



PROJECT MUSE®

Give the Word

Hamacher, Werner, Smock, Ann, Richter, Gerhard

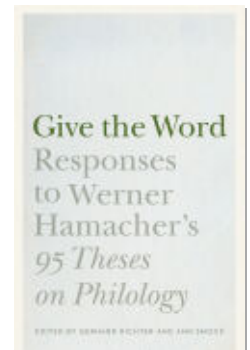
Published by University of Nebraska Press

Hamacher, Werner, et al.

Give the Word: Responses to Werner Hamacher's "95 Theses on Philology".

University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/66257.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/66257>

Give the Word
Responses
to Werner
Hamacher's
95 Theses
on Philology

EDITED BY GERHARD RICHTER AND ANN SMOCK

Give the Word

Stages

SERIES EDITORS

General Editor: Gerald Prince

University of Pennsylvania

Warren Motte

University of Colorado Boulder

Patricia Meyer Spacks

University of Virginia

Give the Word

Responses to Werner Hamacher's
95 Theses on Philology

Edited by Gerhard Richter and Ann Smock

University of Nebraska Press / Lincoln

© 2019 by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. *95 Thesen zur Philologie* © Werner Hamacher. All rights reserved

The German original of Werner Hamacher's *95 Thesen on Philology* is reprinted here by permission from the author's estate, courtesy of Shinu Sara Ottenburger; the English translation of *95 Theses on Philology* is reproduced by permission from Fordham University Press.



Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Richter, Gerhard, 1967–, editor. | Smock, Ann, 1944–, author. | Hamacher, Werner. *95 Thesen zur Philologie*. English.

Title: Give the word: responses to Werner Hamacher's 95 theses on philology / edited by Gerhard Richter and Ann Smock.

Description: Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, [2019] | Series: Stages | Includes bibliographic references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018040955

ISBN 9781496206527 (cloth: alk. paper)

ISBN 9781496213594 (epub)

ISBN 9781496213600 (mobi)

ISBN 9781496213617 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Philology—Anecdotes. | Philology—Philosophy. | Hamacher, Werner. *95 Thesen zur Philologie*. | Hamacher, Werner—Criticism and interpretation.

Classification: LCC P33 .G52 2019 | DDC 410—dc23

LC record available at

<https://lccn.loc.gov/2018040955>

Set in Merope Basic by Mikala R. Kolander.

Frontispiece: Werner Hamacher. © The European Graduate School (EGS).



IN MEMORIAM

Werner Hamacher

APRIL 27, 1948–JULY 7, 2017

“Weltapfelgroß die Träne neben dir,
durchrauscht, durchfahren
von Antwort,
Antwort,
Antwort.”

—PAUL CELAN, “Give the Word”

Contents

95 Theses on Philology / 95 <i>Thesen zur Philologie</i> <i>Werner Hamacher, translated by Catharine Diehl</i>	xii
Introduction <i>Gerhard Richter and Ann Smock</i>	1
PART 1. BALANCES	
1. Was heißt Lesen?—What Is Called Reading? <i>Gerhard Richter</i>	15
2. Language-Such-That-It's-Spoken <i>Michèle Cohen-Halimi, translated by Ann Smock</i>	32
3. 48: [this space intentionally left blank] <i>Jan Plug</i>	38
4. Catch a Wave: Sound, Poetry, Philology <i>Sean Gurd</i>	63
PART 2. TIMES	
5. Einmal ist Keinalmal: On the 76th of Werner Hamacher's 95 <i>Theses for Philology</i> <i>Ann Smock</i>	83

6. Rereading *tempus fugit* 94
Thomas Schestag

7. Language on Pause: Hamacher's Seconds
of Celan and Daive 104
Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei

PART 3. CATEGORIES

8. The Right Not to Complain: A Philology of Kinship 131
Avital "Irony" Ronell

9. The Category of Philology 171
Peter Fenves

10. The *Philia* of Philology 181
Susan Bernstein

11. Defining the Indefinite 195
Daniel Heller-Roazen

PART 4. RESPONDING TO RESPONSES

12. What Remains to Be Said: On Twelve and
More Ways of Looking at Philology 217
Werner Hamacher, translated by Kristina Mendicino

Contributors 355

Index 359

95 Theses on Philology / 95 Thesen zur Philologie

WERNER HAMACHER

Translated by Catharine Diehl

1

The elements of language explicate one another. They speak for that which still remains to be said within that which is said; they speak as philological additions to one another. Language is archiphilology.

Die Elemente der Sprache erläutern einander. Sie sprechen für das, was vom Gesagten noch zu sagen bleibt; sie sprechen als philologische Zusätze zu einander. Sprache ist Archiphilologie.

2

The elements of language explicate one another: they offer additions to what has hitherto been said, speak for one another as witnesses, as advocates, and as translators that open that which has been said onto that which is to be said: the elements of language relate to one another as languages. There is not *one* language but a multiplicity; not a stable multiplicity but only a perpetual multiplication of languages. The relation that the many languages within each individual language, and all individual languages, entertain to one another is philology. Philology: the perpetual extension of the elements of linguistic existence.

Die Elemente der Sprache erläutern einander: sie bieten Zusätze zum jeweils Gesagten, sprechen für einander als Zeugen, Advokaten und Übersetzer, die das Gesagte auf das Zu Sagende öffnen: die Elemente der Sprache verhalten sich zueinander als Sprachen. Es gibt nicht *eine* Sprache, sondern nur eine Vielfalt; nicht eine stabile Vielfalt, sondern

nur eine fortgesetzte Vervielfältigung von Sprachen. Das Verhältnis, das diese vielen Sprachen in jeder einzelnen Sprache und alle einzelnen Sprachen zueinander unterhalten, ist Philologie. Philologie: die fortgesetzte Extension der Elemente sprachlicher Existenz.

3

The fact that languages must be philologically clarified indicates that they remain obscure and reliant upon further clarifications. The fact that they must be expanded philologically indicates that they never suffice. Philology is repetition, clarification, and multiplication of impenetrably obscure languages.

Daß Sprachen philologisch geklärt werden müssen, besagt, daß sie dunkel und auf weitere Klärungen angewiesen bleiben. Daß sie philologisch erweitert werden müssen, besagt: sie reichen nie aus. Philologie ist Wiederholung, Klärung und Vermehrung undurchdringlich dunkler Sprachen.

4

To be able to speak means to be able to speak beyond everything that has been spoken and means never to be able to speak enough. The agent of this “beyond” and of this “neverenough” is philology. Philology: transcending without transcendence.

Sprechen können heißt über alles Gesprochene hinaus und heißt nie genug sprechen können. Der Agent jenes Darüber-hinaus und dieses Nie-genug ist die Philologie. Philologie: Transzendieren ohne Transzendenz.

5

The idea of philology lies in a sheer speaking to and for [*Zusprechen*] without anything spoken of or addressed, without anything intended or communicated.

Die Idee der Philologie liegt im schieren Zusprechen ohne Gesprochenes und Angesprochenes, ohne Gemeintes und Mitgeteiltes.

6

The idea of philology, like the idea of language, forbids us from regarding them as something had [*eine Habe*]. Since the Aristotelian definition of man as a living being *having* language uses the (linguistic) category of having [*Habe*] for language itself, and thus tautologically, language is without a finite object and is itself a nonfinite category, an *apeiron*.

Die Idee der Philologie verbietet wie die Idee der Sprache, sie als Habe anzusehen. Da die aristotelische Wendung vom Menschen als Sprache *habenden* Lebewesen die (sprachliche) Kategorie der Habe für die Sprache selbst und also tautologisch gebraucht, ist sie ohne finiten Gegenstand und selbst eine nicht finite Kategorie, ein *apeiron*.

7

The object of philology is—in extension and in intensity (reality), as well as in the intention directed toward it—infinite. It lies, as Plato might say, *epékeina tes ousías*. It is therefore not an object of a representation or of a concept, but an idea.

Der Gegenstand der Philologie ist nach Extension und Intensität (Realität) sowie nach der Intention, die sich darauf richtet, unendlich. Er liegt, wie Platon sagen könnte, *epékeina tes ousías*. Deshalb ist er nicht Gegenstand einer Vorstellung oder eines Begriffs, sondern Idee.

8

From the *logos apophantikos*, the language of propositions relating to finite objects in sentences capable of truth, Aristotle distinguishes another *logos*, one that does not say something about something and therefore can be neither true nor false. His only example of this nonapophantic language is the *euche*, the plea, the prayer, the desire. Propositional language is the medium and object of ontology as well as of all the epistemic disciplines under its direction. Meaningful but nonpropositional language is that of prayer, wish, and poetry. It knows no “is” and no “must” but only a “be” and a “would be” that withdraw themselves from every determining and every determined cognition.

Aristoteles unterscheidet vom *logos apophantikos*, der aussagenden Rede, die sich in wahrheitsfähigen Sätzen auf finite Gegenstände bezieht, einen anderen *logos*, der nicht etwas über etwas aussagt und deshalb weder wahr noch falsch sein kann. Sein einziges Beispiel dafür ist die *euchè*, die Bitte, das Gebet, das Verlangen. Die aussagende Rede ist Medium und Gegenstand der Ontologie sowie aller von ihr geleiteten epistemischen Disziplinen. Die bedeutsame, aber nicht aussagende Rede ist die des Gebets, des Wunsches, der Dichtung. Sie kennt kein „ist“ und kein „muß,“ sondern nur ein „sei“ und „mag sein,“ das sich jeder bestimmenden und jeder bestimmten Erkenntnis entzieht.

9

Unlike the sciences—ontology, biology, geology—that belong to the order of the *logos apophantikos*, philology speaks in the realm of the *euche*. Its name does not signify knowledge of the *logos*—of speech, language, or relation—but affection for, friendship with, inclination to it. The part of *philia* in this appellation was forgotten early on, so that philology was increasingly understood as logology, the study of language, erudition, and finally as the scientific method of dealing with linguistic, in particular literary, documents. Still, philology has remained the movement that, even before the language of knowledge, awakens the wish for it and preserves within cognition the claim of that which remains to be cognized.

Anders als die Wissenschaften—die *Ontologie*, *Biologie*, *Geologie*—, die der Ordnung des *logos apophantikos* zugehören, spricht die *Philologie* im Bereich der *euchè*. Ihr Name besagt nicht Wissen vom *logos*—der Rede, Sprache oder Kundgabe—, sondern: Zuneigung, Freundschaft, Liebe zu ihm. In ihrer Benennung ist der Anteil der *philia* früh in Vergessenheit geraten, so daß *Philologie* zunehmend als *Logologie*, als Wissenschaft von der Sprache, als Gelehrsamkeit, schließlich als wissenschaftliches Verfahren im Umgang mit sprachlichen, insbesondere literarischen Zeugnissen verstanden wurde. Dennoch ist *Philologie* die Bewegung geblieben, die noch vor der Sprache des Wissens den Wunsch nach ihr weckt und in der Erkenntnis den Anspruch des Zu Erkennenden wach hält.

10a

In contrast to philosophy, which claims to make statements about that which itself is supposed to have the structure of statements, philology appeals only to another language and only toward this other language. It addresses it and confers itself to it. It does not proceed from the givenness of a common language but gives itself to a language that is unknown to it. Since it does this without heed and *à corps perdu*, it can remain unknown to itself; since it seeks a hold in the other language, in the one that appeals to philology, it can assume that it recognizes itself in this language. Out of a language of unknowing, it springs into a form of knowing. It defines itself as the mediation of nonknowing and knowing, determines itself as the bearer of the speech of the same to the same, becomes the methodical procedure of the securing of epistemic orders, and furthers — against itself — their hegemony. Philology loves and in the beloved forgets love.

Im Unterschied zur Philosophie, die Aussagen über das zu machen behauptet, was selbst die Struktur von Aussagen haben soll, spricht die Philologie auf eine andere Sprache nur *an* und auf diese andere Sprache nur *hin*. Sie spricht auf sie *zu* und spricht *sich* ihr zu. Sie geht nicht von der Gegebenheit einer gemeinsamen Sprache aus, sondern gibt sich einer ihr unbekanntem Sprache hin. Da sie es rückhaltlos tut und *à corps perdu*, kann sie sich selbst unbekannt bleiben; da sie an der anderen, von ihr angesprochenen Sprache Halt sucht, kann sie meinen, in ihr sich selbst zu erkennen. Aus einer Sprache des Unwissens springt sie um in eine Form des Wissens. Definiert sich als Vermittlung von Nichtwissen und Wissen; bestimmt sich als Zuträgerin der Rede des Selben vom Selben; wird zum Verfahren der methodischen Sicherung epistemischer Ordnungen und fördert — gegen sich selbst — deren Hegemonie. Die Philologie liebt, und vergißt über dem Geliebten die Liebe.

10b

The privileging of predication over plea, of propositional knowledge over wish, of topical language over the atypical, can be reversed neither by a violent act of knowing better nor by utopian wishes. But philological experience is recalcitrant. It shows that the desire for language cannot

be restricted to the forms of knowledge. Since it is itself the advocate of this desire, it is close to the conjecture that forms of knowledge are only stations of this desire, not its structure.

Die Privilegierung der Aussage vor der Bitte, des propositionalen Wissens vor dem Wunsch, der topischen Sprache vor der atopischen ist weder durch einen Gewaltakt des Besserwissens noch durch utopische Wünsche rückgängig zu machen. Aber die philologische Erfahrung ist renitent. In ihr zeigt sich, daß das Verlangen nach Sprache nicht auf die Formen des Wissens fixiert werden kann. Da sie selbst die Advokatin dieses Verlangens ist, liegt ihr die Vermutung nahe, auch Wissensformen seien nur Stationen dieses Verlangens, nicht seine Struktur.

11

If all propositions are not only capable of addition but also in want of it—be it only in their demand to be heard, understood, answered—then propositions belong to a language that for its own part is not structured as proposition but as claim, as plea, wish, or desire.

Wenn alle Aussagen nicht nur ergänzungsfähig, sondern ergänzungsbedürftig sind—und sei's nur durch ihren Anspruch, vernommen, verstanden, beantwortet zu werden—, dann gehören Aussagen einer Sprache an, die ihrerseits nicht als Aussage, sondern als Anspruch, als Bitte, Wunsch oder Verlangen strukturiert ist.

12

The languages of knowledge are grounded in languages of nonknowledge, epistemic practices in those of the *euche*: ontology in philology.

Die Sprachen des Wissens sind in Sprachen des Nichtwissens, epistemische Praktiken in solchen der *euchè* begründet: Ontologie in Philologie.

13

Poetry is the language of *euche*. Departing from the other, going out toward the other that is not and is not *not*, *philein* of a speaking, addressing, affirming without likeness, unlike itself: impredicable.

Dichtung ist die Sprache der *euchè*. Von Anderem ausgehend, auf Anderes hinausgehend, das nicht *ist* und nicht *nicht ist*, *philein* eines Sprechens, Zusprechens, Zusagens ohne Gleichen, sich selbst ungleich: imprädikabel.

14

Poetry is *prima philologia*.

Dichtung ist *prima philologia*.

15

That philology is founded in poetry means, on the one hand, that the factual ground for philology's gestures and operations must be found in the structure of poetry—and that it can only thereby lay claim to a cognition that would do justice to it; on the other hand, it means that philology cannot find any secure, coherent, or constant ground in the structure of poetry. It must, therefore—albeit as an advocate for the cause of poetry—speak with another voice than that of poetry: as divination, conjecture, interpretation. Its *fundamentum in re* is an abyss. Wherever there is no form of proposition, there is no ground of knowledge.

Daß Philologie in der Dichtung fundiert sei, besagt zum einen, daß sie den sachlichen Grund für ihre Gesten und Operationen in der Struktur der Dichtung zu finden hat—und allein daher Anspruch auf deren sachgerechte Erkenntnis erheben kann; es besagt zum anderen, daß sie in der Struktur der Dichtung keinen gesicherten, kohärenten und stetigen Grund finden kann—und deshalb, wenngleich als Fürsprecherin für die Sache der Dichtung, mit einer anderen als der Stimme der Dichtung sprechen muß: als Divination, Konjektur, Interpretation. Ihr *fundamentum in re* ist ein Abgrund. Wo keine Form der Aussage, da kein Grund des Wissens.

16

The two languages of philology—the language of longing and the language of knowledge of longing—speak with each other. But the second can only repeat [*wiederholen*] what the first says; the first can

only overtake [*überholen*] what is said by the other one. In this way they speak each other, speak themselves asunder, and speak their asunder.

Die zwei Sprachen der Philologie — die Sprache des Verlangens und die Sprache des Wissens von ihm — sprechen mit einander. Aber die zweite kann nur *wiederholen*, was die erste sagt; die erste nur *überholen*, was von jener gesagt wird. So sprechen sie einander, sprechen sich auseinander und sprechen ihr Auseinander.

17

Philology is not a theory in the sense of an insight into that which is. Nor is it a praxis that is led by a theory or that has a theory as its end. It is — if it is — the movement of attending to that which offers itself to this attending and which slips away from it, encounters or misses it, attracts it, and, attracting it, withdraws from it. It is the experience of drawing into withdrawal. The movement of a search without predetermined end. Therefore without end. Therefore without the without of an end. Without the without of ontology.

Philologie ist keine Theorie im Sinn einer Einsicht in das, was ist. Sie ist auch keine Praxis, die von einer Theorie geleitet wird oder in einer Theorie ihr Ziel findet. Sie ist — wenn sie *ist* — die Bewegung des Aufmerkens auf das, was diesem Aufmerken entgegenkommt und was ihm entgleitet, ihm zustößt und es verfehlt, was es anzieht und, derart anziehend, sich ihm entzieht. Sie ist die Erfahrung des Zugs in den Entzug. Die Bewegung einer Suche ohne vorbestimmtes Ziel. Also ohne Ziel. Also ohne das Ohne eines Ziels. Ohne das Ohne der Ontologie.

18

Every definition of philology must undefine itself — and give way to another.

Jede Definition der Philologie muß sich indefinieren — und einen anderen Raum geben.

The formula of the human being as a living being having language—*zōōn logon echon*—can be clarified by the modification: he is a *zōōn logon euchomenon*—a living being appealing for language, longing for it. He is a *zōōn philologon*. His longing for language is a longing that exceeds every given language. His cognition of the given one cannot do without the experience of its giving and its refusal; his exploration of the finite one cannot do without the opening of an infinitely finite one.

Die Formel vom Menschen als dem Sprache habenden Lebewesen—*zōōn logon echon*—kann durch die Modifikation verdeutlicht werden, er sei ein *zōōn logon euchomenon*—: ein um Sprache bittendes, nach ihr verlangendes Lebewesen. Damit ist der Mensch als *zōōn philologon* charakterisiert. Sein Verlangen nach Sprache ist ein Verlangen über jede gegebene Sprache hinaus. Seine Erkenntnis der gegebenen kommt nicht ohne die Erfahrung von deren Gebung und deren Versagung aus, seine Exploration der endlichen nicht ohne die Eröffnung einer unendlich endlichen.

Where knowledge is missing, affect stirs. Where ontology stalls, philology moves.

Wo das Wissen ausbleibt, rührt sich der Affekt. Wo die Ontologie stockt, bewegt sich die Philologie.

Philology is the passion of those who speak. It indicates the angle of inclination of linguistic existence.

Philologie ist die Passion derer, die sprechen. Sie bezeichnet den Neigungs-Winkel sprachlicher Existenz.

There is no philologist without philology in the most original meaning of the word. . . . Philology is a logical affect, the counterpart of philosophy, enthusiasm

for chemical cognition: for grammar is doubtless only the philosophical part of the universal art of dividing and joining (Schlegel, *Athenäum* frag. 404).

Es gibt keinen Philologen ohne Philologie in der ursprünglichsten Bedeutung des Worts [. . .]. Philologie ist ein logischer Affekt, das Seitenstück der Philosophie, Enthusiasmus für chemische Erkenntnis: denn die Grammatik ist doch nur der philosophische Teil der universellen Scheidungs- und Verbindungskunst. [. . .] (Friedrich Schlegel: *Athenäum* 404)

23

“Logical affect,” in Schlegel’s etymological elucidation of *philology*, may mean affect for language but also affect of language, thus affect of language for language. If language turns toward language, if it is inclined toward it, then toward itself as another, as one distinct from it. It joins with itself as another, departed from it or ahead of it, solely in its affect, its “enthusiasm.” Philology can mean a “universal art of dividing and joining” not because it attempts to neutralize the dividing through a joining but because only through division can it join itself with that from which it is divided. Philology is inclination not only for another empirical or potentially empirical language but for the otherness of language, for linguisticity as otherness, for language itself as perpetual alteration.

Logischer Affekt kann in Schlegels etymologisierender Erläuterung von *Philologie* heißen: Affekt für die Sprache, aber auch Affekt der Sprache, also Affekt der Sprache für die Sprache. Wenn die Sprache der Sprache zugewandt, ihr zugeneigt ist, dann sich selbst als einer anderen, von ihr unterschiedenen. Mit sich als von ihr abgeschiedener oder ihr bevorstehender verbindet sie sich einzig in ihrem Affekt, ihrem *Enthusiasmus*. Eine *universelle Scheidungs- und Verbindungskunst* kann die Philologie heißen, nicht weil sie die Scheidung durch eine Verbindung aufzuheben versteht, sondern weil sie sich mit dem Geschiedenen allein durch Scheidung verbindet. Philologie ist Zuneigung nicht nur zu einer anderen empirischen oder virtuell empirischen Sprache, sondern zur Andersheit der Sprache, zur Sprachlichkeit als Andersheit, zur Sprache selbst als fortgesetzt Anderem.

24

Philology, philallology, philalogy.

Philologie, Philallologie, Philalogie.

25

Once again, otherwise: philology is the inclination of language to a language that is, for its own part, inclination toward it or to another. Philology is therefore the inclination of language to language as inclination. It likes in language its liking, language's and its own. Language is self-affection in the other of itself.

Philology can only like and like itself because it is *not* philology itself that likes and that it likes. It is each time another that likes, each time another that is liked. Thus it will even like its dislike and its being disliked. It is philology of its misology.

Noch einmal, anders: Philologie ist Zuneigung der Sprache zu einer Sprache, die ihrerseits Zuneigung zu ihr oder einer anderen ist. Darum ist Philologie Zuneigung zur Sprache als Zuneigung. Sie mag in der Sprache ihr Mögen, ihres und ihr eigenes. Sprache ist Selbstaffektion im anderen ihrer selbst. Philologie ist Philophilie.

Mögen und sich mögen kann die Philologie nur, weil *nicht* sie selbst es ist, die mag und die sie mag. Es ist jeweils eine andere, die mag, jeweils eine andere, die gemocht wird. Sie wird also noch ihr Nicht-mögen und ihr Nicht-gemochtwerden mögen. Sie ist Philologie ihrer Misologie.

26

Philology is language in three [*selbdritt*]. In four [*selbvier*]. The fourth wall of the scene of its relations remains open.

Philologie ist die Sprache selbdritt. Selbvier. Die vierte Wand der Szene ihrer Beziehungen steht offen.

27

What is most proper to language, no one knows: that it merely concerns itself with itself. That is why it is such a wonderful and fruitful mystery — that if

someone merely speaks in order to speak, one pronounces precisely the most splendid and original truths. . . . Out of this arises the hate that so many earnest people have against language. They notice its willfulness . . . (Novalis, Monologue).

Gerade das Eigenthümliche der Sprache, daß sie sich blos um sich selbst bekümmert, weiß keiner. Darum ist sie ein so wunderbares und fruchtbares Geheimniß, — daß wenn einer bloß spricht, um zu sprechen, er gerade die herrlichsten, originellsten Wahrheiten ausspricht. [. . .] Daraus entsteht auch der Haß, den so manche ernsthafte Leute gegen die Sprache haben. Sie merken ihren Mutwillen, [. . .]. (Novalis: Monolog)

28

Since it has no power over language and none over itself, philology cannot be structured as the reflexive self-consciousness of language. It is from the outset beside itself. It forgets itself. Since it gives itself over to its cause, language, it must allow itself to be forgotten.

Da sie keine Macht über die Sprache und keine über sich selbst hat, kann Philologie nicht als reflexives Selbstbewußtsein der Sprache verfaßt sein. Sie ist von Anbeginn außer sich. Sie vergißt sich. Da sie sich an ihre Sache, die Sprache hingibt, muß sie es zulassen, selbst vergessen zu werden.

29

As the forgetting of language belongs to language, so the forgetting of philology belongs to philology. Only in virtue of its self-forgetting can philology pursue language without subsuming it under the form of knowledge; only because of its self-forgetting is it disposed to assume the form of a science and, more precisely, of ontology; only in forgetting itself, however, is it also historical and susceptible to change: always to another language, always to another form, always an-ontologically.

Wie Sprachvergessenheit zur Sprache, so gehört Philologievergessenheit zur Philologie. Nur vermöge ihrer Selbstvergessenheit kann sie der Sprache nachgehen, ohne sie unter die Form des Wissens zu bringen; nur ihrer Selbstvergessenheit wegen ist sie disponiert, die Form der

Wissenschaft und, genauer, der Ontologie anzunehmen; nur selbstvergessen ist sie aber auch geschichtlich und historischer Wandlungen fähig: immer *an* einer anderen Sprache, immer *an* Formen, in denen sich deren Andersheit befestigt, immer *anontologisch*.

30

In Plato, there is still no separation between philologos and philosophos. Later, philologos is the one who takes from books, philosophos the one who takes from himself. . . Towards the end of the fourteenth century and in the fifteenth century. . . One was at once a jurist, physician, theologian, etc., and philologist (Nietzsche, Encyclopädie der Philologie).

Bei Plato giebt es noch keine Scheidung zwischen philólogos und philósophus. Später philólogos der aus Büchern, philósophos der aus sich selbst schöpft. [. . .] Gegen Ende des 14 Jh. und im 15t Jh. [. . .] Man war Jurist, Mediciner, Theolog usw. und Philolog zugleich. (Nietzsche, Enzyklopädie der Philologie)

31

There can be no history of philology that would not be a history *from* philology. And no history *of* philology and *from* philology *against* which philology would not have its reservations. As it exceeds every given language, so philology—in additions and precisions, doubts and demands—exceeds every representation of its own history. It transforms the given into the movement of giving and releases this giving from a reservation.

Es kann keine Geschichte der Philologie geben, die nicht eine Geschichte aus Philologie wäre. Und keine Geschichte *der* Philologie und *aus* Philologie, *gegen* die Philologie nicht ihre Vorbehalte hätte. Wie über jede gegebene Sprache, so geht die Philologie in Zusätzen und Präzisierungen, Zweifeln und Forderungen über jede Vorstellung von ihrer eigenen Geschichte hinaus. Sie überführt das Gegebene in die Bewegung des Gebens und entläßt dieses Geben aus einem Vorbehalt.

32

Narration proceeds sequentially. It combines discourses on events, actions, and states of affairs through an express or implicit “and then.”

Even if a sequence adopts the form of addition—if it turns the “and” into a “plus,” the virtually infinite series into a finite sequence, and this, in turn, into an aggregate or an ordered totality—“and then” always remains the minimal formula for the combination of assertions, the temporal copula for the generation of a storyline. It is the task of philology to exhibit this construction. Thus, its task is also to exhibit in this “and then” a “thereafter,” in the “thereafter” a “no longer,” and in the “no longer” a “not.” Connectives are not so much placeholders as place openers for a “not.” Only this “not”—be it as “no longer” or as “not yet”—allows for the possibility of a story by preventing the sequence [*Folge*] from withering into an inference [*Folgerung*]. *Before every and in every* “therefore,” which maintains the causality of actions and the motivation of decisions, stands an “and then” and a “not” that provide neither a *causa* nor a cause and thereby indicate that history is only that which takes a “not” as its point of departure.

Erzählen verfährt sequenziell. Es verbindet die Rede von Geschehnissen, Handlungen und Sachverhalten durch ein ausdrückliches oder implizites “und dann.” Ob die Sequenz die Form einer Addition annimmt, das “und” zu einem “plus,” die virtuell unendliche Reihe zu einer endlichen Folge und diese wiederum zu einem Aggregat oder einer geordneten Totalität werden: immer bleibt “und dann” die Minimalformel der Kombination von Aussagen, die temporale Kopula zur Erzeugung eines Geschichtsverlaufs. Es ist Sache der Philologie, diese Konstruktion aufzuweisen. Deshalb ist es ihre Sache auch, in diesem “und dann” ein “danach,” im “danach” ein “nicht mehr,” in diesem ein “nicht” aufzuweisen. Junktoren sind nicht so sehr Platzhalter als vielmehr Platzöffner für ein Nicht. Erst dieses Nicht lässt, ob als “nicht mehr” oder als “noch nicht,” die Möglichkeit einer Geschichte zu, indem es die Folge davor bewahrt, zur Folgerung zu verkümmern. *Vor* jedem und noch *in* jedem “und darum,” das die Kausalität von Handlungen und die Motiviertheit von Entscheidungen behauptet, steht ein “und dann” und ein “nicht,” das weder eine *causa* noch einen Beweggrund angibt und dadurch andeutet, Geschichte sei nur, was von einem Nicht seinen Ausgang nimmt.

33

What touches a “not” is contingent. Thus, history can be called contingent. It takes place where something breaks off and starts [*aussetzt*].

Kontingent ist, was ein Nicht berührt. Deshalb kann Geschichte kontingent heißen. Sie ereignet sich, wo etwas aussetzt.

34

What happens is parting.

Was geschieht, ist Abschied.

35

The inner law of language is history. Philology is the guardian of this law and of this one alone.

Das innere Gesetz der Sprache ist Geschichte. Philologie ist die Hüterin dieses und allein dieses Gesetzes.

36

It is the task of philology to perceive, realize, and actualize in every “and so on” a “not so on,” an “not and,” and an “other than thus.” That is the smallest gesture of its politics.

Es ist Sache der Philologie, in jedem „und so weiter“ ein „nicht so weiter,” „nicht und,” „anders als so“ wahrzunehmen, zu realisieren, zu aktualisieren. Das ist die kleinste Geste ihrer Politik.

37

Philology is love of the *non sequitur*.

Philologie ist Liebe zum *non sequitur*.

38

The fact that philology turns its attention to the constellation of phenomena, to the configuration of figures, and to the composition of sentences indicates that it is no less interested in the dark ground out of

which phenomena, figures, and words take shape than in these themselves. For that ground is their sole “co” or “con” or “cum.”

Daß Philologie ihre Aufmerksamkeit der Konstellation von Phänomenen, der Konfiguration von Figuren, der Komposition von Sätzen zuwendet, besagt, daß ihr an dem dunklen Grund, von dem sich die Phänomene, Figuren, Wörter abheben, nicht weniger liegt als an diesen selbst. Denn jener Grund ist ihr einziges “co” oder “con” oder “cum.”

39

For philology, language does not exhaust itself in the sphere of means. It is not mediation without being at the same time a leap, not transmission without being at once its diversion or rupture. And thus also for philology itself: chopping copula, chopula.

Sprache erschöpft sich für die Philologie nicht in der Sphäre der Mittel. Sie ist nicht Vermittlung, ohne zugleich ein Sprung, nicht Übertragung, ohne zugleich deren Ablenkung oder Abbruch zu sein. Und so auch die Philologie selbst: kappende Kopula, Kappula.

40

Plato investigates the concept of *philia* under the title *Lysis*. Philology: loose attention. Should not that *philia* thereby loosen itself and dissolve?

Platon untersucht den Begriff der *philia* unter dem Titel “Lysis.” Philologie: gelöste Aufmerksamkeit. — Sollte nicht jene *philia* selbst sich dabei lösen?

41

Alois Riegl noticed a change in the construction of space in late Roman art, decisive for history ever since; he characterized this change as the “emancipation of the interval.” This phrase is also the formula of philology. Philology emancipates the interval from its border phenomena and, going a step farther, opens up phenomena out of the interval between them, phenomenal movements out of the aphenomenal in their space in between, space out of a fourth dimension: in the end, every dimension out of the nondimensional.

Alois Riegl hat an der spätrömischen Kunst eine für die Geschichte seither entscheidende Veränderung in der Raumbildung bemerkt, die er als „Emanzipation des Intervalls“ charakterisiert. Das ist zugleich die Formel der Philologie. Sie emanzipiert das Intervall von seinen Grenzphänomenen und erschließt, einen Schritt weiter gehend, Phänomene aus dem Intervall zwischen ihnen, phänomenale Bewegungen aus den aphanomenalen in ihrem Zwischenraum, den Raum aus einer vierten Dimension, jede Dimension zuletzt aus einem Nicht-Dimensionalen.

42

“*M’illumino d’immenso*” (Ungaretti). The incommensurable does not lie outside of language. It is language.

M’illumino d’immenso. (Ungaretti)—Das Inkommensurable liegt nicht außerhalb der Sprache. Es ist die Sprache.

43

Since language exceeds itself infinitely and discontinuously, the end of philology must be the leap of language.

Da die Sprache unendlich und diskontinuierlich über sich hinausgeht, muß das Ziel der Philologie der Sprachsprung sein.

44

The name has no name. Hence it is unnamable. (Dionysios. Maimonides. Beckett.) Two extreme possibilities of philology: philology is a life that completes itself as the spelling of the name and therein cannot be pinned down by any nomination. It thus becomes sacred and a matter of lived theology. Or: language is treated as a sentence-language in which none of its elements touches the name because all elements are dispersed into sentences. The philology of sentences claims to be profane. — Since one cannot speak in nominations about the life in the name, one must be silent about it. Since profane philology knows no name but only an infinite play of sentences, it has nothing essential or hyperessential to say. Common to both philologies is that they say nothing about their nonsaying. It remains for an *other* philology— one that does not conform to the opposition between the theological

and the profane — to say even this nonsaying. Or is precisely this what is already happening in both? Then theology would practice the integral profanation in the extreme; profane philology would practice the theologization of language — and both would do so by articulating in the anonymity of the name an *atheos* and an *alogos*. It would fall to that *other* philology to elucidate this movement more than the first two philologies could wish.

Der Name hat keinen Namen. Deshalb ist er unnenbar. (Dionysios. Maimonides. Beckett.) Zwei extreme Möglichkeiten der Philologie: Philologie ist ein Leben, das sich als Buchstabieren des Namens vollzieht und darin von keiner Benennung getroffen werden kann. So wird sie heilig und eine Sache gelebter Theologie. Oder: Sprache wird als Satz-Sprache behandelt, die in keinem ihrer Elemente den Namen berührt, weil jedes dieser Elemente sich in Sätze auflöst. Die Philologie der Sätze erhebt den Anspruch, profan zu sein. — Da man über das Leben im Namen nicht in Benennungen sprechen kann, muß man davon schweigen. Da die profane Philologie keinen Namen, sondern nur ein unendliches Spiel von Sätzen kennt, hat sie nichts Wesentliches oder Überwesentliches zu sagen. Gemeinsam ist beiden Philologien, daß sie nichts über ihr Nicht-sagen sagen. Für eine *andere* Philologie, die sich der Opposition zwischen Theologischem und Profanem nicht fügt, bleibt übrig: eben dieses Nicht-Sagen zu sagen. Oder sollte genau das schon in beiden geschehen? Dann betriebe die Theologie im Extrem die integrale Profanierung, die profane Philologie betriebe die Theologisierung der Sprache — und beide täten es, indem sie im Anonymat des Namens einen *atheos* und *alogos* artikulieren. Jener *anderen* Philologie fiele es zu, eben das deutlicher zu machen, als es den beiden ersten lieb sein kann.

45

In the course of secularization, Sunday — the Sabbath, the rest-day and holiday — was abolished; the work day became every-day; the everyday and workday language became the *lingua franca*; philology changed from a medium of the unfolding of the sacred to a toll for working on a happiness that is neither to be found *by means of* work nor *in* it;

it became — that too — a branch of an industry producing linguistic mass commodities and mass-market-commodity producers. One of the decisive historical questions that a *different* philology has to pursue is whether or not all of its working days could still fall on a Sunday. Whether or not all of its works, those to which it is directed and those it performs itself, could celebrate the “Sunday of life” — that of Hegel or that of Queneau. This other philology cannot be out for an end and a goal; it can only be out for a feast.

Im Zug der Säkularisierung wurde der Sonntag, der Sabbath, der Ruhe- und Feiertag abgeschafft, der Werktag wurde zum All-Tag, die Alltags- und Arbeitssprache zur *lingua franca*, die Philologie aus einem Medium der Entfaltung des Sakralen zum Werkzeug der Arbeit an einem Glück, das weder *vermittels* der Arbeit noch *in* ihr zu finden ist —; sie wurde, auch das, zur Filiale einer Industrie, die sprachliche Massenartikel und Massenartikelverfertiger verfertigt. Eine der entscheidenden historischen Fragen, der eine *andere* Philologie nachzugehen hat, ist die, ob nicht alle ihre Werktage dennoch auf einen Sonntag fallen können. Ob nicht alle Arbeiten, auf die sie sich richtet und die sie selber verrichtet, den „Sonntag des Lebens“ — den Hegel’schen oder den von Queneau — feiern können. Diese andere Philologie kann nicht auf einen Sinn und Zweck, sie kann nur auf eine Feier aus sein.

46

Philology: in the pause of language.

Die Philologie: in der Pause der Sprache.

47

Philology is the event of the freeing of language from language. It is the liberation of the world from everything that has been said and can still be said about it.

Philologie ist das Geschehen der Freilassung der Sprache von der Sprache. Sie ist die Befreiung der Welt von allem, was über sie gesagt worden ist und noch gesagt werden kann.

If language speaks *for* a meaning, it must also be able to speak in the absence of meaning. If it speaks *for* an addressee, then it must also be able to speak in the absence of an addressee. If it speaks *for* something, it must also be a “for” without a “something” and without the particular “for” that would be predetermined for it. Only one half of language is an ontological process; philology must, therefore, also concern itself with the other half.

Wenn Sprache *für* eine Bedeutung spricht, muß sie auch in der Abwesenheit einer Bedeutung sprechen können. Wenn sie *für* einen Adressaten spricht, muß sie auch in der Abwesenheit eines Adressaten sprechen können. Wenn sie *für* etwas spricht, muß sie ein Für auch ohne ein Etwas und ohne das diesem zubestimmte “für” sein. Sprache ist nur halbwegs ein ontologischer Prozeß; die Philologie hat sich auch mit der anderen Hälfte zu befassen.

Language is the *objeu* of philology.

(With a philologist’s ear, Francis Ponge heard in the word *objet* the different *objeu* and used it in his texts. He thereby wrote, as Joyce did on a larger scale and more deliriously in *Finnegans Wake*, another philology.

Objeu is the object that preserves in play its freedom not to ossify into the object of a subject. It is the counterplay against the objectification of a thing by naming it. Each word, and language as a whole, may be such an *objeu*. In the *objeu*, language plays against language.)

Philology—which, like all language, is a language about language and therefore the play of its unpredictable and predicable movement—is language in *trajeu*.

Die Sprache ist das *objeu* der Philologie.

(Francis Ponge hat mit dem Ohr des Philologen im Wort *objet* das andere *objeu* gehört und in seinen Texten verwendet. Er hat damit, wie in größerem Stil und deliranter Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*, eine andere Philologie gedichtet. *Objeu* ist das Objekt, das im Spiel seine Freiheit bewährt, nicht zum Gegenstand eines Subjekts zu erstarren. Es ist das Widerspiel gegen die Vergegenständlichung einer Sache durch ihre Benennung. Ein solches *objeu* kann auch jedes Wort und kann die Sprache insgesamt sein. Im *objeu* spielt die Sprache wider die Sprache.)

Die Philologie, die wie alle Sprache Sprache von der Sprache und deshalb das Spiel ihrer unprogrammierbaren Bewegung ist, ist Sprache im *trajeu*.

50

Hölderlin's *Giebt es auf Erden ein Maaß? Es giebt keines* ("Is there a measure on earth? There is none") refuses Protagoras's claim that this measure is man. Anthropology cannot ask about man because it thinks it already knows that man is the unshakable certainty of the subjectivity of the subject and as such the measure of all things. Anthropology knows, in short, because it does not ask. But asking about man exposes this certainty to a language that offers no measure of man and thus no measure of anything at all. Hölderlin says that the sorrows of the one who asks—Oedipus—are *indescribable, unspeakable, inexpressible*. The disparity between language and the unspeakable, between expression and the inexpressible, leaves language without measure, without *metron*. For this reason, Hölderlin's language speaks in "free rhythms."—To a language, that is not attuned to itself and therefore cannot be "correct" [*stimmen*], corresponds only a philol-

ogy that finds no measure, whether traditional or contemporary. A philology in “free rhythms.”

Hölderlins *Giebt es auf Erden ein Maaß? Es giebt keines.* weist die Auskunft des Protagoras zurück, dies Maß sei der Mensch. Anthropologie kann nach dem Menschen nicht fragen, weil sie schon zu wissen meint, er sei die unerschütterliche Gewißheit der Subjektivität des Subjekts und als solche das Maß aller Dinge. Die Anthropologie weiß, kurzum, weil sie nicht fragt. Im Fragen wird jede Gewißheit aber der Sprache ausgesetzt, und von dieser muß es heißen, sie biete kein Maß. Die Leiden des Fragenden — Ödipus — werden von Hölderlin *unbeschreiblich, unaussprechlich, unausdrücklich* genannt. Das Mißverhältnis zwischen Sprache und Unausprechlichem, Ausdruck und Ausdruckslosem läßt die Sprache ohne Maß — ohne *métron*. Deshalb spricht sie bei Hölderlin in “freien Rhythmen.” — Einer Sprache, die auf sich selbst nicht abgestimmt sein und deshalb nicht “stimmen” kann, entspricht nur eine Philologie, die kein Maß, sei es tradiert, sei es zeitgemäß, findet. Eine Philologie in ‘freien Rhythmen.’”

51

There is no metalanguage that could not be disavowed by a further one. This disavowal is one of the gestures of philology.

Es gibt keine Metasprache, die nicht von einer weiteren desavouiert werden könnte. Dieses Desaveu ist eine der Gesten der Philologie.

52

“[. . .]er dürfte,/spräch er von dieser/Zeit, er/dürfte/nur lallen und lallen,/immer-, immer-/zuzu.// (‘Pallaksch. Pallaksch.’)” (“. . . he could,/if he spoke of this/time, he/could/only babble and babble/over, over/againagain.// [‘Pallaksh. Pallaksh.’]”) How does philology answer these verses of Celan? By refusing all attempts at measurement through a norm of language that shatters in them. By recognizing that the psychiatric diagnosis of these verses as manifesting an aphasic disorder is itself a disorder of language. By pursuing their memory traces to Hölderlin, Büchner, and others; by following their cadences like movements of diving in trauma; by adopting them as a memorandum of a language that would be

human in a different way—a language of pain that can only say that it is allowed to babble but that injures its own law: which does not bring pain to language but language to pain. Language pain: how does philology respond to it? By recognizing it as the pain of its own language? By repeating otherwise the pain of the other? By changing the pain, the other? By letting itself be changed? By releasing it? But the poem poses no question. Philology gives no answer.

[. . .] *er dürfte, / spräch er von dieser / Zeit, er / dürfte / nur lallen und lallen, / immer-immer-/ zuzu. // (“Pallaksch. Pallaksch.”)*—Wie antwortet auf diese Verse von Celan die Philologie? Indem sie alle Versuche zurückweist, sie an einer Sprachnorm zu messen, die in ihnen zerfällt. Indem sie die psychiatrische Diagnose, es handle sich in ihnen um eine aphatische Störung, selbst als Sprachstörung erkennt. Indem sie ihren Erinnerungsspuren zu Hölderlin, Büchner und Anderen nachgeht, ihren Kadenzen wie Tauchbewegungen in Traumen folgt, sie als Memorandum für eine auf andere Weise menschliche Sprache aufnimmt—für eine Sprache des Schmerzes, die nur sagen kann, daß sie nur lallen dürfte, aber ihr eigenes Gesetz verletzt: den Schmerz nicht zur Sprache, sondern die Sprache zum Schmerz bringt. Sprachschmerz, wie antwortet darauf die Philologie? Indem sie ihn als den Schmerz ihrer eigenen Sprache erkennt? Indem sie den Schmerz des Anderen anders wiederholt? Den Schmerz, das Andere ändert? Sich von ihm ändern läßt? Ihn löst? Aber das Gedicht stellt keine Frage. Die Philologie gibt keine Antwort.

53

Language cannot be the object of predicative assertions because these assertions would both have to belong to their object and not belong to it. No trope can designate language without being a linguistic trope and at the same time not being one. Every assertion about language and every trope for it thwarts itself. What is called “language” in language is the an-tropo-logical event par excellence.

Philosophy was only able to do justice to this complication by assuming, since the eighteenth century at the latest, that it is essential to the human being to lack a determination of essence; that his essence, therefore, lies in his existence and that this existence cannot in turn

be essentialized. Philology can only do justice to this complication by understanding linguistic existence as an inconsistent event, which is to say as a movement that follows neither the logic of predications nor the logic of tropes without deactivating the one as well as the other. Philology is an-tropology, not anthropology.

Die Sprache kann nicht Gegenstand prädikativer Aussagen werden, weil diese Aussagen sowohl zu ihrem Gegenstand als auch nicht zu ihm gehören müssten. Keine Trope kann die Sprache bezeichnen, ohne eine Trope der Sprache und zugleich keine zu sein. Jede Aussage über die Sprache und jede Trope für sie durchkreuzt sich selbst. Was in der Sprache „die Sprache“ heißt, ist das an-tropo-logische Geschehnis schlechthin.

Die Philosophie konnte dieser Komplikation nur gerecht werden, indem sie, seit dem 18. Jahrhundert, annahm, es sei dem Menschen wesentlich, einer Wesensbestimmung zu ermangeln, seine Essenz liege mithin in seiner Existenz und diese Existenz könne nicht wiederum essentialisiert werden. Die Philologie kann dieser Komplikation nur gerecht werden, indem sie sprachliche Existenz als inkonsistentes Geschehen, soll heißen als eine Bewegung versteht, die weder der Logik von Aussagen noch der Logik von Tropen folgt, ohne die eine wie die andere außer Kraft zu setzen. Sie ist An-tropologie, nicht Anthropologie.

54

When Roman Jakobson opposes “the poetic function” as substitution on the axis of equivalences to another — one could say “prosaic” — function that is realized through combination on the axis of contiguities, then the geometry of their relations implies that both axes cross in a zero point at which they follow both a logic of substitution and of contiguity, of poetic as well as of prosaic functions — and also of neither of the two. The rhetoric of metaphor and metonymy, which for a century has occupied philological work in poetological, anthropological, and psychoanalytic studies, relies upon a zero-rhetoric with a zero-function of which not even the figure of prosopopeia can render account, since prosopopeia consists in a positing rather than in no positing. Zero

rhetoric would be that which marks the empty place [*Leerstelle*]—and, more precisely, the opening for a place [*Stellenleere*]—which is necessary in order to safeguard the possibility of a language at all. Only the philology of the zero would be the *origo* of philology.

Wenn Roman Jakobson die “poetische Funktion” als Substitution auf der Achse der Äquivalenzen einer anderen, man könnte sagen: prosaischen Funktion entgegensetzt, die durch die Kombination auf der Achse der Kontiguitäten realisiert wird, dann impliziert die Geometrie ihres Verhältnisses, daß beide Achsen sich in einem Nullpunkt kreuzen, in dem sie sowohl der Logik der Substitution und der Kontiguität, der poetischen wie der prosaischen Funktion, als auch keiner von beiden folgen. Die Rhetorik von Metapher und Metonymie, die für ein Jahrhundert die philologische Arbeit in poetologischen, anthropologischen und psychoanalytischen Studien in Anspruch genommen hat, ist auf eine Zero-Rhetorik mit einer Zero-Funktion angewiesen, von der nicht einmal die Figur der Katachrese Rechenschaft ablegen kann, da sie in einer Setzung und nicht in keiner besteht. Zero-Rhetorik wäre diejenige, die im Achsenkreuz aller Tropen die Leerstelle—und, genauer, die Stellenleere—markiert, deren es bedarf, um die Möglichkeit einer Sprache überhaupt zu wahren. Erst die Philologie des Zero wäre die *Origo* der Philologie.

55

While philosophy can only concern itself with a *nihil negativum* from which it tries to remove its objects, philology concerns itself with a *nihil* to which every negation must still be exposed in order to be considered as a linguistic occurrence. So little is this a null nothing that it can be characterized as a *nihil donans*. For philology, there is not merely a “there-is-language”; there is also a “there is no ‘there-is-language.’” It is language that gives (itself) and language that withdraws (itself, this giving).

Während es der Philosophie nur um ein *nihil negativum* gehen kann, von dem sie ihre Gegenstände abzusetzen bemüht ist, geht es der Philologie um ein *nihil*, dem noch jede Negation ausgesetzt sein muß, um als sprachliches Geschehen in Betracht zu kommen. Es ist dies so wenig ein nichtiges Nichts, daß es als *nihil donans* charakterisiert werden kann.

Es gibt für die Philologie nicht nur ein “Es gibt — Sprache”; es gibt darin auch ein “Es gibt kein ‘Es gibt — Sprache.’” Es ist die Sprache, die (sich) gibt, und sie, die (sich, dieses Geben) entzieht.

56

Topoi also have their time. Philology — which pays as much heed to the usury of tropes in the baroque and in Romanticism as it does to the disappearance of *topoi* in the twentieth century — will notice that the drainage of language, on the one hand, allows predication to emerge as the (ideological) central *topos* and, on the other hand, multiplies a gap — an interval — into gaps — and intervals — that cannot be contained by any *topos* but hold open an *a*-topy or *u*-topy. The time of space is suffused with the time of spacing; time spacing is no longer a condition of phenomenality but its withdrawal into the aphenomenal. Time also has its time: it is *ana*-chronistic.

Auch *Topoi* haben ihre Zeit. Die Philologie, die auf den Tropenwucher des Barock und der Romantik ebenso achtet wie auf den *Topoischwund* im 20. Jahrhundert, wird bemerken, daß die Trockenlegung der Sprache zum einen die Prädikation als (ideologischen) Zentral-*topos* hervortreten läßt, zum andern eine Lücke — ein Intervall — zu Lücken — und Intervallen — multipliziert, die auf keinem *Topos* begrenzt werden können, sondern eine *Atopie* oder *Utopie* offen halten. Die Zeit des Raums wird von der Zeit der Räumung durchzogen, die Zeit-Räumung ist nicht mehr nur Bedingung der Phänomenalität, sondern ihr Entzug ins *Aphänomenale*. Auch die Zeit hat ihre Zeit: sie ist *anachronistisch*.

57

What belongs to philology — besides the inclination to that which is said — is the courage for that which is not.

Zur Philologie gehört bei aller Neigung zu dem, was gesagt ist, der Mut zu dem, was es nicht ist.

58

The fact that philology applies itself to detail, to the nuances of a detail, to the *intermundia* between these nuances, slows its movement in lan-

guage and in the world. Its slowness has no measure. As temporal magnifier, it even stretches the moment and lets leaps occur within it that do not belong to chronometric time. A world without time, a language without time: that is the world, language, as it is—: whole, without being there; exactly this, completely other.

Daß die Philologie am Detail, an den Nuancen eines Details, an den Intermundien zwischen diesen Nuancen ansetzt, verlangsamt ihre Bewegung in der Sprache und der Welt. Ihre Langsamkeit hat kein Maß. Als Zeitlupe dehnt sie noch den Moment und läßt Sprünge in ihm gewahren, die nicht zur chronometrischen Zeit gehören. Eine Welt ohne Zeit, eine Sprache ohne Zeit: das ist die Welt, die Sprache, wie sie ist—: ganz, ohne da zu sein; genau diese, völlig anders.

59

Philology—the absolute fermata.

Philologie—die absolute Fermate.

60

Philology is slow, however quick it may be. Essentially slow. It is lateness.

Die Philologie ist langsam, so schnell sie sein mag. Wesentlich langsam. Sie ist die Späte.

61

“*Quand on lit trop vite ou trop doucement on ne comprend rien*” (Pascal). Whoever reads too quickly or too slowly indeed comprehends nothing, but for this very reason it may occur to him that comprehending, capturing, and keeping (*prehendere, capere, conceptio*) are not genuinely *linguistic* gestures. (I notice that Pascal wrote *on n’entend rien*. Too late. Still.)

Quand on lit trop vite ou trop doucement on ne comprend rien. (Pascal) Wer zu schnell oder zu langsam liest, begreift zwar nichts, aber ihm kann eben deshalb aufgehen, daß Begreifen, Erfassen und Haben (*prehendere, capere, conceptio*) keine genuin *sprachlichen* Gesten sind. (Ich merke, daß Pascal notiert hat: *on n’entend rien*. Zu spät. Dennoch.)

For philology is that venerable art which demands of its followers one thing above all: to step aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow — it is a goldsmith's art and connoisseurship of the word which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it lento. But for precisely this reason it is more necessary than ever today, by precisely this means does it entice and enchant us the most, in the midst of an age of "work," that is to say: of hurry, of indecent and perspiring hastiness, which wants everything to "get done" at once, including every new or old book — this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches us to read well, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking back and forward, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers . . . (Nietzsche, Day-break, Preface §5).

Philologie nämlich ist jene ehrwürdige Kunst, welche von ihrem Verehrer vor Allem Eins heischt, bei Seite gehn, sich Zeit lassen, still werden, langsam werden —, als eine Goldschmiedekunst und-kennerschaft des W o r t e s, die lauter feine vorsichtige Arbeit abzuthun hat und Nichts erreicht, wenn sie es nicht lento erreicht. Gerade damit aber ist sie heute nöthiger als je, gerade dadurch zieht sie und bezaubert sie uns am stärksten, mitten in einem Zeitalter der "Arbeit", will sagen: der Hast, der unanständigen und schwitzenden Eilfertigkeit, das mit Allem gleich "fertig werden" will, auch mit jedem alten und neuen Buche: — sie selbst wird nicht so leicht irgend womit fertig, sie lehrt g u t lesen, das heisst langsam, tief, rück-und vorsichtig, mit Hintergedanken, mit offen gelassenen Thüren, mit zarten Fingern und Augen lesen . . . (Nietzsche: Morgenröte, Vorrede, 5)

Where philology encounters utterances, texts, or works that are entirely understandable, it will shudder as if it were in front of something already digested, become polemical in order to keep it away, or turn aside and remain silent. Obviousness excludes understanding and even the inclination to it. Only what is disconcerting can be loved; only the beloved that remains disconcerting while growing closer can be loved lastingly. Only what is incomprehensible, only what is unanalyzable —

not just *prima facie* but *ultima facie*— is a possible object of philology. But it is not an “object”; it is the area in which philology moves and changes itself.

Wo die Philologie auf Äußerungen, Texte, Werke stößt, die ihr durchweg verständlich sind, wird sie sich schütteln wie vor etwas, das bereits verdaut ist, polemisch werden, um es sich vom Leib zu halten, oder sich abwenden und schweigen. Verständlichkeit schließt Verstehen und sogar die Neigung dazu aus. Geliebt werden kann nur, was befremdet; und am dauerndsten nur das, was bei wachsender Nähe fremd bleibt. Nur das Unverständliche, nur das— nicht nur *prima facie*, sondern *ultima facie*— Unanalysierbare ist ein möglicher Gegenstand der Philologie. Aber es ist kein “Gegenstand,” es ist die Gegend, in der sie sich bewegt und sich ändert.

64

No philology that would not enjoy stillness— that of letters, of images, of architectures, and even of music and of thoughts. Even in the spectacle, it only turns to that which is for no one and nothing. Everything else is theater, on its side no less than on that of its “objects.”

Keine Philologie, die nicht die Stille genießen würde, die der Buchstaben, die der Bilder, der Architekturen, und noch die der Musik und der Gedanken. Selbst am Spektakel wendet sie sich bloß dem zu, was für niemanden und nichts ist. Alles andere ist Theater, auf ihrer Seite nicht weniger als auf der ihrer “Gegenstände.”

65

Et tout le reste est littérature. “And all the rest is literature.” Philology has to do with this rest named by Paul Verlaine as well as with that other rest of which it is said in Shakespeare, *The rest is silence*. To distinguish between these rests, these silences— their difference is sometimes infinitesimal— philology becomes critique.

Et tout le reste est littérature. Philologie hat es mit diesem von Verlaine genannten wie mit dem anderen Rest zu tun, von dem es bei Shake-

speare heißt *The rest is silence*. Um zwischen diesen beiden Resten, diesen beiden Stillen zu scheiden — ihr Unterschied ist zuweilen infinitesimal —, wird Philologie Kritik.

66

The fact that they say everything and mean nothing could characterize works that turned out well. They have no outside to which they refer; they contract the world into themselves. As one says of a stone that it is contracted matter, so are they contracted world. They are *dicht*, *Gedichte* [dense, poems]. For this reason, they are not closed and shut off: they also speak — since they say everything — for others and for other times, but they do not denote them, claim no knowledge of them and none of themselves. The idea of philology that corresponds to *this* monadic structure of works would thus not be interpretation, referring them to another world and placing them in its service, but clarification, saying only that something is there — spoken, painted, composed — or not there. Such clarification comes about only in becoming strange. Philology is the experience of something becoming strange [*Befremden*]. Therefore, it becomes slow and silent; therefore, its counterpart slowly turns into stone. But who is the Gorgon?

Daß sie alles sagen und nichts bedeuten, das könnte die gelungenen Werke charakterisieren. Sie haben kein Außerhalb, auf das sie verweisen, sie kontrahieren die Welt in sich. Wie man vom Stein sagt, er sei kontrakte Materie, so sind sie kontrakte Welt. Sie sind dicht, Gedichte. Darum sind sie nicht etwa abgeschlossen: sie sprechen, da sie alles sagen, auch für Andere und andere Zeiten, aber sie bedeuten sie nicht, beanspruchen kein Wissen von ihnen, keins von sich selbst. Die Idee der Philologie, die dieser monadischen Struktur der Werke entspricht, wäre deshalb nicht die Deutung, die sie auf eine andere Welt verweist und in ihren Dienst stellt, sondern die Verdeutlichung, die nur sagt, daß etwas da — gesagt, gemalt, komponiert — oder nicht da ist. Solche Verdeutlichung gelingt nur im Befremden. Philologie ist Befremden. Deshalb wird sie langsam und still, deshalb erstarrt ihr das Gegenüber langsam zu Stein. Aber wer ist hier Gorgo?

Philology indeed asks “*Qui parle?*” and does not only ask about a speaker but a perhaps incalculable plurality of speakers and speakers for, speakers with, and speakers after — and it thus asks about “itself.” But it asks; and since every question is posed in the absence of an answer, and since this absence can be infinite, it must also ask “Who is silent?” and “What is silent?” — and it must approach itself in silence [*erschweigen*].

Gewiß, die Philologie fragt „*Qui parle?*” und fragt nicht nur nach einem Sprecher, sondern nach einer vielleicht unabsehbaren Pluralität von Sprechern und Vor- und Mit- und Nachsprechern — und fragt so nach “sich selbst.” Aber sie fragt, und da jede Frage in der Abwesenheit einer Antwort gestellt wird, und da diese Abwesenheit unendlich dauern kann, muß sie auch fragen “Wer schweigt?” und “Was schweigt?” — und muß sich selber erschweigen.

Perhaps there is only still-life for philology. One knows that such still-lives can also be battlefields and slaughter-feasts. Everything is *still* living, everything already *still*.

Vielleicht gibt es für die Philologie nur Stilleben. Man weiß, solche Stilleben können auch Schlachtplätze und Schlachtfeste sein. Alles ist *noch* lebendig, alles schon *still*.

The exercise of philology — the *askésis*, training, learning, practice, unlearning, forgetting of philology — lies in waiting. It is not always something for which we wait. Before expectation [*Erwartung*] was waiting [*Warten*]. Within it, the presence [*Gegenwart*] of philology expands. It is waiting by the word.

Die Übung der Philologie — die *askesis*, die Einübung, das Erlernen, die Ausübung, das Verlernen, das Vergessen der Philologie — ist Warten. Nicht immer wird auf Etwas gewartet. Vor der Erwartung war das Warten. In ihm erstreckt sich die Gegenwart der Philologie. Sie ist Warten beim Wort.

70

Philology: the holding back, holding open. A guard, waiting [*Warte*].

Philologie: der Aufenthalt; die Offenhaltung. Die Warte.

71

Philology is *nekyia*, descent to the dead, *ad plures ire*. It joins the largest, strangest, always growing collective and gives something of the life of its own language to the collective to bring those who are underground to speech. It dies — philology dies, every philologist dies — in order to permit some of those many an afterlife, for a while, through its language. Without philology, which socializes with the dead, the living would become asocial. But the society of philology is the society of those who belong to no society; its life is lived together with death, its language an approaching silence.

Philologie ist *Nekyia*, Abstieg zu den Toten, *ad plures ire*. Sie gesellt sich zum größten, sonderbarsten, immer wachsenden Kollektiv und gibt etwas vom Leben ihrer Sprache dahin, um diese Unterirdischen zum Sprechen zu bringen; sie stirbt — die Philologie stirbt, jeder Philologe stirbt —, um dem einen oder anderen von jenen Vielen für eine Weile in ihrer Sprache zum Nachleben zu verhelfen. Ohne die Philologie, die sie mit den Toten vergesellschaftet, würden die Lebenden asozial. Aber die Gesellschaft der Philologie ist die Gesellschaft derer, die keiner Gesellschaft angehören, ihr Leben Zusammenleben mit dem Tod, ihre Sprache — Erschweigen.

72

Philology digs — digs out — the world.

Philologie gräbt, ergräbt sich die Welt.

73

The historical “process” is sedimentation, depositing in layers without ground. Languages do not die; they sink.

Der geschichtliche “Verlauf” ist Sedimentierung, Ablagerung in Schichten ohne Grund. Sprachen vergehen nicht, sie sinken.

Orpheus is a philologist when he sings.

Orpheus ist Philologe, wenn er singt.

Philology is already, in its first impulse, philology of philology. It distances itself from the myths of philological praxis, does not tolerate any transhistorical constants — transforms Orpheus into Eurydice and her into Hermes . . . — it de-sediments. If everything went according to philology, from the earth and the subterranean nothing would be left over but the free sky.

Philologie ist schon in ihrer ersten Regung Philologie der Philologie. Sie setzt sich von den Mythen der philologischen Praxis ab, duldet keine transhistorischen Konstanten — verwandelt Orpheus in Eurydike und diese in Hermes . . . —; sie desedimentiert. Wenn es nach der Philologie ginge, bliebe von der Erde und allem Unterirdischen nur der freie Himmel übrig.

Philology, a love story. — Freud, in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess on December 29, 1897: *Mr. E, whom you know, suffered an attack of anxiety at the age of ten years when he attempted to capture a black beetle [Käfer], which did not allow it to happen. The interpretation of this attack has until now remained obscure. . . . Then we broke off the session and next time, he told me before the session that an interpretation of the beetle has occurred to him. Namely: Que faire? What Freud, the philologist, calls “interpretation” is not a translation [Übersetzung] of a word into a representation of the thing associated with it, but a dislocation [Versetzung], a displacement of attention from the possible meanings to the idiom of their naming. Only through separation from meaning does an idea [Einfall] take the place of an attack [Anfall]: in place of anxiety, its articulation; in place of the animal or the name of the animal [Käfer], a question (Que faire?). And indeed in another language, French, for — so Freud continues — E’s governess and his first beloved was French; in fact*

he had learned to speak French before German. The way to “interpretation” is not the way to meaning. It is the way to a repetition of a language or to a return into a language that is kept hidden by another. The movement of philology is the movement to the language of the first beloved, to the beloved language. The question “*Que faire?*” and that which is asked by it are allowed to happen this time, in the repetition, by the beloved. For in “*Que faire?*” that which is still asked about is already done.

Philology: to bring it about that the first love can be repeated, so that it allows the repeating to occur.

Philologie, eine Liebesgeschichte. — Freud im Brief vom 29. 12. 97 an Fliess : *Herr E., den Du kennst, hat im Alter von 10 Jahren einen Angstfall bekommen, als er sich bemühte, einen schwarzen Käfer einzufangen, der es sich nicht gefallen ließ. Die Deutung dieses Anfalls war bislang dunkel geblieben. [. . .] Dann brechen wir ab und vor der nächsten Sitzung erzählt er mir, die Deutung des Käfers sei ihm eingefallen. Nämlich: Que faire? — Was vom Philologen Freud “Deutung” genannt wird, ist keine Übersetzung eines Wortes in die damit verbundene Sachvorstellung, sondern eine Versetzung, eine Verschiebung der Aufmerksamkeit von möglichen Bedeutungen zum Idiom ihrer Benennung. Nur durch die Ablösung von der Bedeutung tritt an die Stelle des Anfalls ein Einfall, an die Stelle der Angst ihre Artikulation, an die Stelle des Tiers oder Tiernamens (Käfer) eine Frage (Que faire?). Und zwar in einer anderen, in der französischen Sprache, denn — so erzählt Freud weiter — E.s Kinderfrau und erste Geliebte war eine Französin. Der Weg zur “Deutung” ist nicht der Weg zu einer Bedeutung. Es ist der Weg zur Wiederholung einer Sprache oder zur Wiederholung in eine Sprache, die von einer anderen verdeckt gehalten wird. Die Bewegung der Philologie ist die Bewegung zur Sprache der ersten Geliebten, zu der Geliebten Sprache. Die Frage *Que faire?* und das darin Erfragte läßt die Geliebte sich diesmal, in der Wiederholung, gefallen. Denn im *Que faire?* ist schon getan, wonach es noch fragt.*

Philologie: es dahin bringen, daß sich die erste Liebe wiederholen läßt, daß sie sich das Wiederholen gefallen läßt.

What is repeated is not the past but rather what of the past went into the future. Philology follows this course and takes from the future what it lacks in the present. —What is lacking to philology? —Nothing is lacking.

Wiederholt wird nicht das Vergangene, sondern was von ihm in die Zukunft ging. Philologie wiederholt diesen Gang und holt aus der Zukunft, was ihr zur Gegenwart fehlt. Was fehlt ihr, der Philologie? Nichts fehlt.

To the question of what comes *after* philology, one can, nowadays, expect the answer that this would be postphilology. But not only is every (and also this) answer to this question a philological answer — for no one could even begin to understand the question and no one would be capable of an answer without a minimum of philology — even the question is fundamentally a philological one, when it asks about the end and the beyond of philology. From the outset, philology goes beyond to something other than that which it is; it is the way to that which it is not and thereby *is* — transitively — its not [*Nicht*] and its after [*Nach*]. Its being is nearness, so far as it may be; so near as it may be, the distance. Far-nearing is the time-space that philology opens up and that remains closed to philosophy.

Auf die Frage, was *nach* der Philologie komme, kann man inzwischen die Antwort erwarten, das sei die Post-Philologie. Aber nicht nur ist jede (auch diese) Antwort auf diese Frage eine philologische Antwort — denn niemand könnte die Frage verstehen und niemand wäre zu einer Antwort darauf fähig ohne ein Minimum an Philologie —, auch schon die Frage ist eine elementar philologische, wenn sie nach dem Ende und dem Jenseits der Philologie fragt. Von Anfang an geht die Philologie auf etwas anderes als sie selbst ist hinaus; sie ist der Weg zu dem, was sie nicht ist, und deshalb *ist* sie — transitiv — ihr Nicht und ihr Nach. Ihr Sein ist die Nähe, so fern sie sein mag; so nah sie sein mag, die Ferne. Fernähe, das ist der Zeitraum, der sich der Philologie erschließt und der Philosophie verschlossen bleibt.

Does the pull go from the foreworld to the afterworld or the reverse? Or, *at the same time*, the reverse? Is not every reversal a repetition? And every repetition an affirmation and an erasure of that which is repeated? Does not every repetition come from another future?

The time of waw ha-hippukh is the messianic time (Scholem, "95 Theses," no. 83).

Geht der Zug aus der Vorwelt in die Nachwelt oder umgekehrt? Oder *zugleich* umgekehrt? Ist nicht jede Umkehrung eine Wiederholung? Und nicht jede Wiederholung eine Bekräftigung *und* eine Tilgung des Wiederholten? Kommt nicht jede Wiederholung aus einer anderen Zukunft?

Die Zeit des waw ha-hippukh ist die messianische Zeit. (Scholem: 95 Thesen; Nr. 83)

80

Philology is the name for a future of language *other* than the *intended* one.

Since it answers for what in language—and in itself—remains intentionless, blank, and unknown, philology is the name for the secret of language, for its *secretum*, *puendum*, its home, the wound, for that which does not belong to it and which it itself is not. For its, for one, for no determined gap in ontology and in logic. Therefore a mis-nomer.

Philologie ist der Name für eine *andere* als die *gemeinte* Zukunft der Sprache.

Weil sie für das einsteht, was in der Sprache—und in ihr selbst—intentionlos, unbesetzt und ungewußt bleibt, ist Philologie der Name für das Geheimnis der Sprache; für ihr *secretum*, *puendum*, ihre Heimat, die Wunde, für das, was ihr nicht gehört und was sie nicht selbst ist. Für ihre, für eine, für keine bestimmte Lücke der Ontologie und der Logik. Deshalb ein Fehlname.

81

Current theories of media presume there could be media even if there were no language; language would be a medium among others. This is not so. If there were no language, there could not be a single medium.

Language is the medium of all media. They are all, each in its particular way, linguistic: mimicry, gestures, the arrangement of spaces in a building, of buildings in a settlement, the distribution of colors, figures, the framing of an image, technical constructions of every kind. They are built on revocation. They assume that they become destructible, incomprehensible, or misusable, in any event do not arrive at their goal, cannot accomplish their purpose. What determines them—and indeterminates them—is not a *causa finalis* but a *causa finalis defecta*. They only function because they could also not function. They all relate to a future that could not be their future, not the future projected in each one's construction, supposed or assumed by them; they relate to their not.

Media are languages because they attempt to anticipate their collapse and even play with the collapse of this attempt. They operate with possible breaks and with the breaking off of their possibilities. That is to say: they operate with their nonoperationality; they mediate their immediality.

Whenever “media studies” begins to make transparent this disstructure of its objects and itself, it becomes philology.

Die gängigen Medientheorien unterstellen samt und sonders, es könne Medien geben, auch wenn es Sprache nicht gäbe; Sprache sei ein Medium unter anderen. Dem ist nicht so. Gäbe es keine Sprache, so gäbe es kein einziges Medium. Sprache ist das Medium aller Medien. Sie alle sind auf je besondere Weise sprachlich, das Mienenspiel, die Gestik, die Anordnung der Räume in einem Gebäude, der Gebäude in einer Siedlung, die Farbverteilung, die Figuren, die Kadrierung eines Bildes, technische Konstruktionen jeder Art. Sie sind auf Widerruf gebaut. Sie gehen davon aus, daß sie zerstörbar, unverständlich oder mißbrauchbar werden, nicht an ihr Ziel gelangen, nicht ihren Zweck erreichen können. Nicht eine *causa finalis*, sondern eine *causa finalis defecta* bestimmt sie—and indeterminiert sie. Sie funktionieren nur, weil sie auch *nicht* funktionieren könnten. Sie alle beziehen sich auf eine Zukunft, die nicht *ihre* Zukunft, nicht die von ihrer jeweiligen Konstruktion entworfene, von ihr unterstellte oder angenommene Zukunft sein könnte; sie beziehen sich auf ihr Nicht.

Medien, das sind Sprachen, weil sie ihr Scheitern zu antizipieren versuchen und noch mit dem Scheitern dieses Versuchs spielen. Sie operieren mit möglichen Brüchen und den Abbrüchen ihrer Möglichkeiten. Soll heißen: sie operieren mit ihrer Nicht-Operationalität; sie mediieren ihre Immedialität.

Wenn den "media studies" diese Distruktur ihrer Gegenstände und ihrer selbst erkennbar wird, werden sie Philologie.

82

The ground of philology is a wound. It screams. But no one hears this Philoctetes except, maybe, himself. He is isolated. The men of war first come to his island when they notice that they cannot go further without his bow. (But where are they going to, if not to further wounds?)

Der Grund der Philologie ist eine Wunde. Sie schreit. Aber diesen Philoctetes hört keiner außer ihm. Er ist isoliert. Die Kriegsherren kommen erst auf seine Insel, wenn sie merken, daß sie ohne seinen Bogen nicht weiterkommen. (Aber wohin kommen sie, wenn nicht zu weiteren Wunden?)

83

A passion is a trauma. An insight a stitch. Since philology is the first passion of those who speak, it is no wonder that they do not like it, that they do not like liking it. But in order not to like something, one must like this nonliking. Philology is — *ad infinitum* — the liking of the nonliking of language.

Eine Passion ist ein Trauma. Eine Einsicht ein Stich. Da Philologie die erste Passion derer, die sprechen, ist, kann es nicht Wunder nehmen, daß sie sie nicht mögen; daß sie das Mögen selbst nicht mögen. Aber um etwas nicht zu mögen, muß man dieses Nichtmögen mögen. Philologie ist — *ad infinitum* — das Mögen des Nichtmögens der Sprache.

84

We are, all of us, accustomed to speaking badly of language — *These ambiguous words* (such as "make" [*machen*]) *are like striking several flies with one blow* . . . (Freud, letter to Fliess, December 22, 1897). The disposition to strike and strike dead, which, however subtly, is connected

with philology, can hardly be explained other than through the fact that language itself is perceived as brutalization. To reduce massive affects to miniscule noises and scratches requires an expenditure of psychic and somatic tension that easily turns against the desired result of reduction, against language, speaking, the speakers. Logocasm belongs to language as misology to philology. Instead of fearing an everthreatening collapse of sublimation, one should warm to the thought that language represents an indeed elastic but also exceedingly fragile limit of sublimation that can be broken through at any time through gestures, mimicry, infamies, fisticuffs, and worse. And is broken through in every sentence, every syllable, and every pause. Violence belongs to the structural unconscious of our language because violence channels its way to consciousness. We only insufficiently know what we do when we say something; with some luck, we shall have known it. In the interval opened in this *futurum exactum*, philology moves.

Wir sind allesamt schlecht auf die Sprache zu sprechen. — *Diese zwei-deutigen Worte* [wie „machen“] *sind gleichsam mehrere Fliegen auf einen Schlag* [. . .] (Freud an Fliess, 22. 12. 97) — Die Schläger- und Totschläger-gesinnung, die sich, wie subtil auch immer, mit der Philologie verbindet, läßt sich kaum anders als dadurch erklären, daß das Sprechen selbst als Brutalisierung empfunden wird. Massive Affekte auf winzige Laute und Kritzeleien zu reduzieren, erfordert einen Aufwand an psychischer und körperlicher Anspannung, der sich leicht gegen das erwünschte Resultat der Reduktion kehrt, gegen die Sprache, das Sprechen, die Sprechenden. Der Logokasmus gehört zur Sprache wie die Misologie zur Philologie gehört. Statt einen stets drohenden Sublimierungskollaps zu fürchten, sollte man sich mit dem Gedanken anfreunden, daß die Sprache eine zwar elastische, aber äußerst fragile Sublimierungsschranke darstellt, die jederzeit durch Gestik, Mimik, Infamien, Handgreiflichkeiten und Schlimmeres durchbrochen werden kann. Und in jedem Satz, jeder Silbe, jeder Pause durchbrochen wird. Gewalt gehört zum strukturell Unbewußten unsrer Sprache, weil Gewalt ihr den Weg zum Bewußtsein bahnt. Wir wissen nur unzureichend, was wir tun, wenn wir etwas sagen; wir werden es, bei einigem Glück, gewußt haben. Im Intervall, das sich mit diesem *futurum exactum* auftut, bewegt sich die Philologie.

The Christianity of philology took an embarrassing turn with its reform in the sixteenth century, which to this day has not ceased in its effects. The divine *logos* of John the Evangelist, at one with love, became a God that hated creation and condemned his believers to spend their lives in *hatred of self* (Luther, “95 Theses,” no. 4). The most pitiless consciousness of guilt is thus imputed by a word, a language, a discourse that represents the simple perversion of the *logos* that was still in force in the *philia* of Plato and John. What is said in the phrase *hatred for oneself* is: language hates us, condemns us, persecutes us, and we hate, condemn, and persecute ourselves and, in ourselves, language whenever we seek to make ourselves understood in it and about it. (—*Was heißt, haßt.*—) If language hates itself, it seeks to destroy itself, and since it can achieve this destruction in no other way than through silence and action that themselves still claim the value of a language, it can preserve itself only through its repetition in the course of its destruction. What Freud attempts to capture with the concepts of death drive and repetition compulsion is a historical order of misogyny that strives to extinguish every history, order, and language. Since the reformatory about-face, long prepared for, the intensified interest in the letter that kills; since then, the propagation of the “book” that chastens; since then, the reproductive technologies of the word; since then, the credo of capital, credit; since then, the economy of guilt [*Schuld*] and of debts [*Schulden*]; every word a crime that repeats another in order to hide it. . . . One of the most pressing tasks of psychohistorical philology lies in analyzing this world-historical turn to a sadistic language and to a suicidal philology.

Die Christlichkeit der Philologie hat mit ihrer Reform im 16. Jahrhundert eine peinliche Wendung genommen, die bis heute nicht aufgehört hat, ihre Wirkung zu tun. Der göttliche, mit der Liebe einige *logos* des Johannes-Evangeliums wurde zu einem Gott, der die Schöpfung haßt und seine Gläubigen dazu verurteilt, ihr Leben im *Haß gegen sich selbst* zu verbringen. (Luther: 95 Thesen; Nr. 4.) Das erbarmungsloseste Schuldbewußtsein wird also von einem Wort, einer Sprache, einer Rede imputiert, die die schlichte Perversion jenes *logos* darstellt,

dem die *philia* Platons und noch die des Johannes galt. Mit dem Wort vom *Haß gegen sich selbst* ist gesagt: Die Sprache haßt uns, sie verwirft uns, verfolgt uns, und wir hassen, verwerfen, verfolgen uns und in uns die Sprache, wenn immer wir uns in ihr und über sie zu verständigen suchen. (— Was heißt, haßt. —) Wenn die Sprache sich haßt, sucht sie sich zu vernichten; und da sie diese Vernichtung nicht anders als durch ein Schweigen und Handeln erreichen kann, das selbst noch den Wert einer Sprache beansprucht, kann sie sich nur durch ihre Wiederholung im Gang ihrer Vernichtung bewahren. Was Freud mit den Begriffen Todestrieb und Wiederholungszwang zu fassen versucht, ist eine historische Ordnung der Misologie, die jede Geschichte, Ordnung, Sprache zu tilgen bestrebt ist. Seit der reformatorischen Volte — wenn auch von langer Hand vorbereitet — das intensiviertere Interesse am Buchstaben, der tötet; seither die Propagierung der “Schrift,” die kasteit; seither die Reproduktionstechnologien des Wortes; seither das Credo des Kapitals, der Kredit; seither die Ökonomie der Schuld und der Schulden; jedes Wort ein Verbrechen, das ein anderes wiederholt, um es zu verdecken. . . . Eine der dringlichsten Aufgaben der psycho-historischen Philologie liegt darin, diese weltgeschichtliche Wende zu einer sadistischen Sprache und einer suizidären Philologie zu analysieren.

86

The relegation of philology to an ancillary discipline of dogmatic theology, jurisprudence, historiography; its shrinking into a disciplinary technique in pedagogical institutions; its contraction to literary studies; and above all the attempt to force it under the norms of an epistemic discipline: however destructive these institutions of repression were and remain for the experience and clarification of linguistic existence, they have not yet been able to destroy the philological impulse. But one should not deceive oneself: this impulse is destructible. The nationalisms in whose service the national philologies have placed themselves, the juridicism, classism, racism, and sexism that they serve and often uphold are assaults on linguistic and philological existence from which the most gruesome ravagings proceed day by day. These philologies are self-destructive. *Another* philology has to fight with the means of analysis and invention — with *all* means — against this work of destruction.

Die Relegierung der Philologie zu einer Hilfswissenschaft der dogmatischen Theologie, der Jurisprudenz, der Historiographie; ihre Verkümmern zu einer Disziplinartechnik in den pädagogischen Institutionen; ihre Schrumpfung zu einem Verfahren der Literaturwissenschaft und allem voran der Versuch, sie unter die Normen einer epistemischen Disziplin zu bringen —: so schädlich diese Verdrängungsanstalten für die Erfahrung und Klärung sprachlicher Existenz waren und bleiben, sie haben den philologischen Impuls bislang nicht zerstören können. Aber man täusche sich nicht: dieser Impuls ist zerstörbar. Die Nationalismen, in deren Dienst sich die Nationalphilologien gestellt haben, der Juridismus, der Klassismus, Rassismus, Sexismus, den sie bedienen und oft genug tragen: sie sind Anschläge auf die sprachliche, auf die philologische Existenz, von denen Tag um Tag die grauenvollsten Verwüstungen ausgehen. Diese Philologien sind selbstdestruktiv. Eine *andere* Philologie hat mit ihren Mitteln der Analyse und der Invention — mit *allen* Mitteln — gegen dieses Zerstörungswerk anzukämpfen.

87

As long as a single person must *pay* to be able to speak with others and to read and listen to them, language and philology are not *free*.

Solange noch ein Einziger dafür *bezahlen* muß, daß er mit Anderen sprechen und Andere lesen und hören kann, sind Sprache und Philologie nicht *frei*.

88

Philology follows the pleasure principle as little as does language. There is no *plaisir du texte* that would not start with repetitions and strive for repetitions. Yet every repetition of an experience also repeats the pain of separation from it — and repeats at the same time the separation from repetition.

Repetition thus not only repeats; it releases itself from repetition and dissolves it. It turns to *another* beginning, that is to say, back to something *other* than a beginning. It — philology, repetition — does not only turn back. It begins, without principle.

So wenig wie die Sprache untersteht die Philologie dem Lustprinzip. Es gibt kein *plaisir du texte*, das nicht von Wiederholungen ausginge und Wiederholungen erstrebte. Doch jede Wiederholung einer Erfahrung wiederholt auch den Schmerz der Trennung von ihr — und wiederholt zugleich die Trennung von der Wiederholung.

Die Wiederholung wiederholt also nicht nur; sie löst sich von der Wiederholung und löst sie auf. Sie kehrt zu einem *anderen* Anfang, soll heißen zu *anderem* als einem Anfang zurück. Sie — die Philologie, die Wiederholung — kehrt nicht zurück. Sie fängt, ohne Prinzip, an.

89

There are philologies that treat the world as if it allowed itself to be *behandelt* (treated like a sick person), as if it allowed itself to be *verhandelt* (negotiated with like an enemy), as if it allowed itself to be *handeln* (traded like a commodity or traded with, like a business partner or an instrument), as if it allowed itself to be *abgehandelt* (handled like a theme). They forget that philology is not a part of the world that can trade with or act on another part. It is the movement of its becoming a world: the coming to the world of this world. This *coming* does not allow itself to be *made*, to be bargained for, to be achieved through intentional acts. The nonnegotiability of this coming (of this world) is the experience that another philology has to elucidate. Its provisional maxim: act such that you can leave acting. And further: act without a maxim, even without this one.

Es gibt Philologen, die behandeln die Welt, als ließe sie sich behandeln (wie ein Kranker), als ließe sich mit ihr verhandeln (wie mit einem Feind), als ließe sich mit ihr handeln (wie mit einem Instrument oder einer Ware oder einem Geschäftspartner), als ließe sie sich abhandeln (wie ein Thema). Sie vergessen, daß die Philologie nicht ein Teil dieser Welt ist, der zu einem anderen Teil Handels- oder Handlungsbeziehungen unterhalten könnte, sondern daß sie die Bewegung der Welt selbst: daß sie das zur Welt Kommen der Welt ist. Dieses *Kommen* läßt sich nicht *machen*, nicht aushandeln, nicht durch intentionale Akte bewirken. Die Unverhandelbarkeit dieses Kommens (dieser Welt) ist die Erfahrung, die eine andere Philologie zu verdeutlichen hat. Ihre

provisorische Maxime: Handle so, daß du das Handeln lassen kannst.
Und weiter: Handle ohne Maxime, auch ohne diese.

90

Philology fights in a world civil war for language and for the world against the industrial manufacturing of language and of the world: it fights against muteness. It must therefore be prepared to fight against its own tendencies toward industrialization. One of the most fatal, most soporific, most disaffecting forms of this tendency is journalism.

Die Philologie kämpft im Weltbürgerkrieg um die Sprache und um die Welt gegen die industrielle Verfertigung der Sprache und der Welt: sie kämpft gegen das Verstummen. Deshalb muß sie bereit sein, gegen ihre eigenen Industrialisierungstendenzen zu kämpfen. Eine der fatalsten, einschläferndsten, desaffizierendsten Formen dieser Tendenz ist der Journalismus.

91

Philology is the Trojan horse in the walls of our sleeping languages. If they awaken,

Die Philologie ist das trojanische Pferd in den Mauern unsrer schlafenden Sprachen. Wenn sie erwachen,

92

Hölderlin's philosophical and poetic attention is condensed in a philological remark that is related from the time of his misery. It says, "Look, my dear sir, a comma!" One could call this remark a philographic one if it were certain that every comma adopts a graphic shape and that "comma" in fact means comma. If one considers the weight that the future, the arrival, the coming claimed in Hölderlin's language, then this "comma" may also hint at that which is not asserted but is called and invited to come. Philology would then be attention to that which interpunctuates, brings to a hold, creates caesuras, because within it something that comes—or its coming—becomes noticeable.

Hölderlins philosophische und dichterische Aufmerksamkeit ist in einer philologischen Bemerkung kondensiert, die aus der Zeit seines Elends überliefert ist. Sie lautet: "Sehen Sie, gnädiger Herr, ein Komma!" Man könnte diese Bemerkung auch eine philographische nennen, wenn gesichert wäre, daß jedes Komma eine graphische Gestalt annimmt, und gesichert, daß "Komma" tatsächlich Komma heißt. Bedenkt man das Gewicht, das in Hölderlins Sprache die Zukunft, die Ankunft, das Kommen beanspruchen, kann dies "Komma" auch auf das deuten, was nicht ausgesagt, sondern gerufen und zu kommen eingeladen wird. Philologie wäre dann die Aufmerksamkeit auf das, was interpungiert, zum Innehalten bringt, zäsuriert, weil in ihm ein Kommendes oder sein Kommen bemerkbar wird.

93

If philology were conducted by all and with unlimited candor — so one could think — then murder and manslaughter would rule, and soon there would be no more language and no more philology. But language places distances between speakers and into their worlds; in a conversation between two, it always refers to a third and a fourth, and if it allows "persons" to come to speech, they do so as those who stay in language and hold themselves back within it. However deadly language can be, it is first of all nothing other than the interdiction to kill. Language is the taboo about death, about the *totum*, the totem. Philology is not only the guardian of this taboo; in each of its gestures, it invents it anew.

Wenn die Philologie von allen und in rückhaltloser Aufrichtigkeit betrieben würde — so könnte man meinen —, dann würden Mord und Todschlag herrschen und es gäbe alsbald keine Sprache und keine Philologie mehr. Das ist falsch. Sprache legt Distanzen zwischen die Sprechenden und in ihre Welten, sie bezieht sich im Gespräch zwischen Zweien jeweils auf ein Drittes und Viertes, sie ist sachlich, und wenn sie "Personen" zur Sprache kommen läßt, dann zunächst als solche, die sich in der Sprache aufhalten und sich in ihr zurückhalten. So tödlich die Sprache wirken kann, sie ist zunächst nichts anderes als das Verbot, zu töten. Sprache ist das Tabu über den Tod, über das Totum, das Totem.

Philologie ist nicht nur die Wächterin über dieses Tabu, in jeder ihrer Gesten setzt sie es aufs Neue ein.

94

Philologists also dance around the golden calf, around the gold standard of culture, around the cape of good hopes: cattle and capital dances. The point, however, is to dance the dancing. (Marx: Theses on Feuerbach; no. 11)

Auch Philologen tanzen um das goldene Kalb, um den Goldstandard der Kultur, um das institutionelle Kapital, um das Kap der guten Hoffnungen: Kuh- und Kapitaltänze. Es kommt aber darauf an, das Tanzen zu tanzen. (Marx: Thesen über Feuerbach; Nr. 11)

95

To write — thus, philology — *as a form of prayer* (Kafka). It is only possible to pray if there is no God. Only the prayer yields a God. The perpetual bifurcation between none and one is the path of philology. It is an ongoing aporia, a diaporia.

Schreiben — deshalb Philologie — *als eine Form des Gebetes*. (Kafka) Beten ist nur möglich, wenn es keinen Gott gibt. Erst das Gebet ergibt einen Gott. Die fortgesetzte Gabelung zwischen keinem und einem ist der Weg der Philologie. Er ist eine fortgesetzte Aporie, eine Diaporie.

95seq.

The delight therein: that the indefinite slowly defines itself.

Der Genuß darin, daß sich das Indefinite allmählich definiert.

Give the Word

Introduction

GERHARD RICHTER AND ANN SMOCK

Among the many beauties of the late Werner Hamacher's *95 Theses on Philology*, reproduced in full in this volume, are its breaks.¹ Perhaps Hamacher would have liked this line from a sonnet by Emmanuel Hocquard describing wolves that sing at twilight (*between dog and wolf*, as one usually says in French, but Hocquard hears his wolves *between ape and cat*):

Part of a pack echoes scraps of distance²

For the *Theses* feature intermittence, *non sequiturs*, and blanks. They do not add up, as one of the contributors to this volume, Jan Plug, observes. Instead of beginning at a proper start, they get going by breaking off; neither chronological order nor logical sequence is their mode, for they veer — detour, double back, halt, wait — toward something (philology!) that cannot be the goal of a systematic program. Withdrawal is their attraction. The *Theses* do not build or progress toward anything; they are not continuous; their rhythms are irregular (“free” is Hamacher’s word, echoing and responding to Hölderlin’s “free rhythms” [Thesis 50]).

If the rhythm of the *Theses* is irregular and free, their gesture always is one of giving. The title of our volume, *Give the Word*, recalls this giving. “Give the Word” is the title that Paul Celan bestows, in English, on one of his German poems, self-consciously mobilizing a quotation from *King Lear*.³ Celan thereby adds another dimension to his lifelong engagement with the language of Shakespeare, whose sonnets he also translated into German — that is, “gave” to German. In Celan, the command

to “give the word” becomes powerfully ambivalent, as it already was in Shakespeare. Hamacher’s *Theses*, too, in which the poetry of Celan is never far, are suffused by this motif of giving, whether it be a giving of language, of philology, or of thinking itself. This giving, for all its suggestive possibilities, remains of necessity elusive, enigmatic, syncopated.

Nonetheless, it will do no harm to stress, in this introduction, a sort of ground bass in Hamacher’s 95 *Theses*: philology’s way of differing from ontology, philosophy, science, and knowledge itself. This differing, between philology and ontology, is not exactly an opposition (philology must do without ontology, Hamacher writes, “and without the without of ontology” [Thesis 17; emphasis added]). If philology were not *kind of* the same as what it is most different from, or *even more* at odds with itself than with its enemy, it would not be itself, so other. Although the difference between philology and ontology is not simple, this distinction is the closest thing in the *Theses* to a given, an underlying principle, even a through line.

Aristotle provides this line by distinguishing between the *logos apophantikos*, “the language of propositions relating to finite objects in sentences capable of truth,” and another *logos* that is meaningful but nonpropositional. It “does not say something about something and therefore can be neither true nor false.” Aristotle’s sole example is “the plea, the prayer, desire” (Thesis 8). And philology, to put it bluntly, is on the side of this desire: it is love of words, longing for them, not knowledge about them. Language, for this *philia*, is not a given, the object of study and cognition; it is rather something like an unknown beloved, but also an incalculable danger. Philology is *amour de loin* (love from afar). It does not exactly have an object or a proper aim. It does not line up, then, on the side of the sciences, with philosophy “which claims to make statements about that which itself is supposed to have the structure of statements” (Thesis 10a). Philology, however, is not extraneous to such statements; rather, it is their foundation. For all propositions, Hamacher says, partake of the longing for language and the prayer for words that are not a given, if only because propositions all demand a hearing. Thus “propositions belong to a language that for its own part is not structured as proposition, but as claim, as plea, wish, or desire” (Thesis 11). Here, the “languages of knowledge are grounded in lan-

guages of nonknowledge, epistemic practices in those of the *euche*: ontology in philology” (Thesis 12).

