spirit to the following: 'Arise ye workers from your slumbers / Arise ye prisoners of want / For reason in revolt now thunders / And at last ends the age of cant. / Away with all your superstitions / Servile masses arise, arise / We'll change henceforth the old tradition / And spurn the dust to win the prize.' 'The Internationale' was composed in 1871.

8 Loos was famously acknowledged by Wittgenstein as an important source of inspiration. For a discussion of his influence see John Hyman (2001).

9 They may hence be taken almost as an 'ornamental' effect, as in Wittgenstein's own formulation in his dictation to Schlick in 1929, TS 302. Wittgenstein notes Loos' influence on his own ideas here, but fails to detect the same spirit, or even influence, in Carnap's work. However, we have just seen that Carnap himself does note the similarity in spirit between the Vienna Circle attitude and the architecture of his day.

10 Cf. LSW: 123.

11 See e.g. Carnap 1934: § 3 passim.

12 Compare to Schlick: 'logical positivism and realism are not in opposition' (LP: 107). This is the bottom line of his 'Positivism and Realism', an article dedicated to showing that scientific realism is not – or should not be – metaphysical, and in that case coheres with the positivist language.

13 Cf. SL: 252ff.

14 Note, again, the dissimilarity to the *Tractatus* in this attitude.

15 Carnap's pragmatic approach to 'formal analysis' aims precisely at avoiding such a metaphysical attitude as that, for example, of Husserl. In the next part of the book we touch upon Derrida's criticism of Husserl's appeal to form – in its traditional sense; but see also Staten's clear discussion of the subject in the introduction to Staten 1984.

16 Schopenhauer's influence on both Nietzsche and the early Wittgenstein is very clear at this point.

17 And note the striking similarity of this conception of formal language to that of Mallarmé, as described by Blanchot – the power 'that, in relation to language, will be designated as another language, purer but also more effaced, and capable of bringing into play – in order to disappear in it – the very Other of all language' (Blanchot 1993: 333). The arch-modernist Mallarmé, of course, thinks of poetry along these lines. My point is that Carnap's approach should be seen as complementary to that of Mallarmé.

18 Cf. FPM: 253f.

19 I am referring of course primarily to Quine's classical article 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism', reprinted in Quine 1953. The first dogma is that there is a cleavage between analytic and synthetic truths; the second is 'reductionism', namely the belief that the terms which are used in every meaningful statement can be 'reduced' to terms which refer to immediate experience. Quine argues that both dogmas are strongly connected.

20 On the equivalence between the internal-external distinction and the analytic-synthetic one see also Hylton 1998: 49.

21 Flaubert is quoted by Blanchot in 1993: 336.

22 Compare with Davidson's argument in 'A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs', where he argues that lacunae are essential to language, and that the distinction between 'knowing a language and knowing our way around in the world generally' should be erased. Davidson 1986: 446.

23 Cf. his 'Moods and Performances' and 'Communication and Convention', in Davidson 1984.

24 This anti-naturalist assumption is the springboard of the next part of the book – the analysis of Frege and Husserl's theories through Dummett and Derrida's perspectives. Dummett's own views of philosophical language and his criticism of Quine's approach are discussed in the last part.

3   Modernism: the last breath

1 Skorupski turns to the anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl in order to introduce this facet of modernism: 'a mystical orientation to the world, an orientation which follows laws of thought other than the logical, and is thus sharply opposed to modern mentality, on which the iron cage of rationality has closed' (Skorupski 1990: 17). We have seen that

Baudelaire, too, expressed a similar attitude. Artaud does not only criticise the Western tradition and admire the alternatives; he makes the alternative ours.

2 Here again we can see Carnap's position as an intermediate one. His insistence on keeping such notions as analyticity and necessity as the subject-matter of philosophy is deeply rooted in his emphasis on philosophical formal *activity*, on the legitimacy of 'external language', etc. His *Meaning and Necessity* is a latter-day testimony to this 'middle-position', as are his debates with Quine on necessity.

3 Quoted by Derrida in WD: 182.

4 For a complementary discussion of the 'yet undiscovered nucleus' in Artaud see Derrida's WD: 179.

4 'The way in which logic uses ideas'

1 Cf. Sluga 1980: 35f., 53f.

2 Cf. PGHP: 15.

3 The context principle and its anti-psychologistic justification are stated in the introduction to Frege's *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*, FA: x. Austin translates *Satz* as 'proposition'. I follow Dummett's decision to translate it as 'sentence'.

4 Compare with Wittgenstein's above-quoted remark, that 'what he was doing was not the same kind of thing as Plato or Berkeley had done, but . . . [it] "takes the place" of what they did' (Cf. PO: 113).

5 Sense *and* reference?

1 See Dummett's discussion of corrected versions of the principle as applied to the notion of reference in FPM: chs 16 and 17, passim.

2 For a succinct and clear presentation of this interpretive line see Floyd 1998.

3 Goldfarb's words from 'Logic in the Twenties: The Nature of the Quantifier' are quoted in Floyd (1998: 144). In the relevant respect, then, philosophers belonging to the 'universalist' school regard Frege more as a modernist than a pre-modernist.

4 We shall see towards the end of Part II that an equivalent rationale guides Dummett in his objection to Frege's wish to avoid adopting any position concerning subjective experience. Such a wish 'unleashes' the subjective sphere, enabling it to be interpreted according to a 'private language' model. Derrida's criticism of Husserl's implicit mentalism is very similar in this point.

5 Dummett devotes an entire article to arguing in favour of keeping the sense/reference distinction, as opposed to suggestions by Davidson, Quine and Kripke. Although his terminology and argumentation are very different from the reasons outlined here, I believe that the gist of the argument is the same. Cf. 'Frege's Distinction between Sense and Reference' (1975), reprinted in TOE: 116–44.

6 Cf. Hylton 1993: 474.

7 Or actually, sense, in Frege's terminology; it was Russell who renamed 'sense' as 'meaning', in the manner used later by Quine. Cf. Russell 1905: 108.

8 Cf. 'Reality without Reference' and 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', Davidson 1984: esp. 225 and 191.

9 It is interesting to compare both criticisms of Quine with those expressed by Kant's contemporaries, such as Jacobi and Maimon, against Kant's concept of the thing in itself. Both argued, in different ways, that any causal connection between phenomena and things in themselves is implausible, and that this fact points at an inherent absurdity in this concept.

10 See also the ensuing discussion on FPL: 70f.

11 Dummett cautions us against ignoring Frege's great achievement and regarding this step as a testimony to his total relegation of his own linguistic turn. It is important to see that Frege did not simply 'inadvertently' anticipate the linguistic turn, and then 'subsequently

set himself upon another path' (OAP: 6). Rather, the inner conflict among Frege's move-ments indicates that he did indeed take the linguistic turn seriously, but was still unable to see clearly enough how far-reaching its consequences actually were.

12 Cf. FPL: 93.

13 A little further down, in section 87, Wittgenstein shows why this post-Fregean picture of names may also serve to refute scepticism, not in the foundationalist way adopted by Russell, but rather by showing why the sceptical doubt cannot arise at all within the compass of this new view of language.

14 Dummett's deconstruction of Frege's attitude towards proper names is similar in its gist to Derrida's treatment of the topic. Cf. for example Marian Hobson's discussion of the topic in Hobson 1998: 125–30. In 'Des Tours de Babel', Derrida explicitly and ironically toys with the idea of the untranslatability of proper names, which cannot hence be – 'not strictly' – part of language at all. This point is further discussed in the next part.

6   The apparent primacy of language

1 I shall not here dwell on the differences in terminology between Frege and Husserl's distinctions. In his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl intentionally wipes out the Fregean sense/reference distinction (LI: § 15), and when he brings it back, in his *Ideas*, he gives it a new meaning. For an elaborate and clear discussion of this issue, relating to Husserl's terminology at the time of his *Logical Investigations*, see Bell 1990: 125–49. The purpose of Husserl's terminology in *Ideas I* is thoroughly explained by Derrida in SP: 19f. For a lucid presentation of the interplay between the immanent and transcendent facets of Husserl's notion of intentionality see Staten 1984, ch. 1 passim, but esp. 34.

2 Cf. e.g. FPL: 85ff.; and OAP: 10.

3 Derrida's point should not be confused with the view that *representation* should be primary in our understanding of language – the position dealt with thoroughly above. It is not the fact that it is essential for language to represent a given reality that Derrida empha-sises here, but the fact that 'what is called perception is not primordial' (SP: 52).