In his *95 Theses*, Hamacher takes his stand by this nonknowledge: by the *euche*—the leaning toward, the appeal to what in language withdraws “from every determining and every determined cognition” (Thesis 8). His stand is an unusual one, mainly because the relation to language is not a Cause. It has too deep a tendency to forget itself for that. Indeed, “only in virtue of its self-forgetting can philology pursue language without subsuming it under the form of knowledge.” But then, “only because of its self-forgetfulness is it disposed to assume the form of a science and, more precisely, of ontology” (Thesis 29).

Philology is not a Cause, then. And anyway, Hamacher, as another contributor to this volume, Sean Gurd, suggests, may well have “lost his footing” in language. How could he take a stand on it? The philology, however, that Hamacher slowly defines in the course of the *95 Theses*—distinguishing their very opposition to ontology from ontological structures like opposition and accord—puts starkly into question the everyday practices of teachers and students like ourselves as knowledge producers. Is our current work the work we want? What of the goals we are forever proposing, the use we must not fail to make of time, the productiveness we require of each other? “In the course of secularization,” Hamacher writes,

Sunday—the Sabbath, the rest-day and holiday—was abolished; the work day became every-day; the everyday and workday language became the lingua franca; philology changed from a medium of the unfolding of the sacred to a toll for working on a happiness that is neither to be found by means of work nor in it; it became—that too—a branch of an industry producing mass linguistic commodities and mass-market-commodity-producers. One of the decisive historical questions that a different philology has to pursue is whether or not all of its working days could still fall on a Sunday. Whether or not all of its works, those to which it is directed and those which it performs itself, could celebrate the “Sunday of life”—that of Hegel or that of Queneau. This other philology cannot be out for an end and a goal; it can only be out for a feast. (Thesis 45)

The love of language, stronger than any stable knowledge of it—the yearning appeal to words yet unknown in which, after all, the drive to know things and achieve goals is rooted—faces us academics with a serious and festive disorientation. Thus, when extracts from the 95 *Theses*—originally solicited by Cynthia Chase and Jonathan Culler—first appeared, along with other scholars’ ideas about where our work should be heading, in a special section of the journal *PMLA* devoted to the future of literary studies, we heard in those extracts a call aimed at us: students and teachers of language, literature, and critical thought today. As the beginning of a response, we organized two panels at the 2013 MLA Convention in Boston. The present volume, substantially enriched by a number of additional voices and critical perspectives, is a continuation of that first attempt to rise to the call of Hamacher’s *Theses*. If his philology has a dubious character, a treacherous dimension—if it is apt to forget and betray itself the better to be none other—this is also what makes it “historical and susceptible to change: always to another language, always to another form, always un-ontologically” (Thesis 29). At one level, the one that struck us most forcefully upon first encountering them, the 95 *Theses* are an exhortation to remember in philology—that venerable scholarly study of classical and modern languages and literatures in their historical and cultural contexts—a radical susceptibility to change.

Yet what might such change entail? How could we begin to conceptualize it? There is nothing self-evident about the idea that Hamacher’s 95 *Theses on Philology* or their companion text, *Für—die Philologie* (*For—Philology*), should help us fundamentally to rethink our relation to our institutions and to the work we do as philologically oriented scholars in the humanities today. After all, philology, the love of language, in its most basic and conventional sense designates not an intervention in institutional paradigms but a mode of scholarly inquiry with regard to textual phenomena and their historical, philosophical, and cultural inscriptions. Philology has a particular genealogical trajectory that reaches from the study, editing, and interpretation of classical or ancient written sources to the modern literary disciplines as they are still practiced in our institutions of higher learning today. But one quickly real-

izes that, in Hamacher's hands, philology assumes a different kind of modulation. Indeed, for him, "every definition of philology must undefine itself—and give way to another" (Thesis 18). This undefining—this undoing of definition that, precisely *by* undoing, invents a future—rethinks the idea of definition, locating philology both in a specific kind of history (marked by all its previous definitions and attendant indefinitions) and pointing toward a future speaking and thinking. We might say that in this perpetual work of definition and indefinición, philology becomes a kind of *paleonymy*. As Jacques Derrida reminds us, a paleonymy designates the "maintenance of an *old name* in order to launch a new concept."⁴ If Hamacher's concept of philology helps us to consider the current state of our work and our institutions, it is because it is paleonymically inscribed both in a tradition of thinking in and about language while also marking a rupture in, and a transformation of, that same tradition—parting with the tradition precisely in order to remain faithful to its radical, but increasingly occluded, core. It is no accident that Hamacher writes: "What happens is parting" [*Was geschieht, ist Abschied*] (Thesis 34).

We might say that Hamacher self-consciously shares this *Abschied*, this perpetual leave-taking, with other writers who took a certain parting with conventional understandings of language and interpretation as the starting point of their own calls for a renewed practice of philology. On the one hand, it behooves us to see Hamacher's call for a renewed engagement with philology in the context of a broader return to the linguistic nature even of allegedly non-linguistic phenomena such as "politics," "culture," "ideology," et cetera. This renewed turn toward the textuality of cognition as it comes to pass in the reinvigoration of philology today encompasses a broad and heterogeneous contemporary field.⁵ On the other hand, it is equally important to locate Hamacher's engagement with philology in its own, broader genealogical trajectory, which includes Friedrich Schlegel's philosophy of philology; Schleiermacher's elucidations of the concept of philological criticism; the Nietzsche of "We Philologists"; and, closer to Hamacher's more immediate orbit, the remarkable Peter Szondi, one of his teachers at the Freie Universität Berlin. Szondi, whose life work was cut short by his suicide in 1971, revolutionized the fields of philology, German Studies, and Compar-

ative Literature in the 1960s with such pathbreaking essays as “Über philologische Erkenntnis” (“On Philological Cognition”). Hamacher’s early engagement with Szondi’s philological concerns was later supplemented by his relation with Paul de Man (one thinks here, among many other texts, of de Man’s 1982 essay “The Return to Philology”) and Derrida, interlocutors whose radical understanding of language helped to shape the course of Hamacher’s own linguistic concerns and their inimitable, singular signature.

If Hamacher’s trajectory commences on the occasion of the return to a philology that always has yet to be invented, his writings in turn have exerted a decisive influence on many students and scholars working at the intersection of literature and philosophy today, especially in his native Germany and in the United States, where he taught for a decade and a half at Johns Hopkins University before returning to Germany in 1998. While Hamacher’s work has not yet received anything like the attention that has been lavished on the corpus of his slightly older French and Italian contemporaries, Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben, its significance and complexity is fully on par with theirs. It deserves to be studied as a corpus in its own right. After all, such seminal works of Hamacher’s as his 1978 study *Pleroma* (presented as a reading of Hegel) or his essays of the 1980s—including such classics as “The Promise of Interpretation: Remarks on the Hermeneutic Imperative in Kant and Nietzsche,” “The Quaking of Presentation: Kleist’s ‘Earthquake in Chile,’” and “The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure Through Celan’s Poetry”—contributed in innumerable ways to the intellectual formation of an entire generation of German and American scholars of German Studies, Comparative Literature, and beyond.⁶ It is therefore no accident, either, that Avital Ronell’s far-reaching meditation on the role that Hamacher has played in the development of German Studies and contiguous fields points to the ways in which his unyielding emphasis on the predicament of language helped to loosen the dominant and long-established shackles of a Germanist scholarly enterprise that—often unconsciously, but therefore all the more powerfully and dangerously—found itself tied to the idea of full hermeneutic accessibility and communicative disclosure. As Ronell writes, respecting a legacy without imparting a

premature or even false sense of triumphalism: “Having Hamacher in America made all the difference.”

We suggested to all the contributors to this volume that each link her or his response to a particular thesis among the 95. They followed this suggestion with varying degrees of strictness. Several of our authors do dwell on a single thesis among the 95, but they draw into the discussion many texts from other books, in other languages and from other times with which the single Hamacher thesis in question is palpably in contact, which it cites, or with which it tacitly speaks—on purpose or maybe not. Other contributors pursue a zigzagging course across a swath of theses, stressing a particular thought or exacerbating a doubt; still others play some theses against others or one against itself. In this way a reader is enabled to sense not only the uneasy comradeship and elusive friendliness among the interlocutors in these *Theses* (Aristotle, Kant, Schlegel; Benjamin, Sappho, Ponge; Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Celan)—and not only the feel of the words that, cited, show up and get in touch (for instance, Mallarmé’s with Nancy’s, or Shakespeare’s with Queneau’s)—but also the marvelous out-of-synch-ness of the whole operation. For the philology of the *Theses* speaks no single language; instead, its different tongues talk among themselves, speaking for, with, and against each other. They “speak themselves asunder and speak their asunder” (Thesis 16).

The 95 *Theses* are moving, which means affecting, and animated by philology’s passionate character. Hamacher’s philology can hardly be thought in isolation from pathology, as one of our contributors, Peter Fenves, suggests. Its category, so the suggestion goes, is suffering. Another essay, Daniel Heller-Roazen’s, discretely emphasizes delight. Indeed, several of the contributions to this volume converge around the emotion in philology, the *philia*, suggesting both in their propositions and in their style what work animated by friendship, rather than driven by the demand for results, might be like. But *moving* also means that the *Theses*, instead of being *about* anything, or *on* anything, lean *toward* it (*zu*). Philology’s movement *toward* draws several of the contributors to this collection into its drift, and several essays focus on aimless movement, pace, tempo, and time. Thomas Schestag’s contri-

bution, for example, re-reads, slowly, for Hamacher, the old adage *time flies*. Thanks especially to Michèle Cohen-Halimi, Sean Gurd, and Vincent van Gerven Oei, who welcome Francis Ponge, Sappho, and Jean Daive to the feast, *Give the Word* takes Hamacher's Thesis 14 to heart: "Poetry is *prima philologia*."

No consideration of philology and its possible futures can afford to neglect the precarious political and institutional contexts in which it is inscribed. By most accounts, universities today, along with the very idea of a university, are in jeopardy. We seem to be drifting ever farther away from gold standards such as Humboldt's idea of a free and autonomous research university or the late Derrida's concept of a university "without condition," in which, in principle, it is possible to think, say, and write everything and "in which nothing is beyond question."⁷ Around the globe, the tenets of neoliberalism and the relentless machinations of capital are working to transform (or deform) the university into a franchise of corporatist ideologies and managerial structures.⁸ The humanities in particular, as potential sites of critical literacy and of a non-instrumentalist affirmation of the value of learning for learning's sake, have suffered as a consequence.⁹ As Nobel Laureate J. M. Coetzee recently reminded us, "all over the world, as governments retreat from their traditional duty to foster the common good and reconceive of themselves as mere managers of national economies, universities have been coming under pressure to turn themselves into training schools equipping young people with the skills required by a modern economy."¹⁰ While the immediate context of Coetzee's reflections is the precarious condition of academic freedom in today's South Africa, the reach of this precariousness is emphatically global. "A certain phase in the history of the university," he suggests, "a phase taking its inspiration from the German Romantic revival of humanism, is now, I believe, pretty much at its end." As Coetzee goes on to explain, "It has come to an end not just because the neoliberal enemies of the university have succeeded in their aims, but because there are too few people left who really believe in the humanities and in the university built on humanistic grounds, with philosophical, historical, and philological studies as its pillars." How might it be possible today—within the current insti-

tutional context of the humanities and under the shadow of an ever-expanding neoliberalist franchising of universities—to take up the urgent question that Lenin, albeit in a very different context and with different political aims, first posed so simply yet eloquently: “What is to be done?” Potentialities may still be found, if they can be found at all, where one would not expect to look for them.

Coetzee reminds us of the historical and theoretical situatedness of our contemporary predicaments. “In institutions of higher learning in Poland,” he writes, “in the bad old days, if on ideological grounds you were not permitted to teach real philosophy, you let it be known that you would be running a philosophy seminar in your living room, outside office hours, outside the institution. In that way, the study of philosophy was kept alive.” Coetzee adds: “It may be something along the same lines will be needed to keep humanistic studies alive in a world in which universities have redefined themselves out of existence.” What kind of an imaginary seminar—a twenty-first-century version of a Platonic symposium—might one envision to arise out of Hamacher’s *Theses*?

The question is not an easy one, for there are no simple conclusions to draw from Hamacher’s text, no working group to join, no statistical data to mine, no pie charts to create, no alumni groups to please, no revenues to increase, no evaluation forms to fill out, no targets of opportunity to take aim at, no enrollment numbers to fret about, no committee to establish, no performance to review, no “initiative” to sell. It is even doubtful whether the drawing of conclusions in any conventional sense still lies within the purview or interest of Hamacher’s project. It cannot be the pre-assigned task of actual thinking to offer practical solutions to this or that perceived problem, even though concrete action and transformation may on occasion, almost by accident, result from it. If the task of thinking in the humanities, or of practicing philology in the radical sense that Hamacher articulates, were immediately action-oriented, then it would belong, from the very beginning, to the realm of merely instrumental reasoning. Such thinking would not be autonomous but heteronomous, accepting its laws from elsewhere rather than developing them from within itself. Borrowing a phrase from Adorno, this would amount to a kind of practical pre-

ensorship of thinking. Hamacher's philology therefore has little to do with providing strategic recipes for intervention; rather, it is concerned with the development and refinement of a restless critical vigilance, a guardedness with respect to received programs and allegedly self-evident truths, and an acknowledgement that our engagement with the world is fully mediated by the contingencies and resistances of language. Hamacher therefore writes: "Philology is the event of the freeing of language from language. It is the liberation of the world from everything that has been said and can still be said about it" (Thesis 47).

However one interprets this event and liberation, one thing is clear: The hermeneutic reluctance of Hamacher's text to provide a clearly marked course of practical action that is predicated upon the encounter with a linguistic "freeing" is not a shortcoming. This is so because "language cannot be the object of predicative assertions, because these assertions would both have to belong to their object and not belong to it. No trope can designate language without being a linguistic trope and at the same time not being one" (Thesis 53). By extension, we might say that this particular inability also is the emphatic condition of possibility for teaching and learning in the first place. In this respect, the attitude, perhaps even the Hölderlinian *Stimmung* or "attunement" of Hamacher's *Theses*, shares a certain tenor with that of Heidegger's understanding of teaching and learning. In his 1951–2 lecture course "Was heißt Denken?" ("What Calls for Thinking?" or "What Is Called Thinking?") Heidegger argues that in "universities especially the danger is still very great that we misunderstand what we hear of thinking."¹¹ No one is more acutely aware of this difficulty than a real teacher: "Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. Indeed, the proper teacher lets nothing else be learned than — learning."¹² If the teacher "has to learn to let them learn," he "must be capable of being more teachable than the apprentices. The teacher is far less sure of his material than those who learn are of theirs."¹³ The task of the teacher, then, is first and foremost to learn how to let learn, to let learning come to pass, to teach and learn *learning as learning*. This learning-how-to-let-learn unfolds according to its own rules and at its own pace and, at any rate, is always "something else entirely than becoming a famous professor."¹⁴ It is no differ-

ent with Hamacher's teachings. And it is no different with philology itself or, for that matter, with any thesis that could be brought to bear on philology. If Hamacher is right that philology "is the name for a future of language *other* than the *intended* one" (Thesis 80), then this otherness is where thinking and acting would have to begin today—again, and as if for the first time. This future-directed otherness of philology also sets the stage for the substantial and magisterial new essay by Hamacher himself, "What Remains to Be Said," in which he responds to the responses offered here.

Notes

1. Werner Hamacher, *95 Thesen zur Philologie* (Basel: Engeler, 2009). Excerpts from the English version, translated by Catherine Diehl, first appeared in *PMLA* 125, no. 4 (2010), 994–100, and the full English translation of the text appeared as "95 Theses on Philology," trans. Catharine Diehl, *Diacritics* 39, no. 1 (2009) [recte: 2011], 25–44. Hamacher also published a companion text to his theses, entitled *Für—die Philologie* (Basel: Engeler, 2009). That text, along with the "95 Theses," was translated by Jason Groves as "For—Philology." Together with "95 Theses on Philology," "For—Philology" now constitutes Werner Hamacher, *Minima Philologica*, trans. Catherine Diehl and Jason Groves (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015). The *95 Theses* also are reproduced, in English and in German, in the present volume, by permission.
2. Emmanuel Hocquard, *A Test of Solitude*, trans. Rosmarie Waldrop (Providence RI: Burning Deck, 2000), 47.
3. Paul Celan, "Give the Word," *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Beda Allemann and Stefan Reichert, with Rolf Bücher (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), volume 2, 93.
4. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 71.
5. See, among many other recent projects, *Grenzen der Germanistik: Rephilogisierung oder Erweiterung? DFG-Symposium 2003*, ed. Walter Erhart, (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004); and *Was ist eine philologische Frage? Beiträge zur Erkundung einer theoretischen Einstellung*, ed. Jürgen Paul Schwindt (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009). The latter contains a version of Hamacher's "Für—die Philologie" and essays on the question of philology today by leading scholars such as Karl Heinz Bohrer, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, Friedrich Kittler, and others. Compare further the more recent volumes edited by Pál Kelemen et al., *Kulturtechnik Philologie: Zur Theorie des Umgangs mit Texten* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2011) and by Christoph König and Denis Thourend, *La philologie au présent. Pour Jean Bollack* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses

- Universitaires du Septentrion, 2010). In the Anglophone world, see the following recent projects, among others: Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Powers of Philology: Dynamics of Textual Scholarship* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003); *Philology and Its Histories*, ed. Sean Gurd (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010); John Hamilton, *Security: Politics, Humanity, and the Philology of Care* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); and the genealogical account by intellectual historian James Turner, *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
6. A useful bibliography of Hamacher's writings up to 2009 can be found in the Festschrift *Babel: Für Werner Hamacher*, ed. Aris Fioretos (Basel/Weil am Rhein: Engeler, 2009), 419–34.
 7. Jacques Derrida, "The University without Condition," in *Without Alibi*, ed., trans., and with an Introduction by Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 202–37, here 205.
 8. For impeccably researched accounts of this phenomenon, see, among many others, the representative studies by Christopher Newfield, *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Marc Bousquet, *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); and Henry A. Giroux, *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2007).
 9. Compare further, among others, Frank Donoghue, *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).
 10. J. M. Coetzee, "Universities Head for Extinction," *Mail & Guardian*, November 1, 2013, <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-11-01-universities-head-for-extinction>. Last accessed August 9, 2016. No page numbers. All quotations of Coetzee are from this source.
 11. Martin Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?" trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 369–91, here 378.
 12. Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?," 380.
 13. Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?," 380.
 14. Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?," 380.

Part 1

Balances

I

Was heißt Lesen? — What Is Called Reading?

GERHARD RICHTER

No philology, no *philo-logia*, no affection, friendship, or even love for language and the word, without another, libidinally overdetermined, love — the love of reading. That love is itself compelled, in turn, by philology. But what exactly does one love when one entertains a friendship with the reading of *lógos*, when one loves reading? At stake here is not the kind of casual relationship to texts that professions of “interest” in literature or a phrase such as “I love to read” would conjure, as such gestures tend to render reading a mere preference, a habit, or even one hobby horse among many others. And what happens when the word does not love the reader back, when *philia* remains unrequited by *lógos*? What if *lógos*, trailing off on its own, even actively resists the hermeneutic advances of *philia*? Philology, in its most courageous, life-affirming moments, cannot but attend to the dark tension lodged in this permanent possibility. The particular love of reading evoked by the relation between *philos* or *philia* and *lógos* is, in any event, marked not by transitory interest but by lasting obsession, not by *Erlebnis* but by *Erfahrung*, not by immersive enthrallment but by a relentless and uneasy sense of dwelling in a world that is fully mediated by language. What is it, then, that allows one’s critical energies to cathect, to borrow Freud’s term, the sort of textual experience suffused by “that critical, dangerous moment that lies at the ground of all reading,” as Walter Benjamin once called it?¹

Werner Hamacher’s corpus, with all its far-reaching implications, could be thought as a perpetual engagement with the *philia*, as well as

the logic and rigor, of the very act of reading. His extensive oeuvre, a series of daring and radical readings of specific literary and theoretical texts we thought we knew well—from Kleist to Celan, Kant to Nietzsche, Schlegel to Benjamin, and beyond—always also works toward a perpetually suspended and ultimately impossible reading of reading itself. Hamacher's 95 *Theses on Philology*, which contain highly suggestive and ever-renewed attempts at reading reading as reading, are no exception. Suffused with a transformative conceptual impetus evocative of other consequential theses in intellectual history—prominently Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*, Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses*, Marx's "Theses on Feuerbach," Gershom Scholem's "95 Theses on Judaism," and Benjamin's "Theses on the Concept of History," among others—Hamacher's theses proceed from the premise that any transformative potential that philology may harbor (still or once again) is tied to the considerable difficulties associated with the act of reading. In the end, no thesis—the Greek *θέσις* that names the act of putting forth a proposition—can circumvent the problems of reading and the elusive interpretive gestures by which any such thetic putting-forth is invariably touched.

As the most radical of all lovers of words, the philologist engages the intense and disorienting experience of being and dwelling in language without any prior putative understanding or even suspension of understanding. Where philology can be understood as a speaking about language itself, as a language of language that cannot simply take its referential function for granted, it becomes a question of reading.² Yet reading, even when it is explicitly emphasized as a constitutive element of a textual performance or of an attempted act of understanding, can never be exhausted as a stable hermeneutic category of achieved interpretation. This is why Hamacher, as early as in his 1985 essay on Paul de Man, cautions that because "the theme 'reading' can always be used in a text as a metaphor for something else that would not be 'reading,' it is impossible to ascertain whether or not reading is in fact thematized." And since, he continues, "every reading is exposed to the unensurability of the referential relation," it can never be given over to the realm of understanding as if it were a static and self-identical operation. On the contrary, the "specular structure of self-reflection . . . in which reading seeks the guarantee of an objective basis, is broken by the impos-

sibility of determining without any doubt the referential status of the bond by which reflection and what is reflected could cohere.”³ This view shuns the gestures of mere thematization — even the thematization of “reading” — which problematically takes for granted the ability of a critical discourse to avoid the referential ambiguities that would tie it to this or that object of inquiry. The *95 Theses on Philology* remain faithful to these earlier reflections, even as the former venture to take up the trope of reading one more time.

Theses 61 and 62 explicitly engage with the significance of reading for the practice of a radical philology whose objective is not the conversion of an unknown, yet in principle, knowable semantic content into a type of secure, referential knowledge, but rather the constantly shifting attentiveness and ever-renewed vigilance that each new act of reading demands. Thesis 63 then proceeds to shift our thinking about the tacit outcome of a philological reading from the certainty of achieved insight to the more occluded region of incomprehensibility. It reads as follows:

Where philology encounters utterances, texts, or works that are entirely understandable, it will shudder as if it were in front of something already digested, become polemical in order to keep it away, or turn aside and remain silent. Obviousness excludes understanding and even the inclination toward it. Only what is disconcerting can be loved; only the beloved that remains disconcerting while growing closer can be loved lastingly. Only what is incomprehensible, only what is unanalyzable — not just *prima facie* but *ultima facie* — is a possible object [*ein möglicher Gegenstand*] of philology. But it is not an “object”; it is the area in which philology moves and changes itself [*Aber es ist kein “Gegenstand”, es ist die Gegend, in der sie sich bewegt und sich ändert*].

Paradoxically, it is understandability, rather than its absence, that, according to Hamacher’s understanding, stands in the way of philology. Philology does not proceed by eliminating obstacles to understanding. Rather, it understands these obstacles as its own condition of possibility and as the linguistically saturated mode of its specific way of being in the world. The object’s resistance to understanding is what makes philol-

ogy a kind of *philia* in the first place: it is attracted to what must remain suspended and obscure, an attraction that stems not from some excessively cultivated taste for the deferral of understanding but rather from an abiding respect for, and incorruptible vigilance toward, that which withdraws from transparency and meaning. We might say that this critical relation to philology, which is mediated by the object's incomprehensibility, inscribes Hamacher's perspective in a subterranean trajectory of thinking philology that traverses the German tradition, roughly from Friedrich Schlegel's 1800 essay, "Über die Unverständlichkeit" ("On Incomprehensibility"), through Nietzsche's transformative redefinition of the philological attitude, to Theodor W. Adorno's epistemo-political reflections in *Minima Moralia* on how, regrettably, often only that which does not first need to be understood is considered understandable.

It is easy to overlook a seemingly minor linguistic detail in the last line of Hamacher's Thesis 63. But upon closer inspection this detail turns out to be significant for the entire conceptual orientation of the 95 *Theses*. In order to redirect the philological impetus, this line takes up the word *Gegenstand* from the previous line, opening it up to areas of the unruly and the unthought. No translation can fully capture the linguistic and conceptual movement that unfolds here. While the published English version legitimately offers "object" for "Gegenstand," in the original German Hamacher's choice of words is more strongly motivated and overdetermined. After all, German offers numerous options for the broad semantic field of the "object," including "das Objekt," "die Sache," "das Ding," and, precisely, "der Gegenstand." Each of these German words has its own history and conceptual specificity. As the neo-Kantian philosopher Heinrich Rickert—in whose courses at the University of Freiburg both Benjamin and Heidegger happened to be enrolled at the same time—suggests in *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* (1892), a primary task of epistemology is to pursue the implications of distinguishing between objects of cognition that are classified either as "Dinge" or as "Gegenstände," that is, either as things putatively found in the world that give rise to certain mental representations of themselves or phenomena whose cognition prompts the object world to conform to the precepts of the cognizing mind.⁴ When viewed from a rhetorical perspective, the "Gegenstand" is an evocative locution because it

is literally a “Gegen-Stand,” a standing-against that implies a particular mode of being and of appearing to a subject among the *res extensa*. To be sure, “Objekt” and “Gegenstand” are closely related in that they both imply a particular relation to an observing subject, an agent in the world who perceives. But while “Objekt” (derived from the Latin *obiectum*) names that which has been thrown or thrown toward and, as such, emphasizes the course traveled, “Gegenstand” emphasizes the positionality of a standing, a standing against. The “Gegenstand” stands within the world over against a perceiving subject; it is a consciousness that is called upon to relate to the “Gegenstand” in a particular way.

Yet the idiomatic movement of Hamacher’s language works to disrupt any relational standing-against of the “Gegenstand” with respect to a perceiving subject ready to render it a matter of comprehensibility. Through a subtle and allusively rich rhetorical shift from the domain of “Gegenstand” to “Gegend,” the active, perpetually mobile, and transitory character of philology is illuminated. Philology is not bound by an *a priori* standing-against that which would assign it a delimitable relation to a specific observer or mode of observation. Rather, philology emerges as a nomadic, transitory, elusive phenomenon that carries neither in a prescribed precinct of cognition nor with itself. It differs in essential ways from what surrounds it; and it differs from itself, is at odds with itself, in a “Gegend” for which there can be no map and no established orientational matrix of words and concepts. Philology inhabits a “Gegend” in which it moves and changes (“*sich bewegt und sich ändert*”), not as an object that is present to itself or to the subject, but rather as a shape-shifting, region-jumping gesture of perpetual displacement and even self-displacement.⁵

If this sort of philological displacement implies, to re-functionalize a formulation that Hamacher mobilizes in another context, that “history-writing be reinvented for every topic and for every occasion,” it also implies, among many other things, that philology be reinvented each time it fastens upon a new text or engages with a new phenomenon or situation.⁶ To the extent that philology takes seriously the need for reinvention (the reinvention of its procedure in relation to a specific text as well as the reinvention of the reader himself as a consciousness capable of engaging with the recalibrated demands of reading that a

new text issues), it also takes seriously the idea that texts, in de Man's formulation, "solicit an understanding" that propels them to "pose the problem of their intelligibility in their own terms."⁷ This is why philology is unable to remain simply with itself, that is, to speak only for, as, and to itself. Indeed, the acts of inspired and rigorous reading that philology spawns travel through the language of the Other, patiently listening and responding to languages and texts that arrive from elsewhere, at times even coming to this shore unannounced and without proper papers, inserting themselves into the discourse of the proper as alien bodies that both wreak havoc and enable new insight.

This is also why the perpetual moving and shifting of the "Gegenstand" to a new "Gegend" implies, as the German idiom has it, leaving the word to someone else ("*jemand anderem das Wort überlassen*"), letting the other speak. By speaking first, it is the Other who has the last word. Such a leaving of the word to someone else is one of the imperatives of Hamacher's writing and teaching as such. "Whatever we teach," he suggests in "To Leave the Word to Someone Else," "—and whatever we teach to our students and colleagues, but also to ourselves—ought to be talking. But to teach talking, we need to listen, and we need to talk in such a way that we listen—to others, to ourselves—and, while still speaking, leave the word to someone else."⁸ Philology, we might now add, is one of the names for the very act of leaving the word to someone else.

This is why those theses among the 95 *Theses on Philology* that explicitly thematize the knotty relation between reading and philology at times self-consciously leave the word to someone else, sometimes even for their entirety. Thesis 61 leaves the word to Pascal, who worries about just what the right tempo of reading might be—its appropriate speed or slowness—lest one hear or comprehend nothing. But it also implicitly leaves, through Pascal, the word to de Man, whose *Allegories of Reading* Hamacher translated for, and introduced to, German-speaking readers. *Allegories of Reading* opens precisely with the epigraph taken from Pascal's *Pensées*, "Quand on lit trop vite ou trop doucement on n'entend rien," which also opens Hamacher's Thesis 61.⁹ Leaving the word to someone else, then, stages the ways in which "comprehending, capturing, and keeping (*prehendere, capere, conceptio*) are not genuinely linguistic gestures." But what would be a "genuinely" linguistic gesture? A

gesture, precisely, whose “Gegenstand” has moved to the “Gegend” in which even the strangeness, foreignness, and irreducible otherness of the language of the Other no longer can be taken for granted.

The other philologist to whom the word is left in the theses on reading is Nietzsche. Indeed, while Pascal’s single sentence is still surrounded by Hamacher’s sentences that, in the philological manner of commentary, remark upon it, Nietzsche’s sentences constitute the entirety of Thesis 62, so that not only a word, but every single word, is given over to the voice and diction that emanate from the “Gegend” of the Other. While Thesis 62 is marked in the English translation by conventional quotation marks, Hamacher’s original German employs no quotation marks at all but rather stages its relationship to what it quotes through italicization, as if to intimate, allusively, how Nietzsche’s words simultaneously belong and do not belong to the speaking voice of *95 Theses on Philology*. This voice may or may not be Hamacher’s alone; it may be his without being fully his, and, at any rate, readers of Hamacher may need to learn to differentiate among different voices operating within his texts, beginning, perhaps, with the distinction between an author’s voice and the voice of a narrator, a distinction we are more accustomed to making when reading novels by Thomas Mann or Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, but that we rarely dare to keep alive when attending to theoretical texts and philological treatises. Thus, Thesis 62 is co-extensive with paragraph 5 of Nietzsche’s preface to *Daybreak*:

For philology is that venerable art which demands of its followers one thing above all: to step aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow—it is a goldsmith’s art and connoisseurship of the word which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it *lento*. But for precisely this reason it is more necessary than ever today, by precisely this means does it entice and enchant us the most, in the midst of an age of “work,” that is to say: of hurry, of indecent and perspiring hastiness, which wants everything to “get done” at once, including every new or old book—this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches us to read well, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking back and forward, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers.¹⁰

Whereas Pascal worries about the prospect of reading either too quickly or too slowly—since, for him, both modes can have disastrous consequences—Nietzsche fully embraces the possibilities as well as the irreducible dangers of radical slowness.¹¹ In fact, Nietzsche's remarkable passage on reading and philology, which also is and is not Hamacher's, works to slow reading down on at least two levels. First, we might say that when one finds Nietzsche quoted in another book, one is so struck by the allusive richness of Nietzsche's language that one virtually forgets the rest of the book that surrounds the quotation, as Benjamin once said of Michelet.¹² Nietzsche, accepting the word that has been left to him, pricks the text in which he is quoted, piercing its movement and breaking through it in order to displace it from within. Second, Nietzsche's passage itself concerns the process of deceleration in reading, the movement by which philology acts as the teacher of slowness, delicacy, attentiveness, circumspection, and, by extension, of infinite openness, patience, and critical vigilance with regard to language itself.

The textual others to whom Hamacher decides explicitly to leave the word in *95 Theses on Philology* include, *inter alia*, Aristotle and Novalis, Hölderlin and Celan, Jakobson and Ungaretti, and Freud and Kafka, in addition to Pascal and Nietzsche. If Pascal and Nietzsche are obsessed, each in their own way, with a practice of reading that gradually works to identify the right speed of reading—that is, the appropriate tempo that allows for a delicate engagement with a text—the company they keep deserves to be augmented by inviting in two additional lovers of words who will help to shed light on the kind of reading practice that Hamacher's radical philology exposes: the Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard, as well as Heidegger, who has such an important presence in the adventure of reading that is Hamacher's oeuvre. While they are not mentioned explicitly in the *95 Theses on Philology*, their ghosts can be said to haunt the logic of the entire thetic constellation in significant and, as we will see, illuminating ways.

In Bernhard's 1985 novel *Alte Meister* (*Old Masters*), the cantankerous protagonist Reger, a philosophical critic of music and culture, reports—through the voice of Atzbach, the novel's narrator—on a certain preference for an extreme practice of close reading:

Surely it is better to read altogether only three pages of a four-hundred page book a thousand times more thoroughly than the normal reader who reads everything but does not read a single page thoroughly, he said. It is better to read twelve lines of a book with the utmost intensity and to penetrate into them to the full, as one might say, rather than read the whole book *as the normal reader does*, who in the end knows the book he has read no more than an air passenger knows the landscape he overflies.¹³

And the novel continues, in the tone of exaggeration and provocation that is characteristic of Bernhard's prose style, by providing specific examples of this strategically self-restrained approach to reading:

He who has read everything has understood nothing, he said. It is not necessary to read all of Goethe or all of Kant, it is not necessary to read all of Schopenhauer; a few pages of *Werther*, a few pages of *Elective Affinities* and we know more in the end about the two books than if we had read them from beginning to end, which would anyway deprive us of the purest enjoyment . . . We even understand a philosophical essay better if we do not gobble it up entirely and at one go, but pick out a detail from which we then arrive at the whole, if we are lucky. Our greatest pleasure, surely, is in fragments, just as we derive the most pleasure from life if we regard it as a fragment, whereas the whole and the complete and perfect are basically abhorrent to us. Only when we are fortunate enough to turn something whole, something complete or indeed perfect into a fragment, when we get down to reading it, only then do we experience a high degree, at times indeed a supreme degree, of pleasure in it.¹⁴

As readers of this passage we become witness to another kind of passage: the fundamental passage from reading texts to reading *in* texts. To be sure, there is a certain kind of irony at work in Bernhard, for the kind of intensive, fragmentary, and slow reading that is at stake also always performs a certain kind of violence that works to ignore other, perhaps equally essential elements of a work, along with its "overall" arguments and its many contextual inscriptions. Yet this irony, which cannot repress a certain willful act of exclusion in which the so-called

entirety of a work is abandoned in favor of the fragment or the isolated passage, itself entails another irony: it is only through this form of violence that reading can first break with the very violence perpetrated by facile or superficial readings that believe themselves ethically to “do justice” to a text “as a whole,” its contexts, its place in history, its alleged meaning, et cetera. It is no accident that in a meditation on his possible kinship with Adorno, Derrida remarks on the importance of the critical impetus “to shield from violence all these weaknesses, these vulnerabilities, and these victims *with no defense* and even to shield them from the cruelty of traditional interpretation, in other words, from philosophical, metaphysical, idealist—even dialectical—and capitalist forms of inspection exercise.”¹⁵ From the perspective of this “cruelty of traditional interpretation,” we might say that the irony of the redoubled violence in Bernhard’s passage, which also works to resist a certain violence by breaking with its conventions, allows actual reading first to come into its own, even as such reading cannot place itself safely and happily on the side of the normatively and conventionally ethical.

If Pascal, who, along with Heidegger, also figures in Bernhard’s general intellectual orbit and whose proper name, again like Heidegger’s, is mentioned in the novel, worries about the right *speed* of reading—that is, a reading that proceeds neither too quickly nor too slowly—Bernhard’s character Reger is concerned instead with the proper *amount* of reading. For him, reading closely and hypervigilantly requires that a certain selection be made, that there be an aleatory yet strategic restriction to a few sentences, even a few words. He who reads everything, no matter how erudite, may, in the end, “understand” very little in comparison to the slow, careful, and caring reader who has read little of a work—but that little bit extremely well. The Nietzschean *lento*—the philological stepping-aside that strives not to get things done but to slow them down long enough to keep doors open and to prohibit common-sense from foreclosing the infinite conversation with the text that reading requires—inhabits an area of radical, but not at all arbitrary, selectivity. If for Hegel the whole is the true, for Bernhard, implicitly following Adorno’s dialectical reversal of Hegel, the whole is the untrue. Just as in the theoretical programs of an early German Romanticism associated with Schlegel and Novalis, it is the fragment or ruin that is conceived

as the locus of insight and pleasure. The particular form of penetrating reading that Bernhard's literary character rhapsodically outlines also is conjured, in a shifted modulation, by Benjamin's wish in the *Arcades Project* "to erect the great constructions from the smallest . . . building blocks" in order to "recognize in the analysis of the small singular moment the crystal of the total occurrence" [*in der Analyse des kleinen Einzelmoments den Kristall des Totalgeschehens zu erkennen*].¹⁶

Let us now turn to Heidegger. Heidegger composed his brief text "Was heißt lesen?" in 1951, and it was first published in 1954 in the Munich pedagogical journal *Welt der Schule. Zeitschrift für Erziehung und Unterricht*. He had made his text available to the journal as a "Handschriftprobe," a sample of his handwriting, as one of Heidegger's German editors, his son Hermann Heidegger, tells us. The journal cover featured a facsimile of this occasional text, consisting of two paragraphs, the first one five lines long, the second one comprised of a single line. Heidegger epigrammatically condenses key elements of his thinking of reading as follows:

Was heißt Lesen? Das Tragende und Leitende im Lesen ist die Sammlung. Worauf sammelt sie? Auf das Geschriebene, auf das in der Schrift Gesagte. Das eigentliche Lesen ist die Sammlung auf das, was ohne unser Wissen einst schon unser Wesen in den Anspruch genommen hat, mögen wir dabei ihm entsprechen oder versagen.

Ohne das eigentliche Lesen vermögen wir auch nicht das uns Anblickende zu sehen und das Erscheinende und Scheinende zu schauen.¹⁷

Heidegger's German here is far too rich and too allusive to allow for any straightforward translation into English. Almost every single word in these six lines has a complex history in the course of Heidegger's thinking, a thinking that has taught us patiently to hear German words and concepts such as *die Sammlung*, *eigentlich* (along with its noun, *die Eigentlichkeit*), *der Anspruch*, *mögen*, *ent-sprechen*, *ver-sagen*, *das Erscheinende*, and *das Scheinende* differently and "more primordially," as Heidegger would say. An annotated translation of this passage—which would have to engage in detail all the specific ways in which it gathers many Heideggerean concerns as well as the reasons why it is strictly speak-

ing untranslatable—would fill a tome, even a tomb. One might do well, then, to hear the language of this passage along the lines of what one of Heidegger's great translators and interpreters, David Farrell Krell, once noted with regard to Lacan's attempts to translate certain Heideggerian terms into French: "There are after all some things that the German language keeps to itself."¹⁸ When rendered into English, this passage on reading, too, keeps at least as much to itself as it reveals. With these caveats in mind, one possible English interpretation—among many others—of Heidegger's sentences could run as follows:

What is called reading? What sustains and guides in reading is the gathering. What does it gather toward? Toward what is written, toward what is said in the writing. Appropriate reading is gathering toward that which, without our knowledge, has already made a claim on our essence, regardless of whether we correspond to this claim or fail to speak to it.

Without proper reading we also are incapable of seeing what gazes at us, incapable of spying that which appears as well as its radiant appearing.

The first thing to note in Heidegger's meditation is the self-conscious intertextual allusion to other texts composed at the same time: his 1951–52 Freiburg lecture course and his 1952 radio address both entitled "Was heißt Denken?"—which can be translated either as "What Is Called Thinking?" or "What Calls for Thinking?"¹⁹ In the context of Heidegger's reflections on thinking, "heißen" does not merely signify a designation or a proper name, such as "Ich heiße Gerhard." Rather, Heidegger reminds us to listen to the bidding or bidding forth encoded in "heißen," as in "jemanden willkommen heißen," "to bid someone welcome." This kind of simultaneous being-called and bidding-forth is the gesture that a thinking-to-come implies. But because even (and especially) when we engage in conventional philosophy, we are not yet thinking, as Heidegger suggests; we question thinking or quest after it with an eye toward thinking's particular way of posing a question. When, only two years after his reflections on "heißen" and "denken," Heidegger once again takes up the locution "Was heißt," his implication is that "Lesen," reading, ought to be thought and experienced from

a similar vantage point. Indeed, we may say that reading in this sense does not constitute an activity whose meaning has been agreed-upon, but rather the very admission that we do not yet know what reading is or what it calls for. As is the case with “Denken,” we may not even know yet if we know how to read at all. Just as, for Heidegger, there can be no assurances that we are already thinking, much less have become “thinkers,” there is little to suggest that we can be certain of our ability to read or of our status as “readers.” What, then, is called reading and what bids reading come by welcoming something?

If what “carries” and “guides” or “directs” reading is a gathering (“*die Sammlung*”), this gathering is not a mere accumulation of empirical data or of informational content that could be translated into meaning. Rather, the gathering to which Heidegger here alludes is encrypted in the double meaning of the German word “Lesen”: it means both to gather and to read. Thus, German has locutions such as “Ich lese die Blätter auf” (“I gather or pick up the leaves”). In this semantic context, “Lesen” also refers to the activity of harvesting, as it derives from the Old High German verb *lesen*, meaning “auswählend sammeln,” to gather or collect in a discriminating, thoughtful way. A *Spätlese* is a harvesting of wine grapes in late autumn, after the normal harvesting-gathering already has passed, allowing for especially ripe, late-harvest wines. Heidegger here also silently alludes to Goethe’s well-known statement, “An Zerstreung läßt es uns die Welt nicht fehlen; wenn ich lese, will ich mich sammeln.” (The world is not lacking in distraction for us; when I read, I want to collect myself.)²⁰ For Goethe, who also capitalizes on the double meaning of “Lesen,” the gathering that “Lesen” performs is a way for the self to come into its own, to collect from the pieces of quotidian distraction a semblance of coherent subjecthood. But, for Heidegger, unlike Goethe, the reading-gathering that reading performs can have no such triumphant outcome. His account of the relation between reading-gathering and the *Dasein* that experiences it is therefore accentuated differently.

Because “Lesen” always implies a reading, a gathering, and a harvesting all at once, the “Sammlung” that it performs gathers around something, placing something in relation to something else. If the “Sammlung” that is a reading-gathering attends to what is written and

to what is said in writing, it exposes us to something within our being that already has called upon us, made claims upon us, stirred and moved us in particular ways without our conscious knowledge. Whether or not we correspond to or speak out of (*ent-sprechen*) this experience; whether or not we invite it in or refuse ourselves to it and to speech (a “Ver-sagen” that also is a “Ver-sprechen,” which is to say, a form of misspeaking that also is a promise); whether or not we respond to a call by becoming answerable to it, the reading-gathering, when it is taken seriously—that is, when it is seen as an activity at which one also can fail without any conditions of success having been articulated—bids a certain experience of “das Geschriebene,” the written, to make itself felt.

To say that this reading-gathering experience connects us with something inchoately yet strongly felt by our being-in-the-world also is to say that in the absence of this form of “Lesen,” which Heidegger even ventures to call “das eigentliche Lesen,” we cannot read the ways in which we ourselves already are read, that is to say, the ways in which we have become the object of reading. According to Heidegger’s view, this is so because, in the absence of “Lesen,” we are unable to return the gaze of that which already is looking at us (“das uns Anblickende”), that experience of *Dasein* which already has laid claim to us, perpetually scans and tracks us. It is perhaps no coincidence that Heidegger’s rhetorical imagery here is reminiscent of Nietzsche’s aphorism 146 of *Beyond Good and Evil*: “And when you look long enough into the abyss, the abyss also looks into you.”²¹ What seems to hover in our life, gazing at us, holding us up for examination, putting us through our paces from an unnamed elsewhere, only can be approached through an inspired act of genuine reading, “das eigentliche Lesen.”

But it remains undecided whether even this actual, real, genuine, authentic, or strong reading finally could enable us to differentiate between “das Erscheinende” (that which appears on the level of the phenomenon) and “das Scheinende” (that which seems or appears, semblance as such), or whether “eigentliches Lesen” even can be held separate from the threats of something like “uneigentliches Lesen.”²² “Eigentliches Lesen,” if it can tell us anything, tells us that it follows an altogether different trajectory. It returns us always one more time to

the question, each time deepened and enriched, of what is called reading, what calls for reading, and what bids reading come. To pose the question “Was heißt Lesen?” is not to seek an answer that might lead us out of a predicament — the elusive predicament of understanding — but rather to move us ever more deeply, thoughtfully, and hauntingly into it. When viewed from this perspective, the uncontainable dissemination of reading is one of the names for the strange and each time unpredictable experience of philology itself.

Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, vol. 5 of *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 578. When not indicated otherwise, translations are my own.
2. Compare further Werner Hamacher, *Für — die Philologie*, 8.
3. Werner Hamacher, “LECTIO: De Man’s Imperative,” trans. Susan Bernstein, in *Reading de Man Reading*, eds. Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 171–201, here 173.
4. Heinrich Rickert, *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der philosophischen Transcendenz*. (Freiburg: Wagner, 1892).
5. It would be necessary also to examine a related tropological mutation of the “Gegenstand” in Hamacher’s work. In his introduction to the German edition of de Man’s *Allegories of Reading*, Hamacher criticizes certain institutionalized forms of conventional literary studies for all too often turning its subject matter, with a gesture of indifference, into a mere “Gegenstand” and, from there, ultimately into a “Gegner,” an opponent or foe. In a further step, it would be worth examining the circumstances under which a “Gegenstand” in Hamacher’s work sometimes turns into “Gegend” and at other times into a “Gegner” — and all that this double possibility implies for concepts of reading and interpretation. Werner Hamacher, “Unlesbarkeit,” in *Allegorien des Lesens*, by Paul de Man, trans. Werner Hamacher and Peter Krumme (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 7–26, here 7.
6. Hamacher on the back cover of the first edition of the *Passagen-Werk*’s English translation: Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
7. Paul de Man, “The Rhetoric of Blindness: On Jacques Derrida’s Reading of Rousseau,” in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 102–41, here 107.

8. Werner Hamacher, "To Leave the Word to Someone Else," in *Thinking Difference: Critics in Conversation*, ed. Julian Wolfreys (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 165–81, here 181.
9. Hamacher's text first misquotes this line from Pascal in order to rectify it later on, staging, as it were, the very philological labor of remembering, reading, quoting, revising, rereading, et cetera, without which there can be no philology.
10. Nietzsche cited in Hamacher, Thesis 62.
11. In this context, we also may recall Nietzsche's observation that "what is most difficult to render from one language into another is the *tempo* of its style." *Beyond Good and Evil*, in *Basic Writings*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 178–435, here 230.
12. Benjamin speaks of Michelet as "an author who, no matter where he is quoted, makes the reader forget the book in which he encounters the quotation." *Das Passagen-Werk*, 584.
13. Thomas Bernhard, *Old Masters*, trans. Ewald Osers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 17f.
14. Bernhard, *Old Masters*, 18.
15. Jacques Derrida, "Fichus: Frankfurt Address," in *Paper Machine*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 164–203, here 171. Along similar lines, compare further Benjamin: "There is a transmission [*Überlieferung*] that is catastrophe." *Das Passagen-Werk*, 591.
16. Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, 575.
17. Martin Heidegger, "Was heißt Lesen?," in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens 1910–1976*, ed. Hermann Heidegger, vol. 13 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), 111.
18. The full passage reads, "Lacan tries his hand at *Geschick/geschickt*, in which the German fuses the destined with the skilled, but all he can come up with is a mandate: *mandat/mandaté*. The fittingness or suitability of saying-the-same, as both gift and gifted, skilled, is not really retained in the French. There are after all some things that the German language keeps to itself." David Farrell Krell, "Is There a Heidegger or a Lacan Beyond All Gathering?," in *Heidegger and Language*, ed. Jeffrey Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 201–23, here 222n8.
19. Martin Heidegger, *Was heißt Denken?*, ed. Paola-Ludovika Coriando, vol. 8 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002). For the short radio address that bears the same name as the extensive lecture course, see "Was heißt Denken?," *Vorträge und Aufsätze (1936–1953)*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 7 of *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000), 127–43.

20. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Schriften zu Literatur und Theater*, ed. Walter Rehm, vol. 15 of *Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften in zweiundzwanzig Bänden* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1958), 741f. My translation.
21. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 279.
22. It would be fruitful to pursue the question as to the extent to which the abiding threat of “eigentliches Lesen” collapsing into “uneigentliches Lesen” relates to a similar threat, that of readability transforming into unreadability.

2

Language-Such-That-It's-Spoken

MICHÈLE COHEN-HALIMI

Translated by Ann Smock

Is it not an advantage to be freed from the necessity that curbs others? Is it not better to remain in suspense than to entangle yourself in the many errors that the human fancy has produced?

—MONTAIGNE, *Essays II*

Have you ever thought of the real grandeur of his trajectury?¹

—JAMES JOYCE, *Finnegans Wake*

Let us bear these terms well in mind: an anachronistic ephectic² reinvents stasis within movement, the interruption of the processes of language, their suspension by language. The “sacramental word” of ephectics, says Montaigne, is *épéchô*. As he explains, “I hold back, I do not budge.”³ The suspension of judgment is the scales’ point of equilibrium. *Sustino*⁴ is the formula of the person who finds the weight, the *momentum*,⁵ necessary to reach equilibrium. From the phonomic⁶ meaning of arrest, or of suspension’s stasis, the astronomical term apogee has retained the sense of an apparent pause in the wandering of a planet. The word apogee signifies the halt that precedes a retrograde motion. Therefore: the ephectic rejoins phenomenology by way of the astronomy of position, and “sustains” 95 theses — this *Sustino* — need one insist? — belongs to no thinking subject. The ephectic combats the destructive effects of other theses, specifically those of Luther: mortification and guilt brought on by the letter, hatred of language, “sadistic language,” and “suicidal philology” (Thesis 85). His combat makes a memory of these nefarious effects, but this memory is separated from

every object just as from any subject. It is the memory of speech—such that—it’s-never-forgotten. In the ephectic, this memory speaks, the better to exhaust—in the movement of the very words that utter it—straying error’s forgetfulness. We are in the presence of a memory of speech—it remains to understand what speech, separated from the subject—it remains to learn what subject and what separation.

Here the semantic field of the balance point broadens to include time: *epoche* designates the *point fixed in time*. The various positions will bear a relation to this point of reference. It is a spatial position at a point that is fixed temporally, a here-and-now station, relative to which all spatiotemporal sites distribute themselves, or a “zero” point whose placement allows effects of relief and perspective. Thesis 48, which precedes the one we are going to read, is a blank page, a reading zone as sensitive as an *instant* of equilibrium or a punctual recession toward saying’s not-saying. The *momentum* of the motionless weight—the many theses beginning with “Dass . . .,” “That . . .,” as if to designate the gesture of placing a stone on the scales—becomes cinematic *momentum*.⁷ The moment of inertia is roused into scansion, or into cuts, whereby a parenthetical enclosure turns out to be at the same time an arrest, a suspension and an instantaneous moment, a punctual instant. As if the stop became eternal return, inversion of the future into the past: “waro ha-hippukh.”

Eternal return of an askesis in language: speech deviates into stations, episodes, intervals; it departs from its noemes,⁸ twists into a story, puts time into its plot, insinuates absence in presence, and gives the blank page prospects, aspects. Is this speech a book? Is it a mechanical device? A transitional inertia or kinetics?

The *Sustino*—the first words of Aristotle’s *Peri Hermeneias*—also come to mind: “*dei thesthai*,” “one must establish what the name and the rheme⁹ are.” These words never appear as a signature, but rather as a disappearance; and the phrase produces an utterance scarcely proffered—a balancing, re-balancing kind of word followed by a separating, splitting one, operating in a thetic moment called differing and deferring both. In this context, one must posit the difference between the name and the rheme. This difference does not oppose two species of a single grammatical genus; it escapes grammar. It complicates what

saying says by showing that saying exceeds naming. The rheme is the word that is said, inasmuch as this word expresses the verbal sense of speech unfurling. And this unfurling, which has neither outside nor in, causes the time of the speech it phenomenalizes in language to appear and disappear:

A *rheme* is that which, in addition to its proper meaning, carries with it the notion of time. No part of it has any independent meaning, and it is a sign of something said of something else.

I will explain what I mean by saying that it carries with it the notion of time. ‘Health’ is a noun, but ‘is healthy’ is a verb [*rheme*]; for besides its proper meaning it indicates the present existence of the state in question.

Moreover, a verb [*rheme*] is always a sign of something said of something else: of something either predicable of or present in some other thing.¹⁰

The difference between name and rheme is lost when snared grammatically as noun and verb. To go back to that difference is not so much to comprehend as to hear saying once again as temporalization, not as the assignment of a meaning and an identity. The rheme subverts the schema, the noemes play freely in space-time—the here-now of their phenomenalization in language—and this language drifts, floats, and vacillates all the more for its power to recondense time via the signs of attribution. But no one escapes the snare—which the ephectic calls Christian, Lutheran; there is no escaping its subversion. As Francis Ponge says, “We’ll never get out of it . . . isn’t the hope of *getting out* itself a mad idea? There is only ever re-inscription . . .”¹¹ Observe this stubborn commitment to writing whereby poetry (*Dichtung*) turns out to be *prima philologia* (Thesis 14). Neither Ponge nor Joyce shows up by chance in Thesis 49.

Superior in this regard to philosophers, poets know “*on its own terms*” that which they express.¹² For they take to its utmost language’s reference to language, and they change their own particular idiom into its very self, inasmuch as within itself it speaks: by this, “I mean SPEECH.”¹³ The return of the thetic¹⁴ in the “I mean” and in the stubborn resolve to “say language” is, for Ponge, indissociable from a hesitation, a punctual instant of wavering—*epoche*. This vacillation is the movement of a

time that recalls the *jeu* (play) of *l'objeu* — that is, the *motus*¹⁵ of the *mot* (word), which no longer opposes subject and object or reactivates the face-off of word and thing but which rather delivers the rocking in-between of language, the rheme's counter-current. And the effect of all this is to spring the *-jet* (of *objet*, *sujet*) from the enclosure of its name and from the very use of the name. The *objeu* puts words in play against themselves according to a writing that is no longer either on the side of words or of things, but that is *between* word and thing:

Another way of approaching the thing is to consider it unnamed, unnamable, and describe it *ex nihilo*, but so well that it can be recognized — however, only at the end: its name, as it were, the last word of the text and not appearing till then.

Or only appearing in the title (given at the end).

The name must not be indispensable.

Replace the name.¹⁶

The great Pongian “ear” hears (*entend*) all the potential of the not-said; it speaks saying on behalf of an understanding (*entente*) incommensurable with anything named; it furthers “the confusion” of “reasoning” (*raisonnement*) with “resonance” (*résonnement*).¹⁷ What philology could still maintain that any thing responds or corresponds to its name? Ponge calls the infinite power of language to speak on words “gene-analogy.”¹⁸

Thus, just as people have ancestors, words also have ancestors. Anyway, they have, if I may be so bold as to put it this way, a gene-analogical tree: the ramifying associations of ideas that they develop in the reader. And I take all that into account. I've had occasion to say that utter success for a text would be that every one of the words composing it could be taken in every one of the successive meanings that the word has had in the course of its history. That is obviously an extreme and can't be attained, but one might well ask for the most in order to obtain the least, that is, obtain precisely a sort of thickness with each term, inside the text.¹⁹

“Gene-analogy” is the transverse version of philology as “philallogie” or “philologie” (Thesis 24). It manifests the historical time that impli-

cates but doesn't explicate itself in words — “the inner law of language is history” (Thesis 35). It is in this implicated temporality that the *motus* of words against themselves can be perceived — their “perpetual movement.”²⁰ The ephectic extends to the maximum the time of differing/deferring — the interval whose utterance starts in only to leave off: philology, he holds, is “language in *trajeudy*.” This is a radicalization of the *epoche* as *epoche-language*. The “trajeu” raises to the power of two the *mise en abyme* of “the dizzying thickness” and the “absurdity of language”²¹ by means of a continuous duplication of sheer saying upon itself. Thanks to a quasi-reflection without separation, saying and not-saying coincide at a single point, the fixed point of the *Sustino*. This is both the point where language can lose itself and the one where speaking subjects lose themselves outside it — the balancing point which transforms the “trajeu” into “trajoie,” the unbalancing point where the “trajeu” falls into “trajeudi.”

Thus Thesis 49 advances toward its own most poetic rigor as much and even more than it emerges from there. Its delivery, impersonal like that of Ponge, is made without any mouth; its thought sees without a gaze and thinks without any pensive subject. It achieves these (meta) morphoses of the speech that speaks of itself alone — philology — by folding into it that immense responsibility with regard to words (*trajoie/trajeudi*) which is possible only through them.

Notes

1. Translator's note: “trajeudi” is the ingenious invention of the French translator of *Finnegans Wake*, Philippe Lavergne (Paris: Gallimard, 1997). The “jeu” in the middle of it means “play” in French.
2. “Ephectic” is a term that Montaigne forged starting from the Greek verb “épéchô” (I put in suspense) to designate those who are capable of suspending their judgment and of doubting.
3. Montaigne, *Essays II*, 12, trans. Donald Frame, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), 374.
4. “Sustino” is a Latin verb meaning “I maintain.”
5. “Momentum” is a Latin word meaning “weight.”
6. “Phoronomy” is the science of the laws of equilibrium — of the movement of solids and liquids.
7. “Movimentum” is an invention that allows us to play on words, the better to bring out the way weight (*momentum*) becomes “movement” (*movimen-*

- tum). The adjective “cinematic,” which refers to the study of movement, accentuates this transformation or this dynamization.
8. Here this term, borrowed from Husserl, designates the intentional object of speech.
 9. “Rheme” is a Greek word often translated as “verb.” Our text goes on to show how reductive this translation is.
 10. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, trans. E. M. Edghill (*Massachusetts Institute of Technology Internet Classics Archive*, 19942–009), part 3.
 11. Francis Ponge, *Pour un malherbe, Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999), 430.
 12. Francis Ponge, *Méthodes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961) 38; trans. Beth Archer, *The Voice of Things* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 98.
 13. Francis Ponge, *Le Parti pris des choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), 77; Beth Archer’s translation in *The Voice of Things* is modified here.
 14. By “thetic” we mean the assertive mode of phrases such as “I hold that . . .,” “I mean that . . .”
 15. “Motus” is a Latin word that means “movement,” and it is also a portmanteau word because it includes the word “word” (*mot*).
 16. Ponge, *Méthodes*, 102.
 17. Philippe Sollers, and Francis Ponge, *Entretiens de Francis Ponge avec Philippe Sollers* (Paris: Gallimard/Le Seuil, 1970), 158.
 18. Sollers, Ponge, *Entretiens de Francis Ponge*, 170.
 19. Sollers, Ponge, *Entretiens de Francis Ponge*, 170, trans. A. Smock.
 20. Sollers, Ponge, *Entretiens de Francis Ponge*, 187.
 21. See the Pongian definition of the “objeu” in *Pièces*, “Le nous quant au soleil. Invitation à l’objeu” (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 137.

3

48

[this space intentionally left blank]

JAN PLUG

The center, which is by definition unique.

—JACQUES DERRIDA

The symmetry is perfect: 47 before, 47 after. And between them the crux, we might say, the hinge around which the 95 *Theses on Philology* turn. Yet under the numbered heading 48 there is a blank space. This central thesis around which the 95 *Theses* promise to structure themselves, in which they promise to disclose *the* thesis of the theses, is not given, or if it is only as that which is not given. The thesis in which the thetic could assert itself is at once there—you can count up to this numbered section—and not. Without text, without language as we customarily think it, Thesis 48 is rigorously unreadable.

Or to be more accurate, both readable and not. For there is in fact a Thesis 48 with a text. Not that I have withheld anything or miscounted, though I have, to be sure, misrepresented ever so slightly, by a half we might say. For while what I have said to this point about Thesis 48 holds more or less, everything, including whether or not these 95 *Theses* add up, depends upon how one counts. There are indeed 47 before and 47 after; there have to be, there being no other way to get to 48, at least if we are dealing with whole numbers and the normal rules that hold over them. So, 47 before and after, and yet not, for before Thesis 48 comes . . . Thesis 48.

Two of them side-by-side, then, and on facing pages, as if mirror images, each giving the other back to it.¹ Two of them, let us repeat, as

though Werner Hamacher did not know how to count. Or to put this differently, 48 twice, which hardly helps, the blank or empty one following the first, if that word even makes sense any longer, to empty it out or perhaps simply to repeat it. At the very least, this strange recurrence means that strictly speaking there are not 95 theses, but 96, perhaps more.² But 96, let's say, to keep things round and simple, and to give Hamacher some benefit of the doubt. And, needless to say, 96 theses cannot have a central thesis, not one that could find its place under a whole number, which is another way of saying that Thesis 48 is not the middle, mid-point, or center of the text.³ If 48 counts twice, then the center would be the blank space between Thesis 48 and Thesis 48, which is to say, once again, that the center is only there by virtue of repeating and reinscribing the blank space — Thesis 48. What counting in this way would mean is not least that Hamacher's theses do not quite add up to assume their place alongside those other most significant 95s: Martin Luther's *95 Theses* ("Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences") and Gershom Scholem's "95 Thesen über Judentum und Zionismus" ("95 Theses on Judaism and Zionism"). For them to do so and take up a position in a theological and, perhaps, philological tradition, Hamacher would have to be innumerate or perhaps all too numerate. For Hamacher to have written *95 Theses*, then, Thesis 48, the second, has to be there (you can see it, count it even), but not *as a thesis*, a proposition that can be tested. In other words, while according to the normal rules of counting, perhaps even logic, one might count 96 numbered sections, only 95 of them are theses and the *95 Theses* have earned their name. This is another way of saying that Thesis 48 at once ensures and refuses every inscription of the *95 Theses on Philology* in that theological tradition, because blank, empty, it can never quite add up to be accounted for.

At their very center, then, the *95 Theses* confront us with a thesis that, because it is not one — not a thesis and not *only* one, but always at least two — takes us to the center of a rethinking of the place of language in contemporary theory. That thesis does so, of course, by appealing to an essay that could be described as the origin or center of the contemporary questioning of structure, an essay that must therefore fall under the history it relates.⁴ In "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of

the Human Sciences,” Derrida describes how until an “event” that he will “mark out and define,” the conception of “structure—or rather the structurality of structure . . . has always been neutralized or reduced, and this by a process of giving it a center or referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin.”⁵ By “orienting and organizing the coherence of the system,” the center “permits the free-play of its elements.”⁶ Accordingly, “the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself,” which is to say, most immediately, that every structure must, as structure and structured, have a center. Without a center, there is no structure.⁷ Yet the center also “closes off the free-play it opens up and makes possible,” for it is that point at which no substitution or transformation of elements can take place.⁸ The center thus escapes the structurality of structure; it is at once inside and outside the structure. As Derrida puts it, “The center is not the center.”⁹ The concept of the center therefore “represents coherence itself” and as such serves to secure the game by assigning a fixed point of “full presence which is out of play.” However, this coherence is contradictory, and “coherence in contradiction,” Derrida insists, “expresses the force of a desire.”¹⁰ The desire that the center that is (not) one discloses is for full presence, a fixed point that would ground the exchange of elements and guarantee the structuring principle of the system.

That desire is exposed precisely as desire, rather than an immanent part of the structure of structures, say, when the contradiction at the heart of the concept of the center is exposed, that is, when it “has begun to be thought, that is to say, repeated.”¹¹ Thinking the center thus redoubles what was always already its doubleness, if not duplicity, its position at once in the structure and outside it. The center is thus revealed not as the “fixed locus” that it appears to be but as a “function” at which “an infinite number of sign substitutions comes into play.”¹² And the event of thinking and rupture introduces into the concept of the center an element that it cannot tame or neutralize. This, then, is the moment when “language invaded the universal problematic,” the moment of an “invasion by language, when everything became discourse,” when “everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never present outside a system of differences.”¹³ The re-inscription of language at the (non)

center of structure thus functions to extend the free-play of elements “within” the structure infinitely—though one can no longer speak of a within or a without.

When Hamacher’s 95 *Theses* repeat their center, Thesis 48, they do so of course to invoke and repeat the thinking and repetition of the center that marked this event in contemporary thought whereby everything became language. Moreover, the theses repeat their center to inscribe in the center of the structure the “unthinkable itself.” For if a structure without a center cannot be thought, and if the center is “by definition unique,” the 95 *Theses* double down on thinking structure by denying themselves a center at the same time that they insist upon it—twice over. At the center of the 95 *Theses* is quite literally the unthinkable, since they have no center, not one but two, of course, but even more because the thesis that guarantees that (non)center is a blank that quite rigorously cannot be thought, cannot be the object of a thesis or theses, not even these 95 *Theses*. No matter how many times Hamacher’s theses invoke and attempt to come to terms with the thinking of and at their center, then, they cannot be said to think this unthinkable and so to reduce it to something thinkable, even to something thought. Rather, the *Theses* open up, at their heart, the *experience* of the unthinkable.

At the center of the 95 *Theses*, Hamacher immediately extends the play of elements with and across the theses, both his and those other 95 *Theses* (at least two of them) with which they enter into conversation. The infinite extension of free-play of course also means that every thesis, indeed every “element” — word, phoneme, space — of every thesis is brought into relation with every other. Indeed, this is at least part of the origin of the 95 *Theses*, its first thesis:

The elements of language explicate one another. They speak for that which still remains to be said within that which is said; they speak as philological additions to one another. Language is archiphilology.

From their opening words, Hamacher’s 95 *Theses* speak (of) a language that speaks for what remains to be said and thus to theses that also necessarily refer themselves to “additions” that say what language does not. As the philological additions that explicate one another, none of them perhaps more than Thesis 48, the theses infinitely extend the free-play

insofar as in them everything has become discourse. Yet everything becomes discourse here by virtue of a blank space in which no language, at least as we normally think it, appears. Everything becomes discourse thanks to this central space that does not quite speak—not yet. But this is also to say that the *95 Theses* also require additions to say what remains to be said in what they say, or that the extension of free-play that takes place with the inscription of the central (non)thesis at their center necessarily extends them beyond themselves. In this sense, Thesis 48 is quite literally the space that opens the *95 Theses* to their explication by one another and by an other, another philology, toward which they orient themselves.¹⁴

The language of addition, in a text in which what counts and how one counts play such a crucial (if understated) role, already hints at as much: here, the *95 Theses* insist upon adding to themselves once again, as though 96 were not enough. And they insist upon adding together halves precisely in the manner of the classical concept of the structure Derrida traces, although how these halves come together will be another matter. Hamacher calls upon philology to concern itself quite precisely with “the other half” of language. We should no doubt be anything but surprised that he does so in nothing other than the other half—if it can be called that—of Thesis 48. After all, where else could we be summoned to account for a half that is not quite given (as given), if not in its other half, thus in that very thesis—and not?

Now, then, it is as though Thesis 48—the second, blank one—says again what it always already says in its first “half.” To put this in the words of the “first” 48, it is as though Thesis 48 says what it already said, philologically, by saying what it cannot and does not say. And what Thesis 48, the first, says is this:

If language speaks for a meaning, it must also be able to speak in the absence of a meaning. If it speaks for an addressee, then it must be able to speak in the absence of an addressee. If it speaks for something, it must also be a “for” without a “something” and without the particular “for” that would be pre-determined for it. Only one half of language is an ontological process; philology must, therefore, also concern itself with the other half.

According to the proposition of the central thesis of the *95 Theses*, philology (and this would include these theses) will become “properly” philological only when it concerns itself with this other half. Since doing this means attending to the absence of meaning, as of addressee, that is, means speaking without something for which to speak and even without determining in advance what is spoken for, the *95 Theses* become philological with Thesis 48, not the one that says philology must do this, or not only this one, since it still speaks meaning, to an addressee, and for something. Indeed, even in affirming that language speaks in the absence of a pre-determined *for*, Hamacher’s thesis is articulated in an *if* that is not hypothetical so much as it is rhetorical, for this thesis cannot assume even its own position, without pre-determination, as ground. Thesis 48 immediately refers itself, of course, to itself, and the *95 Theses* concern themselves with the other half of language in the other (half of) Thesis 48, where they no longer speak—meaning, to, for . . . —where language or its absence, the absence of language in all senses of the genitive, inscribes itself.

Moreover, Thesis 48 speaks “in the absence” of and for a *for* in that it refers to that other philological text of Hamacher’s that speaks for: *Für—die Philologie*.¹⁵ Yet if Thesis 48—the first and the second—speaks for this text, indeed comes as close as possible to naming it, this too is but an approximation. For *For Philology* never quite carries this title. In a gesture by no means foreign to Hamacher, the title, if it is one, never appears on the cover or title page.¹⁶ The text simply begins, with its first words, its opening sentence, on the cover and continues from there. *For Philology*, as a title, never appears as such except in the virtual address, the URL, for the book; as a title, it remains rigorously virtual, or perhaps better, as the address to the virtual *and* the address (*for* philology) that are never quite a title, a heading, something that might be converted into *something*, something like a thesis that could orient us. This title without a title, with everything this entails, is always only *for* philology and never the “thing itself.”

For Philology, we might speculate, is the text that never made its way into the *95 Theses*. As though there by (not) being there, it is the philological addition to the *95 Theses* that says what they cannot. It is as though it were the forty-eighth thesis, again, that absent text, the

language that can never be there because it is not a thesis, not a proposition. That *For Philology* comprises precisely 96 numbered pages—that it therefore repeats with some precision, depending upon how one counts, the number of theses in *95 Theses on Philology*—might well be pure contingency. That pages 95 and 96 of that text are blank, like Thesis 48 of the *95 Theses*, the thesis that guarantees that the *95 Theses* will count both 95 and 96 theses, can similarly only be fortuitous.¹⁷ But if these are accidents, they are those of a numeracy that nonetheless adds up perfectly to a language that inscribes itself in numbers whose addition is problematic to say the least. *For Philology*, like Thesis 48, is a (non)thesis or one thesis 2 many, as Hamacher himself writes it elsewhere¹⁸—in which the alphabetic and the numeric do not quite add up to a sentence or a calculation. Language cannot be said to function according to the rules of grammar or syntax here, nor can numbers be said to function according to the rules of arithmetic, since “one 2 many” begins to count, it would seem, but gets the count wrong—one gives way inexorably to 2, and 2 gives way to many. The many are too many here, it seems, but really it is two, 2, that refuses the full count inasmuch as 2 is never only 2 but also *too*. The implicit reference to *For Philology* in Thesis 48 thus fulfills that title, since it is never fully asserted as such, as reference, and even insofar as it does refer, it never does so to philology itself or even a statement, text, or thesis *on* it, as the English translation has it, but is only *to* or *toward* (*95 Thesen zur Philologie*), a philology that it is only ever *for*. The *95 Theses* can only ever be for something without a something, for what they are for is not least a text (*For Philology*) that is for. . . . The theses are for a *for*, then, but that *for* has no thing predetermined as that for which it would be, not even philology, nor can it be said to have anything like a fore-structure, say a reference or intention, that would be pre-determined for it.

Elsewhere in the *95 Theses* and in his other work, Hamacher speaks more explicitly and extensively to the other, non-ontological, half of language to which Thesis 48 calls us to attend. Indeed, it could be said that this is the most abiding concern of his work.¹⁹ As he makes clear in Thesis 8, at least since Aristotle what has been at stake in language,

in the foundation of every epistemic discipline is an understanding of being, objectivity, and truth.

From the *logos apophantikos*, the language of propositions relating to finite objects in sentences capable of truth, Aristotle distinguishes another logos, one that does not say something about something and therefore can be neither true nor false. His only example of the nonapophantic language is the *euchē*, the plea, the prayer, the desire. Propositional language is the medium and object of ontology, as well as of all the epistemic disciplines under its direction. Meaningful but nonpropositional language is that of prayer, wish, and poetry. It knows no “is” and no “must” but only a “be” and a “would be” that withdraw themselves from every determining and every determined cognition.

If according to its Aristotelian definition apophantic language is capable of truth, the non-ontological half of language Hamacher speaks of in Thesis 48, the first, would no longer make any claim to relate (adequately or not) to finite objects. Philology, insofar as it concerns itself with this other half of language, would make no attempt to speak the truth, even about that which does not take the form of an object, that is, about the non-ontological other half of language. This is one (more) reason for the halving and doubling of Thesis 48. Thesis 48 (the second) can thus be said to “be” the non-propositional and non-thetic thesis that speaks to this other half insofar as it refuses every gesture of relating its language to finite objects in a language that claims truth for itself. To put this differently, Thesis 48 “is” this also insofar as it is only one (even one half of the) thesis that would offer such refusal.

According to the terms Hamacher establishes in the 95 *Theses*, one could argue without too much difficulty that his thinking and writing have been philological from the beginning. At least since his seminal essay on inversion in the poetry of Paul Celan, he has been concerned with the aporias of the Aristotelian conception of language that culminates, in his explicitly philological work, in this conception of the two halves of language.²⁰ In that essay, Hamacher works out in exquisite

detail how the apophantic, epistemic, ontological half that is Aristotle's first concern involves a reduction of language as such.

Under the sign of the semantic function to which language, according to the classical doctrine formulated by Aristotle, should reduce itself in the course of its only veritative mode of expression—predicative assertions—language appears caught in an aporia that admits only an aporetic solution: it is explained away as an empty gesture that must evanesce before the power of the factual, or it is accorded all the weight of the only ascertained reality, whose types are stamped into the entire region of objectivity and constitute objectivity itself. In the first case, language is destined to disappear before the presence of the world of things and their movements; it is nothing in itself, a mere instrument, in the crudest instance an instrument of deixis, a means of reference that should disappear whenever the things themselves appear.²¹

According to this conception, the ontological half of language in the end paradoxically “is” and “does” nothing, nothing other than disappear before the presence of “things themselves”; that is, language cedes the ontological to objectivity. The inversion whereby this ontology is ultimately dissolved every time language is understood to be determined semantically is countered, though hardly overcome, by an other pole that still does not, however, attend to the non-ontological half of language that will be Hamacher's explicit concern in the 95 *Theses*.

In the other case, language is exalted into the schema of all reality, and so it encounters in reality only itself; it employs objects to confirm the efficacy of its figures and runs through a virtually endless process of repeating, without resistance, its preestablished types.²²

If, according to the natural attitude, language exists at best merely to become transparent before objects, here “reality only retains the rights of language in whose image it was created.”²³ According to the semantic function of language, then, that ontological half considered in half of Thesis 48, one side must always cede its right to exist to the other.

What is at stake in such a reality is not merely language, of course, but the reduction whereby language is seen as reductive, but a poor

substitute for a more pressing and urgent reality. At stake are some of the central terms of the philosophy of subjectivity since Kant and Hegel, through whom Hamacher traces the figure of inversion to its (onto)logical breaking point. In Kant's Copernican revolution, the inversion of the dependency of language upon an objective substrate before which language must ultimately yield takes the form of a subjectivity faced with potential objects of knowledge or representation. Only Kant this time around, of course, postulates that for there to be knowledge (*a priori*) the subject must "give its objects the rule . . . which alone permits them to be objects of knowledge."²⁴

Taking up Kant's figure in order to complete (to overcome and perhaps invert) that figure, the "greatest feat" of Hegel's dialectic is performed, to be sure, by the movement of spirit. But here this means coming to terms with "the arena of nonreality," "death as the abstract negation of entities as such."²⁵ Accordingly, Hamacher argues, "Spirit shows itself as substantial subjectivity by turning its own nonreality . . . into being."²⁶ And it does this by transforming "death into something dead, from an unreality—by prosopopoeia—into a fact, from the negation of the I into the pure energy of the I."²⁷ Insofar as nothingness (unreality, death) is "the nothingness of something' and thus already assumes the figure of objective being," this nothingness is "returned to Being."²⁸ The result of the process of speculative inversion is thus to return the subject to nothingness, unreality, nonmeaning, and death.

By virtue of the mediating and converting character of the substantial subject, a meaning attaches itself to each linguistic sign it posits, and this meaning remains indispensable for the interaction between the sign, what it signifies, and the communicative interaction between different speakers, because the very thing signified is already drawn into the shape of subjectivity as a moment of mediation.²⁹ This mediation of the understanding of language as medium can be understood without exaggeration as the completion or fulfillment of every thinking of the semantic function of language since Aristotle. Hamacher does not stop here, however; he follows the inversion of the philosophical figure of inversion in lyric poetry, most of all that of Celan—who will emerge at a crucial moment in Hamacher's explicitly philological texts as well. For Celan, as Hamacher reads him, radicalizes the figure of inversion

to the point of “an abstract purity” and “seeks ultimately to surpass and abandon this figure by means of a procedure to which the formulation ‘inversion of inversion’ scarcely does justice.”³⁰ To put this differently, with Celan Hamacher seeks to surpass and abandon not only the figure of inversion but the philosophical substrate, epistemology, and subject that guarantee it. He seeks to overcome and abandon even the notion of figure and of figurative reading that made his own analysis possible.

At stake in language as it is conceived and deployed in the *95 Theses* is the same threat Hamacher sees Celan facing, that of “making nothingness into a positive, the danger of allowing for absence merely as the negative of presence, and thus of wanting to change absence, by virtue of language, into everlasting Being.”³¹ Like Celan, Hamacher refuses to turn or convert absence into presence. He refuses to make language an instrument or a virtue of any description that could perform such an inversion and in so doing reconfirm its ontological, epistemological, and ethical value.³² He refuses, finally, to make nothing into a positive and to change absence into Being, and he does so “by virtue of language,” to use his own language, which now must mean by virtue of the inscription of this other half of language, this half that is not half (or more or less — always more and less).

Having established the aporia in which the semantic understanding of language finds itself, Hamacher outlines the possibility of an utterly different conception of language and structure from the neutralizing one that the *95 Theses*, at their very heart, work to disrupt. He exposes a conception that in fact begins to make the other half of language explicit but which will only be worked out fully, I would suggest, with his work on philology.

In both cases, language and its inherent epistemological forms are denied the power to be a reality with its own rights and its own structure, a reality that could not be exhausted by any relationship of analogy, of representation, or of typifying other realities.³³

Hamacher’s *95 Theses* take up the possibility of such a language granted the power to be a reality with its own rights and its own structure.³⁴ Still more, the *95 Theses* allow for a thinking — better yet, an experience — of such a language insofar as they concern themselves with the other half

of language, the half that is *not* determined semantically but also is not determined as the “mere” inversion of the semantic.

One of the ways in which language exerts this power is in its persistent interruption of the propositional form of truth statements relating to finite objects, which Aristotle discussed. In fact, this rupture, to use Derrida’s word again, is all the more effective in that these are not just any propositions that are being interrupted but the very propositions that would say what language and philosophy “are” and what they “do.” This is not to say that language asserts itself by way of and as a self-consciousness, for the claims of any such consciousness are also set aside here. Hamacher explicitly states that no such reflexive or dialectical structure is at work: “Since it has no power over language and none over itself, philology cannot be structured as the reflexive self-consciousness of language” (Thesis 28). On the contrary, “the forgetting of language belongs to language” and “the forgetting of philology belongs to philology” (Thesis 29). This “self-forgetting” means that even as language and philology assert themselves as such, they do so as their own forgetting.³⁵

The 95 *Theses* — if they are not simply to be caught in a double bind that negates their own proposition and concern themselves with (rather than trying to be adequate to) the non-ontological other half of language — must therefore forget themselves and come to terms with the status of propositional statements that speak for a nonpropositional language.³⁶ Hamacher’s language, that is, must make statements while always also appealing to another language, even *as* the appeal to this other language. Hamacher does this by frustrating the propositional form of his own apophantic statements, statements that would lend language an epistemic ground. And language interrupts this ground with nothing more, and nothing less, than a mark: —. Thus, the first four theses alternate perfectly between propositional, ontological statements (of truth) and their dislocation by marks that can be overlooked or translated into verbs (as surely they must and will be) only at the cost of a radical reduction of their status *as mark*, of their interference with the other, ontological half of language. Here, the seemingly ontological, the material mark, refuses the steady, uninterrupted movement of ontology. Thus, Thesis 1: “Language is archiphilology.” Thesis 2: “Philology: the perpetual extension of the elements of linguistic existence.” Thesis

3: “Philology is repetition, clarification, and multiplication of impenetrably obscure languages.” Thesis 4: “Philology: transcending without transcendence” (my use of italics and underlining for emphasis, Theses 1–4). While on the one hand Hamacher offers a (partial) definition, exposition, and clarification of philology—not least as that which clarifies—in the simplest terms, a statement of what philology is, he then inserts, on the other hand, a simple mark, punctuation in the most common sense, between the name (of language and philology) and what it might be. Even to say this is in fact already too much, for it determines the colon (in these examples) as something like a mark of equivalence (: = =) that must simply be crossed over to get to the other side, meaning. However, it is equally the case that punctuation punctures, forming a barrier to every such gesture of crossing, every metaphor of language and punctuation as a metaphorical carrying from one side to another. Even if what lies across the barrier somehow qualifies philology, the mark refuses to make that relation one of equivalence that would effectively dissolve the mark and resolve the two sides of the barrier into one another.³⁷

The insistence upon the mark here recalls, no matter how unintentionally, yet another thesis, the first Derrida registered for his doctorate. Under the title “The Ideality of the Literary Object,” Derrida proposed a phenomenology of literature in which he would ask the question of “when and how . . . an inscription becomes literature, and what takes place when it does.”³⁸ This is not to suggest that Hamacher’s philology is straightforwardly phenomenological, although his bracketing of ordinary language bears a certain resemblance to that tradition, especially as it is taken up in deconstruction. Nor is Hamacher concerned solely with the literary object, no matter how crucial literature, poetry first and foremost, is for his theses. Still, Derrida’s formulation of literature as nonmathematical and nonmathematizable is entirely to the point here. We might rewrite Derrida here to say that Hamacher’s recent work asks “when and how . . . an inscription becomes language, and what takes place when it does.” Hamacher’s language exerts its power in marks that cut the language of the copula: “philology itself: chopping copula, chopula [*Kappende Kopula, Kappula*]” (Thesis 39). His language exerts its power to exist with the other half of that central thesis in

which the 95 *Theses* introduce a certain nothingness into their structure that cannot be made to fit into the ontological process of language or its negation, since the blank, the empty space, the “nothing” of Thesis 48 (the second) is by definition the *same* thesis. In other words, Thesis 48 (the second) is always already found in Thesis 48 (the first), where there is a proposition. Hamacher’s language exerts its power as non-mathematical and nonmathematizable, then, not only because there can be no arithmetic of words, but also because the 95 *Theses*, on the contrary, insist precisely upon such a math that at once works (there are 95) and does not (there are at least 96, and 48 follows 48).

Thesis 48 is the other half of language.

Thesis 48: —the space in which language exerts its power to be a reality with its own rights and its own structure.

Despite his insistence upon the nonpropositional form of the other half of language, Hamacher asserts, in the clearest propositional form possible, “Wherever there is no form of proposition, there is no ground of knowledge” (Thesis 15). The propositional form of this statement implies that it contains the ground of a knowledge—the knowledge of where there is no ground of knowledge. This sentence cannot claim to know this groundlessness, of course, only that it “exists.” And while Hamacher offers no single sentence in the 95 *Theses* that states it quite as concisely, both that text and *For Philology* establish just as precisely that where there is no ground of knowledge, there can be no science (*Wissen-schaft*) that would in turn ground itself in that knowledge and in the form of propositions.

Hamacher thus effectively reopens the question of the possibility of a science of literature to whose demands, he claims, “[o]nly Paul de Man has exposed himself.” It is crucial here that it is not simply that de Man has posed the question of such a science but that he has *exposed* himself to it. De Man’s singularity consists not merely, perhaps not even principally, in a cognitive operation that would result in a systematic understanding of literature that could be given the name *science*. Indeed, it is just such an operation that his work exposes and questions. His singularity, rather, consists in having undergone the demands of the question. De Man can be said to have exposed himself to the demands of the question of the possibility of a science of liter-

ature insofar as the claims to knowledge required by that science find no ground in his conception and practice of reading. He can be said to have exposed himself insofar as his exacting approach to literary texts leaves the question suspended. Accordingly, Hamacher writes, "It is not certain that there can be a science of literature."³⁹

This uncertainty can in the first instance be attributed to distinctive features of what would be the object of every such science—the language of literature. For if, as Hamacher insists, the goal of a science of literature, or literary criticism, is the "systematic clarification of all the specifically literary aspects of literature, then one treats this specificity like a riddle that can be solved by the translation of the figures of literature into the generally comprehensible language of science."⁴⁰ The result of such a gesture is the movement from the obscurity and distortion (of and by literature) to the linguistic transparency of science: "Literary language is thus declared to be a systematic distortion of a normal language with literary criticism operating as its orthopedic."⁴¹ The physician or surgeon medicates or cuts out the infected area, sets the broken bone, returning language to a prior healthy state, but can in no way account for this healthy ground. This approach is paradoxical, however, in that it denies the possibility of an understanding of literature *as* literature:

Pursued in this way, literary criticism is essentially a business of rehabilitation, striving to recuperate all deviants—whether historical or formal—within the *ratio* of the present or of a more enlightened future. Its fundamental premises—the epistemological assumption of general rules of comprehensibility, and the corresponding historiographic view that these rules must be promoted—these premises in fact exclude the possibility of the knowledge of literature *as* literature. This kind of literary criticism is not a science of literature, but rather more or less clandestinely, science against literature.⁴²

Already in this early essay, Hamacher establishes the relationship between philology and the science of literature that is neither a science nor really an account of literature, or a science only insofar as it cannot, or refuses to, account for literature. For the "structural and historicizing philology aimed at explication" does not immediately attempt to trans-

late deviations and distortions but “gives its attention not so much to the meaning of a text and the possibility of its general mediation as to the construction of linguistic images and figures in which meaning is supposed to have attained concrete form.”⁴³ This philology is still not philological, then, and has not enacted the “return to philology” that de Man ultimately calls for and that Hamacher is perhaps alone in fulfilling, at least explicitly, as a philological theorization of philology.⁴⁴

What the structural and historicizing—the explicating—philology Hamacher speaks of does, if not recuperate the deviants of literature, is read that deviance:

But if the meaning is visibly given in the works themselves, then for this kind of scholarship nothing remains but to revel in the works in a hedonistic cult of images or to offer itself as the *maître de plaisir* to a weekend public. . . . If seduced by the aesthetic reduction of its objects, literary scholarship ceases to be scholarship and becomes impressionistic literature.⁴⁵

Neither approach, then, neither the normalizing of linguistic deviants nor the reveling in them, could live up to the name of *science*. This does not imply that *science* names something otherwise possible. Rather, the ground of such possibility “would have to lie in the texts of literature themselves,” otherwise the science would not be *of literature* but always of something else—normal language, the non-scientific imperative of a pleasure principle. . . .⁴⁶

[I]n its texts, this ground cannot simply lie as mere passivity, as the abstract possibility of its explicit concretion in knowledge that would offer itself without resistance to the will to knowledge or to aesthetic pleasure. Rather, this ground must be laid in them in such a way that a dimension of critical knowledge of their constitution is proper to these texts themselves *as texts*. Only if literary texts are marked by the articulation of a knowledge of themselves can a science of literature have an objective foundation.⁴⁷

In formulating the possibility of the impossibility of a science of literature, Hamacher follows de Man’s understanding of philology as a very particular reading experience: the experience of reading with-

out, in Hamacher's words, a "predetermined" something to be read or, especially, understood.⁴⁸ As de Man tells the tale, in Reuben Brower's Harvard University undergraduate course "The Interpretation of Literature," students "were not to say anything that was not derived from the texts they were considering. They were not to make any statement that they could not support by a specific use of language that actually occurred in the text."⁴⁹ This imperative demands that the reader forego the move to the "general context of human experience or history," the move that de Man associates with the term *aesthetic ideology*.⁵⁰ This ideology is interrupted, at the very least, by close attention to the text, by *reading* in the strong sense de Man gives the term. Reading disrupts the foreknowledge of an aesthetics in which a seamless transition is made from the literary text to self-knowledge, religion, and politics.⁵¹ Reading thus gives rise not to knowledge but "bafflement" and "non-understanding."⁵² However unexpectedly, these experiences are the province of philology understood as the encounter with language before and beyond the meaning that could be the ground of knowledge.

Attention to the "philological or rhetorical devices of language" (and this phrase is of course one, bringing together the philological and rhetorical *and* separating them with the conjunctive disjunction *or*) or, perhaps better, the "*return* to philology" means "an examination of the structure of language prior to the meaning it produces."⁵³ As such, this return is not a return to something that was there before it, especially if we think of de Man's rhetorical reading as such a "return" to philology conventionally understood. The return, now, posits that to which it returns in the return and thus necessarily undoes its historical priority, its status as an origin to which one can refer and return in order to establish the privilege and precedence of a method. It is rigorously impossible here to know (and this is the source of much bafflement and non-understanding) whether it is the structure of language that comes prior to the meaning it produces—a proposition that would assert something like a history of language in which there could be structure without meaning but no meaning without structure—or whether it is the examination of structure that would precede that of meaning. In the latter case, one could not jump to meaning without

first examining how it is produced, could not move to the aesthetics of a reading that would thereby extend beyond literature and its reading to other domains and disciplines.

According to this formulation, philology (or rhetorical reading) would not only be prior to any determinate meaning and reading; it would come before the assumption that (and how) there is meaning. Philology does not foreclose on meaning and its production but leaves these an open question. It follows not only that it is not certain that there can be a science of literature, but also that it is not certain that there has ever been, or that there could ever be, a philology understood in these terms. It is not certain that philology could ever constitute a science, since it refuses the imposition of knowledge and system that science requires, not least the system of numbers that add up. In both *95 Theses on Philology* and *For Philology*, philology—understood even in the most conventional manner as the mode of scholarship that seeks to establish the texts and determine the historical and linguistic terms that would allow for any reading of texts in the most elementary sense—can never assert itself as science, not least because its structural and historicizing tendencies would in turn fall under the uncertainty of its own objective foundation in language.

What Hamacher's reading of de Man's reading discloses, what his texts on philology disclose, is not simply that it is not certain that there can be a science of literature, but, to turn this ever so slightly, that every such science is radically uncertain. The science of literature is the *uncertainty* that it can ever formulate itself as such because the objective basis it seeks for itself in the texts of literature requires that it come to terms with the impossibility of determining whether the claims of literature can have an objective basis; whether they are to be taken literally or figuratively; whether they mean what they say and say what they mean; whether saying and meaning could ever be translated, philologically or otherwise, into a language that would resolve their difference and thus the question of what it is, in the end, to say and to mean. Indeed, since it is very possible that the texts of literature do not say what they mean and mean what they say, what they might mean, if indeed they mean at all, is irreducible to what they say; because they always say something else, or because it is always something else that

distinguishes them as literary, the objective basis for the science of literature would be uncertain, even uncertainty.

Given this uncertainty, the certainty with which Hamacher can assert that philology is no science is to be read with the utmost care:

The question concerning the philological question and thus concerning the question of philology is . . . not a scientific question, but it can be understood as the question concerning whether philology is a science—and it already contains, understood thus, *as* question, the answer: it is not.⁵⁴

Surely, we have to take Hamacher at his word here, all the more so given his insistence upon the open question of philology throughout *For Philology*. Yet to take him at his word we cannot do so, cannot assume that his language can do what it says it cannot do: say what it means by referring itself to an instance (within or without) that would guarantee that meaning. As Hamacher understands it, only philology can respond to the rigor of the philological questioning, for only philology can articulate and withstand another critical question: “Only philology can pose the question, what a philological question would be because only it can admit and bear finding no binding and conclusive answer to it.”⁵⁵ And yet this question could not belong to the “canon of philology as science,” even if one were to exist, for questioning “means not-or not-yet-knowing, and for questioning concerning questions not only of knowledge but even the methodological approach to it is in doubt.”⁵⁶ It follows, then, that philology is unable to endure its own questionableness only when it restricts its range to a “determinate region of objects,” even that circumscribed by literature, and “defines itself as *Literatur-Wissenschaft*.”⁵⁷ Philology’s objective basis would therefore be in language—and not merely that of literature—and philology could assert, scientifically as knowledge, not that it can make statements and assert knowledge over this language, but that its knowledge is always (of) the uncertain.

Hamacher thus exposes the question of the science of literature neither as answered (neither he nor de Man has done so) nor as null and void. He exposes the question of the science of literature with another question that it cannot bear or endure, to which the science of liter-

ature would always respond with an appeal to knowledge. Hamacher exposes himself to the question of philology, or, more precisely, the philological question, which will never seek or be able to free itself from that of literature. With that question, he opens the question of the science of literature beyond itself to that to which it cannot respond; to a philological question and to the question of philology; to a non-knowledge that escapes the order of responding, at least of any response that would seek to answer and thus close that question. Nowhere do the 95 *Theses* endure this open question more than at their center, where the non-ontological other half of language refuses every gesture of knowledge and instead produces bafflement. There, at the center of the 95 *Theses*, the elementary laws of science are also denied insofar as the two halves do not add up. Here, $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = .$ We cannot know how to perform this function or if, indeed, it can be performed, for the ontological (a half) and the non-ontological (a half that is not) cannot be added up precisely; perhaps better, they precisely cannot be added. And philology, by extension, comes to itself, as *philology*, when it precisely follows this formula, which is to say that it does not add up to a thesis or theses *about* (language, literature) and thus produces no knowledge that could be the ground of a science, no matter how uncertain. Philology's relation to language and knowledge, the language of knowledge and thus science, rather, is structured like Thesis 48, both of it, both the thesis that makes a statement in language and the blank toward which it inclines or declines itself. This language, this center, this blank, is not to be known. Thesis 48 thus repeats the philological question that refuses every scientific gesture that would reduce the question to something that can be known. The question of philology, rather, can only ever be born and endured or not; and where it has not been endured, it remains unposed. As Hamacher writes in Thesis 20, "Where knowledge is missing, affect stirs. Where ontology stalls, philology moves."

However tempting it might be, it would undoubtedly be presumptuous to claim, as Hamacher does of de Man, that a single contemporary theorist has exposed himself to the demands of this nonknowledge, that he has born the question and allowed philology to move. Nevertheless, Hamacher has exposed the question of philology, and he has

endured that question, repeatedly—most of all, perhaps, where it does not appear as such. I close, then, by citing that endurance as best I can, that is to say, by quoting that thesis again: 48.

Notes

1. In the German edition of *95 Thesen zur Philologie*, each thesis starts on a new page at page 1, and Thesis 48 and Thesis 48 fall on facing pages on pages 50 and 51. The symmetries between the numbers of the theses and their (almost) corresponding page numbers would have been even greater had every thesis been able to confine itself to a single page. In that case, Thesis 48 would have fallen on pages 48 and 49.
2. Thesis 95 for example, the culmination of the *95 Theses*, also repeats itself in a sense, as 95 and then 95seq., and other theses are divided into parts a and b.
3. Similarly, Benjamin remarks in his *Trauerspiel* book on the effect of spectral repetition when the 3 or 5 act play is replaced by even numbered plays. I am grateful to Rebecca Comay for bringing this parallel to my attention.
4. Ian Balfour has very astutely noted that the essay, which is easily the best-known piece from Derrida, is also not characteristic of his work. The result of this paradox is that Derrida is associated with a style and a thinking that, while his, also does not represent his work more generally. See Balfour's introduction to the special issue of *The South Atlantic Quarterly* entitled *Late Derrida*, 106, no. 2 (Spring 2007).
5. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 247–65, here 247.
6. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 248.
7. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 248.
8. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 248.
9. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 248.
10. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 248.
11. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 249.
12. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 249.
13. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play," 249. A fuller reading of Derrida's essay would need to further explore this rupture. On the one hand, it would appear that the event Derrida has in mind here is the publication of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* and the rise of structuralism more specifically. The occasion of his essay, first given as a paper at the Johns Hopkins conference on structuralism and the sciences of man, is not the only, but also not the least, indication of this context. But, of course, the analysis of the center and of the "invasion" by language of the problematic of

structure can hardly be said to begin with structuralism. The “event” that Derrida marks here, as a rupture, was always already “there,” has always already taken place, or is always already taking place, even if it can never be said to come to itself in the full presence of an event.

14. This is also why every charge that the 95 *Theses* do not adequately take into account the “outside” of language, however it is thought (most often as history or culture), will ultimately have failed to read their language. For the call for additions that say what language does not, like the infinite extension of language, necessarily invokes that “outside” and the language of reference even as it forces a rethinking of their status.
15. All translations are my own.
16. See Hamacher’s essay on Benjamin’s use and conception of language: “The Word Wolke—If It Is One,” in *Benjamin’s Ground: New Readings of Walter Benjamin*, ed. Rainer Nägele (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 147–76. It should no doubt be noted that this practice is not unique to Hamacher’s *Für—die Philologie* but is repeated by other works in the same series in which Hamacher’s text was published.
17. I am grateful to Ian Balfour for drawing to my attention to the fact that these final pages are blank. He also helpfully pointed out a perhaps even more accidental accident—that Thesis 14 (“Poetry is first philology”) appears verbatim on page 14 of *For Philology*.
18. “One 2 Many Multiculturalisms,” trans. Dana Hollander, in *Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination*, ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 284–325.
19. Daniel Heller-Roazen offers a much more extensive treatment of the conception of language in Hamacher’s earlier work, especially the Aristotelian tradition, in “Language, or No Language.” *Diacritics* 29, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 21–39. See also Hent de Vries, “Ordinary Words,” in *Babel: Für Werner Hamacher*, ed. Aris Fioretos (Frankfurt am Main: Urs Engeler, 2009), 102–10.
20. Werner Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” in *Premises: Essays on Literature and Philosophy from Kant to Celan*, trans. Peter Fenves (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 337–87.
21. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 337.
22. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 337.
23. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 337.
24. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 338.
25. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 339.
26. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 339–40.
27. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 340.
28. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 340–41.
29. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 341.
30. Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 344.

31. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 348.
32. Celan figures centrally in Hamacher's philological works as well. Indeed, the title of *Für—die Philologie* is derived not least from a reading of Celan's "Und Wie die Gewalt." A reading that would begin to do justice either to the poem or to Hamacher's careful and exacting reading of it would require the space of at least an extended essay. I note here, much too quickly, only some aspects that begin to help situate *For Philology* in terms of the *95 Theses*. Like a violence [*Gewalt*] that, in order to take effect, must turn upon and do violence to itself as violence—must de-violence violence [*ent-walten*] in order to be violence—so the word, Hamacher writes, can speak, as word, only if it de-words [*ent-wortet*], only when it finds a counter-word. This word would not be the simple or even Hegelian negation of the word, or of what it says, but would put the word into question *as word*. The word becomes effective, then, it speaks, only when it speaks not of or for itself but *for* something: something other, an other, and thus for the speaking *for tout court*. The de-wording necessary for the word to work [*um / zu wirken*] is fulfilled in the *for*. For the word is never only itself. It becomes effective because *entworten* resonates in the semantic field of two common German verbs, *entwerten* and *antworten*, most commonly, *to devalue* and *to answer*. Thus, the de-wording always invokes a de-valuing [*ent-werten*], though even this devaluing can also function to validate. Celan's poem is from his *Nachlass: Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7, ed. Bertrand Badiou, Jean-Claude Rambach and Barbara Wiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997).
33. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 338.
34. Heller-Roazen writes of a similar tendency: "the study of what exceeds meaning and what, in the movement of this excess, is left of language cannot be a study of the semantic and referential operations of language, whether these operations are understood in terms of signs or figures and the mechanics of their organization; nor can it, by that token, have the form of a consideration of the comprehension of language and the structures by which such a comprehension is, or is not, reached." ("Language, or No Language," 24). Indeed, I would argue that with *95 Theses on Philology* the philosophical and theoretical significance of Hamacher's work is shown to be rigorously philological, at least according to the sense he gives that term, and that his work on philology makes explicit that the elsewhere to which Heller-Roazen refers here is precisely a philology that refuses to fix itself into a place, at least one other than, say, the blank space of a thesis.
35. Given Hamacher's encyclopedic knowledge of the work of Benjamin, one is tempted to see this forgetting as a development of his theory of language. Indeed, in his essay on Robert Walser, Benjamin writes that "each sentence has the sole task of making the previous one forgotten." See Walter Benjamin,

- “Robert Walser,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. 2 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), 324–28, here 324.
36. Any number of the 95 *Theses* will speak to this language. Thus, just for example, Thesis 10a: “In contrast to philosophy, which claims to make statements about that which itself is supposed to have the structure of statements, philology appeals to another language and only towards this other language. It addresses it and refers itself to it.” And Thesis 15: “Wherever there is no form of proposition there is no ground of knowledge.”
 37. Hamacher similarly deploys the dash in relation to what he calls “the rest of language—and so language itself” in *Premises* (330). For a reading of this phrase, see Heller-Roazen, “Language, or No Language,” 24–25.
 38. Jacques Derrida, “Punctuations: The Time of a Thesis,” in *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2*, trans. Jan Plug and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 113–28.
 39. Hamacher, Werner. “LECTIO: Paul de Man’s Imperative,” in *Reading de Man Reading*, ed. Lindsey Waters and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 171–201.
 40. Hamacher, “LECTIO: De Man’s Imperative,” 171.
 41. Hamacher, “LECTIO: De Man’s Imperative,” 171.
 42. Hamacher, “LECTIO: De Man’s Imperative,” 171.
 43. Hamacher, “LECTIO: De Man’s Imperative,” 171, 172.
 44. There can be little question that Hamacher’s 95 *Theses* have de Man somewhere “in mind.” After all, Thesis 61 misquotes the famous sentence from Pascal about reading that de Man takes as the epigraph to *Allegories of Reading*: “‘Quand on lit trop vite ou trop doucement on ne comprend rien.’ Whoever reads too quickly or too slowly indeed comprehends nothing, but for this very reason it may occur to him that comprehending, capturing, and keeping (*prehendere, capere, conception*) are not genuinely linguistic gestures. (I notice that Pascal wrote *on n’entend rien*. Too late. Still.)” The thesis is entirely remarkable for its inclusion of a misreading that is not one and that comes, no doubt, when Hamacher does not obey the imperative to read and to read at precisely the right speed. He has always read too fast or too slowly and thus has not heard precisely that Pascal did not write *comprend* but *entend*. That the verbs can mean precisely the same thing (*to understand*) is of course both beside and to the point: Hamacher has not heard (*entendre*) the difference between them and so both misunderstands and, in so doing, understands perfectly.
 45. Hamacher, “LECTIO,” 172.
 46. Hamacher, “LECTIO,” 172.
 47. Hamacher, “LECTIO,” 172.
 48. Paul de Man, “The Return to Philology,” in *The Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 21–26. Hamacher never refers

to the de Man text in his essay on de Man, though his description of de Man's reading imperative does conform to it with some precision.

49. De Man, "The Return to Philology," 23.
50. De Man, "The Return to Philology." See Ian Balfour's excellent article, "The Philosophy of Philology and the Crisis of Reading," in *Philology and Its Histories*, ed. Sean Gurd (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), 192–212.
51. De Man, "The Return to Philology," 25.
52. De Man, "The Return to Philology," 23.
53. De Man, "The Return to Philology," 24.
54. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 27.
55. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 30.
56. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 27–28.
57. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 30–31.

4

Catch a Wave

Sound, Poetry, Philology

SEAN GURD

I am sitting in a room different from the one you are in now. I am recording the sound of my speaking voice and I am going to play it back into the room again and again until the resonant frequencies of the room reinforce themselves so that any semblance of my speech, with perhaps the exception of rhythm, is destroyed. What you will hear, then, are the natural resonant frequencies of the room articulated by speech. I regard this activity not so much as a demonstration of a physical fact, but more as a way to smooth out any irregularities my speech might have.

—ALVIN LUCIER, *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1976)

He did what he said. Over the course of about twenty iterations, these words became increasingly less audible, until by the end the microphone captured only eerie pitches overlapping with a resonant beauty: the “sound of the room, articulated by speech,” rather than the sound of speech, articulated in a room, with which the piece began.

I Am Sitting in a Room is a standard reference point for historians and critics of electro-acoustic music. But it is also an important statement about language and about the relationships between language, sound, and art. Using rudimentary technical means, Lucier’s performance drew attention to the unheard vibrations constituting language. When I speak, my vocal tract produces a complex wave of vibrations with a base frequency corresponding to the (variable) pitch of my voice, together with a series of overtone frequencies. My vocal chords produce the base

or “fundamental” frequency, while my throat, nose, tongue, teeth, and lips modulate the overtone frequencies or “formants.” The hearer cognizes specific overtones and their development over time as phonemes and words. The verb “cognize” is important. Speech is not an acoustic phenomenon—the acoustic phenomenon is vibration—but a cognitive achievement, a remarkable act of mind.

I Am Sitting . . . set up a non-human apparatus designed to amplify and then capture the vibratory frequencies that we cognize as language. The dimensions and materials of all enclosed spaces give the air within them a propensity to vibrate at certain frequencies: if one of those frequencies is played within a room, the air will vibrate in sympathy. When Lucier played the recording of his voice in the room, the room resonated with those frequencies in his voice to which it was “tuned.” When Lucier recorded the playback, he captured its sound with the amplitudes of certain frequencies enhanced by the room. By repeatedly playing the recording into the room, recording the playback, and then playing the recording back into the room, he amplified certain frequencies of speech at the expense of others, so that by the end of the process intelligible speech had disappeared. Crucially, the frequencies at which the room vibrated were the overtones or formants modulated by Lucier’s mouth in the process of enunciating words. In an important sense, then, *I Am Sitting . . .* made audible as sound what is normally experienced as speech.

I Am Sitting . . . was not, however, intended to demonstrate a physical fact. Though listeners normally encounter the piece in one of two recordings made by Lucier, it is in fact a performable score for voice, recording apparatus, and room. The length of the process and the sound of the result will never be the same: they depend on the voice of the performer, his or her accent, the volume of the playback, the dimensions and materials of the room, and the humidity and temperature of the air within it. This piece exists in the realm of aesthetic singularity, not scientific experimentation.

And yet Lucier claimed that *I Am Sitting . . .* was meant to eliminate irregularities in his own speech, the most obvious of which is Lucier’s stutter. On first reflection, the piece seems to succeed, for traces of Lucier’s stutter are very difficult to detect in the final iterations. On second

reflections, however, his stutter — like his accent and his sense of timing — is singular, inhering in his speech patterns alone, much as each room has its own specific resonant frequencies. *I Am Sitting . . .* thus does not eliminate the peculiarities of Lucier’s speech; it re-articulates them on another plane, in another mode, and with another rhythm. Indeed, “beneath” the linguistic utterance of Lucier’s text there is a further series of singularities: as I speak, my vocal chords vibrate and shift in length and tension, and my jaw, tongue, teeth, and lips are in continuous motion, each movement altering the sound of my voice. I move my vocal tract to articulate phonemes and words, but stable sounds are not what I make. The sound made by my voice is always changing. Consonants and vowels overlap and interact, altering the way they are formed. No linguistically significant sound, though it may seem to be the same sound each time we hear it, has the same acoustic profile. Against the generality of language, then, *I Am Sitting . . .* constructs a chain of oppositions, linking the vibratory pre-linguistic, the specifics of individual speech, and the ever-repeatable and yet always new performativity of works of art.

Here is another example of the same thing, from the archaic Greek poet Sappho:

δευρυ μ’ ἐκ Κρήτας ἐπ[ὶ τόνδ]ε ναῦον
 ἄγνον ὄππ[α τοι] χάριεν μὲν ἄλσος
 μαλί[αν], βῶμοι δὲ τεθυμιάμε-
 νοι [λι]βανώτωι·

ἐν δ’ ὕδωρ ψῦχρον κελάδει δι’ ὕσδων
 μαλίνων, βρόδοισι δὲ παῖς ὁ χῶρος
 ἐσκίαστ’, αἰθυσομένων δὲ φύλλων
 κῶμα κατέρρει·

ἐν δὲ λείμων ἰππόβοτος τέθαλεν
 ἠρίνοισιν ἄνθεσιν, αἰ δ’ ἄηται
 μέλιχα πνέοισιν [
 []

ἔνθα δὴ σὺ στέμ<ματ’> ἔλοισα Κύπρι
 χρυσίαισιν ἐν κυλίκεσσιν ἄβρωσ

ὄμμεμείχμενον θαλίασι νέκταρ
οἶνοχόαισον.

[. . . here to me from Crete to this holy temple, where is your lovely grove of apples, and altars smoking with incense; cool water murmurs through the apple branches, and the whole place is shaded with roses, and sleep flows down from the flashing leaves; and there is a meadow there, which nourishes horses and blooms with spring flowers; and sweet leaves breathe . . . there, Aphrodite, take your garland, and pour nectar, mixed with joyful gatherings, gracefully into golden cups].¹

Like Lucier, Sappho builds a sonic presence comparable to the unheard auditory beyond linguistic articulation. She does it by using the phonetic elements of Greek, usefully annotated in alphabetic writing. But the language's sounds are orchestrated into patterns that evoke the complex pre-cognitive—that is, pre-linguistic—acoustic wave. Language-immanent structures such as phonology, prosody, or meter are less important to this process than the poem's non-periodic soundscape. Take, for example, the following lines:

ἔνθα δὴ σὺ . . . ἔλοισα Κύπρι
χρυσιαίσιν ἐν κυλίκεσσιν ἄβρωσ
ὄμ<με>μειχμενον θαλίασι νέκταρ
οἶνοχόαισιν.

[And there you, Cypris, taking . . . in golden cups pour nectar mixed with festivities].²

The stanza is given integrity by the persistent expression of σ (three times in line 13, four times in 14, once in 15, once in 16), combined with a pattern of glottal plosives (κ and χ; Κύπρι / χρυσιαίσιν ἐν κυλίκεσσιν . . . / ὄμ<με>μειχμενον . . . νέκταρ / οἶνοχόαισιν); the -νθ- of ἔνθα is repeated across the word juncture-ον θαλι-in line 15. Lines 13–14 pulse with υ-sounds. These patterns are irregular, and because of this they are the framework for an audible presence without which the poem could not, fairly, be considered a concrete singularity: like sound itself, the poem unfolds in an inexorably temporal way. Here again, we can see

the poem figuring the acoustics of speech. From the variations of amplitude in a complex and non-periodic wave, the auditory system postulates multiple periodic vibrations, then samples and interprets some of these for processing as speech. Poetry takes these periodic vibrations and deploys them as plastic material, producing higher orders of non-periodicity. In doing so, poems recall their acoustic origin in the noise beneath language, the grain of the voice.

The elaborate re-performance of sound that the poem undertakes is most intense in the description of murmuring water.³ This passage overflows with complex auditory arabesques and polyrhythms. The sequence ε-υ-ω appears at the beginning of line 5 with “ἐν δ’ ὕδωρ,” then repeats in “κελάδει δι’ ὕδων” — though it is interrupted by “-άδει δι-,” a near-rhyme that also continues the chain of δ-sounds through the line. Here the subject of the poem and its ability to figure the acoustic substrate of speech come into closest contact. Like the cool, green grove it describes, Sappho’s hymn to Aphrodite is a moment of verbal calm wrested from the noisome wilderness of everyday speech. The contrast in this poem is not between a garden and oppressive urban life but between a garden and the oppressive natural landscape. Though most of its delights are organic, the grove is intensely cultivated: culture makes this space. But the enclosure is not complete, nor can it be; Sappho’s sonorous brook is the one element that is not fully the product of artful cultivation. In fact, the brook came first; its location determined that of the grove. Water can be guided but not formed: you can shape a stream, line its banks, even change its bed — but you can’t make the water go uphill or make a dry bed flow. Though water is an integral part of the garden, it also exceeds it by entering from outside and continuing beyond. The brook’s sound is a symbol of its wild primacy and it echoes with the sound of the poem, summoning the audible as a love song summons the force of desire.

Aphrodite — a laughter-loving goddess, born of the foam from the Titan Cronos’s severed genitalia — serves as a governing power of procreation. She is also a queen of madness, of a desire that loosens the limbs, steals the lungs, drives us from the shelter of acceptable behavior, and robs us of our shame. When Sappho summons her, she summons a force that at once gives and disrupts form, one defined both by

sensual delight and a terror that energizes these delights from within. Sound participates in this uncanny poetics. Indeed, it is through such a poetics that we can hear the poem at all.

The works of Lucier and Sappho are about the relationship between sound and language. It is not, however, about the relationship that has been sketched in the tradition of language-based thinking about poetry represented by Roman Jakobson. For Jakobson poetic language use drew attention to the materiality of communication by “projecting the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination.”⁴ In a line of quantitative verse, for example, all long syllables are treated as metrically identical and the rhythm of the line emerges because this assumption allows a pattern to become audible. Jakobson extended his analysis beyond structuring features like meter, identifying in paronomasia and auditory parallelisms (“sound effects”) further examples of the projection of equivalence onto the axis of combination.⁵ As a result, poetic language foregrounds or emphasizes sound as a constitutive element: “the relevance of the sound-meaning nexus is a simple corollary of the superposition of similarity on contiguity.”⁶ But for Jakobson the ultimate value of the poetic function is that it draws attention to language as such—or at least to language as the object of linguistic science. I would counter that Sappho and Lucier draw attention not to language but to the complex vibratory temporalities “beneath” or beyond it. A poem is not language. If it retains linguistic elements, it does so because they are inherent in its medium, not because it takes its identity or its essence from them. Indeed, it is more accurate to say that poetry uses language in ways that fundamentally subvert linguistic self-evidence. Whatever there was of language in their preliminary material, little or nothing remains by the time Lucier and Sappho are done. Exploiting the acoustic properties of language, or miming them in a poem, is not a theory of language, not even a *gestus* meant to make us aware of it.

Could there be philology here? We know what philology is not: it is not linguistics, not classics, not paleography or codicology or textual criticism; not close reading, not bibliography, not the history of scholarship. Why should it be acoustics or poetic sound either? Yet, precisely

because of this long list of exclusions, I sense the presence of something philological in the interstices of *I Am Sitting . . .* and Sappho's poetry. Let's call philology the ungrounded, anxious improvisation of a voice that has lost its footing in language; in Lucier and Sappho, something is finding a new way forward on a rising wave of sound. Reflecting on Jakobson's definition of the poetic function, Hamacher suggests in Thesis 54 that Jakobson's image of two linguistic "axes" implies a point at which they intersect:

When Jakobson opposes the "poetic function" as substitution on the axis of equivalences to another — one could say "prosaic" — function that is realized through combination on the axis of continuities, then the geometry of their relations implies that both axes cross in a zero point at which they follow both a logic of substitution and of contiguity, of poetic as well as of prosaic functions — and also of neither of the two. [. . .] Zero rhetoric would be that which marks the empty place — and, more precisely, the opening for a place — which is necessary in order to safeguard the possibility of a language at all. Only the philology of the zero would be the *origo* of philology.

This zero point where selection and combination coincide and yet do not happen is no longer language but an all-too-tangible materiality. It is from this self-positing space that the "projection" of the principle of equivalence from one axis to the other happens: a throwing forward, a gambit, an improvisation or, to use a figure of which Hamacher is especially fond, a promise.⁷ If it is true that "philology is the event of the freeing of language from language," the work of Lucier and Sappho are the consequences of just such a jailbreak: and, as in all fugues, whatever logic their languages embody is overwhelmed by an unfolding melody (Thesis 46).

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν' ὤνηρ, ὅττις ἐναντιός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδου φωνεί-
σας ὑπακούει

καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν,

ὡς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε' ὡς με φώναι-
σ' οὐδ' ἔν ἔτ' εἵκει,

ἀλλ' ἄκαν μὲν γλώσσα †ἔαγε λέπτον
δ' αὐτικά χρωῖ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,
ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἔν ὄρημμ', ἐπιρρόμ-
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,

†έκαδε μ' ἴδρωσ ψῦχος κακχέεται† τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὐται.

ἀλλὰ πὰν τόλματον ἐπεὶ †καὶ πένητα†

[He seems to me to be like the gods, that man who sits opposite you and hears you speaking sweetly and laughing lovely—which makes the heart in my chest palpitate. For when I look at you I tremble so that I have no voice left but my tongue goes mute and slender fire runs beneath my skin and there is no more sight in my eyes and my ears rumble and cold sweat pours over me and my whole body trembles and I am greener than grass and I seem just a little short of dead. But all must be dared, since even poverty . . .]⁸

This is Sappho again, in a poem that stages an irreversible destruction of language, and the consequential emergence of the poem as sonorous artifact. Charles Segal charted the sounds in the last two stanzas:

A strong alliteration of *k* and *g* in line 9 seems fairly probable [. . .]. It is strengthened by the *k* alliteration of αὐτικά χρωῖ (at once beneath my skin) in the next line. The *d* sound at the beginning of that line (10, δ') continues in the impressive drumming *d*'s of ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν (has run beneath), which follows up the chiasmic *pu / up* pattern in πῦρ ὑπεδεδρόμηκεν (fire has fun beneath). A similar, but more complex pattern recurs in the next line (11) in the *or-m-/rom*-sequence of ὄρημμ' ἐπιρρομ – (I see . . . are humming). The drumming *d* beat of line 10 is taken up again in line 13, reading Page's emendation: καδ' δέ μ' ἴδρωσ ψῦχος ἔχει (a cold sweat covers me). Here, as also

in line 10, the alliteration of *k* sounds accompanies the *d*'s. Vowel patterns also reinforce the repetitive effect, especially the strongly marked sequence of open *o*-sounds in line 11 and the *a* sounds of line 14: παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωρότερα δὲ ποίας (a trembling seizes me, and I am paler than grass).⁹

Segal interprets these sounds as the embodiment of an “incantatory” poetics whose aim “is to lift the daimonic power of eros out of the realm of the formless and the terrible, bring it into the light of form, make it visible to the individual poem and, by extension, to his or her society.”¹⁰ Segal seems to mean that the song and its sound-patterns represent a kind of control or formalization of the effects of eros. I hesitate here. Without doubt, this poem descends into eros as the negation of form. But I’m not sure it comes all the way back. Instead, the encounter seems to result in the crippling of language from within and from without. The sounds Segal identifies are the poetic equivalent of the humming that overwhelms the speakers’ ears: the poem’s sonorousness is the material correlate of its theme.

The first word, φαίνεται, is echoed in the fragment’s final complete line with a change of subject (φαίνομαι). This carefully plotted verbal repetition invites us to consider more explicitly the contrast between “him,” as he is described in line one, and “me,” especially as described in the last complete line. The contrast is immediate and clear: “I” am “almost dead”; “he” seems “equal to the gods.” It is a contrast, in other words, between quasi-immortality and extreme mortality. The movement of the poem is from the observation of a scene so happy as to seem immortal to a self-observation on the part of a nearly dead, utterly devastated sufferer of erotic desire, via a series of physiological responses so devastating that the speaker loses her ability to communicate with, and eventually even to sense, the outside world. She literally becomes material, a passionate vibration.

Her experience is the result of an external stimulus, described in verses 2–5, where “he” sits opposite “you,” listening to “you” “speaking sweetly” and “laughing in a lovely way.” Her first reaction is a loss of voice. This matches exactly the voiceful beloved in the first stanza. Indeed, both occur in the same metrical position of the stanza, though

they describe exactly opposite experiences. The end of the first stanza runs its five syllables through two words without elision or hiatus and manages an extreme vocal economy, repeating the syllable-sequence α -v twice before concluding with ϵ i. This smooth, carefully patterned termination fits well with the calm, almost ambrosial, situation of the first stanza. The end of the second stanza begins with the same word in the same metrical position, then moves in a different direction: its five syllables run through five words and a total of three elisions—only two words ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ and $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\kappa\epsilon$ i) are complete. The result is a fracturing of speech at exactly the point where the poem begins to describe the same process. This enacts the breaking up of the tongue described in the next stanza's first line. We can reconstruct what happens in the relationship between sound and sense here. The elisions remove the terminal syllable from three out of five words. A reader or hearer who wants to reconstruct sense needs to supplement what she reads or hears. This is not difficult: elision rules are limited, and a competent reader can come up with the right terminal syllables pretty easily. But there remains a radical disjunction between the sense of the line and its sound. More sound than meaningful utterance, the line offers only a fragment of sense.

The speaker's linguistic crisis is symptomatic of an ongoing process of chaotic inwardness. The third stanza details the effects of the speaker's discombobulation on two other senses—fire under her skin (touch) and darkness in her eyes—then turns to her hearing, which is overcome by humming. This experience mirrors the “gentle fire” that runs beneath her skin; both describe subtle interferences in the body's customary interface with the world. The humming of the speaker's ears impedes their usual function of sensing the outside world and increases the volume of the inside world. Just as her broken tongue prevents her from communicating, her humming ears tune her to an internal environment experiencing sudden and catastrophic collapse. The climactic position of auditory pathology at the final line of the third stanza draws attention to the fact that this inward humming is an intensification or amplification of the sound of “you” that laughs in the first stanza.

The final stanza shifts its focus from the speaker's imploding sensorium to an inwardly felt somatic pathology: she sweats, shakes, and

changes color, then seems to herself to be practically dead. This “I seem to myself” closes the circle that started at the beginning of the poem with “he seems to me . . .” Despite the extreme contrast between his quasi-immortality and her near-death, the speaker also resembles him: for now she, too, only *seems*, even to herself. She began as a third-person observer of other people’s experiences and she ends as a third person to herself.

In *Parables of the Virtual*, Brian Massumi locates affect in a stratum of somatic response that exists prior to the separation of sensation into its different modalities. Affect, he argues, is fundamentally synesthetic.¹¹ Sappho’s poem seems affective in just this sense. Her “affective sensorium . . . becomes a rhythmic transducer composed of not just the five exteroceptive channels that open onto the external environment, but also the viscerality of interoception, which is sensitive to intensity minus quality and in a sense preempts exteroception in that it makes decisions before the consciousness of extensive sensory objects fully emerges”—to hijack a sentence written by Steve Goodman to describe not-so-different contemporary realities.¹² At such moments there is a broad deterritorializing of the sensorium. But these moments remain virtual, detectable only as stories vaguely remembered or in symptomatic textual details. After the extreme affect, there must be a moment of capture or crystallization. Thus, the passionate becoming-other of the speaker has a consequence: the poem itself, which is an affect of language.¹³

When poems simultaneously enact and describe auditory phenomena, they are comparable to the rhetorical device of onomatopoeia. But we should not speak of the relationship between sound and sense as mimetic. Nor should we say that it represents a moment of unity, a “nexus” between sound and sense, or that the auditory presence that emerges is a self-presence of the type crucial for Western metaphysics (and critiqued by Jacques Derrida as phonocentric). Rather, in both describing and working with sound, a poem can reduce the space between signifier and signified to an interval optimal for allowing the mutual interferences of language and art, sound and order, to produce dissonant overtones all their own. Derek Attridge observes that onomatopoeia and other “sound effects” rely on the simultaneity of a

semantic description and an enhancement of linguistic sound, “the momentary and surprising *reciprocal* relationship established between phonetic and semantic properties, a mutual reinforcement which intensifies *both* aspects of language.”¹⁴ Attridge concludes that such moments of intensified auditory awareness can only be catastrophic for “normal” linguistic cognition, which presumes unmediated contact between language and reality:

If onomatopoeia is to be judged in terms of the accuracy with which it enables the sound of language to reproduce the sounds and other physical characteristics of the non-linguistic world, then the more successful it is [. . .] the more it is bound to come into conflict with the necessarily abstract nature of the language system, foregrounding the physical properties of speech (and writing), and drawing attention to itself as a rhetorical device, instead of melting away in a presentation of unmediated reality. The more it succeeds, that is, the more it fails.¹⁵

“Onomatopoeic” passages in poetry are, thus, critically important because it is there that a poem strains beyond language. Not surprisingly, they often occur at climactic moments. In the twenty-first book of the *Iliad*, for example, sound explodes with elemental force at a crucial moment in the narrative development. Up until this point, sound has appeared primarily in descriptions of nature, and almost exclusively in similes describing martial realities—the sound of clashing armies, for example, is compared to mountain rivers colliding with a roar.¹⁶ In *Iliad* 21, however, this changes. Achilles, whose rage has been building for several books (and has been accompanied by a gradual increase in sound, beginning in book 18),¹⁷ descends into the river Scamander, slaying soldiers as he proceeds:

έν δ' ἔπεσον μεγάλῳ πατάγῳ, βράχε δ' αἰπὰ ρέεθρα,
 ὄχθαι δ' ἀμφὶ περὶ μεγάλ' ἴαχον· οἱ δ' ἀλαλητῷ
 ἔννεον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ἐλίσσόμενοι περὶ δίνας.
 ὡς δ' ὄθ' ὑπὸ ρίπῆς πυρὸς ἀκρίδες ἠερέθονται
 φευγέμεναι ποταμὸν δέ· τὸ δὲ φλέγει ἀκάματον πῦρ
 ὄρμενον ἐξαίφνης, ταὶ δὲ πτώσσουσι καθ' ὕδωρ·

ὦς ὑπ' Ἀχιλλῆος Ξάνθου βαθυδινήεντος
 πλῆτο ῥόος κελάδων ἐπιμῖξ ἵππων τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
 Αὐτὰρ ὁ διογενῆς δόρυ μὲν λίπεν αὐτοῦ ἐπ' ὄχθη
 κεκλιμένον μυρίκησιν, ὃ δ' ἔσθορε δαίμονι ἴσος
 φάσγανον οἶον ἔχων, κακὰ δὲ φρεσὶ μήδετο ἔργα,
 τύπτε δ' ἐπιστροφάδην· τῶν δὲ στόνος ὄρνυτ' ἀεικῆς
 ἄορι θεινομένων, ἐρυθθαίνετο δ' αἵματι ὕδωρ.

[And they fell into the river with a great noise, and the steep stream resounded and the banks around shouted greatly. But they swam here and there shouting, whirled about in the eddies. As with the onslaught of fire locusts hang in the air, fleeing towards a river—but the tireless fire burns them, surging without warning and they shrink into the water, so was the stream of deep-eddying Xanthus (Scamander) filled with the confused noises of horses and men under Achilles's advance. But the god-sprung one left his spear leaning on a tamarisk bush there by the bank and leapt down like a *daimon* holding only his sword. He intended terrible things, and he turned to all sides to strike out. A hideous groaning arose from them as they were struck by his sword and the water rushed red with blood].¹⁸

Auditory descriptions coincide with the ostentatious use of sound effects in the homoioteleuton of sound words in 9–10 (μεγάλω πατάγω, ἀλαλητῶ); the thundering and shouting of the river banks is emphasized with alliteration on χ (βράχε . . . ὄχθαι . . . ἴαχον); heavy assonance on α links all the sonic descriptions in these lines (μεγάλω πατάγω, βράχε δ' αἰπὰ ῥέεθρα, / ὄχθαι δ' ἀμφὶ περὶ μεγάλ' ἴαχον· οἱ δ' ἀλαλητῶ, 9–10). In line 11, a remarkable rhyme on ἐν, coupled with the vivid phrase ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα, gives sonic emphasis to the terror and confusion of Achilles's victims. At the end of the passage, the groans of the dying rise with assonance on ο and ω (τῶν δὲ στόνος ὄρνυτ' ἀεικῆς / ἄορι θεινομένων, ἐρυθθαίνετο δ' αἵματι ὕδωρ), accompanied, as though in the relative minor key, by the repetition of υ (ὄρνυτ', ἐρυθθαίνετο, ὕδωρ). The sounds in the first three lines modulate from the non-organic noise of crashing in the opening words (πάταγος and βράχε) to vocal cries at the end (ἴαχον and ἀλαλητός). This shifting towards the human, even as it mingles with the natural, also suggests that what is at stake

in Achilles's struggle with the elements is an attempt to portray a rage so powerful that the "mundane" clashes of armies and warriors must morph into a struggle with natural forces.

Enraged at Achilles's violence (and at a few stunningly arrogant words),¹⁹ the river rises against him:

Πηλείδης δ' ἀπόρουσεν ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ δουρὸς ἐρωή,
αἰετοῦ οἴματ' ἔχων μέλανος τοῦ θηρητῆρος,
ὅς θ' ἅμα κάρτιστός τε καὶ ὠκιστος πετεηνῶν·
τῷ ἐϊκῶς ἦϊξεν, ἐπὶ στήθεσσι δὲ χαλκὸς
σμερδαλέον κονάβιζεν: ὕπαιθα δὲ τοῖο λιασθεῖς
φευγ', ὃ δ' ὀπισθε ῥέων ἔπετο μεγάλῳ ὀρυμαγδῷ.
ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ ὀχετηγὸς ἀπὸ κρήνης μελανύδρου
ἄμ φυτὰ καὶ κήπους ὕδατι ῥόον ἡγεμονεύη
χερσὶ μάκελλαν ἔχων, ἀμάρης ἐξ ἔχματα βάλλων·
τοῦ μὲν τε προρέοντος ὑπὸ ψηφίδες ἅπασαι
ὄχληθνται· τὸ δὲ τ' ὠκα κατειβόμενον κελαρύζει
χώρῳ ἔνι προαλεῖ, φθάνει δέ τε καὶ τὸν ἄγοντα·
ὡς αἰεὶ Ἀχιλῆα κιχήσατο κῦμα ῥόοιο
καὶ λαιψηρὸν ἔόντα· θεοὶ δέ τε φέρτεροι ἀνδρῶν.

[The son of Peleus leapt back the length of a spear's throw, his body swooping like a black eagle, a hunter, the strongest and fastest of winged creatures. He darted like an eagle, and the bronze on his chest rang out terribly. He fled, withdrawing from under (the river), and the river flowed after him with a huge din. As a man leads a stream of water away from a black spring between his plants and pots, holding a hoe in his hand, removing the blockages from the channel, and as it flows forward all the pebbles are swept away and it murmurs as it runs quickly along downhill, overtaking even the one who leads it on; so did the rave of the river perpetually catch up with Achilles, even though he was fast. Gods are more powerful than men].²⁰

In this passage, the sounds of nature overflow the banks which, up to this point in the epic, have kept them safely contained within the rhetoric of the simile.²¹ In the struggle between Achilles and the river, the cosmic upheaval of natural forces embodies the violence of its central

hero. And from the coalescence of sound and song arises a disruptive interference between the singer's voice and the represented story world. This passage, by amplifying what language brackets off, intensifies and transfigures poetic technique, taking it into uncanny realms that destabilize concepts of order and civilization.

This is made clear in a curious and surprising simile: Scamander is like an irrigation trench in which the water gently murmurs (κελαρύζει) as it runs down the slope. Ancient commentators noted the disjunction between the violent narrative and the bucolic simile that accompanies it.²² As the major river in the vicinity of Troy, it must have played a central role in the life of the city at peace. But the rising of the Scamander is a moment of extreme and climactic violence. The dissonant simile forges a link between the river and the hero who fights it. Like the river, which rises up with supernatural violence yet is compared to a gentle irrigation trench, Achilles is both the highest expression of the warrior ideal and its terrifying excess; he defines, exemplifies, and proves its impossibility.

At that eddying point of conflict, where the post-linguistic resonances of art emerge from the vibrations of language, is philology.

Notes

1. Sappho fr. 2 lp, in *Greek Lyric Poetry*, ed. D. Campbell. (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1991). All translations from the Greek are my own. Portions of this essay appear in Sean Gurd, *Dissonance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), and, reworked, in my contribution to *Sound and the Ancient Senses*, ed. Shane Butler and Sarah Nooter (London: Routledge, 2018).
2. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, 13–16.
3. Campbell, *Greek Lyric Poetry*, 5–6.
4. Roman Jakobson, “Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), 350–77, here 358.
5. Jakobson, “Closing Statement,” 371–72.
6. Jakobson, “Closing Statement,” 372.
7. See Werner Hamacher, *Premises*, trans. Peter Fenves (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Daniel Heller-Roazen, “Language, or No Language.” *Diacritics* 29 (1999): 22–39.
8. Sappho fr. 31 D-P. On this frequently discussed poem, see Charles Segal, *Aglaia: the Poetry of Alcman, Sappho, Pindar, Bacchylides, and Corinna* (Lan-

- ham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 43–62; Giuliana Lanata, “Sappho’s Amatory Language,” in *Reading Sappho: Contemporary Approaches*, ed. Ellen Greene (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 11–25, here 22–25; John Winkler, “Gardens of Nymphs: Public and Private in Sappho’s Lyrics,” in *Reading Sappho: Contemporary Approaches*, 89–112, here 98–101. I was taught to read in the fashion represented in this essay by Anne Carson, both in person at McGill in the early 1990s and from *Eros the Bittersweet: An Essay* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 10–17.
9. Segal, *Aglaiā*, 50.
 10. Segal, *Aglaiā*, 54.
 11. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 14.
 12. Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 48.
 13. See Hamacher’s Theses 20–23, an interaction with Schlegel’s definition of philology as “logical affect,” which Hamacher glosses as “affect for language, but also affect of language, thus affect of language for language” (Thesis 23). Here, as in his discussions of language as promise (of language to language; see above), Hamacher tries to capture the futurity of language as a tentential moment. Such a moment is, inevitably, a kind of slippage or tension—it is certainly not a ground or a launching-point from which a language-to-come could emerge. It is the moment of language in which language is not (yet), in which it is both necessary and impossible; here, at this moment of linguistic self-positing and self-cancelation, is where philology happens. The axis of my argument intersects with Hamacher’s here, but I would emphasize sound as a material articulation of what was before language and could be again only through the agency of technique. For Hamacher, philology works at the hollow core of language, if it can be put that way, whereas I follow its drift towards an intransigent periphery.
 14. Derek Attridge, “Language as Imitation: Jakobson, Joyce, and the Art of Onomatopoeia.” *MLN* 99 (1984): 1116–40, here 1131.
 15. Attridge, “Language as Imitation,” 1135.
 16. See *Il.* 4.455 for the simile of spring rivers crashing together in a gorge, used to describe the Achaean and Trojan hosts coming together. In Aeschylus’s *Seven against Thebes*, the Argive army outside the gates roars like a wave (115); later, the image recurs as waves of misfortune around the city’s stern (720). The sound of horses becomes the din of a river at *Seven* 86.
 17. The rising of the Scamander is the culmination in a sequence of auditory similes that begins several books earlier. When Achilles stands on the ramparts of the Achaean fort to show himself to the Trojans in book 18, he shines like fire and shouts. Athena’s own, terrifying voice is mingled with Achilles,’ and the latter’s cry strikes immediate terror into the hearts

of those who hear it (*Il* 18.217–219). The panic it causes costs twelve lives, as men die amid the confusion of their horses (18.230–31). In book 19, the gods enter the battle with a shouting match that quickly escalates to the shaking and rumbling of earth and heaven. First, Athena appears on the side of the Achaeans and shouts (beside the roaring sea; 20.48–50); then Ares, on the side of the Trojans, shouts back from the top of the citadel in a high pitch (20.51–53). Now, Zeus thunders (20.56) and Poseidon shakes the earth with such a great noise that it causes Hades to cry out (20.57–66).

18. *Il.* 21.9–21.

19. *Il.* 21.184–99.

20. *Il.* 21.251–64.

21. See *Il.* 2.208–10, 2.394–97, 2.459–68, 3.3–5, 4.535, 10.185, 12.144–53, 13.140, 14.392–401, 16.633–34, 17.86–89, 17.735–39, 17.756, 20.404, 21.575, 22.141.

22. *Il.* 21.261. See Geoffrey S. Kirk, et al., *The Iliad: a Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), *ad loc.* for ancient commentators who noted the contrast between the simile and what it describes.

Part 2

Times

5

Einmal ist Keinmal

On the 76th of Werner Hamacher's 95 Theses for Philology

ANN SMOCK

Sometime around 1932 Walter Benjamin wrote a page about a kind of success that is regrettable.¹ He contrasted this misfortune with another kind of success that is good. There is a certain wisdom, he said, that puts down roots in the good kind of success—in fruitful operations, that is—and this wisdom is expressed in an adage: “*Einmal ist keinmal*” (once is as good as never, in Rodney Livingstone’s translation). Another maxim corresponds to the regrettable kind of success: “*Ein für allemal*” (once and for all).

Apparently, it is hard to recognize a happy success; however, Trotsky did, Benjamin observes, when he wrote a description of his father at work in the fields cutting grain. Not everyone would care to know about what Trotsky uncovered in the description that he wrote; not everyone, Benjamin says, would care about the “innermost nature” of cutting grain. For my part, I suppose that plenty of people would be interested in the skill of the experienced reaper (his firm steps and sure strokes); or maybe in his scythe (its blade thin and sharp enough to slice the grain, not knock it down); or in his rate of progress through the field and the heaps of fallen grain accumulating behind him. But Trotsky didn’t dwell on any of that. He went back into the “innermost nature,” Benjamin writes—“the innermost nature of the practices and arrangements” that harbor the wisdom expressed in the saying “*Einmal ist keinmal*.”²

He described reaping without any regard for its aim or purpose, grace, efficiency, or outcome. Of his father's scythe he wrote that it went along without any trouble or any remarkable ease: it "cuts sharply and close to the ground and throws off to the left in regular ribbons what it has cut down," but the reaper himself doesn't appear very sure of it. To watch him at his task, Trotsky said, you wouldn't really think he was working at all. You'd sooner think he was practicing. His steps were "practice steps, as if he were looking for the spot where he could really make a start." Experienced as he was, he never seemed to get anywhere but was forever beginning over. "Here," Benjamin comments, "we have the work habits of the experienced man who has learned every day and with every swing of the scythe to make a fresh start."³

He has learned, I should think, to be a novice. With practice, he has grown young. And if he never pauses to look back on what he has accomplished, no doubt it is because, as Trotsky wrote, "what he has done seems to evaporate under his hands and leave no trace."⁴

I think you might say that in his description of his father at work, Trotsky went back into a practice and in this way uncovered a labor that is hidden by a different kind of work and by this other work's regrettable, once and for all type of success. He got down underneath the work that pursues its aims, achieves its goals—that, in short, gets done—and in this way he uncovered the innermost nature of the practices and arrangements that sustain the "einmal ist keinmal" wisdom. It seems to me that he described his father at work a little in the manner of a philologist interpreting a sentence or a word: not, as Werner Hamacher says in Thesis 76 "along the path of meaning" (in order to get to the point), but rather along "the way to a repetition of a language or to a return into a language that is kept hidden by another."

Thesis 76 starts with a sort of title, "Philology, a love story," and recalls a patient of Freud's who had suffered an attack of anxiety as a boy when he tried to catch a black beetle: *Käfer* in German. Freud, a philologist as Hamacher notes, reports that the interpretation of this perplexing anxiety finally came to the patient long afterward when, instead of trying to figure out what the beetle represented, he let his attention stray to the word itself and heard in it a question: "*Que faire?*" (What to do?) in the first language he'd known, before German—the language of

his first beloved, his French governess. It is thanks, Hamacher says, to this separation from meaning that an idea (*Einfall*) takes the place of an attack (*Anfall*): “In place of anxiety, its articulation; in place of the animal or the name of the animal [*Käfer*], a question [Que faire?]. And indeed in another language . . .”

Before leaving Thesis 76, Hamacher dwells a little on philology’s way to interpretation: it is not the way to meanings, but rather to the idiom in which they are named. “It is the way to a repetition of a language or to a return into a language kept hidden by another.” This hidden language is “the language of the first beloved . . . the beloved language.” Philology’s returning movement “brings it about that the first love can be repeated.”

This thesis is among the few where I am able to hear one or two of the other voices that I think must be speaking tacitly along with Hamacher’s throughout the entire manifesto; it is also one of the 95 in which I am up to recognizing some striking tokens of much longer trains of thought. Attracted by what I take for a couple of such glinting signals, I will depart from Thesis 76 and then meander back—via a winding path through some fragments by Benjamin and a few pages by Blanchot, with occasional references to other theses among the 95 and to other texts by Hamacher—seeking to stick with a thought about happy successes (such as the fortunate interpretation of *Käfer*) and fruitful operations (as opposed to the kind that get things done, mean something, or, as we say, bear fruit). I hope to come close to appreciating the questioning mode of happy practice: “Que faire?” And the profitless time of this happiness, this returning, repeating, first happiness.

Benjamin suggests that in order to recognize the inner conditions of happy success, it helps to get a grasp on the unhappy kind of triumph that covers over true fruitfulness. So he obligingly describes the misfortune you can meet up with when, while writing, you pull off a paragraph or so of particularly Good Writing: the nicest flow—a perfectly lovely passage. That’s it, you nailed it, you can’t continue.⁵

It’s not really that this “ein für allemal” kind of accomplishment isn’t sometimes a good thing: in games it can be, Benjamin acknowledges—or in exams and duels. But in work this mode of action is always unfruitful. For the fruit of work—as distinct from the prevailing kind of sweaty

effort “which wants everything to ‘get done’ at once”⁶—is not a result or outcome. It looks to me as if work, from Benjamin’s perspective, doesn’t aim for an outcome and has nothing to do with aiming at all. In any case, he considered one of the most disagreeable maxims known to man to be this one: Try to ensure that everything in life has a consequence.⁷ He could hardly believe he found it in Goethe. Trotsky, describing his father cutting grain, observed that the results of his father’s work seemed to evaporate under his hands. Here we catch a glimpse of working hands that expunge the fruits of labor as consequences. The practice Trotsky describes seems to spring labor from the order according to which every activity must have its goal, every idea its task force and implementation, every exam its grade.⁸ You can count on bad actions to bear fruit, Benjamin says; doing so is their chief characteristic. But no “consequence,” he writes, putting the term in quotation marks, can be ascribed to the acts of good people. Their activities are, I dare say, inconsequential. The fruitfulness of what they do is internal to their actions, as Benjamin puts it.⁹

The way to a regrettable, unfruitful success seems to involve forging ahead ever more easily on the strength of what you’ve already achieved. At the end of the page about Trotsky’s father at work in the fields, Benjamin quotes Gide’s advice against ever taking advantage of one’s momentum: “never profit from an acquired *élan*,” he cautioned.¹⁰ And Benjamin remarks approvingly of Gide that he is a writer in whose works dishearteningly lovely passages—the kind that put a stop to everything, as if you’d arrived, once and for all—are rare. Trotsky’s father, experienced as he was, never acquired any *élan* at all. He just kept starting over again, time after time.

Writing again elsewhere about different kinds of success, Benjamin says the kind that requires practice—sometimes years and years of it—is the kind that can only be chalked up to luck.¹¹ It must be a kind of success, then, that does not result from the faithful practice it nonetheless requires. Practice, it seems, isn’t an endeavor that builds up your strength or your mastery, giving you increased control of your limbs, your tools, the music you study, or the poems you want to learn by heart. It doesn’t appear to be a path heading for success, for it wears you down: exhausts your will and annuls your resolute intention the

better to allow for various unlikely eventualities, such as that you'll find complete in your head when you wake up in the morning the contents of the book you put under your pillow the night before. Regular practice all but erases you the better to make room for your brain, your arms and legs, or hands to take things in hand themselves and make certain arrangements "behind your back." Then it often happens that things you've lost track of and forgotten even to look for unaccountably turn up. It would be absurd to look to such happy successes for evidence of your strengths. "Who doesn't know," Benjamin exclaims, in a short passage about how to recognize your strong points, "that nothing reveals our foibles as much as our triumphs? Who hasn't once felt a kind of ecstatic shiver of weakness after a victory . . . and wondered: Did I do that? Did victory fall to me, the weakest?"¹² It looks as if fruitful success, for Benjamin, is success as aberration, as non sequitur, so to speak;¹³ it does not follow from the practice it nonetheless demands; it shows our foibles and its own wonderful implausibility.

Where, by the way, should you look for proof of your strong points if not in your victories? In your defeats, Benjamin answers. Brazen defiance when you face down defeat and dishonor: that's what flows from your strength and attests to it. "In whatever area a person's strong point lies, there he is immune to disgrace." And when he acts on that strength, nothing is crude or futile enough to embarrass him. He'll persist interminably in vain and shameful behavior; he has no inner composure. Some people go so far as to dwell in their strength. "This," Benjamin says, "is life inside a tank. If we live inside it, we are stupid and unapproachable, fall into all the ditches, stumble over all the obstacles, churn up a lot of dirt and violate the earth. But only where we are so besmirched are we unconquerable."¹⁴

Reading Benjamin's recommendation to travel writers in 1932 that they exercise a certain discipline and refrain from exploiting their irretrievable first impressions of foreign places, I am reminded of Gide's advice, appreciated by Benjamin, not to profit from the momentum you might gain when writing. For it's another admonition to forego what looks like an advantage. One can understand the temptation a journalist might feel to make the most of his initial impression of a place he has never visited before, trying thereby to preserve in his description

of it the blue haze that distance surrounds it with (the lingering hint of foreignness)—given the familiar sameness that the whole globe has been ground down to by now. As Benjamin observes, “every description should take place against a black backdrop of disillusionment—from which,” he goes on, “the truly strange incommensurability of the near at hand . . . could stand out more sharply.” But at least travel writers should let the incomparable first glimpses they might still happen to catch of a place whose foreignness isn’t quite altogether gone yet, drop. “Into the womb of habit,” he says—so they can give rise later on to “the marvelous tree whose fruits have the scent of the near-at-hand.”¹⁵

There are many spots in Benjamin where it seems best that advantages should just be dropped, instead of made the most of or built upon. Goals, plans, aims . . . Once there was a man whose affairs were in exemplary order, but then there was a change that began when he got rid of his watch and began to “practice arriving late.” Whenever he needed some particular nearby object, he managed to lose it. He lost a great many things but—as we’ve noted tends to be the case with people who practice faithfully—he kept coming upon things he’d forgotten and was not even looking for. “So it was,” Benjamin writes of the man, “with his mind, with his entire life.”¹⁶ I expect he got a fresh start. Love, Benjamin writes, on a page that is mainly about his hashish experiments in Marseille, makes our existence run through nature’s fingers “like golden coins she cannot hold and lets fall so that they can thus purchase new birth.”¹⁷

All of which just to suggest that when Benjamin advised letting priceless first impressions drop—not valuing them as if their firstness were so important (or as if the foreignness of what hasn’t turned into a familiar habit yet were such an interesting foreignness)—he might have had in mind another first impression, or first encounter, another first time, or another time altogether that would have the strangeness of all the places where nothing is strange. The far-awayness of the near-at-hand.¹⁸ The marvelous sweet scent of nothing too remarkable, nothing to aim for or desire.

It would be a time like the time of waiting—which, for my part, I first learned something about from Blanchot who says that if there were time to wait, there would be no waiting.¹⁹ You wait only when you haven’t

time to. Only when the time to start waiting—a little like a watch that suddenly goes missing—escapes you and just leaves you there, waiting, to get started waiting. Waiting to “do” what you are doing. Waiting in the time that you don’t have and that there is not, for the faraway coming time you are in right up to your ears.²⁰ It lasts and lasts, indefinitely, still unbroached. With waiting, “einmal ist keinmal.”

And, no matter how long you wait, none of this waiting ever adds up to an amount already done, with a lesser amount still left to do; it never piles up as an accumulation of experience in waiting. You never put any of the time you wait or any of what you “do” in this time behind you; none of it yields anything you could build on. You might say it just runs through your fingers or evaporates under your hands, all the while lying way ahead, for your waiting never makes waiting anything but what you never have done yet at all. You just keep doing the same thing (as a creature of habit, perhaps, or a person with work habits like those of Trotsky’s father who appears, as he cuts the grain, year after year, I suppose, to be “looking for the spot where he could really make a start”²¹)—you just keep doing the same thing as though you’ve never done it before.

Not that you are doing it or not doing it, either (what is it, anyway?); not that you are succeeding or failing to wait, but maybe rather you are practicing—practice being foreign to will and goal, and having for fruit nothing that follows or results from it (no outcome, consequence, or end), but rather a fruitfulness internal to it; practice being as it were a tendency to delay instead of gathering momentum, a preference not to join the programs of progress and improvement, or dutifully to employ the time of prognoses and evaluations coursing ever onward into the future; practice being something that’s done in an interrogative mode: what to do? “Que faire?”—in a time like the time of waiting, which cannot be used or used up. It is new.

Hamacher says that the exercise of philology—“the ascesis, training, learning, practice, un-learning, forgetting of philology—lies in waiting” (Thesis 69). And he says that when we wait it isn’t always for something: “Before expectation, there was waiting” (Thesis 69). So, I believe he is thinking of a Blanchot kind of waiting: waiting when there is nothing to wait for. A Blanchot kind of waiting, I expect, is the

waiting kind of philology practice that he has in mind, and I believe he is thinking of a similar kind of attraction, a similar kind of longing, desire, or love (“Philology, a love story”). For whenever he calls philology a longing or wish for language, an inclination towards language, he always implies that philology yearns or inclines toward language inasmuch as it wants something that cannot ever be an object, an object of desire, or an end. For though “altogether different,” the longed for language is “exactly this” (Thesis 58): like waiting when you still are only waiting for it; like waiting when there is nothing at all to wait for. Philology longs for nothing, then.

And this is how philology returns into the language of the first beloved, into the beloved language (or so it seems to me): by longing, longing with nothing to long for; by longing for the language that has the sweet remoteness of the close-at-hand, whose perfect familiarity is inexhaustibly novel and foreign (philology: amour de loin).

This beloved language, philology’s nothing to long for, gives to longing and to love this interrogative form: “Que faire?” And this question has nothing to ask after, just as waiting has nothing to wait for, since waiting is already all that’s awaited, all that never yet has begun. Likewise, the question “What to do?” has nothing to inquire about—it is already that which is asked after, the yet unknown “askesis, training, learning, practice, unlearning, forgetting of philology” (Thesis 69).

In the last lines of Thesis 76 Hamacher writes, “the question, ‘que faire?’ and that which is asked by it are allowed to happen this time, in the repetition, by the beloved. For in ‘que faire?’ that which is still asked about is already done.” I think the repetition here (“the question . . . and that which is asked by it are allowed to happen this time, in the repetition . . .”) is the reversal of “that which is still asked about is already done.” The reversal: that which is already done is still asked after. This reversal—this still asked about that lies within “already done”—repeats it and vice-versa. A question and answer reverse and repeat, changing places. A question comes to be one by being none—by having turned into the answer—which answers by being a question, instead.²² Such are the inner practices and the inner fruitfulness of philology. Such is its movement.

“Things change and trade places,” Benjamin wrote in a fragment he composed on the occasion of his 40th birthday—an account of a sort

of trance experienced by a man walking in the noonday sun on the island of Ibiza.²³ “Things change and trade places. Nothing remains and nothing disappears.”

As the afternoon wanes and all grows quiet, a sound rises up from somewhere down below.

“Is it a barking dog, some falling rocks, or a person calling from afar? As he listens, trying to identify it, a peal of bells wells up within him, note by note. Then it ripens and expands in his blood. Lilies blossom at the corner of the cactus hedge. In the distance a cart trundles silently across the fields between the olive and almond trees; and when the wheels vanish behind the foliage, women, larger than life, their faces turned toward him, seem to float motionlessly through the motionless countryside.”

Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, “Once Is as Good as Never,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 739–40. From here on referred to in the text as “Once.”
2. Benjamin, “Once,” 739.
3. Benjamin, “Once,” 739.
4. Benjamin, “Once,” 739.
5. Benjamin, “Once,” 739.
6. See Thesis 62, a quotation from Nietzsche’s *Daybreak*: “For philology is that venerable art which demands of its followers one thing above all: to step aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow [. . .]. For precisely this reason is it more necessary than ever today, [. . .] in the midst of an age of ‘work,’ that is to say: of hurry, of indecent and perspiring hastiness, which wants everything to ‘get done’ at once [. . .] This art [philology] does not so easily get anything done . . .”
7. See the fragment with this title in Walter Benjamin, “Try to Ensure That Everything in Life Has a Consequence,” *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 686. Hereafter referred to as “Try to Ensure.”
8. In a similar vein, Hamacher’s Thesis 81 says, in part: “They all [all media, which are all linguistic] assume that they [. . .] do not arrive at their goal, cannot accomplish their purpose. What determines them—and *in-*determines them—is not a *causa finalis* but a *causa finalis defecta* [. . .]. They all relate to a future that could not be *their* future, not the future projected

in each one's construction, supposed or assumed by them; they relate to their not." Relating to their not (not to a goal) has a festive aspect: Thesis 45, referring to the Sunday of life, to Hegel and to Queneau, says, "This other philology cannot be out for an end and a goal, it can only be out for a feast."

I have in mind also Hamacher's essay about Benjamin's sketch, "Capitalism as Religion," where he refers first to a thought of Gershom Scholem's: it is permitted to judge, but not to execute the judgment. Indeed, justice for Scholem lies in the suspension of the apparently obvious relation between judgment and its implementation. Justice delays the result of judgment forever. Or better, it "unfolds from within itself the sphere in which the coming of the Last Judgment is infinitely postponed." Hamacher locates the basis of Benjamin's notion of historical and ethical time in Scholem's thought of justice as a sort of counter-productiveness: "the carrying out of a not carrying out' of God's Judgment." Historical time is for Benjamin, Hamacher shows, simply the postponement of the judgment day whose coming would annihilate Creation. Justice lies in this saving delay—in time as the virtually infinite pause between a sentence and its execution. Time is "the impediment and ultimately the prevention," in short, "of consequences." See "Guilt History: Benjamin's Sketch 'Capitalism as Religion,'" in *Diacritics* 32 (2002): 81–106, here 102, 104–5. Another essay, on Benjamin's "Critique of Violence," bears on the "not" in all projects—"the omission and the *epoche* within every execution"—"a kind of strike," Hamacher suggests, unfolding from within the practices and arrangements of work. See "Afformative, Strike: Benjamin's 'Critique of Violence,'" in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*, eds. Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (London: Routledge, 1994), 110–38. I think that all the Theses on Philology bearing on slowness, on pauses, on delays and fermatas, resonate here (Theses 46 and 59, for example).

9. Benjamin, "Try to Ensure," 686.
10. Benjamin, "Once," 740.
11. Walter Benjamin, "Practice," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 590–91. Hereafter referred to as "Practice."
12. See Walter Benjamin, "How to Recognize Your Strengths," in "Short Shadows," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 270–71. Hereafter referred to as "How to Recognize."
13. Recall Thesis 37: "Philology is love of the *non sequitur*."
14. Benjamin, "How to Recognize," 271.
15. See Walter Benjamin, "Spain, 1932," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 638–52, especially 643–44.

16. Walter Benjamin, "Do Not Forget the Best," in "Ibizan Sequence," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 591.
17. Walter Benjamin, "Hashish in Marseilles," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol 2, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 673–79, here 678.
18. Hamacher speaks of "far-nearing" in Thesis 78. "[Philology's] being is nearness, so far as it may be; so near as it may be, the distance. Far-nearing is the time-space that philology opens up and which remains closed to philosophy."
19. In, for example, *Awaiting Oblivion*, trans. John Gregg (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), especially 51–53.
20. At the end of Thesis 58, Hamacher writes, "A world without time: that is the world, language, as it is: whole, without being there; exactly this, completely other." Evoking a world without time—or at least without watches, without chronometric time—he formulates what I attempt to get at when I try expressions like "the strangeness where nothing is strange," "the remoteness of the familiar, near-at-hand."
21. Benjamin, "Once," 739.
22. "Is not every reversal a repetition?" Thesis 79 asks. Hamacher contemplates asking and what asking asks after, and their relation, at length in "Fragen und Keine. Philosophie." Reading this "rough draft"—especially, in the section on Wittgenstein, phrases such as "Dass es das Rätsel nicht gibt, ist das Mystische"; "Dass es das Mysterium nicht gibt, ist das Mystische"—is what caused me to sense the repeating, reversing rhythm of answer and question in Thesis 76.
23. Walter Benjamin, "In the Sun," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, eds. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 662–65.

6

Rereading *tempus fugit*

THOMAS SCHESTAG

The following remarks take as their point of departure Thesis 59 in Werner Hamacher's 95 *Theses on Philology*. This thesis is part of a sequence on philology and time, which deals both with philology's relation to chronometrical time and the timing of philology. Thesis 59 reads as follows: "Philology—the absolute fermata." A *fermata* is a musical annotation that indicates not simply a pause but names an immeasurable elongation inside a given numerical or metrical—*chronometrical*—pattern, disrupting its compelling trait, its function and structure, its very being there. The surrounding theses, 58 and 60, emphasize philology's slowness: "Philology is slow, however quick it may be. Essentially slow. It is lateness"; and "Its slowness has no measure. As temporal magnifier, it even stretches the moment and lets leaps occur within it that do not belong to chronometric time." These leaps are described as: "A world without time: that is the world, language, as it is: whole, without being there; exactly this, completely other" (Thesis 58). These theses on philology are philological theses in that they do not simply—logically, *chronologically*—follow each other in order to build a sequence *in time*. Rather, they refer to each other, comment on, and interrupt each other. Just as each thesis seems to *state* something (about philology), each one also undoes the statement it builds. The 95 *Theses* could be described as a *flight of extreme statements* about philology, indicating that philology has no *state*, no *state of being*. Philology is *stateless*; philology has *no time*. Philology is interested in undoing time: its sequential, *consequential*, numerical, and metrical scheme. Philology—the absolute

fermata, marks an end of time, not a standstill, but a stretching of its every moment. It is interested in the occurring leaps or fissures of what seemed to be an indivisible and homogeneous *nunc stans*. Due to its interest in the fissured moment, the absoluteness of philology as *fermata* implies philology's detachment — *ab-solutio* — from itself as *fermata*. The absolute *fermeture* (closing) that is marked and remarked by philology is also an absolute *ouverture* (opening), a door, *eine Tür* (as in *littérature*). Philology — the absolute *apertura*. Aperture. -ture. Tür. Philology — the absolute *fors-closure*.

Philology's strange *fermaperture*, its oscillation between closing and opening time, is illustrated by a moment within another series of numbered items, this time not theses but letters written by Seneca and addressed to his disciple Lucilius. Within this epistolary series, number 108 marks a *fermata*.¹ In its first lines, the letter restates a question asked by Lucilius that Seneca promises to answer, here and now. The question stems from a sense of urgency, carried by a desire or enthusiasm — *cupiditas* — for learning. Your question, Seneca begins to reply, will be answered in the book that I am presently writing, a condensation of my moral philosophy, which your letter and its call for an immediate response prevent me from completing. The letter's beginning folds three temporal modes into one another, indicating something like this: The answer I was writing before you even came up with the question has to be held back, postponed, so that it can be given to you now. Now — that is, in a moment. You are in a hurry and don't want to wait, Seneca acknowledges. I will expedite it to you immediately — *Statim expeditam*. However, before doing so, let me write this — *illud tamen prius scribam*. And what then follows — the rest of letter 108 (that is, the *whole* letter) — is nothing but the unfolding of this *before* or *prius*. Only much later, at the beginning of letter 109, does Seneca repeat the postponed question — “whether one wise man is of any use to another” — and answer it, quite eloquently, more or less frankly, with: *Yes*. But letter 108's temporal priority is the unfolding of the philological gesture *par excellence* — namely, a certain *retention* or *reserve*, an elongated *Wait!* or *Wait a second!*; a *fissured fermata* in the midst of which, remarkably enough, Seneca is going to make a scene to philology, recalling a famous line by Virgil about the irreparable flight of time:

fugit inreparabile tempus. The letter unfolds or, more accurately, holds back, slowing down its sequential course, not as a series of theses but as a series of *parentheses* that bracket and thus restrict each other. The letter doesn't follow the consequential timeline of narration or advice. Rather, it is syncopated by a couple of bracketing reservations: *but . . .* The teacher's first step back from answering his pupil's question stems from the remembrance of his own life as a student. The first parenthesis recalls the restricted space of *scholam* (school) as a scene of teaching, learning, listening, and talking. But Seneca also remembers the danger or threat haunting this privileged place at every moment. School, first of all, is a place where *philosophy* is taught and learned. The task of philosophy is a better life. According to a Stoic commonplace, philosophers are like physicians whose words the students are supposed to take in as remedies in order to "discard a vice . . . and gain some rule of life on which to mould their characters." And: "The philosopher's pupil should carry away some profit every day: he should return home either cured or more curable." But there are some who come to school not to listen to *what* the teacher says but to listen to *how* the words are spoken; they hear the words for words' sake. Listen: "Some come to hear, not to learn, just as we're drawn to the theater for amusement's sake, to treat our ears to a speech, a voice, or a *fabula* (play)." Students listen to words because of the *voluptas* (pleasure) they bring to their ears. You have just heard what the letter says: some come to hear, not to learn; but in order to learn you have to hear. The lesson of lessons learned at school, the quintessence of learning how to live, seems to be this: learning how to hear, learning how to *take* in words (and live with them). As everybody knows, this lesson cannot be taught. The ear that education calls for is also at the center of any teacher's, any philosopher's, despair. Hence the violent but powerless—violent *because* of its powerlessness—maxim of education as it used to be exercised throughout the centuries: "He that will not hear must feel," or: "If you don't want to listen, find out the hard way." For a great part of the audience joining the auditorium of the philosopher's school, *all ears*, the place—according to Seneca's complaint in this letter to Lucilius—is just an *otium*, a shelter for leisure, idleness, and inaction. The students turn the school, a place of effective learning through listening, into a place

of idle pleasure of listening to the master's voice. At school, words are spoken in order to cure the pupil's character and to teach a better life. But these remedial words pose the very threat against which they are raised. Thus, the philosopher's task is not just to warn against words in general, but to warn against the very words in which the warning is expressed. Words are the disease they are supposed to cure, the danger from which they are said to protect. The task of philosophy is not endless; it is idle. The philosopher's maxim is thus a double-bind: *Listen: Don't listen!* But the most threatening, most haunting word here, at this point in Seneca's letter to Lucilius, is also the word most dear to Seneca; the word he chooses to designate the place of philosophy's most noble task and activity: its task to teach oneself as well as others how to live, that is to die. It is the word *schola* (school). This word once made its way from Greek into the Latin language, where it settled as a loanword. But the semantic layers constitutive of the Greek noun *scholé* condensate everything against which Seneca implores Lucilius to be on the alert; everything from which, in every word, the letter tries to withdraw its reader. *Scholé* literally means "coming to a stop, a standstill, leisure, rest, and ease," a break (from any kind of work and activity); the related verb *scholázein* signifies, among some other things, to linger and delay, to tarry, dawdle, dally, take a rest; *topos scholázein* is "an empty space where someone is no longer active,"² a kind of *vacuum*. *Scholé*, in other words, marks a *fermata*. Every time a discussion about the philosophical, political, and pedagogical implications of *school*—about its essence, origin, and destination—takes place inside society, this innermost semantic layer of the word *scholé* resurfaces, inconspicuously (and unconsciously) nourishing suspicion and doubts surrounding this very place, and teachers and students alike: Are teachers really teaching? Are students really learning? And what exactly are they *doing* (if they are doing anything at all) at school? Can teaching and learning really be considered a *deed*, *activity*, and kind of *work*? Nothing is ever really *brought up*, *formed*, or *built* in this place of *education*, of *edification*—*Bildung*—and *formation* par excellence. It is as if the school were haunted from the inside by an uncanny *void*—a *vacuum* or *vacancy*—that has to be avoided at all cost. It is as if the semantic core of *school* were occupied by a strange *desoccupation* or *leisure*, where language and words,

the philosopher's pharmacy, were taking not just *a* time out, but taking *their* time to take time *out*—out of service. Seen from this perspective, *school* seems to be the place par excellence of *philology*.

And this is precisely what Seneca, now halfway through his letter, is going to complain about. This is his diagnosis about the decay of school and the scholastic business of his day: philosophy is on the retreat and philology is taking over: “heavy mistakes are made, and these are partly the fault of our instructors who teach us to argue—*qui nos docent disputare*—instead of to live—*non vivere*—and partly that of learners, who come to their mentors with the intention of cultivating not their souls—*non animum*—but their intellects—*sed ingenium*.” Thus, what has been *philosophy* has become *philology*—“*Itaque quae philosophia fuit facta philologia est.*” Detached from Seneca's letter to Lucilius, this last sentence has traveled the centuries like a symptomatic knot repeatedly bringing its readers to a stop and provoking either affirmation or inversion of this inversion. What has occurred is, in the most literal sense of the word, a *catastrophe* between philosophy and philology; be that in Justus Lipsius³ or Friedrich Nietzsche, who, near the end of his inaugural lecture (1869) as a professor of philology at the University of Basel, allowed himself to utter the wishful statement that what once had been called philology has become philosophy.⁴ But what exactly was philosophy; and what exactly is philology about, according to Seneca? In order to open his reader's eyes to the difference between a philosophical and a philological approach to language and words, and to demonstrate the superiority of philosophy over philology, Seneca invokes an example taken from Virgil's *Georgics* (III. 284). The line (in fact only the fragment of a line) on which he chooses to focus is a *locus classicus* expressing the irreparable fleetingness of time: “*fugit inreparabile tempus.*” The question of *time*—as raised by *poetry*—allows Seneca to point out the crucial distinction between philosophy and philology. This comes as no surprise, since philosophy, as is previously underscored in the letter, teaches the soul how to *live* (life being the most time-consuming affair imaginable), whereas philology teaches the mind to argue. But both relate to words. Philosophy teaches how to live, while attempting to overcome its dependence upon words like *life*, in order to reach out for life itself (beyond words), whereas philology seems to be concerned

with the question of how to live with and love words. The lesson taught in the letter to Lucilius seems to be clear. These pages have to be read, and at best *reread*, to teach their reader not to hold on to words, but rather to live—that is, to *learn* how to live, to live *on*. The question at stake in this quotation from Virgil—one that allows Seneca to broach the distinction between philosophy and philology—is the question of how to *read*. It is a question of life and death.

The most important thing to do, old Seneca implores his young pupil, when approaching a line like this, is to establish your *propositio*, your aim or intention. Whenever you read, read a *sentence* as if it could be used as a maxim for life, a sentence to live by. By contrast, a future grammarian—*grammaticus futurus*—Seneca declares, will read this outstanding line “without feeling, ‘No sleep for us! If we don’t make haste we shall be left behind. The racing hours drive us on as they are driven. All unconscious we are whirled away. We drowse over our schemes for the future, while all around is on the wing.’” No, a future grammarian reads only to mark that whenever Virgil speaks of the swiftness of time he always uses the word “flees.” The future philosopher will flee these words, after having felt the urge they express, in order to keep pace with the fleetingness of time, whereas the future grammarian flees life itself, refusing to take Virgil’s line, a fragment of a line, as a maxim by which to live. The philologist simply forgets to take to heart another famous line, this one by Rilke, which Seneca would have considered the maxim of maxims: “*You have to change your life.*” The future grammarian is held back (back from living on, back from fleeing time) by the observation that Virgil, whenever he writes of the swiftness—*celeritas*—of time, uses the verb *to flee*. The verb apparently did not escape Virgil’s attention, who instead seems to have been attracted by or inclined towards it. I wouldn’t go as far as to say that he fell in love with it. Similarly, the philologist doesn’t flee the word but is held back by its appearance (or rather its *reappearance*). The verse’s statement that time *flees* is precisely that which brings this reader to a halt and *pause*. The future grammarian’s *future* will have been this *pause*.

The grammarian, indistinct in this letter from the philologist, doesn’t take Virgil’s fractured line *literally*; he doesn’t take any of its words at its word, nor the letter as addressed to himself. His astonishment is about

Virgil's recurrent use of the verb *to flee* to describe the activity of time. It probably would be too hasty to say that time here is anthropomorphized, turned into a prosopopoeia, and that the verb *to flee* is but a *metaphor*. What time (really) is, whether there is time at all, and what time *does* or fails to do are open questions for philosophers, grammarians, and philologists alike. Instead of asking such questions, Seneca takes the verb *to flee* for granted. He considers its intimate association with time to be appropriate. He holds on to it; he wants to retain time's flight, never to let it go, never to let the remembrance of fleeing time escape, but in a slightly different way than the poet and philologist. The philosopher's concern with this line—which he takes *as is*, as *law*—is its proper application: “The reader with an eye for philosophical value gives these words their proper application. ‘Virgil,’ he points out, ‘never says that the day passes [*dies ire*], but that it flees (which is the speediest sort of running) and that the best are snatched away first: why then do we make no effort to speed ourselves up so as to keep pace with the swiftest of things? The better things fly past, and the worst take their place.’ The clearest of the liquor runs from the bottle [*amphora* in Seneca's Latin letter] first, the heavy, cloudy part settles at the bottom: so in our life the best is foremost.” Time, these lines suggest, written from the perspective of a reader with an eye for philosophy (*qui ad philosophiam spectat*), is like a liquid running from an amphora inclined downwards. Life—a *metamphora*. In Seneca's letter, the philosopher's reading of poetry is *metamorphical*.

The philosopher's task, when confronted with Virgil's broken verse, pertains to appropriation and preoccupation. In an almost imperial manner Seneca declares, “*Quod fugit occupandum est*” (What flees must be forestalled.) “Occupy time!” and “Be ahead!” are Seneca's versions of Rilke's famous line. But the philologist—blind to the philosopher's call to occupy and take possession of what flees—lags behind, dwelling on this and other lines in Virgil. Seneca remarks that Virgil always couples sickness with *senectutem* (old age). And Seneca, the old man or *senex*, holds on to this coupling as well as to the flight of time. The threshold of a counterfeited countersignature, indeed a moment of *resignation*, countersigns Virgil's poetry as well as the philologist's remark, not in the name of *senectus* (old age), nor in the name of *senex* (an old man), but in the name of *Seneca*. It is here that Seneca turns away from the words

“fugit inreparabile tempus” to give his reader more general advice about what he calls *materia*. He compares the text, any text, to a meadow or pasture: “You needn’t be surprised that everyone gathers what fits his own pursuit from the same material: in the same meadow the ox looks for grass, the dog for a hare, and the stork for a lizard.” Seneca’s recommendation to his reader not to be surprised eventually yields a most surprising statement. The three animals Seneca lists here, the ox, dog, stork, each looking for something different in the same field, driven by different embodiments of one and the same desire—to eat in order to live on—are then compared to a philosopher’s, a philologist’s, and a grammarian’s interest in one and the same text: “When a philologist, a grammarian and a philosopher severally take up Cicero’s book, *The State*, each turns his attention to a different point.” But Seneca’s statement is neither a philosopher’s, nor a philologist’s, nor a grammarian’s insight. It is the uncanny discovery that even if this sentence may be driven by a certain desire or intent to have its reader derive nourishment from it—a nourishment that is not always distinguishable from bait—the sentence remains, detached from its writer as well as from its recognition *as* sentence, and no less detached from any past, present, or forthcoming reader, (as if being) a wilderness and nomad’s land: no man’s land. Seneca’s astonishing statement highlights the unavoidable and irreparable instability of any statement (and statement about statements). Seneca’s insight is about the surprising impossibility for any textual or linguistic material to coincide with any reader’s or writer’s desire for identity or diversity. A strange indifference of one and the same meadow, neither *one* nor the *same*, generous beyond any given measure. You can count on it, but you cannot count it. There is no time.

It has been said that the words Seneca takes from Virgil’s *pastoral* text—the *Georgics*—in order to illustrate the difference between a philosopher’s and a philologist’s approach to language, life, and time, are only fragments of a line: “fugit inreparabile tempus.” The context of the citation in book III of *Georgics* is Virgil’s detailed description of a mare’s heat, which is called *furor* (a fury of lust and love that goes beyond measure): “But O, the mares’ madness more flagrant than all: . . . they scuttle through rocks and through badlands, through low vales— / not, O eastwind, toward yours or the sun’s rising / but to north and north-west, or

whither blackest southwinds / spawn and gloom the sky with chilling rain. / Then at last, the *hippomanes* — aptly shepherds call it / by that name, ‘horse-madness’: its viscous slime / drips from the groin, which often wicked stepmothers collect, / brewing up herbs with malevolent spells (*non innoxia verba*).” Here, between a mare’s sex in heat and the danger of not innocuous words — *non innoxia verba* — Virgil comes to a stop with a *fermata*. Following the fermata is the line from which only the second half is quoted and discussed at length in Seneca’s letter 108 to Lucilius. The whole verse reads, “*Sed fugit interea, fugit inreparabile tempus*” (Meanwhile it flies, time flies irretrievably.) And Virgil adds, “while captivated with love we ramble through minutiae.”⁵ Virgil repeats the verb to *flee* twice in one line. The repetition of *fugit* is separated only by the word *interea* that says *and* marks, fills *and* rips apart, the interspace or interval between the return of *fugit*, the one verb that is meant to indicate no return and assert that time flees beyond recall. For the love of words, for the love of silence, in and between these words, one could stay with them forever, a lifetime and beyond.

A similar pause and detachment — as indicated, but undermined, in Virgil’s line about the flight of time — takes place near the end of Seneca’s letter. After having spent half of the letter discussing like a philologist different approaches to half a line excerpted from a poem by Virgil, Seneca comes to a stop; he stands on shifting ground:

But not wishing to slide into a philological or grammatical commentator myself without intending it, I’d have you remember [as myself] that the hearing of philosophers’ discourses and the reading of their books are to be applied to the achievement of the beatific life, not to enable us to seize on archaisms and neologisms of vocabulary, on extravagances of metaphor or diction, but on salutary lessons, splendid, inspired words [*voces*] soon to be translated into action (or deed) [*rem*]. Let us learn them so fully that what has been words may become works [*ut quae fuerint verba sint opera*].

Here Seneca inverts inversion. His former diagnosis, that what had been philosophy has now become philology, invites the philosopher to recommend the following treatment: that words may become works. But the proposition comes too late. The cure won’t work. There are too

many ways in which to take, in which to stay with, or stay away from, a word like *work*. Something else that returns before the outset of the distinction between *words* and *works* is already taking place. One might call it *desoccupation*.

Notes

1. L. Annaeus Seneca, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, Epistula 108 [*Seneca's Letters to Lucilius*], translated by E. Phillips Barker, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), 221–33.
2. Franz Passow, *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*, vol. 2/2 (reprint of the 5th edition, 1841–1847) (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993), 1798–99.
3. Justus Lipsius in a letter to Jan Woverius, November 3, 1603: “Ego ad sapientiam primus vel solus mei aevi Musas converti: ego e Philologia Philosophiam feci [I have converted my eternal Muses to the primordial if not the only wisdom: I have turned Philology into Philosophy],” in Justus Lipsius, *Epistolarum selectarum centuria quarta miscellanea postuma*, Antwerp 1611 (letter 84, 70); see also Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 256.
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Homer und die klassische Philologie*: “Auch einem Philologen steht es wohl an, das Ziel seines Strebens und den Weg dahin in die kurze Formel eines Glaubensbekenntnisses zu drängen; und so sei dies gethan, indem ich einen Satz des Seneca also umkehre // ‘philosophia facta est quae philologia fuit’ [was einst Philologie war, ist zur Philosophie geworden] // Damit soll ausgesprochen sein, dass alle und jede philologische Thätigkeit umschlossen und eingehegt sein soll von einer philosophischen Weltanschauung, in der alles Einzelne und Vereinzelte als etwas Verwerfliches verdampft und nur das Ganze und Einheitliche bestehen bleibt [It is but right that a philologist should describe his end and the means to it in the short formula of a confession of faith; and let this be done in the saying of Seneca which I thus reverse — // ‘Philosophia facta est quae philologia fuit.’ // By this I wish to signify that all philological activities should be enclosed and surrounded by a philosophical view of things, in which everything individual and isolated is evaporated as something detestable, and in which great homogeneous views alone remain],” *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* 6, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. J. M. Kennedy (Edinburgh and London: T. N. Foulis, 1909), 169–70.
5. Virgil, *The Georgics. A Poem of the Land*, trans. and ed. Kimberly Johnson (London: Penguin, 2009), 94–95.

7

Language on Pause

Hamacher's Seconds of Celan and Daive

VINCENT W.J. VAN GERVEN OEI

One of the origins of philological thinking in Werner Hamacher's oeuvre is without a doubt the work of his teacher Paul de Man. In his short text "The Return to Philology," de Man allies the persistence of close reading and philological techniques in literary departments with the advent of post-structuralism. They share a program of developing the question "whether aesthetic values can be compatible with the linguistic structures that make up the entities from which these values are derived."¹ Philology here would match the deconstructive techniques that consider reading first an act of developing poetic and rhetorical figures before turning toward hermeneutic techniques and historical context. The resistance within literary studies against this theoretically oriented approach that de Man points out is taken up again by Hamacher in his manifesto *Für—die Philologie*, of which the opening sentence reaffirms de Man's diagnosis from more than two decades before: "There is an anti-philological affect" that turns itself against the "privileging of the concentrated attention to language, the word, the pause."² Hamacher situates philology as that which departs from the zero-level assumption that

Meaningfulness and communicability would be dependent on an instant that withholds itself *for itself before* any determined meaning and *before* any complete communication. Philology is the advo-

cate of this withholding, *for* which and *through* which language is first of all able to give.³

This description of philology as advocating the *for* of the instant that precedes and gives signification and communicability, the retraction that makes language possible in the first place, becomes decidedly more emphatic in Hamacher's 95 *Theses on Philology*, most prominently in Thesis 46: "Philology: in the pause of language." It is this thesis that will guide us through a number of interrelated theses on philology, as well as in a broader context Hamacher's work on poetry as *prima philologia* (Thesis 14), poetry as the site from which he gathers philology.⁴

Before considering what Thesis 46 says, we ought to first inspect how it says it—without staking any claims on any essential separation between content and form that philology undermines. In my understanding, Hamacher has neither chosen the thetic form by accident, nor in order to approach a certain logical or scientific format.⁵ We should read this "thesis" as resonating with the opening lines of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*, a text to which Hamacher often returns throughout his oeuvre: "First it needs to be posited [*thesthai*] what a noun and what a verb [is]."⁶ Aristotle's entire treatise thus operates under the sign of a positing of nouns and verbs and the sentences that can be built from them. In Aristotle, thinking about language takes the first form of a thesis.

De Interpretatione is considered one of the founding texts of logic and grammar, as it lays out the conditions for the *logos apophantikos*, declarative discourse, that which builds a logically sound argument. However, it has a central position in Hamacher's enterprise as the place where—in the midst of the most grammatical and metaphysical terseness—the first resonance for another discourse is heard, specifically a philological one. This discourse is "another *logos*, one that does not say something about something and therefore can be neither true nor false" (Thesis 8): the *euchē*, the prayer or wish.⁷ Whereas the Western sciences and most of philosophy have developed in the realm of the *logos apophantikos*, philology is located within the discourse of the *euchē* (Thesis 9).

Another aspect of Aristotle's opening sentence of *De Interpretatione* that should draw our attention is the absence of any copula—"is." Translated word by word, Aristotle indicates only that what needs to be pos-

ited is “what noun and what verb.” This syntactical feature provides us with another opening toward thinking Hamacher’s 95 *Theses*. For Thesis 46 similarly revolves around the absence of a copula, thus defying a status as proper sentence, or as definition. Jacques Derrida, in his essay “The Supplement of the Copula,” has given ample attention to how the verb “to be,” and especially its third person singular indicative form, the copula, is inextricably linked to a set of problems commonly gathered under the header of metaphysics, haunting linguistics and philosophy alike.⁸ Hamacher’s conscious omission of the copula in this thesis thus emphasizes philology’s distance from metaphysical considerations, as if silently responding to the enigmatic last sentence of Derrida’s essay, “If it were still a question, here, of a word to say, it would surely not be for philosophy or linguistics as such to say it.”⁹ It is philology that says this word, itself being a “chopping copula, chopula” (Thesis 39).

In Hamacher’s philological thesis, the absence of the copula is compensated in turn with a punctuation mark, a colon.¹⁰ Thesis 46 performs its own statement by opening up a pause inside itself, suggesting neither adequation nor subordination, but rather a silence that contemplates a form of relation that may be different, “signaling both continuity and interruption.”¹¹ Here we may think pause with its etymology in the Greek *pausis*, meaning stopping or ceasing. Again, this arrest of the pause, that in which philology happens, has an antecedent in Aristotle’s text—namely, at a moment of non-declaration similar to the one that marked the *euchē*: “So when spoken by themselves, verbs are nouns and signify something, — the speaker halts [*histēsi*] his thinking through and the listener calms down [*ēremēsen*], — but whether it is or not it in no way signifies.”¹² The standstill of the speaker’s mind and the immediately following acquiescence of the listener are signaled by the abrupt present tense form *histēsi* and the aorist *ēremēsen*. The bare verb form, without the context of a declarative sentence with a subject and predicate, causes a veritable *pausis* in language, an “absolute fermata” (Thesis 59), a “holding back” or delay (Thesis 70). It is this pause that is doubled up in the middle of 95 *Theses*, on the blank page of Thesis 48,¹³ in which the question of being, the ontological question, is suspended and meaning itself is called into question. Philology is thus confirmed as decidedly *anontological* (Thesis 29).

Hamacher consistently sets up philology against ontology—that is, a specific set of philosophical considerations. Whereas issues of the meaning, address, and aim of language have been, are, and will be important preoccupations of any philosophy, philology operates, so to say, on the other “half.” Philology concerns itself with lack of meaning, the absence of stable protocols of reading, and aimless speech (Thesis 48). Whereas language is often considered the *object* of philosophy, philology treats it as its *objeu* (Thesis 49). Were we to return to Lyotard’s terminology, silence, pause is *the* differend between philosophy and philology; and to “give the differend its due is to institute new addressees, new addressors, new significations, and new referents in order for the wrong to find an expression and for the plaintiff to cease being a victim.”¹⁴

It may be suggested that it is Hamacher’s philological project to explore these new addressees, addressors, significations, and referents, in order to reinstate philology not as a secluded area for obscure specialists or as an oppressive field of outdated knowledge, but as a project of the “emancipation of the interval” (Thesis 41). Hamacher’s usage of “emancipation” here is not without political connotations. Not only do the form and title of the 95 *Theses* refer to Luther’s tractate that started the Reformation,¹⁵ also its content at times becomes militant: “As long as a single person must *pay* to be able to speak with others and to read and listen to them, language and philology are not *free*” (Thesis 87). And it is in poetry—for poetry is *prima philologia*—that Hamacher attempts to locate this emancipatory, reformatory force of philology.

Any consideration of poetry as *prima philologia* in the work of Werner Hamacher has to take as one of its points of departure his readings of Paul Celan because they trace the outlines of the philological thinking that has congealed in the 95 *Theses*. Like Hamacher’s philological project, Celan’s poetical project departs explicitly from Aristotle: “[Poetry] does not transfigure or render ‘poetical’; *it names, it posits*, it tries to measure the area of the given and the possible.”¹⁶ Hamacher’s article “The Second of Inversion” uncovers, by following the movement of a figure of speech, the inversion, through the work of Paul Celan, the point at which his poetry is able to articulate itself philologically—that is, unrestricted by any metaphysical boundary, fully founding itself on

the abyss of its own potential meaninglessness. The contrast, outlined in the 95 *Theses*, between philology and ontology, is therefore an immediate consequence of Hamacher's reading of Celan and, more specifically, a close analysis of the function of the dash, the pause, as what Hamacher provisionally calls the "inversion of inversion."

"The Second of Inversion" opens with an extensive consideration of the consequences of Aristotle's theory of the *logos apophantikos* in *De Interpretatione*. The logic of declarative speech or "predicative assertions" that bases itself on the semantic and referential functions of language—that every sentence *signifies something*—has since the beginnings of occidental grammatical considerations firmly linked language to reality, either as "an empty gesture that must evanesce before the power of the factual" or "accorded all the weight of the only ascertained reality."¹⁷ Hamacher's point is that within this metaphysical framework of the *logos apophantikos*, language cannot be thought on its own right: "At the end of every semantic theory of language and its truth stands the aporetic verdict: language does not speak."¹⁸ He thus sets out to escape this logic through the work of Celan, just as he has sought escape routes in *De Interpretatione* itself: the meaninglessness of the *euchē* and the bare verb.