4 Derrida shows that for Husserl, as well, writing serves an important role. It establishes for him a transcendental realm of Objectivity. See OG: 87–93 in particular. The same is true of Frege. Enumerating the advantages of written symbols over audible ones, Frege notes that the former are 'sharply defined and clearly distinguished' and also have 'greater permanence and immutability' (SJCN: 87). It is important to remember, though, that for both philosophers the interest in writing is above all a result of their deep understanding of the primacy of language in philosophical inquiry.

5 Dummett's view on translation is discussed in the next part.

6 Such indeed is the core of Dummett's general move, already in his classical 'Truth' of 1959, reprinted in TOE.

7 See e.g. OG: 80; and SP: 40.

7   Leaving psychologism out: 'too rigid a barrier'

1 Although Derrida analyses LI in particular, at this point he compares it with Husserl's later *Cartesian Meditations*, proving that his conclusion regarding private experiences and immediacy remains intact. Cf. SP: 39f.

2 See PGHP: 29, 31.

3 Derrida actually raises this argument in his discussion of Natorp, comparing him to Husserl on this point. Cf. PGHP: 11. He then goes on to explore the advantages of Husserl's notion of lived experience in relation to Frege, with the above analysis at the background. Cf. PGHP: 23ff. However, as his analysis of Husserl develops, especially in *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida uncovers the same formalism in Husserl.

4 Reprinted in FOP: 263–88.

5 Again, this is obviously a Wittgensteinian idea. For the way it is developed by Dummett see FOP: 274ff.

8 'Determining the logos from logic': language as a monologue

1 This is the subtitle of Frege's *Begriffsschrift*.
2 Cf. TOE: 441.
3 Cf. SP: 37; Derrida refers to Husserl's LI, Book I: §§ 5–7 in particular.
4 Cf. his ensuing discussion in BB: 5ff.
5 Cf. OAP: 156f.
6 I shall resume the discussion of this issue while examining Dummett's own solutions, in the next part.
7 Or actually, the sentence; see Dummett's analysis of this in OAP: 8f.
8 Dummett blames philosophers like Strawson for not going far enough with their post-Fregean insights and for failing to replace the notion of truth-conditions and the dogma of bivalence by a justificationist logic. See, for example, his criticism of Strawson's notion of presupposition which appears in 'On Referring' in his 'Presupposition', TOE: 25–8. For similar reasons, Dummett is not happy with the semantics-pragmatics distinction altogether. (TOE: 445).
9 Dummett's point is that the grains of this approach are to be found already in Frege. Here, for example, is one of the formulations of the context principle in *Grundlagen*: 'It should throw some light on the matter to consider number in the context of a judgement which brings out its basic *use*' (FA: § 46, my emphasis).
10 Reminder: Frege's first 'fundamental principle', the only principle that he takes for granted without supplying even a short justification for it, is 'always to separate sharply the psychological from the logical, the subjective from the objective' (FA: x).
11 'As achieved through the ontological way, the reduction is simply *the rigorous formalization of the concept of philosophical reflection as a thoroughly radical form of criticism*' (Staten 1984: 41, original emphasis).
12 Cf. OG: 50.

9 Representation and presentation in the present

1 Henry Chadwick's translation: 'These usages are utterly commonplace and everyday. Yet they are deeply obscure and the discovery of the solution is new.'
2 PI: §§ 89–90.
3 Dummett's interest in the concept of time begins with such an early article as 'A Defence of McTaggart's Proof of the Unreality of Time' (1960), and continues to this very day with, for example, 'Is Time a Continuum of Instants?', *Philosophy* 75, 2000, pp. 497–515; and *Truth and the Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). I shall not go into his analysis here.

10 Dummett: (almost) nothing is innocent

1 For an explicit statement regarding the connection between the notions of justice, democracy and voting systems, see Dummett 2001: 13.
2 See e.g. 'Language and Communication' in SL, esp. 185–7, where Dummett is explicit about the implications of the change from a conception of language as representation to that of language as activity.
3 In Hebrew, the Ten Commandments are literally 'Ten Acts of Speech'.
4 'We must counter vague ideas with clear images.'