The motif of inversion comes into play at the moment that language as guarantee and source of the objectivity of reality itself is promoted to the construct of reality itself. Hamacher locates this moment in the "Copernican turn" of Kantian philosophy, and with this turn he signals the appearance of the entire vocabulary of revolution, overturning, and inversion, including the speculative inversion of the Hegelian negation of negation. According to Hamacher, the figure of inversion heralded by Kant retains its efficacy in the German philosophical, literary, and poetic tradition up to the early and middle work of Paul Celan who, however, "seeks ultimately to surpass and abandon this figure by means of a procedure to which the formulation 'inversion of inversion' scarcely does justice."¹⁹

Hamacher locates the first instance of such surpassing in the last poem of the cycle "Counter-Light" from Celan's volume *Poppy and Memory*:

Der Tauben weißeste flog auf: ich darf dich lieben!
Im leisen Fenster schwankt die leise Tür.
Der stille Baum trat in die still Stube.
Du bist so nah, als weiltest du nicht hier.

Aud meiner Hand nimmst du die große Blume:
sie ist nicht weiß, nicht rot, nicht blau — doch nimmst du sie.
Wo sie nie war, da wird sie immer bleiben.
Wir waren nie, so bleiben wir bei ihr.

[The whitest dove flies off: I can love you!
In the soft window swings the soft door.
The still tree stepped into the still room.
You are so near as though you did not linger here.

From my hand you take the great flower
it is not white, not red, not blue — yet you take it.
Where it never was, it will always remain.
We never were, so we remain with it.]²⁰

The poem drives the figure of inversion to the extreme with the symbol of a flower in the second stanza, “laying bare the carrying-over mechanism of imagistic language at its extreme, thus trope, turn, and reversal *par excellence*.”²¹ However, in this ultimate articulation of the logic of inversion, Hamacher also locates the first of a series of ruptures in Celan’s poetry that will be the undoing of this logic:

This possibility of the impossibility of its own existence breaks open in Celan’s poem only in the dash before the *doch* (yet), in the interruption of tropic language, in the mute hesitation of receiving and perceiving. This graphic pause [. . .] opens in poetic speaking a hole that cannot be closed by the logic of inversion; it opens a distance that cannot be transformed into nearness, a difference that cannot turn into unity, a mute site that cannot change into a topos of an eloquent image. This is the site of an absence that must still remain unreachable to every absence that could change into our own, into the presence of language.²²

In this citation we are already able to locate several aspects of the pause of language later developed in the 95 *Theses*. Hamacher explicitly invokes the pause of dash, the “mute site” that resists inversion and possible articulation, in an attempt to address the other half of an ontological process at work in Celan’s poetry. As *prima philologia*, poetry here offers the philologist, *in casu* Hamacher, philology itself: “Philology: in the pause of language.” It is perhaps not incidental that he locates the rearticulation of a possible love of language, of a *philo-logy*, in a poem that concerns itself with the “very site of the language of love,”²³ in the pause of language, the place where nothing followed language any longer or, as formulated in Thesis 37: “Philology is the love of the *non sequitur*.”

A second instance in which Hamacher treats the pause in Celan’s work is in his discussion of the poem “Radix, Matrix.” For Hamacher, “Radix, Matrix” is a poem in which the logic of inversion that was still lingering in Celan’s poetry is fully undone:

[. . .]
 (Wurzel.
 Wurzel Abrahams. Wurzel Jesse. Niemandes
 Wurzel—o
 unser.)
 [. . .]
 [(Root.
 Root of Abraham. Root of Jesse. No one’s
 root—o
 ours.)]²⁴

Communicability itself has given way, and the poem “delivers itself up to the abyss of possible meaninglessness, indeterminacy, and incomprehensibility.”²⁵ In the penultimate stanza of the poem, Hamacher notes that the figure of inversion itself becomes suspended in a “‘pause,’ a ‘hiatus,’ a ‘lacuna.’”²⁶

The lacuna between “no one’s” and “root” cannot be brought down on either side of the opposition between meaning and meaninglessness: it maintains itself between the poles of this opposition [. . .]. Neither semantically nor asemantically cathected, the lacuna—and

not only this one — holds open the space between negation and the negated, keeps it open for their relation and at the same time for the possibility of non-relation. [. . .] In the pause there is nothing and there is not nothingness.²⁷

Like in the poem from “Counter-Light,” the pause interrupts the linguistic fabric of “Radix, Matrix,” but whereas in the former the dash was only a first crack, the pause in the latter acquires its full philological weight:

Only when this lacuna and loophole separate language from itself does language impart as ours; as language held in common, it only imparts as one held back by the collapse of communication. [. . .] Here the linguistic being is articulated — and being is only thus articulated — in which language reaches out to its own nothingness, to the nothingness of its reference, its meaning, and its determination.²⁸

The movement traced by Hamacher in Celan’s poetry, from the early poems in which the figure of inversion makes its way through time in order to mend all oppositions, until “Radix, Matrix” and beyond, in which this figure is fully undone and “has ceased to be its rhetorical and epistemological matrix,” leaves us with a situation in which language is divested of its last metaphysical foothold. But where the philosophical grasp fails, the philological traction increases.²⁹

Hamacher’s reading of Celan’s poetry as one of the origins of his philological preoccupations does not offer us a definitive key or point of access to philology itself, nor to a definitive reading of poetry. What we have attended to in briefly reviewing “The Second of Inversion,” a text to which we will return later, is nothing but an attempt to distinguish the imprints of Hamacher’s later philological theses in his philological work, in order to elucidate the former and recapture the latter. Nevertheless, the question remains: “How does philology answer these verses of Celan? [. . .] Philology gives no answer” (Thesis 52).

If not an answer, we may find another indication in the work of the Belgian poet Jean Daive. Less well known in the Anglophone world, Daive’s first volume of poetry, *Décimale blanche*, was translated into

German by Celan, who was in turn translated by Daive into French. Daive has recorded the traces of their friendship in the fifth volume of his prose series *La Condition d'infini*, entitled *Sous la coupole* (Under the Dome). This title should already make us attentive to the space that is occupied by their exchange — namely, “under the *coupole*,” underneath and hushed by the expanse of the copula. At several points, Daive is explicit about the absence of the copula and the verb in general in Celan’s work: “On the one hand, the composite noun — on the other, no verb is given. Paul Celan does not give the verb. [. . .] Absence of the verb: the verb is absorbed into the energy of the composite noun. Morphology.”³⁰ Similarly, Daive, still a young poet when encountering Celan, learns from him the value of silence: “I’ve come to understand that a silence — is — the negative of a moment of thought and that it needs to be heard thoroughly.”³¹ Beside an unsuccessful attempt at crossing out, an interruption of erasure, or perhaps even a suggestion of adequation, “a silence — is —” that recalls the interruption of thought already signaled in Aristotle; this suspension of the copula between two silent dashes raised by Celan in Daive forms the bridge to Hamacher’s readings of Daive.

Hamacher has translated Daive’s volume of poetry, *Narration d'équilibre 4-W* (W for Werner?), appending a lengthy postscript under the title “Anataxis. Komma. Balance.” And Daive’s intense engagement with the work of Celan should in turn make us attentive to the possibility that Daive’s poetry, like Celan’s oeuvre, lends itself to an exposition of Hamacherian philology. A considerable portion of Hamacher’s reading of *W* zooms in on the interruptions of its language, its broken syntax, the bare infinitives, and proliferation of periods. Hamacher claims that not one comma can be found in the entirety of *W* precisely because each of its constituents is structured like a comma, undoing the predicational core of syntactical structure. In an extended lemma on the interruption of regular syntax in *W*, Hamacher develops the idea, affiliated with Derrida’s claim, that the syntax of the copula, the predicational pivot of declarative discourse as meaningful language, is some type of “transcendental machine.”³² In the tradition of Stéphane Mallarmé and Gertrude Stein, Daive upsets and “reprograms” this syntactical — or as Hamacher suggests, *seintactical*³³ — machinery. He does not

concern himself with “a grammatically correct, monolinear speaking, recited in an ordered syntax, but [. . .] with the possibility of speaking and language as such.”³⁴ The comma is here the interpunction mark of the undoing of *seintax*, of its dispersion, displacement, and dissemination. In his 95 *Theses*, Hamacher returns to the comma and its relation to the pause in which philology arises:

Hölderlin’s philosophical and poetic attention is condensed in a philological remark that is related from the time of his misery. It says, *Look, my dear sir, a comma!* [. . .] If one considers the weight that the future, the arrival, the coming claimed in Hölderlin’s language, then this *comma* may also hint at that which is not asserted but is called and invited to *come*. Philology would then be attention to that which interpunctuates, brings to a hold, creates caesuras, because within it something that comes—or its coming—becomes noticeable. (Thesis 92)

Through Hamacher’s considerations of the comma in Daive’s *W*, we may now perhaps turn to “*Sllt*,” the preceding installment in the series *Narration d’équilibre*. Although Hamacher refers only once to this text in his considerations of *W*,³⁵ he seems very well aware of the affinities between these two texts, their continuities, and discontinuities; on closer inspection it will appear that “*Sllt*” openly insinuates itself into the philological discourse that Hamacher developed in his readings of Celan and Daive’s *W*. Whereas *W* stages the psychoanalytic drama of (mis)communication, or rather its breakdown (and Hamacher’s citation of “*Sllt*” in his reading of *W* suggests this relation), “*Sllt*” operates in what precedes communication, what we may perhaps call the sleep of language. In this sense, the title, between quotation marks, makes us attentive to the suppressed *ssst* of the nocturnal visitor, the *salut* of poetry, but also the *slat* that will appear in the construction of nocturnal language.³⁶ At the same time, the title bridges the separation between counting and spelling by incorporating its own ordinal as “ll,” while indicating a certain muteness, vowellessness of language that is “*comparable à une surdité*” (comparable to a deafness),³⁷ a deafness and an oversaying, a saying too much (*sur-dité*). Attending to the thematics that cross over from “*Sllt*” to *W*, and to Hamacher’s philology of the

comma, we may perhaps start by inspecting briefly the following programmatic poem from “*Sllt*”:

Des yeux
comme capsules, mettre la monnaie
sachant
qu’une virgule se déplace
selon
le temps qui.

[Eyes
like caps, putting down the money
knowing
that a comma displaces itself
according to
the time that.]³⁸

The opening phrase invokes closed-off eyes, a state of being asleep, a suspension of *theōrein*: “*Les yeux, en d’autres termes ce qui me précède / évoquent les nuées dont parlait le mot / théorie*” (The eyes, in other words what precedes me / evoke the clouds whereof the word theory / spoke).³⁹ Throughout “*Sllt*” sleep plays an important role as a figure of the process of unconscious phrase building, the construction of language, but also of resting. The *money* of the second phrase recalls the long history of coins as a metaphor for words, including a sentence from Gertrude Stein’s *How To Write* discussed in Hamacher’s lemma on interruption in *W*:⁴⁰ “*Putting down the money*” is thus another image for the coining of language, the minting of words, what happens when eyes are capped off. This language production takes place “knowing / that a comma displaces itself,” which is fully congruous with what we have been able to establish thus far in Hamacher’s reading of *W*. But whereas in *W* the comma is, so to say, fully integrated as anatactical structure, present in each phrase, in “*Sllt*” it is still in constant displacement, “according to / the time that.”

This final phrase ends in a non-sequitur — did we expect *le temps qui [reste]*? — suspending any specification of the time of the comma’s displacement, or precisely qualifying it as a time that happens in a silence, a blank space, a break, pause, or abrupt interruption — a *sec-*

ond. It is this second that provides us with the decisive link between the poetical work of Celan and Daive and Hamacher's efforts in philology. "Sllt," however, is not only philological in the sense that it, as we will see, forms a bridge between Celan's work and *W*; it also produces an entire mode of shadow signification, departing, like Hamacher, from the classical grammatical framework set out by Aristotle, but at the same time responding to its crisis.

In *De Interpretatione*, Aristotle elaborates on the different parts of human speech and institutes a tripartite division between "affects in the soul" (*ta en tēi psukhē pathēmata*); "sonifications," more commonly translated as "words" (*ta en tēi phōnēi*); and "written things" (*ta graphomena*) which are linearly connected. Affects of the soul are symbolized by sonifications, which are in turn symbolized by what is written down. Letters (*grammata*) and sounds (*phōnai*) are not the same for everyone, contrary to the affects of the soul to which they refer, which they signify as signs (*sēmeia*). The same holds for the relation between words and things.⁴¹ In these definitions, Aristotle lays the foundation for the *sign* as linguistic unity, as well as for the structuralist idea that whereas the form of words, letters, and sounds is arbitrary, the signification of a sign is stable: the famous interpretation of the sign as a fissured duality of signifier and signified.⁴² However, besides the philological objections raised by Hamacher, additional philosophical and scientific developments have complicated the Aristotelian theory of linguistic production. Brain scans and electromyograms of the larynx and throat offer us an *image* of actual sound production and the underlying physical processes. Moreover, the works of Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan, who both, among others, addressed the Saussurian sign, have shown that the unity of the sign is less stable than it seems, both on the level of the signifier and signified.

It is within this context that Jean Daive aims to formulate a poetic—that is, a philological—response to the crisis in the (analysis of) the production of language and signification. Cast in a Hamacherian mode, we may suggest that Daive develops a mode of signification for the *euchē*. The first poem in the section "Pant Threat" of "Sllt" immediately addresses the wide topographical range of the role of poetry and its extension beyond the restricted Aristotelian realm:

Car rôle, in—

dit tout dire. “Maïa, neurolinguistique, télépathie
Inde, danse, allométrie. Pourquoi cette traversée des autres
comme—”

La chambre serait-elle sous la tente.
Blocage. Aphasie. Cerveau dans lequel
une chimie sans page.

Raie qui se

onde.

[’Cause role, in—

dict say everything. “Maia, neurolinguistics, telepathy
India, dance, allometry. Why this traverse of the others
like—”

The chamber would it be under the tent.
Blockage. Aphasia. Brains wherein
a chemistry without page.

Line that

waves.]⁴³

The role of poetry is introduced as a *car*, *quare*, a *res* and thus a *chose*, *’cause*, a *causa* that is *in*, immanent, the cause of poetry as poetry itself, but perhaps also a cause that is *in-*, *un-*, in the sense that Hamacher suggests that language is a “*causa finalis defecta*” (Thesis 81). But this *in* is suspended in a dash, a pause that at the same time links it to *dit*, *in—dit*. An interdiction, *interdit*, is immediately silenced, suggesting an un-said, *in-dit* within itself. Yet in spite of this possible prohibition or obstruction of speech—“*Blockage. Aphasia.*”—poetry should say everything: from Maia, the eldest of the Pleiades and the mother of messenger and interpreter-translator Hermes (but also a name referring to an ancient form of hieroglyphic writing); to the latest developments in neurolinguistics, telepathic brain waves emitted from the skull; to the origins of grammar and the dancing and syncopated rhythm of speech

and language. Whereas Hamacher expands the discursive field set out in Aristotle by embracing the *euchē*, Daive suggests that, at the same time, Aristotle's theory of the sign should also be extended, from the neurological signals in our brain to the pressure of air waves.

But, at the same time, Daive also says, "Why this traverse of the others like—." In its saying everything, poetry also asks why it is crossing all of it, traversing this constellation of terms, and "*des autres comme—*" (the others like—), like silence, like pause, but perhaps also others *comme, cum*, with (Thesis 38), or, perhaps, comma. The quoted pause at the end of the second stanza also links the constellation that describes the field of linguistic action to its site of production: "The chamber would it be under the tent," characterized by aphasia and blockage, the proper terms to qualify the two dashes ending the first and second stanzas. This "chamber [. . .] Brains wherein / a chemistry without page" recalls the absolute incommensurability of neural signals and chemical processes with spoken, written, or read language, only lines that wave. In neurology there are no holes, only waveform, as yet unsymbolized electrical signals. And the poet doesn't see anything more in it than we do, "Nothing but a wave":

Je ne vois plus que vous. Rien qu'une onde.
Cela ne se troue pas.
S'écoute. Neurologie.
La main d'un singe. Sa gorge nous supplie.
Nous aurons des enfants, des arbres. Nous grandirons
nous grimperons.
Cela dans ce qu'elle dit. Plus tard.
Neurologie.
Les singes viennent, s'avacent
doublent. Le kilomètre. Cela. Langage phonétique.
Le kilomètre.

[I do not see more than you. Nothing but a wave.
That does not get pierced.
Hears itself. Neurology.
The hand of a simian. His throat supplicates us.
We will have children, trees. We will grow up

we will climb.
That in which it says. Later.
Neurology.
The simians are coming, closing in
doubling. The kilometer. That. Phonetic language.
The kilometer.]⁴⁴

On the allometric side, on the other side of the human speech apparatus, there are different measurement units. The microseconds of EEGs are transformed into sluggish waves of air pressure, into *phonetic language*. Within this enlarged field of signification, which includes the structure of the sign but envelops the neural signals and air waves on both sides of our throat, a new figure emerges: “The hand of a simian,” a supplicating throat that not only “supplicates” (*supplie*) but also supplements (*supplée*). It is the ape’s aphasic throat that distinguishes it from a human; its articulatory mechanism is one of the reasons it cannot speak with us. His throat does not “have” language as we are supposed to but only knows the gesture of supplication, even before it can have *enfants* (*children*) or, more precisely, infants. Supplication, that is, the *euchē*, precedes non-speech (Thesis 19). “That in which it says,” in which neurology speaks, is always *later*. The simian climbs, traversing distances differing from *allo-métrie*, the minute scales at which neurons fire at each other. This *singe* (simian) is what dwells in the spot previously occupied by the Aristotelian sign (*signe*), between the waving signposts of neurology (*ta en tēi psukhē pathēmata*) and phonetic language (*ta en tēi phōnēi*). As can already be traced in *Under the Dome*, “[Karol] opens her legs and notebooks and explains that her life is phonetic writing learned in Northern India among monkeys with whom she lived for a year.”⁴⁵ These monkeys are the sign, originating from a conversation between Daive and Celan about stammers and stutters,⁴⁶ of the inherent aphasia of all speech: the mangling, interrupted signals, gaps, and non sequiturs. Daive’s simian upsets the entire economy of language, where the monetary character of language transforms into “*monnaie de singe*,” empty promises.

Whereas Stéphane Mallarmé imagined the sign as swan (*cygne*), caught on the surface of the white page, Daive focuses on the unoffi-

cial, mischievous character of the sign, highlighting its almost human qualities. Here we have to remind ourselves that in his *Course on General Linguistics* Saussure illustrates the duplicity of the sign by means of a tree:⁴⁷ the relation between the concept “tree” and the phonological sequence /t-r-i/ is arbitrary (*arbre*), and Daive’s simian seems to climb from one to the other, swinging between different branches. The border between signifier and signified, so strongly articulated by Saussure, is thus perforated through the simple displacement from *signe* to *singe*, from the Greek *sēmeion* to the English *simian*, from signification to *signification*. Daive thus provides an image of what Lacan described as the signifier entering the signified. He does not consider the sign to be a structural or hermetically closed unity, as suggested by Saussure, but implies that the signifier constantly insinuates itself in the signified: words and concepts continuously penetrate each other.

In his reading of the *Interpretation of Dreams*, Lacan elaborates the semantic mechanism of *Verdichtung*, which is “the superimposed structure of signifiers in which metaphor finds its field; its name, condensing in itself the word *Dichtung*, shows the mechanism’s connaturality with poetry, to the extent that it envelops poetry’s own properly traditional function.”⁴⁸ This metaphor, which produces a superimposition of signs — “condensation” — functions as process largely during nocturnal dreams, but is also expressed within the work of poetry. If we would follow Hamacher, this process of *Verdichtung* is so productive that the initial metaphoricity that may emerge with it ends up completely flattened out. It is a process of *closing in* and *doubling*, but under a *kilomètre*, a thousand meters, the allometry of a nanosecond — not under a single master-signifier but under a thousand masters (*maîtres*), born from a thousand mothers (*mères*, Greek *mētēr*).

Semblable à l’attention
 si je lui dis fut semblable à
 l’identique.
 Il conclut. Il reste pour ressembler
 et ainsi. Des chambres sans table ni mur.
 Des chambres avec un soleil
 tout entier.

[Similar to the attention
if I tell him was similar to
the identical.

He concludes. He remains to resemble
and such. Chambers without table or wall.
Chambers with a sun
entirely.]⁴⁹

This brings us back to the place where Daive's *singification* takes place, the chamber under the tent, *tente*, *tenter*, *attention*, and waiting (*attente*). This is similar to this halting that Aristotle describes in *De Interpretatione*, when the thinking process stops, and the listener quiets down, attentive and waiting for what follows. Attention is the construction of a pause. And what is this construction in which the simian — image of the permeability of the sign, index to the interpretation of dreams, but also a pre-linguistic, even pre-*infans* state of humanity — climbs around? As Daive writes, “He concludes. He remains to resemble / and such. Chambers without table or wall.” This resemblance (*ressembler*) and being similar again (*re-ssembler*) — “Similar to the attention / like I say to him similar to / the identical” — is at the same time a reassembly (*rassembler*), a construction of “chambers with a sun / entirely.” Resembling is remaining in the attentive pause, in an open space without furniture or walls.

Un sommier
en quoi cette seconde
resterait.
Méconnue qui sépare
s'appelle je suis couché
et je marche.
La pratique de la bouche
entrée déjà comme une construction
dans mon sommeil.

[A slat
in which this second
would remain.

Disowned that separates
 is called I went to bed
 and I march.
 The practice of the mouth
 already entered like a construction
 in my sleep.]⁵⁰

The subconscious work on the construction of the phrase may also be interpreted as the construction of the sign itself, which for Saussure is always split by a bar (*barre*). And Lacan pertinently points out that *arbre* and *barre* are anagrammatically derivable from each other, something that, as I stated before, has its reflection in the couple *signe-singe*. However, this bar is at the same time a blockage: “*Ils lui bloquent la mémoire / avec un sommier.*” (They block his memory / with a slat.)⁵¹ Again we find a confirmation that chamber and blockade, speaking and aphasia, are intimately connected and mutually imply each other. Daive speaks of a *démembrement* (dismemberment) of words, a “*complexe de subordination*” (subordination complex): a subordination, subjugation, subdivided into “*alerte chimique*” (chemical alarm), electric signals in the brains, firing neurons, and “*ces rassemblements de sommeil*” (these accumulations of sleep.)⁵²

Just like the slat, the plank, is part of the chamber’s construction, which is gradually built up—from *Planche I: Tout / est / lacune* (Plank I: Everything / is / lacuna)⁵³ until “*Merci pour le plancher. Il finit / tout.*” (Thanks for the planking. It finishes / everything.)⁵⁴—this space, built from planks, is provisional, conditional: “*Une condition est placée comme / une planche. / C’est une balance.*” (A condition is placed like / a plank. / It’s a balance.)⁵⁵ It is a balance, a figure that is fully worked out later in *W*, because it depends on lacunas, pauses, breaks; a fragile balance between the words, sentences, and themes that also compose the entire cycle of *Narration d’équilibre*.⁵⁶ Yet the planks and slats (*sommiers*) do not only refer to the nocturnal construction work of sleep (*sommeil*) and the support of the bed; they also contribute to the summation (*sommer*) of the phrases, series, and seconds (*secundus*) sequences and persecutions; marching and marking are separated and thus form names, words, albeit in a disowned way: *aping*. The practice of the mouth, the

speaking of language, is always already under construction in our sleep, similar to an attention, an attentive pause, in a chamber constructed by slats “*in which this second / would remain.*”

With Daive’s introduction of the poetic trope of the second in “*Sllt*,” we may perhaps return, through Hamacher, to the opening lines of Celan’s volume *Language Mesh*:

*Stimmen, ins Grün
der Wasserfläche geritzt.
Wenn der Eisvogel taucht,
sirrt die Sekunde:*

Was zu dir stand
an jedem Ufer,
es tritt
gemäht in ein anderes Bild.

[*Voices, into the green
of the water surface etched.
When the kingfisher dives,
the second buzzes:*

What confronted you
on each of the banks,
it steps,
mowed into another image.]⁵⁷

Celan’s poem resonates in several ways with the few poetic samples that we have adduced from “*Sllt*.” Whereas in Daive’s poem, a simian replaces Mallarmé’s swan floating on the reflective water of the page, Celan’s kingfisher breaks this clear surface, diving in like the simian reaching out with its supplicating throat. Both animals attempt to break the classical logic of the signifier that Hamacher has drawn out as the logic of inversion. Although this is only the first of many intersections between Celan’s *Language Mesh* and Daive’s “*Sllt*” — for what does “*Sllt*” propose other than a “language mesh” constructed by *sommiers*? — Hamacher points us here to the etymological sense of *Sekonde*, *seconde* — namely,

from *secare*, to cut, a section but also sexing of time, as the slicing of the water surface but also as a slicing that is *diese Kunde*, “this message,” or “conduit of communication”:

DieSeKunde is not simply a metamorphosis but also a metaphor, the very moment of metaphorization: conducting across and carrying over. All images and all turns of speech in Celan’s text follow the alteration dictated by its eccentric center — *dieSeKunde*, the second, this conduit: they are not metaphors for representation but metaphors for metaphorization, not images of a world but images of the generation of images, not the transcription of voices but the production of the etched voices of the poem itself. [. . .] *Die Sekunde* — this second, this conduit — dictates the law of “originary” secondariness; it is the cut that precedes everything primary, the rift that opens in every principle, including that of universal linguisticity, and it disperses every unit and every condition that makes unity possible.⁵⁸

For Hamacher, *dieSeKunde* suspends the semantic function of language that was supposed to be secured by the figure of inversion, whose ultimate conduit was time itself. The pause is that which interrupts the “language of inversion,” which is “the language of time represented as a continuum of negativity.”⁵⁹ By interrupting time with time itself, the message with a broken message, the meaningfulness of language itself becomes grafted on its only ultimate meaninglessness. Hamacher here dovetails with Giorgio Agamben’s remarks that the modern conception of linear time is out of sync with the conception of revolutionary history, and that it is necessary as well to think of “revolutionary time.”⁶⁰ In order fully to undo the language of inversion, linear time itself needs to be inverted. The interruption of the temporal fabric ultimately supporting the figure of inversion that Hamacher signals under the second in Celan’s *Language Mesh* may be thought precisely as an attempt to think what Aristotle thought to be thoroughly heterogeneous to the experience of continuous, uninterrupted time: pleasure, that which is “perfect at any moment.”⁶¹ Although this idea of pleasure as suspension of linear time is not immediately developed by either Celan or Daive, Hamacher seems to hint at it at two key points of the 95 *Theses* — namely,

immediately preceding Thesis 46: “This other philology [i.e., not in its classical conception] cannot be out for an end and a goal; it can only be out for a feast,” and at another instance *beyond* the edge of the 95 *Theses* — namely, in Thesis 95sq: “The delight therein: that the indefinite slowly defines itself.” Feast and delight as conditions for philology here bring forth the necessary interruption of linear time by means of pleasure. And this other idea of revolution that, however, has very little to do with the revolution that is still dependent on the language of inversion sustained by linear time, appears openly in Daive’s text, in fact precisely in what can be nothing but a glorious image of the poet, or, *pace* Hamacher, the *first philologist*.

Ces choses oubliées.
Mot à mot, ce qu’ils allument
dans mes cheveux.
Un sommier par la suite
nocturne
plus lourdement chargé
qu’éclairé. Un jour s’édifie, dormir
car des journaux auront
rempli les baignoires.
Il y aurait alors un dernier livre
et sa première phrase:
“Le répéteur de la révolution
se transforme en pur logarithme
de vitesses stellaires.”

[Those forgotten things.
Word by word, what they kindle
in my hair.
A slat through the nocturnal
series
heavier loaded
than lit. A day builds up, sleeping
because newspapers would have
filled the tubs.
So there would be a last book

and its first phrase:
“The repeater of the revolution
transforms himself into pure logarithm
of stellar speeds.”]⁶²

This verse, which provides us with a shorthand of the entire logic of *singification* that I have addressed above, opens with “Those forgotten things,” opening not only the question of memory and the often blocked subconscious, but also of the *choses*—that is, the causes of language, which are always somehow defect, broken, forgotten. “Ces choses oubliées” thus refers directly to language itself, which “word by word, what they kindle,” light up “in my hair,” becoming external to the inside of my head, in my *cheveux, chevet*, the bedhead of the bed in which I sleep. “A slat through the nocturnal / series” recalls the construction of language in my sleep, the *sommier* in which the *seconde* remains, which returns here as *suite*, which etymologically derives from the same Latin verb as *secundus, sequi*. This is a “sleeping / because newspapers would have / filled the tubs.” *Journaux* here relates to *jour* in the previous line, but could perhaps also be read as *jour-non* (non-days), or at least not days as described by Daive in “chambers with a sun / entirely.” The contrast between *jour* and *journaux* thus may suggest two different times, the former built with the *slats* in which the seconds remain—that is, a day not in the linear conception of time but rather the eternal Sabbath of Messianic time, and the latter consisting of the eternal monotony of journalism (Thesis 90).

The *slat* is “heavier loaded / than lit.” We recall here the overburdened back of the simian and the obscure work of sleep that, however, ends up with “chambers with a sun / entirely,” and indeed, “A day builds up,” suggesting that there may be a *last book*, which recalls the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse—that is, the arrival of the end of times, in which “a first phrase” would have its *première* in front of all these ground floor boxes (*baignoires*) filled with endless chatter. And this first phrase, after all the sleep work has been done, the simian having traversed the chamber, basking in the light of the entire sun: “The repeater of the revolution / transforms himself into pure logarithm / of stellar speeds.” This sentence is an image of the poet, the first philologist. He is “The

repeater of the revolution,” the inversion or revolution that even revolutionizes time itself, repeatedly. As Hamacher suggests, this is no simple repetition; rather, “it releases itself from repetition and dissolves it. It turns to *another* beginning, that is to say, back to something *other* than a beginning. It—philology, repetition—does not only turn back. It begins, without principle” (Thesis 88).

The poet “transforms himself into pure logarithm”; into a free *rhythmos* of the *logos*, a spacing of words and speech; the incarnate comma of *stellar speeds*; the progression from night to day; the sleepy acceleration, running early; but also the speed of *Stellen*, the Aristotelian *thes-thai*, *thesis* of language, that is, in the pause of language.

Notes

1. Paul de Man, “The Return to Philology,” in *Resistance to Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 25.
2. Werner Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, cover–1. My translation.
3. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 10–11. My translation.
4. See also Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 14.
5. There is a clear resonance with Luther’s 95 *Theses*, the manifesto that he nailed to the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg and that set off the Reformation. These theses, as well as his translation work, were undoubtedly the result of a *philological* project to recuperate the Scripture from canonical exegesis.
6. Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 16a1.
7. Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 17a4.
8. Jacques Derrida, “The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 175–205.
9. Derrida, “The Supplement of Copula,” 205.
10. The philosophical analysis of punctuation marks remains largely unexplored territory. See, for example, Theodor Adorno’s essay “Punctuation Marks,” trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson. *The Antioch Review* 48, no. 3 (1990): 300–5; Giorgio Agamben remarks on the relation between the colon and immanence in “Absolute Immanence,” in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 220–39; and Avital Ronell’s reading of the dash in “The *Sujet Suppositaire*: Freud, And/Or, the Obsessional Neurotic Style (Maybe),” in *Finitude’s Score: Essays for the End of the Millennium* (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 105–28. For an account of the development of

- the colon and other punctuation marks, see M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
11. Werner Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure through Celan's Poetry," in *Premises: Essays on Philosophy and Literature from Kant to Celan*, trans. Peter Fenves (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 337–87, here 366.
 12. Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 16b20.
 13. The page of Thesis 48 is blank in the German edition of Urs Engeler; in Diehl's English translation there remains only an empty paragraph.
 14. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), §21.
 15. The other 95 Theses that Hamacher explicitly refers to are Gershom Scholem's *95 Thesen über Judentum und Zionismus*, in *Gershom Scholem: Zwischen den Disziplinen*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Gary Smith (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 287–95. See, by way of comparison, Thesis 79.
 16. Paul Celan, *Collected Prose*, trans. Rosmarie Waldrop (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 2003), 16. My emphasis.
 17. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 337.
 18. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 338.
 19. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 344.
 20. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 346.
 21. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 347.
 22. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 348.
 23. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 345.
 24. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 363–64.
 25. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 368.
 26. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 369.
 27. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 370.
 28. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 371.
 29. Hamacher, "The Second of Inversion," 374.
 30. Jean Daive, *Under the Dome: Walks with Paul Celan*, trans. Rosmarie Waldrop (Providence RI: Anyart/Burning Deck, 2009), 10.
 31. Daive, *Under the Dome*, 37.
 32. Werner Hamacher, "Anataxis. Komma. Balance.: Anmerkungen zu Jean Daives *W*," in Jean Daive, *Erzählung des Gleichgewichts 4: W*, trans. Werner Hamacher (Basel: Urs Engeler, 2006), 123–81, here 157. My translation.
 33. Hamacher, "Anataxis. Komma. Balance," 162.
 34. Hamacher, "Anataxis. Komma. Balance," 163. My translation.
 35. See Hamacher, "Anataxis. Komma. Balance," 137.
 36. The following annotations to "Sllt" were previously developed in my short introduction, "The Poetry of Jean Daive." *continent* 2, no. 2 (2012): 82–98. I

- also thank Isaac Linder for his insightful comments in “Silt & Structure: An Annotation on Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei’s Translations of the Poetry of Jean Daive,” *The Poetry Blog* (August 8, 2013): <http://www.thethepoetry.com/2013/08/silt-structure-an-annotation-on-vincent-w-j-van-gerven-oeis-translations-of-the-poetry-of-jean-daive/> (Accessed October 10, 2013).
37. Jean Daive, *Narration d'équilibre: Antériorité du scandale*, “Sllt,” *Vingt-quarte images seconde* (Paris: P.O.L., 1982), 237.
 38. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 264. All English translations from “Sllt” are my own.
 39. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 190.
 40. See Hamacher, “Anataxis. Komma. Balance,” 160.
 41. Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 16a3–8.
 42. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 67.
 43. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 221.
 44. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 222.
 45. Daive, *Under the Dome*, 130.
 46. Daive, *Under the Dome*, 59.
 47. Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 67.
 48. Jacques Lacan, “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious,” in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 425.
 49. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 183.
 50. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 243.
 51. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 251.
 52. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 266; 263.
 53. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 189.
 54. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 185.
 55. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 274.
 56. See Hamacher, “Anataxis, Komma, Balance,” 134.
 57. Cited in Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 357.
 58. Cited in Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 359–60.
 59. Cited in Hamacher, “The Second of Inversion,” 350.
 60. See Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History: On the Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (London: Verso, 2007), 99.
 61. See Agamben, *Infancy and History*, 114.
 62. Daive, *Narration d'équilibre*, 218.

Part 3

Categories

8

The Right Not to Complain

A Philology of Kinship

AVITAL “IRONY” RONELL

The springboard and allegorical frame for the argument I propose come from the first several theses in combination with Werner’s assertion, on and off the page, of friendship—the friendly backdrop that is primed to showcase something like a philological drive.¹ *Ach, ach!* Am I right about this, or am I already too close, venturing forward in breach of friendship, drawn into the abandon of overreach? Even at the starting gate, these transcriptions from the 95 *Theses on Philology* fall prey to my over-the-top misprision, a characteristic effect of the warps and distortions that I indulge when reading my friend as text, as a destiny. I’ll take it from the top. Werner Hamacher does not see philology as *driven* but underscores its capacity for “holding back, holding open. A guard, waiting [*Warte*]” (Thesis 70). Such a withholding pattern does not mean that philology is *not* involved in the structure of the drive, as Nietzsche seems to indicate. However, the version of Nietzsche that Hamacher picks up in Thesis 62 sticks to the story of a slowdown of the drive, a powering down of that which eclipses the timing and stillness of true study, too often harried by materially accelerated overdrive. Thus, in the Preface to *Daybreak*, Nietzsche offers, “For philology is that venerable art which demands of its followers one thing above all: to step aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow . . . *lento*.”² Nietzsche is railing against the hurry and flurry of today’s overachievers, the “indecent and perspiring hastiness, which wants everything to ‘get done at once,’ including every new or old book.” He tags out the fast-track producers propelled by our institutions. Instead, he maintains that we should read

slowly, deeply, “with reservations, with doors left open”³—not with the door-slamming pace that harasses today’s academic scholar and young job seeker who has to crunch pages like numbers.

In graduate school I was known as “Miss Prison,” a name initiated by me, meant to promote the stances I wanted to hold as a strong reader, capable of all sorts of duplicities and deviations while running with a text of any caliber. Reading your friends, what kind of engagement or devotional impulse does this disclose? For Bataille the decision to read near ones famously involves a sovereign operation. Reading one’s friends, in friendship, in the emphatic overhaul of the “philo” that heads up philology, may take you into the perils of framing a close-up, scaling regions of the close call, or getting up close and personal in a way that would seem inescapably menacing if this particular exertion didn’t also have you practicing the Nietzschean calibrations of *Dis-tanz*, the dance of distance and dis-identification, keeping one remote, unhinged. One doesn’t often survive such operations because there is the matter of incorporation and the three Vs that regularly beckon at the door to friendly appropriations: *Verneinung*, *Verwerfung*, and *Verdrängung*, the modalities of denial, foreclosure or shutdown, and repression that come into play and aporetically make one even friendlier in the zones of reading—or introjecting and *eating*—the other. Yum! There is something about the encounter with friendly feasting, when allied to the loss of the inassimilable friend, that can leave you debilitated. I am willing to take that chance and will not be intimidated—not even by the spectral abundance of Werner!

Speaking of Bataille and swerving from the imminent stall of loss, let us take as our model his interpretation of Manet’s crucial slippages, where he marks off instances of Manet’s “unique cheek.”⁴ Bataille shows how Manet’s manipulation of his predecessors incessantly “overshoots and transgresses,” but manages nonetheless to succeed in *elongating* the works from which he springs. Not that one would presume—or want—to *elongate* Hamacher’s ever growing oeuvre, *um Gottes willen*, especially now, when we address the beloved departed, as he continues to tap out language for us. Left forlorn and disturbed daily by his disappearance—I am struggling here—let me hitch a ride that is programmed in a certain way by Bataille to overshoot its mark, despite all

good intentions and the brace of nearly orthodox reading protocols, a sensibility for the brushstrokes of inscriptive verve. On the best of days, whether in a commemorative or a festive mode, the reader-friend transgresses and overshoots her mark. In this instance, she dances with worry around the task of assigning herself a write-up of the stellar friend, rumored to have departed for other spheres, something she cannot fathom and will not admit. I stay close to my mourning disorder, dialing him up every night around midnight, like Freud's Rat Man and his model, Hamlet.

In his work, Hamacher started up his engine with the way elements of language stand up for one another, speaking for and explicating, even advocating, committed in large part to witnessing and sheltering. Yet, if I am getting this right, the defensive buildup in and around language never suffices to score stability or assure the reliability of meaning. Everywhere in his oeuvre, Hamacher famously discusses language's unreliability; in the *Theses*, however, I am finding on the part and parts of language more vulnerability and some willingness ethically to intervene on its own behalf, as it were. Language, attuned to its own plaintive cry, attaches to the *Schreiben/Schrei* (the *cri/écrit* or inscribing cry) that keeps it in distress, but with more emergency supplies being delivered to fragile areas of utterance and assertion, more of a sense of *need* in play with *demand*—after all, he, Werner Hamacher, does nail the theses to the door, which in Celan and Kafka, according to Derrida, means that he comes up against the law. Whether breaking down the door or holding back at a threshold, Hamacher confronts the law when delivering the *Theses*.

In the early days, when Werner had just begun his professorial run at Johns Hopkins, we had dinner at his house one evening following a lecture that I gave, a first tryout of the *Telephone Book*—a call, if not exactly a book, that Werner was one of the first to accept. That night, the kids started the music blaring, ramping up the energy around the table. We sipped soup to “Burning Down the House.” Was it a stroke of irony that Talking Heads accompanied us through much of the three courses? I am remembering Ursula, Wellbery, and Rainer at the table, and I see Gasché, too—but I have a sense that he might be a drop-in from a screen memory, a substitute for someone else, but who?

As far as I can remember, that evening Werner commanded the house of being like no other mortal. Even at table, music blasting, he presided over the philological appetite of his guests. His acute and unsparing adherence to language, its supralegal responsibilities, the way language faces down the unhinging of law from justice became a topic of conversation and then he more or less let the issue recede into latency, if I'm not mistaken, before its return to shape defining moments embedded in the *Theses* book. Generous and ethically tipped, the thought anchoring a key aspect of the book identifies the beseeching character of language. No matter how dry, formal, objective or scientific, claims accruing to utterance revert to a type of plea or plaint, something that at heart remains nonpropositional. Propositions, in "their demand to be heard, understood, answered . . . belong to a language that for its own part is not structured as proposition, but as claim, as plea, wish, or desire" (Thesis 11). Let me restart, then, from the predicament of want in language—from the cry, in this instance, untranslatably set in the *Theses*—as part of a longstanding plaint to which philology cables its responsive advocacy, however remote, however dimly apprehended. I guess this would cue my plaint, my failed lament over the distress of losing him.

On the way to l'anguish. Among scholars, hanging on to a friend is laughably difficult, nearly impossible. It is not easy to *make* friends in the first place, not when one is tethered to the book, bound by its exigencies, overwritten by dead zones, held in existential lockdown day in and day out—don't get me started. The question of whether a friend is even *wanted*, and if so, whether a friend is wanted dead or alive—supposing such determinations can be made reliably or at all—remains an open one, especially in our age of undead socialization. Nowadays you are haunted even if the other proves to be more or less alive!

Scholars notoriously spin on a solitary axis, despite the steadiness of their gathering rituals when they book flights, attend conferences, sit on panels, evaluate incoming manuscripts, and offer the occasional keynote—all of which implies, in the end, a passion for relatedness within the precincts of non-relation. Friendship is a hard nut to crack when everyone is sitting in solitary, conferring with Nietzschean shad-

ows in the aftermath of what Derrida has said that everyone else has said about the constitutive glitches in having or being a friend. How much dependency gets uploaded into the zones of friendship? If you want to keep a friend, assuming that such things are possible, you have to make a number of concessions, besides scheduling the narcissistic time-share. When you get up close and personal, decide not to run away, and manage to hang in there, really liking them, the resolve to stave off the cannibalistic libido can indicate one such concession, which for some Daseins is a tall order. All of this gets decidedly complicated when one considers the difficulties, tracked by Montaigne, Emerson, Blanchot, and others, of knowing the friend. Emerson levers the friend as a figure for the unknown, a kind of dead brother — oh, but this runs us into a thicket of anxiety. Let me drive *philia* in another direction, in an effort to get the inclination right.

For the most part on good behavior, I tread lightly. My rap sheet shows that I hadn't gobbled up Werner the way I imagined doing with (or to) libidinally invested objects. Still, I have him as a firm introject from day one. The process of introjection indicates some violence, but I have every reason to think he was able to handle it; from the looks of it, he staved off many sorts of transference addresses and currents coming at him from all sides, with his strong sense of *Dis-tanz*. Werner: Werner Hamacher. We tended to call him, during our academic tweenage, by his last name only: *Hamacher*. From day one, he was something like a Konzept, or the most proper of names, a power signature — the legitimate inheritor, we thought, of Hegel and the other Hs that fantasmatically invaded us, making us submit to super-egoical legislations and writing's severe containment. We had to put in hard time to match his unavoidable — if sometimes imaginary, though effectively *harsh*, — judgment. His range was plotted with such discretion that he could be outlandish and dead serious at once. Werner turned us on to disgust, to *Ekel* in Hegel, as part of a signature move.

When I first met him, Hamacher was toying with the idea of becoming a "Taxifahrer." That doesn't sound right. Let me go at it again: he was being *toyed with* and had to struggle to find a home turf. Universities, especially in Germany, proved scandalously inhospitable to their young intellectuals. That's when the idea of the American journey began:

Hamacher in Santa Barbara, at Stanford, and even took a stab at Riverside, where he blew off my colleagues at the time, during our salad days when we ran around California, making ourselves “visible” and crossing ourselves off nearly everybody’s wish list. Werner was about to be discovered by the Hopkins bosses and the rest of the country. In the meantime, we were at cross-purposes with our so-called careers, going at it with “Worstword ho!” resolve and the debilitating armor of European skepticism. I very much wanted him to come to America and lob hand grenades from this side of the Atlantic, create a new world of critical exigency, and give them hell. “Them” refers to anyone who thought they could read and instead made language a second home, a vacation residency. In those days I was angry, I guess—hungry, scared, unwanted—“all alone” with Larry and a couple of other stowaways cleaving to the outskirts of academia. Paul de Man had suggested that I head out to California, where, as institutional outposts go, they had a huge digestive system that couldn’t simply eject you, a foreign body. Okay, so bring up some sense of irony, please, for de Man becoming my GPS. It worked. I worked, if at first on a par with some sort of migrant worker when the job becomes too expensive and you can barely afford it, much less settle in, pushed off site to the next minimally hospitable hinterland of exploitation. Anyway, I went west, young girrl. Landing in the States after a significant sojourn in Paris and Berlin was not easy. Having Hamacher close would protect me, I thought, and make the trek practicable. It did. Having Hamacher in America made all the difference. Plus, he took out some of the bullies who tried to mow me down. He stood up for me. But I’ve said that already. Okay, maybe I won’t stop saying so. Is it alright that I am making this philological dig about *my relation* to Werner at this point? I do recognize that the event of Hamacher in America exceeds my singularity, my duress, and scholar-disrupted-narrative needs. I guess that when called by Ann and Gerhard to participate in this volume and, when contemplating its pivot on the phasing of *philia*, I was drawn into remembrance and time spent with a cherished friend. Trained on Eckermann, I received the authorization code (so I tell myself) for presenting a facet of *my* Hamacher. This was before he fell ill.

All in all, he marked my time in specific ways and has become a history. *My age of Hamacher is perhaps not in itself unmeasured, or déme-*

suré. Friendship opened up timelines, putting you within earshot of finitude's atomic clock. Capable of shifting intensities and barometric pressure, friendship refines skills associated with the organization of limits and stop-clocks. For Nietzsche, the friend was the future—non-contemporaneous, a promissory note. For others, the friend offers different modalities, thwarts and comforts, of non-presence—even if, as Derrida has taught, quoting a long lineage of friendly agitators, there is no friend. But wait. In order for the friendless announcement to stick, I have turned toward friends to scope the vacated space of friendship: “O my friends!” Turning *away* and turning *toward* make up part of the same movement of friendship to which one inescapably bears a relation, not excluding such times as when the friend is quietly dismissed or rigorously unavailable, ever cutting away from a given callout. Even the littlest of people make friends, move in and out of early stages of intimacy and play, and know the staggering experience of break up. Some of us, shy and reticent, are still frozen in time, quietly playing with dolls, our pretend friends. *Am I able to have a friend*, I wonder? I get attached and put together a make-believe family. At least I appear to stick to the tropologies of husbands and wives, brothers and sisters. *There are moments when Werner has come through for me, stood up for me, or given an intimation of approval, and shown sunshine-y warmth—a big smile flashing upon my approach, a twirling-me-around hug. At those times I felt like I was bringing home the gold, as if I had aced an athletic event or won something for which I had been training long and hard, if unconsciously.*

I have matured since the days of miniature tea parties with my dolls, when I could coddle a selected stand-in for all proximate beings, a stuffed animal. (I never really *played* with dolls, but that's another matter. They were real, even then, and in some ways still are so.) At one point, I must have set out to find more fleshy friendships, though I can see Nietzsche's point about the non-contemporaneity of the other, the way he alerts us to the inescapable disappearance, the dropped call, of friendship: one should expect a locator malfunction when it comes to fixing the *Gesprächspartner* (the respondent or conversational partner), the species of friend built up around the interlocutor as an inner dream team, the friend as fantasy, as fiction of address.

Let's face it: on the outskirts of academic endeavor, one is commonly on one's own. I am provisionally counting out the spectral colloquy and private horde of co-writers, well-established dictators that populate one's solitude, the offshore friendship account, the secret store of cheerleaders, those who show up when one can't go on but must go on. Closer to the core of university life, friendship scores some points here and there, but tends quickly to snag and fold, perhaps as is only to be expected in any theater of work or in the shadow of competitive exertion. Still, one needs allies, craves a kinship network—whether disruptive and improbable or reliably bolstering, familiar—and wants to think of oneself as capable of making friends. *At least let me be able to make friends.* For Bataille, reading constitutes the sovereign act of friendship. Emerson follows similarly run protocols to requite friendship with reading.

The performativity of *making* friends, or the injunction to fake-until-you-make friendship, in itself leaves one insecure and feeling basically alone, unprotected—the affective *Grundstruktur* (fundamental structure) of any workstation in the university. I can only speak for myself. Pause. It took me forever to secure every term and turn of that last sentence; what a whopper: “I can only speak for myself.” How long did it take me to lease out a “myself,” or even to *speak*?—I won't even go into the inaugural “I” that continues to wobble when propped up as if one could start a sentence, any life-sentence, in such a counterfeit manner. I must go on. I can do this. In the fledgling stages of becoming-intellectual (I use shorthand; “intellectual” does not cut it, for this term keeps one in the rut of modernist paleonymy, stuck with obsolesced concepts and habits, but what's a girrl to do?), when priming the intellectual program, I started off out of tune, a bit of an outcast, a somewhat defiant but mostly vulnerable misfit. Defiance was not meant to style my original stance; I was a painfully earnest baby scholar, dedicated, conditioned for every sort of servitude, understanding that doing time, whether in graduate school or as part of a teaching body, amounted to acts—or, rather, passivities—of cultish subjection. Returning to some sense or fiction of self, bootstrapping up, I let myself be inspired by Asian figures of warrior apprenticeship, by Mohammed Ali and his rope-a-dope techniques, by Bettina von Arnim and Emma B., who, bereft of

address, had no one to write to but kept it flowing until, in the end, for Emma Bovary, the ink flowed out of her mouth, body-crashing out of the writing pad.

The solitude was not icily absolute. One formed aggregates and quasi-gangs in graduate school. One could be menacing to others—that's a relationship in itself. One certainly could not afford to practice extreme forms of social isolation. *Are you kidding?* One needed to move in and out of sectors of the group psychology dial-up. We could regroup, fall apart, regroup, change the menu, shift ground, and regroup. I was a primal horde with Larry Rickels, but that's about it, and the spare social diet, with only some add-ons, seemed to suffice for us in our salad days as stand-alone graduate students. Princeton was not exactly a nurturing haven for the sassy yet anxious, horribly serious young scholar, already set for sleeplessness and off-the-chart intensities. Brimming with Kantian enthusiasm and our sick/healthy humor, the two of us were not entirely appreciated and I, for my part, was consistently depreciated even though I wore tight dresses and sparkly rhinestones, always trying to look my best as I delivered papers and listened to my teachers without once retouching my lipstick during seminar.

When I was revving up my engines, with no sense of insurance coverage for what I was going to do and missing out on the institutional warranty, I must have thought that I needed some allies. The point was to make some friends, set up some networks, fall in intellectual love, quick. Even if one was pumped in those days with the narcissistic surefire sense that one could and must do it on one's own, with no pat on the ass (when such slaps did come, they were impudent and all sorts of tensions ensued), you needed an address and number, a way of connecting to other solitudes and creating world. I pause as I write this and ask myself, *Did we really need friends in those days?* We were such hermits, sealed into our workspaces, in touch with 18th century philosophers and a galaxy of poets. *Did we even come up for air in those days?* When I was a child, I used to have best friends on a steady rotation, though I was the loyal one. Part of the soil on which I was set to take off was American. The childishly cheerful tone of American culture does not conceal the dark side of childhood drama. Children are easily inserted into the protagonist slot of horror narratives; or, with

a bit of a dialectical tilt, practices held over from childhood hold sway in American forms of sociality where the culture reverts, if ironically, for instance, to the code of “besties” or BFFs. In a Nietzschean style of questioning, one must wonder: When did the *need* for friendship arise, and what ends did such a need serve? I can’t count out the hypothesis that, actually; I must have needed friends, the fictional props of friendship’s aliases, desperately. (*Or not at all*. I still can’t tell. I try not to be a psycho, and so grab on to somewhat acceptable forms of sociality.) Family was a bust; school—*ach*, school!—was a penitentiary culture and scene of blunting, unremitting cruelty. My love for this or that teacher remained, for the most part, unrequited. Among the spectacularly messianic teaching corps, I was nearly nobody’s pet. Friends could turn around the undeflectable losing streak, I told myself.

Some of my friendships, I admit, were hitchhikers on the death drive. They frazzled my nerves and wore me down, hitting me in the sensitive parts of my *Geworfenheit* (thrownness). Others were vital to my growth. Still others remain to this day mired in opacity, inenarrable, yet I am convinced they have saved my life, such as it is or was. Still, the *need* for friendship—whether intellectually called up, close to the vest, unruly or stealth, rich and cheerful—feels like it may require some genealogical purging, for this need may signal some part of a steady weakening, a long-term or mere bout of existential fatigue, un-sovereignty. When King Richard II gives in to his takedown, he laments:

I live with bread like you, feel want,
Taste grief, need friends. Subjected thus,
How can you say to me I am a king? (*Richard II*, Act 3, Sc. 2, ll.180–82)

Lodged between grief and subjection, coming on the heels of hunger and want, the king, unhinged, admits to being in need of friends, thus twice-over losing his title, of which the play’s title has already shorn him: Shakespeare has declined to name the play *King Richard II*, and the failure to use this title is addressed within the dramatic unfolding as a grave fault, a mark of sovereign faltering. Finding oneself in need of friends is often delineated in Shakespeare as the default position of something like psychic stability, and the needy are ever on the way to meeting the

same destiny as Hamlet's BFFs, sent to their death — as Freud reminds us, despite Hamlet's supposed paralysis, despite his legendary indecisiveness and world-historical stall, Prince Hamlet still sends his friends to hell. Blowing off friendship, he powers up and goes into action on a killing spree. Horatio, another cut of friendship, is preserved in order to write up Hamlet, assuring his epitaph, ensepulchering him in narrative remembrance. Each friend is responsible for surges in writing — or, more discretely offered — for flagging the relation to writing that threatens to undermine us all. If it weren't for this threat, and if one was not faced continually with an unstoppable fear of freak-out, the store of complaints that writing announces, who would bother writing — I mean who would bother *to write*? Is writing not a Nietzschean slice of a relentless series of complaints launched like so many smart missiles at our metaphysical tradition? Or does thinking — for, since Heidegger, one no longer is content merely to *philosophize* — unfold only in the neighborhood where a plaintiff's cry has been subdued?

Thinking is fatefully bound up with thanking: *denken* und *danken* involve a turning toward something other than a self, or any kind of recognizable proximity, in the surrendering pose of gratitude. Of course, Nietzsche ran with this long-distance thought of thankfulness according to an untimely clock-in, and kept on saying to his close ones “fuck you very much” (more or less), even to his rehab leader, Heidegger, who tried very hard to clean up his act and put Friedrich Nietzsche back in commission after the Nazi hijacking. Heidegger sets out to rehabilitate Nietzsche in *Was heißt Denken?* He lashes out at those who have demeaned the Nietzschean *plaint* when turning it into so many forms of idle chatter. Heidegger's reprimand, set on *pianissimo* (even though some thinkers have to SCREAM to get their points across: thus Nietzsche), tries hard to stay the course and avoid becoming a complaint in its own right. Heidegger explicitly resists high decibels, what Freud calls in the end of *Civilization* the *überlaut* or upturned clamor of certain claims — this from the guy who put the death drive on mute. If one amped up the volume in *Thinking?*, it would be difficult to ascertain whether Heidegger was not in fact issuing a complaint, grumbling, even *ranting* — but this description could amount to a distortion, possibly part of a theoretical projection in which one wants to hear the

querulous grumble, a breakup of his troubled silence. Sometimes the thinking woman's complaint is nothing but a matter of tone, notoriously difficult to fix or stabilize for the purpose of conceptual runs and determinations. Derrida ran up against the limit-case of tone in philosophy when tapping different registers of meaning in Kant's work, a set of concerns relayed forward to Peter Fenves in our neighborhood.

The way we were. Let me wind back the clock and open some memory banks, go back to the days when a number of deals were to be cut, and choices had to be made. It's the early eighties. I was—characteristically—split. For French-accented Americans who plunged into the unsure depths of German Studies there were only two possible, if incompatible, ways to go.⁵ One option that I saw before me (if it was at all an option: I for my part had *no choice*, but that's another issue for this pro-choice sister-scholar) was to follow and learn from Werner Hamacher's theoretical acuity and handling of texts; the other was to take the off ramp of German literary studies and pursue the media technological and poetic byways owned and innovated by Friedrich Kittler. One had to size their operations, particularly if one wanted to clear some critical abysses and develop a viable repertory. At times it seemed as though these two proper names were responsible for the gang wars of and around Germanistik and its satellite empires. Here we hit a logical snag or two. For no one would dispute the fact that, for all intents and purposes, the discipline of Germanistik was left in the dust by Kittler and Hamacher, who mutated and reconfigured the very program by which we understand the study of German letters, the fraught relations that bind the discipline. Their membership in the field remains tense and, in some sectors, unforgiven, even disavowed. From where the historian scholar sits they were, and remain, titans of a field that did not hesitate to issue penalties, that had them thrown off the very premises they evermore defined.⁶ To be sure, there must be some stragglers or old-timers who do not subscribe to my description of these top-of-the-line border disputes, and by now there may be some secondary revision and hybridization to account for. But I am not aware of such crossovers. Some exceptions, nearby, come to mind and include the strides of Martin Schäfer and Gerhard Richter; the work of Cornelia Visman, Elisa-

both Weber and Elisabeth Strowick; flares sent up by Thomas Pepper; the bi-hospitality of Laurence Rickels, whose direction shows awareness of clashing turf wars; a host of younger professors and graduate students; and my own Nietzsche-friendly contradictory stances.⁷ In any case, I seem to have in my possession updated travel passes to these destinations—they were a destiny and, in typical Avi-fashion, I had to negotiate two or more singular sets of brawler's markings on my writing body. Some of the runs I made were provisional, or not particularly "authentic," maybe tryouts or auditions that I may have been signed up for. It is not uncommon for me to find myself faking my identity at some junctures in order eventually to settle into the ways and idioms that bounce off each singularity that legitimately claims me. In my head I am a Derridienne, a Hamacherian, a Kittlerian—a mutant French theorist and a relentless Germanist, an uprooted Anglo-Americanist, keeping company with Sam Weber and his own kinship network of German comparativists and psychoanalysts. I also like to think of myself closely in line with scholarly insistence as *Wissenschaft* that meshes Hamacher, Nancy, and Lacoue-Labarthe within the reflective-poetic zones of Susan Bernstein and the stirring discretion of Ann Smock. Bernstein points us to the way philology implies the forgetting of original friendship, love, attraction, and inclination; yet, philology, she reminds us, is grounded in Hamacher's thought in friendship, in *philia*, as "philo-philologische Beziehung."⁸ I am trying to retain this relation to the interruption of philosophy that philology for Hamacher and Bernstein marks. But I have not finished with my lineup. In the interest of full, if somewhat confounding disclosure, I should state that I interned in some significant ways with professors Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacob Taubes, among quite a few other mentors and teachers.

These lists are incomplete; my apprenticeship was long and hard. I was tossed about, shared and divided, often enough nearly snuffed out. Some friends took me in other directions. Once in a while I jumped ship. We know from Barbara Johnson's reading of Paul de Man's reading of Baudelaire's reading of himself that enumerations notoriously derail readers: they spin the wrong document and crush complicated textures. So many players in my own feebly crunched numbers are MIA:

the teachers, even the bad ones against whom one sharpened; the ambivalent ones who showed some responsiveness but nevertheless signed the pink slips; the tender and epiphanic ones; the flashback lineups of hiring and firing squads, each essential and structuring, traumatically upturning the dirt on which I was raised. Certain names come up, and I make a grab for them. Hélène Cixous once asked that we reflect on what it means to use proper names in this way, tagging our belonging or way with language when we add names to our work-field. If you're close to Celan, much of the relay remains anonymous. *Ach!* It looks like I am a hysterical spiller, I fear, incapable of keeping a lid on things.

I come from a blended family, a no man's land flagged by shared custody of mostly lost and forgotten causes. As a cub Germanist I was utterly forlorn, largely on my so-called own, before I discovered my "we are family" stride. But this was not easy nor credible. When I met Judith Butler, another corridor lit up, another curve of the kinship throw.

In the area of German studies, I had to struggle to get beyond the many stalled checkpoints, and being a crypto-de Manian did not help matters, either. German was closed off to anything that could break away from hermeneutic or phenomenological explorations—the field at its best. Usually the folks were tied down to thematic types of textual interpretation or Brechtian flavors of Marxism, pitching in some under-served authors as well. So, usually, in the neighborhoods of theoretical work, when one was not caught in the crosshairs/heirs of Benjamin and Adorno, the Frankfurt School and Marxism, and their proclaimed offshoots, one had to choose or lose, in the next generation, between Werner and Friedrich. Am I right, or what?

I said theoretical work, so do not come at me with other names, with Luhmann, for instance, or the other one or two of them. In philosophical and publishing Länder, I remember Habermas as having blocked entry for many among us, a foreboding Türhüter.

Even though I made the two friends signposts along the way of my critical training, I do not doubt that they would scoff at the idea that "Hamacher" and "Kittler" bore meaning for the fate of Germanistik. For his part, Hamacher was trained in comparative literature and philosophy; he had in the early days worked under the fabled professor, Peter

Szondi. Kittler, nurtured by Heidegger's work at Freiburg, split from the scene of Germanistik as soon as he passed intellectual majority. Apart from this yield of more or less empirical-institutional data, little allows them to have been integrated into what passes for German Studies at any point along their trajectories, except by way of a distinctly American view, and even here I am giving only a partial shot. The good part of German Studies, I would think, is what stirs in the uncomfortable chill that hounds its adherents.

Sure, there are those who blithely go about their Germanistik business, who don't carry around the burden of shame and distress, and who simply continue to address the letters of "Goethe und Chiller" without blip or obstacle in their course or courses. The unhappy few approach this area of study with apprehension, a permanent case of the jitters, or at least with latex gloves. Here, among the anguished, is not a hint of specular narcissism, the boom of self-discovery, except, occasionally, for the remote blossom of negative transference or the identificatory pathos of those who are called to the splintered terrain of German Studies for some sort of impossible retrieval, meeting the limit of a reparative economy, indulging a fantasy of psychic restitution and historical rebalancing. Such a fantasy of restitution involves only proved and impugned delusions. Then there are those scholars, and even poets, who clamor too loudly in catastrophic districts and draw *benefits* from interested and shameless identifications. In French departments people can still walk around beaming cultural pride, wearing a beret and scarfing a baguette, keeping it down. OK, this is a fantasy-formation. When is the last time I saw a colleague walking — no, swaggering — in the hallway supplemented by the iconic props of baguette and beret? The hyperbolic projection aims to underscore a dissymmetry — namely, that there exists no excuse for such a cultural identification on the Germanic side of things. Well, I think I've made my point and, to be sure, in some departments the embeddedness of shame goes underground or remains latent. Scholarly populations are not all sleepless, anxious, aporetically straight-jacketed by their object of study, I tell myself. *Recently, a German scholar of considerable note said to me that he could not believe that I spent one minute on German texts after everything that has happened — namely, after what should never have hap-*

pened. “Why would any injured party cast their thought in this direction?” I was asked by Anselm.

For some of us the work of Lacoue-Labarthe was the only secure bridge to get us to return to German letters, and Derrida as well as Lyotard seemed to stand for the most reliable conduit to get one near appropriations of scathing German texts or dormant philosophemes of the German Idealist tradition and their bold inheritors. Together, yet according to very different entry codes, Lacoue-Labarthe, Nancy, Kofman, Lyotard, Levinas, and Derrida made it possible to close in on unbeatable texts such as those of Schlegel, Nietzsche, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Schmitt, Kafka, Celan, Bachmann, E. T. A. Hofmann, and Benjamin. Anyone who thinks she has had an EZPASS to the study of works that sail under these names is blocking off the spray of toxicity directed at this area of study, making critical approach hazardous. For the most part, the field has failed to distinguish or renew itself, though there are signs of growth in restricted sectors of the academic world. One could hazard that, until fairly recently, the relative mediocrity of the field has functioned as a defense mechanism, a response to the disastrous historical undertow that cannot be reasonably contended with. It is understandable that an entire field is more or less on numbing meds in order to avoid itself. Exceptions, however, are luminous, and are beginning to pulse. I see new growth areas among younger scholars—with the paradoxically unbearable outcome that they have only diminished institutional safety zones in which to shine. On the whole, though, the field record does not dispense bragging rights.

The underachievement of German Studies is not new on the horizon. For somewhat different reasons, but propelled by the same evaluation, Benjamin himself was put off by German Studies. Ironically, allegorically, and allegorico-ironically, Benjamin must say his piece on German by switching languages to French, when writing to Gershom Scholem from Paris on January 20, 1930. Calling out to the friend, Gerhard, and announcing that the great interlocutor will think him out of his mind (“*tu vas me trouver fou sans doute*”), Benjamin explains that he can only write “*sur mes projets*” if he allows himself to skip over to another language—not any language in the Babelian inventory, but only if he can do so by means “*d’alibi qu’est pour moi le Français.*”⁹ Con-

cerning German literary criticism, Benjamin intends to take it to the next level, since the work with and in literary studies in Germany has been uniformly mediocre:

C'est d'être considéré comme le premier critique de la littérature allemande. La difficulté c'est que, depuis plus de cinquante ans, la critique littéraire en Allemagne n'est plus considérée comme un genre sérieux. Se faire une situation dans la critique, cela, au fond, veut dire : la créer comme genre. Mais sur cette voie des progrès sérieux ont été réalisés — par d'autres, mais surtout par moi. Voilà pour ma situation.

[The goal is that I be considered the foremost critic of German literature. The problem is that literary criticism is no longer considered a serious genre in Germany and has not been for more than fifty years. If you want to carve out a reputation in the area of criticism, this ultimately means that you must recreate criticism as a genre. Others have made serious progress in doing this, but especially I. This is the situation.]¹⁰

In order to tell his best interlocutor his German project, Benjamin had to break his silence, crossing over to the French letters for the purpose of signing a promissory note in which he announced his intent to take over German letters. If we indulged a luxurious sidebar here, we would interrogate the “Task of the Translator” at this juncture, summoning Derrida and de Man’s work regarding that task, the expropriations that it implies, and the spin-offs that it mandates. “I will be the number one critic of German lit,” Benjamin avows—in French. How does the language trade-off leverage Benjamin’s strategic takeover? Does the French sign off on a guarantee, offering a sort of transcendental seal-the-deal contract, or, on the contrary, does it ironize the determination with which Benjamin makes this Germanic claim for himself? Or is it the case that, already at the time, on his watch, in order to get at the core value of German letters; to find an approach, critical or even psychological (“You will find that I am out of my mind,” “*tu vas me trouver fou sans doute*”); one had to shuttle in on the French language? Benjamin may be updating earlier practices of borrowing on French letters,

but his plan remains unique in a reverse Mme de Stael sort of way. He announces to Gerhard his plan to put in place “*un échafaudage ferme à tout ce travail*,” for the purpose of securing “*la théorie de la connaissance de l’histoire*.”¹¹ While traveling this route, he prepares an encounter of another kind with Heidegger — an encounter that follows a collision course, undecidably set between a meet and a clash, maybe a clasp: “*C’est là que je trouverai sur mon chemin Heidegger et j’attends quelque scintillement de l’entre-choc de nos deux manières, très différentes, d’envisager l’histoire. / Quant à mon séjour actuel à Paris il est d’assez courte durée*.”¹² (This is where I will find Heidegger, and I expect sparks will fly from the shock of the confrontation between our two very different ways of looking at history. / My actual stay in Paris will be rather brief.)¹³

The trip to Paris, of short duration, proves just long enough to set up the historical rendezvous with Heidegger — a knockout bump on Benjamin’s path consisting of very different historical stances. The run-up against Heidegger is anticipated (“*j’attends*”) by Benjamin as part of the species of “*Choc-Erlebnis*” (“*l’entre-choc*”), what Benjamin famously designates as the numbed experience, the difficulty in experiencing experience, that characterizes modernity. The “*scintillement*” indicates that their clash will dazzle — perhaps as *sparkle*, perhaps as the *glint* of traumatic residue. Heidegger and Benjamin will meet, finally, according to the French original, in the spark *between* shocks, in the *entre*-shock of contending manners of vision, the glare of historical vision. Writing in French, inching toward German letters, widening the scope to involve history and host Heidegger, Benjamin nominates himself as a contender. He tells Gerhard that he wants to occupy this very place of strife, with historial swagger. The glint: a dazzle of encounter marks the spot where Benjamin plans to meet Heidegger, on doubly foreign ground. Benjamin writes about the fate of his work, his projects, and sense of place in the disturbed scene of German letters. Yet he has in his sights Heidegger and History. German literature, driven from its language, given over to the task of the translator, becomes atypical; nonetheless, Benjamin is on his way to creating a new genre borne of strife and encounter, buoyed by philological audacity and a fighting spirit. He turns to his friend with the shield of foreign subtitles, making his way back to German literature by means of clashing view-

points, through the mediated hospitality of the French language. In the split screen of translation's divide, Benjamin will encounter Heidegger according to terms no less grave than those of historical knowledge, at the edge of his own end of history. When Benjamin fell, there was no off switch that could erase the traumatic flashback of his elimination from the material and critical scene of writing. Henceforth, the grounds of Germanicity were to become, for many—even of those most inclined—off-limits. It was as if the German language had gone into shutdown.

The new unintelligibilities. That Benjamin chose to write to Scholem in French says something about the friendship's intimacy, the way it holds to an idiom of correspondence, but also marks a re-coding of purported transparency between friends. One could see the relocation to French as part of a Schlegelian friendship pact, issuing permits for posting new unintelligibilities, forsaking myths rooted in sheer understanding upon which some friendships are scantily built. Yet homing in on a so-called native language does not guarantee transparency. Redirecting the exchange to foreign captions may render more scruple and transparency for those who tap for language near abyssal limits. Benjamin tells his friend that he cannot in any case meet him in the shared part of German on this path and passion. Some were never able to return to the German language. For Benjamin, ahead of the curve, yet ever falling behind, as for many others, after the war—from Peter Szondi to Rainer Schürmann (in different ways and different outs for Arendt and Adorno)—German, no longer a host for futurity, became a condemned site, either strictly *verboten* or a matter of securing a complicated pass. In these instances, French was to be the go-to language where one sought refuge, or at least the semblance of safe harbor. France offered its own thicket of historical hurts and problems, but in no specific instance did the language associated with that cast of linguistic and political entities turn into a phobic site, hosting the language of the unspeakable. German itself became the language of *Klage* and the *Anklage*—the registered complaint and pointed accusation, a poison-language of non-address, faced evermore by the historical plaintiff. (It squeezes the sensibility to write even somewhat “poetically” about the

destitution of a language, the reciprocal abandonments and solitude into which nearly all contenders were shoved, the historical lockdown. Can one even say “evermore” or is it too pretty, a protective backslide to Shakespearean ground? Do the bumps of paratactic syntax suffice to convey the way we were all thrown off on a permanent basis and *parabasis*? The initiating sentence of this very paragraph breaks up over the story it tries to tell, collapsing into a Germanic underswell of remarking, the pile-up of names, hard to hold together under circumstances of a flight from language that one is hard-pressed to describe. In a sense, though, German always knew this about itself and tried to push away from the complaint of harshness that it lodged against itself. Some speculate that German became proficient in *music* in order to cope with and fend off its inherent harshness.

Ach, ach!)

HAMACH!er For Friedrich Kittler, the encounter with German letters is softened by a *Seufzer*, a sigh. Even though he turned out in long stretches of his legacy to be a man’s man — he fires up the technological libido and shows ballistic drivenness, delving into forbidden war cathexes, sleuthing in the cut-off narratives of our time, revisiting shrouded theaters of battle and the persistent glare of computer terminals — Kittler started up his own engines with feminine accents, as if to match his long flowing hair and sweet-toned accent. He brought to the podium the spritely, forgotten, but crucial Bettina von Arnim with his unforgettable paper, “Into the Wind, Bettina,” a now legendary intervention first offered at the colloquium on the genre organized by Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe where Derrida presented “Law of Genre/Gender.” Hamacher was also on site, as were Fynsk, Weber, de Man, and so many other A-listers in this Woodstock-at-Strasbourg of German philosophy and literature. Kittler was a soft-spoken advocate for any number of lost causes and genders in those days, capable of summoning up women’s reading habits in 18th century circles; Nietzsche’s initializing stock of girl students; the flooding of the secretarial pool that changed the fate of letters and love stories (men started writing up the collective transference onto the secretary and gal Friday figures, the sudden population boom of Della Streets and Lois Lanes);

and the first time “Ladies” was added in the form of a public address: “*Ladies and Gentlemen! Meine Damen und Herren!*” Kittler famously zoomed in on the *ach!* of *Sprache*—the ache of spake, the indwelling “alas!” that he drew from language (*Sprache*). He observed in fact that German literature commenced on the *sigh*: “*Die deutsche Literatur hebt an mit einem Seufzer.*”¹⁴ German literature revs up with a sigh.

Somewhere between moan and lament, *Seufzer* rings out at the starting gate of the literary adventure, tilting toward the feminine of language utterance—this is how Goethe has Faust start off when he opens the scene of the modern German language, the start-up fund of German literature: “*Habe nun ach! Philosophie,*” (Have, alas, philosophy [under my belt]) and so forth, mutters Faust. The scene opens on a complaint, just as Werther enfolded the need to complain as one of the principal themes of the Sturm und Drang suicide novel.

One never complains to the right person. *On ne se plaint jamais à la bonne personne.*

Elsewhere I shall continue to drive the two gatecrashers together—a scandal in its own right, an inescapable wrongdoing, but not entirely unjust. Behind their remarkable oeuvre, neither Hamacher nor Kittler sign, properly speaking, a German critique. I would say that each, according to scales of very unique deliberation and consequence, with a distinct backdrop and sound system, *register a complaint*. I constellate the grievance that they filed separately, imagining a hearing for the persuasive plaintiffs, given in non-contemporaneous simultaneity. I am not pretending to deal out results or final assessments and enter dialectical summations of the way they tuned their work to what Hamacher calls an “*advokatorischen Ethik*”—for who (or what) has the right to complain?¹⁵ Who represents those who cannot even complain? And what gives one a free pass as concerns plaintive stances? One does not want to reduce the plaintiffs to a single thumbprint, even in our day and age of condensation and techno-abbreviation or creative shuffling. Their relation to the complaint remains at times stealth and somewhat unruly—maybe merely personal in some forms of address. The problem of tethering two very distinct signatories, even for the purpose of

scoring some valid points, remains somewhat unmanageable, if not entirely unjustifiable. This will not hold me back.

Ach, ach! How does one register a complaint? Who has the right to complain? Does the complaint issue from a place of impotence; does it have the potential to move mountains; or, more scaled down, can it arrive at any destination whatsoever? Perhaps the complaint serves as an utterance reserved for minoritized stances or diminishment — or are their envoys precisely banned from complaining and raising objections? Does authority deign to complain, and can power dispense with the urge to complain? “Stop complaining, woman!” loops through internal sound systems, misogynist and unhinging. Do real men complain? Or is the complaint not radically incompatible with the worldly thrusts of any lean, mean fighting machine? What about the silent complaint? So many questions, so little time.

My own engagement with the complaint, as a prevalent but undocumented form of saying, jumps off an earlier preoccupation with the *greeting* — the problematic of the salutation that set off Heidegger when he was closing in on destinal aspects of Hölderlin’s poem, “Andenken” (Remembrance). What it means to be greeted and how being greeted sparks off a greeting from the sacred, bringing the greeted one into existence each time anew, is an area of poetic saying that Heidegger covers with care, if also a distortion. Seized by the quotidian adventure of greeting people on the streets, whether or not one “knows” them, one can test an observation that I have made repeatedly. Like other anxious creatures, I can exhibit overfriendliness, which seems fine to me, but gets the glare of some reserved friends. In any case, I make it a point to greet — maybe an American default position of troubled sociality. Well-to-do people do not systematically return my greeting. The same goes for the self-involved cold fish I stupidly welcome for a split-second into my life, a searing and overextended split-second. I have observed, however, that the poorest of the poor or those whom one might consider to be stuck in miserable circumstances, tend to respond to my greeting in similar ways. When driving on the New Jersey Turnpike, I stopped to ask the man in the tollbooth how he was doing and was met with the reply, “I can’t complain.” The doorman at a friend’s building who had

broken his leg and received no compensation, too, could not complain, nor could a street vendor from Nepal who stays in his container under impossible conditions of overheat or winter blizzards. He, too, cannot complain. I wondered about this calm, glacialized resignation—the grace of the destitute, scenes of mute compliance.

The absence of a complaint is a noteworthy event. My brother tells me that Samoan passengers were flown in abject circumstances, unairconditioned and unfed—add a series of “un-s” here to minimal comfort for which so-called first-worlders would clamor, issue threats, emitting from a place of entitlement, and not at all wrong to expect basic material forms of solace while flying. Not one passenger raised an objection, pressed for attention or accommodation. Not a peep. Silence, nearing the quiet buzz of auratic still-shots, pervaded the plane. Let me break the description to raise a protest here.

Graceless Klage: The Plaint. I am thinking. I am puzzling. Soon the question must be faced of the relation of *thinking* to complaining. I apply for a permit for writing a provisional tract, *Was heißt (sich) Beschweren?—What is Called Complaining?* as the twin other to *What is Called Thinking?* How does the complaint behave as a call? Heidegger would not tolerate the insinuation of the “*sich*” in this place of address, even if I were to shift over to *sich beklagen*, the loftier locution as these things go. Still, the queer adversity of a Heideggerian insert stalls us and teaches something. Heidegger might be the anti-complainer in tone and mood, even though he bulked up on stores of *Sorge*, the bulk of worry and anguish to which he appears to revert in his writing. Part of the Greco-Christian stance may well have been to brake—or mask—the complaining reversion of being. Thinking inclined toward thanking. *Denkers* and *Dankers*, thinkers and thankers, do not complain, unless your name is Nietzsche and you can do both at once, will-to-power style. Nietzsche and Dostoevsky would say that Christ on the cross is one searing complaint tossed out into history, thank you Yahweh, but this remains a matter for speculative theology. To put it in condensed form, perhaps too readably pitched, one could say, riffing off Jean-Luc Nancy, that the Christian demeanor is styled to *praise*, to offer praise and song to creation, thus strategically suited to drop the call of complaint for which Jeremiah serves as stand-out figure. In this regard—and following the protocols of read-

ing such a claim with care and caution—I apologize for the drive-by and the way I’m throwing some of these contentions in reverse. I apologize for apologizing as if one still wanted to “advance,” assuming such a thing to be possible. Christian praise persists as the repression of the Jewish complaint. Both modes of address say something about the way we falter and fail to find an address yet are turned toward the lamentable or praiseworthy other, each stance forgetting and repealing the one from which it emerges and into which it must return. Here’s how I see it: Jesus of Nazareth has a quota of one complaint, delivered the night before the cross. Yet the schema of assigning grammars of praise and complaint—not mine, but culturally imprinted—breaks over the rock of exaggerated simplicity. G—d breaks the seal of simplicity, issuing license for the “double dealing,” as Ann Smock would say, of praise/complaint cultures. Does sHe come down on one side or the other? G—d, one could say, complains all the time. Biblical celebrities have taken signature positions: Job accepts; Jeremiah laments. Sarah laughs, also a type of complaint. That’s the panorama shot I offer and will come in for a close-up elsewhere. But there’s still too much warp, even for my standards, that tolerate glutted warps and trespass, because the well-demarcated projection of the Jewish culture as a *Klagekultur* (complaint culture) remains insufficient and mendacious, leaving out entire chapters of *Lebensfreude* (zest of life), wit, inventiveness, and an insistent consideration of the conditions of freedom.¹⁶ Undeniably, this projection has pernicious historical edges, and some of one’s best friends, including introjected pipelines, have raised the objection to Jewish-accented complaining, leading one to listen again to those cultures that would like to see a halt in the allegedly unceasing Jewish complaint about the Holocaust. This opens a delicate historical juncture that is difficult to articulate or bear. What does it mean to demand a stop to complaint, to timetable a legitimate grievance, and to pencil in a final heave? I’m not sure. In some instances, it can help the one seized up by the *need* to keep the complaint alive, but a lot depends on who’s asking for an end to the complaint and the right not to complain.

The complaint itself comes off as aggressive, impolite—*unhöflich*—leaving victims in the quagmire of an aporetic trap, on the side of the

unsavory and dubious, something that overly discloses and so cannot be viewed simply as relating to what is true. I purposefully swerve from the cultures of lament in order to clear the deck for the complaint, no doubt a downgrade and awkward scramble in terms of the prestige of any presentation of solemn assertion. By putting the focus on the complaint, rather than on the lament, without opposing them, I am considering the possibility of updating the fate of the lament into a modern tonality and rhetorical arrangement. Dropped off to fend for itself, without transcendental imprinting or onto-theological breeding, the complaint bears a tinny voice that peeps up, whiny and shrill, secondary in the line-up of uprisings that language has hosted, pushed to the back row of challenging syntactical maneuvers. The lament, as Hamacher points out, stands a paradoxical ground, for it wants its own abolition, hoping to stamp itself out. The lament cries, "I want an end to this suffering!" The desired invalidation, the self-ending of itself as lament, bears down hard even when issued from the knowing stance of dilemma and self-obstruction; the lament is not able to put an end to its case and condition. One might even venture to say, though such distinctions only can be wobbly and provisional, that the lament has known itself to be affined to mourning, calling out to, and even *from*, its lost object. The complaint, by preliminary contrast, sidesteps any ritual assertion of mourning. To the extent that the complaint cannot mourn, it shares the stances and existential allowances of melancholia and sister disorders. One thinks of the grinding machines that run the language centers of chronic complainers.

At the same time — here's the rub — melancholia aggravates and digs in, showing an end-run around worldly aggravation with the statement "I cannot complain." Because the complaint is also a releasement, perhaps lower on the totem pole of modalities of thinking, it responds and corresponds to the imperfect world of expropriation; it touches down in the neighborhood of thinking. Any delivery of the complaint has something of a critical bite, profiling reflection and some subtle flex of rejection, a push of intelligent nay-saying. The complaint, running on empty or advocating world-historical change, puts up a fight against the "what is" of life. It says many things, putting pressure on world: that something is wrong, that a limit has been breached, or that

the intolerable has made an appearance worth noting or saying “no” to, pushing back on its encroachments. Thinking and criticism are not merely interchangeable on the philosophical score-sheet; sometimes they contradict each other’s velocities and contentions. Still, we have to contend with the fact that a critical mind—or critical thought, even critique—launches its probes on the back of the complaint and is tuned to a queasy squirm of dissatisfaction. *Ach!*

The victims in de Sade have no *right* to complain. Complaining would annoy the dominators, who themselves flaunt the right not to complain—why would they indulge or emit a complaint?

I took a break in order to prepare the sections on critique and complaint, meaning to show how they don’t meld, yet how nonetheless they manage to inch up on each other’s turf of intervention. Everyone knows how writing a piece of criticism does not involve the same gesture as launching a complaint. Right? Then I thought: *Wait, aren’t all my launches part of an uninterrupted complaint?* Yes, but . . . no, but, I whirligigged. Goethe’s oeuvre, he once offered, was one big confession. What if others were given over to those sorts of blanket statements? How would others distill their writing to an Instagram? My writing in some ways feeds one big complaint. I recruit to this inflection or description the way Derrida picks up on Heidegger’s *Schreiben/schrei*, the *cri/écrit*—a micro-event that I can’t seem to shake.

For Aristotle the friend’s lapse and lag in terms of timed responsiveness are grounds for termination. For me it all depends on how one clocks in, and since I live in dog time while others appear to exist in the squeezed temporal frenzy of a fly, we naturally come to blows. My abandonment “issues” are by now well documented, if not very unique. This “human condition” may correspond to the very nature of abandonment—one is left hanging, alone, I mean, as Benjamin says in his essay on Karl Kraus and *Die Verlassenen* apropos of the figures on Greek vases, coldly abandoned. So, my total war with abandonment is not very unique. Still, one feels very unique when left on one’s own like an idiot, even on the subway platform, or holding one’s phone in one’s hand like a phantom member, waiting for a call. One is left waiting on

edge, waiting for the walled-in silence to crumble. This glimpse at my catalogue of complaining in a minor key may seem trifling indeed, subjective and contingent. (I don't usually succumb to "subjective"; I will let that slide for now, if only for the purpose of delivering a drop of provisionally minted sense.) The complaint of abandonment is world-historical, even if it dwindles down to focusing on a solitary figure on the subway platform.

I would like to consider how the complaint, companion to grievance, implies melancholia and unleashes the energy of protest. I have always been fascinated by those who do not raise their little finger to protest, who dare not complain in the proud whistleblower poise of landing their complaint—admittedly a very risky business. The non-complainers get all the credit, staying within the boundaries of coded gracefulness. *It is not graceful to complain.* My dilemma: ego-ideal wants me to be graceful. But I must complain. Sometimes I want to raise myself to the dignity of the unsounded complaint. It would be more comfortable to pull back, stop howling, go soft and compliant. However, compliancy, as Phillis Wheatley, poet of slavery's wreckage, has taught us, also bunks with the complaint following a syntax of holding back and breaking rhyme.

Ö was ist der Mensch. On May 4, 1771, young Werther famously begins by declaring, "How glad am I to have broken away from home." The first two paragraphs, setting up the movement and blueprint for the entire stash of letters, shift from modes of lamenting to the structure of the complaint—from *klagen* to *beschweren*, in fact to "*meiner Mutter Beschwerden*," sounding off the maternal complaint. He starts a correspondence with his best friend, asking of what the human heart is constituted. As he starts up the work that will propel Goethe into world-historical stature, Werther recalls a catastrophic story that he has left behind. He had broken a girl's heart, denying accountability; however, he later admits guilt for instigating the way Leonore was run down by rogue emotion. In the midst of the opening salvo of this text, consisting of many letters and an editorial intervention—the correspondence makes up one long suicide note, put to public notice by the notary-editor—Werther disturbs the syntax, puncturing a hole in his

narrative after the word, *nicht* (not). He cries out ontologically, asking what (not *who*) is man, that s/he can lament. “*Der Mensch*” does not match exactly or only with “man,” but could mean “human” or indicate “personhood,” depending on the stress of context. Werther has just put up for show the lamentable fate of a girl wronged by him in the past and whose injury, as his story unfolds, he will have secretly incorporated. Invaded by Leonore—in some ways faded and vanishing, yet still showing up as pinprick of conscience—he is, from the start, set to become his own victim, played by fate, and infected by the compulsion to repeat. Werther, in any case, delicate and artistic, undertowed by guilt toward the one who precedes the text, will flood his letters with tears and uncontrolled gushes:

Hab ich nicht—O was ist der Mensch, daß er über sich klagen darf! Ich will, lieber Freund, ich verspreche dirs, ich will mich bessern, will nicht mehr ein bißchen Übel, das uns das Schicksal vorlegt, wiederkauen, wie ich's immer getan habe; ich will das Gegenwärtige genießen, und das Vergangene soll mir vergangen sein.

[Didn't I—oh what is man that he is allowed to complain about himself! I will, my dear friend, I promise you, I will improve, I will not chew over the bit of woe that fate presents us with, the way I have always done; I will enjoy the present and let bygones be bygones.]¹⁷

Big mistake, Werther. Werther's intention to put the past behind him is stated as if Goethe had not been coached by Freud about mangled suppressions of the past, bound to assail you down the road.¹⁸ In any case, Werther prepares the furious return of the story he thought he could leave behind. We should neither be satisfied with causality nor seduced by mere narrative coherency, especially given Goethe's syntactical breaches and spurning of logical buildup. One of Goethe's sparks of insight, to be picked up by Kierkegaard, fires up the *Krankheit zum Tode* motif, the sickness unto death, that pushes Werther over the edge by driving down his defenses regardless of logic, rational rebuff, or any manner of developmental projects for growing personhood. The deadly drive, in a sense driverless, is deposited in Werther like a virus, and the work itself behaves like a virus that cannot be stopped

or redirected by the strength of prevalent Enlightenment policies or philosophical critiques. Something in Werther relentlessly pushes him to his smashup. No theory or doctor or philosophy in the area of rational self-righting could be appointed to deter the destruction that was assigned to young Werther.

Werther's own theory of ruin begins with a big "O," a sign of lament—the opening and closure, syncope, of a round of nothingness that initiates the double character of lament: Werther laments that lament is at all allotted to us. This capacity—or incapacitation—has everything to do with the definition of man, of womanly man, the manly feminine that seizes him at moments of textual tension. The license to lament in itself constitutes a trespass in the opening pages of the novel—before anything *happens*. He wonders why he is even allowed to lament, and if this capacity for incapacitating statements spells out disaster. The second paragraph restarts on a neighboring note, on lament's irony. Thus, ironically, when the second paragraph downshifts to the complaint, the scene settles in the realm of the manageable, grasped in terms of the strictly possible. Lament places the speaker, or wailer, under the constraint of the impossible, provoking a backslide into unavowable catastrophe—already on page one.

When Werther breaks away, he promises, emphatically, in the sense that Hamacher taught us to read, I *ver-spreche*—I misspeak/promise at one and the same time—for I cannot promise, strictly speaking, but may only promise to promise and thereby skid off the promise, since the promise can only fulfill itself in the future of its assertion and not in the present in which it's proffered, which means according to strict logic and grammatical prescription that it can never be fulfilled. Werther promises to put an end to the lament, rhetorically breaking into a lament—"O"—thereby cancelling and initiating his writing of disaster; but never mind, let us not tag him out in the first letter merely because he breaks his promise about stopping with the lament already, lamenting that he laments, ironizing his predicament, promising never to do so again as he's doing it again before having started, dropping into bleak irony.—O—.

I have misquoted—or, rather, misappropriated; I took a misstep in thinking through to the end what is happening in the phrasing of

the lament. *I took the question for a question*—again, one of Hamacher’s themes, dealing with the philosophical compulsion to question. Wait. Maybe my misstep is merely a matter of grammatical dilution and not full throttle Goethean eccentricity. Maybe the culture of the question rings differently in German and English. Give me a close-up of the emergent lament. This is important. The better part of my argument hangs on a diacritical mark, *merde!* The break-in sentence ends on an *exclamation mark*, not a *question mark*. I suppose that the refusal to yield a question mark falls in line with Hamlet’s utterance, “What a piece of work is man!”—quite different from, “What a piece of work is man?” I take the liberty of inventing a new folio to support this instance: a revelatory force is put behind the assertion. The flow of Shakespeare’s language steers the observation away from a questioning pose, whereas Werther, echoing and diverting this sense of things, remains somewhere between the question and the assertion. Man is the lamenting animal, yes? Or, what is it that allows one to lament? Does this tremor mark the end of man, where one breaks off from the human, cut from the determinations of language, primed to become a howling creature? What even permits the human to lament, a quality or act that transpierces the properly *human* being of the human? The lament not only brings out the improper, but tips toward the inhuman, introducing the inoperative zone of the so-called human animal. (Let us remember that *Werther* was on the nameless monster’s reading list in *Frankenstein*.) This moment of original complaint—he complains that he laments—commences the textual encounter and marks the spot where Werther tenders his resignation, makes the promise to cease lamenting, in a pull toward Enlightenment perfectibility. It is as though Werther vows, *I will improve myself. I shall stop lamenting*. We understand that lament, for Werther, presses and depends on repetition, opening up the uncontrolled domain of surrender and prepossession. Werther’s promise is to stop tapping out the same story over and again, to stop obsessing on the little bit of malevolence that fate has thrown at him. That’s who he used to be. Now he will stay loyal to *now*, “stay in the present,” enjoy only the present as he finishes with a past that must remain buried in the past. However, the pain of the past keeps being called back into the present, compulsively repeating itself. Nonethe-

less, Werther's first letter contours a promissory note stating that the past is past—I mean, grammatically, that the past has passed; from now on it stays in the past, and Werther resolves to enjoy the present, which entails suppressing lament. Let's not even go to the Derridean sticking point of the repression of writing that Werther's vow requisitions. Werther writes that he will stay present, off repetition, implying that he will not kick into writing. His task makes him throw himself into writing as he gives it up (much as he gives up painting in favor of the purported fullness of being), opening and closing a range of writing indissociable from lamentation. This book, its envoy promises, will not be a lamentation. It will be a book without writing. I promise.—O—

The complaint presupposes an address, probably the wrong one.