5 Cf. LBM: 15.
6 Eagleton's book is wholly devoted to this topic.
7 Cf. PI: § 115.
8 This does not mean that the later Wittgenstein adopts the 'anything goes' approach. He is of course restrained by what he sees as 'grammar'. But the way to expose this grammar is by drawing it from altering perspectives rather than by presenting one perfect analysis that eventually annihilates itself.
9 All this naturally echoes Nietzsche's perspectivism.
10 Molyneux's thesis is that Rembrandt was first to challenge this neutralism, as a result of his acute social sensitivity.
11 Cf. SL: 389, 404.
12 It is interesting to note, *en passant*, Derrida's own anti-realist ideas regarding mathematics. These arise in the context of discussing Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*. For example, Derrida deduces from Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem that 'against the classic affirmations of Husserl, "*tertium datur*" ' (OG: 54). Dummett himself discusses the relevance of Gödel's result to intuitionism in 'The Philosophical Significance of Gödel's Theorem', reprinted in TOE.
13 Some of these were discussed above. Cf. Part II, especially the section 'Sense *and* reference?'.
14 The article was written in 1973 and is reprinted in TOE.
15 Compare our previous discussion of Frege's argument for the necessity of meta-logic in Part I, in the section dealing with Carnap's conception of form.
16 Such a comparison was suggested by Burton Dreben. See his article in R. Arrington and H-J. Glock's *Wittgenstein and Quine*, 1996, London: Routledge.
17 Was Quine aware of Wittgenstein's remark when he wrote, in 1957, that 'a cagey linguist is a caged linguist'? Cf. Quine 1969: 3.
18 This point is parallel to the one discussed earlier in the section 'Sense *and* Reference?' in Part II.
19 Compare also with PI: §§ 354-5: 'The fluctuation in grammar between criteria and symptoms makes it look as if there were nothing at all but symptoms… The point here is not that our sense-impressions can lie, but that we understand their language'.
20 Exactly 'like the case of orthography, which deals with the word 'orthography' among others without then being second-order'.
21 Cf. OAP: 152.

11 Derrida: the stable instability of language and philosophy

1 We have also seen, though, a parallel crisis in modernist poetry and its own essential attraction to silence and annihilation.
2 For a thorough and clear discussion of *eidos*, law and unity in Derrida's work, see Staten 1986 passim, but especially the introduction and chapter 5.
3 Cf. Moore's recollections in PO: 69.
4 There is of course a lot of similarity between Wittgenstein and Derrida's approaches, despite the difference just pointed at. It may be useful to refer the reader again to Henry Staten's *Wittgenstein and Derrida* for a thorough examination of this resemblance, as well as to Garver and Lee's *Derrida and Wittgenstein*, written from a different perspective, which emphasises Wittgenstein's rather than Derrida's advantages as philosopher. Stanley Cavell and Simon Critchley, among others, read Wittgenstein's attitude towards the ordinary as suggesting that the 'ordinary' is to be regained in the light of our philosophical musings. Such a reading draws Wittgenstein nearer to Derrida than my own reading. The gap that I pointed at, though, cannot be totally abolished, I believe.
5 This remark hints at Derrida's view on holistic theories of truth and knowledge, theories in which differences are merely a matter of degree. It squares with the kind of criticism mentioned above against empiricism of the Quinean and Davidsonian kind.
6 See Part I above, p.46 and also Artaud's CW: 89.

7 In the present context I avoid discussing the question whether Nietzsche himself did indeed maintain such a view. It is interesting to note that the differences in interpretation of Derrida's position on the matter are reflected also in differences about Nietzsche, and actually about Wittgenstein too. Compare Garver and Lee's approach to these philosophers in their *Derrida and Wittgenstein* with Staten's in his *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, as well as in his *Nietzsche's Voice* (xx).

8 See the first section of Chapter 10; and LBM: 13–15.

9 For Derrida's discussion of Hegel's aesthetics on this issue see the whole section '*Plus de métaphore*' in 'White Mythology'.

10 Derrida supplies the original terminology: *logos, phōnē, sēmantikē, sēmainein, onoma, mimēsis, homiosis*.

11 This characterisation is, at least *prima facie*, also close to the position criticised by Wittgenstein in PI: § 435, in relation to Augustine. We saw that Wittgenstein, too, linked this position regarding the illusive nature of ordinary language to the representational conception of name-thing relation.

12 Universalist interpreters of Frege attribute this understanding already to Frege.

13 See for example the way semantic tableaux are defined, via syntactic notions, in EI: ch. 5.

14 We have just seen, in the quote from 'Plato's Pharmacy', the name of Bataille used precisely in this manner, starting a similar metonymical chain.

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