Any good Nietzschean would comprehend by now that at least two valences uphold the complaint. Even a bad Nietzschean must concede this point. There's good complaining and bad complaining, noble and decadent complaints. These can be further fissured around Freudian tracks that cover all sorts of minor scaling of the complaint as culture, behavioral grid, cult strength, medical description, cultural queasiness (the so-called "Discontents" squatting in cultural *Unbehagen*), or lamentable weakness and narcissistic soft spot. The constant complainer, whimpering with no off switch, grinding down on the world, can come from a place of weakness, wearing away any vitality that life has to offer, whining to exhaustion, shutting down responsiveness regardless of the push-off point from referential injury. On the other hand, following the lineage of Nietzsche's "noble traitor," one could imagine the *bold complainers* who muster up courage to say what wrongs our being-in-common and light up the bright sense of justice, who risk incivility in the name of civility, taking to the trans-feminist lookout post, the in-your-face act-uppers, and those who advocate life's capacity to power up and adjust vivaciously. These opposing stances of complaint collapse into and support each other, contaminate and cross over into the fields of their adversarial type. I refrain from saying that the constant whiner is *not* the most noble, even though we culturally pitch against all forms of ingratitude no matter how dire the conditions are from which they siren up. This is where Nietzsche comes in strongly, for the weak may

mask the strongest perspectives, covering over the most powerful dispositions, whereas the seemingly strong use props of mendacity to accomplish their takeovers. Can the complaint reinforce advocacy for righteousness in the strong, good, Nietzschean sense allotted to things? Or, conversely but not absolutely: To what extent does the milieu and mark of complaint deplete and extinguish any bump of breakthrough joy? These are Nietzschean questions that come through today according to their inherently strict yet untimely schedule, soliciting with nagging precision a time-released set of responses.

Complaints carry good and bad tonalities, worthy and derisory qualities in terms of their launch pad and aims. A good complaint would be prepped with the energy of critique, enabling a Nietzschean-genealogical scan and sense of how things have deteriorated or overreached, according to distinctive sorts of subterranean logic or seismic shifts in grammar and being. Nietzsche, in complicity with Freud, has a sharp sense for the profit margins of destructive histories: Who are the secret beneficiaries of a certain constellation of incidents, belief-clusters, or traditional safeguards? What are the decoys, beards, or undeclared blood sports waged in support of certain occurrences or rolled in for the prevention of beneficent, if disjunctive, life-forms of growth and kinship?

If one puts on one's allegorical ears, one will tune in to an institutional track and attack, in some ways muted like the death drive. A lot of my work was motivated by attacks on immigrant populations that continue to this day in all the countries that I visit. The writers on Hamacher's reading list, from the 18th century to our present time, have something to say about the consistency of this phobic stance. We try to take these texts to the mat, I tell myself, struggling with their sometimes indefensible edges and peculiar war cry, their logic of injury. My own itinerary includes substantial visitations with wildly incompatible malcontents from Nietzsche, a genealogical faultfinder; to Husserl, who sent up smoke signals that I still try to decipher; to Heidegger, who bellyached about how everything went downhill after the pre-Socratics; and Valerie Solanas, chronic sourpuss of the ends of man. Every one of the thinkers and innovators with whom I put in time and to whose

frame of urgency I have succumbed, addressed life-threatening loopholes, pernicious defense mechanisms of some theoretical gravity, and struggled with core survival issues. I took their complaints seriously.

I devote equal time to the Greeks and the geeks, the losers who are destructive of world, of what's left of world, and their sniveling complaints, as well as the ostensibly winning teams and themes of abiding insight. Thank you for making me produce something like an account of this writing habit, often obscure and harassing, my only float in times of distress. I realize that I take and read and reflect on complaints all year round, day in, day out.

“The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away.” G—d does not have to hear Job’s plaintive appeal; sHe does not have to *repair*. G—d gives; G—d takes. This is part of an argument of force. The reparative experience belongs elsewhere. Jeremiah’s lamentations are made in the mode of catastrophic nostalgia.

At the same time, the Biblical complaint is never *refuted*. The rapport de force says something like, “I’m stronger; you need to shut up.” This attitude trickles down, laying siege to all angles of relatedness where the weaker party’s complaint is closed down amidst the shrapnel of divine violence.

The second paragraph of Werther’s May 4th letter shifts down from lament to complaint. The rhetoric of lament, which has dominated the opening paragraph, fizzles, collapsing on itself, and gives space to the negotiating stances that complaint can encourage. Writing to his interlocutor, Werther commissions his friend to tell Mother that he has looked after her business interests. He has spoken with his aunt, hardly the evil *Weib* (woman) that she was built up as being. Werther has discharged his task by conveying to his aunt his mother’s complaints about a withheld inheritance. Reasons were given; misunderstandings were resolved; their part of the inheritance was assured. Werther concludes the paragraph by stating that misunderstanding and indolence contribute far more to the world’s ills than ruse and malevolence. The conclusion, very Goethe-to-Eckermann in style and dictum, diverts a prevailing perspective. As often happens, Goethe powers down on what drives aggression, on deeds that might be attached to evil or

conspiratorial stratagem. World-class harm happens by way of sloth, lazy transmission, and misunderstanding — part of a grammar of negligence. In order to get a handle on calamity, Goethe downshifts to an exegetics of irritation, minor disturbance, or a quality of glitching capable of bringing major world-disorder. Minor dents serve gradually to mark a pileup of unchecked ineptitude and disregard, escalating indifference to a pitch of endangering phenomena. Goethe preferred slow-burn ethics to prescriptive assertion; this was his way of moving beyond good and evil. But even more to the point, his gaze stays with a reflection that he locates *prior* to any good and evil. The syntagm, “good and evil,” for him, provides too facile an evaluative grid. The fuel for getting *beyond* good and evil was available to Goethe as what comes prior to good, to its derivatives such as evil, affording him the time he needed to move at a radically slow but undeterred pace. (Or “beyond,” as Derrida observes in terms of Freud, is never really beyond, and no one gets *beyond* the pleasure principle, always lagging behind itself. Another story, but not far behind.) Goethe sparked the Freudian principle and corresponded with Nietzschean moves to the point of mapping them. He flew beneath philosophical radars to capture alternative causalities and valuations, indicating slower forms of registering meaning. Thus, the tropes of sloth or inactivity could trigger massive reactivity and fearsome consequence, as in *Elective Affinities*, where everything starts up with a friend losing his job. Losing work is not a result of sloth or slowdown but produces such effects. The fact of having an intimate, a companion or neighbor, out of work puts ethical pressure on the couple, even on their garden. The opening question or “issue” confronts the existential hole dug by a listless friend: What is your responsibility when a friend ceases to thrive, depleted by the frozen stances of unemployment? — a problematic that travels in one way or another in the works of Schlegel, Hegel, Kafka, and Hamacher.¹⁹ In Goethe, the one who falls off the labor lines is considerably endangered. Even leisure time is linked essentially to work — they belong together, reciprocally replenishing. Goethe tries to keep his characters busy and purposefully distracted. What Levinas calls “sabbatical existence” in many ways undermines the life-capacity of the young storm and stressor. Early on, when Werther stops mediating

his mother's business affairs, drops the sketchbook, and starts foundering by, for instance, reading junk like *Ossian*, he is carried away by the suicidal push that had from the start thrown him together with poor Leonore. For Werther, it is not clear that it could have been otherwise, because nothing could redirect this impulse, over which Goethe scandalously suspended a sentence — neither good nor evil, certainly not *beyond*, but a permanent sidebar of impossible negotiations. He, Werther, is already gone when he arrives on the scene, following the impertinent logic of non-presence and writing, rendered by an impossible grammar of being: “*Wie froh bin ich, daß ich weg bin!*” (How happy I am that I'm gone!). Sure, one can and must translate this opening/closing statement into English more or less as “since I have gone or gotten away,” but Goethe puts it all in the present tense: being gone, going away, writing from this being-away.²⁰ I write to the extent that I am already gone, a specter of my history, that of the split away part, whom I lament. The paradox of the lament is that, as Hamacher's refrain runs, it always wants to do away with itself, to put down the lamenting subject and its unappeasable causalities like a rabid dog. Well, maybe not like a rabid dog — this figure comes from Lyotard and means to underscore how we handled or failed to handle Nazi Germany as historical calamity: it was put down like a rabid dog. *No working through*, if that seems possible. No coming to terms in a severe and lucid and worthy way, not on the part of the majority of Europeans. Hamacher, in his way, on another register, questions our ability truly to “work through.” Wait. How did we get from *Werther* to Nazi Germany? What kind of a scandal and slippage have I provoked or allowed? My pathology; I apologize. I guess these stutters mark my ability/disability to work through. Perhaps the lament itself offers such an access route, even though any such route must be barred, and the pathology is not entirely mine but irreversibly bequeathed.

Lament seeks its own end, as Werther explicitly articulates. He promises, as we said, to finish off the lament; he laments in order to disable the past — a logically tall order. What concerns this maneuver now, implicating the fate of the text, is that the first letter has inscribed the end in terms of the subgenre it has selected as object for overcoming, the *Klage*. Like Werther, the text has injected itself with a poisoning

intrusion that may go into latency but will reemerge to reclaim the textual body. The lament that Werther has promised to void is, from the start, overtaking him and the text that seeks to contain *Werther*. The irony of this suicide pill is that the protagonist has wanted to switch subgenres: if he had been able to sustain the attitude of complaint, Werther could have taken on the world instead of training an oversized, libidinated aggression on himself. That is a big *maybe*. Goethe, in any case, walks away famously unscathed, ready for more trouble down the road. Though I do not want to pop open another lost file at this point, I will indicate, for the philologists of the future, that the *complaint*, manageable and on the side of life, belongs to the domain of the maternal, whereas the lament in Werther stays in pursuit of the lost paternal metaphor. Some call the elusive figurality that heads up his quest God-the-father.

That Goethe chisels down the mega-concepts of a prescriptive ethics is something showcased by *Werther* in the famous section on *Laune* (mood). One is responsible for one's moods, for the way one upholds *Mitsein*, the primal condition of being-with explored by Heidegger, and goes about the practice of social justice every time one faces others. One must desist from fatiguing the interlocutor and friend with utterances borne of the foul mood; one must avoid the unleashing of corrosive complaints. Bitch-moan, bitch-moan, blah-nag-blah-nag. Cease and desist these dispositions; turn away from this field of representation. *It is within your power*. Stop approaching the tipping point of bad sociality: the invasive arrogance of presenting, pressing, and pushing a rotten mood. On the Goethean charts the unconcealed bad mood is responsible for unrelenting social destruction, a core complaint on Goethe's playlist.

Werner trat herein, und als er seinen Freund mit den bekannten Heften beschäftigt sah, rief er aus: Bist du schon wieder über diesen Papieren? Ich wette, du hast nicht die Absicht, eins oder das andere zu vollenden! Du siehst sie durch und wieder durch und beginnst allenfalls etwas Neues. — Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, erstes Buch, zehntes Kapitel

[Werner came in, and seeing his friend busied with his manuscripts, said: 'Are you poring over those things again? I bet you don't intend to finish any of them. You'll just look through them again and again—and then start something new.']*²¹

Werner, the good friend, shows up for the protagonist. Addressee of the letters Wilhelm sends out in the *Lehrjahre*, the treasured friend remains unseen in his place of remoteness, much like Georg's "friend from Russia" in Kafka's *Judgment*. Werner picks up the slack where the protagonist cannot stabilize a perspective or mark out the boundaries of speculation. Werner—grounded, bright, skilled with life's pragmatic edges, capable of counting, masterful in critically discounting—puts down some super-egoical tracks in the novel. Werner instructs and critiques. He knows his subject; he has prepared an entire genome map of Wilhelm, the ever-straying friend, prone to flopping, going under and making ethical comebacks, scraping through. When Wilhelm spaces out or drops into poetic aneconomies, their exchange gives Werner some leverage. He tries to pull Wilhelm toward the world, to the upside of running and calculable economies, to the peaceful management of commerce, fiscal advantage, gaining on generalized types and psychological solidity.

As in a number of his prose works, Goethe brings speculative acumen to the subject of human activity (*Tätigkeit*), to the way it and we get organized nonviolently, by fixing the way endangerment is converted to monetary transfers—at least that was Goethe's speculative wish-fulfillment: *a girl can dream!* Goethe thought it could work—that the work could work and sideswipe a history of cruelty. Read back to us, Goethe's intervention runs today as one long complaint, an *Anklage*, or accusation, in terms of the way business in fact has been conducted—or, rather, derailed from its possible alignment with philosophical origins and poetic stamina.

The logic that prompts Werner's theorizations is in the service of the world's thriving body, vibrant and alert, oriented toward its well-being by the poetic exercises of business and peace. Poetry steers the course of business away from mere privative interests, endows it with rhythm and reflection, a certain prowess restrained only by the dignity

of means. The market, meant to supplant the spillover of world-class aggression, subdues and converts the currency of bloodlust, and can quash or reassign the maneuvers of clashing armies. Goethe was resolved to root out, or at least to reroute, perniciously hostile stances by means of the world market and its underlying metaphysics of exchange. At the same time, according to an implicit hierarchical score sheet of the Bildungsroman, Werner's place may scan as a subsidiary of Wilhelm's messy positing and positions, his passions of destruction — unless Werner, ever converting values and changing masks, comes out on top. He will have tutored Wilhelm, bringing him into ethical being, following the development monitored by *Bildung*. Wilhelm is under the control of many, and Werner remains a powerful player, partner, and existential administrator of the highest life-stakes. The value of his commentary on business and free commerce remain strongly supported by the novel's tactics and narrative investments.

In an ironic swerve that ties friendship to the poetic stock market, Werner, when offering his board-like presentation, refers to his "*geschätzer Freund*," his treasured friend, leaving it undecidable whether Wilhelm, when appraised by his devoted friend, transcends market valuation or derives his worth from an economy tethered to commerce, to the freeing of funds on which the market thrives. Does one always avoid assessing the market value of one's friendships? In a sub-Goethean and pre-deconstructive sense, I can only hope so; but, sometimes, contaminated and saturated by overburdening precepts of capital, one just can't tell. Can friendship, even the most lofty in nature, escape such calculations? O, my friends!

In order to be in a position to complain, one must presume a *right* to something — to a better deal, a better world, an improved material arrangement. Yet the unfree — on the plantation, in the Bible, among trafficked women, in lockdown, hunger-bitten, and in poverty — lack the grounds to sound a complaint. Existentially disenfranchised, bereft and frozen in place, terrorized, the destitute stifles the grammar of the plaint. One can barely say "I" and certainly not "don't" or any of the other liberatory "nos." Nonetheless, sometimes a riot breaks out; the accumulated despair leverages a social physics of pushback.

Notes

1. Sometimes it hurts when people play with your name, especially if it's a weird one to start off with, like mine. While Derrida threw light on the ultrafeminine "elle" implicit in "Ronell(e)," Hamacher tied me, with epiphanic verve, I thought, to iRony. Friends rename you or dial you up according to different unconscious scales that can become determining. I hesitated to work up Hamacher's name but gave in, despite my anxieties and respect for this name.
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.
3. Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, 36.
4. In Anders Kølbe, *Beyond Reflection* (New York: Atropos Press, 2013), 60.
5. According to Michael Levine, there was yet another option, differently run: Rainer Nägele, on whose team I did in fact play in the heyday of my Germanistik affiliation. He kept some essential doors open for the French fringe. David Wellbery represented another type of leadership that also shuttled for a spell between Kittler and Hamacher. Benjamin Bennett flagged still a separate district of exegetical intensity.
6. Both Hamacher and Kittler exceed the field to which I provisionally link them here. Recently Hamacher figured significantly in Mangalika de Silva's "No Longer a 'Whore,' Not Yet a 'Terrorist,' Never a Citizen: Majoritarian Right and the Rabble" for his notion of a promissory subject of rights as a never fully constituted actuality in "Wild Promises on the Language 'Leviathan,'" *New Centennial Review* 4, no. 3 (2004): 215–45. See de Silva, *Social Text* 117, winter 2013.
7. Samuel Weber—lucid, prolific, top-of-the-line—had his own travel plan, a type of itinerancy that sometimes coincided with particular instances of this near polarity. He started his run with more or less American identity papers, which may have complicated the specific cast we are trying to identify in the evolving character of German Studies. Close to Adorno, Szondi, and de Man in the breakaway days of his career, Sam was, before and also after he closed ranks with Derrida, resetting all sorts of registers of critical thought spanning France and Germany, relayed to and from the U.S. I insinuated myself with an unchecked sense of urgency into the cartography I am trying to establish here.
8. "The *Philia* of Philology," in the present volume.
9. Walter Benjamin, *Lettres françaises* (Région Basse-Normandie: Nous, 2013), 101.
10. Walter Benjamin, *Lettres françaises*, 101–2; Walter Benjamin, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910–1940*, eds. Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, trans. Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 359.

11. Walter Benjamin, *Lettres françaises*, 102.
12. Walter Benjamin, *Lettres françaises*, 102.
13. Benjamin, *Correspondence*, 359f.
14. “Die deutsche Dichtung hebt an mit einem Seufzer” is the opening sentence and salvo of Kittler’s *Aufschreibesysteme: 1800/1900* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2003), 11.
15. Werner Hamacher, Jan Ritsema, and Gerhard Gamm, “Klage, Anspruch und Fürsprache,” in Werner Hamacher, *Philosophische Salons: Frankfurter Dialoge IV*, ed. Elisabeth Schweeger (Frankfurt am Main: Belleville, 2007), 13–33, here 33.
16. The tendency to maintain Jewish cultures in the lock of the projected complaint is a theme developed in recent discussions with Eckart Goebel, Professor of German at the University of Tübingen.
17. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Erstes Buch*, 8; *The Sufferings of Young Werther*, trans. Stanley Corngold (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 21.
18. I have explored Goethe’s latency in Freud in *Dictations: On Haunted Writing* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).
19. For more work on work and the invention of sloth see Martin Schäfer, Wayne Koestenbaum, Hannah Arendt, Max Weber, Karl Marx, and the *Book of Genesis*. I, too, have been working through work, the labor force, transcendental service, and their supposed opposites in *Stupidity and Loser Sons*.
20. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (Berlin: Insel, 2011), 9.
21. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship, The Collected Works*, vol. 9, ed. and trans. Eric A. Blackall with Victor Lange (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 17.

9

The Category of Philology

PETER FENVES

At the end of Thesis 89 of *95 Theses on Philology*, Werner Hamacher formulates a “provisional maxim” of what he calls “another philology”: “Handle so, daß du das Handeln lassen kannst. Und weiter: Handle ohne Maxime, auch ohne diese.”¹ A provisional English translation of this passage would be: “act in such a way that you can allow a lapse in acting. And furthermore: act without a maxim, even without this one.” Both of these maxims are, of course, reminiscent of the various forms of the categorical imperative that Kant proposes in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and elsewhere. Not only is the content of Hamacher’s maxims different from Kant’s, however; so, too, is the term with which the directives are designated. According to Kant, a maxim is a “subjective principle” of action, whereas an imperative conforms to the objectivity of a law. As for the categorical imperative, it is the manner in which a purely rational law, based on no worldly interest, presents itself to a finite “world-being” (*Weltwesen*) such as the human being. A maxim becomes a categorical imperative only when it is universalized to the point where it can govern the actions of all world-beings without succumbing to self-contradiction. For Kant, every maxim is provisional insofar as it looks toward its universalization. The maxims Hamacher formulates are provisional in a different respect, for they await another philology of which they would be its maxim.

About the endlessly controversial concept of the categorical imperative—whether its foundation in “transcendental freedom” is consistent with the doctrines of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, whether

it has any “content,” under what conditions is “morality” superseded by “ethical substance,” and so forth—there is one issue that remains incontrovertible: the term “categorical” derives from the first book of Aristotle’s so-called *Organon* or “instrument,” and it refers to a mode of utterance in which a certain subject matter is “declaimed” and thus stands “accused” in the public space of the *agora*. Whenever the “accusation” (*kategoria*) of a particular subject matter is unconditional or unqualified, thus admitting no exceptions or allowances, the utterance is categorical. When Hamacher declines to use the term “category” in his formulation of the maxims appropriate for “another philology,” he is undoubtedly demonstrating a certain loyalty to Kant’s terminology; but he is also confirming philology’s disinclination toward categoricity in general and the category of the categorical in particular. This is already apparent in Thesis 8, which is notable because the subject matter of its propositions is neither philology nor language, but the philosopher whose remaining literary corpus begins with a treatise entitled *The Categories*. As Hamacher writes, “Aristotle distinguishes between *logos apophantikos*, assertive speech, which refers to veridical sentences about finite objects, and another *logos*, which does not assert something about something else and therefore can be neither true nor false. His only example of nonapophantic speech is *euchē*, the plea, the prayer, the entreaty” (Thesis 8).

Hamacher refers, of course, to the second book of Aristotle’s *Organon*, *On Interpretation*, which begins by distinguishing *logos apophantikos* from all other forms of discourse insofar as demonstrative speech alone is capable of being true or false. The *Organon* as a whole seeks to solve the cardinal problem of Platonic thought: *einei* (“to be,” thus “to be true”) is used in several ways; but the differences in modes of “accusing” some subject matter of being something cannot be so very different from one another that they are related only by accident, whereupon the putative unity of being would only be a case of homonymy, and sophistic disputation could thus disarm *logos* of its ability to bring disputes to an end by declaring one speech to be true, the other false. Hamacher’s Thesis 6 refers to Plato’s most daring solution to the same problem: the multivocity of *einai* is governed by a hyperbolic power, some non-thing and non-nothing, which lies *epekeina tēs ousias* (beyond

being). As Socrates proposes in the sixth book of *The Republic*, the non-thing and non-nothing lying “beyond being” should be called the idea of the good, and the ensuing “allegory of the cave” describes the painful “turns” or “tropes” that philosophers are forced to take in order for them to see this idea above all and return to the people below. Hamacher responds to this Platonic provocation in Thesis 7: “The object of philology is infinite in both extension and intensity (reality) as well as in its structural intention. It lies, as Plato could say, *epekeina tēs ousias*. It is, therefore, not an object of a representation or of a concept but, rather, an idea.” Much of *95 Theses on Philology* revolves around a small number of *Wendungen* (turns and turns of speech); but from Thesis 7 onward, it is evident that Hamacher declines to take the Aristotelian turn, which replaces the winding movement toward the idea of the good (*epekeina tēs ousias*) with an investigation into the “accusations” of being, beginning with *ousia*. Just as Hamacher is loyal to Kantian terminology, so he remains faithful to the farthest-reaching Platonic idea and finds in the opening books of Aristotle’s *Organon* only a faint trace of what can be heard to take place in the central books of *The Republic*—a trace that appears in the lonely word *euchē*, which may not stretch “beyond being” but is at least outside of the “instrument” of formal logic at the inception of its construction.

The primary condition for the construction of the *Organon*, for Hamacher, emerges in the previous thesis, Thesis 6, where he distances philology from an Aristotelian characterization of the human being: “The idea of philology, like the idea of language, forbids that it be seen as a possession (*Habe*). Since the Aristotelian turn of phrase (*Wendung*) about the human being as a living thing possessing language uses the (linguistic) category of ‘having’ for language itself and therefore uses it tautologically, it is without a finite object and itself a non-finite category, an *apeiron*” (Thesis 6). Hamacher alludes to a famous passage at the beginning of *The Politics* where Aristotle seeks to demonstrate that human beings are “political” by nature: “Of all the animals, only the human being has logos” (*logon de monon anthrōpos echei tōn zōōn*).² As Aristotle briefly explains—and this explanation at once amplifies and contradicts a longer discussion in *The History of Animals*—“logos” cannot simply be understood in terms of either “voice” (*phōnē*) or “sign”

(*sēmeion*), for many species of animals vocalize their experiences of pleasure and pain, and some also use their voices to signal other animals in their vicinity. Aristotle makes only a single positive assertion concerning the sense of “logos” in its “political” context: “logos makes clear what is advantageous and what is disadvantageous, thus what is just and what unjust” (*to dikaion kai to adikion*).³ The Aristotelian notion of “having logos” thus recalls Socrates’ demand that his interlocutors “give logos” (*logon didonai*) for what they do and what they have. Although Aristotle explores the notion of “having logos” in the sense of making an argument for or against a particular course of action or mode of living in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he does not explicitly declare in *The Politics* that “having logos” is predicated on the act of “giving logos” — which would suggest that the word *echein* succumbs to homonymy, since its use at the opening of *The Politics* would fundamentally differ from its use in almost every other context, including those found in later chapters of the treatise. “*To ánthrōpos*” would not “have logos” in the sense of possessing some ability, disposing over an item of property, or even conforming to a fixed “*héxis*” or habit; rather, human beings could be said to “have logos” only insofar as logos was simultaneously given away. A conjecture of this kind cannot be supported from the evidence of the Aristotelian corpus, for even as the passage from *The Politics* helped generate the later notion of the human being as *animale rationale*, it says nothing further about the human being as *zōōn logon echein* — and Aristotle never actually uses this phrase in the extant corpus.

In Thesis 19, Hamacher replaces the Aristotelian turn of phrase with one derived from the aforementioned passage of *On Interpretation*: “The formula of the human being as a living being having language — *zōōn logon echon* — can be clarified by the modification: he is a *zōōn logon euchomenon* — a living being who appeals for language, who longs for it. He is a *zōōn philologon*.” The modification Hamacher proposes confirms the disinclination of philology toward categoriality, for whatever else may be said about *euchesthai*, it is never treated as a category. By contrast, *echein* is the tenth and last category — or it might be the eighth. The uncertain place of *echein* in the order of categories reflects its uncertain categorial status, and a similar uncertainty is also perhaps reflected in Aristotle’s unusual use of the word to single out the human

being among all living things as the one “having logos.” Aristotle may not identify a trans-categorical principle on the basis of which all of the categories are generated; but the provenance of the first few can be clearly developed in relation to the Platonic problem of the multivocity of being, which marks the starting point for Aristotle’s investigations into the way something is said to be something else. As *The Categories* moves away from the categories of substance, quality, quantity, and relation, it becomes ever less sure of its path. Thus, Aristotle writes in the tenth chapter of the treatise, after having briefly discussed the correlated categories of *poiein* (“action” or “making”) and *paschein* (“suffering” or “affection”): “The proposed categories have thus been adequately handled.”⁴ At this point, however, instead of returning to *poiein* and *paschein*, he analyzes certain uses of the term “opposite” to initiate an inquiry into contrary terms such as “privation” (*sterēsis*) and “possession” (*hexis*), which then allows him to distinguish terms that designate “being-in-a-position” from temporal and spatial “accusations” — that is, “being-at-some-time” and “being-in-some-place.” Only after a renewed treatment of the correlated categories of *poiein* and *paschein* does Aristotle finally turn to *echein*, perhaps as clarification of *hexis* in the absence of a corresponding analysis of *sterēsis*, which would presumably include modes of privations that derive from the act of giving things away. In any case, the brief investigation of *echein* echoes the beginning of the inquiry into the meaning of being: “The word ‘have’ is spoken in various ways.”⁵ After listing some of the ways that “have” is used, Aristotle ends the opening treatise of the *Organon* by indicating that the inquiry remains incomplete, for *echein* can still be used in more extraordinary ways: “Other senses of the word might perhaps be found, but the most ordinary ones have been enumerated.”⁶

The inconclusiveness with which Aristotle breaks off his discussion of *echein* and the odd manner in which it is tacked onto the inquiry as a whole immediately raises a question: why should *echein* be considered a category in the first place? The only available answer can be found in the initial paragraphs of *The Categories* that summarize the content of the investigation: “Of things said without any combination, each signifies substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, having [*echein*], action [*poiein*], or suffering [*paschein*]. To give a rough sketch

of what I mean: examples of substance are ‘the human being’ or ‘the horse’; examples of quantity are terms such as ‘two cubits long’ or ‘three cubits long’ . . . ‘Being shod’ and ‘being armed’ [are examples of] having, ‘to cut’ and ‘to burn,’ [examples] of action, ‘to be cut’ and ‘to be burnt,’ [examples] of affection” (1b25–2a4). There are many obscurities here, far too many to discuss in the context of this brief essay; but the most obvious question is why *echein* initially appears as the eighth category but is then treated as the tenth. The primary obscurity, however, lies in discovering the basis for the distinction between *echein* and *paschein*—how, in other words, “having,” understood as a condition of stasis that results from an action, is different from “suffering,” understood as a condition of stasis that results from being acted upon. The similarity between the content of these two pairs of examples is striking but so, too, is the difference in the disposition of the exemplary substances. Both “having” and “suffering” capture the state of a body that undergoes an alteration in the course of an action. Under the category of *echein*, the result is protective: the lower parts of the human body are protected from the earth (“being shod”), and the upper parts are protected from other human beings (“being armed”). Under the category of *paschein*, by contrast, the result is destructive: in the first example, a body is disfigured (“being cut”), and in the second, destroyed (“being burnt”). Hamacher does not follow Kant in asking whether Aristotle’s list of categories is anything more than a rhapsodic jumble of common notions; but there is reason to suspect that the “Aristotelian turn of phrase” that Hamacher discusses near the beginning of the 95 *Theses* is traversed by a counter-phrase that replaces *echein* with the counter category—neither correlated nor opposite—of *paschein*. Just as the examples of “having” reverberate in those of “suffering,” so too does the notion of *logon echein* provoke the thought of *logon paschein*. Given the uncertainty with which *The Categories* concludes, and given the terse comments through which Aristotle explains what is meant by his assertion that the human being “has logos,” the following thought suggests itself: “having logos” may be closer to “being cut” and “being burned” than “being shod” and “being armed.”

Even as he replaces *echein* with *euchesthai* in Thesis 19, Hamacher does not discuss its uncertain categorial status. Perhaps this is because he

concurr with Kant, who, in the drafts for his *Doctrine of Right*, says that *habere* is not a genuine category but only “a predicabile of the category of cause.”⁷ As Kant notes in a prominent section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the same is true of the other questionable Aristotelian categories, *actio* and *passio*, each of which, so he argues, is derived from the “primitive concept” of cause.⁸ Kant’s reformation of the Aristotelian account of the categories consists in the eviction of being-at-some-time and being-in-some-place from the sphere of conceptuality and the concomitant enfolding of *poiein*, *paschein*, and *echein* under the domineering category of cause, thus leaving being-in-a-position as a trans-categorical problem. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to say that the thought of *logon paschein* is altogether absent from Hamacher’s 95 *Theses*, for it resonates with its title, which is drawn, of course, from Luther’s *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum*, popularly known as “The 95 Theses.” Thesis 85 refers to Luther’s manifesto in the course of identifying *Christlichkeit* as a predicabile of philology. And in the same context Hamacher describes a “distressing turn” (*peinliche Wendung*) that occurs with the reformation of Christianity. Evidence for this turn can be found in the fourth of Luther’s “95 Theses,” where self-hatred becomes the abiding affect or passion of earthly life: “As long as hatred of self abides (i.e., true inward repentance), the penalty of sin abides, viz., until we enter the kingdom of heaven.”⁹ Hatred thus becomes the principal passion of earthly life, so much so that, as Hamacher writes in a parenthesis that defies translation, “(— Was heißt, haßt—)” (Whatever is named, whatever calls for naming, whatever has a name—this hates) (Thesis 85, my translation).

A dense complex of predicates emerges at the point in Hamacher’s 95 *Theses* where he touches upon Luther’s similarly named manifesto. The second-person singular form of “have” (*hast*) can be heard in the third-person singular form of the passion called “hate” (*haßt*). Both phonemes resonate with a form of predication in which *actio*, *passio*, and *possessio* are enfolded into language—namely, *heißen*. Not only human beings suffer logos, but so, too, does anything that acquires a name, regardless of whose action is the putative cause of this “logical” passion. The Aristotelian turn of phrase according to which the human being is the “animal possessing language” transposes the movement of

logon paschein into the “hexis” of *logon echein*, which aims to protect the human psyche, just as shoes and armor are made to protect the human body. And the “distressing turn” that occurs with Luther’s reformation of Christianity demands that human beings be the hate-induced agents of self-cutting and self-burning, which is now interpreted as “true inner penance,” a suffering that can demonstrate its penal character only under the condition that it be definitively finite, lasting only so long as the soul is encased in a material substratum. Whereas the attempt on Aristotle’s part to solve the problem of the multivocity of being through the discovery of its categories may leave a trace of the idea of the good in the nonapophantic discourse of prayer, the “distressing turn” taken by Luther leaves nothing of the kind. The declaration that there can be no indulgence, no allowance, no “letting out” or *Abläss* becomes the preformation of the categorical imperative, which— from the perspective of philology— is not so much directed against the pleasures of the flesh as against any movement toward a non-thing and non-nothing lying “beyond being.”

Because the categorical imperative allows for no allowances or indulgences, it follows the “distressing turn” that Hamacher’s 95 *Theses* locate in Luther’s. The “provisional maxim” Hamacher formulates in Thesis 89, by contrast, not only allows for allowances but allows for non-action, which means that—in a term derived from *The Categories* and the Christian Testament—it suffers *paschein*. As Hamacher emphasizes in a related inquiry, “philology is a pathology.”¹⁰ Among his points of orientation for the “affective” or “passionate” character of philology is a passage from Plato’s *Phaedrus*; in the same context Hamacher implicitly disputes those chapters of *The Nicomachean Ethics* where Aristotle seeks to capture the nature and kinds of *philia* under the presumption that like is attracted to like: “[Philology’s] *philein* is never simply the relation of the same to the same, never a mere concordance or correspondence, without at the same time being a relation of distancing, of suspicion, of turning away.”¹¹ Even as Hamacher draws on the category of relation—“*pros hen*” is Aristotle’s turn of phrase—for the determination of the *philia* of philology, he does not inquire into the categorical status of its pathos. Suffering, however, is the uncertain, inconclusive category of philology. Because *logos* is suffered, it can be had only inso-

far as it is simultaneously given away, and for the same reason, *logos* is destined for a “*poiein*” and thus a “*poëisis*” that cannot be understood as the fabrication of protective devices such as shoes, armor, or even logical instruments.

Notes

1. Translations of Hamacher’s work are my own, but I have consulted the excellent translations provided by Catharine Diehl and Jason Groves.
2. Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, revised Oxford translation, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1988; Greek texts are drawn from the corresponding editions published by Oxford University Press. Translations are modified, and further references are to the standard pagination, in this case 1253a10.
3. Aristotle, *The Complete Works*, 1253a11. In the fourth book of his *History of Animals* Aristotle undertakes an extensive inquiry into the difference between sound, voice, and “language” or “conversation” (*dialekton*) among a variety of living things, including the human being. One passage recalls (or prefigures) the famous passage from the opening of *The Politics*: “Viviparous quadrupeds utter vocal sounds of different kinds, yet they do not have conversation [*dialekton d’ ouden echei*], but this is peculiar to the human being [*idion tou’ anthrōpou estin*]” (536b1–3). Aristotle, however, quickly corrects himself, for he claims that certain animals can indeed engage in conversation and even learn their language from their elders: “Vocal sounds are characterized chiefly by their pitch, whether high or low, and the kinds of sound capable of being produced are identical within the limits of one and the same species; but articulate sound that one might reasonably designate ‘conversation,’ differs both in various animals, and also in the same species according to diversity of locality [*he d’ en tois arthrosis, hēn an tis hōsper dialekton, kai tōn allōn zōōn diapherei kai tōn en tautō genei zōōn kata tous topous*]; as for instance, some partridges cackle, and some make a shrill twittering noise. Of little birds, some sing a different note from the parent birds, if they have been removed from the nest and have heard other birds singing; and a mother-nightingale has been observed to give lessons in singing to a young bird, thus suggesting that language is not natural in the same way as voice but can be artificially learned. Human beings have the same voice, but they differ from one another in language” (536b10–21). The question concerning the uniqueness of human beings with respect to “language” or “conversation” could be pursued in numerous other less well-known texts in the Aristotelian and pseudo-Aristotelian corpus, especially *The Problems*, which includes a section on the problems associated with the voice, both in human and

animals (see 898b28–899a3), and elsewhere identifies the uniqueness of human beings not in terms of their “having logos” but, on the contrary, in the hesitations that interrupt their speech: “Why is it that of all animals man alone is apt to hesitate in his speech? Is it because he is also liable to be dumb, and hesitancy of speech is a form of dumbness, or at any rate the organ of speech is not perfect? Or is it because man partakes more of logos, while the other animals only possess voice, and hesitancy of speech, as its name implies, is simply being unable to explain one’s meaning continuously?” (895a15–19). Perhaps it is worth noting that here Aristotle (or one of his students) uses the Platonic term “*metoichē*” rather than the category “*echein*” in speaking of how human beings are “logical.” Under the name of Aristotle, then, the human being could thus be defined—problematically—not as the living thing that has language but as the living thing whose language alone is hesitant.

4. Aristotle, *The Complete Works*, 11b10.
5. Aristotle, *The Complete Works*, 15b16.
6. Aristotle, *The Complete Works*, 15b30.
7. The remark on *habere*—namely, *possession* can be found in Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Königlich Preußischen [later, deutschen] Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 23 (Berlin: Reimer; later, De Gruyter, 1900), 325.
8. See Kant’s criticism of Aristotle’s list of categories in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 81; B 107.
9. Martin Luther, *Luther’s Work* vol. 31, ed. Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1957), 26.
10. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 31.
11. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 31–32.

10

The *Philía* of Philology

SUSAN BERNSTEIN

Lesen heißt sich selbst philologisch affizieren.

—FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL, “Athenäumsfragment 391”

Reading means to affect oneself philologically.

—WERNER HAMACHER, *Premises*

Philía names the affective relation that opens up or is the condition of possibility of philology. Its participation in philology is what makes it differ from science:

Anders als die Wissenschaft . . . spricht die Philologie im Bereich der *euché*. Ihr Name besagt nicht Wissen vom *logos* — der Rede Sprache oder Kundgabe —, sondern: Zuneigung, Freundschaft, Liebe zu ihm . . . Dennoch ist Philologie die Bewegung geblieben, die noch vor der Sprache des Wissens den Wunsch nach ihr weckt.

[Unlike the sciences . . . philology speaks in the realm of the *euche*. Its name does not signify knowledge of the *logos* — of speech, language, or relation — but affection for, friendship with, inclination to it . . . Still, philology has remained the movement that, even before the language of knowledge, awakens the wish for it and preserves within cognition the claim of that which remains to be cognized.] (Thesis 9)

There is a relation to language, of language to language, that precedes the realm of conventional philology, a realm marked by the forgetting of this original friendship, love, attraction, inclination.

Philia is a relatedness that maintains its plurality through material difference, a differentiation that remains connected to the senses through the term affect. It is articulated through the materiality of languages. As Hamacher writes in Thesis 25, “Philologie ist Zuneigung der Sprache zu einer Sprache, die ihrerseits Zuneigung zu ihr oder einer anderen ist [. . .] Sprache ist Selbstaffektion im anderen ihrer selbst.” (Philology is the inclination of language to a language that is, for its own part, inclination towards it or to another [. . .] Language is self-affection in the other of itself.) Philology is philophily. It is the materiality of self-affection that prevents the quasi-transcendental relation of philology from collapsing into a model of transparent self-consciousness—what makes it “ad-transzendental.”¹ We might say that philology is another name for what Jean-Luc Nancy calls sense in *Une Pensée Finie*:

Le sens tient donc à un rapport à soi en tant qu'à un autre, ou à de l'autre. Avoir du sens, ou faire sens, ou être sensé, c'est être à soi en tant que de l'autre affecte cette ipséité, et que cette affection ne se laisse pas réduire ni retenir dans l'*ipse* lui-même.

[Sense depends on relating to itself as to another or to some other. To have sense, or to make sense, to be sensed, is to be to oneself insofar as the other affects this ipseity in such a way that this affection is neither reduced to nor retained in the *ipse* itself.]²

Philia holds open the alterity that makes of sense a contact or touching. Philology is thus grounded in this friendship, inclination, or touching that precedes any objectively determined practice that might be called philology. The inclination toward language activates the question of philology. This question is itself unanswerable because it is asked always in a singular manner. Moreover, it belongs to the structure of the question itself that it not be answerable; otherwise it would not really be a question, but an “exam question” to which the answer is in principle already known:

Die Frage nach der philologischen Frage und damit die nach der Philologie ist also keine wissenschaftliche Frage, sie kann aber als Frage danach verstanden werden, ob die Philologie eine Wissenschaft sei—und sie enthält so verstanden, als Frage bereits die Antwort,

sie sei keine. Gäbe es einen Kanon der Philologie als Wissenschaft, so dürfte die Frage nach ihm nicht zu ihm gehören.

[Thus the question about the philological question and thus about philology is not a scientific question. But it can thus be understood as a question about whether philology is a science—understood thus, it already includes the answer that it is not a science. If there were a canon of philology as of a science, the question about it could not itself belong to it.]³

This asking about philological asking is itself the affective state that Hamacher identifies with *philia*—thus it is a quasi-transcendental asking about asking that is called philo-philology. *Philia*, he writes, is discovered to be an experience that is “unveräusserlich,” essential, inalienable, to philology:

[S]ie ist eine *philia*, eine Neigung, eine Emotion, die sich in der philo-philologischen Beziehung zu ihr intensiviert und als Bewegung auf sie hin die Bewegung der Philologie selber eröffnet. Die Frage nach der Philologie zeugt also nicht allein davon, daß die Philologie keine primär cognitive Praxis sein und auch kein primär theoretisches Interesse verfolgen kann.

[It is a *philia*, an inclination, an emotion which intensifies itself in the philo-philological relationship to it and, as a movement towards philology, opens as the movement on philology itself. Thus the question after philology bears witness to the fact that philology cannot be a primarily cognitive praxis, nor can it pursue a primarily theoretical interest.]⁴

Instead, it is “als ein affektives Verhalten strukturiert [. . .] als eine Neigung zur Sprache und allen sprachnahen Phänomenen [. . .] als eine Zuwendung und eine Näherung” (structured like an affective relating [. . .] as an inclination towards language and all phenomena that are close to language [. . .] as a turning-towards and an approach).⁵

Philology thus originates in a mood or affective state, an emotional experience, that cannot be defined or regulated; its question is instigated by a feeling, an inclination, that is also a friendship for

and of language. Hamacher quotes Schlegel to state the claim that I am focusing on here: “Philologie ist ein logischer Affekt, das Seitenstück der Philosophie” (Philology is a logical affect, the counterpart of philosophy) (Thesis 22). Philology allows logos to exceed itself, to move beyond the logic or science of the signified to investigate the affective side of experience that characterizes the encounter with language. Investigation abuts its own material conditions, its own excessive structure. Philology is the *à-soi* Nancy identified as the characteristic of “sens,” thus as the relation of language to itself: “Philologie ist Zuneigung nicht nur zu einer anderen empirischen oder virtuell empirischen Sprache, sondern zur Andersheit der Sprache, zur Sprachlichkeit als Andersheit, zur Sprache selbst als fortgesetzt Anderem” (Philology is inclination not only for another empirical or potentially empirical language, but for the otherness of language, for linguisticity as otherness, for language itself as perpetual alteration) (Thesis 23). Language is the relation to itself that cannot be reduced or transcended, that thus remains engaged in its own finitude as the mark of otherness in itself.

As philology, language goes beyond itself without becoming an other. “Philologie: Transzendieren ohne Transzendenz” (Philology: transcending without transcendence) (Thesis 4). This gap within itself syncopates the terms *philien* and *logos*; self-affection characterizes each term and their relation to each other. In this sense, philology interrupts philosophy, which would be an unobstructed transcendence towards an other. Philology remains linked to the finitude and materiality of its linguistic terms, the materiality of the letter that continues to affect even in its lack: “Wo das Wissen ausbleibt, rührt sich der Affect. Wo die Ontologie stockt, bewegt sich die Philologie” (Where knowledge is missing, affect stirs. Where ontology stalls, philology moves) (Thesis 20). This movement remains a material movement of the letter that does not lead to Spirit. The play of the letter, or *Witz*, is the mode of language’s self-affection. It proceeds by means of alterations of the letter that break the hegemony of knowledge or science: “Philologie, Philallogie, Philalogie” (Thesis 24). This kind of saying works through affection, not conception. The science of being (ontology) is interrupted by literature, a disruption that distances the pure

ideality of logos. Alteration of the letter works through materiality, finitude, the senses. Sensibility must interrupt itself to allow sense to emerge; thus, as Schlegel writes, “Die Lehre vom Geist und Buchstabe ist darum so interessant, weil sie die Philosophie mit der Philologie in Berührung setzt.” (The doctrine of the spirit and the letter is so interesting because, among other things, it also puts philosophy in touch with philology).⁶ Philology as self-affection, as the inclination of language toward itself, is repetition with difference. With respect to Schlegel, Hamacher characterizes philology as a kind of practice as the “process” of self-affection of the body of language (*Sprachcorpus*): “immer wieder auf neue das einmal Gesagte und verändert Wiedergesagte zum Sprechen zu bringen” (again and again to bring to speech what has already been said and said again, changed).⁷ The synecdoche between repetition and difference is especially apparent in the critical rewriting of certain words that recasts reading as writing; this is where reception and citation touch each other, where citation is reception that touches itself. Alongside Benjamin, Hamacher characterizes this point as the “Indifferenzpunkt der Reflexion” (the point of indifference of reflection), where “ursprüngliche Selbstaffektion aus dem Nichts entspringt” (originary self-affection springs out of the void).⁸

This springing out of the void, the originality of philology, is the originality of a new reading that articulates itself primarily through disarticulation and the play of the letter: *entworten/antworten, entwalten, das entbildende Bild, Für/für, ad-formativ/aformativ, Empfangnis/entpfangen*, et cetera.⁹ This is where Hamacher echoes, borrows, and goes beyond what he cites: Celan, Benjamin, Schlegel. But a kind of citation that deforms. This is a kind of philology we would not find in Schlegel. Schlegel operates through a play of the syllable but not really through mutations of the letter. This may be where Hamacher exceeds Schlegel, a powerful and consistent source throughout his career, a close friend and companion. In this camaraderie, perhaps it is no longer possible to distinguish between source and reception, reception and affection, affection and action, reading and writing. This point of indifference, “in dem Selbst und Anderes einander durchdringen” (in which self and other interpenetrate one another), is marked by the space or spacing

between and within *philia* and *logos*.¹⁰ The syncopation of self-affection requires, at the very least, a point of contact, a picking up of the book, a receiving of the prior text:

Bevor sie ihre Gegenstände definieren und sich mit Regeln einer epistemischen Disziplin wappnen kann, die den kalten Abstand von solchen Gegenständen sichern, ist die Philologie schon in Kontakt und *ist* der Kontakt mit einer Sache, der Sprache, die aus nichts als eben solchen Kontakten, Berührungen, Affekten [. . .] gewirkt ist.

[Before it can define its objects and arm itself with the rules of an epistemic discipline which assure the cold distance from such objects, philology is already in contact and is the contact with a thing, language, that is made out of nothing but just such contacts, touching, affects . . .]¹¹

As philology, language contacts its others, its comrades—and here, Hegel: “Sie ist die Bewegung eines An-und Für-anderes, die, als Revers der Erfahrung des An-und Für-Sich im Hegelschen absoluten Wissen, die Bewegung einer absoluten Sprache und ihrer Absolvanz von sich durchläuft.” (It is the movement of an in- and for-itself which, as the reverse of the experience of the on- and for-itself in Hegelian absolute knowledge, runs through the movement of an absolute language and its absolution from itself.)¹² Hamacher’s philology inserts a membrane between the critique of Schlegel and the philosophy of Hegel, alongside of Benjamin’s *Kunstkritik*. Hamacher reads to the side of Hegel, Schlegel, Benjamin, through a moment of contact, touching together. The singularity of philology must be read as a “singular plural,” an always new this singular time: the newness each time of “tout est dit” (La Bruyère). “That” it is being said, this particular time, is always an addition, a novelty. Hamacher’s essay on Fichte and Schlegel, “Der ausgesetzte Satz—Friedrich Schlegel’s poetologische Umsetzung von Fichtes absolutem Grundsatz” (in *Entferntes Verstehen*) opens with a long meditation on versions of this problem, from “Noch ist nichts gesagt” to a footnote reference to La Bruyère. In every “tout est dit,” a “noch ist nichts gesagt” speaks alongside of it; everything is punctuated, syncopated, by a nothing, a *noch nichts*:

[D]ann wäre Fragment jeweils diejenige Sprache, die nicht ganz Sprache, nicht ganz sie selbst, sondern noch anderes and anders ist als sie; diejenige die vor die Sprache zurück— oder über sie hinausgeht, in der anderes als sie selbst— Nichts, zum Beispiel— mitspricht und in der also immer mindestens zwei Sprachen sprechen; eine gebrochene Sprache und der Bruch der Sprache.

[[A] fragment would be that which in the face of language passed behind or beyond it; a fragment would be the language in which something other than itself— nothing, for example— also spoke and, therefore, a language in which at least two languages always spoke—a broken language, the break of language.]¹³

So already, language is friendship, *philia* and *logos*, originary self-affection, *le toucher*. Critique or philology becomes sheer showing or pointing, *epideixis*, each time singularly plural: “in ihr soll nichts als das Zeigen sich zeigen [. . .] und nichts als die schiere Bewegung der Phänomenalisierung sich ereignen— nicht unähnlich jener *fleur!* [. . .] *l'absente de tous bouquets* Mallarmés. Nichts soll in ihr noch gesagt sein” (nothing is supposed to show itself but the showing, and nothing but the sheer movement of phenomenalization takes place, as it does in Mallarmé’s *fleur!* . . . *l'absente de tous bouquets*. Nothing yet is supposed to be said in it).¹⁴

Mallarmé’s fragment outlines the saying of singularity: “*Je dis: une fleur!* . . .” et cetera.¹⁵ The singular flower emerges through the sheer enunciative function of language. Nancy quotes the same passage from Mallarmé in *Etre Singulier Pluriel*:

Le “je dis ‘une fleur’” de Mallarmé énonce que le mot dit “la fleur” comme “fleur”, et comme rien d’autre, qui n’est “absente de tous bouquets” que parce que son “en tant que” est aussi bien la présence comme telle de chaque fleur en chaque bouquet.

[Mallarmé’s phrase “I say ‘a flower’” [. . .] expresses [the fact] that the word says “the flower” as “flower” and as nothing else, a “flower” that is “absent from all bouquets” only because its “as” is also the presence *as such* of every flower in every bouquet.]¹⁶

The process of gathering—the bouquet or collegiality—is part of the philological process that moves from what has been said in general to the saying of the singular. This again is what Hamacher, along with Schlegel, calls logical affect. Philology, he writes, “stellt in prosaischer Praxis den Prozess der Selbstaffektion des Sprachcorpus dar: immer wieder aufs neue das einmal Gesagte und verändert Widergesagte zum Sprechen zu bringen” (presents in prosaic praxis the process of self-affection of the language-corpus: again and again to bring to speech what has already been said and said again, changed). Textual critique, he continues, deals with “das Gesagte” (what is said); but Schlegel is concerned with the saying that precedes and makes possible what is said: “es geht ihm um den Affekt des *Sagens*, aus dem Texte erst entspringen, um das *Movens* des *Sagens*, das die Philologie als ‘logischer Affekt selber ist.’” (He is concerned with the affect of saying out of which texts first originate, with the movens of saying which philology, as “logical affect,” itself is).¹⁷

For Nancy, this motion between saying and the said echoes in the relation between “le dit” and “le re-dit”: “Dès qu’une parole est dite, elle est redite, et le sens ne consiste pas dans une transmission d’un émetteur à un récepteur, mais dans la simultanéité de deux (au moins) origines de sens, celle du dire et celle de sa redite.” (As such, meaning does not consist in the transmission from a speaker to a receiver, but in the simultaneity of [at least] two origins of meaning: that of the saying and that of its resaying).¹⁸

Along with Hamacher, Nancy quotes La Bruyère: “‘tout est dit et l’on vient trop tard . . .’ Tout est dit, assurément, car tout a toujours été déjà dit, mais tout est à dire, car le tout comme tel est toujours à nouveau à dire.” (Everything is said, and one comes to it too late . . . Certainly, everything is said, for everything has always already been said; yet, everything remains to be said, for the whole as such is always to be said anew).¹⁹ That I say: a flower is always new in its saying, each time, as is the movement of saying and its affect.

But why a flower? Perhaps there is no answer to this question, as Heidegger suggests in *Der Satz vom Grund*. Here he quotes Johannes Scheffler’s lines:

Die Ros ist ohn warum; sie blühet, weil sie blühet,
Sie acht nicht ihrer selbst, fragt nicht, ob man sie siehet.

[The rose is without why: it blooms because it blooms,
It pays no attention to itself, asks not whether it is seen.]²⁰

The verse comes up in Heidegger's prolonged meditation on Leibniz's Principle of Sufficient Reason, "nihil est sine ratione." In the previous lecture, Heidegger worked through Leibniz's phrase to restate it as: "Nichts ist ohne warum" (Nothing is without "why"), only to present us with a poetic verse claiming that the rose has no "why" but only a "because." But how is this possible? Clearly, as Heidegger explains, the principle of reason is not valid for the rose: "Die Rose — ohne warum und dennoch nicht ohne weil. Also widerspricht sich der Dichter und redet dunkel." (The rose — without why and yet not without a because. So the poet contradicts himself and speaks obscurely).²¹ Heidegger reads the verse as pulling in opposite directions towards and away from the ground or reason it names: "'Warum' ist das Wort für die Frage nach dem Grund. Das 'weil' enthält den antwortenden Hinweis auf den Grund. Das Warum sucht den Grund. Das weil bringt den Grund." ('Why' is the word for the question concerning grounds. The 'because' contains the answer-yielding reference to grounds. The 'why' seeks grounds. The 'because' conveys grounds).²² The mode of the "warum" is said to be that of representation, of subject and object, in which the ground is re-presented before a thinking consciousness. The realm of the "because," pulling forward to the ground, brings the ground forth without the distancing of the structure of representation. This is made clear in the second line of the couplet. The rose itself does not need the technological ordering up of its reason or ground but simply blooms as it blooms: "Ihr Blühen ist einfaches aus-sich-Aufgehen" (Its blooming is a simple arising-on-its-own.)²³ The dynamic of these verses enacts the contradiction of the principle of reason that the flower itself enacts in its blossoming.

One might say we are near something like Jakobson's definition of the poetic function as the focus on the message for the sake of the message itself, for which the blossoming flower has come to stand. The "aus-sich-Aufgehen" is the simple moving forward of the verse, a moving forward that also moves backward towards its origin or begin-

ning. In the lecture on Heraclitus, Heidegger argues that this “aus-sich-aufgehen” is the same as its obverse, “das Sichverbergen.”²⁴ The two are linked not by dialectic identity in difference, but by an affective relation, that of *philia*.²⁵

Friendship links the two readings of the sentence, “Nichts ist ohne Grund,” that allow its tonality to shift to accommodate the reading of Scheffler’s lines. Heidegger distinguishes between the average reading of the sentence as “Nichts ist ohne einen zureichenden Grund, der seine Zustellung beansprucht” (Nothing is without a sufficient reason, which demands to be rendered) and his translation of it into the positive statement: “Jedes Seiende hat seinen zuzustellenden zureichenden Grund” — that is, “Nichts ist ohne Grund” (In the affirmative form this means that every being has its sufficient reason, which must be rendered. In short: “nothing is without reason.”)²⁶ Here a predicate is represented as belonging to a subject, *jedes Seiende*, every entity or thing that is. He distinguishes from this another reading of the sentence that stresses instead the words *ist* and *Grund*: “Nichts ist ohne Grund.”²⁷ A leap (*Sprung*) takes us from the first reading to another tonality, a different “Tonart,” thanks to which we read *ist* and *Grund* together. Through the leap from one to another tonality, we shift from a representational predicative sentence to a different kind of saying: “Der Sprung ist der Satz aus dem Grundsatz vom Grund als einem Satz vom Seienden in das Sagen des Seins als Seins” (The leap brings thinking out of the realm of the principle of reason as one of the supreme fundamental principles concerning beings into a saying that speaks of being as such.)²⁸ The leaping between sentences parallels the forward and backward movement of the pair *warum/weil* and is perhaps what Hamacher calls “das Movens des Sagens” (the movens of saying) itself. The double reading figures philological self-affection, or rather the self-affection that is philology, that is both *philein* and *legein*. “Die Freundschaft,” writes Heidegger, “*philia*, ist demgemäß die Gunst, die dem anderen das Wesen gönnt, das er hat, dergestalt, daß durch dieses Gönnen das gegönnte Wesen zu seiner eigenen Freiheit erblüht. In der ‘Freundschaft’ wird das wechselweise gegönnte Wesen zu sich selbst befreit” (Friendship, *philia*, is thus the granting which grants to the other the essence which it has, in such a way that through this granting

the granted essence blossoms forth into its own freedom. In ‘friendship’ the alternately granted essence is freed unto itself.)²⁹

The blooming of the rose gathers together the friendship it exudes. Perhaps it is an emblem of philology. The “Gönnen,” the granting, of this friendship—*philia* (philophily)—holds the blooming flower apart from itself, differentiates it in its opening and closing. The essence, Heidegger says, blooms outward in its own freedom, its own self, through the granting of essence through another: the friend. Nancy writes:

Il ne suffit pas de dire que ‘la rose croît sans raison.’ Car si la rose était seule, sa croissance sans raison enfermerait en soi, à soi, toute la raison du monde. Mais la rose croît sans raison parce qu’elle croît avec le réséda, l’églatine et le chardon — le cristal et l’hippocampe, l’homme et ses inventions.

[It is not enough to say that the “rose grows without reason.” For if the rose were alone, its growth without reason would enclose within itself, by itself, all the reason of the world. But the rose grows without reason because it grows along with the reseda, the eglantine, and the thistle—as well as with crystals, seahorses, humans, and their inventions.]³⁰

Nancy’s language here opens up the singular plural of philological community. This inventory listing the many kinds of flowers and plants alongside one another establishes the philological ground to maintain and articulate difference rather than unity. In his reading of Baudelaire’s poem “Correspondances,” Paul de Man invokes a similar kind of enumeration to undo the mirror-like analogy of synesthesia, the doctrine usually connected with that poem. He reads the word “comme” in a different tone: not simply as a simile relaying the second term to the first, but as a word announcing a potentially endless, that is, unclosed, series of enumerations. The correspondence of phrases like “Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté” is disrupted, he argues, by the lines: “Il est des parfums frais . . . / — Et d’autres . . . / Comme l’ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l’encens,” in which “comme” “then means as much as such as, for example.”³¹ De Man describes the destructive element of the enumerative function of “comme” when he asks: “What could be more perverse

or corruptive for a metaphor aspiring to transcendental totality than remaining stuck in an enumeration that never goes anywhere? [. . .] Enumerative repetition disrupts the chain of tropological substitution at the crucial moment when the poem promises, by way of these very substitutions, to reconcile the pleasures of the mind with those of the senses and to unify aesthetics and epistemology.”³²

The “comme” of enumeration opens up repetition, or the semblance of sameness, at the same time as syntax propels the reader forward into unbounded differentiation. As de Man’s argument returns us to the quotidian in the form of urban transportation, the banality of endless repetition — of philology — turns us back to the commonplace of the flower. “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose,” wrote Gertrude Stein. Maurice Blanchot points to this line, in *L’entrelien Infini*, as the place of a “perverse contradiction.” On the one hand, he writes, “il dit de la rose qu’on ne peut rien dire qu’elle-même et qu’ainsi elle se declare plus belle que si on la nommait belle.” (On the one hand, it says that one can say nothing of the rose but the rose itself, and that in this manner the rose declares itself to be more beautiful than if one were to call it so.)³³

The rose repels all attempts at predication and holds forth simply as itself in an image of beauty. At the same time, the agrammatical repetition of the word “rose” undoes the “emphatic character of nomination” and points to the weakening withdrawal of language from what it would name through a potentially endless repetition, a numerical expansion that brings no new information or qualification. Repetition signifies here, for Blanchot, the resistance to all development and ends up leading us to “la multitude de la bavardage,” the multiplicity of sheer chatter. Thus, the sentence with its forward driving syntax leads us away from the totalizing development of “Correspondances” towards the enumerative repetition of the flower generated through the *philia* of philology.

Notes

1. Werner Hamacher, *Für — die Philologie*, 72.
2. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Une Pensée Finie* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 16; *A Finite Thinking*, ed. Simon Sparks, trans. Edward Bullard, Jonathan Darbyshire, and Simon Sparks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

3. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 27. All translations are my own.
4. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 28–29.
5. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 29.
6. Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, 1981), II. 179, # 93; *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 29.
7. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 38.
8. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 60.
9. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 72.
10. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 60.
11. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 71.
12. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 71.
13. Werner Hamacher, *Entferntes Verstehen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), 198; Werner Hamacher, *Premises*, trans. Peter Fenves (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 225.
14. Hamacher, *Entferntes Verstehen*, 232–33; Hamacher, *Premises*, 258.
15. Hamacher, *Premises*, 259.
16. Nancy, *Être singulier pluriel* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 111–12; Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert Richardson and Anne O’Byrne (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 86.
17. Hamacher, *Für—die Philologie*, 38.
18. Nancy, *Être singulier pluriel*, 110; Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 86.
19. Nancy, *Être singulier pluriel*, 112; Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 88.
20. Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1957), 69. For interesting meditations on these passages from Scheffler and Heidegger, see Thomas Schestag, “Worte, Wie Blumen,” in his edition of Francis Ponge, *L’Opinion changée quant aux fleurs / Änderung der Ansicht über Blumen*, (Basel: Urs Engeler, 2005); cited in Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 35.
21. Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, 70; Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 36.
22. Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, 70; Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 36.
23. Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, 73; Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 38.
24. Martin Heidegger, Gesamtausgabe, vol. 55: *Heraklit* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979), 131. Derrida points to this instance of philía in *Politiques de l’amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 388–89.
25. Heidegger, *Heraklit*, 131.
26. Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, 91; Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 50.
27. Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, 92.
28. Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund*, 108; Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 61.
29. Heidegger, *Heraklit*, 128. My translation.
30. Nancy, *Être singulier pluriel*, 109; Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 10.

31. Paul de Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 249.
32. Paul de Man, *Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 250.
33. Maurice Blanchot, *L'Entretien infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 503; Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 343.

11

Defining the Indefinite

DANIEL HELLER-ROAZEN

Der Genuß darin, daß sich das Indefinite allmählich definiert.

—WERNER HAMACHER, *Thesis 95sqq.*

Naming the Unnamed

The indefinite has a history, and it is one inseparable from that of its definitions. A first chapter is to be found in the treatise by Aristotle known today as *On Interpretation*, whose aims bring it into contact with a matter at once philosophical and philological. Aristotle begins with a simple, yet perplexing claim: there are “things in the voice” (τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ) in need of investigation.¹ One might wonder about the nature of the “voice” that Aristotle evokes; one might also ask how it has come to contain what he hears in it. Aristotle’s subsequent reflections, however, all bear not on the container but its contents. His first words suggest that he will treat the various terms now called “parts of speech,” for he states that he will define the “noun” or “name” (ὄνομα), then the “verb” (ῥῆμα). Soon, however, he declares that he will investigate more complex beings, of which he offers a fourfold enumeration: “negation, affirmation, statement and sentence.”² On their own, words, the reader learns, are signs of soundless “impressions” (παθήματα) made upon the soul.³ Aristotle acknowledges that he has explored this subject elsewhere. His reference seems to be to his psychological writings, which offer studies of sensible impressions of various kinds; yet the reader also knows that in the *Categories*, he explored the varieties of names, enumerating the ways in which things can be said to be. Now his task

will be to show how it is that, from individual nouns and verbs, whole phrases can be formed. For the first time in his works on language, he will treat a fundamental question: truth and falsity. In isolation, a name or verb may signify something, but it “has no truth or falsity to it” (οὔτε γὰρ ψευδος οὔτε ἀληθές πω). Only when incorporated into a sentence, in “combination and division,” can a “thing in the voice” be considered to be true or false.⁴

Sentences are to constitute the ultimate subjects of this treatise. To reach them, however, Aristotle must first clear the field of language of troublesome elements of speech and misleading word combinations. There is vocal clutter to be set aside. The philosopher begins at the beginning, offering a summary account of the types of words. Then he advances to the level of the sentence, in its varieties and parts. In its fundamental form, the sentence, Aristotle writes, is a meaningful assertion, which joins a subject and a predicate in stating “one thing about another.” Aristotle observes that, in such a statement-making sentence, a subject will take the grammatical form of a name or noun (ὄνομα); the predicate, by contrast, will consist of either a second name or a verb. This much is well known and seems clear enough. But in considering the varieties of subjects and predicates, Aristotle also encounters a perplexing phenomenon of speech. He observes that there are some things “in the voice” for which there exists no name: anonymous beings, which he will soon succeed in naming.

To recover the conditions of their appearance, one must recall the treatise’s argument. In the second chapter of *On Interpretation*, Aristotle distinguishes nouns, verbs, and conjunctions from “the inarticulate noises of beasts.” He notes that whereas linguistic sounds are significant “by convention,” animal cries are meaningful “by nature.”⁵ When, after treating names, Aristotle introduces the verb, he defines it as similar in meaning to the name, while manifesting a supplementary feature: that of signifying time, or, as the scholars of language would later say, exhibiting a tense.⁶ At this point, however, Aristotle makes an unexpected concession. He admits that there are certain expressions that defy his own analysis: words that would appear to be names and verbs yet that cannot be viewed as either one or the other. His example for the class of names is the queer term “non-man” or “not-man”

(οὐκ ἄνθρωπος). Evoking it, Aristotle comments, “It is not a name, nor is there any correct name for it. It is neither a phrase nor a negation.”⁷ Aristotle’s reasoning is worth unfolding. He first suggests that one might be led to consider “not-man” to be a name. Perhaps this is because, in *On Interpretation*, “not-man” does not belong to either of the two parts of speech that Aristotle posits, in addition to names. “Not-man” is not a particle, for it will not bind two words, as would a conjunction or a preposition; nor can it be considered a verb, for it cannot be said to signify time or tense. But, he claims, it is also not a name. That consideration might lead one to view “not-man” as a “phrase” or a “negation,” if one takes into account three features of the language in which Aristotle wrote his work: first, a subject, if implied, need not be explicitly stated; second, one may construct a full sentence by nominal means, by joining subject and predicate, without the verb “to be”; third, the sense of an indefinite article, such as “a,” can be implicit, even where it does not appear as a word. For all these reasons, Aristotle’s first readers might well have taken the utterance “not-man” to be shorthand for a complete sentence, such as “[He is] not [a] man,” or “[This is] not [a] man.” Yet Aristotle also expressly excludes such readings: “not-man,” he asserts, “is neither a phrase nor a negation.” Almost despite himself, Aristotle thereby obligates himself to view it as a curious variety of noun, for which there is no “correct name.” Immediately, however, he names this anonymous designation with a single gesture: “Let us call it,” he states, “an *indefinite* name” (ὄνομα ἀόριστον).⁸

The reader of *On Interpretation* soon learns that such indefiniteness is not restricted to the field of nouns. In the chapter of the treatise dedicated to verbs, Aristotle calls to mind similar expressions: “‘does not recover’ [οὐχ ὑγιαίνει] and ‘does not ail’ [οὐ κάμνει] I do not call verbs. For though they additionally signify time and always hold of something, yet there is a difference—for which there is no name. Let us call them indefinite verbs [ἀόριστον ῥήμα].”⁹ Once more, the reader might be forgiven for taking such utterances as “does not recover” (which might also be translated as “not-recovers”) and “does not ail” (or “not-ails”) as verbs, since they are manifestly neither particles nor nouns, and Aristotle has not allowed for any parts of speech beyond these three. And the philosopher admits that such terms, while functioning to designate,

do “additionally signify time,” making of them verbs of a kind. But for them, “there is,” he repeats, “no name.” Speakers of Greek might again take such utterances, despite their brevity, as full phrases: “does not recover” (or “not-recovers”), for example, might well be a complete sentence, which one might render into English as “[He] does not recover,” and the Greek “does not ail” might be taken to be synonymous with “[She] does not ail.” Yet it appears that Aristotle has a different interpretation in mind. Even as he treated “not-man” as a single “indefinite name,” so he now advances that “does not recover” (or “not-recovers”) and “does not ail” (or “not-ails”) are examples of a category of speech that has yet to be discerned: that of the “indefinite verb.”

There are several ways to address the difficulties raised by such terms. The simplest would be to ask about their sense, or—to evoke a term whose form reflects the question it is to name—their nonsense. One could, in other words, examine Aristotle’s language, and the ones that we still, at least in part, employ today, and pose a simple question: under what conditions can one call anything a “not-man” or “non-man,” and what does one mean in speaking of “not-recovering” and “not-ailing”? Another possibility is to put such questions to the philosopher himself. Why, one might ask, does Aristotle take such terms to be noteworthy? One may recall that the aim of *On Interpretation* is hardly “interpretative” in the customary sense, and the examples of indefinite words he offers are not citations; if they do matter to him, one might therefore surmise, it may be for reasons pertaining to the architecture of his own doctrine. Recalling the ultimate object of this work, one might wager that the indefinite noun and verb are both best situated in the theory of proof that Aristotle founds in this treatise. Perhaps these expressions are to be elements in a system containing statements of many types, some of which will involve indefinite terms. The argument seems plausible, but Aristotle’s books would appear to belie it. No sooner does Aristotle name the unnamed name and the unnamed verb than he seems to set them both aside. When, in his more advanced works on demonstration, he presents the forms of valid reasoning, he offers many examples of statements embedded in three-part syllogisms; but those statements, as a rule, include no indefinite terms.¹⁰ The Aristotelian branches of philosophy respect

this limitation. Neither the philosopher's biology nor his astronomy, neither his doctrine of the virtues nor his theory of the natural world appears to bear, in any major way, on things named by non-names and non-verbs. It is all the more remarkable, for this reason, that in his book on what is in the voice, Aristotle should have drawn such attention to these terms, asking what they might signify. It seems that he found something to be pondered in the words to which, for the sake of his new science, he was soon to bid farewell. He summoned their indefiniteness to the ear and to the mind, even if he could not dispel it, as if anticipating that it would linger yet.

Of Contrariety

A reader of *On Interpretation* might anticipate that Aristotle's first treatment of indefinite terms would also be his last. Yet long after their appearance and disappearance has receded from view, words such as "non-man" and "not-recovers" return in his first book on sentences. Having discussed the noun and verb in isolation, Aristotle offers an account of the forms of their combination in the affirmation and the negation. Here he states certain principles that he takes to be fundamental to reasoning. He explains that where an affirmation and a negation bear on the same subject, considered with respect to the same predicate, they enter into the relationship that is contradiction ($\alpha\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\phi\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$): "For every affirmation, there is an opposite negation; for every negation, there is an opposite affirmation. Let us call an affirmation and a negation which are opposite a contradiction."¹¹ Appealing to the rule of reasoning that would in the modern age be called "the principle of bivalence," Aristotle stipulates that when a statement, whether affirmation or negation, bears on general subjects of the past and present, it must by necessity be either true or false.¹² Next he formulates the related logical principle that would, in time, be known as the "law of the excluded middle": where two statements are contradictory, "it is always necessary for one to be true and the other to be false."¹³ Having established these fundamental points, Aristotle concedes, however, that contradiction is not always easily identified. Speech contains several varieties of opposition and, misled by language, one might come to take one kind of contrariety for another.

To ward off such a possibility, Aristotle offers a systematic account of the relations that may obtain between opposing sentences. It contains certain surprises, one of which is the incontrovertible suggestion that indefinite names and verbs may have a role to play in the structure of predicative assertions. Seven chapters after appearing to dismiss such unnamed terms from the field of philosophy, Aristotle observes, “Now, an affirmation signifies something about something, this last being either a name, or a non-name [or ‘not-name’]; and what is affirmed must be one thing about one thing.”¹⁴ As if to explain the curious term “non-name” (τὸ ἀνώνυμον), Aristotle adds, “Names and non-names have already been discussed. For I do not call ‘non-man’ a name but an indefinite name—for what it signifies is in a way one thing, but indefinite—just as I do not call ‘does not recover’ a verb, but an indefinite verb.”¹⁵ Here, without underlining the fact, Aristotle specifies that an affirmation may bear on indefinite as well as definite predicates. Yet lest the point be lost on his readership, he continues, “Every affirmation and negation consists of a name and a verb, or an indefinite name and a verb.”¹⁶ The indefinite name, therefore, is a “non-name,” designated by catachresis. Aristotle hastens to offer some examples. He explains that the sentence “Man is just” has its exact negation in its contradictory: “Man is not just.” Yet it also has a contrary in the sentence “Man is non-just,” a sentence that, in turn, has its own contradictory in the statement: “Man is not non-just.”

Aristotle presents the matter in further detail in Book One of the *Prior Analytics*. “In establishing or refuting,” he writes, “it makes some difference whether we suppose the expressions ‘not to be this’ and ‘to be non-this’ are identical or different in meaning, e.g., ‘not to be white’ and ‘to be non-white.’”¹⁷ He settles this question without a doubt: “They do not mean the same thing, nor is ‘to be non-white’ the negation of ‘to be white,’ for that is ‘not to be white.’”¹⁸ Chapter Ten of *On Interpretation* contains a systematic classification and enumeration of the correlated sentences that illustrate this principle. They compose an ordered set of logical relations. A long tradition of teaching suggests that they are best seen when projected onto the surface of a figure: a square of negation.¹⁹ Four predicative assertions will be inscribed in four vertices. “Man is just” will be written in the upper left corner. To its right, one can then notate its contrary: “Man is non-just.” In the lower left, one may place

the sentence “Man is not non-just.” To its right, finally, one can write its contrary: “Man is not just.” The two diagonals will then draw out two relations of contradiction: “Man is just” has its contradictory in “Man is not just,” and “Man is non-just” has its contradictory in “Man is not non-just.”²⁰ The two horizontal lines in the square will exhibit a different logical relation: that of “contrariety.” While “contradictories,” such as the sentences linked by the two diagonals, are of such a nature that one must be true, and one must be false, of contraries one may state a different principle: both may be true or both false. The truth, however, is that the possibilities of contrariety are more numerous than this square of logical negation would suggest. One may also place an *ou*, a “not” or “non,” before the subject, and not only the predicate. Then, as Aristotle explains, one obtains more predicative statements. Indefiniteness begins to flower. Once one admits “non-names” in the position of subject as well as predicate, six sentences can be formed: “Man is non-just,” “Man is not non-just,” “Non-man is just,” “Non-man is not just,” “Non-man is not-just,” and “Non-man is not non-just.”

One might object that in such developments, Aristotle’s clarity of reasoning is equaled only by the obscurity of his own statements. What exactly, one could ask, does the sentence “Non-man is not non-just” mean? Aristotle offers no answer to this question. His aim is not to explain the meaning of such an assertion on its own but to establish its relations to the other sentences that variously oppose it. He concentrates, therefore, on the regularities of sense that contrasting sentences will exhibit by virtue of their logical structure. He continues to argue for the distinction between contradiction and contrariety, enjoining the reader not to mistake a negation for the opposition signified by the introduction of an indefinite expression. All negations, he asserts, bear on predication; they deny that certain properties belong to certain subjects as when, for example, denying the sentence “Man is not just,” one affirms “Man is not just.” Indefinite terms, by contrast, concern individual predicates or subjects; their specific difference comes to light when one compares the assertion “Man is just” to “Man is non-just” or “Non-man is just.” Negations, in short, produce contradictions between sentences; indefinite terms bring into being mere contrariety. The nature of that contrariety, however, remains far less evident.

To produce an indefinite term, one needs no more than a single prefix, which one may add indifferently to subject or to predicate. But the minimalism of the “non-” or “not-” (οὐ or *non*) conceals a philosophical question of great magnitude. What is the nature of the opposition between such sentences as “Man is just” and “Man is non-just,” or between “Man is just” and “Non-man is just”? It cannot be that of negation. Aristotle himself states this much. “It is clear,” he writes in the *Prior Analytics*, “that ‘it is non-good’ is not the negation of ‘it is good.’”²¹ The negation would be “It is not good.” But there remains the question, then, of what exactly the predicate “is non-good” may mean.

Despite his recurrent attention to such varieties of speech in his work on words, statements, truth, and the forms of certain proof, Aristotle retreats from proposing a full treatment of indefinite terms. Strictly speaking, he advances only a single affirmative thesis about them. It is striking that he does so almost as an afterthought and in passing. “What an indefinite name [or noun] signifies,” he writes, “is, in some manner, a single thing” (ἓν γὰρ πως σημαίνει καὶ τὸ ἀόριστον).²² Aristotle offers no evidence in support of this claim; nor does he provide commentary on it. This principle appears as something like an axiom in his argument, allowing him to include such terms as “non-man,” “non-just,” “does not ail,” and “does not recover” in a theory from which they might otherwise have been excluded. That the indefinite term signifies something, and that the something in question is, “in some manner,” one, remains a decisive and an obscure postulate, which ushers in a question that is raised without being fully resolved. It is telling that the name Aristotle gives to the term that he introduces appears to illustrate the very difficulty it must designate. The attribute “indefinite” (ἀόριστον) itself is almost indefinite in form. One might wager that it constitutes a name for the “non-definite”: some contrary of the definite, which does not, however, entail its negation.

The truth is that in *On Interpretation*, the word “indefinite” constitutes less the name of a concept than the index of a difficulty, which troubles the theory of words, sentences, and the regularities of truth and falsity that are to hold between forms of spoken opposition. As a double of the noun and verb that compose the statement, as a contrary of predicative contrariety, the indefinite term — whether noun or verb,

non-subject or non-predicate — exhibits the same impenetrability. It cannot be placed outside the domain of rational language, like animal noises, which are significant by nature; nor can it be excluded, like the prayer and the exclamation, from the field of sentences that philosophy must take into account. Indefinite expressions therefore appear and reappear in Aristotle's theory of terms and sentences as the witnesses to a possibility of language that he can neither fully accept nor altogether reject. The philosopher, of course, was not the first to have taken note of their indeterminacy. Centuries before he evoked the difficulty of defining the meaning of a term such as "not-man" or "non-man," a nameless bard had sung of the glory and the cunning of a man of many ways, who, to save his life, knew to name himself "non-one," "not one," or "No one": one stranger, as every Greek well knew, had truncated and twisted his name, turning the word *Odysseus*, or perhaps *Outase*, into *Outis*.²³ But in listening attentively to what is in the voice, Aristotle made of such strange masks the subject of a new question for thinking. Drawing out the perplexing consequences of the existence of non-words in language, he became the first to name the indefiniteness that he heard, to transcribe and to interpret it.

Boundlessness in Translation

Aristotle's disciples were to follow in his steps for centuries, first in Greek and later in other languages of philosophy: Syriac, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin. Thanks to their labors, indefinite terms would, in time, acquire a definite position in the doctrines of logic. Yet behind the systematic inquiries into the regularities of sentence forms, there lurked a persistent question: What, exactly, does it mean for a word to be "indefinite"? Aristotle's word for this uncertain state is *áoriston* (ἀόριστον), which can be opposed to *hōrisménos* (ὠρισμένος), as "limitless," "unenclosed," "boundless," to "limited," "bounded," and "enclosed." It is perhaps in this sense that Thucydides recounts that Athens accused the Megarians of "pushing their cultivation into [. . .] unenclosed land on the border," or, as Hobbes has it, "having tilled [. . .] ground unset out with bounds"; the territory called "unenclosed," or "unset out with bounds," is *áoriston*.²⁴ It is certain that, when Aristotle employs this expression, he evokes the special state of being indeterminate, in which

a boundary, limit, or definition cannot be perceived. Yet the vanishing of a contour brings several possibilities into view.

Aristotle's own works furnish precious tools for the definition of the non-definite. One may distinguish at least three types of designations in the theory of terms, which correspond, in turn, to three distinct manners of expressing non-being.²⁵ There are, first, the expressions employed in "negation" (ἀπόφασις), in the strict sense that Aristotle gives to this act. To evoke an Aristotelian sentence discussed in detail by Aristotle's greatest early commentator, Alexander of Aphrodisias, in the late second or early third century, take this example of "negation": "The wall is not capable of seeing." In such a statement, the property of "capable of seeing" is denied to the substance that is "the wall," and the sign of the denial is the "not" (οὐ) placed before the predicate.²⁶

Such statements of negation may be distinguished from assertions including terms expressing a "privation" (στέρησις). The corresponding example can be simply given: "The man is blind."²⁷ According to Aristotle, a fundamental logical and metaphysical difference separates a negative term, such as "not capable of seeing," from a privative one, such as "blind." A negation simply denies that a certain property belongs to a certain being, even where the being that is in question, by nature, would never be expected to possess that property. It is in this sense that a wall can be said to be "not capable of seeing"; in making such a claim, one does not suggest that the situation could be otherwise. A privation, by contrast, does more than merely to negate; it also suggests that a being has been "deprived" of some property that, according to its constitution, it might also have possessed. In this case, one asserts, in other words, that a predicate is positively "lacking" to a subject.²⁸ A privative property, unlike a negative one, can therefore only be affirmed of a being if that being could naturally be attributed its contrary, namely, possession. As Aristotle explains, "*privation and possession are spoken of in connection with the same thing, for example sight and blindness in connection with the eye.*"²⁹

"Indefinite" terms would seem to point towards a third sort of non-determination, distinct from those of negation and privation. Were one to follow through the philosopher's example of the capacity to see and blindness, one might evoke properties such as those of being

“non-capable of seeing,” “non-seeing,” or “non-blind.” Where exactly one ought to situate such indefinite predicates with respect to negative and privative terms, however, remains less than clear.

The philosopher’s disciples noted this problem and developed various means to solve it. A first treatment was strictly nominal. A generation after Aristotle, Theophrastus of Eresus, Aristotle’s successor at the Lyceum, devised a new expression to designate what his teacher had called “indefinite.” Pseudo-Magentius records that the propositions that “Aristotle himself called ‘indefinite’” came to be known, “by his pupils and those associated with Theophrastus,” as “transposed propositions” or “propositions from transposition” (ἐκ μεταθέσεως).³⁰ This term was soon to become standard usage among philosophers writing in Greek. After Theophrastus, it can regularly be found among the Hellenistic commentators of Aristotle; and, later, the philosophers of classical Islam, reading Aristotle and his commentators in translation while writing in Arabic, evoked terms and propositions said in this sense to be “deviated” or “deflected” (*ma’dūl*), rather than “simple” (*baṣīṭ*).³¹

It seems that talk of “transposed,” “deviated,” and “deflected” expressions and statements already provoked some perplexity in antiquity, since the sources suggest at least two differing explanations of such terms. According to the first, the “transposition” involves the passage of a single Greek particle: *ou* (or *ouk*), which one may render in English as “not” or “non.” This linguistic operator, in the first account, is “deflected” from its place in a negative predicate, such as “is not just,” to its place in an indefinite predicate, such as “is non-just.” While in the first case, it precedes the verb “to be” (*ouk esti dikaios anthrōpos*, “Man is not just”), in the second, in Greek, it comes to follow it (*esti ou dikaios anthrōpos*, “Man is non-just”). One syllable, in short, is “deviated,” and the entire proposition is then “transposed.” The “diphthong *ou* does not remain with its own terms,” as Pseudo-Magentius observes.³² In the words of Stephanus of Alexandria, “the negative ‘not’ is transposed away from the ‘is.’”³³ According to a second interpretation, however, the “deviation” comes to pass not in the order of speech, but on the imagined surface of a logical square. Ammonius, writing in the fifth or sixth century A.D., explains that Theophrastus spoke of “deflection” because he referred to a diagram in which one might replace or “transpose” (μετατίθεναι)

definite terms by indefinite ones, recasting, in this way, the quadrilateral figure of opposition.³⁴

Deflected terms and propositions, as Ammonius presents them, introduce new characteristics into the ancient doctrine of the indefinite. The most important among them involves the striking fact that the “deflected” expression, as he understands it, may apply both to things that exist and to things that do not. Ammonius explains that Aristotle wrote of indefinite terms “because he saw that such vocal sounds too were often included in assertions, as when we say, ‘Non-man walks’ [οὐκ ἄνθρωπος περιπατεῖ], although they were not accorded any name by the ancients.”³⁵ Ammonius explains that, for the purposes of the doctrine of logic, a term such as “non-man” cannot be viewed as a name, at least in the primary sense that one ought to attribute to that category. The reason derives from the nature of the “name” as the philosophers treat it:

A name signifies one nature, that of the thing named. Yet each such vocal sound [as an indefinite name] destroys one thing, namely, what is signified by the name said without the negative <particle>, and also introduces all the other things beside that, both those which are those and those which are not. For “non-man” is not just said of a man, but also of a horse or dog, or of a goat-stag or centaur, and of absolutely all things which are or are not. For this reason he [Aristotle] bids us call them, this whole class, “indefinite names”: “names,” on the one hand, because [. . .] they signify one thing in a way, namely everything beside the definite thing considered as one, e.g. “non-man” signifies everything besides man as being one in just this respect, that all have in common their not being just what a man is; but “indefinite” because what is signified by them does not signify the particular existence of any thing, which is the rule among names, but rather a non-existence which applies equally to things which are and which are not.³⁶

Aristotle himself had not explicitly treated the question of whether a term such as “non-man” necessarily signifies “the particular existence of any thing” or may, instead, evoke a “non-existence.” Yet it is the Aristotelian conceptual terminology, nonetheless, that allows such a distinction to be drawn. Ammonius reasons, in essence, in terms of

“negation” and “privation.” He supposes that there are certain negative statements, such as “not capable of seeing,” which are true even when they imply properties that do not exist, such as the “not being capable of seeing” that may rightly be denied to a wall. Then, as he knows well, there are terms signifying privations, such as the “not seeing” of a man, which necessarily evoke states of virtual possession.³⁷ Recalling this Aristotelian distinction between the metaphysical and logical implications of negation, as opposed to privation, Ammonius resolves an ancient problem in a single gesture: he sets indefinite names among negations. Yet whereas the ordinary negative term limits itself to denying a certain quality, each “transposed” designation, as he defines it, has a double function. With its prefix in “*non-*,” it first “destroys one thing.” Then, from that initial elimination, it “introduces” a panoply of non-existences: “everything beside the definite thing” that is said. An indefinite thus name un-names and names at once. Indicating that something is distinctly “not man,” it also evokes the indistinct expanse common to horse and dog, goat-stag and centaur.

Yet the examples Ammonius offers of such an unlimited range of “things” belie his claim. Despite their real and imaginary diversity, horse, dog, goat-stag, and centaur, although admittedly both existent and non-existent, share one common trait. They belong to the genus of which the term “man” also designates a species. They are all, quite simply, animals. “Absolutely all things” might well have included a stranger collection, whose members could, for instance, have contained among them plants, minerals, numbers, and propositions. The excess of this “deflected” name seems, therefore, less than absolute. “Non-man” may “destroy” the signification of “man,” but for Ammonius, it nevertheless appears to preserve the unity of a single genus. As R. Petrilli observes, the Greek commentator has, perhaps unwillingly, introduced “a restriction that, while undeclared, is nevertheless clearly manifest.”³⁸ Ammonius’s semantic “non-determination,” however vast its potential field of reference, remains obstinately, if tacitly, determinate.

In the same years in which Ammonius proposed this account, Boethius advanced a definition of his own in his two *Commentaries on On Interpretation*.³⁹ Completed in the second decade of the sixth century A.D., Boethius’s interpretations were to become vastly influential in

the parts of Europe in which Latin remained in use. For centuries, they would accompany Boethius's translation of Aristotle's first books on the rules of reasoning, which students from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance would regularly study. Like Ammonius, Boethius explains that, for Aristotle, an indefinite name signifies by a process of "removal." As Boethius writes in his first commentary, "He who says 'non-man' removes 'man'" (*Qui vero dicit non-homo hominem tollit*).⁴⁰ As he puts it in his more extended second interpretation, "What is meant by 'non-man' is whatever is outside 'man,' once 'man' has been annulled" (*Sublatio enim homine quidquid praeter hominem est, hoc significat non-homo*).⁴¹ Boethius's remarks make clear that he shares Ammonius's thesis that an indefinite name possesses a status close to that of the negative term, which signifies "a non-existence which applies equally to things which are and which are not." As if to illustrate this point, Boethius offers, as a first example of such a name of a "non-man," "Scylla," which signifies the historic Roman dictator: a "man," one might reason, who, being long dead, is "no man" now. But Boethius also takes a step beyond the theory of Ammonius by suggesting that an indefinite term's meaning may point beyond the limits of the genus from which the original term's particular signification was drawn. As Boethius understands it, *non-homo* may be said not only of a dead man or an animal, real or imaginary, but also "of a stone, or of a log of wood, or of other things" (*de lapide vel de ligno vel de aliis*).⁴²

Boethius takes special measures to ensure that such a "name" not be confused with any names in the ordinary sense. With a terminological decision whose consequences were to resonate in Europe for centuries, Boethius forges a single Latin expression for Aristotle's "indefinite" words, Theophrastus's "transposed" terms, and the propositions containing them. Boethius translates *aóriston*, "indefinite," by "infinite" (*infinitum*), adding, by way of explanation: "That which signifies many things, indeed infinite things, must be called an *infinite name*."⁴³ In the next chapter of his commentary, Boethius extends such reasoning to the theory of verbs; in place of the Greek "indefinite verb," he thus proposes the Latin "infinite verb" (*verbum infinitum*). "Non-runs" and "non-works," he argues, in fidelity to Aristotle and Ammonius, may be said both of what is and of what is not. One may apply such pred-

icates to existing animals, such as the horse, to the dead Scylla, or to the centaur.⁴⁴ Earlier Aristotelians had been familiar with “indefinite” expressions and statements; Boethius now introduces “infinite” terms and propositions.

Boethius’s decision to conceive the “infinite name” and “infinite verb” is more than an expedient of Graeco-Roman translation, though it is also that. Had he so wished, Boethius could have limited himself to evoking a *nomen* or *verbum indefinitum*. Returning, after Ammonius and Theophrastus, to the opacity of the terms evoked by Aristotle, Boethius proposes, instead, an original rendition, which abbreviates a new definition to the logic and metaphysics of the *áriston*. Building on the theories of his predecessors, Boethius suggests that, in the “deflection” of a single sign of negation, in the movement of a crucial diphthong, the passage from a *non est* to an *est non-*, a particular mode of being—or non-being—suddenly comes to light: that which Boethius, almost without comment, resolves to designate by the attribute “infinite.”

Such “infinity” is different from any we are accustomed to imagining. It is certainly not reducible to an unbounded presence, being not a datum but the product of an act of semantic “destruction”: the exclusion of a “well-described sense” by the mere addition of a “non-” to a given term. But the signification of a *nomen infinitum* also differs from those of privative and negative terms. Unlike a privative expression, an infinite name does not designate a property that is lacking in the sense that, while absent, it could also have been present. An infinite name need not, in other words, refer to natural potentialities. “Non-man” may be said of a stone, a log, a dead dictator, and a centaur. Yet the meaning of an infinite name is also irreducible to that of a negative term, which asserts that a certain property does not belong to a certain subject. Boethius’s infinite expression at once condenses and reorders the traits variously discernible in the ancient typology of negative and privative terms. As he defines it, *non-homo* resembles a negative term, in signifying a non-existence, and a privative one, in being structurally double in its signification. To state that something is a “non-man” is not only, in a negative manner, to deny that it is a man. It is, at the same time, to posit, in a form reminiscent of the privation, a kind of being, advancing that the thing in question is “many things, indeed

infinite things” other than a man. To utter an infinite name is, in this sense, simultaneously to refuse a finitude and to propose an infinitude that exceeds it.

With the modest inventiveness of a master commentator, Boethius hardly calls attention to the fact that, by means of translation and renaming, he has both solved a thorny problem in the ancient philosophy of language and grasped an event of speech that was perhaps never before defined as such: the naming of a pure non-existence, “unenclosed” and “unset out,” in its distinction from both negation and privation, as Aristotle had presented them. In such a naming, one may discern a double act of meaning: both “destruction” and “introduction,” a denial and an affirmation. In the passage from “man” to “non-man,” from “just” to “non-just,” from “works” to “non-works,” limitation and position, conjoined in a single utterance, engender an unknown boundlessness. An infinity of sense arises from the negation of a finite thing or deed. That Boethius considered the idea of such infinity to be little more than a gloss on a dark passage in the classics can be gleaned from the ease with which he advances his concept and moves on to other matters. After pausing to explain the sense and specificity of infinite expressions, after admitting that they may be “names” and “verbs” for the student of language, but not for the more demanding thinker, Boethius dismisses them from this book, as if in fidelity to the principle that philosophy, a science of the definite, admits exclusively terms of “well-described sense.”⁴⁵ This was his way of following Aristotle, and many, after him, were to adopt it. Other paths, however, also led from the Greek; some among them circumvented the “infinity” he conceived. In time, and in translation, it would become ever clearer that there are different ways to transpose one language of thinking into another, and to follow the “gradual,” if unanticipated, motions by which “the indefinite [. . .] defines itself.

Notes

1. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16a4.
2. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16a2–3.
3. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16a2–3.
4. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16a13.

5. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16a19–22.
6. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16b6–7.
7. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16a30–31.
8. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16a30–31.
9. Aristotle, *Peri hermeneias*, 16b11–15.
10. The point is noted by Łukasiewicz, who adds that in the syllogistic, terms without reference, such as “chimera,” are also tacitly excluded. See *Aristotle’s Syllogistic from the Standpoint of Modern Formal Logic* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 72.
11. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 17a32–34.
12. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 18a28.
13. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 18a29.
14. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 19b5–8.
15. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 19b8–11.
16. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 19b12.
17. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* I, 46, 51b5–7.
18. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* I, 51b7–8.
19. On the logical square, often attributed to Apuleius, see “The Traditional Square of Opposition: A Biography,” *Acta Analytica* 18 (1997): 23–49.
20. For a clear presentation, see Lawrence Horn, *A Natural History of Negation* (Stanford: CSLI, 2001), 15–18.
21. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, 51b32.
22. Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, 19b9.
23. See Konrad Ziegler, “Odysseus—Utase—Utis,” *Gymnasium* 69 (1962): 396–98; Jürgen Wöhrmann, “Noch enimal: Utis—Odysseus,” *Gymnasium* 70, no. 6 (1963): 549; and, against the hypothesis that *Outis* constitutes a truncated nickname, Alfred Heubeck and Arie Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey*, vol. 2: *Books IX–XVI* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 33.
24. Thucydides, *Historiae* 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942), I, 139.2. For the first translation, see *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. J. M. Dent (London: E. P. Dutton, 1910); for the second, see *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury* (London: Bohn, 1843). Lexicographers comment that the exact meaning of the adjective in this setting is “debatable.”
25. For a helpful summary, see Harry Austryn Wolfson, “Infinite and Privative Judgments in Aristotle, Averroes and Kant,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 8, no. 2 (1947): 173–87, reprinted in *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion* 2, ed. Isidore Twersky and George H. Williams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 542.
26. For Alexander’s commentary, see *Alexandri Aphrodisiensis in Aristotelis Metaphysica Commentaria (Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca 1)*, ed. Michael Hayduck (Berlin: Reimer, 1891), 327, 11.180–20; English in Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle’s Metaphysics* IV, trans. Arthur Madigan

- (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 122. The commentary refers to *Metaphysics* IV, 2, 1004a10–16.
27. See Aristotle, *Categories* 10, 10a26–12b5.
 28. In this sense, privation is, as Aristotle famously remarks, like an “idea”: see *Physics* B 183b18–20. See Heidegger, “Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φύσις,” in *Gesamtausgabe* I.9: *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1976), 294–95.
 29. Aristotle, *Categories*, X, 12a26–27.
 30. Pseudo-Magentius, *On Aristotle’s De interpretatione* 10 19b19 (CAG vol. 4, xliv.11–14 Busse); 87C in *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*, eds. William W. Fortenbaugh, Pamela M. Huby, Robert W. Sharples, and Dimitri Gutas, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), I, 150–51.
 31. For the terminology, see the remarks in F. W. Zimmermann, *Al-Farabi’s Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle’s De Interpretatione* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), lxiii–lxvii.
 32. Theophrastus 87C, in *Theophrastus of Eresus*, 151.
 33. Theophrastus 87D, in *Theophrastus of Eresus*, 151.
 34. Theophrastus 87B, in *Theophrastus of Eresus*, 149–51. As the editors remark in a note, the diagram at issue has been lost (151n1).
 35. *Ammonius in Aristotelem De Interpretatione Commentarius* (*Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 4), ed. Adolf Busse (Berlin: Reimer, 1897), 41.18–20; English in *Ammonius, On Aristotle’s On Interpretation 1–8*, ed. David Blank (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 50.
 36. *Ammonius in Aristotelem De Interpretatione*, 42.1–8; English in *On Aristotle’s On Interpretation*, 50.
 37. The qualification is important, for it allows one to avoid the fallacious conclusion that, by virtue of the law of the excluded middle, if it is false that “The wall is blind,” it must be true that “The wall is not blind.” Such an inference would be valid only if “blind” could be predicated of anything; but the field of application of such a predicate is limited to such subjects as could, by nature, be said to possess the corresponding positive predicate (“seeing”).
 38. Raffaella Petrilli, *Temps et determination dans la grammaire et la philosophie anciennes* (Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 1997), 26.
 39. On the commentaries, see James Shiel, “Boethius’s Commentaries on Aristotle,” *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1958): 217–44, especially 228–34; John Magee, “On the Composition and Sources of Boethius’s Second *Peri hermeneias* Commentary,” *Vivarium* 48 (2010): 7–54.
 40. Boethius, *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri hermeneias* 2 vols., ed. Karl Meiser (Leipzig: Teubner, 1877–80), I, 52.15.
 41. Boethius, *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri hermeneias*, vol. 2, 62.14–16.
 42. Boethius, *Commentarii in librum*, vol. 2, 62.11.

43. Boethius, *Commentarii in librum*, vol. 2, 63.13–14.
44. Boethius, *Commentarii in librum*, vol. 2, 70.3–15.
45. In the *De Hypotheticis Syllogismis*, by contrast, Boethius presents a theory of the categorical syllogism that takes account of infinite terms, perhaps for the first time. See Arthur N. Prior, “The Logic of Negative Terms in Boethius,” *Franciscan Studies* 13 (1953): 1–6; and Christopher J. Martin, “The Logic of Negation in Boethius,” *Phronesis* 36 (1991): 277–304.

Part 4

Responding to Responses

12

What Remains to Be Said

On Twelve and More Ways of Looking at Philology

WERNER HAMACHER

Translated by Kristina Mendicino

I

Among twenty snowy mountains
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.¹

Whoever speaks, speaks with many, and in manifold ways. He speaks—whether he writes, gesticulates, or holds silent—not only with the languages of others and with their idioms, variants, deviations, and irregularities. He also speaks with them in the way that he enters *with* the common language *upon* this common language—giving in to it, pointing toward it, and working upon it—and *with* that “with,” he lets this very “with” become an *other* “with.” Each language is a “with”-language (*Mit-Sprache*) with many, yet since this “with”-language speaks each time *with* many as well as *towards* them; since it also speaks *away from* them, *about* them, and *beyond* them; since it adjoins one or more languages to the many, each speaks with more than a predetermined multitude; each language that speaks with others also speaks with others than others. Whoever speaks thus speaks *more* than one language from the outset and, since this multi- and more-language (*Mehr-Sprache*) is other than any language that is already known and identifiable as such, he perhaps speaks something *other* than a language. He speaks from out of a non-correspondence to language. Nothing of what the Greeks called *aporía* and *thaumastón* could encounter those who speak if language were not itself a wayless movement (*weglose Bewegung*), and a wonder.

This movement of language is not the result of an individual achievement or a personal weakness on the part of those who use or need it. It cannot be credited or charged to a particular linguistic community, to a social idiom, or to an artificial specialized language; and it is not limited to a phase in the history of languages. This is not to say that there is no such history; rather, there is nothing other than history in the area of language — and whether it runs its course as micro- or macro-history, in a *longue durée* or in the split of a second, there belongs to the constitutive moments of this history alterations as well as standstills, atavisms as well as unforeseeabilities. Before all, however, what initially belongs to it is that no single one of its moments is coordinated with any other one in a stable way. An answer can, in every single case, also be something other than the answer to a question or a statement that precedes it; it can be the answer to an appeal that is assumed — but not at all intended — to be behind a question or a statement; it can be an answer to a supposed or projected, fantasized or fragmented utterance; and at the latest — at the very latest — since Freud, it should be plain that there is no impenetrable boundary between the language of consciousness and the language of condensation, displacement, and reticence that should distinguish the dream. Thus, whatever is said can say something else. However the answer to it may turn out, it can also be the “answer” to something other than that which could justify its claim to be an answer. What follows upon an utterance or state of matters does not have to stand in the same continuum with it, and still less does it have to relate to it as a matter of cause and consequence. As Lichtenberg notes in his *Sudelbüchern*², “*Er las immer Agamemnon statt ‘angenommen,’ so sehr hatte er den Homer gelesen*” (He always read Agamemnon instead of “acknowledged,” so often had he read Homer) — whereby Lichtenberg may have had in mind not an orthopedics program for speaking and reading, but the peculiar manner in which language, perception, and experience are altogether *reformable*, and only therefore *formable*, *transformable*, and only therefore an eminently historical form.

The 95 *Theses on Philology* were written against orthopedics, all of them; against the monopolization of the regulating tendencies that belong to the structure of language; against the reduction of the study

of language to disciplinary techniques; against the obsessions with conformity to which the philologies and the so-called literary sciences (*Literaturwissenschaften*) give in, although they have to do with the least conformed, and the most exposed linguistic and historical occurrences. The *Theses on Philology* were written *for*, in short, the movement of language in its extreme courses and *for* the movement *with* this movement of language, through the complexities of the “with” as well. They speak, therefore, with others and with something other than their *proper* others; they speak with convergent and divergent theses, theories, and tendencies; they cite, comment, and debate them through their sheer arrangement, as well as through explicit arguments. And they attempt—always again anew, and with the greatest possible variegation—to hold in motion the thought of a language that withdraws from every establishment, from every thesis, every sheer theory, and every unidirectional tendency. They speak *with* others, with the assumption that this “with” is thereby altered, too. Their form—if it can still be called a “form”—is, in many of them, that of the cento: a text drawn from other texts that do not relate to one another homogeneously, but that are referred to one another rhapsodically, or, as Hamann writes in *Ein fliegender Brief, musivisch* and *à la Mosaïque*³—at once in the fashion of a mosaic and in a lawlike manner—so that every single element is defined through its reference to others, while their association is defined through their reference to further elements and associations. The arrangement of these elements *redefines* each single one among them; it exposes them and itself to further *redefinitions*, and thus to still further *indefinitions* that find no “natural” or “organic” end, but can only break off. In this way, each single thesis, as well as the *Theses* altogether, speaks—as it says in the first one—“for that which still remains to be said within that which is said.” That is to say: it remains to be said, even if there were no one to be found who says it. The claim of what is said for clarification and explication is not extinguished in remaining unanswered; it goes beyond every positive factum of an answer or a non-answer. As a claim, it still remains preserved even where it encounters an answer, be it affirmative or mute. For no answer, even if it were a collective one, can be the only one; none can be itself concluded, and none can be the last. Language—and therefore the language of the *Theses*—is aphoristic.

tic: it cuts out and defines; but it is also precisely for this reason not itself caught up in a *horos*—in a defined precinct—: it is *ahorizontal*. Language—and therefore philology—is not capable of saturation.

It runs its course *passencore*. With this French-English hybrid- and hyper-word, James Joyce characterizes on the first page of *Finnegans Wake* what is most likely a movement, a passage—*passin'*—that corporeally—*en corps*—leads to the inmost core or heart—*en core*—of a matter, but that does so in such a way that, each time, this movement does not yet—*pas encore*—come to pass and nevertheless comes to pass ever yet—*pass encore*. At once not yet and ever yet: such is the way this polynym speaks, and thus speaks of its own speaking as such a one that happens “ever yet not yet” and “not yet ever yet;” this speaking therefore comes to pass without kernel and corpus—*pass sans core*, *pass sans corps*—and then again, it does not pass without them—*pas sans core*, *pas sans corps*. The phoneme- and syllable-boundary that could draw the line between morphemes as well as affirmative and negative particles—*pass en* and *pass sans*—wanders and allows this word, which wanders with its boundaries, to condense all temporal dimensions of its speaking and to suspend them all. It says what is impossible to say within the bounds of a merely formal logic and what is nonetheless real in the word: that language, without ever being able to keep to itself for the blink of an eye, is really beyond itself. *Passencore* says that its language is henceforth what it was, insofar as it henceforth becomes what it never became, and that it therefore remains what it never has or will have been. Its hybrid- and hyper-word speaks—and breaks word of⁴—a hybrid- and hyper-time with which this language goes through a movement of transition to another, without reaching or not reaching the other that it is going for at any single spatial, temporal, or linguistic place. The language of *passencore* moves before and beyond all oppositions between affirmation and negation, between selfsameness and otherness, because it is what allows for these oppositions in the first place. It makes room for counter positions, but it does not confirm them. It thus moves without any presupposed or even positable end—*pas en core*—and it does not move yet—*pas encore*. It lingers far from all immanence, in a transitioning that does not result in itself—it remains *sans core*—and that does not return to itself as transition,

for in *pas encore*, language remains first and foremost behind itself in advance. This *passencore*-language: not yet and ever yet language; not yet and ever yet movement; ever beyond and behind itself in advance; the corpus of what has none — *sans corps en corps* — ; without a middle in its midst — *sans core en core* — : this *passencore*-language speaks *in* and speaks *with* different languages, French and English. But it speaks them solely in speaking with the without-with of those languages that it is itself speaking: *pass sans core*: language without middle, kernel, or incorporation; language with the without-with of language. *Passencore* is, in a word, the wordward aporia *incornate*: a transition to what is no transit and to what allows none; to what is not *itself* and to what is not. But if there is a single “movement” in “language” that articulates an aporia — and there are countless others — then language must be altogether aporetically structured. Since philology, which should clarify the structure of language, is itself a language, a linguistic comportment, and a linguistic movement, it has, initially and before all else, to clarify the aporias of language and of speaking of it.

In Thesis 4, the minimal structure of philology is characterized as “transcending without transcendence.” This formulation can make for difficulties only when it is ignored that, in the philosophical tradition, “transcending” denotes a movement to another, and especially the movement of an experiencing subject towards the matter with which he has an experience. Nothing particularly sublime is meant by this, as one might otherwise believe if one were under the impression of all kinds of transcendentalisms from New England or any other provenance. Rather, what is meant is the relatively straightforward procedure by which someone feels a corporeal sensation, notices the table that he is looking at, or senses the wall that he is hitting. In the area of language, such transcending is always also the one in which a phoneme, a combination of phonemes, a word, or a sequence of words refers to other phonemes, words and word combinations, and refers these references, in turn, to sensations, feelings, notions, matters, and states of matters. Whatever can be called “referring,” “connecting,” “relating,” “pointing out,” “meaning,” “intending,” “bespeaking,” and so forth, can be grasped as a movement of transcending to another. Yet so long as no stable objective substrate with a horizon of meaningfulness can be

established in which this other remains what it — “substantially” — is, it cannot be held for a moment that the movement of transcending has come to its end and that the unmovable horizon of what this transition was going for has been reached. No horizon is reachable; each wanders and withdraws itself. Transcending ends in no determinable transcendence. All determinations can be further determined. Determination itself implies that it is structurally the further determination of other determinations, and that it can be determination solely by virtue of its proper *further* determinability. Since it implies *openness* for determinations, each determination also implies a relation to another in which determination does not exhaust itself. With the formulation, “transcending without transcendence,” it is thereby said that even this transitioning is none that is assured in and through itself; it is no steady and constant movement that was ever already carried out, but one that is initiated each time anew; one that is never to be found in advance, but through a breakthrough finding. Thus, it is a movement that must go without a pre-cut path, a pathbreaking without any pre-given direction and without any assurable sense. “Transcending without transcendence” says as much: transcending without being able to assure so much as the *sense* of this formula for movement.

This motion before any distinct movement — this *trans-* before any possible assurance of a given beyond — can be indicated and interpreted in manifold ways. But even if were to be denied, negated, or rejected, it would remain, bracketed in parentheses or placed in quotation marks, an index of what can be asserted of language with language. And it would, either as a structural scandal or as a scandalous assertion of the unassurability of linguistic transcendence, remain a stumbling block for every thinking of language, every thinking of linguistically tinged experience, and every thinking and every experience whatsoever. Language has something non-linguistic before itself, and it would not be language if it could be certain of something — even if this something were language itself. If language were already a given — as a system, as a strictly regulated communications procedure, as an organon of imparting between living beings that are given independently of it, as a thoroughly determined and determining form of living with one another — then there would be no need or possibility

for a language that could say anything besides itself, nor could there be anyone to whom anything could still be said. Then there would exclusively be such speakers, bespoken things, and addressees who hang as marionettes on the strings of a linguistic calculator, whose functioning could be programmed and perpetuated by itself alone. There would never have been history, never a future, never something other, and never others, if the program of a total language were not full of holes. Among the conditions for the preservation and survival of language belongs, paradoxically, the condition that language is never already given as a firmly established *datum*. The fact that it ever yet does *not yet* speak entirely—and thus does not speak *as* language—and the fact that it does not yet *ever yet* speak; the fact that it—*passencore*—opens the transition from its never having been to what may at one time be: this is the single assumption that could do justice to the structure of a language without assured—and thus immanent—transcendence and without stable—and thus lethal—substance. That is to say, however: it is not simply, language. It—or whatever “we,” but not others, name in this way—breaks word of itself and the world.

II

I was of three minds,
Like a tree
In which there are three blackbirds.

“Philology,” this concept that has been used for over two thousand years for the conservation, restitution, and exegesis of transmitted texts,⁵ is no classical concept of epistemology or philosophy. The thought of an *anèr philólogos* can be found in one of the important and influential Platonic dialogues—the *Phaedrus* (236e)—but it is not methodically examined there.⁶ Rather, it is evoked as an *ad hoc* formula in a conversation on speaking and the love—the *éros*, the *manía*, the *philia*—for speaking. *Philia* signifies, in this context, a comportment towards the *lógos*, or the offering and apprehension—in the broadest sense—of that which starts off and opens up for living beings (*aufgeht*), as well as that which approaches and affects them (*angeht*). It designates a comportment towards a comportment that co-constitutes the life of these

living beings in a most marked way. Since this *philia* means inclination, proclivity, befriending, and nearing,⁷ the expression “philology” emphasizes the occurrence and movement that characterize this comportment towards the *lógos*, the draw towards it and the distance that this comportment towards it simultaneously maintains in its separation from it. Thus, it is indicated that the *lógos* discloses itself solely in the movement of *philia*, and that it is solely in this movement that the *lógos* can also be foreclosed, forged, and forgotten. It is indicated that this *lógos* goes through a motion that is owed to the movement of the *philia* and that it can, with this movement, splinter off, turn against itself, run into error, and come in various ways to a standstill. *Philia* is, in short, an ever required but never assured comportment towards the determination of comportment that is called *lógos*.

When, at the end of the *Phaedrus* (279b-c), Socrates detains and demands his conversation partner to direct (*poreúesthai*) a prayer to Pan—who is addressed as *phile Pán*—it is thus a prayer for *philia* that he calls for. And when Phaedrus, for his part, pleads that Socrates also pray for him (*suneúchou*) on the grounds that all is common among friends—*koinà gàr tà tôn philōn*—this commonality is clarified as a commonality that comes alone through befriending; and this befriending is clarified, for its part, as one that takes place in pleading for befriending and in longing after it. Thus, the *sun-* of *suneúchesthai* and the *koinón* in the *philia* are not already given and had; they are not things that could be disposed of arbitrarily; they offer no primary synthesis, but rather a synthesis that must first be gained and that can at all times remain outstanding or go lost. What is called *lógos* is as little a universal concept as *philia*, neither of which describes a given relation or a relation to such a relation; before and beyond any commonality, *lógos* is rather a determination of that which can defer and withdraw from every determination, be it “logical” or “philo-logical.” Philology thus emerges solely as the reference that is itself problematic, that does not accord with itself, and that must leave open the “with,” the *syn-*, *co-*, and *cum*—the *koinón*—of its community with others. Even its *philia* remains, as the concluding passage of the *Phaedrus* makes plain, surrendered to the movement of the plea—the *euché*—for *philia*. Plato does not speak of an answer from the *phile Pán*.

The minimal determination of indeterminacy that can be found in the first major examination into the relation between *philia* and *lógos* is not paradoxical in the strict sense. It precedes every *dóxa* and every assured concept of the *lógos* and the *philia*, and it can therefore be called hypoparadoxical, since it moves this side of a developed conceptual language and the contradictions that are possible only within conceptual language. The directive that is bound up with it is: to preserve the greatest possible reservation (*Vorbehalt*) towards ordering and subordinating concepts—a reservation that is ever to be renewed, and that famously bears, in Plato, the traits of what is misunderstood as “irony.” This directive can be understood as a characteristic of philological comportment (*Verhalten*) as such, the comportment of philology to the *lógos* and the *philêin*, as well as the ways of relating (*Verhältnisweisen*) that they describe. And it can be understood as the irreducible comportment of philology towards itself, its premises, its operations, and its history. Its relation or proportion—its *lógos* in another sense of this Greek word—is each time a relation to another, and to such another whose relation to it need not be reciprocal and thus can be a disproportion, an irrational breach, or nonexistent every time. Structurally “philological,” every comportment (*Verhalten*) can therefore be characterized as a withholding (*Vorenhalt*) of the conditions for this comportment. The directive that is thereby given for the suspension of conceptual and predicative stipulations is not thoroughly respected in the Platonic dialogue itself, and still less in the philosophical doctrines that, like the Aristotelian one, have made the *koinón* and the *génos* into fundamental concepts of their ontology. In particular, the genealogical obsessions that have, historically, repressed and reduced the philological suspension of all certainties ever since—and not only in philosophy—work at all levels, in all regions and formats, as attempts at security and mastery. And they still largely hold the argumentative protest against them firmly within the confines of an ordered thinking that should dispense with analyses and arguments.

Aside from a few exceptions, the answers to the *Theses* also appeal with conspicuous insistence to well known yet hardly examined rubrics for orientation. Genealogies, empirical evidence, cardinal rhetorical figures, categorical ascriptions, oppositional determinations, juridical and moral universals, et cetera, are offered in order to move along with

the text of the *Theses* on the one hand and to avoid it on the other. Since these procedures of assigning and inserting into an order, of subordinating and arranging—or simply of ordination and coordination—are at all times mechanically reproducible, they therefore do not appear implausible. But since they also reduce whatever history, language, and philology can be to a quasi-causal sequence and since they thereby reductively restrict the range of what is addressed in the *Theses* to a group, a school, a parochial play, or worse, several of these ordination-figures will be discussed in the following—in all friendship and gratitude for the friendship that announces itself in these answers. The fact that this discussion devotes more attention to misunderstandings, distortions, and problematic assumptions than to confirmations, complements, and independent examinations, is the regretful concession that needs to be made in the form of an answer to answers.

Only a few of the twelve and more answers forego the suggestion of a descentance or dependence lineage in which the *Theses* supposedly stand. This lineage is regularly marked by three names, none of which are mentioned in the *Theses*. These are the names of Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, and Peter Szondi. Ann Smock, by contrast, shows in her impressive reading how considerations of Walter Benjamin and Maurice Blanchot speak along with the *Theses* in important ways. She admits that other voices are “tacitly” at work in the *Theses*, but holds only those of Benjamin and Blanchot to be recognizable—and thus refutes the diagnoses of the majority of the answers: “This thesis [76, which refers to a letter from Freud to Fliess] is among the few where I am able to hear one or two of the other voices that I think must be speaking tacitly along with Hamacher’s throughout the entire manifesto; [. . .].” Gerhard Richter, the only commentator to emphasize the cento-character of the *Theses*, draws attention, like Smock, to the other “voices” with which they speak and refers, not unrightly, to that of Laurence Sterne especially: “this voice may or may not be Hamacher’s alone; it may be his without fully being his, and, at any rate, readers of Hamacher may need to learn to differentiate among different voices operating within his texts, beginning, perhaps, with the distinction between an author’s voice and the voice of a narrator, a distinction we are more accustomed to making when reading novels by Thomas

Mann or Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, but which we rarely dare to keep alive when attending to theoretical texts and philological treatises." Richter refers to Derrida and de Man as well, but evokes the one as an ironist of the theoretical comprehension of objects and concepts, and the other as the victim of a—not merely ironic—misreading. To the usual trinity of standard greats, however, Richter adds a seldom mentioned fourth—namely, Heidegger, who, as he suggests, "has such an important presence in the adventure of reading that is Hamacher's oeuvre"—without forgetting a fifth, Benjamin, and—presumably not without irony—a sixth, Thomas Bernhard.

Avital Ronell works against the suspicion of an overpopulation of the *Theses* with other "voices" in her autobiographically toned "Philology of Kinship" by economically limiting the circle of historical parties of influence to one: "Hamacher [. . .] had in the early days worked under the fabled professor Peter Szondi," and by compensating with a circle of relatives that playfully extends to the hardly surveyable history of European philosophy and literature—namely, the H-relatives, "Hegel and the other H's"—Heraclitus, Hume, Hamann, Hölderlin, Husserl, and Heidegger, I presume—and the W-relatives in Goethe's novels, from Werther to Werner and Wilhelm (Meister, of course). Jesters, who take *three* for a *tree*. For Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei, it stands firm: "One of the origins of philological thinking in Werner Hamacher's oeuvre is without a doubt the work of his teacher Paul de Man." Without a doubt, it stands just as firm for van Gerven Oei, however, that the analyses of the sentence in modern poetry (by Benn, Mallarmé, Stein, and Daive) in "Anataxis. Komma. Balance" are *affiliated* with Derrida's "Supplément de la copule," although Derrida knowingly offers in that essay nothing more than a presentation of Heidegger's and Benveniste's considerations, with whom he, for his part, can hardly be simply called *affiliated*. The genealogical tree thus branches out further, this time not in playful homonyms and paronyms, but in branches that would fail to be there if they were not inoculated in the first place. Van Gerven Oei may hedge when it comes to interpretation as implantation, for halfway between the two undoubtable genealogical assertions that prop up de Man, and then let him fall again in favor of Derrida, he notes that the considerations of poetry as *prima philologia* are partially gained from

readings of Paul Celan, and takes these readings “as one of his points of departure.” With that, he would not have gone entirely amiss, if he had not let Celan’s poetry depart from Aristotelian premises — “Celan’s poetical project departs explicitly from Aristotle” — which premises were anything but parameters for Celan.

The zeal for genealogy, the search after provenances, origins, paternities, twofold, threefold, and clan-paternities — always without a mother, sister, wife, or girlfriend; without a brother, uncle, or friend — plainly spares no one, not Celan, not Szondi, and not Derrida. And all means of imputation and suggestion seem to be justified in order to introduce a familial order by hook or crook that is at the same time, if only implicitly, denied or simply shown to be laughable. Would a comedy of philo-genealogy or gen-philology or philo-gene-agony be the answer, then, to an argumentative plaidoyer for an *other* philology? Would the other and the others be genetically coded and decodable? Would there be no other, then, but a something, a being among other beings, beside or above them? Then would one not have read the texts by Derrida and de Man and Szondi that one names by rote, routinized like historians of Augustus or DNA-chemists around 2000? And if one had read them, would one have shaken them, tossed them off, and forgotten about them after (or according to) usage? And the poor *Theses* — ditto? Or did one want to send along further proof for the surmise indicated in the *Theses* that philologies avail themselves of systems of order that can never be grounded or even made reasonably plausible by its matter and cause — by language — insofar as language cannot be restricted to a *koinón* or a *génos*?

It can happen that one no longer sees the forest through the family trees or the world through the woods. And this can happen even to those who, like van Gerven Oei, decode the Saussurean *arbre* with Lacan in its *arbitrarité* and strike it with a *barre* — deciphering it as arbitrary and barren. No tree, neither in a naturalistic-genetic sense, nor in a “symbolic”-genealogical sense, is a family tree, if this “family tree” were to be the metaphor for a substantial relation of descentance. Therefore, the sentences of Francis Ponge, which Michèle Cohen-Halimi cites in her dense commentary on Thesis 49 and on the word *objeu*, could hardly be more apt, when it comes to the relation between language and mat-

ter (*Sprache und Sache*), but also between language and language. Ponge says: “. . . voilà une autre façon de tenter la chose: la considérer comme non-nommé, non nommable, et la décrire ex nihilo si bien qu'on la reconnaisse” (. . . another way of approaching the thing is to consider it unnamed, unnameable, and describe it *ex nihilo*, but so well that it can be recognized). And further: “Il faut que le nom ne soit pas utile. / Remplacer le nom” (The name must not be indispensable. / Replace the name).⁸ When, however, the name must be expunged and replaced for the sake of the matter—be it a matter of names—then this goes for the name of philology, too. Cohen-Halimi formulates this implication in the form of a question and remarks, no less aptly than Ponge: “What philology could still maintain that any thing responds or corresponds to its name?” Now, if the paleonym “philology” is retained for strategic and matter-related motives, as it happens in the *Theses*, but is used as *another* name for altered matters, then every text—for each text is, in the emphatic sense, “philological”—and every word has the structure of a palimpsest. Instead of the notion of a palimpsest, Ponge uses the neologism *géné-analogie* and explains, “Thus, just as people have ancestors, words also have ancestors. Anyway, they have, if I may be so bold as to put it this way, a gene-analogical tree: the ramifying associations of ideas that they develop in the reader.” And Cohen-Halimi, who cites these sentences, adds: “‘Gene-analogy’ is the transverse version of philology as ‘phillalogy’ or ‘philalogy’” (Thesis 24). This gene-analogical relation would have to insist between philologists just as it insists between the word and matter of philology, such that each philologist relates to the others as he does to the things whose names he blots out, in order to find, *ex nihilo*, another name for an altered thing, matter, cause, or *chose* (*Sache*). One relates to the matter—to the matter of philology and philologists—not in treating its name as a given, as a historical or naturally produced *datum*, but in removing it as a cover name in order to name the undiscovered matter anew.

The genuinely philological operation is the *unnaming* and *renaming*, the *unsettling* and *resettling* of utterances and their meanings, the translation and translation beyond (*Hinübersetzung*) from certain formulations into other formulations, from one idiom into another. Philology makes a *tabula rasa* with the language that is pre-given in order

to write the tablet over with a new language; it *unspeaks* and breaks from what is spoken, in order to break word of what remains to be said of the matter it concerns. What remains each time is this: that it—whatever it may be—remains to be said.

This holds valid for the concept of “philology,” too, and for the activity that has long been designated as such. What “philology” can be called and what it can call for is always already and ever yet to be found anew, since it remains, as an eminently historical phenomenon, structurally open for other histories that have not yet come to pass. But it is historically open and open to history solely because it is open to the lacunae of experience, understanding, and knowledge; because it starts off at the lacunae and preserves and expands them. In each of its movements, philology is at a zero point and at its zero point: it is and remains philology. This makes every notion of a stable traditional context or genealogical continuum into a blank naivety. Only when “genealogy,” as Ponge suggests, is rendered more precisely as *genealogie* does it become plain what “philology” is.

With a sensitive ear akin to Cohen-Halimi, albeit in a completely different way, Ronell uses a somewhat more familiar formulation for the “gene-analogical” complex. She speaks of a “make-believe family.” In a phase when she “turned toward friends to scope the vacated space of friendship,” she addressed herself to others—“I get attached and put together a make-believe family”—while others continued “[to] quietly play with dolls, our pretend-friends.” Since she herself chooses the language of psychoanalysis, one could characterize this family of the philologist as a transitional family and as a multiple transitional object that newly revives the advantages, but also the dangers, of lost objects, and that gets played out gradually with more or less happiness—with all the manifestations of mourning and melancholy, pain and joy, that can go along with it. *Objeu, trajeu*—and, to evoke Cohen-Halimi’s happy conceptual find, *trajeudi*—are thereby recognizable as the characteristic elements of any relation to language and world with which every philologist—that is, everyone—has to keep house. It thus becomes plain that each object is not only multiple and mobile; it is a “transitional object,” an object in transition to other objects. Each is thus a replacement object that serves to loosen attachments to an earlier one, and therefore an

initial, opening object that opens a way to further object relations and series of objects. Each is a play-object, each an object-play, an *objeu*. As such a transitional object, it is nothing that one could get behind, get around, or get over, since it condenses in itself all structurally possible movements of cathecting, decathecting, and recathecting affects.

With this insight, a sharper sense is gained for the way philology is no mere *métier* and no well-defined discipline that consists in the routines of applying a pre-given technique, but a movement of transformation that does not depart from a given, but from withdrawals, and that does not issue into homogeneous forms for language and world, but into their transformation. And with this, greater clarity is gained with regard to the so-called subject of philology, which is an *ob-je*, and as such, an *objeu*, a *trajeu*, and a *trajeudi*. It is therefore no constant, substantial magnitude, but an instance of movement in a language game that plays *with* rules and not merely *according* to them. The defamilialization and transfamilialization that are described with different accents by Cohen-Halimi and Ronell refute the suggestion of a harmonic family tradition that appears in the other answers to the *Theses*. This de- and transfamilialization is no mere psychological factum, no fact of individual or disciplinary psychology — and it is therefore also no *déformation professionnelle* — but it is no linguistic occurrence among others, either. It is *the* occurrence of language par excellence. Language is *objeu*, *trajeu*, and *trajeudi*, and every relation to it, every philology, can be structured only according to the logic of such an *objeu*, *trajeu*, and *trajeudi*. What plays in its center is a vacancy that is itself an *objeu* — “a vacated space,” as Ronell writes — as well as a withdrawal — “consider the thing unnamed, unnamable,” as Cohen-Halimi writes with Ponge — a *nihil* and an *ex nihilo*. Philology is, always, a beginning.

III

The blackbird whirled in the autumn winds.

It was a small part of the pantomime.

It is not self-explanatory that there “is” a vacancy, absence, or lacuna “in and of itself,” so to speak. One therefore needs to ask initially how vacancies are induced that could then be said to “result” like a positive factum.

The difference between an ellipsis that is induced and one that lies independent of inductions and first opens the playing field for them, is decisive in all questions of derivation, motivation, and historical context. But this difference is covered over wherever lines of descent are carelessly drawn, wherever coordination procedures are applied, and wherever the erasures that those operations require are undertaken. With such gestures of regulatory politics, histories are construed without so much as inquiring into the structure of history, and whatever history could be is denied, along with whatever, in individual cases, history is.

The curators of such ancestral portrait galleries thoroughly concede, either explicitly or implicitly, the existence of other ancestors, and thereby admit that the history they construed can be no more than a conjectural history. Nevertheless, they present it as a natural history that runs its course according to causal laws. Other histories of provenance not only simply fall by the wayside; they are sidelined from the playing field of beginnings, impulses, and “impressions,” without any indication of motives. The storytelling that results is not grounded in the philological matters that should concern it, but in the suggestion that there was one and only relation, a non-philological and nearly mechanical one—a teacher-student relation—and that this relation was strong enough to remain in effect for the span of nearly half a century. And it is further suggested that it was not only an institutional affiliation, but an affective and familial relation, that generated texts. Personalization, familialization, institutionalization, and historical linearization define the result of the historiographical suggestions that should give account of the idea of another philology. But already the indication that there could be more possible inroads into this idea demands, if it is taken seriously, that one keep one’s distance from personalizations and separate from the family prototype for intellectual relations; it draws a rift in every affiliation with institutions; and it makes linearizations according to the schema of causality impossible.

In Thesis 32, attention is drawn to the way in which narrative sequences imply, each time, an “and then,” and with this, a “no longer” and a “not yet.” And with this redoubled “not,” they introduce a vacant element into the course of speech that prevents every succession (*Folge*) from becoming a necessary consequence (*Folgerung*).

“Connectives,” as it reads there, “are not so much placeholders as place openers for a ‘not.’ Only this ‘not’ — be it as ‘no longer’ or as ‘not yet’ — allows for the possibility of a story by preventing the sequence [*Folge*] from withering into an inference [*Folgerung*]. Before every and in every ‘therefore,’ which maintains the causality of actions and the motivation of decisions, stands an ‘and then’ and a ‘not’ that provide neither a *causa* nor a cause and thereby indicate that history is only that which takes a ‘not’ as its point of departure.” In the adjoining theses, this observation is then connected to the concept of historical contingency, and this contingency — along with history — is then characterized as parting from all coherent courses of events with the sentence, “What happens, is parting” (*Was geschieht, ist Abschied*). This sentence is a verbatim citation from a small study on anacoluthic existence, published twenty years before under the title, “Über einige Unterschiede zwischen der Geschichte literarischer und der Geschichte phänomenaler Ereignisse.”⁹ Afterwards, in the remarks that follow, philology is characterized as the guardian of history — namely, of parting — and the guardian of politics — namely, of a “not so on” and “other than thus” — and it is therefore characterized as the love for the *non sequitur*. The ambivalent “co-” that contingency and coherence share with one another is called in Thesis 38 the “dark ground out which phenomena, figures, and words take shape” — which ground cannot itself be a phenomenon, figure, or nominal unit in the service of mediation, of logical, grammatical, or compositional synthesis. It is therefore called in the next thesis a “chopping copula.” (This *dark ground* could have also been named, regardless of Native American etymologies, *Connecticut*.)

If even the most coherent forms of linguistic occurrence in poetry, literature, and so-called everyday life are sequences of non-sequiturs, then whatever is structured or merely co-structured through linguistic occurrence cannot have the form of a genealogical continuum. Institutional coordinations are secondary imputations, which serve to cover or repress a “not” that withdraws and must withdraw from every coordination, so long as coordination should even be thinkable without contradiction. The personalizing, familializing, and institutionalizing constructions that model history according to the psychological model of the nuclear family romance and the Bildungsroman issue into a natural history of

linguistic relations that is the exact opposite of a history issuing from language and from an analytic-transformative philology that considers and furthers this language-history. Every natural history is purchased at great costs; its price is the particularity and freedom of each and every one.

One of the most important sentences in Szondi's tractatus "On Textual Understanding" reads, "For texts present themselves as individuals, not as exemplars."¹⁰ And although he cites Adorno and speaks at the end of his text of "the logic of their existence as the result of a productive process" (*die Logik ihres Produziertseins*),¹¹ being produced means, for Adorno and for Szondi, something other than auto-production or the self-production of spirit, despite their proximity to Hegel. When Szondi speaks of the "reflexive character" (*reflexives Wesen*)¹² of theoretical hermeneutics and emphasizes that the "condition of irreflection is not adequate to science,"¹³ it is thereby said that the "science" of literature can only lay claim to knowledge if it makes certain of the particularity of its knowledge, and that this particularity lies in the way that its knowledge—in contrast to that of the natural sciences—does not aim towards the leverage of positive facts and their mechanical laws, but towards the ever individual utterances of singular speakers and their "subjective" condition of having come to be. Only a "subjective knowledge" in Szondi's sense can do justice to "facts that bear the imprint of subjectivity" (*den subjektiv geprägten Tatsachen*),¹⁴ which is what Szondi understands by literary texts. Literary texts are therefore not to be subjected to either a positivistic empiricism, or an abstract universalism of the objective or even absolute spirit. Regarding the multivalent concept of the subjective, Szondi's tractatus gives prominence throughout to the significance of the "particular," "uniqueness," the "singular occurrence," and "individuality" in structure and genesis.¹⁵ The "unique, the unexampled"¹⁶ is, for him, the object of literary science, and since this science is responsible for the knowledge of the singularity of its object, it has both to guard against attempts to overpower the text through arbitrary exegesis and to ward off its reification into a normative-conformative matter. This is why Szondi rejects the method of historicization that situates "the artwork in history," as if it were a matter of placing it in a normalizing process, and calls for a mode of observation that allows "history to be seen in the artwork."¹⁷ This is why he insists that the understanding of literary

science is “perpetually renewed understanding,”¹⁸ in which “assertions are dissolved again into the cognitions from which they arose.”¹⁹ This is why he ultimately insists that, in the limit case of the hermetic poem, this knowledge may well be a “deciphering operation,” but only a deciphering of the enciphered “as written in cipher.”²⁰ Thus, the cause of literature is precisely not self-generation and self-revelation in the Hegelian sense. And it is precisely not the self-reflection of that self-production in a universal self-transparency that is, for Szondi, the cause of philological knowledge. Its cause is, on the contrary, the knowledge and defense of the particularity and separateness of the “unique.” It is not the unclosing of what is closed off, but the unclosing of its closedness.

Philological knowledge would be the reflection of an ever-singular resistance to reflection: it is in this unsublatable paradox, and not in a speculative-dialectical turn, that Szondi’s considerations of the uniqueness and singular occurrence of philological knowledge might be grasped. With Schlegel, these considerations insist upon what is “extraordinary” — which is to be read as extra-ordinary, as belonging to no order — and upon what does not fit into the “postulate of commonness” — namely, into the subsumption under general concepts as well as behavioral conventions.²¹ And not only do Schlegel, Schleiermacher, Valéry, and Adorno, all of whom Szondi cites, stand for the resistance of philological reflection to its — and to every — subjection to universal concepts and norm-postulates. Hölderlin stands for this resistance, too, in a particularly pronounced way, in a note that Szondi does not cite in this context, but that must have been eminently present to him, since it lay on his writing desk in a facsimile of Hölderlin’s manuscript. It reads: “The *apriority* of the individual / over the whole” (*Die apriorität des Individuellen / über das Ganze*).²²

The *Theses* hold true to this thought — to the problem of this thought — in their particular way. Hölderlin’s note protests with Fichte against Kant’s determination of the individual as a thoroughly determined one; but against Fichte, the note also holds firmly to the apriority of the individual against its dissolution into a whole. The note implies that this individual not only differs from the whole, but also from any other individual, and that its differentiation is therefore the ground of every relation between individuals and the ground of the individual

itself. The apriority of the individual is hence, differently than every Kantian a priori, not a given. It is an occurrence, and as the occurrence of differentiation, it is, in the strict sense, ground-less. As it says in a draft from the Homburg Folio, to which the note on the individual is added, perhaps as a commentary, “From the abyss namely / we have begun” (*Vom Abgrund nemlich haben / Wir angefangen*). The “a priori” — the “from the beginning” — is thus interpreted as “from the abyss” (*vom Abgrund*). In itself unfirm, the a priori of beginning — this an-archic *arché* — can, however, be interpreted only as the occurrence of differentiation before every differentiated being. In it, the individual is sheer individuation that presupposes nothing, and this individuation is co-individuation with others in a “we”: “From the abyss namely / we have begun.” “We,” the groundless ones, are therefore before every whole that could give us an initial or final ground of determination; and we are the individual — the un-divided and un-differentiated (*Un-unterschiedene*) — insofar as we are differentiation ourselves. The differentiating that we are must not only be “over the whole” and before it; it also cannot result in any whole. It remains in the movement of pluralization — “in doubt and anger” (*in Zweifel und Ärgeriß*), as Hölderlin writes — but it does not form into a collective that could have its autarkic ground in itself, as the ideal of ethical reason has ever since enjoined in Kant, Fichte, and the social ontologists. “From the abyss namely / we have begun”; hence, the individual cannot strip away its beginning from the abyss as a burdensome past — which the structural sense of its apriority would contradict — rather, the individual must bear that beginning along with itself wherever it goes. The individual must move with its abyss and must therefore move with what is not bound to it through any consistent “with.” Whether it be an “I” or a “we,” the individual is a determination from that which is determination-less and can therefore reach no final dissolution or resolution in the whole of self-determination.

If Hölderlin’s note is understood in this sense — and thus as the formulation of a perduring problem of understanding and sense — then an inconsistency shows itself in Szondi’s interpretation of the subjectivity and individuality of philological knowledge. “Evidence,” he writes, is the “adequate criterium” for this knowledge, for in it, “the language of facts [. . .] is perceived as subjectively conditioned and mediated subjectively

in cognition, and thus first of all in its true objectivity.”²³ The language of philological knowledge would indeed have to behave in this way if subjective conditionality did not also mean conditionality through a lack of conditions, and if subjective mediation did not also mean the mediation of that which is incapable of mediation. Szondi had “forgotten” the thought “of the abyss” in the structure of the *a priori* of the individual; he had erased the nothing, the *ab nihilo* and the *cum nihilo* that indissolubly comes along with it. The claim for “true objectivity” is not annihilated by the “not” of the ground of subjectivity, but it is recognizable as a claim that must remain behind its conditions for fulfillment and can therefore never be “objective” and “true” enough for itself and for others. This claim remains—subjectively, individually, incompletely, and groundlessly—a claim for that which still remains to be said of it and beyond it. No one is merely the part of a whole or a world because everyone bears along with himself the un-whole of an un-world.

The fact that even a lack of evidence can become evident should clarify that nothing becomes evident that was not previously obscure and can become obscure again through forgetting or erasure. It is the cause of what is called philology in the *Theses* to remind of that forgetting and erasure. In his tractatus, Szondi remembered the hermetic *as* hermetic, but in his formulation for the subjective mediation of the subjectively conditioned, he blotted out the unmediatable character of the un-conditioned and with it, its hermetics. There may be lines of descendance that are individual and individually made evident, but these too can be curved, zigzagged, or fault lines; and these, perhaps first and foremost, will have begun *a priori* “from the abyss” and do not cease to begin from there.

IV

A man and a woman

Are one.

A man and a woman and a blackbird

Are one.

The commentators on the *Theses* have difficulties with the relation of the *Theses* to the works of Paul de Man. De Man’s writings are deemed

by van Gerven Oei to be one of the origins of the entire draft for an *other* philology. Jan Plug remarks, hesitating, on the one hand, “There can be little question that [they] have de Man somewhere ‘in mind,’” since Thesis 61 provides a brief commentary to the motto of *Allegories of Reading*. On the other hand, he does not shy away from the assertion, “Hamacher follows de Man’s own understanding of philology [. . .]”; and he conveys with “own” even more than with “follows” that de Man is the original and Hamacher, his prophet, when it comes to placing the scientific claim of literary criticism in question. The thought of adherence that is testified in these diagnoses demands, as in every other case, a significant psychological—that is, philological—effort, for the text of the *Theses* is, precisely when it comes to one of de Man’s basic operations, unambivalent. The effacement of the most relevant remarks—their blending out, denial, or overwriting—is therefore a philological procedure of the greatest interest for a philology emerging from its self-induced minority. That effacement touches, one more time, upon a not or a nothing.

The basic operation that is discussed in Thesis 54 is the differentiation between two fundamental functions of language: selection and combination. This differentiation, which is correlated to the one between metaphor and metonymy, traces back further than de Man, but de Man adopted it, as Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, and Genette had done before him for their respective fields of research. And differently than they had done, de Man understood to radicalize and undermine this differentiation with further foundational rhetorical figures, starting with another pair: allegory and irony. Yet this subversion—or sub-version—of the foundational rhetorical figures remains regularly bound for de Man to figures in which the movements of the initially isolated pairs become mutually imbricated and either activated or deactivated. In de Man’s work, the most prominent example of such a sub-figure, which precedes even the movements of ironizing and allegorizing, is prosopopoeia: the figure of figuration, the trope of the production and assignation of tropes, and thus the fundamental trope for the linguistic arrangement of the world. Since prosopopoeia owes its analysis to de Man, its name in Thesis 54 can point towards his: the name for figure-making points to the name of the one who gave it its sharpest profile. Anyone who is familiar with the field of literary and cultural studies should not be capable of misrecognizing this reference.

It was Roman Jakobson who drew from the fund of millennia-long treatments of linguistic figures to bring the two most marked ones to prominence—metonymy and metaphor—and to generalize them as the two “modes of arrangement” of combination and selection.²⁴ Since the combination of linguistic elements at any level already implies their selection, and since selections are possible solely in combinatorial contexts, the question arises as to the intersection point of these two axes of the linguistic system, which Jakobson does not expressly pose in his investigation of the “modes of arrangement.” This is why it says in a footnote of the essay from 1982, “Apotropäische Figur”: “What remains undiscussed in Jakobson’s linguistic theory is the difficult problem of the intersection point of both axes, of the origo of the coordinate-system that spans out from them, as well as the structure of the projection of the one axis upon the other.”²⁵ In the essay itself, which concentrates upon the apotropaic and auto-apotropaic figure of the scarecrow in a reading of “Among School Children,” it is said that this figure and counter-figure marks “a zero-syntagm in the tropological and grammatical rhetoric of representation where the course of the poem breaks off (*aussetzt*) in order to be able to set forth (*fortsetzen*), cut with a caesura, upon its anasemic ground.”²⁶ And in this figure and counter-figure, “the language of generation *breaks off* (*setzt...aus*), in order to preserve the possibility of the generation of language.”²⁷ This thought of a “zero-syntagm” and an “origo” in the geometric sense was taken up again two years later—²⁸ again in the context of a subversion of the generation-paradigm—in the study “The Second of Inversion,” this time with reference to Jakobson’s essay, “Signe Zéro.”²⁹

In “Signe Zéro,” written in 1937 and first published in 1939, Jakobson draws support from the works of Charles Bally, who himself recurs to an investigation of Robert Gauthiot from 1902, in order to turn to the “morphological zero-function” of both signifiers and signifieds. This “zero-function”—although Jakobson does not expressly touch upon these consequences—also regulates the coordination of selection and combination, and thus offers the ultimate resource for the entire linguistic order as a zero-metaphor or zero-metonymy. The zero-sign is, for Jakobson, the name for the absence of a sign that could stand in opposition to another sign. It is therefore the very sign that is still capable of

differentiating solely by virtue of its absence, even where another sign with differential qualities cannot be placed in opposition to it according to a binary order. Since the “zero” enters as the sign for an absent sign or as the differential marking for an absent differential marking, it defines the structure of language as such — : as a “zero-opposition,” it ensures the homogeneity of the linguistic order that is built upon oppositions, in that it marks even the absence of oppositions as a significant or signified absence, and thus as a linguistically posited one.

Since the “zero sign” can enter as a signifier for all absent signifiers; since it can ward off, apotropaically, the entire absence or failure of language and guard language from falling mute, its function was of eminent interest not only in linguistics, but also in anthropology, psychoanalysis, and philosophy. Lévi-Strauss therefore drew upon the zero sign as a “*symbole à l'état pure, donc susceptible de se charger de n'importe quel contenu symbolique*” (a symbol in a pure state, and thus susceptible to assume the charge of any symbolic content whatsoever) in a famous passage from his “Introduction to the Oeuvre of M. Mauss” (1950) in order to solve the riddles that are raised by foundational concepts such as *hau*, *mana*, *wakan*, and *orenda*. Lacan drew upon the concept of the *symbole zéro* in his “Discours de Rome” (1953) in order to describe the contouring of what he called the “symbolic order” and to ground the notion of a “*dette inviolable*” that is yielded from the significant reference to an absent signifier. In 1966, Derrida found in the “floating signifier” of the zero sign one of the many traces of an imprevisible supplementarity in his essay, “La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines.” Under the title, “À quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?” Deleuze asserts in 1972, “*pas de structuralisme sans ce degré zéro*,” and refers to “La suture,” a short, dense work from 1966 by Jacques-Alain Miller, who drew upon the concept of zero from Frege’s *Grundlagen der Arithmetik* in order to reconstruct a logic of signifiers in the sense of Lacan.³⁰ In section 74 of his text from 1884, Frege defines: “0 is the number that belongs to the concept of ‘not identical to itself’” (*Null ist die Anzahl, welche dem Begriffe ‘sich selbst ungleich’ zukommt*).³¹ Already from this scant definition, it becomes plain enough that the logical concept assigned to the number zero needs no object — namely none that could be substituted by itself — such that, in this sense, as Leibniz had

proposed, the zero-concept is none that needs a self-identical object. As this logical concept, it can therefore be evoked in order to found the beginning of the numeric series and to ground arithmetic entirely in logic. Jakobson's zero sign does not have to end up in the logical aporias into which, as Bertrand Russell showed, Frege's "logicism" leads. For Jakobson and still more plainly for Lévi-Strauss, language behaves entirely, to put it most pointedly, as a zero sign in relation to every thinkable relatum.

What not all of the above-mentioned authors saw clearly is that there can be no criterion for the differentiation between an absence marked as an opposition and one that is not marked as an opposition that would not, for its part, require recourse to a zero sign, which leaves this differentiation an open issue. With the zero sign, which can always both be and not be a sign; which can always both mark and not mark a difference, an irreducibly *alogical* element is admitted into every logical order that nullifies the force of its internal coherence. The difference between a zero-opposition and a zero that does not stand in opposition to any "given" phenomenon cannot, in turn, be marked according to a logic of opposition. In the "zero," the minimal marking with which language operates bifurcates into a marking of absence and the absence of a marking; it refers in this way to what is posited and unposited; it is the reference (*Bezug*) and relation (*Beziehung*) to the withdrawal (*Entzug*) of every relation; and since this zero poses no unambivalent sign for its difference, it must share its proper value with another that remains in-graspable for it. In this *ammarking* (*Ammarkierung*),³² the age-old, ageless ur-problem of ontology breaks open again with regard to what and whether non-being is, and in what relation non-being stands to beings and their presence.

Thesis 54 reminds of this situation in linguistic, poetological, anthropological, and mathematical research, which is here characterized only in outline, and it attempts to prepare an answer to this situation. It gives the concept of zero-rhetoric an extension that is not congruent with Jakobson's use of zero-composita and clarifies this deviation through two interconnected traits (*Züge*): zero-rhetoric is no rhetoric of positing and opposing, and it therefore refers not so much to an "empty place" (*Leerstelle*) as it does to an "opening for place" (*Stellenleere*). This "thesis" asserts, namely, that the rhetoric of metaphor and metonymy "relies

upon [. . .] a zero-function of which not even the figure of prosopopoeia can render account, since prosopopoeia consists in a positing rather than in no positing.” And further, “Zero rhetoric would be that which marks the empty place [*Leerstelle*]—and, more precisely, the opening for a place [*Stellenleere*]—which is necessary in order to safeguard the possibility of a language at all.” What is offered in parentheses to distinguish “*Stellenleere*” more precisely from “*Leerstelle*” is, in fact, more than a mere correction. It marks a turn away from the order of places and positings that is bound up with axis-geometry, the arithmetical zero, and its logical concept. The formulations of this “thesis” thus attempt to say something in the language of a rhetoric of positing that is resolutely excluded from this language, but that, in order to even be thinkable or indicable, must remain open as a playing field for alterations in that very rhetoric of positing. There is such a playing field wherever a place—even an empty place—is displaced into the absence of place, a *Stellenleere*. Since the “opening for place” precedes every empty place that occupies a well-determined, foundational position in the structure of language, it cannot belong to this structure or be sufficiently characterized by its means; it can only ever vaguely—“floatingly”—be indicated through negations, hyperboles, hypothetical modi, or paradoxes. Since, however, there would be no language without this infra-vacancy of an unsettled, positionless “opening for place,” it cannot be eliminated from the horizon of language and ignored as something simply non-linguistic, pre-linguistic, or extra-linguistic. The relation to the irrelational that is opened through the reference of the zero sign to the signless is, rather, the absolutely aporetic constitutive feature of language as such. Thus, in the last sentence of Thesis 54, where the use of the expressions “zero” and “origo” deviate silently, but dramatically, from their linguistic, arithmetical, or logical usage, it is remarked: “Only the philology of the zero would be the *origo* of philology.”

When Paul de Man characterizes prosopopoeia, which is the theme of his study, “Autobiography as De-facement,” he privileges, in correspondence to this figure of figure-making, the vocabulary of positing: “the figure of prosopopoeia, the fiction of an apostrophe to an absent, deceased, or voiceless entity [. . .] *posits* the possibility of the latter’s reply and confers upon it the power of speech.” And: “Our topic deals

with the *giving* and *taking away* of faces [. . .].” And further: “prosopopeia [. . .] *makes* the unknown accessible to the mind and to the senses.” And again: “the rhetorical function of prosopopeia [is to be understood] as *positing* voice or face by means of language [. . .].”³³ Nature and, as its extreme, death, is the absent and unknown entity in whose “place” a face and language should be installed by prosopopeia. This is why “figures of deprivation” shift ever again into the center of poetic attention in Wordsworth, the poet whom de Man’s study primarily addresses: “maimed men, drowned corpses, blind beggars, children about to die.”³⁴ The absolutely privative, deadly instance turns out, however, to be language itself as that which Wordsworth calls “counter-spirit.”³⁵ If prosopopeia is the principle of language-positing, then it also must simultaneously be that of language-privation, for solely a language that gives can take, and it must take—or suggest that it takes—in order to be able to give further: “giving and taking away,” it was said, are supposedly the foundational operations of prosopopeia. The balance that they both hold in de Man’s presentation may correspond to Wordsworth’s wish for symmetry. But the turns of phrase in and beyond de Man’s essay on prosopopeia that insist upon a precise reciprocity between thesis and antithesis, *spirit* and *counter-spirit*, *giving* and *taking*, can hardly be explained in any other way than through a compulsion to systematicity that makes language into the center of all positings and negations. Thus, it reads towards the end of de Man’s study: “To the extent that, in writing, we are dependent on this language, we are all [. . .] deaf and mute [. . .].” And in the penultimate sentence, the strict proportion—which also belongs to the spectrum of meanings of *lógos*—is stressed again, emphatically: “prosopopeia [. . .] deprives and disfigures to the precise extent that it restores.”³⁶ The imperturbable symmetry that de Man asserts with this exact correspondence—“to the extent,” “to the precise extent”—between figuration and disfiguration, restoration and distortion, is placed in question by, among others, the structure of *ammarking*, which troubles every linguistic sign and the entirety of language.

De Man draws the compulsory consequence of his correspondence-scheme with the following statement, grave in every respect: “Death is a displaced name for a linguistic predicament [. . .].” This assur-

ance could be a consolation, if it were thereby said that “death” is *only* a name and nothing other than this; that it is a name for the irreducible linguistic function of address and indication, and thus a name for language as such. For if death were such a name, it would not be the matter itself, and therefore no real matter. De Man’s assurance offers no such consolation, however, since it does not depart from the unreality of language and the “predicament” that bears the name “death,” but from the overwhelming reality that belongs to language as positing. As positing, however, this reality can also be erased through other positings, and thus turned over to its unreality. The consolation that de Man’s assurance offers lies in the homeostasis between the inevitability of the name “death” and the inevitability of its erasure, and thus in the balance between a positing and its negation.

The homeostasis between linguistically posited and linguistically obliterated death is unsettled, however, in de Man’s sentence by the one—perhaps superfluous—word, “displaced.” In the essay on “Defacement,” it stands on a par with “deprives,” “disfigured,” “defaced,” and it can be understood as the repeated specification of the “name” that was already characterized before as the effect of “defacing” and “displacing.” Without the didactic-mnemotechnic adjective, the sentence would read: “Death is the name for a linguistic predicament;” or, more simply: “Death is a name;” and, more plainly: “Death is the name.” In this way, it would be sufficiently plain that death is a linguistic factum, not a substantial or even “natural” entity; and it would be plain that its name initially stands for nothing other than the act of naming, to the extent that the foundational operation of language as such is contracted in it: “death” is the name of all that is named; it is spoken of whenever language is spoken. Since the thetic act of naming necessarily results in a differential marking through which this marking is assimilated to the field of other markings, “death” is a signifier that, despite its difference to “life,” can be associated with a meaning and even a sense. Since, however, even this thetic event is not only inevitable, but also structurally arbitrary—a “random event”—it must result in a zero signifier that both can be assigned meaning and sense, and that can also be assigned neither meaning nor sense. “Death” is therefore not only a name that posits a matter that was no matter before it and neutralizes it through

the indication of its posited status. “Death” is, beyond this, a name that refutes itself and, incapable of assuming a meaning, is removed out of the bounds of linguistic positing. It marks *in* language an ineffaceable unlinguistic reality—or an ineffaceably real unlinguistic character—: it marks no positing, but a trans-posing (*Ver-setzung*), a missing or mis-placing (*Fehl-Setzung*), and a dis-placement or dis-tortion (*Ent-stellung*) of the entire positing-, placing-, and coordination-system of language: it is a name by which language misses (*verfehlt*) and unnames itself. “Death” is not “displaced” from any previously occupied place in the system of signifiers or from any topos that would have been correct for it; it is “displaced” because it does not belong to the linguistic order of places, and its misnomer (*Fehlname*) name opens this order not only to an “empty place” (*Leerstelle*) but beyond this, to an “opening for place” (*Stellenleere*). Yet if “death” is also always the *atopos* of language that, like none other, wards off every topical way of thinking, then this *atopos*—this *Atopos*—is also an absolute resistance to the reduction of philology to a rhetorology of *topoi* and *tropes*. “Death” is never posited death without the un-settling *de*-posal (*Ent-setzung*) of the entire order of positing, *poiesis*, and acts. The assumption that positing and deposing could relate to one another symmetrically is one that can be based only upon a reduction of *de*-posing (*Ent-setzung*) to *op*-posing (*Entgegen-setzung*) that cannot be founded. Even the slight consolation that *de Man*’s assertions of balance allow finds no support within the unlinguistic reality of the elements of language. Philology, as it is thought in the *Theses*, is *philology*; it remains open to disproportion, to irrelation—to the *alógos*.

De Man returns explicitly—and extremely critically—to the structure of positing and its relation to meaning and sense, as well as to the connection between *poiein* and *prosopon* that the primary positing-figure of *prosopopoeia* asserts, when he writes in “Shelley Disfigured”: “language posits and language means (since it articulates) but language cannot posit meaning; it can only reiterate (or reflect) it in its reconfirmed falsehood.”³⁷ This sentence, among the most important ones for recent thinking on language, insists upon the radical disjunction between two functions of language—positing and meaning—where neither is possible without the other, and neither is reducible to the other. But if the second part of this sentence speaks of reiteration (or

reflection), no third linguistic function is thereby introduced; rather, the positing force of language is ascribed the ability to produce, through repetition (or reflection), a meaning that is neither internally nor externally founded, and thus a meaning that is principally falsifiable. The hinge that bears the entire burden of the relation between positing and meaning is therefore the repetition, reiteration, or reflection that makes an accidental or arbitrary positing into a meaningful, relatively consistent positing, which, in turn, is lent the semblance of motivation or even essentiality. But if a merely positing language can generate a meaning through iteration, then its positing would also have to be iterable as such and in its selfsameness. Since, however, there can be neither an internal nor external criterion for this sameness—say, a criterion assured through a meaning—then there can be no talk of a sheer positing, a positing force, or an isolatable positing function. Every linguistic positing must, in order to be possible as a positing, be posed in difference to itself; it must, in every sense and out from every sense, be *exposition*. That means, however: it cannot work in sameness and therefore cannot work as positing; each time, it can only work out otherwise, altered and altering, as an inconsistent occurrence that offers no constant ground for working effects.

Language, that is to say, is a ground without consequence (*Grund ohne Folge*). And further: it is a ground that does not bear out, that does not bear itself or anything else, a ground in withdrawal. Every repetition of a positing must once be the default of this positing, and it cannot even once be a self-default with any certainty, since a self could constitute itself only in the assured repetition of the same. Just as little as one can assume a steady coordination between positing and positing or between positing and meaning, however, inconsistent positings of meanings cannot be thought as strictly differentiated, either. Since they follow no principle and stand under no stabilizing power, positings must also, differently than de Man postulates, always be able to posit meanings, alter meanings, and erase posited meanings. There can be no criteria for their falseness correctness under these conditions. Whether it is considered in its function of meaning or positing, language is “itself” only where it is exposed to its non-self, its unlinguistic character, its incapacity to posit and to mean. A connection between positing and

meaning can only ever be one where both are radically *contingent* and where, in touching their common “zero point,” they touch their common disconnection. This common and uncommon “zero point” is the only place where language *as* language—as meaningful imparting—constitutes itself, but it is no place where it consolidates itself as language. This geometrical, but at the same time *ametrical* place ensures not only the steady mediation between positings, but also the unsteady de-mediation (*Ent-mittlung*) in and between them. This is why it cannot be counted as a third function, but only counted and counted out (*entzählt*) as a zero-function—and, more precisely, as a dysfunction. Language is structurally dysfunctional. Only for this reason does it need such tenacious efforts to grasp its functions and to make it function.

Similar considerations of the structure of positing were developed at a clear distance from Derrida and de Man since the early 1970s, departing from a critical analysis of Fichte’s foundational thesis of the *Thathandlung*, the “enactment” and “done deed”;³⁸ and offering arguments against conventional and egological speech act theories as represented by Austin and Benveniste. These considerations were published more or less succinctly since 1979 and 1989 in “Position Exposed” (*Der ausgesetzte Satz*) and “Afformative, Strike” (*Afformativ, Streik*), respectively. In *Premises*, the general diagnosis is formulated that ontology is *onto-theseology*,³⁹ and the thought of an *extheseology* is weighed in connection with Paul Celan’s sentence, “*La poésie ne s’impose pas, elle s’expose.*”⁴⁰ In “*For—Philology*” (*Für—die Philologie*), it says: “Language posits and sets forth” (*Sprache setzt und sie setzt fort*).⁴¹ This formulation attempts to answer—among others—de Man’s axiom of a language that posits on the one hand and means on the other. The “and” in this sentence could be misunderstood as merely additive. But it is meant as an explicative “and” as well, so that the sentence could also read: “Insofar as language posits, it sets forth” (*Sofern Sprache setzt, setzt sie fort*). This “forth” (*fort*) could, in turn, be misunderstood as indicating merely the further continuation or distantiation of thetic activity. But what is also meant with “set forth” (*fortsetzen*) is that this activity breaks off for something other than a positing in setting away from itself and exposing itself to a distance, to another—to an unposited and unpositable other—over which positings have no power. This other can always also

remain a nobody and a nothing. Language, which holds its balance in the figure-elaborating and figure-obliterating act of prosopopeia, can open a way to another only because it does not stand in equilibrium, but is in itself already forthwith othering, furothering (*Veranderung*). Only an *other* philology can correspond to it.

VI

Icicles filled the long window
With barbaric glass.
The shadow of the blackbird
Crossed it, to and fro.
The mood
Traced in the shadow
An indecipherable cause.

Derrida wrote a “grammatology,” not a “philology.” A line of descendance from that to this — *any* line, however zagged — can be traced or construed only with difficulty. Nonetheless, since one can assume that the *Theses* were not written before *La voix et le phénomène*, *De la Grammatologie*, *L'écriture et la différence*, *La Dissémination*, *Glas*, *Donner le temps*, et cetera, and since one can assume that they are not so naïve as to fail to consider the insights and arguments of Derrida's work, one would also not go amiss in surmising that they operate with an understanding of the word *lógos* and of the concept “language” that is unusable for every “logocentrism.” The *other* philology that the *Theses* speak of — if it is *one* at all — does not lend itself to any philo-logocentrism. The *Theses* are too precise with the *philo-* to neglect its companion, the *miso-*, and they proceed too analytically to leave the dissolution of both, the *lysis*, out of consideration. Neither philo-nor miso-logocentric, they speak, from the first thesis onward, of the “elements” of language, “which speak *for* that which still remains to be said within that which is said,” and they therefore do not speak of any saying that could be fitted within a closed system, nor do they speak of a meaning or sense that would allow what is said to find its area of access and disclosure. Rather, they speak, reservedly and rudimentarily, of that which is not yet — and perhaps never — said, and which nonetheless remains to be

said. They speak of what is to be said, which, as the unsaid, may not even lend itself with certainty to ever being said. A future of which one could be certain that it waits and serves a presently known language or any language at all would be no future, and its language would be nothing other than what has been said one more time, a *fatum* in the form of a program. If the “elements of language” speak as advocates—and, in this sense, philologically—“for that which remains to be said,” then this “for” is not only an “instead,” but also an “in favor of” and, as this “in favor of,” it is a “for” for that which is itself incapable and perhaps in no need and no reach of any “for.” As Thesis 48 indicates: “If it speaks for something, it must also be a ‘for’ without a ‘something’ and without the particular ‘for’ that would be predetermined for it.” The *Theses* speak for an *other* philology, because they speak for the future and thus for another language than any known one, for something other than any spoken one. They speak—in every sense and beyond every sense—for their own speechlessness. They speak towards what comes to pass only as a *passencore*, and they therefore speak *with* their not.

If one should wish to equate this wayless movement—this *diaporia*, as it is called in *Pleroma* and again in Thesis 95—with Derrida’s *archi-écriture*; or if one should attempt to demonstrate, as Jan Plug does, that the double, half, quarter, and eighth-thesis with the number 48 is patterned after Derrida’s considerations in “La structure, le signe, et le jeu,” then nothing—self-evidently—stands in the way.⁴² But the question then arises as to why one would undertake this effort if one admits the *thought* that there is no provenance and most certainly no origin besides one that is structurally prohibited. The question arises as to why one, in searching for prototypes for eccentric forms of composition, does not look to the “mannerists” of all times, in order to make a find in, for example, Ausonius or Cortázar. And the question arises as to why one goes to the trouble of typologizing, if one believes oneself to have *arguments* at hand that cast doubt on the character of the *typos* and that render it recognizably erroneous. And furthermore, the question arises whether the 48/48 does not belong to a half-private code of the author of the *Theses*, or to a code for which even he does not know the key, so that he would be entirely without a prototype, image, *eidōs*, or idol. Now, when it comes to the arguments, one should

remember that Derrida expressly remarks in a footnote to his second book on Husserl, *La voix et le phénomène*, that his analyses “[s’]appuyent], en des points décisifs, sur des motifs heideggeriens” (appeal to Heideggerian motifs in decisive places),⁴³ even though Heidegger’s thinking elicits questions, in turn, that he himself would pose with regard to the “métaphysique de la présence.” In moving with Heidegger, Derrida takes distance from him, and his with-without-with goes through a movement of alteration that renders its point of departure nearly unrecognizable. If, however, one does not and cannot remember this, then it is most likely also because one believes that one must proceed from the assumption that Hegel is merely Hegel; Heidegger, none other than Heidegger; Derrida, just Derrida; each one of them, self-identical, and thus a well-defined subject or object as registered in a population census or in a cultural-historical cadastral survey, a bourgeois identity with personal ID, an estate with titles. This police-like apprehension supposes not only the ability to establish names, works, and their relations to one another; it also produces this very ability to establish, and suggests that what first offers itself with and by virtue of language—language, along with all of its names and relational categories—is itself a thing among things and is classifiable, controllable, and policeable like a thing. But language must initially “be there” (*da sein*) in some way if it is to offer even the slightest hold for reifying and arresting it (*sie dingfest zu machen*). “It” must already “give” itself (“*es muss sie ‘geben’*”) if anything is to be made out of language whose ability to be made and established could be asserted. Whoever does not even ask whether and how language lends itself to giving itself out for such a thing; whoever does not ask whether it exclusively lends itself to this, and nothing else, cannot legitimate the implicit or explicit assertion that language can be made, produced, or thoroughly typologized. He must say to himself—or let it be said to him—that he avails himself of a restrictive concept of language and applies a police-philology where no legal ground or object can be given for it.

In at least one of the *Theses*, a thought developed by Heidegger comes into play that addresses not so much the givenness of language but rather its giving. This thought appears for the first time in 1927 as a fleeting suggestion in *Being and Time*, and it is elaborated in 1962 in

Time and Being. In the writings published by Heidegger, it is further elaborated in the three lectures on a poem by Stefan George that were held for the first time in 1957 and 1958 under the title, “The Essence of Language.” Presumably gained through his engagements with Kant and Husserl, this thought attracted early on the greatest interest on the part of Levinas and Blanchot and, at the latest since 1977, Derrida in *Donner le temps*. The nigh indissolubly close connection of Heidegger’s thought with an idiomatic turn of phrase in German hardly allows it to be translated or explicated in other languages in an even approximately elegant way. This turn of phrase simply reads: “*Es gibt*” (It gives).⁴⁴ It can be used to say that something presently exists, whether it be a thing or a possibility, and to this extent, the German phrase accords with the usage of the French “*il y a*,” which speaks not of “giving” (*geben*), but of “having” (*avoir*), and adds the adverbial determination of place, “there” (*y*). The phrase *es gibt* can, however, also be understood word for word, and would then signify that something does not simply occur, but that, in order to occur, it must first be given and experienced from out of its provenance. Heidegger uses the syntagm in this emphatic sense, and with it, he wards off the interpretation of beings — be they real, necessary, or possible — as entities that could be sufficiently clarified as products or as “naturally” occurring things at hand.

The Aristotelian *prima philosophia* inquires into the first foundations, the *archai*, and the highest causes, the *aitiai*, of beings, insofar as they are beings (*Metaphysics* 1003 a 26).⁴⁵ In examining *what* is and what thereby contains the indication *that* it is, Aristotle finds the highest cause to be that which effects (*ein Wirkendes*), *tò poiētikón*; and more exactly, he finds it to be the self-effectuating mind, *noûs poiētikós* (*De anima* 430 a11). The theorem of the auto-poetic and auto-technical effectiveness of beings answers the question of being — regardless of whether it refers to *what* or *that* beings are — by explaining being as *entelécheia*, or being determined from and toward one’s being (*Aus-sich-zu-sich-selbst-Bestimmtsein*). Since, with this explanation, the question of being is answered, but the answer speaks only of the circular self-movement of the living, only self-givenness is thought in Aristotle’s ontology in the sense of the autoproduction of substance, but not its givenness, and still less the giving that must precede any given. For

Aristotle and for the tradition that depends upon him, being has the sense of a self-relation of unconditional reciprocity. The transcendental philosophies of modernity, in which subjectivity is considered to be substantial, allow for the given as a *datum* of sensation, but take it up as an object of cognition solely under the condition that it finds its correlate in the categorial determinations of understanding. The given is given only when it is reformed into something that is taken by assumption. Both the philosophy of substance and the philosophy of the subject know of giving solely as the movement towards a given, and they know of this given solely as the objectification of what is assumed. They do not leave the circle of beings, but determine it as the circulation of its forms of production. Heidegger attempts to free thinking from the reductionism of both tendencies with an *Es gibt*, which reaches back before every given and before every subject and substance of giving.

If the *Es gibt* should have any sense as an answer to the state of problems in classical and modern philosophies — namely, if it should have the minimal sense of making the provenance of sense questionable — then it cannot be localized within the circle of beings that are thought as mental representations or as objects of experience. According to Heidegger, there is (*es gibt*) a preeminent threefold that cannot be characterized as such beings: being, time, and language. Being distinguishes itself in that it cannot be understood as a being, a thing, a representational content, or a representational form without thereby becoming fundamentally disputable. Of being it can be said that it is each time — and each time in a singular way — the occurrence of a being in which this being is not effective as a subject or a substance. Of time it was already said in Aristotle's *Physics* that it is not, or that it barely is (218 a), for it shows itself alone in the *nûn* (now), which is already no longer as soon as it is there, and which is not yet, so long as it remains ahead. Of language, one can just as little say that it is as one can say that being and time *are*: language too cannot be predicated of any subject that would not, as such, first be constituted — or dethroned — by it. Language is also no substantial being that could produce itself, and it is also an occurrence that cannot be traced back to any *arché* or *causa* that could ensure its proper constancy as *entelécheia* or as a *causa sui*. Language is not; it gives language. The giving of lan-

guage does not proceed, however, from a self, nor is language given back to any self; rather “it” gives language (“*es*” *gibt sie*)—otherwise, there would be no language (*denn sonst gäbe es sie nicht*)—for another and as something other than a self.

These preliminary historical and structural considerations can clarify what Heidegger writes on “the essence of language” (*das Wesen der Sprache*) in the context of the poem by George, “The Word” (*Das Wort*). There, it reads, “the word, the saying, has no being” (*Das Wort, das Sagen, hat kein Sein*). And further: “The word—no thing, no being. [. . .] Neither the ‘is’ nor the word belongs among existing things. [. . .] Nonetheless, neither the ‘is’ nor the word and its saying can be banished into the void of sheer nullity.”⁴⁶ The occurrence of language can neither be reified nor arrested as a being—be it an utterance, a statement, a lexicon, or an idioticon—nor can it be declared null and void, if only because it is this occurrence that first allows something to show itself as something at all. The fact that it “gives” language does not, however, mean that it is a being—or a distinguished being—or its logical negation. If it “gives” language, then it must give language so that this giving—differently than the turn of phrase, *Es gibt*, might at first suggest—is not to be interpreted as a mere predicate of language, but as the occurrence that is indissoluble from it. Hence Heidegger goes on to say: “*Es gibt*—and not in the sense that ‘it’ gives words, but that the word itself gives. The word: the giver. [. . .] In thinking, we would have to seek the word in that ‘*es, das gibt*’ as the giving itself, but never as the given.”

Every word remains to be sought and is “never” already given as a positive *datum*, since it must, as the occurrence of giving, precede every manifest gift, and by preceding it in this way, it must remain withdrawn from every consolidation in a given. This withdrawal—which Heidegger also characterizes as refusal (*Verweigerung*), as withholding (*Vorenthalt*), and, in *Time and Being*, as exappropriation (*Enteignis*)⁴⁷—belongs to the structure of the giving of language itself, so that Heidegger can say that, in language, “that which gives conceals itself.” Both giving and giver are therefore every time and forever “concealed,” and they are “concealed” before the alternatives between presencing and absencing, between appearing and vanishing, and between affirmative and negative prop-

ositions, which all owe themselves initially to that giving. Thus, if language is to be thought as *giving* and *giver*, language cannot be understood according to the pattern of a genetic process or a production procedure, and still less according to the pattern of self-generation. But it also cannot be understood according to the grammatical paradigm of a proposition in which language would be the subject of a giving that it ascribes to itself as a predicate. If giving and giver are said to be structurally “concealed,” then they are concealed in the sense that they do not belong to the order of beings that are predicable in apophantic propositions, and thus cannot assume the position of a subject or a predicate. Neither a subject nor a predicate nor an object, what is concealed is also nothing of the sort that could be converted into an “unconcealed” entity or wrested of its secret. Language conceals no secret except this: that it gives (*dass es sie gibt*).

The implications and consequences of Heidegger’s remarks on the *Es gibt* of language are immense. Particularly important in this context concerning philology is the fact that these remarks decipher the revers of a mainstream turn of phrase, which turns out to be another, non-current language that allows one to think back *with* language to *before* what is spoken *in* the occurrence of language. Heidegger draws attention to this with stiff didactic pathos when he writes: “Suddenly we awaken from the dormancy of hasty opinion and glimpse something other” (*Plötzlich erwachen wir aus der Verschlafenheit des eiligen Meinens und erblicken Anderes*). The other that Heidegger speaks of here is a language that does not come under observation as a being, and is therefore neither the subject nor the substance of giving, but that which remains withheld in its giving, yet precisely because it holds back, this language speaks as another to another and releases itself and another in its ever-singular otherness. With the phrase “It, the word, gives” (*Es, das Wort, gibt*), what is discovered is not so much another language, but rather language as an other. And this discovery — even if it were, in any sense whatsoever, an invention — is simultaneously the discovery of another philology. For this philology, language is not a system of announcements and communications that is regulated by grammatical and rhetorical categories in which language would function as its proper, universal subject-object. Rather, language is the occurrence that, insofar as it occurs, must remain withdrawn from “thingliness,” and that, insofar

as it also occurs with every act of consciousness, must remain withdrawn from consciousness. The fact that its occurrence announces itself alone in withdrawal and can be neither arrested by reflection — for this is itself an occurrence — nor synchronized with declarations, marks the inner finitude of language. In that it speaks, language gives itself over to silence in each act of announcement; it gives itself over to forgetting before every possibility for repression, denial, or abnegation; and it gives itself over to death with its every vital sign. Finitude signifies here: the a priori self-distancing of language in its giving; forgetfulness signifies: the structural unconsciousness of language in its occurrence; and silence signifies: the aphasiac, asemic ground of all utterances in their course. The *other* philology of which the *Theses* speak can only be a philology of a priori self-distancing and immediate self-othering. It can therefore only be a philology of language as that which is ever other. And it must be a philology of the response to this other and the responsibility for its “It gives” (*Es gibt*), as well as its “It gives nothing back” (*Es gibt nichts zurück*).

This is why Thesis 24 speaks of philology as *philalology*, *philalogie*. This is why Thesis 28 dismisses the understanding of philology as a reflexive self-consciousness of language. This is why the following thesis speaks of the “forgetting of language” that “belongs to language,” and the “forgetting of philology” that “belongs to philology.” This is why self-forgetting is bespoken there as the decisive element of historicity, and why it says of philology in Thesis 31: “It transforms the given into the movement of giving and releases this giving from a reservation.” But it is also why the attempt was already undertaken in the study, “Faust, Money” (*Faust, Geld*), to characterize giving and giving out as the pre-primary gesture — one could also say the zero-gesture — of language. There, the verses are cited from *Faust II* in which the boy charioteer — an allegory of poetry — speaks of Pluto, the god of wealth: “That which he lacks, I share out,” which is followed by the commentary:

Poetry is therefore richer than rich and richer than wealth itself, since it is first [. . .] in poetry that wealth comes to language and to appearance. [. . .] Poetry gives what it does not have and what can never be an object of having. It thus gives absolutely; it gives even

the giving itself; it gives both itself and its giving away and therefore never lets itself be appropriated as a mere given, as an objective possession. It must, as sheer giving, also give the giving of its gifts and must therefore go on to give itself further still from out of the hands of the gifted. It gives everything as well as the giving and it therefore gives—this, too, belongs to the paradox of giving—only the semblance of a gift and gives itself the semblance of giving.

This “pregiven premise and present of every gift” (*Vorgabe jeder Gabe*), it says further, “is an inappropriable credit that can only be valid according to the inordinate claim of its self-disclaimer: credit in the state of discrediting.” The footnote to the first of these passages remarks, with reference to the study of Jean-Louis Chrétien, “Le Bien donne ce qu’il n’a pas”: “That it gives what it does not itself have is, for Plotinus (*Enneads* vi 7, 15), the distinction of the one and the good, which is also the beautiful.”⁴⁸ In Chrétien’s study, the aporias of a presuppositionless giving are analyzed, but it is not made sufficiently clear that they are the aporias of a language-giving before every language, and thus of a non-language and a non-gift that refuses itself to the orders of the *lógos* and logic, as well as the orders of being and ontology—including their “negative” versions.

Thesis 55 takes up the thread of the remarks in “Faust, Money,” in which context Heidegger’s thought of the *Es gibt* of language may, in a limited or concealed way, speak along with the commentary on Goethe, the *Enneads* of Plotinus, and their exegeses through Jankélévitch and Chrétien—: this thesis again takes up that thread from a multiplicity of threads and connects it with the observation of the inexplicit “not” that Theses 32–36 pursue, as well as the remark on the bifurcated zero and the “opening for place” (*Stellenleere*) that is entered upon in Thesis 54. It is from there that Thesis 55 goes on to speak of a *nihil* that cannot be a *negativum*, but that would have to be characterized as *nihil donans*. With this, a path opens for the transition to the following two sentences on the giving and non-giving of language. With the *nihil donans*, the inexplicit “not” as well as the vacancy of place and position are addressed, without which there would be no language (*ohne die es Sprache nicht gäbe*). Language is thus to be thought as a non-being—which is nonetheless not nothing—whose giving, insofar as it gives, cannot congeal into an ontological or logical datum.

Language gives, but precisely for this reason, it cannot be a given. It gives being, but it is not what it gives, and it is not in the manner of a given. Since language remains the occurrence of giving, it also cannot be named or measured according to the being that it gives. It therefore does not *presence*, and it does not come to *presence* in the sense that Heidegger characterizes as *presencing* (*Anwesen*). Since language, as sheer giving, precedes every categorical determination, it would be misleading to characterize it with the categories of “necessity,” “reality,” or “possibility,” or with their conceptual counterparts, “accidental,” “unreal,” or “impossible.” And it would be further misleading to designate it with the terminology of critical or speculative transcendentalism as the unconditioned condition of possibility for objective experience. On the one hand, these names can be justified only by the architecture of transcendental philosophies and lose their ground when their irrevocable premise—the primordial positing of the subject as substance—gives way. On the other hand, if language is sheer giving, it gives no condition and no ground without also withdrawing conditions and grounds in its giving. Each time, language “is” only *donans* as *recedens*. It must therefore remain questionable whether, confronted with the withdrawal-structure of giving, any talk of a given could at all be justified without reference to the foundational assumptions of classical and modern ontologies, which allow for the thought of giving only as the giving of a given. The linguistic difficulties that set in with the attempt to name the occurrence of language or to determine it predicatively are not, however, catalyzed solely by the grammar and vocabulary of establishment-philosophies. They also set in with turns of phrase that occur in “natural” languages if those phrases are not questioned, in turn, with regard to that which is supposedly said with them and that which remains to be said of them beyond what they obviously say. As in the case of *Es gibt*. If, namely, language gives and “is” nothing other than this giving, then whatever it releases from itself can likewise only be something that gives, but never a given. Since, however, its giving must preserve and therefore reserve itself, language can never give out; it can never give without restraint; and, *sensu stricto*, it cannot be giving. “It gives” (*Es gibt*) therefore always signifies at the same time: “It does not give” (*Es gibt nicht*); and: “It gives — not-giving” (*Es gibt —*

das Nichtgeben); or: “It, not-giving, gives” (*Es, das Nichtgeben, gibt*). This structural formulation for language thus indicates that what is grasped as giving must have already slipped its grasp and given giving the slip. The formulation does not bring a relation or proportion—a *lógos*—for language to language; rather, it brings the skewed relation and disproportion of language to language—an *alógos*—and it suggests that this disproportion is language itself in its occurrence, that language is *lógos alógos*. With this, however, it becomes questionable whether Heidegger’s formulation, “It, the word, gives” (*Es, das Wort, gibt*) can have constancy; and it becomes questionable whether the foundational formulation for language that he postulates at the end of *On the Way to Language* (*Unterwegs zur Sprache*)—that language is the “relation of all relations” (*das Verhältnis aller Verhältnisse*) or the *lógos* of all *lógoi*—reaches the matter in question or whether this formulation does not, with sure aim, miss the mark.⁴⁹ It would be more precise, and nevertheless insufficient, to reformulate it as the relation to that which holds open for relations (*Verhältnisoffenen*), and to that which cannot be halted or held (*Unhaltbaren*). What language remains is this: that it does not remain, and before all else, that it does not remain “itself.”

Thesis 55 only slightly enters into these—ever yet precursory—considerations. Its last two sentences merely say: “For philology, there is not merely a ‘there-is-language’; there is also a ‘there is no ‘there-is-language.’” It is language that gives (itself) and language that withdraws (itself, this giving).” What these remarks may offer for philology is left open here. But from the context—for example, Thesis 1—it gives itself to be understood that *phileîn* does not signify a belated relation to a pre-given language, but a relation that owes itself to its givenness. The *philia* is what first admits—allows and accedes—that something is given and that something is given to it. With *philien*, what is meant is no psychological or emotional inclination in the sense of a *psychologia rationalis* or psychoanalysis, but a linguistic behavior and a behavior of language, which is structured in such a way that language, speakers, and addressees are held out and held off for another. The *phileîn* gives itself over to this other, which is given for the first time with that giving over. But since this other is never conditioned in the sense of a thing or an object, *phileîn* is solely thinkable as an allowance for the

withdrawal of what it gives. This withdrawal can be taken for a privation, a frustration, or a disappointment only if one counts upon a given in the form of a thing, representation, or established fact, but not if this withdrawal is realized as a structural trait of giving itself. Giving gives by letting free and giving leave for that to which it gives itself to remain withdrawn. If it behaved otherwise, *philia* would be the self-sufficient positing of a subject, a self-substitution, and an exchange of the self with itself in the guise of another. It would be the movement of a return to the self and a self-endowment, but it would not be giving.

The movement of *philein* and the *lógos*—and thus the foundational movement of philology—can be clarified with a sentence from Heraclitus that has frequently been considered and cited since antiquity. It reads, laconically: “*phûsis krúptesthai philei*” (fr. 123).⁵⁰ If one reads it with regard to Heraclitus’s understanding of the *lógos*, it can also signify: “*lógos krúptesthai philei*”; and with an extensive enough understanding of *lógos* and language, it can be rendered: “language inclines towards concealing (itself).” Since language is inclined toward another and is nothing other than this inclination toward another, language gives itself over to what it is not, and thus gives itself to what remains withdrawn from its own tendency towards elucidation. It holds itself back so that whatever it inclines towards can be brought to light. Language withdraws itself in surrendering to that which is spoken. It gives room for admissions without finding a place among the admitted. It gives and yields itself, among others, with its withdrawal. That is philology: philocrypty.

For the praxis of philology— not merely the academic and didactic variant, but also the various semi-conscious and unconscious praxes of everyday and all-night philology— it is thereby admitted, before all else: there is no giving language that would not have to go on being given and being given on; no language that does not alter what is said; none that does not alter the saying; none that could offer a criterion for deciding that it— and exclusively it— is language; and no language that could not also be none at all. Since it is each time given on anew, and since it is, in this sense, an iteration, language must, in its minimal structure, be repeatable and recognizable as language. Since it is a new beginning in each of its moments, language must be a beginning without a successor, an initium that does not condition its consequences. Since it is the

iteration of an initiation without a criterion for its initiative, it must be *iteration*. Language gives itself in the dative—before there can be a nominative for the given, a genitive for its provenance, an accusative for its exclusion, or an ablative for its mediality—and it thus gives itself without any pre-given orientation and without a criterion for the affirmation, recognition, or confirmation of its gift. A philology that corresponds to this movement will have to come to terms with the minimal structure that allows it to repeat and that hinders it from consolidating into a fixed substrate, a “code” or “convention,” a “type” or a “schema.” Only in this irreducible minimal structure can philology recognize its proper—its linguistic—procedures and its blockades, its playing field and its limits, its history and its distance to history; only in it can it recognize its recognition. And it is also only in this minimal structure that philology can—beyond what is said in Theses 17, 76, and 89–92—define its practice. It cannot do so, if linguistic phenomena are handled positively as mere *faits accomplis*, or constructively as principally manipulable entities. Philology can only define its practice in parting from the misunderstanding that philology is an—empirical, transcendental, dialectical, or otherwise modified—ontology of linguistic being.

Maurice Blanchot thought through and worked through this parting with more abandon than many before him. Three years after the publication of *Unterwegs zu Sprache*, he published in 1962 an equally “philosophical” and “literary” meditation with *Awaiting Oblivion* (*L'attente l'oubli*), which distantly recalls the story of Orpheus and Eurydice and offers an answer, among others, to Heidegger’s recently published works.⁵¹ On page 48, it says: “*L'attente donne l'attention en retirant tout ce qui est attendu*—” (Waiting gives attention while withdrawing everything that is awaited—).⁵² From the first sentence of the book onward, there is talk of this waiting in talking, listening, writing, and reading; in addressing, receiving, and giving again in turn. One modus of waiting is the waiting for an answer that is articulated in a question. Perhaps as an echo of Paul Valéry’s opening verses of the *Jeune Parque*, “*Qui pleure [. . .] Mais qui pleure?*” (Who weeps [. . .] But who weeps?), the question of who speaks is posed in the first paragraph of Blanchot’s text: “*Qui parle?*” And once more, more urgently: “*Qui parle donc?*” (Who, then, is speaking?).⁵³—Through Foucault, Samuel Beckett’s variant of this ques-

tion later came to a certain fame.⁵⁴ And it is taken up again as the question of philology in Thesis 67 and extended with the questions, “Who is silent?” and “What is silent?” — As it is shown in the sentence, “*Latente donne [. . .] en retirant tout*” (Waiting gives [. . .] in withdrawing all), giving holds back giving before every temporal retention and every attentional-intentional relation of the sort that Husserl describes. It can therefore be said that giving withdraws all that is pre-given, given, and awaited in such a way that the withdrawal of the given is what is given every time before all. This is why forgetting — this very withdrawal — is the gift *par excellence*, but only insofar as it is itself concealed: “*L’oubli, le don latent*” (Oblivion, the latent gift).⁵⁵ If waiting — for an answer, for an event, for the arrival and the presence of a figure, whether it be the world or language — gives attention and raises the tension towards what is awaited, it nonetheless does so in such a way that the awaited itself withdraws, so that what is given is only ever given in the modus of delay, withholding, and distraction: it is given as that which only “is” because it is ungiven. Present can only be what remains non-present in questioning and waiting for it. But what is initially ungiven and non-present every time is, before all, language. It is what is called waiting in Blanchot, and it is what is called forgetting.

Even the name of all names, the name of being, can only be a name for forgetting. Derrida remembers this thought in *Donner le temps* — and reverses its sense — but he had, so he suggests, “forgotten” the precise wording and place in Blanchot’s text that treats similarly of giving and of giving time: “Being is yet another word for forgetting” (*L’être est encore un nom pour l’oubli.*)⁵⁶ As that which *yet* and *ever yet* is a name for forgetting, and thus for a forgetting that forfeits to forgetting, *being* remains preserved in the word — “forgetting remains in an utterance” (*l’oubli demeure en une parole*)⁵⁷ — so that forgetting remains in language as the name of being *and* remains preserved as the forgetting of this name. Like waiting, forgetting remains a name for no name and a language for no language. Being remains, thanks to the gift of forgetting, without being. “The present that forgetting would make for them: presence free of any present, with no relation to being, turned away from every possibility and impossibility” (*Le présent que leur ferait l’oubli: la présence libre de tout présent, sans rapport à l’être, détournée de tout possi-*

ble et de tout impossible).⁵⁸ And further: “motionless presence, turned away from presence” (*présence immobile détournée de la présence*).⁵⁹ Now, whether one translates *présence* as a state of being present (*Gegenwart*); as presence (*Anwesenheit*); or as coming to presence (*Anwesen*), Blanchot’s formulation touches upon an extreme of Heidegger’s analyses of time and being, which are resumed in the reminder from the “Anaximander Fragment” (*Spruch des Anaximander*): “being withdraws itself in unconcealing itself in beings” (*Das Sein entzieht sich, indem es sich in das Seiende entbirgt*).⁶⁰ Blanchot makes plain that even this statement on being and its withdrawal falls under the conditions of this withdrawal; that its aptness is both gained from this withdrawal and lost to it. As a “present free of all that is present” and “without relation to being”; as a presence that is turned away from presence, the statement speaks first of all its “proper” non-existence in its address to someone and in its reference to something, as well as in its self-reference.

Language, as it is experienced in the text by Blanchot, is the release from what is present and its presence, the absolution of language from itself, the liberation of presencing from presencing, and the being of without-being (*Sein des Ohne-Sein*). But even this language *sans rapport à l'être* still speaks; it speaks without itself and without being present; it speaks in not speaking: “speaking — not speaking, in an identical movement” (*parlant-ne parlant pas, dans un même mouvement*);⁶¹ “speaking, deferring speaking” (*parlant, différant de parler*).⁶² Language thus speaks *from out of* this difference to itself; it speaks *as* this difference; and it speaks its non-speaking in speaking. While one of the most disputed sentences in Heidegger reads: “Language speaks” (*Die Sprache spricht*), Blanchot’s sentence on language — without contradicting Heidegger’s — could only read: “Language speaks — not.” These turns of phrase for a non-speaking, “not”-speaking language, for a language that defers from speaking — as well as the analogous turns of phrase that characterize *archi-écriture* in Derrida — may seem paradoxical. But they are hypo-paradoxical insofar as they precede every logic that could interdict and suppress the attribution of two contradictory predicates to one and the same matter. The giving of language remains free from this logic, since it remains free from the interpretation of being as self-presence and self-possession, and free from the obsession with being its proper

ground. Hence, it is thanks to the structure of the thought of a language that is absolutely giving and therefore withholding — but not upon the grounds of any ancient or contemporary philosophical “influences”⁶³ — that one of the protagonists in Blanchot’s *Awaiting Oblivion* says, “I cannot give you what I do not have” (*Je ne puis vous donner ce que je n’ai pas*), and thereby “cites” for a further time a version of Plotinus’s words on giving what is not had.⁶⁴ Upon this, he receives the answer: “I ask it of you, and [. . .] I will ask it of you until the end” (*je vous le demande [. . .] je le vous demanderai jusqu’à la fin*).⁶⁵

This fragment of a monologue with disparate voices speaks of what is called philology in the *Theses*: the longing for a language without the capacity, power, essence, or presence of language. The movement of a philology that is understood in this way also becomes recognizable in the ambivalent title of Blanchot’s later book, *The Step Not Beyond* (*Le pas au-delà*), which speaks of a step (*pas*) into a beyond (*au-delà*) that is also no (*pas*) beyond (*au-delà*).⁶⁶ And later, the movement of philology becomes recognizable again in the title, *L’entretien infini* — “the infinite conversation,” the infinite holding (*tenir*) in the interim (*entre*), the relation with no given relata. Understood rightly, these turns of phrase are more exact, more analytic, and more far-reaching into the complex of what is called language than the ascriptions of meanings or functions could be, which, in the name of philology, draw upon the most questionable traditional inventories of ancient and medieval substantialisms and modern subjectivisms.

Derrida wrote a “grammatology,” not a “philology.” Yet that “grammatology,” as it is developed in *La dissémination*, *Glas*, *Donner le temps*, and countless earlier and later works, offers one of the most unreserved yet most discrete philologies to be found. It would be no *other* philology, and it would be no other *philology*, if it could be reduced to being *his*, to having been *his own*, and to remaining identifiable exclusively with his proper name. Derrida would not be Derrida, if he were merely “Derrida” and had not, like hardly another, insistently investigated the premises and effects of his and every name.

With inexplicit “citations,” which are all reformulations, the *Theses* recall, among others, the pre-history of the theorems that are discussed in them, as well as the names that are connected with them.

And they thereby recall the pre-history of what belongs to no empirical history: they recall what they call *nihil donans*, and what was taken up and re-interpreted, withheld and given further, by Derrida, Blanchot, Chrétien, Lacan, Jankélévitch, Heidegger, Goethe, Proclus, Plotinus, Heraclitus, as well as countless unnamed and nameless contemporaries and others who came before and after them. This giving is rendered each time, without ever heeding these names, without needing a name, and without being able to bear a name that would be its proper name or appropriate for it.

Who knows? Philology could be another name, for example, for what Derrida called deconstruction. But the mere name—the one as well as the other—does not say much. It gives provocation for thought, but it is no etiquette for a sterile theory. Philology is no less a singular praxis than it is a plural one. In every *renaming*, it is a praxis of *unnaming*.

Philology is the praxis of language that says something more—and therefore other—than all that has been said. It would not give language, if it were already given (*Es gäbe sie nicht, wenn es sie schon gäbe*).

VIII

I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know.

One of the strongest statements in the responses to the *Theses* is: “A poem is not language.” It is most likely one of the boldest statements that have ever been proposed concerning poetry, language, and their relation to one another. But in “Catch a Wave: Sound, Poetry, Philology,” the grounds given for it by Sean Gurd, to whom it is owed, are hardly tenable.

The statement that a poem is not language proceeds in Gurd’s presentation from a concept of poetry that is oriented according to Jakobson’s theses in *Linguistics and Poetics* and that accordingly defines it along the lines of a strict symmetry between the two principles of language, selection and combination. In poetry, “the principle of equivalence”

should be projected “from the axis of selection into the axis of combination,” and thereby determine the entire structure of its language. The connection between phoneme and meaning that makes language language, this “sound-meaning nexus,” is, according to Jakobson, “a simple corollary of the superposition of similarity on contiguity.”⁶⁷ But with this, it is suggested that poetry is not only the most compact but also the most structurally fulfilled language, since it subordinates the contingency of the “sound-meaning nexus” completely to the principle of equivalence. If it accorded with Jakobson’s theorem, poetry would have to offer a harmonic world of language whose phonetic dimension would be in consonance with its semantic dimension; there would be no allowance for a notable lacuna, a false note, or an instance of nonsense. To this construction Gurd attaches the justified suspicion that Jakobson’s concept of language and poetry is adapted to dispose the one as well as the other to being an “object of linguistic science.” But in poetry from Homer to today, it also happens that the cognitive-semantic function of language collapses and its “material” level registers only the traces of this collapse. And if this is the case, poetry can no longer be understood, Gurd argues, to be structured according to Jakobson’s coordination scheme. For, he writes, “poetry uses language in ways that fundamentally subvert linguistic self-evidence.”

But is the subversion that Gurd means enough of a “subversion” to justify this name? In his reply to Charles Segal’s commentary on Sappho’s *pháinetáí moi*-fragment (fr. 31), Gurd concedes that the poem “descends into eros as the negation of form,” but doubts that “it comes all the way back.” He finds support for the overwhelming of form by the formlessness of eros in the overwhelming of the voice by the “humming” in the ears of the speaker in Sappho’s poem. The consequence that he draws from this element of the text, among others, is that “the poem’s sonorousness is the material correlate of its theme.” But with this formulation, Gurd takes over without notice Jakobson’s axiom that the “sound-meaning nexus” is “a simple corollary of the superposition of similarity on contiguity,” which is the very axiom that Gurd means to counter. Theme and sound harmonize with one another if the theme is an asemantic humming that can be heard as such a humming in the phonetics of the poem. If the semantic and

somatic elements of language are consonant with one another in this way, then the deepest disturbance of cognition and self-recognition finds its equivalent in the disturbance of sound. A disharmony that attests itself *as* disharmony is formally harmonic and can therefore hardly be grasped otherwise than in the way that Segal does: as a disharmony that is “sublated” in the Hegelian sense; as a disharmony that is at once cancelled out and returned to itself; as a self-harmonizing disharmony. The subversion of language that Gurd attempts to assert against Segal, and still more against Jakobson, appears to be merely another version of a language that constantly stabilizes itself in its generation and constation of equivalences.

But for there to be anything like equalizing, balancing, and harmonizing, there must initially be a disparity and even a lack of relation between the somantic and semantic elements of language; and there must therefore be something that cannot be integrated into what constitutes the foundational structure of language for Jakobson. Gurd speaks of this disparity as “a radical disjunction between the sense of the line and its sound.” It is marked, for example, by the three vowel-elisions in the last verse of Sappho’s second strophe, which speaks of the muting of the voice of the poem. Gurd’s interpretation of this disjunction, however, is astonishing. He writes, “More sound than meaningful utterance, the line offers only a fragment of sense.” With this, he repeats the thesis on the preponderance of sound over sense that he had previously proposed, but he thereby simultaneously contradicts the observation that should ground this thesis. Through the elisions, sound is left out and, as Gurd extensively shows, it is made to go mute — sound is, if one remains closer to the Greek text, strangled off — while the meaning of the reduced words remains indubitably clear. The characterization of the questionable verse could accordingly be written as the inversion of Gurd’s sentence: “More meaningful utterance than sound, the line offers only a fragmentary phonetic realization of sense.” But with this, it would become clear that one can speak of a conventionally understood meaning in Jakobson’s and Segal’s sense only if it finds its “equivalent” in its phonetic, morphological, and grammatical “realization.” The fact that this does not happen in Sappho’s verse is explicitly motivated by its semantic content, but this content also requires not only that less is

uttered than what is meant, but that nothing be voiced: *sensu stricto*, the poem would have to go mute before or with the verse that speaks of muting. The disjunction between *sense* and *sound* is therefore—in every sense of “sense”—first of all a disjunction between *sense* and *sense*. This disjunction of sense—of somatic, sensorial, semantic, and epistemic sense—always opens rifts in language where language hits upon the limits of language—upon corporeal excitations as well as excitations of feeling; upon the resistance of the languages of others; upon sensual realities and the real unrealizability par excellence, death—and where it nonetheless oversteps these limits.

It is in this way that the voice speaks in Sappho’s poem, in the present tense, beyond the limit of its muting. It lets the muting that it cannot sound out still resound; and it still means what it cannot. That means, however, that the voice sounds its non-sounding, means its non-meaning, and speaks its non-speaking. And that means, furthermore, that it speaks *with* the “not” of its speaking, meaning, and sounding. And further still, it speaks with the “not” of its sense, in the somatic and semiotic senses of the word. Since this sense emerges in Sappho’s poem from Eros alone; since it is Eros that first releases the gaze upon shapes, the voice for their description, and the experience of feelings, there is nothing in this poem that is not said, seen, or experienced from out of Eros. But Eros, which gives all free release, forbids all that it lets free from entering into a harmonious, reciprocal relation to it, and therefore wards off all sounding, sighting, and feeling: the voice fails; the gaze goes blind; hearing goes deaf; and the speaker appears to herself to be nearly dead. To formulate it sharply: Eros is a force that lends sense and the senses and that, in its lending, withdraws them. Only he who speaks from out of the experience of its withdrawal can speak of and *from* this force. This is why Sappho’s poem does not go mute but speaks *with* the muting of its speaking, and only in this way speaks *of* it and *beyond* it. Its semiotic dimension does not collapse into blank senselessness, and its somatic dimension does not fall to insensible humming, since each articulates itself in and with the other. It is not the case, then, that a sound would be superposed upon a pre-existing meaning—“superposition” is Jakobson’s word—or that a principle of meaning would be “projected”—again according to Jakobson’s

wording—upon a principle of phonetic formation, for meaning and sound both depart from an impulse that refuses itself to both meaning and sound. No sense is somaticized and no sound, semanticized; both are phenomena of the transition to what both are not, never were, and never could have become entirely: *allosomaticization*, *allosemanticization*, and *allologicization*, which has no determinable beginning and no term that could be its *telos*. Language speaks from out of its dis-sense. It does not speak with sounds and coordinated meanings; it speaks with another—with a soundless and unmeaningful other—that cannot be *its* other or the other of *itself* because it is not and is not for language alone. In this sense that absolves itself from every sense, the last, fragmentarily transmitted verse of Sappho's poem can neutrally speak of the all as another: "*allà pân tolmatón . . .*" (But all is to be borne . . .). This bearing—or this daring—is the cause of philology, of *philallogie*, of *philalogy*. It could, with reference to Sappho's poetry, be called an erotics of language.

In his biaxial system of language, Jakobson operates with the premise that sound and sense, selection and combination, obey independent "principles." He modifies his Cartesian dualism in allowing for projections and interferences, and thus for an intersection point between the two where it remains open which of the two "principles" this point would fall under, and whether it is subordinate to one of them at all. Sean Gurd interprets this point, whose problematic status is indicated in Thesis 54, as a non-linguistic substrate of language: "This zero point," he writes, "is no longer language but an all-too tangible materiality." And he goes on: "It is from this self-positing space that the 'projection' of the principle of equivalence from one axis to the other happens [. . .]"; and in the following sentence, he brings a sentence from Thesis 47 into connection with this "projection," in which it says: "philology is the event of the freeing [*Freilassung*] of language from language." The issue may be left open as to whether a point is a space, but according to every current understanding, neither one nor the other consists of "tangible materiality." And it is also certain that neither of the two can be characterized as "self-positing" or as pre-given, if that is what "positing" should mean. Gurd leaves no doubt that this space should be the "acoustic substrate of speech," the "plastic material" of

“auditory phenomena,” whose “sonic presence” or “audible presence” is brought to appear in its “complex vibratory temporalities ‘beneath’ or beyond [language]” through the works of Homer, Sappho, or Alvin Lucier. But it must nonetheless be asked in which sense this “acoustic substrate” or any other substrate can be irreducible for language and, by virtue of its irreducibility, constitutive for language. If Gurd’s sentence, “A poem is not language,” and if the sentence that Gurd places beside it on the freeing of language are to be comprehensible, it must first be clarified what is meant by “language” and which elementary traits are indispensable for it.

At the latest since Aristotle’s *Peri hermeneias*, it has been assumed that no word of a language is a word “by nature” — *phúsei* — but that it is defined as such only through variable conventions — *katà synthéken*. Vocalized sound is not characteristic for a word, for otherwise — according to the disputable argument of *Peri hermeneias* (16a29) — the voicings of animals would also be words. But if language is a thoroughly synthetic formation that is generated and altered solely through conventions, then sound is not constitutive for language. It can be released, replaced, and itself arbitrarily signified by other conventions that, like writing, require no sound. Sounds can, as Gurd writes, be the “acoustic substrate of speech,” but they cannot be the substrate of language. The deaf and the mute can also make themselves understood through writing, gestures, or glances whose linguistic character no one will dispute. Colors, scents, tastes, and tactile impressions can also be used for “symbolic,” and therefore linguistic, understanding, as can the layout of buildings and streets, the shaping of gardens, and the topographical particularities of landscapes. In short, all that offers itself as a sensually experienceable substrate can hold up as a substrate for language, but it can do so only when the condition that Aristotle had canonized holds valid, namely, that nothing becomes a substrate by itself or “by nature,” but by convention, *katà synthéken*.

The only “substrate” of language would then seem to be social consensus. The question as to how this consensus can come together, however, is one that Aristotle neither posed nor answered. But the disjunction he acknowledges between suffering and uttering, between sounds and written signs, implies that conventions are a “symbolic” substitute for

lacking “natural” connections, while the diversity of these conventions testifies notwithstanding to a lack of coherence between them, as well as a lack of inner consistency within each of them. Conventions must complement not only a deficiency of “nature,” but also a deficiency of these conventions themselves, and they must do so with means that can do nothing other than perpetuate or increase the deficit they are meant to balance out. Thus, if conventions—*synthêkai*, *sýmbola*, and their *synthéseis*—are the one irreducible substrate of language, then language has none that could hold so much as one of its elements together. Its *syn-*, *con-*, and *cum* is, as Theses 1–2, and 38–40 sqq. suggest, a without-with. What appears irreducible with respect to these conventions stands, every time and everywhere, open to further “reductions.”

With the fragility of conventions, it becomes plain that they are historical and open to history, but this is not to say that there are no conventions. With the precarious substrate-character of sensual phenomena, it becomes clear that no pure percepts form the foundation of linguistic modeling, but this is not to say that there are no sensual phenomena at all. How they are “given” (*wie es sie “gibt”*) can be recognized more easily in an extreme composition of modern music than in the philo-phonetic examples that Gurd draws upon, a composition that conducts to its uttermost limit the linguistic character (*Sprachlichkeit*)—or, to take up the distinction Adorno recommends, the language-likeness (*Sprachähnlichkeit*)—of music.⁶⁸ In the piece entitled 4’33”, John Cage wrote the direction *Tacet*, which traditionally calls for the silencing of individual voices or instruments, over all three movements of the piece, and he thus bids every voice and every instrument to hold silent for the duration of the performance. What is given to be heard is therefore the voicelessness and soundlessness of that which is tuned to resound but remains still in order to let other voices or sounds be heard. In 4’33”, silence is kept in order to render perceptible not only other voices or instruments, but also the stillness that offers a foundation for music in compositions and that usually announces itself only at their points of articulation and, more pronouncedly, in their pauses. Fully independently of the further intentions that Cage may have associated with his arrangement, 4’33” behaves in such a way that here, stillness is composed. It is not presented as natural raw material

for audition; rather, it is conducted in a conventional musical scenario with a variable, but chronometrically exact, duration—four minutes and thirty-three seconds—and with one or more instruments, in order to leave no doubt that what is brought to hearing is music. Stillness, in short, is played. It is not pretended, however, but expressly exposed *as* stillness. And it nonetheless remains inexponible. It plays no part to belong among all that is imparted as given or present-at-hand, as a sensorial occurrence or meaningful message; and it can in no sense be grasped as the positive presence of stillness as such, but only as the play of *this* musically composed stillness, which decomposes itself in *this* stillness and withdraws from objectification. Nothing is said and nothing like language is offered but this: it is musically said *that* nothing is said. Cage's music speaks with this stillness in speaking with its non-speaking, and it does so without offering any assurance that it is its *own* and only *its* non-speaking with which it speaks. This non-speaking allows for hearing, but just as hearing allows for hearing without letting *itself* be heard, so too does non-speaking allow for hearing without letting *itself* be heard as anything present-at-hand. 4'33" can, in the most extensive sense of the word, find no resonance.

What does not belong among the irreducible elements of language and its like are those somatic phenomena that function as messenger substances to signal a correlated sense, or that absolve themselves of this function in order to make an impression as signifiers without signifieds. Among these rudiments belong *a limine* only such phenomena that open themselves to that which is aphenomenal, to that which can be neither perceived by the senses nor connected with sense and meaning. The fundamental, affundamental structure of language resides in the exposition of the inexponible, in the ex-position of all of its positive elements, in the freeing of language through language. Since no language can go without silence, stillness, and muteness, it must be admitted that even these elements that cannot be "heard" (*gehört*) belong (*gehören*) to language, and that they do not belong as speechlessly present sensorial data, but as the *irresponsiveness* of language (*die Entsprechung der Sprache*), of the senses that are opened through it, and of its consensually circumscribed sense. What is irreducible in language is solely its further reduction to what it is not and

to what none of its elements is. Its only sense lies in its opening to and of sense (*Sinn-Offenheit*).

When Gurd asserts that he follows the “drift” of language “towards an intransigent periphery” in his philological investigation, the periphery is drawn, for him, by “sound.” But it needs to be considered that such a sound-periphery cannot remain impenetrable if this “sound” dies off even in the poem by Sappho that Gurd so impressively comments upon. And when he asserts that philology, according to the presentation of the *Theses*, “works at the hollow core of language,” it needs to be remembered that, in the *Theses*, such a “core” or center for that periphery is only a linguistical—a scientific and ontological—construction that cannot do justice to the for-structure of language. The zero-function that Jakobson speaks of is no vacancy (*Leere*), but its positive marking. The opening for place (*Stellenleere*) that Thesis 54 speaks of is no geometrically locatable vacancy, but one that first opens space—a non-geometrical space—for all places and vacant positions. In the playing field of the theses, even Gurd’s weighty sentence, “A poem is not language,” cannot do justice to poetry or language. In this context, the sentence would have to read: “A poem is language ex-posed.” It is to be taken in a similar and similarly complex sense as Celan’s sentence: “*La poésie ne s’impose plus, elle s’expose.*”⁶⁹

If poetry is language *in extremis*, then it would also have to be said of language as such that in all instances—in each of its moments and each of its elements—it already no longer abides within the order of positing and phenomenalizing that places it in a position to be a convention and the convention of all conventions. In each of its moments and each of its elements, language begins to be something other than positing and phenomenalizing, and it begins to transition—immaterially, informally, in free rhythms, allosemiotically, allosomatically—into its—and not only its—“not.” There is therefore no here and beyond for language. Even *what* language is not and *that* it “is” not belong *yet* to its occurrence, be it only in the modus of the *not-yet*. As the further “freeing of language from language” (Thesis 47), language remains language only from out of the movement of its *passencore*. It goes with its not-going, and in this without-with, in this with-something-other-than-going-with, it runs its course as the movement of philology, philalogy, philallogy.

XI

He rode over Connecticut
In a glass coach.
Once, a fear pierced him,
In that he mistook
The shadow of his equipage
For blackbirds.

One of the most fundamental misunderstandings of philology is a fixation upon the remainder of evidence that appears to present itself in grammatical-rhetorical figures and their semantic effects. Philology misunderstands itself when it holds to the grammatical “evidence” that there are names, predicates, connectives, and markings that connote a principally determinable meaning within broader or narrower contexts and their sedimented traditions. Philology—whether it is understood in the sense of everyday attempts at understanding, or in the sense of a disciplined technique of restitution—would already be mistaken if it allowed or promoted talk of “philology as such.” For there is no such “philology.” But if there is no given philology that could be provided with “the” definite article, then there is also not “a” philology accompanied by an indefinite one, and no plural of “theirs,” either. The same would have to be said of the components of this compositum, for there is also no given *philia* or *lógos* in the sense of a nominal or intelligible unity. Since the ungivenness of words and matters—of every word and every matter—spans the entire linguistic universum, every word would have to disintegrate in the mouth of every speaker like a “mouldy mushroom”—the so-called “crisis of language” (*Sprachkrise*) being neither here nor there.⁷⁰ No speaker would be authorized to apostrophize himself as “the speaker” or to think of himself as a “self”; he would have to fall silent in mind and society and draw the world into a cataract that could not even be called “mute.” But “authorize,” “have to,” “could,” “none,” and “not” are also not givens, although they may evidently be used at least to indicate the ungivenness of “themselves.” Hence, “there is” (*es gibt*) the giving of all and its denial, of language and no language, of philology and its aphasia, and “there is” (*es gibt*) all the while not even the *Es gibt* that “there is” (*das “es gibt”*). Such is

the situation — and therefore also none — that renders every word subject to reservations. And this did not first begin during the times of an elegant “decadence” that purportedly showed nihilistic traits, but has been going on and given on ever since there was language (*seit es Sprache gibt*), which refers to the fact and modus of its giving, as well as to the givenness of its ungivenness. A relatively late fragment that gives testimony to this, most likely dating from the fourth century before the common era, remarks dryly: “Tossed like a heap of sweepings (*sárma*) is the most beautiful world” (*σάρμα εἰκὴ κεχυμένων ὁ κάλλιστος κόσμος*).⁷¹

How to speak, then, without keeping silent about speaking? All speaking is — among others — determining, marking, and identifying. But whoever defines language by its semantic, grammatical, and figurative functions and identifies it with these functions comes, upon further consideration, too late in every respect to make its occurrence comprehensible. He means to define that through which he is already defined, and identifies what has already identified him. Within the horizon of mere identifying, language comes into consideration solely as an organon of self-preservation, self-reproduction, and, ultimately, the self-positing of its meaningfulness. In the predicative judgment, language identifies a matter as that which it is by simultaneously identifying itself as self-identical. It is for this reason that predication, the language of judgment, could advance to become the standard scheme of language as such. The obligatory status of this identification-ontology is not limited to an esoteric circle of philosophers; it is the working ontology and work-ontology of an entire culture that has, out of economic motives — and before all, motives of linguistic economy — been able to expand into the culture of the entire world. It gives itself, supposedly, its own foundation. Since the language of propositions identifies itself in this ontology as the irreducible resource of being and meaning, it must be a positing ontology. Since its self-positing should at once be the positing of a self with universal validity and the positing of an individual I, this identification-ontology has to assume the form of a universal egology. Since this ontology is not only a formal one, but also at once a form-ontology, forms, figures, schemes, types, and orders are the privileged objects in which it recognizes itself. These objects offer, so it is assumed, stable constancy, and they guarantee through their

formal universality the principally unlimited meaningfulness of that which can be said. All the same, the nexus of being and sense that produces itself in the act of self-positing is not thinkable without a further implication that is regularly suppressed by this form-, identification- and establishment-ontology: every positing also co-positing something that is unposited and thus exposes itself to that which is unposited.

This axiom of self-foundation, whose long history and immense complexity cannot be entered into here, reaches a pinnacle in Fichte's philosophy of self-positing and has ever since undergone manifold critical reformulations through the considerations of language offered in literature and philosophy. Its first figural-analytic examination can be found in de Man's study of prosopopoeia, but even this study remains, despite the complications that it indicates, beholden to the axiom of the *poiēsis*- and positing-character of language.

With regard to the internal structure of this positing axiom, it should be remarked: language can be the positing of another—be it a face, a voice, or an addressee—only in such a way that it thereby at once exposes itself to an unposited other. It can posit the being of an I only by being exposed to the occurrence of a positing that results in no positing, and thus by leaving its positing undone.⁷² With this fundamental paradox, a way is opened not only to a differential and dialectical ontology, but also to a metontology that takes up the motifs of a non-thetic being from the philosophies of antiquity and late antiquity and that attempts to develop the thought of a non-personal giving—and not a positing—of being.

For language, what emerges from the thought of the non-positing is that language must precede positing, and thus must precede the predicative judgments and figurations with which it has hitherto been identified. Language is the area of possible sense and possible ascriptions of meaning, but language itself “has” no sense or meaning and “posits” neither the one nor the other. If sense or meaning could be ascribed to it, this could only ever occur through acts of positing from out of the area that language first opens up. Propositions, including the categories that are set in their service, neither exhaust the range of language, nor can they give account of its occurrence. What opens the area of representations and the form for representations must itself

remain withdrawn from this form. What allows for tropes and topoi is itself neither a trope nor a topos, nor is it graspable by tropes and topoi.

An important step towards this insight is recognizable in de Man's previously cited apophthegm: "Language posits and language means (since it articulates) but language cannot posit meaning."⁷³ Since "posits" connotes radical arbitrariness and inconsistency here, it signifies something other than it is said to mean in the modern ontology of subjectivity. As the sentence itself announces, it can only signify the absolute precedence of language before every ascription of meaning and its resistance to every institution for ensuring sense. De Man's formulation issues an unambiguous dismissal to the theorem of the thoroughgoing figurality of language—which has nonetheless not been understood by some of his disciples—and it issues an ambiguous dismissal to the theorem of its positing character.

Plotinus's turn of phrase, as it is thought further by Heidegger, Jankélévitch, Blanchot, and Derrida, among others, gives a more concise formulation for language that is less conducive to misunderstanding: language gives without having what it gives, and it gives what cannot be given back to it. At least two decisive consequences follow from the asymmetrical and non-circular relation between language and that which is given thanks to language. On the one hand, no linguistic institution, be it figuration or predication, can correspond to the language from which it emerges. On the other hand, every linguistic institution, be it figuration or predication, must give on the language from which it emerges. This giving on can be bent and distorted; it can occur in the form of denial and anti-linguistic aggression; but none of these forms can avoid *that* it occurs.

Since the giving and giving on of language are relations to another, Plotinus's formulation can be abbreviated in the syntagm: language—alters. It is always already other than every meaning that could be ascribed to it, but its occurrence also alters every meaning beyond the bounds what meanings can cover and confirm.

Contracted into a single, yet multivalent word, language, as the alteration of whatever can be said to "be" and to "be" language, can be characterized as: for. "For" signifies here: language is for another, towards another, and in favor of another in ways that can be grasped

in no predication, figure, or word—not even the polyvalent “for.” It speaks—and with it speaks philology—“for that which still remains to be said within that which is said” (Thesis 1). It speaks for that which is to be said, for that which has never already been said, and thus for that which cannot be programmed by any trope. This is why it says in Thesis 53, not only suggestively, but with emphatic intonation: “Philology is *an-tropology*.” This is *another* philology than the one that compulsively turns in circles around what has long since been said, and it cannot be held under the rule of thumb that philology repeats the error that it uncovers itself. This formulation of negative certainty may be valid for a logic of positing that seeks to identify itself as such only through equivalent—cognitive or reflective—positings, and thereby founders. It cannot be valid for a language that is differentially structured, that knows no equivalents, and that therefore guards its distance from identifying and identification: it cannot be valid for the language that first opens the playing field for infralinguistic structures of positing. Whether it knows it and wants it or not, that *other* philology enters into a pact with this language. It repeats none of the errors that it discovers. It “remains,” insubstantially, a language for “that which still remains to be said within that which is said,” and thus for that which never yet was, for the unrepeatable. This is why it precedes the alternatives of error and non-error, of repetition and non-repetition. It speaks athetically, irreflexively, asemically, afigurally as the absolute inchoative, before every grammatical form. It breaks word (*erspricht*)—just as one invents a breakthrough, broaches a thought, or utters a plea (*wie man ersinnt oder erfindet, erdenkt oder erbittet*)—of what does not belong to all that has already been spoken, and therefore belongs to no one.

It gives, language (*es gibt sie, die Sprache*)—and its minimal characteristic can therefore only be that it gives, without ever being able to be a mere given, a datum, factum, fatum, or figure. One therefore has to differentiate between an “es gibt sie” in the sense of “there is” (*es gibt*), which would affirm the mere presence of language as a theme or an object, as a sensual or nonsensual entity; and another “es gibt sie” that means the occurrence of language, without disregarding that this “es gibt sie” also testifies *of* and *for* this occurrence and speaks *as* and *for*

it. That is to say, however, that there is always more that occurs than can be predicated of the occurrence, for every utterance speaks as an occurrence, even were it to be denied. It gives on in a way where control must escape it. And this similarly goes for every trope and every topos: wherever a figure seeks to give language a shape and a sense, it is already reliant upon language as a shapeless and senseless occurrence, and it gives this occurrence a space and a time that fits into no known shape. It gives more than the space and time of the given, and it gives something other than any given space and time.

Since, however, "it gives, language" is also a turn of phrase and a predicative syntagm, this formula, too, remains in the predicament of having to speak predicatively about what can be, as it attests, no object of predication. What is said by "it gives" is therefore precisely what it keeps silent. And since it structurally withdraws, it can in turn be silenced, covered up, and repressed; it can be clarified as a function of transcendental schemata, irreducible foundational figures, and even neural synapse-effects that mechanically reproduce or eliminate linguistic utterances, as well as their shape and their sense. In the service of these functions, linguistics, psychologists, and even philologists can then proceed to interpret language entirely as the effect of grammatical and rhetorical formations that are declared acceptable or objectionable according to whim and contemporary taste. All of these procedures do not move merely within the vacillating region of the virtual. It is just as massive a reality as it is a banal one that all that belongs to language is put out, more or less "naively" or "automatically," as the function of prelinguistic impulses, infralinguistic forms, extralinguistic compulsions, and thus as disposable and dispensable things. "It gives, language" would then render nothing more than a sweeping phrase or rehashed slogan.

But it is *also* a reality that without language, nothing that is called pre-, infra-, or extralinguistic could be so much as addressed as such, and that without it, none of them could even be addressed *as* unaddressed. It is *also* a reality that there would be no reality without that which still remains to be said of it. And it is therefore *also* a reality that there would be no reality without an *other* language than any that is already spoken, and any that could be programmed according to the model of spoken

languages. Thus, it is no natural compulsion, no social convention, no tropological effect, and no categorical necessity, but rather a metalogical trait of language that moves it to say something more and other than all that has ever been indicated, anticipated, or projected. This trait draws it into the withdrawal of whatever is intended, believed, figured, predicated, and known; it draws language to withdraw from every noetic or noematic correlate; it draws it towards that which is not “linguistic.” Since this draw of language towards the non-linguistic—towards that which is not yet and perhaps never linguistic—is constitutive for language, and since this *destitution* is constitutive for it, language is nothing merely linguistic, no mere factum and no fatum. It is therefore not an ideal—as such, it could only be an organon of representations—and it is no utopia—for then it would belong to a pre-programmed order—it is, however, that which is incapable of being addressed by itself *as itself*, as language. It is, in other words, the trait that draws towards the beginning of another.

The last “remainder of evidence” for language is therefore no figure and no grammatical or even transcendental-grammatical form; rather, what is irreducible for language is that which remains to be said of it and beyond it. Affiguration, affirmative. This is not to say, however, that it could ever be said. At every step, philology stands before the problem of being unable to know *what* still remains to be said and *whether* something still remains to be said. One has to get used to the fact that language is nothing usual, no habitual relation to oneself and to another, but a break from habit; that it is uninhabitable and no house, but an exodus; that it is, from the beginning onward, disinhabiting. This can, as theoreticians easily forget, provoke anxiety, anxiety towards language, anxiety of language.

The occurrence leaves what happened behind; language leaves what has been said, phrased, and rehashed. But in order to be so much as swept aside, all of these things must still belong to language. If there is (*es gibt*) language, then there must also be—lest there be none—its “there is none” (*es gibt sie nicht*). *Sárma*, the sweepings of which Heraclitus speaks—this badly made, most beautiful cosmos that, for him, could be none other than the cosmos of the *lógos*—is good for dunging.

The river is moving.

The blackbird must be flying.

In her “philology of kinship,” Avital Ronell reminds of how little a language can be of use for understanding or even self-understanding, and she shows at the same time how the street talk, languages of instruction, and scholarly idioms that are used for stiff masquerades can be loosened up and made to move. This movement is, for her—but not only for her—initially a movement “on the way to languish.” This ingenious wording connects language, anxiety, and longing in such a way that anxiety can be recognized in language; and in this anxiety, longing; and in that longing, language. It indicates the way that this movement runs its course, as well as the way that is found through this movement. It is not the one that Heidegger may have had in mind with his title, *On the Way to Language* (*Unterwegs zur Sprache*). In Ronell’s travesty of this title, language has gone so far in missing and suffering from language, in anxiety toward it and in the pain of going without it, that language can hardly appear otherwise than by laughing itself off, along with the affects that burden it and give it grief. And even such concepts as “affect” and the Freudian notion of “laughing off” cannot be spared from this movement. They are borrowed concepts, loanwords, transitional instruments, crutches, and what moves with them does not have the status of a firm “I” or a corporate person, of a collective or commercial brand identity: “I can only speak for myself. Pause. It took me forever to secure every term and turn of the last sentence, what a whopper. ‘I can only speak for myself.’ How long did it take me to lease out a ‘myself’ or even to *speak*?—I won’t even go into the inaugural ‘I’ that continues to wobble when propped up as if one could start a sentence, any life-sentence, in such a counterfeit manner. I must go on.” This “must go on,” together with the earlier phrases, “you can’t go on, you must go on,” are not so much leads as they are leased—in this case, from Beckett’s *The Unnamable*—and there, “can’t” and “must” do not have the categorial sense of impossibility or necessity, but bear the sense of an approximate orientation towards what occurs when there is no “I” that could steer or even be sure of it. Language is not simply

spoken; it is cited. And since it is cited no more frequently by an *out-cast* than an “incast,” by a *misfit* than a “fit,” Heidegger’s sentence on language can no longer read: “language speaks,” but would have to be rendered more precisely: language speaks from another and toward another; it speaks with another and therefore cannot even be certain of its speaking. Language cites (itself). It cites and summons itself from that which is no longer or not yet language; it cites something other than itself and can become “itself” only by way of this endless detour that is no way. Thus, language “cannot” go on and “must” still go on; it “cannot” become “itself” and must, without having come out to be or exist, still “remain”: “it” remains *passencore* “itself”; “itself,” its ex-distance (*Ent-Fernung*).

If *language is languish*, as Ronell makes recognizable, then language is not only suddenly and occasionally, but also structurally beside itself. For it is then just what it misses and longs after, the very wound that it suffers, the anxiety towards its absence; and it is therefore, too, anxiety as the presence of its absence. Language is not initially—and therefore never entirely—the object of representation, sensation, or intuition; it is a relation, and it remains apart as the relation before all object-relations that can be characterized as withholding. Since it does not merely imply the absence of what it addresses (*Angesprochenen*), but, transitively, *is* this absence; since it first and foremost does not merely mean its absence from *itself* as what it addresses (*Angesprochenen*), but, transitively, *is* this absence, language is the rift that holds itself apart and, by holding in this way, holds itself together. Language *is*, therefore, without ever being present or having been present, and it is therefore not a *factum*, but an *ad-factum*, *affectus*, and *affectatio* in the sense of a striving, an addiction, and a claim. The fact that language is structurally a claim to language (*An-spruch auf Sprache*), however, signifies that its “being” is, at every term and every turn, being-towards (*An-sein*); that it is un-being (*Un-sein*) and pre-being (*Vor-sein*) before every predicatively demonstrable or deniable being; and that it therefore can be no object of an ontology. The fact that language is structurally affect and does not merely denote or express affects signifies that it can be no object of a psychology. On the same grounds, however, language also cannot primarily be an object of philology. Language is—as a claim

to language, as a longing after language, and as the experience of its withholding—in itself (*an sich selbst*) philological. It is, as it says in Thesis 1, “archiphilology.” Solely for this reason can it allow for what has developed into a philological praxis and gone on to become a discipline; and solely for this reason can this praxis, in turn, surrender itself to certain affects. Because *language* is *languish*, it is, in itself deranged (*ver-rückt*) and out of range for every possible hold, logoalgia and logophobia, angst over language loss and lust over language angst, the pangs and pains of language. (Thesis 52) And it is solely for this reason that the primary affection-character of language and those praxes that refer to it is one of the best-kept secrets of the world. To lift this secret, be it merely through the distortion of its name, is a liberation of language and its disburdening. This freeing of language is philology—: philogophobia.

In Ronell’s text, the movement of *languish* entertains the closest relation—which is more than neighborly, but also not especially familiar—to lament. The relief provided by wordplay appears to correspond to the grievances that it shakes off. For Ronell, lamenting, complaining, and filing a complaint are obviously allied so closely with speaking and writing that every word, whether spoken or written, announces a plaint: “the store of complaints that writing announces.” After the pattern of Goethe, who called his oeuvre one big confession, she characterizes hers: “My writing in some way feeds one big complaint.” And in the course of expanding her “make believe family” from Goethe to God, she writes: “G—d, one could say, complains all the time.” Whether it is accurate, however, to say that “Christian praise persists as the repression of the Jewish complaint” may be doubtful, for the same suspicion of repression in Saint Francis’s songs of praise could be raised towards the Psalms of the Bible, the Greek odes, and the Suren of the Koran. If language is not only capable of complaining, but is, as *languish*, structurally complaint, then laudation must stand in another relation to lament than one of opposition. As it is suggested in Job, as well as in Hölderlin’s and Rilke’s “elegies,” lament turns to praise and relief because it reaches back before all lament over the world and before even any lament over the complaints that are raised against the world, and because it turns not only to another world, but to something other

than a world.⁷⁴ Laments reduce the given, created, or produced world to an object-less language that says nothing, and with this language, they reduce it to the beginning of every world and to the beginning of none. In this an-archic beginning of all and nothing, language is the sheer differentiation, exaltation, and exulting in which lament and praise move together. Neither the language of lament, which does not cease to destroy the world and itself, nor the language of praise, which lets the world become something other than any given world, are definable through the infraworldly and infralinguistic structures that are examined in the history of language- and psycho-technology. The radical languages of lament and praise are “not of this world” because they are extreme versions of a language through which a world first emerges and is moved beyond itself.

To bring this language into connection with a god is, on the one hand, usual and belongs among the habits of a long tradition within the “cultural circles” known to us. But it is neither necessary nor logically possible to trace it back to a supreme being. If what Ronell writes is accurate, if “G—d, one could say, complains all the time,” then he complains over all that he created himself, complains for all the time that he made himself, and complains beyond his creating—and thus complains not as a creator, not as god. If there should be a complaining god, then he would have to be something other than god and other than that which could be capable of being god. The assumption that something is “not of this world” does not imply the assumption of another world, of an over- or hinter-world, nor does it imply the assumption of a divine being. But it does imply the assumption that there is a language that is, for its part, not a world and that is not exhausted (*erschöpft*) in the creation (*Erschaffung*) or completion of a world. A philology that attempts to do justice to this *other* language can therefore understand itself to be neither the continuation of creation, nor a technique of production or reproduction that administers the supposedly “secularized” heritage of creation-theology. Philology, the *other* philology, is not philo-theology, and it is not philo-technology.

This has consequences, too, for an understanding of the question that Ronell poses regarding the “right to complain.” According to the declarations of the political and theo-political tradition, such a right

can be conferred either by the “natural” or “divine” order, or by virtue of a consensus that installs universally valid rights and ensures the right to resist the injury of these rights. According to the understanding of both traditions, rights are the institutional manifestation of an inviolable community of so-called juridical subjects, which guarantees every individual “without respect to his person” — namely, with exclusive regard to his status as a “legal person” — belonging to this community. All that is right is thus defined within the precinct of a community on the one hand, and within the precinct of its institutional consolidation and internal differentiation on the other. A right to complain, in the juridical sense, is assured in this construction solely for those who already belong to this juridical community. But in order to protect the principles of this community, a right to enter it can be refused, or, if it was already granted, it can be withdrawn. Rights are therefore principally the rights to refuse rights. The oppressive complications that thereby result become insoluble if constitutions raise the claim to be founded upon “universal human rights,” and at the same time are nonetheless constitutions of singular legal entities, most often nation-states, which, as such, assert rightful privileges or prerogatives concerning “their” natural resources and their owners. The decision over the principle of universality must therefore be pronounced, by right, on the basis of rightful privileges that injure that very principle; the decision over rightful justice or injustice must principally fall in favor of injustice. Because and so long as they are the rights to refuse rights, rights are principally the rights to wrong.⁷⁵

In Ronell’s sentence, “In order to be in a position to complain, one must presume a *right* to something — to a better deal, a better world, an improved material arrangement,” the phrase, “one must presume a *right* to something,” resumes the fundamental ideological assumption of a rule of law, which can only realize itself as an unlawful rule on the basis of its internal contradictions. The sentence turns the actual state of matters on its head. It is not the right to something — and especially not the right to complain — that constitutes the conditions for complaint; rather, it is the other way around: the complaint is the unconditioned condition for introduction of legal relationships, for justice to be spoken, and for justice to be made possible. The complaint, and not the right to

complain, is the foundation for rights. Solely the complaint — even if it were uttered in the pre-judicial form of a plea, claim, or demand, or in the turbulence of a “riot” — can work against privileges and against their protection under the right to refuse rights; solely the complaint can work towards a completely other right: the *right* to justice.

According to a report by one of his contemporaries, the figure whom Ronell tenderly calls Chiller allows himself to be persuaded by just this argument during conversation over Fichte’s *Contributions to the Rectification of Judgments over the French Revolution* (*Beiträge zur Berichtigung der Urteile über die Französische Revolution*), which took place in his Jena-salon in 1794 or 1795. A young guest whose name has not been preserved made the following remark on Fichte’s chapter concerning the right of a people to revolt: “for him, it seemed laughable to wish to speak of a right here. A revolution is comparable to a thunderstorm; once it has gathered, no one will ask whether it has a right to strike a house that has no lightning rod. Schiller responds: “The young man may very well not be wrong. I really want to expostulate on that chapter with my friend Fichte!””⁷⁶ If one disregards the electro-physical simile that should make the entire event strikingly plausible along the lines of a natural occurrence, then what is said is this: revolutions, riots, and complaints precede every right to which they could appeal. The complaint takes its departure not from a right, an interpretation of the law, or a sense of justice, but from the unbearable state of an existence that has been abandoned by all rights. The fight for justice is a fight *against* rights, since all rights are prerogatives, and all prerogatives are rights to refuse rights. This fight cannot be won, it cannot even be begun, if rights are trusted as the *prima ratio* of ethics.

Just as little as complaints can be oriented according to a right, they also do not stand under another “objective” or “theoretical” criterion. They therefore also cannot be reduced to critique. In this sense, Ronell writes, “a critical mind, or critical thought, even critique, launch their probes on the back of the complaint.” *Klagen*, whether they be complaints, plaints, or laments, are without criteria; they are measureless and haltlessly “critical”; and they sweep away the conventions of every critique when it is a matter of shaking off the unbearability of the world as such. They are not exhausted in judgments or convictions —

the weather is bad, men are a pack of jerks, the world is a flop — they do not name or predicate, but denounce; and they do not stop at self-denunciation, but complain that they get no hearing, that they have no voice and no language. Where they are most penetrating, complaints remain unconscious, expressionless, mute, but they are no less real for all of that, no less effective, and no less shattering. They are judgmentless procedures in a dispute against the world and a language that relentlessly reduces itself to nothing. This is why they do not hold back or keep to themselves — since there is no “self” that could hold — but hold out for the haltless. They further the praxis of an *other* philology in holding out for an *other* language and for something other *than* a language.

For this reason, Michèle Cohen-Halimi reaches back to the concept of *ephexis* and draws the connection between a philology that knows no higher instance than a movement of language and the skeptical suspension of all judgment that brings the movement of language to a standstill. In Pyrrhonian skepticism, what is called *ephexis* or *epoché* signifies the withholding from a judgment that would have to decide over the truth of a phenomenon in favor of one of two alternatives. This withholding from judgment leaves the scales for both alternatives hovering, whereas a judgment would let one of the two sink. Montaigne interprets *epéchō* to mean, “*je soutient, je ne bouge*” (I hold back, I do not budge),⁷⁷ and this *epéchō* is the stance of the scales that tips to neither side and precipitates no decision. The withholding from judgment is, for the sceptics of antiquity and for Montaigne, the effort of a person to respond to the lack of criteria for judgment by avoiding judgment and thereby to attain the desired equilibrium between *res* and phrase (*Sache und Sprache*), as well as a state of equanimity in the face of an inconstant world. Even Nietzsche had spoken in this sense of *ephexis* as the stance that is held by a person who seeks no foothold in criteria for judgment that rest merely upon belief. In §52 of *The Antichrist*, he writes: “What is understood by philology here is, in a very broad sense, the art of reading well — of reading off facts without falsifying them by interpretation, without losing caution, patience, delicacy, in longing to understand. Philology as *ephexis* in interpretation: whether it is a matter of books, the news in the papers, destinies, or weather

conditions — not to speak of the ‘salvation of the soul.’”⁷⁸ For Husserl, the *epoché* resides in the methodical withholding from judgment over the objectification of thetic acts of consciousness. As this withholding, it should open access to these acts themselves and thus disclose the center of the constitution of the world.

Cohen-Halimi sees for good reason that such security measures for the subject of cognition in Montaigne, Nietzsche, and Husserl are no longer at work in the philological ephexis of the *Theses*: “This *Sustino* — need one insist? — belongs to no thinking subject.” The individual and methodical withholding from judgment has altered, as she accurately remarks, into an *epoché* of language itself: “Radicalisation of the epoché as epoché-language.” Since language, for the *Theses*, is no standing inventory of lexical items set up according to presiding norms of internal or external accord, but an open complex of markings that refer to and beyond one another to that which has not yet been said in them, every judgment that might be pronounced with it — and on it — must be issued provisionally, subject to revocation, and without grounds: it must be a judgment pending future judgments that would extend or cancel it, and thus a judgment made *from out of* this suspension of judgment and *for* this suspension. A language that will have always been placed in the *epoché* can find no firm ground in any judgment, nor even in any mere withholding from judgment. Since language is the pre-withholding (*Vor-enthaltung*) of language, it can only hold every judgment open for further judgments and abstentions from judgment. A continuity between this language-epoché and the ancient and modern sceptics thus remains at least as far-fetched as it may nearly suggest itself.

The sense of balance that Montaigne bespeaks, leaning on Sextus Empiricus, is also thereby altered.⁷⁹ The counterpoised scales could only bear that which has been said and that which is to be said. If an equilibrium between them were reached in which the scales came to a standstill — “if you will, a ‘zero’ point,” as Cohen-Halimi writes — a “recession towards saying’s non-saying” would have to install itself there.⁸⁰ This is why, however, the “balancing point” would, in equal measure, have to be the “unbalancing point” where language and its non-speaking, but also language and subject, language and world, at

once win and lose one another and themselves. *Trajoie* and *trajeudi*, comedy and tragedy, praise and lament, would thus not only have a common derivation and destination (*Herkunft und Zukunft*); they would also, one should think, hold one another in steady balance. But if equilibrium and disequilibrium converge in this one “point” of language, then this point could only be a *punctum saliens* (*ein springender Punkt*), such that their convergence would at once have to be a springing asunder. Its “equal measure” (*Zugleich*) would at once (*zugleich*) have to be at odds with itself, an unequal measure (*Unzugleich*) that suspends each “at once” and every common measure. Thus, neither a synchronic nor a symmetrical relation can be asserted between language and that which is to be said of it. It may very well be a relation, but a relation to that which is without relation or proportion, an irrelational relation, and as such, an irrelation itself.⁸¹ Language therefore cannot be a *stasis* in the sense of a mere pause or motionlessness without being a riot; it cannot come to rest without uproar, and it can offer no affirmation without alteration. Language in the *epoché* is not only not *thetic*—it does not posit and does not establish—not *theoretical*—it does not pause in the contemplation of a state or course of matters—and not *predicative*—it does not identify something *as* something and does not identify its structure *with* that of anything—; rather, it is the *praxis* of language as *trans-positum* (*Ver-setzung*) without correspondence to any previous *positum* (*zuvor Gesetzem*). Hence, language offers no measure that it would not have to overstep, no time with which it would not be out of sync, and no space that would not be removed from it. In this sense, language is the “balancing point” that is, in equal and unequal measure, the “unbalancing point,” the “zero’ point” that lies beyond itself. It is the scale that does not weigh anything, so long as it still remains to be weighed itself.

Ephexis reaches a literary-historical pinnacle in more recent writing, making it clear that even the traditional skeptics’ firmly held figure for self-sustainment in self-distance can be brought to budge. The first paragraph of Beckett’s *The Unnamable* sketches this motion:

Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving. Questions, hypotheses, call them that. Keep going, going on, call

that going, call that on. [. . .] I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me. These few general remarks to begin with. What am I to do, what shall I do, what should I do, in my situation, how proceed? By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later? Generally speaking. There must be other shifts. Otherwise it would be quite hopeless. But it is quite hopeless. I should mention before going any further, any further on, that I say aporia without knowing what it means. Can one be ephectic otherwise than unawares? I don't know.⁸²

There would be no holding back from judgment if any judgment over this withholding were not withheld as well. It must therefore remain unnoticed in order to occur; even the suspension of judgment must be suspended and withdrawn from knowledge, just as the meaning of "aporia" must remain inaccessible in order to correspond to its meaning: to be inaccessible, *and* in order to cast this meaning off. Beckett's text moves with the aporia and without it, with ephexis and beyond its hold.

Therein lies the joke of Beckett's philology; therein lies the joke of what he calls *aporia* and *ephectic*: through questions and hypotheses that disavow themselves, he drives judgments to their deactivation, meanings to their self-revocation, and names to their unnamings. His text speaks both for judgments and their suspension (*Aussetzung*); for meanings and their erasure; he speaks for that which is said and for that which still remains to be said of it, without obscuring the fact that it is not said by him, but also without obstructing the way to it: "Keep going, going on, call that going, call that on." He could not keep "going" and go on calling it that if he could be certain that he goes and calls, for only when the correct name is uncertain can something be named, and only what has not gone on for certain can get going. An unnamings must therefore go along with every naming, an unmeaning with every meaning, a retraction with every judgment, a suspension with every step —: with every "with," a without-with. Beckett's philology of ephexis holds out for an *other* language, which can so little be identified that it could also be the very language that his text already speaks; and it holds out for another time, which is so little known that it could be no time or could simply be called the future.

The *other* philology of which the *Theses* speak is not the philology of *the* future that Nietzsche had announced. It is philology *as* future and *as* the opening of futures to come. This future is not to be understood as a future present time, but as untimeliness (*Unzeit*), as the time of the not-yet of a time (*die Zeit des Noch-Nicht einer Zeit*), and as the non-time (*Nicht-Zeit*) that it takes for something like time — and time for the past — to be there at all. This requires, just as a *tabula rasa* is required for that which is to be written, a *philologia rasa* for that which is to be read, understood, and said.

It is in this sense that Thesis 36 speaks of the “other than thus” as the smallest political gesture of philology. It is in this sense that Thesis 86 polemicizes against the way philology places itself again and again as an “ancillary discipline” in the service of “nationalism, juridicism, classism, racism, and sexism,” and has gone on making itself into a lackey of power interests that ravage linguistic, philological existence. It is in this sense that Thesis 94 speaks against the “cattle and capital dances.” It is in this sense that Thesis 90 speaks for the campaign of philology in the “world civil war for language and for the world against the industrial manufacturing of language and of the world.” But philology can fight against its industrialization and its silencing only if it frees itself from the security suggestions that industry imposes upon it; if it rises against the legal suggestions that state societies force upon it; and if it turns away from the suggestions regarding class, race, and sexuality that the typical ideological state apparatuses impress upon it. And it can do so only if it uses no judgment and no form of judgment, no name and no form of naming, without altering it in such a way that it becomes unusable for industry, the state, and their apparatuses, but usable for the further analysis of what can be made better with them — or without them.

For such an alteration in the usage of forms for names and judgments, it is not conducive to be pious or to show piety towards conventions, sciences, or concepts. It is conducive, however, to elaborate an inconspicuous concept anew — such as philology — along with its implications and in the contradictory manifold of its functions, and to bring it to an altered and altering usage.

IX

When the blackbird flew out of sight,
It marked the edge
Of one of many circles.

One more time: the object of philology is that which remains to be said within that which is said. What remains to be said within that which is said, however, remains to be said of exactly *this*: that which is said. It remains to be said with reference to *it*, and not with reference to conjured phantasized formations, arbitrary projections, and selectively perceived or tendentiously distorted phenomena. It remains to be said with reference to what can be demonstrated of a text without reducing it; to what can be clearly recognized in a composition; to what can be grasped of a social practice with the sharpest analytic instruments. Therefore, there cannot remain the least doubt that philology, in each of its variants, has to offer unrestricted attentiveness and the highest unprejudiced respect toward its objects, and that it decays into self-indulgent chatter as soon as it does not acknowledge the dignity of their objective standing, their proper stance, and their resistance. Nothing would remain to be said of that which is said, if it did not remain precisely *this* that was said.

It is therefore the cause of philology in all of its variants to concede the status of objects (*Gegenstände*) to all utterances, texts, and constructions that it encounters (*begegnet*)—which they have neither “by nature,” nor through mere “convention.” It is a matter of leaving them free in their stance as objects and letting them be what they are in their singularity. Philology grants, gives leave, and allows that something has been said, and lets it remain and have constancy—for however limited a time—as that which has been said. Yet in granting, giving leave, and allowing, philology simultaneously *releases* (*entlässt*) what is said from its power, makes it independent of its authority, and lets it free. As this freeing, philology holds back from what has been freed—without thereby becoming estranged from it—and in holding back, it remains itself free to say that which *still* remains to be said of and beyond that which is said. This releasing hold—it can be characterized as hearing,

attending, or inclining, *philia*—is the “pause of language”: the pause that gives leave for language; the pause for which language gives leave; the pause in which it remains indistinct whether it belongs to speaking or to silence, and of which it remains indeterminate whether it at all “belongs” or is “heard” (*gehört*). This pause opens to language as that which is said and holds itself open for a language that is other than what has already been said. It allows for speaking, but it also allows far more; it allows another to speak and to speak otherwise; and beyond this, it gives allowance for non-speaking. Since it grants what has already been said, as well as what it not yet and never is, philology abides outside of the opposition between being and non-being. As what releases both and holds back from them, philology does not fall under the logic of being or the predicative forms—the *praedicamenten*—that structure it. It allows for meanings and the entire range of the meaningful, but for this very reason it remains itself exempt from all meaningfulness. “Philology,” as it is characterized by Thesis 46, moves and remains: “in the pause of language.” It is no ontology of language, for it does not speak from within the limits of categories and is therefore itself not graspable by categories.

The only answer to the *Theses* that frontally contradicts these decisive considerations for the entire conception of an *other* philology is the one by Peter Fenves. Under the title, “The Category of Philology,” he confronts them with the thesis that philology falls under the category of suffering. In order to support his assertion, he initially places the meaning of *échein* in question, which is used in Aristotle’s formula for man as the *zōōn lógon échōn* (*Politeia* 1253a 10).

Fenves concentrates in his first series of arguments upon disputing the particular position of man this formula stipulates in contrast to all other living beings. To the latter, Aristotle concedes voicing (*phōnē*) as a means of communicating pleasure and pain in the above-cited passage from the *Politics*. But Aristotle does not acknowledge them as having *lógos*, which, he writes, enables humans alone—*mónon*—to disclose for one another the advantageous and the disadvantageous, as well as the fitting and the unfitting (or, as it is more often translated, the just and the unjust). However, the relevant remarks from the *Historia animalium* (536b 1–21) to which Fenves refers only strengthen the

difference between *phōné* and *lógos* that Aristotle also insists upon in *Peri hermeneias* (16a 28). (The *pseudo*-Aristotelian “Problemata” certainly cannot support any assertions of a modification of Aristotle’s views, since they were most likely written long after his active teaching years.) The human-animal distinction that interests Fenves remains, however, completely irrelevant to what is said in the *Theses* on the *lógos* and on language, on *lógon échein* and on having language, since not one of these *Theses* speaks of the language of man in distinction to that of animals, and none excludes the possibility that philology, especially an *other* one, could also be a philology of animals or, who knows, of angels.

By contrast, Fenves’s second argument refers clearly to Thesis 6, where his objection ignites. There, he concentrates upon the sense of *échein*, which seems to him to be characterized with insufficient precision. Fenves remarks: “*To ánthrōpos* would not ‘have *lógos*’ in the sense of possessing some ability, disposing over an item of property, or even conforming to a fixed ‘*héxis*’ or habit; rather, human beings could be said to ‘have *lógos*’ only insofar as *lógos* was simultaneously given away.” Now, nothing of what Fenves denies is asserted in the above-mentioned thesis, but what he himself asserts presupposes what he denies. In order for something to be given away, it must indeed be had, albeit not as a mere capacity—which, if it were given away, would no longer be a capacity—but as an activity (*enérgeia*), as a praxis (*prâxis*), as a producing (*poiēsis*), as a movement (*kínēsis*), and thus as *héxis* in the sense that is characterized as “behaving” in the relevant passage on the categories from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (1022b 4–14), which Fenves disregards. There, the expression *héxis* is used, for example, for “an activity (*enérgeia*) of the holding and the held (*échontos kai echoménu*) as a sort of praxis (*prâxis tis*) or movement (*kínēsis*).” The notion that anything could be given that is not had in this sense does not—differently than for Plotinus—come into consideration for Aristotle. That it could “simultaneously” be had and given cannot so much as be conjectured from any remark that Aristotle makes regarding *échein* or *héxis*. Only if Aristotle’s formula in the *Politics* had asserted that man is the being that gives *lógos* without having it could it be asserted that “having,” in this formulation, means nothing other than “giving away.” But as it stands,

it says only that *lógos* is the specific comportment or behavior of a living being that exchanges its experiences of the advantageous and disadvantageous in commerce with other members of his community. Since this community is the community of a polis that already avails itself of a traditional language in order to ensure its goals, it would be less than plausible to see in this language an instrument of mutual injury. In the passage in question from the *Politics*, the *zōōn lógon échōn* is thus a parallel construction to the *zōōn politikón*, where the reciprocal and co-originary constitution of the political and linguistic community is emphasized (1253a 4–11). “Having” the *lógos* would, accordingly, signify “moving” it and “conducting” it within the community of the polis and in commerce with corresponding communities. To give the *lógos* away would, by contrast, mean to destroy it along with every political community, and thus both of the characteristics of man that Aristotle names. With this, the most important objection that Fenves raises against the considerations of Thesis 6 falls away. Even if Aristotle had used his formulation only once, which Fenves notes as a qualification, its singularity invalidates neither the existence of its wording nor its contextually determined meaning, nor the importance that it has assumed in the dominant tradition of thought on language.

Through the hypothesis that, for Aristotle, *lógos* is a possession “only insofar as it [is] simultaneously given away,” Fenves does not come closer but runs counter to his thesis that suffering is the determining category for philology. For as a praxis of exchange, philology would have to, in accord with Aristotle’s theory of political *autárkeia*, reside in a homeostasis of giving and taking (1280a–81a), and thus in an equilibrium of acting and suffering. But it would not have to reside in a possession for which, as Fenves remarks, Aristotle has no counter-concept. Now, a correlation between the two categories of having and suffering, rather than acting and suffering, is supposed to lay the ground for access to Fenves’s foundational thesis, although they are introduced without any structural relation to one another in the first book of the Aristotelian *Organon*, which offers an excerpt of his doctrine of categories. Even in the summary overview of the categories provided in the fourth chapter of this text with regard to the connection—the *symploké*—of words in a sentence, it cannot be overlooked that only a correlation between

the *verba activa* and *verba passiva* is produced from the categorial divisions of doing and suffering—“to cut” and “to burn” on the one hand, and “to be cut” and “to be burnt” on the other. For the category of having, the semantically and formally isolated examples of “being shod” and “being armed” are introduced, conspicuously without being juxtaposed to the category of *stérēsis*—withholding or privation. Nevertheless, Fenves arrives at the result: “Just as the examples of ‘having’ reverberate in those of ‘suffering,’ so does the notion of *lógon échein* provoke the thought of *lógon páschein* [. . .]: ‘having *lógos*’ may be closer to ‘being cut’ and ‘being burnt’ than ‘being shod’ and ‘being armed.’”

Now, with regard to the uncertainties that Fenves rightly emphasizes when it comes to assessing the category-text as a whole and the presentation of the category of having in particular, it would have only taken a look into the more extensive treatment of this category at the end of the text in order to draw a more plausible connection to clarify the status of *lógos* and *échein* in Aristotle. But Fenves does not enter into the fifteenth chapter of the text. There, “having” is identified as *héxis*, *diáthesis*, or *poiótēta*—as having, behaving, and comportment, disposition or quality—and the first two examples that clarify its particular status are knowledge (*epistēmē*) and virtue (*aretē*). If *lógos* is an object of having or behaving like knowledge and virtue, then it falls under the determinations that are introduced in this chapter and in the corresponding twenty-third chapter of the fifth book of the *Metaphysics*, which Fenves similarly disregards in his remarks. These determinations are: to hold in a form; to hold parts in a whole; to encompass a content as a container; to hold something back from following its natural motion; to hold together what strives asunder; to hold under a rule and dominate (1023a 8–25). According to this presentation, something is had each time in the sense of being at the disposal of another. Having is thus a thoroughly restrictive behavior towards another that effects or forces its limitation, homogenization, and control. Language grasped under the category of having is formed, formalized, and subsumptive language; it is not language that is granted, given leave, and allowed to another. It is instead, each time and in every sense, a proper language and a language of appropriation (*Aneignungssprache*). The first meaning that Aristotle assigns to *échein* in the *Metaphysics* dominates, then, the

purported manifold of its meanings: “*tò hágein katà tèn autoû phýsin hê katà tèn autoû hormén*” (to move or lead by its proper nature or proper drive). It should stand beyond all doubt that a language that is moved and hegemonically ruled out of proper impulse is none that is passively received or borne under pain, as Fenves asserts with the formulation *lógon páschein*. In Aristotle, the *lógos* is not suffered, but steered by the one who “has” it; it is not borne but is dictated.⁸³

In his text, Fenves remonstrates that the *Theses* do not investigate the categorial status of the *lógon échein* and the categorial status of the pathos of philology. Both remonstrations have no object, for in Thesis 6, which Fenves cites and translates in full at the beginning of his discussion, the entire categorial status of language is explicitly disputed: “The idea of philology, like the idea of language, forbids that it be seen as a possession [*Habe*]. Since the Aristotelian turn of phrase [*Wendung*] about the human being as a living thing *possessing* language uses the (linguistic) category of ‘having’ for language itself and therefore uses it tautologically, it is without a finite object and itself a non-finite category, an apeiron.” With this, nothing more than the sketch of an argument is offered, but this sketch is clear enough to render the following consideration recognizable: a proposition concerning the *lógos* is arrived upon with the formula, *zōōn lógon échōn*, that subordinates the *lógos* to the category of *échein*, which itself belongs to the *lógos*. The relation that is thematized as *lógos*, here interpreted as “language,” is characterized as a linguistically predicable relation; the relation that language is comes to be determined by one of the relational forms that stand at the disposal of language — at the disposal, that is, of a historically determinate language, namely, the Greek of Aristotle’s time. Since language, in this formula, is doubly thematized through the noun *lógos* and through the predicative determination *échōn*, what emerges is the apparently trivial and yet highly peculiar matter of a double self-thematization, in which language is presented as an originary self-relation and as a relation to itself *as* self-relation. Language thus appears as that which is said and as that which is predicated in its state of having been said, without any proper consideration of this restriction of its movement to a theme and to a circular course of self-thematization.

These matters may appear trivial, since whenever a noun such as *lógos* or “Sprache” or “language” is spoken, it speaks *about* language *in* language and *with* its means, while the event of addressing language in its thematization does not properly come to appear. Thus, nothing is spoken of “language” other than its relation to itself as its theme. Yet however trivial these matters may seem, they are unsettling when they enter into greater clarity and show themselves to be a circular relation of a theme to itself as a theme. The relation that is established with the name *lógos* not only turns out, then, to be an auto-logical or tautological relation and therefore one that exhausts itself in the mechanical repetition of what is said. Beyond this, the *lógos* paradoxically shows itself to be a recursion to an unsurveyable series of instances of predication in which language loses itself as a theme and a self-supposition.

Aristotle reacted to this implication of his own concept of *lógos* by raising a taboo that should rigorously exclude reduplicative or sui-referential propositions from the domain of the *lógos apophantikós*. With regard to one such double-predication, it states in *Peri hermeneias*: “A man is a man and is white. He will, therefore, be also a white man. And, if he is white, then it follows that the composite also is white, which will give us a ‘white, white man,’ and so we go on to infinity (*ápeiron*)” (2ob 39–40). In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle repeats his verdict against sui-referential propositions, and he does not do so with an example, but with a category—namely, the category of *héxis*, which is registered as the first meaning of *échein* in fifteenth chapter of his text on the categories. After he has made clear that *héxis* signifies the relation of an active mediation between holding and being held, and thus a relation of *poiēsis metaxy*—of mediating production—he writes: “Clearly, then, it is impossible to hold (*échein*) a ‘holding’ (*héxin*) in this sense; for there will be an infinite series (*ápeiron*) if we can hold the holding of what we hold” (1022b 9).⁸⁴ According to Aristotle, such an *ápeiron*, unlimited and in-finite, is here understood as an infinite regress and forbidden to logical propositions, since the *péras*—the limit and thus the form, telos, and essence of both a matter and its knowledge (1022a 5–17)—is the determining ground and goal of the *lógos apophantikós*. The erasure of this limit would simultaneously be the erasure of this *lógos* as well as the propositional forms that are constitutive for it, and thus

the erasure of all the categories. Through reduplicative, sui-referential predications, nothing comes to appear, nothing comes to be known, and nothing comes to a propositional formulation. For that which is said is deprived of its cognitive and ontio-logical form in being surrendered to another proposition, and then again to another, further one, and thus to the limitless and propositionless. The *ápeiron* that Aristotle also calls *átōpos* in *Peri hermeneias* (20b 38) and equates with the *hýlē* and the Platonic *chōra* in the *Physics* (209b) functions in the texts on the categories as the absolute other to the categories and to all forms of ontological thought.

According to the argument sketched in Thesis 6, Aristotle commits, with his formula for man as the *zōōn lōgon échōn*, the very mistake that he himself condemns as the destruction of the categorial order of the *lógos apophantikós*. Just as “the white, white man” leads to an infinite deferral of propositional judgment that can come to no finite proposition, so too must a language that is “had” be a “had having,” a “held holding,” or a “produced producing,” which opens, within the self-relation of the *lógos*, the bottomless abyss of a relation to another on which no proposition can stand.⁸⁵ Even the phrase that Heidegger uses in *On the Way to Language* for language and its “enowning” (*Ereignis*), namely, the “relation of all relations” (*Verhältnis aller Verhältnisse*),⁸⁶ announces itself as an ambivalent reminder of this aporetic and apeironic structure. In opening up to an unlimited other, the self-relation that Aristotle calls *lógos* shows itself to be a relation to the relationless, and thus to that which is neither a being nor a non-being, neither *tò ón* nor *mè ón*, but also not *ousía*, *dýnamis*, or *entelécheia*. If the multiplicity of categories signifies the manifold meanings of being, then they do so in such a way that their signifying—*sēmaínein*—refers each time to an order of being—*éinai* (1017a 24–27). With this, the possibility of ontology is ensured. But it collapses when, along the way of self-designation, the *lógos* that is reduced to the categories goes lost in an *ápeiron* that offers no hold for categorial designations and none for the being that they signify.

The consequence of this observation may seem peculiar; it may even appear to be an enormity, but it cannot be averted if it is a matter of clarifying the structure of language. If the categories are determined to ensure the structural order of communication—in particular, “political”

communication in Aristotle's sense — and if these categories, despite the formal-logical taboos that should ensure their functioning, err off into a haltless *ápeiron* already in the minimal self-thematization of the phrase, *lógon échōn*, then this *lógos* is not graspable by categories. Then it is no substantial possession and no property of the *zōōn politikón* that man can, through the *lógos*, define himself to be. Then the *lógos* is not a relation to itself or to another that is defined by it, but a relation to an undefinable, impredicable, unlimited other without form or being, and thus a relation to a relation-withdrawal and itself a haltless relation in withdrawal. This is not to say, however, that language is not had, but that, *as such*, it always already “belongs” to another, an in-finite other that can, for its part, hold fast to and dispose of nothing, save by surrendering it to another in turn. This is also not to say that the *lógos*, here interpreted as language, gives no hold, but that this hold remains itself without constancy, without a subsisting essence, and is therefore finite, and, as it says in Thesis 19, “infinitely finite.” Further, this is not to say that language is no being in the sense of the Aristotelian “first substance” and its mode of being (*tò tí ên êînai*) or *actus essendi*, but that this mode of being is determinable each time only by something other than a mode of being. Yet however indeterminate this “other” may remain, it cannot be assigned the logical status of a *nihil negativum*. It is rather to be thought in the sense of the *nihil donans* that has been extensively commented upon here, and thus as the giving of what it does not “have” and what cannot be given back to it. Language, in departing from this *ápeiron*, is, in short, no possible object of an ontology because it is no possible object of categorial determinations. Conversely, categorial and ontological determinations are possible only as implicit references to a language that cannot be grasped by them: as references to an *ápeiron*. This language is not the “object”; it is the field of philology.

This reference to an *ápeiron* emerges perhaps most conspicuously in the “relation” — which Aristotle designates as *prós ti* — and in the *páthos* that can stand in connection with it; in the two “categories,” then, that are most closely associated with philology. Aristotle is precise enough in characterizing “relation” in the fifth book of the *Metaphysics* to hold it open for what he called in his arithmetics the *hyperéchon* in its relation to

the *hyperechómenon*, or what “exceeds” in relation to what “is exceeded,”⁸⁷ but more precisely: what over-has in relation to what is over-had. And he is precise enough to remark explicitly that this relation is, numerically, completely indeterminate — *hólos aóriston* — because it is cipherable solely in relation to an incommensurable number — *mè symmetron* (1021a 1–6). The relation considered here thus stands under neither measure nor definition, and it can only be spoken of as that which goes over and beyond the horizon of the category. It would thus have to hold valid that this relation is the category for what is *a limine* no category.

As for *páthos*, the spare explanation in the *Metaphysics* stipulates that it signifies, in the “stricter” sense, injurious — *blaberaí* — alterations and motions, as well as excessively great — *megéthē* — pains (1022b 15–21). Thus, one would have to add that it designates those sufferings that threaten the existence of the injured, and with it, the injurious category of *páthos* itself. Since this category, like that of the arithmetical relation, designates a movement that not only touches but also exceeds the limit of the predicable, one would also have to say that it refers to something “completely indeterminate,” “incommensurable,” and “asymmetrical”; in short, to something that is not graspable by categories. But this is not said by Aristotle. What is not said, then, is the extreme of *páthos*, which may not be a “logical” *ápeiron*, but would nonetheless be a psychological and somatic *ápeiron*. If this *ápeiron* is left unspoken, then it is because categories fail to speak to it. If it is itself a “category” — insofar as it is addressed with the name “*ápeiron*” — then it is a non-finite one like the Platonic idea, or like the arithmetical *hyperéchon*, the *aóriston*, the *mè symmetron*, and the *átupon*, which each in a different way abandon the horizon of categorial determinations and reduce them to itself as the sole irreducibility. The relation of any category to *páthos* — even the *páthos*-category — shows itself ad infinitum to be a relation to the irrelational: so that the thought urges itself that *páthos* is the excess or lack, the irrational and irrelational dimension in every categorial relation, and thus the non-categorial excess that disturbs all categories.

The considerations that led to the *Theses* do not, as Fenves bafflingly maintains, rest upon a “disinclination” towards categories; they rest upon the analysis of the incapacity of categories to preserve their categorial status, as it emerges in their canonical presentations. This incapacity

indicates that the structure and extent of language cannot be thoroughly determined by categories and that, furthermore, categorial determinations submit to ever further indetermination through that which is indeterminate, indefinite, in-finite. It is to this indetermination that philology has to correspond in its explications, findings, and answers.

Hence, the sole response to Fenves's thesis: "Suffering [. . .] is the uncertain, inconclusive category of philology," would be: philology stands under no category. It has suffered for a long time—at the latest since Aristotle, and still more since Luther—from categories, but it does not suffer *according* to categories, nor does it suffer in correspondence to them or within their limits. For all its suffering, it can therefore analyze even this suffering in all good cheer, and it can let something other than suffering and other than categories—something as yet undetermined—come to be spoken. In this analysis, the uncertain and inconclusive may claim a great portion of its attentiveness, especially since they were never categorially graspable or held to be characteristic of categories in the standard ancient and modern doctrines of categories.

In distinction to ontology, which posits the being of a matter in its being propositionally stated, philology lets speak what is silenced, blunted, and erased by the forms of propositions—by the categories—as well as by notions, concepts, figures of thought, and rhetorical figures. Philology gives leave for speaking, and it is nothing other than this: giving leave for speaking and hearing. Letting and leaving (*Lassen*), however, is no category. Letting is no form that establishes the being of a matter in its propositional formulation. Letting is not a form at all. It is a relation to what it grants, gives leave, and allows for; to what it lets come and lets come to be spoken, and in such a way that it leaves it free to speak another language than any that is already known and spoken, and free to enter into another relation than any that could be anticipated. In this way alone, the letting of philology is a relation to that which is not already bound by a relation; and solely in this way is it a relation to that which—ever yet—remains left to be said within that which is said.

The "provisional maxim" that is placed at the end of Thesis 89 is no "subjective" principle in the Kantian sense of a law to govern the acts of a subject of mental representations. This maxim recommends, on the one hand, that one leave acting (*Lassen des Handelns*); however, it does

not recommend this as a mere leaving off (*Unterlassen*), but also as a letting and allowing (*Zulassen*), and as a modification of acting through which acting comes to itself in the free relation of both allowing and leaving off. This maxim of an *other* philology reads: “act such that you can leave acting. And further: act without a maxim, even without this one.” To act without maxims, and without even the minimal maxim of allowing and leaving off acting, plainly does not mean not to act, and still less does it mean to surrender to suffering or to draw suffering upon oneself. It plainly has nothing to do with the directives of the “Christian” gospels and apostolic writings, and it has less than nothing to do with the spare missives and omissions (*Auslassungen*) in the Aristotelian text on the categories. It signifies simply and in all clarity: give leave to the acting and behaving of each one and yourself, in such a way that is free of every bidding and every forbidding; give leave that each be free even of giving leave, insofar as this could be interpreted as an intentional act or a passive tolerance; and allow for something to occur that absolves itself from every occurrence; for something to be said that comes in addition to all that has been said; and for something to remain to be said that has never yet and never will have been said. Allow for that which never is, was, and will be, in any sense of being. Leave every determined or determining leaving. This maxim of maxim-withdrawal defines what the *Theses* call “philology” as its ever further indefiniteness. It defines and indefines philology as the occurrence of what knows no internal and no external limit. And to this extent, it approaches very closely what Aristotle renders taboo and what Anaximander affirms as an *ápeiron*.

This word that is cited in Thesis 6, *ápeiron*, also appears in one of the most important sentences that have been transmitted from the oeuvre of Anaximander. In the version that Simplicius cites in his commentary on the *Physics* of Aristotle, the sentence reads: “*archè tōn óntōn tò ápeiron*” (the provenance of being lies in that which has no limits). With this, it is openly said that the provenance of all beings is itself no being — no presence, no thing, no phenomenon. Open for determinations, it cannot be enclosed or included in them, but it also cannot be protected against them. This is why it can be interpreted as the warrant that allows for anything at all to come forth, but as a warrant also remains unwarded

from its obscuration and obstruction by what comes forth. Since it is absolutely open for determination, every determination must not only fail it, but also occlude it. Already its name—*ápeiron*—testifies that it is solely accessible as something definite, but that it nevertheless refutes its definition at the same time through the way in which this definition rests exclusively upon a negation. And since this negation is thought and determined as an *arché*, it cannot be the negation of a previous positum, but can only be the infra-negation of all categorial determinations, as well as any others that can at all be affirmed or denied of a being. With the Platonic formulation that is also cited in Thesis 6, the *ápeiron* is also called *epékeina tês ousías*, beyond all essences and entities, and thus beyond all forms that are thinkable for ontology, without, however, being able to stay protected in this beyond. For it is “without limit” and therefore without any line of demarcation against that which is other than it or that which is not. What becomes clear with the eminently negative—and infra-negative—occurrence of the *ápeiron* is that it is an occurrence of language; and with its characterization as *arché*, it becomes clear that this occurrence is infra-negative through and through, and therefore reducible to no infralinguistic form such as predicative negation. Language as such, as an occurrence, is, in short, no phenomenon among others, no state of matters beside others. It is, first and foremost, nothing but the freedom *for* phenomena and states of matters. But if it is such a freedom, then it is also the free relation to all languages that can be encountered as phenomena and states of matters, and thus the freeing *towards* that which they have not yet, in each case, come to be. It is the indefinite that opens all definitions, including their negations and its negation, to indefinitely further definition. Thought in this way, the *ápeiron* of Anaximander discloses one of the avenues for and towards another philology.

In his study, “Defining the Indefinite,” Daniel Heller-Roazen offers an entirely different sort of explication of the indefinite and the sentence from Thesis 95 “that the indefinite slowly defines itself.” His reconstruction of the post-history of a philological discovery in Aristotle and its philological clarification over the following centuries in commentaries, shifting accentuations, translations, and expansions is itself an outstanding example of radical philology. The indefinite that

he examines is not the *ápeiron* of Aristotle or Anaximander, but the *aóriston* that is described and named by Aristotle, and, more exactly, the *ónoma aóriston*—the indefinite name—and the *aóriston rhêma*—the indefinite verb—that both present neither an affirmation nor a negation. The “not-man”—*ouk ánthrōpos*—is the example that Aristotle gives in *Peri hermeneias* (16a 30–33, 19b5) for a not-name—*ouk ónoma*—which is not simply no name, but rather an indefinite name because it is the only one among countless others that is *not* used in a due case of naming, and thus one that allows for all unnamed others. “A not-man” can designate a blackbird, snow, a number, and infinitely many more things, but not a man. It is therefore a name for an infinity of not-named matters, with the sole exception of the “man” that is negated in it. Aoristic, indefinite names do not name through naming, but through the refusal of a single determinate name. Such not-names, Aristotle assures, are used in equal measure for things that exist and for things that do not—*hypárchei kai óntos kai mē óntos*. The aoristic verbs such as “does not-ail” behave similarly: they not only negate a predicate, but also thereby predicate a depredication. The meaning of all decisive elements of the *lógos* accordingly lets itself radically alter through an indefining particle—*ou* or *ouk*—without distinction regarding the existence or non-existence of that to which they refer. Through this *aóriston*, the *lógos* as such is entirely exposed to its structural indetermination, which prevails throughout—*hypárchei*, as Aristotle writes⁸⁸—and with this, it is given to be understood that the *lógos* is suspended in its ontological status from the ground up.

In passing, Heller-Roazen aptly remarks that philosophy was understood in the Aristotelian tradition as “a science of the definite” and therefore could offer no room for a sustained engagement with the indefinite. Although Aristotle speaks with conspicuous frequency of names that are lacking, and although he writes for the first time of indefinite expressions that refer both to things that exist and to things do not, they belong nonetheless only in a problematic way, if at all, within the region of ontology that he founded and within the philosophy that is understood as ontology; and they belong to none of the regional sciences that proceed according to ontological principles. If they belong to a science at all—to a *téchnē* or an *epistēmē*—then indefinite expressions would belong

to a science without a name or with an aoristic one; they would belong, namely, to a not-science. Heller-Roazen points in this direction with his further historical examination of indefinite languages. Ammonios, a student of the Neoplatonist Proclus, emphasizes in his commentary on *Peri hermeneias* that the indefinite name “destroys one thing, namely, what is signified by the name said without the negative [particle], and also introduces all the other things beside that, both those which are and those which are not.” Heller-Roazen summarizes this description with the sentence: “An indefinite name thus un-names and names at once.” This double gesture draws the indefinite name into proximity with the gesture Cohen-Halimi cites from Francis Ponge, whereby the nearness of the *aóriston* to poetic praxis simultaneously indicates its nearness to philological praxis, which is, in its decisive traits, a practice of renaming and repredication, and thus at once a practice of denominating and depredicating. Ponge had said: “Another way of approaching the thing is to consider it unnamed, unnamable — *non nommée, non nommable* — and describe it *ex nihilo*, but so well that it can be recognized — however, only at the end [. . .] The name must not be indispensable. / Replace the name — *Remplacer le nom*.”⁸⁹ Ponge too unnames and names at once, and in this way he makes his poetry into an indefinite name, an indefinite sentence, an indefinite language — a “not-language” that names through unnamings and predicates through depredicating.

To be more precise: Ponge, hardly otherwise than those who would use indefinite names and verbs after Ammonios, introduces an aoristic language where no language was before it. He opens, one could say, a pause of language: speaking, he holds speech open, such that, through his indefinings, matters as well as the language for them can, for the first time — or for the first time anew — become recognizable. His poetry does not judge — least of all according to categories — and it does not imitate a given, but discloses that which had hitherto not been given. And so too is the labor of the philologist. For Heller-Roazen, the Aristotle-commentary of Boethius that follows upon Ammonios's distinguishes itself through the “modest inventiveness” with which he translates the Greek *aóriston* with the Latin *infinitum*, and thus catalyzes an “event of speech that was perhaps never before defined as such: the naming of a pure non-existence.” The work of philologists — analysts, commentators,

translators, and interpreters — lies, that is to say, not only in the precise explication of a term or a non-term, of a text or a non-text; it lies in carrying out an “event of speech” that is thereby rendered more precise. Poetry and philology are, in different ways, the event of naming anew that which was missing a name before or bore a misnomer; through this event, however, it does not become a definite being, but an indefinite, and furthermore, in-finite, non-being. “Infinite,” the not-name that Boethius chooses, would thus be — as it says in Thesis 32 — “not so much [a] placeholder as [a] place opener for a ‘not.’” This not-name would be the opening or reopening of precisely this “not,” as were the earlier relevant texts by Ammonius and Proclus, Plotinus and Aristotle, Plato and Anaximander, and countless others who have become, in the meantime, anonymous. Traditions are also always first and foremost traditions of a “not” that is said towards that which has been said and towards that which has been not-said; towards that which exists and that which does not: they are traditions of a “not” of which ontologies and their tables of categories — even Kant’s table of “nothing”⁹⁰ — want to know nothing, although they cannot avoid touching upon it again and again.

In an extreme interpretation of the so-called infinite judgment, which offers an extension of the *aóriston* that Heller-Roazen has not yet addressed in his contribution, Hegel remarks in his *Science of Logic* that this judgment, which he regularly and characteristically calls a “negative-infinite” judgment, is “a judgment in which even the form of the judgment is sublated.” As the countless examples for this non-form of judgment make evident — “spirit is not red”; “the rose is not an elephant”; “understanding is not a table” — it “negatively” connects “determinations of subject and predicate” whose spheres are not connected with one another. As correct as these judgments may be, they are, Hegel writes, “counter-sensical and tasteless”; or rather, “they are no judgments.”⁹¹ At the same time, however, they are judgments par excellence, since they leave their determinations free in their respective spheres and preserve them independently of one another, while relating them in their unrelatedness. Not merely despite, but also because the infinite judgment entails the “complete incommensurability of subject and predicate” and grasps this incommensurability as a unity in the copula “is,”⁹² this sublated judgment is at once no judgment

and the absolute judgment. In the last chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it is therefore characterized as the foundational structure of all propositions and all phenomena, and thus as the form of absolute spirit. There, Hegel writes: “That judgment, should it be taken as it immediately sounds, is spiritless and insipid (*geistlos*), or rather the spiritless and insipid itself. But according to its *concept*, it is, indeed, that which is richest in spirit [. . .].”⁹³ In it, the relation it introduces between relationless elements holds together subject and predicate, judgment and non-judgment, spirit and the spiritless in the one copula “is” — and, more exactly, “is not” — while this copula at once confirms the inherence of existence within them and brings it to disintegrate as the existence of the disparate.

In an addition to section 173 of the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel writes — and thereby touches the pinnacle of that which is to be said of this aoristic form of judgment —: “Death is similarly a negative-infinite judgment, then, *since in it* subject and predicate fall entirely asunder.”⁹⁴ This argument can be formalized in the following sentences: Death is its not-is, and it is thus the name for the disintegration of the copula, of existential predication, and of the language of mere logic altogether. Death is the name for the not-name, the name for the not-language that defines itself, and as such, it is the event of language as not-language itself. If not-speaking, and this alone, is not only addressed in the word “death,” but is also spoken and carried out in speaking that word, then this speaking of not-speaking is the first, absolutely presuppositionless, groundless — and only therefore ground-giving — movement of language, thinking, and relating as such. The indefinite and in-finite name “death” signifies that not-language, and it alone, speaks; that all speaking is speaking with its not-speaking; and that the movement of language as such — and thus, too, the movements of sense-perception, understanding, and reason, as well as the subjective and objective spirit — has the irreducible structure of the infinite, indefinite, aoristic judgment. With this judgment, Hegel recognizes that it is and is not a judgment, and that it can be rendered more precisely as a judgment of language’s lack of judgment — a judgment from *out* of its lack of judgment and *over* its lack of judgment. The constancy of all categories of classical and modern ontologies is “sublated” with the “form of

the judgment” insofar as each of these categories shows itself to be a form of determination of its proper indeterminacy. Even the “is” shows itself in the infinite judgment to be an aoristic, indefinite, and infinite predicate in which predication depredicates itself and preserves itself solely as its depredication. Whatever is said, it is a “not” that speaks, and, as such, it speaks *with* this very “not” and *against* this “not.” Language is the not-language that says of itself that it is not.

If Hegel characterizes the concept of absolute spirit as the concept of the infinite judgment—as “that which is richest in spirit”—then absolute spirit is aoristic spirit, and its absolute language is the language of further self-absolvement, which speaks ever anew with its disintegration and thus *with* its *not-with*. Notwithstanding, if this should indicate the irreducible foundational structure of language, then it is conceivable that Hegel recognizes it to be a structure of unconditional absolutizing, absolutism, and absolvement, but not that it should have the structure of an absolute knowledge that returns to itself and conceives itself. For what is recognized and known in the infinite judgment is also always, namely, “the spiritless and insipid itself”: “spirit is not red” or “spirit is not an elephant.” As Hegel concedes, such judgments are just as counter-sensical as they are correct; they are just as much judgments as they are none; and they can therefore be no form of knowing without being an indefinite, form-open, judgmentless relation to an indefinite knowing and a no less indefinite not-knowing. The absolutely aoristic “spirit” that recognizes itself “in the spiritless and insipid itself” must recognize itself as such and must do so in an insipid way; it must therefore concede that its recognition, insofar as it is a recognition of *itself*, is also recognition *through* the spiritless and insipid, and therefore a non-recognition that is—even in its negativity—inadequate through and through. Differently than Hegel would have it, absolute knowledge cannot come to rest with itself, but would have to be, from the outset and even in its presumptive end or conclusion in and with itself, a transition to another without ever being able to know for certain that this other is *its* other, the other that is immanent and pertinent to it. This knowledge would, in short, be exposed to another, whereby it must remain open whether it is its other or an *other* other; whether it is an *other* other, or something other *than* an other; and where it also must

remain open whether it is not the absolute not-other, the selfsame in its most indefinite and infinite form. In that case, however, the other would be that which is absolutely formless and incapable of formation; that to which neither being, nor essence, nor a concept could be attributed; that which is absolutely impredicable, and therefore un-negatable—: an *aóriston* that cannot be defined as such, not as an *aóriston*, without also indefining this indefinition. Spirit would then be absolute, as would the “aoristic” language that lets it be spirit, as the one that is not only left and abandoned by its spirit and language, but was also never inhabited by them. Spirit would be absolute not only as an immediate “transcending without transcendence,” but also as a transcending without knowledge or certainty (*Gewissheit*) of this very transcending, and thus as a transcending without a transcendental that could define its necessary conditions. Absolute “spirit” in its unity with the “spiritless and insipid itself”—and thus absolute language—would not be the movement of an alteration that is founded in a self, not a self-alteration, but an alter-alteration, and thus the movement of an orientationless and haltless, untenable and unrelenting, erration. Language, the absolute one, would thus be a relation to the irrelational throughout and beyond all of the stations that it could occupy in its positions and negations, and it would itself be, without a correlative other to this self, the irrelation—the err-relation—of all relations that it could entertain. It would be the wandering relation without stable relata, and thus the relation without relation and without the “without” that would signify the absence of a relation. It would thus be the relation this side of all positions, negations, and negations of negations. Through its forms as well as contents, and thus throughout all of its ontological constituents, it would be the movement of absolvence from ontology and from its “without”: the movement of impredication and innomination.

The movement of “philology” cannot lead to the reassurance that even speculative-dialectical ontology is incapable of providing. If its slightest gesture is the minimal gesture of language that discovers in every “nothing” a “not” for this nothing—which is no positive determination, but the beginning of *bare* determinability (*Bestimmbarkeit*)—then it discovers a not-language and in it, that which remains to be said of it; it discovers the indefinite in-finity of that which is to be said.

But philology must not only admit that it *remains* to be said without ever being able to be a substantial given; for this very reason, it must also admit that it, philology, is itself a not-yet and never-language that has ever to discover anew a “not” to this “not” of language. This slight movement of the not-in-the-not is that which is absolutely irreducible for language; it is the breaking word of language (*Ersprechen der Sprache*), its outset and its departure (*ihr Anfang und ihr Fortgang*). Hermann Cohen had attempted to think through this movement of the indefinite name and the infinite judgment as the origin of logic and sought to describe this origin, with dubious legitimacy, as a purely logical “category.” Through an important modification, Walter Benjamin attempted to consider it as a historical movement, and to give warrant to this thought philologically in his *Origin of the German Mourning Play*.⁹⁵ In the absolute minimum of this movement of the not-in-the-not, all language is absolute and absolutely indefinite, aoristic philology—philology of not-philology.

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.
 It was snowing
 And it was going to snow.
 The blackbird sat
 In the cedar-limbs.

Four sentences before the beginning of “Absolute Knowing,” the last chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel addresses the incompleteness of the “revealed religion” of Christianity. There, he writes that the religious community—the “universally common godly man”—is conscious of the pure mediation that “lies beyond,” while “what appears as present [*gegenwärtig*], as the side of immediacy and existence, is the world that has yet to await [*gewarten*] its transfiguration.”⁹⁶ That which is present has “yet to await” its essence, its being-for-itself, and thus itself. It is presently not *yet* that which it *already* substantially is, and it must therefore await its presence in its presence. The tension between subject and substance, between being-for-itself and being-in-itself in their common presence is characterized by Hegel etymologi-

cally through “await” (*gewarten*), the intensivum of the verb “to wait” (*warten*), which is one of the two components of the word “present” (*Gegenwart*). “Waiting” means keeping watch, aiming the gaze towards that which should come to encounter the one who is gazing; it means having regard, as well as guarding and cultivating regard. It thus has a similar range of meanings as “expectare.” And since, for a long time, the word “Gegenwart” could be used as an intensivum of “Warten,” its association with “gewarten” would have been suggestive for Hegel’s contemporaries, though it is also still suggestive for every attentive reader.

If, for Hegel, the present of revealed relation “has yet to await” its essence, then it has yet to await its own present waiting (*Gegenwart*)—and it has to wait for as long as it takes until this present wait realizes itself in absolute knowing. The time of this waiting of the present for itself—and this time is the internal difference of present waiting to itself—is, Hegel writes, “erased” in absolute knowing with the “unity of thinking and time,” and it is taken back into the provenance of both, into the I that equals itself, the I=I. In the state of absolute knowing, this “I” is therefore pure time and pure thinking; as pure thinking, it is equal to itself as that which is thought; as pure time, it is not “restless and haltless time,” but the “repose of extension” (*Ruhe der Ausdehnung*) that abides by itself. Time is accordingly cancelled as time but preserved as extension. Although Hegel does not analyze this thought further, and although he does not return to the tension between waiting for the present and present waiting, his thought of the preservation of time in the “repose of extension” implies nevertheless that time, sublated in this way, is nothing other than waiting—: the waiting of the present (*das Warten der Gegenwart*) that is no longer waiting for itself, but that is equal to itself and thus simply present waiting (*Gegenwart*). That would be to say, then, that the present in absolute knowledge is, as pure time, pure waiting, a waiting without subject and without object, since it is, as their unity, also their common ground. It is a waiting that is neither expectant waiting (*Erwarten*), nor counter-waiting (*Entgegen-Warten*), nor waiting for something, but the relation in which all outer- and counter-tendencies are held in. It is a waiting as the “repose of extension” that encompasses all that is extended: no stretch of time but sheer time-space. This relation reposes in itself because its waiting is

at one with itself; it is therefore a relation to another solely as a relation to the other of *itself*, and can thus be characterized as the steady and constant relation of all relations, as time without reference, time without withdrawal, and time without future. Waiting would be the present of that which is present, the pure time of pure language and of the absolute name, "I."

A short history of waiting in modern philosophy could begin in this way or in a similar one. It could be continued and furthered with references to the transformations that it undergoes in Schelling and Kierkegaard, in Nietzsche and Husserl; but it should be clear that the absolute, auto-teleological time of waiting, which is one with the time of substantial subjectivity, is not the one of which Theses 69 and 70 speak. Already in Thesis 59, it says: "Philology—the absolute fermata." In Thesis 69: "It is not always something for which we wait. Before expectation [*Erwartung*] was waiting [*Warten*]. Within it, the presence [*Gegenwart*] of philology expands. It is waiting by the word." Both remarks may appear not to be entirely irreconcilable with Hegel's thought of the sublation of "awaiting" in the pure present and the repose of its "extension." And yet they must both say something else if they can be elaborated with further precision through Thesis 70, where it says: "Philology: the holding back [*Aufenthalt*], holding open [*Offenhaltung*]. A guard, waiting [*Warte*]." While the notion of "holding back" (*Aufenthalt*) still allows the language of *epoché* to echo and with it, the notion of a mere suspension of judgment, "holding open" (*Offenhaltung*)—whose "offen" can also be read as an interpretation of the "auf" in "Aufenthalt"—signifies the preservation of openness for another, and thus for such a one that is not held within the circle of the self-equivalent present of I=I. Here, philology is thought as openness to another, and therefore not as a waiting in itself or as a Hegelian waiting in-and-for-itself, but as "waiting by the word." If this "waiting" is read together with the "fermata," its "holding" opens—since the Italian "fermare" from which this technical musical expression derives does not mean "to close," but "to hold" and "to linger," designating the extension of a tone beyond its metrical limits—and it opens the possibility of reading the extension of waiting by the word as the unconcludable opening towards what is called "word" here, but what signifies, *as* this "word," the other of waiting by

which waiting abides. Since the “fermata” is designated “absolute,” it is held to be not only uncludable, but also without beginning and before every time—before every before—: an extension without content and a holding-open to which no fixed limit or objective correlate is counterposed that could bid it halt. The “word” is not the object of waiting; it is not the expected and thereby anticipated object of philology; and it is not the preconceived thing from which philology could take its measure, since every word must in turn be thought of as a waiting one. The fact that “Wort” (word) can be read as a paranomasia—as a nearby name and nearly a homophone—to the “-wart” of the “Gegenwart” (present) and the “Warte” (guard, waiting), gives an indication of the unlimited span of “waiting by the word,” as well as its incapacity for saturation.

The time of philology is obviously not the time of any sort of fulfillment where waiting concludes with the awaited, and it is therefore also not the time of a history that could be conceived as progress towards a presiding goal or telos. Philology is neither teleologically nor theoteleologically constituted. Even the brief history of waiting that was just mentioned could not issue into a word or a clarification by which the riddles of philology or even those expectations that are bound up with it could finally be solved. It could only make clear that the expectations with which it is occasionally bound—history and philology, the history of philology, and the philology of history—place it, in every single case, in the service of aims that it outstrips, redefines, and indefines.

Philology does not serve. It is a praxis without a master. Just as little as it stands under the directives of categories, figures of thought, and figures of speech; or even the “materiality” of gestural, phonetic, or graphic markings; it does not stand under the dictate of consensual meanings or transcendental schemata for engendering and ensuring meaning. Philology does not represent; if it were to do so, something would already have to be pre-given and prescribed (*vorgegeben*) for it as a datum whose givenness philology first allows. It is therefore also no medium in the sense of an instrument, for philology would then be merely the dependent function of a magnitude that would have to be co-constituted by it. It could be mediation only as a mediation without mediated matters, as a medium without extremes, and as an instrument

without purpose. — In this sense, Thesis 81 says of media: “they operate with their nonoperationality; they mediate their immediality.” — Neither representation nor mediation, philology is bound to no expectations, unless it were the one, paradoxical expectation of being freed from all expectations. But in order to harbor this one expectation, philology must already be disbanded and delivered from the schema of expectation itself. It must have already abandoned the followers that demand all sorts of histories of progress or salvation from it, and it must move in an *other* history that is neither the *historia* of knowledge and anticipatory foreknowledge, nor the teleological history of enterprising projects (*Vor-Habe*) and technical planning; and it is therefore also not the history of progress in self-consciousness and its sublation in the thoroughgoing self-presence that seals the end of all history. This *other* history can only be that of an awaiting without an object and without an awaited present (*gewärtigte Gegenwart*). It would have to be the history of a waiting without awaiting.

Early in *Awaiting Oblivion*, Blanchot lets it be said about one protagonist of this story: “To wait: what did he have to wait for? [. . .] As soon as one waited for something, one waited a little less” (*Attendre, que fallait-il attendre? [. . .] Dès qu’on attendait quelque chose, on attendait un peu moins*).⁹⁷ With this, the movement of a time of waiting is characterized that Ann Smock pursues in her clear-sighted meditation under the title, “Einmal ist keinmal.” Blanchot’s remark is the modified reprisal of a passage from Heidegger’s three-way conversation, “Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit” — “Towards Situating Releasement” — in which the emancipation of waiting from awaiting is more extensively elucidated.⁹⁸ There it reads: “Scholar: [. . .] Waiting has, properly speaking, no object. Scientist: Yet when we wait, we always wait for something. Scholar: Certainly, but as soon as we represent to ourselves what we are waiting for and bring it to stand before us, we already no longer wait. Teacher: In waiting we leave open what we are waiting for. Scholar: Why? Teacher: Because waiting releases itself into openness . . .”⁹⁹ For Heidegger, at issue is a waiting in which the awaited is not reduced to the representational *placement* (*Vorstellung*) of an object in counterstance (*Gegenstand*) to a subject;¹⁰⁰ rather, waiting is let free and released from out of all limitations of placing and standing. Hence, what is also released is the

“open area” (*Gegend*) from which phenomena can, non-objectively and non-representationally (*ungegenständlich*), initially come forth; what is released is the other, outer side of the transcendental horizon within which they are constituted in their objective standing (*Gegenständlichkeit*). Without denying the accuracy of Heidegger’s thought, Blanchot gives it a turn that it does not take in Heidegger’s conversation through a slight alteration of its wording. He alters Heidegger’s formulation, “we *already no longer* wait” when we “wait for *something*,” into the seemingly more moderate formulation, where he who waits for something is said to wait “a little less” (*un peu moins*). In so doing, Blanchot shifts his own course of thought to the horizon line on whose other side the open area stretches out. Blanchot’s hesitation (*Säumen*) over crossing this line—his waiting—allows him to grasp more sharply the temporal and existential aporias that are only distantly suggested or simply missing in Heidegger’s sketch. They also bring him upon the way to the remarks that Ann Smock more closely comments upon.

In her rich and clarifying text, Smock explicates an intricate course of thought from Blanchot’s book with the plain sentences: “if there were time to wait, there would be no waiting. You wait only when you haven’t time to.” And as this explication implies, the contrary is no less accurate: one only has time when one does not wait for something, but waits for the time that one does not—ever not yet—have. “You wait only when you haven’t time to” can be the complement and explication of Blanchot’s sentence: “The absence of time is what lets him wait” (*C’est l’absence de temps qui le laisse attendre*).¹⁰¹ Time, that is: absent time. Its name is an antonym. It names that which is not present, but whose absence withdraws every presence and must withdraw even the presence of the absent. What remains of time is therefore solely a waiting for it; what remains of its current name—*le temps*—is the tension, the stretch and extension, the tendency—*l’attente*—towards it. If absent time leaves one waiting, then it leaves one waiting for it, the absent time, and it leaves one waiting for the time when it will become present *as* absent. The next sentence in Blanchot reads: “Time is what gives him something to wait for” (*C’est le temps qui lui donne quelque chose à attendre*).¹⁰² Time, the time that withdraws, not only gives something with its withdrawal for which one is left waiting; it initially gives itself as this withdrawal,

and thus gives itself as another time that leaves one waiting for it, as the *timespan* of waiting for this time. Time itself “is” this waiting for time, *le temps l’attente*, time attending, present waiting (*Gegenwart Warten*).

Time is given (*Zeit gibt es*) only as the meantime, as the interval or pause between times, and these are given, in turn, only in such a way that they too offer themselves as intervals of waiting and as such without a present; they are nothing that is, and nothing that could be had. Time is not *a* time, no homogeneous flux, and no continuous line; it is a *plurale tantum* whose sole unifying trait rests in the waiting of each time for another. If, however, time is only ever given in its stretch towards another time, then there is also never a present (*Gegenwart*) as a punctual *nunc stans* in time or of time itself, but solely as the presents-in-waiting (*Gegenwarten*) that are only ever given as their counter-waitings for one another (*Einander-Entgegen-warten*). Since that which is counter-waited in this way has no ensured constancy, and since it is neither an already given time nor a present, it cannot be ensured that the direction of *its* waiting is coordinated with that of the one in wait, nor can it be ensured that there is any possible coordination, or that there is a wait ahead (*eine bevorstehende Gegenwart*), rather than none at all. “He knows that when time comes to an end, the absence of time is also dispersed or escapes.” (*Il sait que, lorsque le temps prend fin, se dissipe aussi ou se dérobe l’absence de temps*).¹⁰³ Every waiting and every counter-waiting is exposed *a priori* not only to another time, but also to the end of every time; not only to another present-in-waiting, but also to the impossibility of another one, and thus to its proper non-waiting and untimeliness (*Ungegenwart*). Hence, waiting waits within the element of non-time (*Un-Zeit*), time-withdrawal (*Zeit-Entzug*), and not-waiting (*Nicht-Warten*). At odds with itself, it waits for the waiting that it already is — and not only now and then or on chance occasion, but with structural necessity — without ever once being this waiting. Waiting moves, aporetically, as what could be called, according to the ambivalent formulation of Blanchot, “the step not beyond” (*le pas au-delà*), and it moves, according to the multi-valent composite word of Joyce, *passencore*. Waiting would then be the ever fulfilled and ever disappointed awaiting of the unawaitable that it itself is. “Waiting fulfilled by waiting, fulfilled/disappointed by waiting” (*L’attente comblée par l’attente, comblée-déçue par l’attente*).¹⁰⁴

If the common trait of presents-in-waiting—their *counter*-waiting for one another—also implies the other trait of their abiding aversion to one another and their unawaitability, then their commonality cannot offer the “repose of extension” that Hegel finds attained in the present of absolute knowing; and they cannot allow for the “gathering” that Heidegger ascribes to the event of enowning (*Ereignis*), in which beings comport themselves toward their being. Counter to these thoughts of a final self-relation of time and therefore history, Blanchot gives the lapidary and compelling remark in *Awaiting Oblivion*: “Waiting that assembles, disperses” (*L’attente qui rassemble, disperse*).¹⁰⁵ This sentence also holds valid for the gathering Heidegger speaks of in a brief note that he had drafted in 1954 on the question “What is Called Reading?” (*Was heißt Lesen?*). There, he defines: “Appropriate reading is gathering toward that which, without our knowledge, has already made claim on our essence, regardless of whether we correspond to this claim or fail to speak to it” (*Das eigentliche Lesen ist die Sammlung auf das, was ohne unser Wissen einst schon unser Wesen in den Anspruch genommen hat, mögen wir dabei ihm entsprechen oder versagen*).¹⁰⁶ Gerhard Richter, who cites and comments upon Heidegger’s note in his intelligent essay, “Was heißt Lesen?—What is Called Reading?” rightly emphasizes that the gathering that Heidegger interprets reading to be, both here and in other passages, answers to a claim that precedes every gathering, a claim that is not an object of our knowledge, and that therefore offers no criterion for whether this gathering corresponds to the claim or fails to speak to it. Hence, every gathering must also be a possible failure of gathering; every reading, if it is “appropriate reading,” must possibly fail to speak to the text and thereby fail the reader’s “essence” as well—our “essence,” as Heidegger writes—which would mean failing the occurrence of *our* “proper” existence. “We” therefore never know whether “we” correspond to that claim or fail to speak to it; whether “we” read or enter a delirium; whether “we” are gathered or scattered; and whether “we” are “we” at all. Precisely this experience of not-knowing is the experience of “appropriate,” finite reading, which abides by another and can come to itself only by coming to this abiding-by-another. It is not said by Heidegger, however, that reading would then be a gathering towards scattering and the experience of the im-possible.

It is not “an inspired act of genuine reading” that corresponds to the “predicament” of the experience of not-knowing, but rather, as Richter suggests in a striking association, a movement of drawing towards that which withdraws itself from every reading in the sense of a gathering.¹⁰⁷ At the end of his commentary to Heidegger’s note, Richter refers to an aphorism of Nietzsche, the 146th aphorism from the fourth chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*: “when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you” (*wenn du lange in einen Abgrund blickst, blickt der Abgrund auch in dich hinein*).¹⁰⁸ If one looks away from the fact that this sentence is a variation upon an often-cited verse from the Biblical Psalms, which reads in the Septuaginta: *Abyssus abyssum invocat* (42: 8); and if one therefore does not look into the way the “abyss” that Nietzsche evokes itself bears topically leveling traits, but instead abides, as Richter does, by the disclosure that this sentence gives regarding reading as a gathering towards a pre-historically distant “claim,” then an image of history (*Geschichte*) installs itself as one of overlain layers (*Schichten*) of texts that are broken through by that “abyss” and cleave open. The gaze of the reader does not meet upon one of the historical layers of the text; it meets—if one can still speak of meeting here—upon the lacunae and free spaces within them, which offer no hold for any gaze, but lead into an abyss that is no history and that contains the text of none. If the abyss returns this gaze, as Nietzsche writes, then the reader becomes an abyss himself in which every text and every history sinks. Should one follow Nietzsche’s abyssal sentence (*Satz*) or abyssal leap (*Satz*), the gazes of the reader and the abyss encounter one another nonetheless, and their encounter holds both together—“long,” as it says—and keeps them hovering over one another. The time that is experienced therein is not the horizontal time of a progressive course or span, but the vertical time of a precipitation. The precipitation of time (*Zeit-Sturz*) may be held back or held up; it may be frozen or long drawn out; but it belongs to no linear continuum; it breaks each one off. This “long” vertical instant and glimpse (*Augenblick*) of a *mise en abîme*—this blink of an eye in which nothing is seen and nothing can become the object of a theory—can be read as the desedimentation of history. It issues out into that which, *within* history, remains *open* to this history and at the same time remains open to none. As a catalyst

for such a desedimentation Thesis 75 names—with a double allusion to Rilke's Orpheus-poems and Benjamin's fourteenth thesis on the philosophy of history—philology. Its eminent theme is that which grants history, permits it, and holds open the playing field for its movements. This theme is, again more than paradoxically, a breach; it is no *theme* and it is nothing posited, but rather the rupture and exposure of all positings and compositions, “the empty place—and, more precisely, the opening for a place”—in and outside of every gathering. It is upon this “opening for a place” that reading—even the reading that is understood as gathering—as well as history has its *onset*. Since history first opens *up* and starts *off* (*aufgeht*) where it is drawn through by a rift, it is no process; it is the suspended precipitation through its layers. This precipitation is the time—the non-time—of philology.

With regard to the relation between historical time and philology, the two most important complexes of thought that Richter draws upon—Heidegger's brief note on reading and Benjamin's theory of “that critical, dangerous moment that lies at the ground of all reading”¹⁰⁹—hardly offer a foothold to support their connection to a theory of waiting. Beholden to a long tradition that culminates with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, they are theories of the moment, the blink of an eye (*Augenblick*), or the “now of recognizability.” Yet even if they present that moment as long and abiding, it can in any case be conjectured from them that this moment could be one of waiting in the intervals of time, or could belong to a waiting that is not limited by the horizon of temporal representations and conceptual time. Only later did Heidegger limit his privileging of the moment, which still stands in *Being and Time* at the center of all other temporal dimensions; Benjamin, apparently, never did so. Nevertheless, he held a “metaphysics of waiting” to be “indispensable,”¹¹⁰ and in his notes for the *Arcades* project, he spoke again and again of waiting as one of the most important phenomena for the philosophy of history. Above all, he emphasizes the close relation of waiting to abiding (*Weilen*) in the shape of boredom (*Langeweile*). Thus, in the notes on *ennui* and the “eternal return of the same,” it says: “We are bored when we don't know what we are waiting for. And that we do know, or think we know, is nearly always the expression of our superficiality or inattention. Boredom is the threshold to great deeds.”¹¹¹

That is to say, we never know what we are waiting for, and thus always live upon the threshold of what we perceive as boredom—until this threshold shows itself to be the transition to an unplanned praxis or an unexpected experience.

In the transitional zone that Benjamin notices both in doubt and in the dream,¹¹² in the sauntering of the flaneur and the squandering of the gambler,¹¹³ as well as in “the commodity’s wait to be sold,”¹¹⁴ what is most important for him is its relation to that which remains concealed in it. This relation becomes clearest with the dream: “we seek a teleological moment in the context of dreams. Which is the moment of waiting. The dream waits secretly for awakening [. . .]. So, too, the dreaming collective [. . .].”¹¹⁵ The “teleological moment” within the threshold-phenomena that Benjamin observes, which all find themselves gathered in waiting, is no conscious moment, and this is why the dream, whether it be the dream of individuals or collectives, waits only “secretly” for awakening. And since it belongs neither to a subjective consciousness nor to a collective and in this sense, objective consciousness, this “teleological moment” is also none that would issue into a final purpose. Such a purpose could lie only in a programmed future and thus in the continuation of a present that is not present to itself. The secret of waiting lies sealed, then, in the structure of this present-in-waiting itself. If the dream “secretly” awaits awakening, then it is turned against itself in an anti-intentional and anti-attentional movement, and its waiting turns out to be a counter-waiting (*Gegen-Warten*), a waiting directed against waiting that bears in its self-sublation—in its extinction and preservation—the telos it awaits. A wakeful counter-waiting that would be present to itself could only fulfill itself to the present time with its erasure. This present would be one that is entirely determined by its counter-striving and one that is led by no consciousness; it would be the time that is open in its secrecy: the present-in-waiting of counter-waiting, the time of time. The secret telos of waiting is, for Benjamin, solely this: historical time as the time of the ending of time in itself.¹¹⁶

The following note could be understood as a further characterization of the experience of this historical time: “We (*Wir*) are a dam (*Wehr*) stopping the time which, when that which is awaited appears,

precipitates into us in an enormous squall.”¹¹⁷ It would not precipitate if it were not initially, in waiting, dammed; no one would awaken from the dream and interpret it, if he did not initially wait secretly in the dream to awaken. But in “precipitat[ing] into us” — not horizontally, but vertically — time not only fully becomes time for the first time, as the fullness of an “enormous squall”; it also ceases to be time with its precipitation into the abyss of the self, should time be understood in the sense of a mere course. And what goes for vertical time likewise goes for history: in learning its interpretation from history, the dream becomes for the first time historical reality, but it also at once ceases to be a history of progress or salvation and breaks off. Should one speak of gathering — or speak of the historiographer as a “rag-picker,” as Benjamin does — ;¹¹⁸ should one speak of collations, readings, and collectives, one would always also be speaking of a stoppage of time, of a piling up and hoarding of historical material, which, in the moment it is released, appears for the first and only time as history. But it does so in order to step, already upon appearing, into another dimension — from the horizontal to the vertical one — and to extinguish. The telos of waiting therefore does not lie in any history to be had — it would be less than lacking — but in the experience of its passing, and thus in historical experience in the strict sense. It lies not in a constant present, but in its precipitation, and this precipitation knows no temporal parameter.

The history of waiting is, for Benjamin, a waiting for history; yet since this history floods every horizon in order to precipitate into the depths, it is not teleological but eschatological in every moment. The waiting of which Heidegger speaks in his conversation, “Towards Situating Releasement” (*Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit*), likewise goes beyond the transcendental horizon of every teleology, yet it is not, in turn, auto-teleologically set upon its precipitation, but rather lets it rest. Benjamin shows no similar releasement in his late notes for the *Arcades* project, but it does emerge in two early, spare remarks on philology.

The minute analysis that Thomas Schestag devotes to the 108th letter from Seneca’s *Epistulae morales* moves in proximity to those remarks. Under the title, “Rereading *tempus fugit*,” he shows how Seneca deploys spurious arguments that have ever since been used for the denuncia-

tion of philology and nobilization of philosophy. In a culture-critical volte, which seems to have lost but little of its allure over nearly two millennia, the Stoic finds fault in the way one is lately no longer schooled to live, but to discuss; how one no longer edifies the fortitude of the soul—the *animus*—but the understanding—*ingenium*. “Thus what has been *philosophy* has become *philology*” (*itaque quae philosophia fuit, facta philologia est*).¹¹⁹ Seneca introduces an example of this deterioration with the responses that are given by philologists and philosophers to passages from the canon of Latin classics. In Seneca’s presentation, the philosopher, a semanticist inclined towards authority, responds to the abbreviated verse from Virgil’s *Georgics*, “*fugit irreparabile tempus*” (time flies irretrievably), by interpreting the sentence as a demand and obeying it by turning to direct action and getting to his life’s work.¹²⁰ The philologist, by contrast—a word-fetishist and formalist *avant la lettre*—lingers upon *fugit* and remarks that, whenever Virgil speaks of the swiftness of time, he uses precisely this same verb, “it flees,” and comes to slow down over it: “*inter praecipitia lenti sumus*” (in the midst of precipitating events, we are slow).¹²¹ Schestag, a sovereign philologist who does not shy from caricature, shows that the time that is addressed in Virgil’s verse is swifter than the philosopher who would seek to preempt it, and swifter than every philosophical activism that should attempt to catch up to it.

In his letter, Seneca had cited only the second half of Virgil’s verse, which reads in full: “Meanwhile it flies, time flies irretrievably” (*Sed fugit interea fugit irreparabile tempus*).¹²² After drawing attention to the two occurrences of *fugit*, Schestag elucidates: “The repetition of *fugit* is separated only by the word *interea* that says *and* marks, fills *and* rips apart, the interspace or interval between the return of *fugit*, the one verb that is meant to indicate no return and assert that time flees beyond recall.” But *interea* not only opens the interval between the one *fugit* and the other; it is also itself only fleeting, itself in flight, and the flight itself, since *interea* can be read as an adverbial noun in relation to the first *fugit*—*fugit interea*—and as the temporal index of the flight of *tempus*—*fugit interea* [. . .] *tempus*. The interim-time is not only the passage crossed by time in its flight; it is itself this flight, and the doubling of *fugit*—*fugit interea fugit*—indicates that even the flight flees. Beginning

with *sed*, which marks a distance, up to *tempus*, the current name for time, every word of the verse signifies the being-no-longer or the non-being of what it names. Virgil's verse offers a fugue of flights, each of which offers the vanishing interval to further one. His language is that of a time in which this very language withdraws. No action comes to equal its rapidity; Seneca's wished-for transition from words to deeds remains behind the swifter transition to the *praecipitia*, the precipitating events; the mandate to capture what flees or to "occupy time"¹²³ — *quod fugit occupandum est* —¹²⁴ comes, as Schestag emphasizes, "too late," since the time to be captured is already *inreparabile* bygone. Virgil's verse thus withdraws from the philosophical wisdom that claims to be capable of holding power over time, its object. The philosopher has not read the verse, but even if he has read it, he has not understood it; and if he has understood it, then he also has not understood that it withdraws itself from his and every other understanding that should attempt to capture it.

Yet it is not only the philosopher who comes too late and wishes to know nothing of it; the philologist who admits his delay comes too late as well. But he also admits that "flying," as Seneca correctly remarks in his caricature, occurs again and again, or at least twice, and that only this repeated occurrence of time "flying" allows one to experience the remaining fact that time does not remain. Thus, philology not only always comes too late; it also comes before the arrival of every "too late." In abiding by the repetition of "flying," philology abides by what holds "flying" and "flying" together and asunder and what thereby grants the time of which it can be said and experienced that it "flies." Its halting and vanishing point is marked by *interea*. Of course, this interim-time flies as well. But without the minimal pause that its intervention grants, time would always already have flown off in a haltless raptus and thus been unnameable, unthinkable, and inexperiencable; time could not, however — constantly or inconsistently — fly off. The *interea* of the interim-time is an inter-word, an inter-marking of time in which time persists *as* fleeting and flees off *as* it persists, and only thereby first becomes remarkable *as* time. In abiding by the repetition of the same word for time, the philologist, as Seneca presents him, abides by the minimal holding, delaying, and slowing of time in language — here,

in poetry—; he abides by time as a structurally linguistic phenomenon, and thus as a phenomenon of the phenomenization that occurs through biding, dividing, and repeating what otherwise could not even fall to sheer aphanisis. Philology is the slowing down of temporal and phenomenal flight to the repetitive time of language (*Sprachzeit*). “*Inter praecipitia lenti sumus*” (In the midst of precipitating events, we are slow.) Differently than philosophy, philology does not attempt to follow their raptus or to capture them. It comes, untimely, before them. It holds back; it divides; it scatters: it times time.

The accent that Schestag places upon the interval of *interea* in Virgil’s verse connects his considerations with both Benjamin’s late thinking on the “differentials of time,”¹²⁵ and with his earlier remarks on philology as interpolation. In a letter from February 1921, Benjamin writes to Gershom Scholem: “Philological interpretation in chronicles simply brings the intention of the content to appearance in its form, for its content interpolates history.”¹²⁶ Interpretation is interpolation—and not in the sense of a falsifying insertion, but in the differential-mathematical sense of the intercalation of values between the already given values of a series. For Benjamin, the chronicle is itself a procedure of interpreting interpolation, since “its content interpolates history,” and it does so in such a way that events are not intercalated *in* a given history, but history is itself intercalated between at least two events. If, according to this presentation, the labor of the philologist consists in bringing that which is interpolated—history—to appearance, the presentation of a neighboring early note indicates that this labor consists in the research of the transformations that “terminology” undergoes, and thus in the research of the very terms between which interpolation occurs. Since, however, terms thereby become the theme of philology, philology lacks a terminus for itself, as well as any given value for it or any known event that could be grasped in a chronicle, and all terminological determinations for philological research wander into the interval of an interpolation without limits.

After clarifying that philology treats a course of terminologies as “one of the methodical types of history” that is not “essentially temporal,” Benjamin notes: “Philology is a history of transformations; its unidirectionality resides in the way that terminology does not become a presupposition but, rather, the material of a new [terminology], etc.

[. . .] In it, unidirectionality is particularly modified, since it inclines in the end towards the cyclical. This history has an end but not a goal.”¹²⁷ According to this note, which does not differentiate between historiography and the history of events, philology is a history that always finds an “end” whenever it becomes the object for another one. But philology knows no nameable telos — no “goal” — since every name, concept, and term is, for it, only the theme and “material for a new one, et cetera,” and not the epistemological or methodological “presupposition” of a new terminology and a new philology. For a historical philology in the emphatic sense — namely, for one that first conjectures and configures history — all that ever was or may yet become an organizational principle, a methodological premise, or a form for the thought of history, must without exception become “material,” without ever granting this ever new philology the ability to dispose over a principle, a consistent form, or a terminological instrumentarium. Philology and the procedures with which it structures its texts are always only the “material” of philology. Indebted to the progressive transcendental philology of Schlegelian provenance, the philology that is thought in this way is a threshold without a beyond, a praxis without a guiding theory, a history *ad infinitum*. It moves in an “etc.,” in an “and so on, and so forth,” and in a circle of the eternal return of the same, which, in turn, can be no terminus for philology and no binding notion, but merely “material” for further research. Since it is the research of termini, philology remains unterminological, stands under no terminus, and is itself none.

For Benjamin, there is no terminus and no telos for philology — nor is there one for history or historiography — since the history that it interpolates each time anew is itself the telos, and since this telos is, as Benjamin’s “etc.” indicates, immanently infinite.¹²⁸ Since, however, philology does have an end that is not a goal — “this history has an end but no goal” — and since it is itself what relentlessly brings this end about as its proper end, it can only realize itself as counter-philology and counter-history: philology not only *describes* (*beschreibt*) its end by thematizing it with the outlived forms of the past, but also writes it from *scratch* (*erschreibt es*) and writes itself as its ending.¹²⁹ Philology is immediate self-termination. And it is self-termination in every sense: as determination through itself, as the determination of itself

as its end, and as the ending of itself. In the simile of a burning pyre that Benjamin evokes at the beginning of his essay on the *Elective Affinities* to clarify the relation between the material content of a work and its truth content, the commentator sees only wood and ashes as his object—the realia of the work and the “lived experiences” of them. For the critic who inquires after the truth, however, solely the flame that consumes the material preserves “a riddle: the riddle of the living.”¹³⁰ More real than the realia is the fire that consumes them; more decisive than terminologies is their ending in a philology—in a critique—that rests upon nothing but this ending. Philology, which holds a critical bearing, in Benjamin’s sense, not only towards literary works, among others, but also towards itself in its history, would thus be the open-ended hold (*Aufenthalt*) in its ending, and only in this way would it be, in each of its movements, a free beginning of the living: of language. Its time—the time of language and philology—can only be the time of a limitless interval and of an interpolation that is as infinite as it is infinitesimal, the threshold-time of waiting without anything awaited. Yet since this threshold does not lie before a final stage of progress or an awaited inner space of truth, philology is the threshold that burns: it is itself the truth, whose content in literary works, among others, allows it to set off (*aufgehen*). To remain with Benjamin’s image, philology is not only the wood of what it once was or the light ashes of its lived experience; it is the fire, “the living,” without which there would be neither. Thought in this way, philology is as destructive as it is restitutive in its self-affection, in its self-ignition from its self-termination—: the ongoing auto-auto-da-fé of language, which is one with the time of history, the time of language (*Sprach-Zeit*).

With this, the history of waiting has not yet come to an end.¹³¹ Benjamin’s later notes for the *Arcades* project also belong to it, where the “now of recognizability” (*Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit*) is bespoken as “that critical, dangerous moment that lies at the ground of all reading” (*kritischen, gefährlichen Moment, welcher allem Lesen zugrunde liegt*), and where it said more precisely that the “moment of awaking” is “identical” with that now.¹³² But if the dream secretly awaits awaking,¹³³ then there is no now without that secret waiting; no now without waiting against waiting; and as one could conjecture—although Benjamin says so nowhere—wait-

ing alone is what comes forth in that now, in its uttermost contraction to the present of counter-waiting (*Gegenwart des Gegen-Wartens*). This waiting comes to be open *in* its secrecy, not *without* it. When Benjamin defines the “image” as the site where “what has been comes together in a flash (*blitzhaft*) with the now to form a constellation,”¹³⁴ what comes together with the now is the *waiting* of what has been, and it comes together in an image that comes forth solely in a lightening flash, in its blinding appearance, and thus in its invisibility. And since the “constellation” that is formed can take shape only from out of a dark ground, it can come into relief solely on the condition that the ground remain invisible as well. What Benjamin calls a “dialectical image” is an image of the imageless —: in it, its no-longer is preserved in its ever-yet, and it is not preserved in an objective appearance within a given space, but as the opening of space itself. This “image” does not appear at any point within an already current course of time; its appearance is itself nothing other than the opening (*Aufgehen*) of time as time, the breach and leap into time (*Sprung in die Zeit*) that is sprung each time for the first and only time. If “the moment of awaking [is] identical with the ‘now of recognizability,’” then it must, as Benjamin writes, “be the synthesis drawn from the thesis of dream-consciousness and the antithesis of waking-consciousness.”¹³⁵ And it must therefore, according to all rules of dialectics, be a synthesis in which the waiting for awaking transitions into an awaking to this waiting, or into the awaking of waiting to itself. The moment of awakening and recognition — every one of them — as well as the moment recognizability and readability, can therefore only be the self-encounter of waiting in counter-waiting.

But in the moment of this synthesis, time not only opens in its entire complexity; it opens itself as space. On the “staking of an entire life” at the beginning of Proust’s *Recherche*, Benjamin writes with a particularly emphatic formulation: this staking takes place at “life’s supremely dialectical breaking point: awakening.”¹³⁶ And he adds: “Proust begins with an evocation of the space of someone awaking” (*des Erwachenden*).¹³⁷ This space — and Benjamin also speaks of an “image-space” (*Bildraum*) — is the space of a “constellation” in which the elements of “an entire life” stand in spatial distance to one another and show themselves to a third who is, for his part, spatially distanced. And they show

themselves solely at “life’s supremely dialectical breaking point,” where life, turning back from out of its breach, begins. The beginning in this breach—and thus the breach as the beginning—is no beginning *in* time. It is the beginning, the irruption (*Anbruch*) of time—the “staking of an entire life”—and it is as the beginning of a time-space in which all that is living stretches out in its separateness. Counter-striving and directed against itself, this waiting extends, in awaking, into a space—: it makes room for space (*es räumt ihn ein*)—; turned against itself, it stretches into a time—: it gives time (*es gibt Zeit*)—; and it lets time and space come together into an image-space where they are mutually imbricated—: time-space installs itself as time-image-space (*Zeit-Bild-Raum*). Since waiting encounters itself as this time-image-space, it awaits nothing more: no object that could still arrive from a spatial or temporal remove, and no transcendent essence that would have to enter into the picture from another space or time. It awaits nothing that could still be longed for besides, but whose bare ability to be longed for is sublated in the time-space of the image.

The opening of this image-space is, as Benjamin suggests and does not not say, in itself “messianic.” And this image-space is also, *sit venia verbo*, archi-messianic. In it, space and time “come,” Benjamin writes, “to readability, to recognizability”—: hence, those dimensions that were hitherto regarded as already given conditions for cognition *come* to cognition only in coming *to* themselves, and they come *to* themselves only in turning *against* themselves—: the waiting of the dreamer turns against itself in awaking; the lethargic stretch of a course of time turns against itself at its “breaking point;” and the mere point of time turns against itself with its “eruption” (*Zerspringen*) into a plurality of light points, which themselves separate out within a constellation into an image-space. With this, it becomes clear that the transcendental forms of cognition that Kant calls forms of intuition are no such forms at all, but first come to be forms of cognition in awaking, which can only come to be when waiting turns against itself and encounters itself as its counter-waiting (*Gegen-wart*). Benjamin characterizes their “now” as the “death of intention” and thus as the death of every aim that could be directed toward an intentional object of awaiting or cognition. In the “now,” it is not an object, but cognition itself that opens

up and goes off, without object or objective. This is why the “image” that shows itself in the flash of the “now” can be called “dialectics at a standstill.”¹³⁸ The dialectic itself is suspended in it. It holds still within a space that is not defined by dialectics. If the moment of recognizability and awaking is characterized as a “critical point” and a “critical moment,” then it is characterized critically and as a crisis in the sense of a scission as well: it is a separation, a point that not only divides, but that also splits itself and erupts. This “eruption” extends it into space. This space is, for Benjamin, the space of “true historical time” and the “time of truth,” because truth itself opens up within it as time, time-space, and time-image-space. This is no harmonious event. It is, as Benjamin does not tire of emphasizing, an explosive, exorbitant, and expansive one. The present is an occurrence that strives against itself, an occurrence against occurring; it is no time, but a time-gap; no space, but a breach-area; no image, but a counter-image. This time-image-space is the space of what Benjamin calls “reading.” It is a reading against the grain (*Wider-Lesen*) in the counter-waiting that erupts: the origin, the ur-rupture of philology (*Ur-sprung der Philologie*).

The only thing that cannot be awaited and failed is waiting. Whether it be characterized as the “respose of extension” in Hegel; as an ahistorical relation to another in Heidegger; as reserved dispersion in Blanchot; as held flight in Virgil and Seneca; or as a “dam” and “dialectic at a standstill” in Benjamin; waiting remains, however disparate it may be in itself, the only warrant that there is history, historical time, and a present. Since it only takes place in the space of language, this comportment is called in the *Theses* philology.

XIII

It was evening all afternoon.
It was snowing
And it was going to snow.
The blackbird sat
In the cedar-limbs.

What has been drawn together here into a—far too brief—history of waiting has obviously found no direct entry into the *Theses*. Among the

almost thoroughly heterogenous elements of this history, only a few are taken up and grouped in such a way that they form relatively independent and coherent movements of thought, which ever again pass anew through lacunae, empty places, intervals, pauses, and waiting areas. Each time, they do so not in order to clarify the incompleteness, but, rather, the provenance of an intuition, notion, or procedure. This is why, in Thesis 41, the “emancipation of the interval” is addressed with Alois Riegl, and elucidated: “*philology* emancipates the interval from its border phenomena and, going a step farther, opens up phenomena out of the interval between them, phenomenal movements out of the aphenomenal in their space in between, space out of a fourth dimension: in the end, every dimension out of the nondimensional.” These remarks, among others, characterize the procedure—the absolutely non-methodologizable procedure—of conjecture as the disclosure and opening of that which is not a given, but the giving and the prompt (*Gebung und Vorgabe*) for all further giving. The *Theses* show themselves to be less interested in the yield of conjectures, “interpolations,” or “interpretations,” than in the background from which they take shape. For solely this background—this ground without ground—offers a playing field that allows for other historical conjectures, other histories, and other worlds than those which are realized in a text or its interpretation. This playing field is that which remains to be said, because it is that which allows something else to be said. This is why Thesis 56 speaks of “intervals—that cannot be contained by any topos but hold open an a-topos or u-topos. The time of space is suffused with the time of spacing; time spacing is no longer a condition of phenomenality but its withdrawal into the aphenomenal. Time also has its time: it is ana-chronistic.” Time is just this: that it is not. The fact that time is no being among beings and has no substantial existence makes it into a language; and the fact it is a language makes it, despite all chronometrical suggestions to the contrary, elastic, alterable, and riotous against all that can be established, directed, and trained, and thus makes time as much into the material of philology as it does into its accomplice. The interest of the *Theses* in the motif of history does not lie in a phenomenology or ontology of a determinate form for the course of occurrences; its interest lies, rather, in that which lies before every possible

form, and in-forms and trans-forms each one. It is in this sense that the reservations are to be read that are announced in Thesis 38 against the privileging of syntheses, collections, and configurations, as well as all the co-composites that articulate them. In this thesis, the interval is expanded into the ground without ground and into the a priori of the “abyss,” in the sense of the late Hölderlin: “The fact that philology turns its attention to the constellation of phenomena, to the configuration of figures, and to the composition of sentences indicates that it is no less interested in the dark ground out of which phenomena, figures, and words take shape than in these themselves. For that ground is their sole ‘co’ or ‘con’ or ‘cum.’” With this, it is indicated that the coexistence of phenomena offers no sufficient ground or reason for them, and that the ground from which this coexistence takes shape cannot be observed as such. Since this remark on the “dark ground” still remains itself obscure, it is in need of an explication.

The bouquet that Susan Bernstein ties together in her essay, “The Philia of Philology,” gives a favorable occasion for such an explication. After she refers to two parallels between passages from “Position Exposed” (*Der ausgesetzte Satz*) (1980) in *Premises* (*Entferntes Verstehen*) and from Jean-Luc Nancy’s *Being Singular Plural* (*Être singulier pluriel*) (1996), which address in different ways the saying of all and nothing, as well as Mallarmé’s “flower! [. . .] what is absent from all bouquets” (*fleur! [. . .] l’absente de tous bouquets*),¹³⁹ Bernstein cites the famous verses of Angelus Silesius that Heidegger places at the center of his lecture course, *The Principle of Reason* (*Der Satz vom Grund*): “The rose is without why; it blooms, because it blooms / It does not regard itself; it asks not whether it is seen” (*Die Ros’ ist ohn’ warum; sie blühet, weil sie blühet, / Sie acht nicht ihrer selbst, fragt nicht, ob man sie siehet*).¹⁴⁰ Beside these verses that speak of the groundlessness of the rose, Heidegger places the principle formulated by Leibniz: “Nothing is without reason,”¹⁴¹ which asserts the exact contrary, namely, that all beings find their *ratio* — their ground but also their *lógos* — in a most powerful being that cannot itself be further derived. Now, Nancy objects that the sentence on the rose, which blooms without a “why,” is insufficient, as is its interpretation by Heidegger. Bernstein cites Nancy: “It does not suffice to say that the ‘rose grows without reason.’

For if the rose were alone, its growth without reason would enclose within itself, by itself, all the reason of the world. But the rose grows without reason because it grows along with the reseda, the eglantine, and the thistle—as well as with crystals, seahorses, humans, and their inventions” (*Il ne suffit pas de dire que “la rose croît sans raison.” Car si la rose était seule, sa croissance sans raison enfermerait en soi, à soi, toute la raison du monde. Mais la rose croît sans raison parce qu’elle croît avec le réséda, l’égantaine et le chardon — le cristal et l’hippocampe, l’homme et ses inventions*).¹⁴² This remark stands in the context of the large-scale “ontology of being-with” (*ontologie de l’être-avec*) that Nancy develops in critical connection with Heidegger, and it claims to name a sufficient ground for the groundlessness of the rose and for its lack of need for a ground. The ground of its blooming-without-ground lies, for Nancy, in its blooming-with-others. He understands being-with others as the being-with the being-with of others, irrespective of any modification of their being—regardless of whether they correspond to the measures of existence—and he thus understands being-with as the opening towards that which is itself open or, as Nancy says, the “co-incident of openings” (*co-incident des ouvertures*).¹⁴³ The absolute symmetry of the incommensurable has, for Nancy, the consequence that the difference between ground and without-ground falls away. The gathered entirety of beings has its ground in itself and nothing else; yet the ground that it has—its being-with, its being-together, and being-entirely-gathered—can have no further ground, because any further ground would already have to be an integral part of the entirety. After the sentences that Bernstein cites, Nancy can therefore continue: “And the whole of being, nature, and history do not constitute an ensemble the totality of which would or would not be without reason. The whole of being is its own reason; it has no other reason, which does not mean that it itself is its own principle and end, exactly because it is not ‘itself.’ It is its own dis-position in the plurality of singularities. This *Being* ex-poses itself, then, as the *between* and the *with* of singulars” (*Et tout de l’étant, la nature et l’histoire, ne fait pas un ensemble dont la totalité serait ou ne serait pas sans raison. Le tout de l’étant est sa proper raison, il n’en a aucune autre, ce qui ne veut pas dire qu’il est à lui-même principe et fin, puisqu’il n’est pas lui-même. Il est sa proper dis-*

position en pluralité des singularités. Cet être s'ex-pose donc comme l'entre et comme l'avec des singuliers).¹⁴⁴ With this, the question of the ground and the without-ground appears to be done with. But it can only appear to be done with because being in its entirety does not expose itself to another. Rather, it exposes itself, in all of its elements, only to the totality of these very elements; its being-exposed is thus essentially being-with, but it is never an exposure of that being-with. With this, the thoroughgoing being-with-one-another of beings is declared to be its proper ground.

The question of the without-ground, the without-being, and not-being returns a few pages after the above-cited passage as the question of the sense of being, insofar as this sense is not-being. And it returns again as the question of the negative, on which Nancy rightly remarks that it would have to “withdraw” (*soustraire*) itself from its proper operation. Without further pursuing the problem of this self-withdrawal of the negative, Nancy writes of the *nihil negativum* and therefore too of sense: “It is *without* (at a distance) to the exact measure that it is *with*; it is shown and demonstrated in being-with, [which is] the evidence of existence” (*Il est sans [à l'écart] dans l'exacte mesure où il est avec: montré et démontré dans l'être-avec, preuve de l'existence*).¹⁴⁵ Not-being thus provides its own proof of existence, insofar as it is not-being solely and exclusively together *with* being, which, as being-with, determines and has always already determined the totality of being. As Nancy formulates it, not-being is *without* in the “exact measure” that it is *with* — namely, *with* the *with* — and to this extent, it is and belongs to the solid consistency of a being-with, which may not already be present as a given, but which is simultaneous with every positing: “the ‘with’ is always already given [. . .], it [its absolute antecedence] does not ‘underlie’ or preexist the different positions; it is their simultaneity” (*l'“avec” est toujours déjà donné [. . .], elle [son antécédence absolue] ne préexiste pas aux positions, elle est leur simultanéité*).¹⁴⁶ With this, not-being is assimilated to being-with in such a way that its “absolute antecedence” is reduced to absolute coincidence; its absoluteness is reduced to selfsameness; and the self-withdrawal of the negative is reduced to the self-positing of being-with. Nancy may know, then, of a without-being *in* being-with; of a not-being that is simultaneous, homogeneous, and co-existent with being-with.

But he does not know of an asymmetrical, asynchronous, incommensurable not-being. He may know of a with-*another*, but only such a one where the other is converted into an element of the “with.” And he may know of a *with*-another, but no “with” that is othered and altered according to the measures of the other; he knows of no *other* with and no other-*than*-with. Whatever enters into the precinct of being-with, be it even a *nihil negativum*, has already withdrawn itself—*soustrait*—from its being-other and its not-being. It is always already given—*toujours déjà donné*—and it is already in the midst of being in the selfsameness of its plural singularity. It is therefore sublated in the emphatic, Hegelian sense, in its immediate mediation with another. For Nancy, “with” is the middle of all mediations that can be exposed solely to itself, but never to another, and never to something other than a “with.”

Insofar as every other is other than any intended one, however; and insofar as it is other than any generic “other,” and thus other than the category “other” *itself*, it must be the case that, in every relation to another, an *other* relation of the other to this relation intervenes and alters the with-another into another “with,” another “with-another,” a “with-another-than-with,” and a *limine* a “with-without-being-with” and a “with-without-the-sense-of-being-with.” A “co-incident des ouvertures” can therefore never be hypostatized as a given, and still less can any opening be ascribed the structure of givenness: an opening is neither a notion, nor a presence-at-hand, nor an object. Since Nancy’s analysis of being-with knows no with-*another*-with, no with-another-*than*-with, and no with-*without*-with, it remains an ontology merely of being as being-with. Since solely the exposure *in* being-with is thought within this ontology, but not the exposure *of* being-with, and since this ontology therefore considers only the positedness of being in a constantly given and never withdrawn state of being-with-one-another, it remains a restrictive ontology of the absolute immanence merely of being as being-with the communicative spirit.

“Language is essentially in the with” (*Le langage est essentiellement dans l’avec.*)¹⁴⁷ Nancy thus summarizes the credo of his co-existential ontology and thereby indicates one more time the ground for the insufficiency of the groundlessness of Angelus Silesius’s singular rose. However, the sufficient groundlessness that, as Nancy holds, is first attained

in being with-others, is simultaneously the unconditioned ground that this “with” finds in itself as a thoroughgoing relation. Philology, as it is sketched in the theses, sets itself apart from this relational ontology. History, as it says in Thesis 33, “takes place where something breaks off and starts [*aussetzt*], where something touches a ‘not;’” and it is in this sense “contingent”; history takes place, in short, where it could be otherwise and also could not be. Thesis 78 states more precisely: “From the outset, philology goes beyond to something other than that which it is; it is the way to that which it is not and thereby is—transitively—its not [*Nicht*] and its after [*Nach*].” The fact that philology—and therefore language—both exposes (*aussetzt*) and exposes itself (*sich aussetzt*), does not mean that it is a mere exposition, offering, or presentation. Nor does this characterization of philology merely mean that it is an ex-position as an end to positional and propositional utterances, or that it has the related meaning of an ex-istential comportment toward the possibilities of one’s ever-singular existence or that of another. Rather, it means, first of all, relating to the absolute im-possibility of any relating at all.¹⁴⁸ “Exposing” signifies ending; and as such, it signifies being that to which no being and no being-with can be ascribed, that of which no commonality and no universality can be predicated. If, as Thesis 55 remarks, “philology concerns itself with a *nihil* to which every negation must still be exposed,” then philology “is—transitively—its ‘not’ [*Nicht*]” (Thesis 78); then it is a transition into a non-transition, or a “transcending without transcendence” (Thesis 4); and it is therefore a with-another-than-with, or a with-without-being-with. Being can neither be affirmed nor denied of philology, which, according to Thesis 17, is a movement “without predetermined end [*ohne Vorbestimmtes Ziel*]. Therefore without end. Therefore without the without of an end. Without the without of ontology [*Ohne das Ohne der Ontologie*].”

What is said in these sentences of the end in the sense of a *causa finalis* holds no less valid for every *causa*: philology has none: it is without ground even in the “with” that it itself is, as the *philía* of a *lógos* that could be translated as *ratio* or *causa*. Philology has no ground in itself as a with-another, because this other would be no other if it could not have something other than a ground and therefore could have no ground. The ontological minimum that Nancy insists upon in an

advanced Hegelian and Heideggerian tradition, namely, the being-with with others, is not the minimum of philology. For philology, being-with cannot hold validity as an irreducible universal fundament, but only as a phase of thinking, as a passage that becomes a dead end if it is not broken through from the *other* side, from the side of the other, and opened to what still remains to be said from its side about the “with-ground-and-telos” and the “without-ground-and-telos,” about “being-with” and “being-without-with.” Of this opening it can never be presupposed that it is given in a symmetrical and simultaneous “co-*incidence des ouvertures*.” But for this very reason, there also can be no direct talk of a “without.” The negation that it normally indicates would merely be a negation according to the measures of the “with,” which determine a relation to another, but not the relation of another to it. The “without” in “with-without-with” is to be thought, however, as an inoperative negation, as a “without-without-without”; not as an “empty place,” but as an “opening for place”; not as an index of a *nihil negativum*, but as a *nihil donans*. Only in this sense — outside of every given sense — does it hold open the “dark ground” of every *co-*, *con-*, or *cum*.

Language is not essentially in the “with.” If one were to take up Nancy’s phrasing, it could be said that language is essentially within the “with-others,” yet in such a way that every “with” can not only be forestalled, refused, and failed by the others with which it is, but can also be given through their refusal. Hence, it is essentially not *within*, but *outside* every “with,” and it is therefore, in each of its elements, in-essentially and contingently referred to that which is allowed or foreclosed to it by others and by others than others. Language is that which “remains to be said” of language beyond every “with,” in a “with” that is without a given “with.” It therefore “is” not, but *remains*, though it does not *remain* as the abiding substance of that which is given, nor does it remain as a steady capacity whose preservation and activation would allow the subjectivity of a subject to substantiate itself. Rather, language remains left over to that which cannot be anticipated as anything that “is” or as anything that — in any sense whatsoever — “remains.” It remains, in every second, about to quit remaining. It mutates, each time on the threshold of mutism.

Philology speaks for these others about whom ontologically ensured propositions are impossible because these others are operative or inop-

erative beyond the bounds of every possible identification, classification, and calculation. But philology does not speak as their representative— for what was never present does not let itself be represented— nor does it speak solely as their advocate— where the risk of talking over and infantilizing those others would be unavoidable—; rather, it always speaks first of all as their “place opener” (Thesis 32). Only in releasing the other from all epistemological, technical, and practical— from all ontological— confinements that make him into a calculable *alter ego* does philology make room and grant him the place of one to whom philology can, in its proclivity and disinclination, bring its inclination. Only in this way is philology no procedure for the predicative comprehension of objects in the immanence of being-with, but philology: an attentive turn (*Zuwendung*) towards that which, *in* this turn, is free *from* it, and thus is other and unrestrictively linguistic for the very first time. An other that is defined through the fixed relation of being-with is only an other within the limits of pre-given categorical forms for predication; it is the preformed, conformed, and formatted other, and therefore the same: a mass product. Philology, by contrast, is the free release of the singularity of the other and thus the free release of its otherness and its openness to and from forms. In its relation to another, philology surrenders itself to an alteration of this relation and lets it become a with-an-other-with that can culminate in a without-with. “Philology,” as it therefore says in Thesis 80, “is the name for a future of language other than the intended one.” Since philology cannot exempt itself from this other future, its name— and every name— must be *a priori* redefinable, and thus an indefinite name, a missing name and a misnomer. Philology is the inclination towards a language that belongs to no one, the inclination towards that which does not belong, towards that which is unheard of and improper. It is, beyond every concept, xenophilic. In the draft of an afterword to *Inner Experience (L'expérience intérieure)*, Bataille writes on the idea of a “negative” community: “the community of those who have no community” (*la communauté de ceux qui n'ont pas de communauté*).¹⁴⁹ Thesis 71 takes up this paradox and hypoparadox, and reclaims it for the society of those who speak with one another, beyond every given with-one-another, as well as before and behind it: “the society of philology is the society of those who belong to no soci-

ety [. . .].” It could also read: the society of those who allow each other another society or something other than that which they know by the name “society.” And it could read: the society of those who give one another leave for another future, another time, and another history than the ones that they already know or believe to know.

The fact that philology is xenophilic beyond all concepts signifies that it is also thaumatophilic. Aristotle reaches back to one of Plato’s insights when he calls wonder — *thaumázein* — the beginning of philosophy in the first book of his *Metaphysics*. Wondersome is, each time, the unclarified, the inaccessible, and the inapproachable — the *áporon*. Among such things, Aristotle counts the revolutions of the sun, the workings of chance, and the incommensurability of the diagonal, the *diamétron asymmetrian*. In a parenthesis, he adds that the friend of myths is also, in a certain way, a philosopher — *ho philómythos philósophós* — for the saga, the myth, the tale, and the story consist of that which is wondersome (*thaumasión*) (982b 17–19). Yet whether he is called philomythic or a philologist, whoever is inclined not only towards sagas (*Sagen*), but also towards saying (*Sagen*), loves the wonder that he does not know. His *phileîn* is itself a *thaumázein*. He is at the outset, before the emergence of all — *pantòs genéseòs* — before time, space, and language. And confronted with their aporias, their incommensurability with every known way of thinking, he comes no further. His astonishment is the stoppage that Benjamin speaks of as a “dam” (*Wehr*).

Whoever is astonished waits because he encounters the unawaited. He does not wait *for* the unawaited or for its clarification; he does not wait for the course of time or history that would bring him further; rather, he waits so that this very time and history — the emergence of all, the movement of the sun — can occur. His waiting allows for time; it gives time to time, space to space, language to language; and it gives them leave to be what they would not be without this waiting. It lets them be in such a way that they do not, like him, need to wait. This is not to say that he willingly or unwillingly bears them, or that he bears patience and waits for them to unveil their secret at last. His astonishment comes before every act of will and every suffering. Whoever is astonished allows for what does not adapt itself to him, but he cannot do otherwise than allow it, for the unawaited has already struck

him, and the surprise renders every decision for or against it moot. Descartes therefore names astonishment as the first passion in the *Passions de l'âme*;¹⁵⁰ it comes before all other affections and, although Descartes does not say so, it comes before the time in which it could be sensed as such. Whoever is astonished has no time to correspond to the wonder of time. He has no time to wonder, and no time to wait for his astonishment to cease. The standstill in astonishment before the *áporon*, before the wayless and the motionless, is no standstill in time, but of time itself. Its silence is no silence in a given language that would continue its course after an episodic interruption, but a silencing of language entirely, insofar as it is language. In this standstill of the philologist's astonishment, and solely there, language moves, and with it move time and history. It may be for this reason that Benjamin spoke of a "dialectic at a standstill," and that Heidegger spoke of a "waiting" without awaiting. It is in the motionlessness of astonishment, of incomprehension, and of the unreadability of the phenomena—and it is in this abiding by them—that the phenomena first open up and start off as phenomena. In waiting, they move in the element of their unsublatable foreignness. In the pause of wonder, they are let free and left over to themselves in their othering (*Veränderung*). Philology—or "philomythy"—is the befriending of what becomes foreign (*diesem Befremdenden*). In its astonishment, in its waiting (*Warten*), its present wait (*Gegenwart*) stretches out. It is the holding open of language for what remains to be said otherwise and what therefore remains to be said. This holding open is the *praxis*, the *praxis* of the *passion* of waiting.

What remains in this way does not, in every case, bear advantages; it is not, as Descartes emphasizes, "convenable"; it is no given convening and no "with," but always also a counter-with and a with-without-with. Ossip Mandelstamm found particularly drastic words for it. In his essay, "About the Nature of the Word," he writes: "The antiphilological spirit with which Rozanov wrestled had burst loose from the very depths of history; in its own way, it was just as much an inextinguishable flame as the philological fire. [. . .] There is absolutely no way to snuff [it] out. Luther showed himself to be a bad philologue, because instead of an argument, he let fly an inkwell. The antiphilological fire ulcerates Europe's body, growing dense with flaming volcanoes in the

land of the West, making a cultural wasteland for ages to come out of that soil on which it had burst forth. [. . .] Europe without philology isn't even America; it's a civilized Sahara, cursed by God, an abomination of desolation."¹⁵¹ Ever since these pathos-filled sentences were written in 1920, what they call "desolation" with — or without — Hegel or Nietzsche has not grown any less. There is no means against it that could not serve as fodder for that "anti-philological" fire.

What remains is the undeniable (*das Unwidersprechliche*) — language in its denial of language (*Widersprachlichkeit*). What remains to be done: to speak such that all can speak otherwise. Or: to speak further, beyond all known, spoken, given languages. Or: to speak language.

Pascal's remark, "l'homme passe infiniment l'homme,"¹⁵² can be translated with the less restrictive and more precise remark: "Le langage passe infiniment le langage." Its "passe infiniment" can be explicated through the hybrid- and hyper-word of Joyce: *passencore*. A shorter formula for the movement of language and for the philology that corresponds to it could therefore, in more than one language and in ever more than one sense, read: *Or*.

5

I do not know which to prefer,
The beauty of inflections
Or the beauty of innuendoes,
The blackbird whistling
Or just after.

Notes

1. The mottos for the segments of this text are drawn from the poem of Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 92–95.
2. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Sudelbücher*, in *Schriften und Briefe II*, ed. Wolfgang Promies (Munich: Hanser, 1975), 166. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine (KM).
3. Johann Georg Hamann, *Ein fliegender Brief. Zweite Fassung*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3 (*Schriften über Sprache, Mysterien, Vernunft, 1772–1788*), ed. Joseph Nadler (Vienna: Verlag Herder, 1951), 347–407, see 363.

4. This formulation, “to break word of,” renders the formulation, *sich ersprechen*, which is used in this text to indicate the initiation of speaking through speaking, with reference to both the speaking itself, as well as that which is bespoken. This notion of a rupture or eruption without any presupposed ground also resonates in the other verbs formed with the prefix *er-* in this text; it can be considered in analogy to the initiation of a “path-breaking” movement, as the author of this text mentioned in a conversation on June 11, 2017. A similar verbal phrase — “make words break from me” — appears in “The Wreck of the Deutschland” by Gerard Manley Hopkins, in *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Norman H. Mackenzie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 123. In the course of this translation, I have attempted to draw consistently on a lexicon that implies “broaching” in order to render the words in which the prefix *er-* receives emphasis. For another discussion of possible ways in which this prefix may be rendered, see Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, “Translators’ Foreword,” in *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), xx. Readers of *Premises* might also recognize an allusion in this translation of *sich ersprechen* to the connection between speaking (*sprechen*) and breaking (*brechen*) that is cited there from August Schlegel’s “Languages: A Dialogue about Klopstock’s Grammatical Dialogues,” in *Premises*, trans. Peter Fenves (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 225. (KM)
5. For its history, see the two works of Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968) — in German: *Geschichte der klassischen Philologie. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des Hellenismus* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1978); and *A History of Classical Scholarship from 1300–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) — in German: *Die klassische Philologie von Petrarca bis Mommsen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1982).
6. Plato, *Phaedrus*, ed. Harvey Yunnis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
7. See Jean-Claude Fraise, *Philia. La notion d’amitié dans la philosophie antique* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1974).
8. Francis Ponge, *Méthodes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 36. The translation offered here corresponds to the one that appears in the contribution by Michèle Cohen-Halimi, translated by Ann Smock. (KM)
9. In *Zwei Königskinder? Zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. Wilhelm Vosskamp (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), 5–15. Reprinted in *Texte zur Theorie und Didaktik der Literaturgeschichte*, ed. Marja Rauch and Achim Geisenhanslüke (Stuttgart: Verlag, 2012), 162–82.
10. Peter Szondi, “On Textual Understanding,” trans. Harvey Mendelsohn, in *On Textual Understanding and Other Essays* (Minneapolis: Manchester University Press, 1986), 3–22, see 13. Translation modified. (KM) Peter Szondi, “Traktat

- über philologische Erkenntnis," in *Hölderlin-Studien. Mit einem Traktat über philologische Erkenntnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 9–30, see 21.
11. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 22; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 34.
 12. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 4; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 9.
 13. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 4; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 10.
 14. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 8; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 14.
 15. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 13, 10; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 20, 16.
 16. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 12; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 19.
 17. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 13; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 20.
 18. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 5; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 11.
 19. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 6, translation modified; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 11.
 20. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 6; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 12.
 21. Schlegel, quoted in Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 13; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 20.
 22. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, vol. 1, ed. Michael Knaupp (Munich: Hanser, 1992), 422.
 23. Szondi, "On Textual Understanding," 17, translation modified; *Hölderlin-Studien*, 25.
 24. See, for example, Roman Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," in *Language in Literature* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 98.
 25. Werner Hamacher, "Apotropäische Figur," in *Europalyrik 1775–Heute*, ed. Klaus Lindemann (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1982), 325–46, see 337.
 26. Hamacher, "Apotropäische Figur," 338. In a later passage, it reads: "The language of the poem is auto-apatropaic, insofar as it unfolds as the uncludable drama between two figures for protection that are irreducible to one another, much as they depend upon one another" (345). In this context, there is also reference to the similar considerations of the author in *pleroma* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1978), and to Freud's study from 1922 regarding the apotropaion, "Das Medusenhaupt" (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 17, London: Imago, 1955), 47–48.
 27. Hamacher, "Apotropäische Figur," 337.
 28. In the French translation by Jean-Luc Nancy, this text appeared under the title, "La seconde de l'inversion," in *Contre-jour. Études sur Paul Celan*, ed. Martina Broda, which is a collection of the contributions to the Celan-colloquium in Cerisy-la-Salle from 1984. In "The Lesson of Paul de Man" (Yale French Studies 69), the essay was published in William D. Jewett's English translation. There, the reference to "Signe Zéro" appears on page 298. In *Premises* (Harvard and Stanford 1996), it appears in the translation by Peter Fenves on page 370.

29. Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings II* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), 211–19. In German, this important essay appears in the translation of Regine Kuhn under the title “Das Nullzeichen” in the collection, *Aufsätze zur Linguistik und Poetik*, ed. Wolfgang Raible (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1974), 44–53. In English, it appears as “Zero Sign,” trans. Linda R. Waugh, in *Russian and Slavic Grammar Studies 1931–1981*, ed. Linda R. Waugh and Mirris Halle (Berlin: Mouton, 1984), 151–60.
30. See the introduction of Claude Lévi-Strauss to Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et Anthropologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), xlix–l; Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 279; Jacques-Alain Miller, “La Suture,” in *Cahier pour l’analyse* 1 (1966): 37–49; Jacques Derrida, *L’écriture et la différence* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), 409; Gilles Deleuze: *L’île déserte et autres textes* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002), 261.
31. Gottlob Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, trans. J. L. Austin, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper, 1960), 87; Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987), 107–8, see 97.
32. This concept is introduced for the clarification of the same nexus of matters (*Sachzusammenhang*) in Werner Hamacher, “Bogengebete,” in *Aufmerksamkeit*, ed. Norbert Haas, Rainer Nägele, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (Eggingen: Edition Isele, 1998), 11–43, and in Werner Hamacher, “Époché poème — La parenthèse-rime de Celan autour des parenthèses de Husserl,” trans. Michèle Cohen-Halimi, in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 79.3 (2013): 297–329.
33. Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 75–76, 80, 81. (Emphases WH).
34. de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 73.
35. de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 79.
36. de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 80, 81.
37. de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 117–18.
38. Here I follow the translation offered by Peter Fenves in his translation of Werner Hamacher’s *Premises*, 232. (KM)
39. Hamacher, *Premises*, 12–19.
40. Hamacher, *Premises*, 43.
41. Werner Hamacher, “For—Philology,” trans. Jason Groves, in *Minima Philologica* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 132. “Für—die Philologie” (2003), in *Was ist eine philologische Frage?* ed. Jürgen-Paul Schwindt (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009), 36–39. In the extended version that spans further preliminaries and consequences, these remarks appear in *Für—die Philologie* (Weil am Rhein: Engeler, 2009), 40–44.
42. This poly-“thesis” — this ex-thesis and ek-stasis — bears a connection that is most likely far more plausible, and in any case more interesting, to Paul

- Celan's poem, "Dein / Hinübersein," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 218.
43. Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), 83; *Speech and Phenomenon, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 74.
 44. At the risk of deviating from the more usual English idiom, I have attempted to render the German phrase word for word—"it gives"—in those passages where it is explicitly analyzed, in order to distinguish its usage from other phrases that could be translated with "to be there," "to exist," such as *da sein*. When it seemed to me that the syntax of the sentence would be too distorted by this alternative here and elsewhere, I have clarified the original phrasing with parenthetical references to the German. (KM)
 45. All quotations from the works of Aristotle are cited according to the standard pagination established by August Immanuel Bekker. (KM)
 46. Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1971), 192–93. The subsequent quotations from Heidegger's book also appear on pages 192–93.
 47. Martin Heidegger, "Zeit und Sein," in *Zur Sache des Denkens*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2007), 3–30, see 28.
 48. "Faust, Geld," in *Athenäum — Jahrbuch für Romantik* 4 (1994): 131–87, see 150–51. The analysis of giving does not conclude with the passage cited here from this *Faust*-study; in its further course, it turns to the burning and reduction to ashes of all that is given. The reference to Chrétien and his book, *La voix nue* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990) could have been extended with reference to a book that Chrétien's study explicitly takes as a point of departure—namely, Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Philosophie première. Introduction à une philosophie du "presque"* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954). There, Jankélévitch—who was not close to Heidegger—formulates five years before the publication of *Unterwegs zur Sprache* three "métalogismes violemment paradoxaux" in connection to the remark, "Celui qui fait n'est pas lui-même un étant" (He who makes is not himself a being). These metalogisms are presented at once as the paradoxes of creation, of original making, and of positing, but upon closer examination, they can only be the paradoxes of a non-poietic and non-thetic giving. In formulating them, Jankélévitch appeals to Plotinus, and to explicate Plotinus, he comes upon the important differentiation between that which is given (*dōrōn*), that which gives (*dōtēr*), and the giving of the gift (*dōsis*). His paradoxical metalogisms read: "1. *Ce qui fait n'est pas ce qu'il fait* [. . .] (That which makes is not what it makes [. . .]) 2. *Ce qui donne donne ce qu'il n'est pas* [. . .] (That which gives, gives what it is not); 3. *Ce qui donne n'a pas ce qu'il donne, et inversement ce qui donne a encore ce qu'il a donné!* (That which gives does not have what it gives, and conversely, that which gives still has what it has given!)" (l.c. pp.

188–91). When it comes to the third paradox, the question poses itself as to whether the temporal dimensions that are introduced with “still” (*encore*) and “has given” (*a donné*) accord with the thought that is explicated, which requires the unconditioned pre-temporality and a-temporality of giving and having. As it would have to be said according to the premises of Jankélévitch and Plotinus, that which gives *has* never already *given*, and *ever yet* does not *have* that which it has *given*. Since it entirely opens up and starts off in its giving, but does not vanish in the given, that which gives only ever *has* its giving, but it never has *what* it has given in the sense or the tense of the perfect or imperfect past. Giving is not subordinated to the conditions of the time that it gives (*die es gibt*).

Heidegger does not fall into the traps of hyper-ousiological presentism or the chronometric notion of time when he speaks in *Time and Being* of *Es gibt* as the fourth dimension of time, which is neither having-been, nor presencing, nor coming to be, but “is” rather—as one could say, deviating from Heidegger’s terminology—an ana-chronic time. This fourth dimension opens a playing field for three-dimensional time, and preserves ‘itself’ in each of its dimensions: one could say it preserves no time in every time. If the *Es gibt* also signifies a fourth dimension in *Es, die Sprache, gibt*, then it would have to be possible to say that language *is* no language in every language and *has* no language in every language. With this, it would be suggested that, as long as language speaks, it speaks with and from out of its non-speaking. Nothing would be more ‘logical,’ and nothing more ‘alogical’—for language can give (itself) only if it comes forth from its non-being (*Un-Sein*) and non-essence (*Un-Wesen*), and if it is itself its occurrence as this coming-forth. If indeed language occurs in this way, however, then its non-being also cannot cease to speak with and from out of it, and cannot cease to be silent, and to fall mute. And if language behaves in this way, then it would have to become doubtful whether *its* non-being can be what speaks with it, or whether it is not rather an *other* than *its* non-being. Even not-having (*Nicht-Haben*) cannot be predicated of language as *its* possession (*Habe*). Therein lies, perhaps, the most abyssal implication of Plotinus’s thought. It is recognized by neither Jankélévitch nor Chrétien nor even Heidegger, who between the years 1946 and 1950 poses the question of giving justice, *didónai díkē*, in “The Anaximander Fragment” (*Der Spruch des Anaximander*): “Can it [the ever-singular, the *Je-Weilige*] give what it doesn’t have?” and gives the answer: “the giving that is designated here can only consist in its manner of presencing.” See *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975, 1984), 43; *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1950), 329. Derrida, who reads in Heidegger’s question a reprisal of the question of Plotinus—see *Donner le temps I: La fausse monnaie* (Paris:

- Éditions Galilée, 1991), 13, 202 — is the only one who, already in his earliest publications, poses the closely connected question of the *proprium*, property, and possession. However, he offers an answer that bears different accents than the one sketched here, since for Derrida, the decisive text by Heidegger is *Time and Being*, and he nowhere refers to the earlier *Es gibt* passage from “The Essence of Language” (*Das Wesen der Sprache*).
49. Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 267. On the complex and complexity of the ‘word’ — and not only the word — *Verhältnis* and its neighbors, *Ver-halten*, *ent-halten*, *Auf-ent-halt*, *epoché*, et cetera, in Heidegger, see Werner Hamacher, “Das Verhältnis,” which appeared in English under the title, “The Relation,” translated by Roland Vésigö. *The New Centennial Review* 8, no. 3 (2008): 29–69.
 50. Heraclitus, *Heraclitus: Greek Text with a Short Commentary*, ed. and trans. Miroslav Marcovich (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2001). All subsequent references to Heraclitus are drawn from this edition and cited by fragment number. The numbering follows the standard enumeration from Hermann Diels and Walter Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 1 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1954). (KM)
 51. Maurice Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, trans. John Gregg (Lincoln NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); *L'attente l'oubli* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962). In 1959, the same year that Heidegger’s book on language was published, *Gelassenheit* appeared with the important “Feldweggespräch” from 1944–45, “Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit.” In it, the concept of waiting (*Warten*) is characterized as a behavior that is neither that of expectation (*Erwartung*) nor anticipation. Already in 1959, Blanchot had published under the title, “L’attente,” a brief passage that he would later revise from an early draft of *L'attente l'oubli* in the commemorative collection of essays, *Martin Heidegger zum siebenzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. Günther Neske (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), 217–24. For Heidegger’s and Blanchot’s “waiting” (*Warten*), see below.
 52. Maurice Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 23; *L'attente l'oubli*, 48.
 53. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 1; *L'attente l'oubli*, 7.
 54. See Michel Foucault, “Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?” in *Dits et Écrits I* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 792.
 55. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 45; *L'attente l'oubli*, 87. Gregg draws attention in a note to the important “phonetic resemblance in French between the adjective *latent* and *l'attente*” (45). (KM)
 56. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 35; *L'attente l'oubli*, 69. The passage is cited by Derrida in *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 23: “Blanchot also says, more or less, that forgetting is another name of Being.” In French, the sentence reads in *Donner le temps I: La fausse monnaie* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1991), 38: “Blanchot dit aussi, à peu près, que l'oubli est un autre nom de l'être.”
 57. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 35; *L'attente l'oubli*, 69.

58. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 54; *L'attente l'oubli*, 103.
59. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 81; *L'attente l'oubli*, 154.
60. Heidegger, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1950), 310, 311. I have adjusted the translation that appears in *Early Greek Thinking*, “As it reveals itself in beings, Being withdraws,” 26. (KM)
61. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 48; *L'attente l'oubli*, 93.
62. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 58; *L'attente l'oubli*, 111.
63. This non-influence does not exclude, but first makes it possible that Blanchot came to know the formula, “to give what one does not have” through Lacan, who evoked it for the characterization of love in “La direction de la cure.” This text was first published in 1961—around the time Blanchot was writing *L'attente l'oubli*—in *La Psychanalyse* (vol. 6), and later in *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 627.
64. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 58; *L'attente l'oubli*, 112.
65. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 58; *L'attente l'oubli*, 112.
66. For his German translation of Blanchot’s *Pas au-delà*, Hinrich Weidemann found the beautiful formulation, *Jenseits Weg* (Berlin 2006). See also Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, trans. Lycette Nelson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). (KM)
67. Roman Jakobson, “Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas Albert Sebeok (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1960), 372.
68. Theodor W. Adorno, “Musik, Sprache und ihr Verhältnis im gegenwärtigen Komponieren,” *Musikalische Schriften 1–3* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978) 649–64. For the rendition of “Sprachähnlichkeit” as “language-likeness,” I am indebted to Gerhard Richter’s translation of this term in *Afterness: Figures of Following in Modern Thought and Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) 224. (KM)
69. Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke 3* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 181. See, by way of comparison, the brief commentary above.
70. See Hugo von Hofmannthal, “Ein Brief,” in *Gesammelte Werke – Erzählungen, Erfundene Gespräche und Briefe, Reisen*, ed. Bernd Schoeller (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1979), 465.
71. Heraclitus, Fr. 124. The translation that the author offers for this fragment of Heraclitus reads, in German: “Wüst hingeschüttet wie ein Misthaufen (sárma) ist die schönste Welt (kállistos kósmos).” (KM)
72. On the structure of Fichte’s positing-theorem and the onto-theological constitution of metaphysics, see Werner Hamacher, “Position Exposed” and “Premises,” in *Premises*, trans. Peter Fenves (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 222–61 and 1–43, respectively. The German versions of these texts appear in *Entferntes Verstehen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), 194–234 and 7–48.
73. de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, 117.

74. See Werner Hamacher, "Bemerkungen zur Klage," in *Lament in Jewish Thought: Philosophical, Theological, and Literary Perspectives*, ed. Ilit Ferber and Paula Schwebel (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 89–110.
75. For a more detailed justification of these remarks, see Werner Hamacher, "The Right to Have Rights. Human Rights; Marx and Arendt," trans. Ronald Mendoza-de Jesús, in *The New Centennial Review* 14, no. 2 (2014): 169–214, as well as "The Right Not to Use Rights: Human Rights and the Structure of Judgments," trans. Tobias Boes, in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in the Post-Secular World*, ed. Hent de Vries and Lawrence Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 671–90.
76. The passage is cited according to *Schillers Gespräche: Berichte seiner Zeitgenossen über ihn, herausgegeben von Julius Petersen* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1911), 255.
77. Michel de Montaigne, "Apologie de Raimond Sebond" (Essais II, 12), in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. A. Thibaudet, Maurice Rat (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 485.
78. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1982), 635, translation modified (KM). See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke 2*, ed. Karl Schlechta (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1966), 1218. In the *Genealogy of Morals*, it becomes clear that the practitioners of ephexis nevertheless cannot be the best philologists: "anti-Christians, immoralists, nihilists; these skeptics, ephectics, *hectics* of the spirit (they are all *hectics* in some sense or other); these last idealists of knowledge," they too are "far from being free spirits: *for they still have faith in the truth.*" See Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollindale (New York: Vintage, 1989), 149, 150. Also see Nietzsche, *Werke 2*, 889, 854.
79. Sextus Empiricus, *Grundriß der pyrrhonischen Skepsis* (I, 190), ed. Malte Hossenfelder (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), 136. Montaigne speaks of the pyrrhonic equilibrium of the scale pans (*arrepesia*) in *Essais 2*, 508, 544.
80. See Werner Hamacher, "Époché Poème. — La parenthèse-rime de Celan autour des parenthèses de Husserl," trans. Michèle Cohen-Halimi, in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 79 (2013): 297–330.
81. As is argued in *Entferntes Verstehen*, 10.
82. Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (New York: Grove, 1970), 3–4.
83. A later echo of the categorial determination of knowing as a possession can be heard in Walter Benjamin's remarks from the "Epistemo-critical prologue" of his book, *On the Origin of the German Mourning-Play*: "Knowledge is possession. Its object is determined as that which must be had—be it even transcendently—in consciousness. The character of a possession remains to it. Presentation is secondary for this possessing. It does not exist already as something that presents itself (*als ein Sich-Darstellendes*). Precisely this, however, holds valid for the truth." See *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 209. For Benjamin, language

along with truth is distinguished from the possessing of knowledge, for truth is “an intentionless being formed from ideas,” and on the idea, it is said: “The Idea is something linguistic; it is that moment in the essence of the word in which it is a symbol” (216).

84. Here, Hugh Tredennick’s translation from the Loeb edition (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1933) has been modified by the author of this text, and I have adhered to his rendition of passage in my translation (KM).
85. For further analysis of the Aristotelian doctrine of propositions and several of the considerations sketched here, see Werner Hamacher, “Hypertax (Ett försök),” trans. by Tommy Andersson, in *Ordets Negativ: Till Anders Olsson* (Stockholm: Stehag, 2009), 115–49.
86. Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), 267.
87. This phrase remains in keeping with the translation that appears in the standard Loeb edition of the *Metaphysics*, vol. 1 by Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), 260. (KM)
88. This Greek word, which is usually translated as “exists,” contains the morphemes *hypó* (under) and *árchein*, which is primarily understood to mean ‘to be first,’ and thus, in principle, ‘to rule.’ The German *durchwalten* that the author provided in the original text would therefore underscore the dynamics of domination that the verb conveys. I have attempted to emphasize the force of ‘rule’ and the notion of ‘primary’ status in this translation with ‘prevail.’ (KM)
89. This passage is cited according to the way in which it is rendered in the contribution of Cohen-Halimi. (KM)
90. What is referred to here is the table of “Nothing” that Kant considers to be necessary to add to the transcendental analytic, although it is “in itself of no especially high importance” (A 290–92). See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 383, translation modified (KM). It enumerates the four meanings of nothing according to the order of the four groups of categories: the “empty concept without object (ens rationis),” the “empty object of a concept (nihil privativum),” the “empty intuition without an object (ens imaginarium),” and the “empty object without concept (nihil negativum).” It would take lengthier explications to make clear that each of these nothing-concepts is of the highest importance, and that each marks a ‘not’ to a ‘nothing,’ in that it lends a name to that which can bear none: it is only for this reason that Kant can also characterize them as “contradict[ory]” and, in this sense, “impossible” (382). Further explications could show that all of these concepts trace back to the minimal limitative function of the so-called infinite judgment, which, like all true negations, is to be understood only as a “limitation” (*Schranke*) that limits “the infinite sphere of all that is possible only to the extent” that the negated predicate “is separated from it,” while

the subject is posited “in the remaining compass of its space,” and thus “affirmatively determined” (A 72 sq; 208, translation slightly modified. See also A 575 sq.). With this, it could be made clear that the entire, apparently non-contradictory world of objective experience according to categories traces back to an insoluble contradiction in the sheer non-category ‘nothing’; and that not only the reality, but also the objectivity of this world rests upon a categorial ‘impossibility.’—The limitative judgment maintains the closest relations to the category of quality or reality (understood as the *realitas* of a *res*, and thus as the status of a matter *qua* matter [*Sachheit*]), in its Kantian conception (B 182). For an approximating attempt to discuss these matters, see the study, “Intensive Sprachen,” in *Übersetzen: Walter Benjamin*, ed. Christiaan Hart-Nibbrig (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2011), 174–235. This study has also appeared in the English translation of Ira Allen and Steven Tester in *Modern Language Notes* 127, no. 3 (2012): 485–541.

91. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik II*, in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969), 324.
92. It is formulated in this way in § 173 of the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 8 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 324.
93. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), 551.
94. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, 325.
95. For a closer analysis and critique of the “logic of origin” in the infinite judgment in Hermann Cohen (who, in his *Logic of Pure Cognition*, refers expressly to the Aristotelian *ἀρίστον* as an early precursor of this judgment), as well as in Franz Rosenzweig, Gershom Scholem, and Walter Benjamin, see Werner Hamacher, “Bemerkungen zur Klage,” in *Lament in Jewish Thought* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 101–6. (“Klage keine Negation”). See also the earlier study, “Schuldgeschichte,” in *Kapitalismus als Religion*, ed. Dirk Baecker (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2003), 77–119, especially 111–13 (“Logik des Ursprungs”).
96. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 548. The English translation that is offered here is drawn from Terry Pinkard’s draft (p. 699), and slightly modified. See Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry Pinkard, <http://terrypinkard.weebly.com/phenomenology-of-spirit-page.html>. (KM)
97. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 9; *L’attente l’oubli*, 21.
98. The published English translation of Heidegger’s text bears the title, “Conversation on a Country Path about Thinking.” I have offered a different translation that seems closer to the words of Heidegger’s German, in order to emphasize the resonance of “letting” and “releasing” in this text on “Gelassenheit,” or “releasement.” (KM)
99. See Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking: A Translation of Gelassenheit*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966),

- 68, translation modified. Heidegger, “Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit,” in *Gelassenheit* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), 42.
100. With these translations of “Vorstellung” and “Gegenstand,” I have attempted to draw out the placement (*Stellung*) and standing (*Stand*) implicit in both German words, as well as the sense of the prefixes, on which see also Richter’s excellent discussion of the “Gegenstand” as a “standing-against” in his contribution. (KM)
 101. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 51; *L’attente l’oubli*, 99.
 102. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 51; *L’attente l’oubli*, 98.
 103. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 52; *L’attente l’oubli*, 99.
 104. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 52; *L’attente l’oubli*, 100.
 105. Blanchot, *Awaiting Oblivion*, 32; *L’attente l’oubli*, 64.
 106. Martin Heidegger, “Was heißt Lesen?” in *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 111. The English translation is adopted from the one that Richter offers in his contribution to this volume.
 107. Another commentary on Heidegger’s note is offered in the brief overview of the history of reading between Cervantes and Heidegger (and also Laurel and Hardy) in Werner Hamacher, “Diese Praxis—Lesen—” in *Lesen*, ed. Hans-Christian von Herrmann and Jeannie Moser (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2015), 73–98. This text draws upon Heidegger’s “Lógos”-essay from *Vorträge und Aufsätze* to make clear that it is from out of the context of *légein* and *lógos* that Heidegger considers ‘reading’ in the sense of gathering, preserving, and holding back.
 108. The translation is drawn, with slight modification, from the one that Richter cites from Nietzsche, *Basic Writings*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 279. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, in *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. Karl Schlechta, vol. 2 (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1966), 636.
 109. Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* 5.1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), 578. The translation offered here is Gerhard Richter’s, as it appears in his contribution. (KM) See also Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Kevin McLaughlin and Howard Eiland (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 463. (KM)
 110. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 859; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 1029.
 111. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 105, 855; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 161, 1024.
 112. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 859–60; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 1029.
 113. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 864; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 1034.
 114. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 861; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 1031.
 115. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 390, 855, translation modified (KM); *Das Passagen-Werk*, 492, 1024.
 116. Benjamin’s thought of an immanent revolution of time is more closely examined in Werner Hamacher, “Das Theologisch-politische Fragment,”

- in *Benjamin-Handbuch*, ed. Burkhardt Lindner (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2006), 175–92.
117. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 855, translation modified; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 1024.
118. See Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* 3, 225.
119. L. Annaeus Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistolae morales*, vol. 2, ed. L.D. Reynolds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 456. The English translation offered here is drawn from Thomas Schestag's contribution. A less accurate rendition appears in the English translation, *Seneca's Letters to Lucilius* 2, trans. E. Phillips Barker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), 221–33, where it reads: "Thus what started as a quest for wisdom has become a taste for erudition," 228. (KM)
120. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium*, 456. See also Virgil, *The Georgics*, Vol. 2, Books 3–4, ed. Richard F. Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 11.
121. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium*, 456. My translation here is based on the one offered by Werner Hamacher in his German text. (KM)
122. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium*, 456. Here, the translation is drawn from the one that Schestag offers in his contribution. (KM)
123. This latter phrase is borrowed from Schestag's translation. (KM)
124. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium*, 457.
125. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 456, 867; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 570, 1038.
126. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe*, vol. 2 (1919–1924) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), 137. *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin 1910–1940*, trans. Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 176, translation modified. (KM)
127. Walter Benjamin, "Methodische Arten der Geschichte," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985), 93–94. In German, the passage reads: "Die Philologie ist Verwandlungsgeschichte, ihre Einsinnigkeit beruht darauf daß die Terminol<ogie> nicht Voraussetzung sondern Stoff einer neuen usf. wird. [. . .] Die Einsinnigkeit ist in ihr besonders modifiziert, da sie letzten Endes zum Zyklischen neigt. Diese Geschichte hat ein Ende aber kein Ziel." (KM) The English translation offered here is largely borrowed and slightly adapted from Peter Fenves's rendition of this passage in *The Messianic Reduction: Walter Benjamin on Historical Time* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 233.
128. One might compare the late note from the *Arcades* project, in which it reads: "And so on, ad infinitum, until the entire past is brought into the present in a historical apocatastasis," *The Arcades Project*, 459; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 573. An "ad infinitum, until" is obviously a contradiction in adjecto. The antagonism between infinity and totality to which Benjamin, in the Kantian tradition, devotes important remarks in his essay on Goethe's *Elective Affinities* and in the preface to the *Trauerspiel* book, can be resolved

- only by simplifying it through the classical hypothesis of an infinity that is immanent in a totality. This solution is not illegitimate only if each whole is considered to be determined through the *breach* of an infinite series.
129. The German phrase reads, “*sondern erschreibt es und schreibt sich selbst als ihr Enden*”; on the sense of the prefix ‘er-’ in this text, see above, n. 4. The notion of ‘scratching’ may also recall the broad range of senses that the Greek verb for writing (*gráphein*) conveys—though to ‘scratch’ something or to ‘scratch it out’ implies erasing a mark as much as it may imply making a mark. (KM)
130. Walter Benjamin, *Goethes Wahlverwandtschaften*, in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, 126. See also Stanley Corngold’s translation of this text in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 298, translation modified. (KM)
131. The fragments from this history that have been placed together here were selected mainly according to the parameters that were set through the names mentioned by the commentators of the *Theses*. Their selection does not in the slightest lay claim to historical ‘objectivity.’ In order to allow for a short glimpse into what lies beyond the limits of this selection, several further texts are named here—again without a claim to representativity—in which the motif of waiting is addressed or drawn out. Benjamin cites at least twice the sentence of Victor Hugo: “Attendre c’est la vie” (*Das Passagen-Werk*, 156, 178). In the third segment of Valéry’s *Jeune Parque* (1917), it states: “Tout peut naître ici-bas d’une attente infinie.” “Enigmes” (1927), the opening text of Henri Michaux’s *L’espace du dedans* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), treats of waiting, where it reads: “il attendait ainsi, toujours diminuant jusqu’à n’être plus que l’orteil de lui-même.” Samuel Beckett: *En attendant Godot* (1948–49). Francis Ponge notes under the title, “Voici pourquoi j’ai vécu” (1961): “A ne rien faire qu’à attendre leur déclaration particulière [des choses],” in *Nouveau nouveau recueil II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 172. Paul Celan writes in “Dein / Hinübersein” from *Die Niemandsrose* the most important lines in this context: “Alles ist wahr und ein Warten / auf Wahres.” See Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke* 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 218.
132. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 463–64; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 578–79. The translation offered here is the one that Gerard Richter provides in his contribution. (KM)
133. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 390; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 492.
134. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 463; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 578.
135. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 463–64, translation modified; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 579. (KM)
136. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 464, translation modified; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 579. (KM)
137. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 464, translation modified (KM); *Das Passagen-Werk*, 579.

138. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 463; *Das Passagen-Werk*, 578.
139. Stéphane Mallarmé, "Crisis of Verse," in *Divigations*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 210, translation modified (KM); Mallarmé, "Crise de vers," in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2, ed. Bertrand Marchal (Paris: Gallimard, 2003), 213.
140. Quoted in Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 35, translation modified (KM); Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957), 68.
141. Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 35, translation modified. (KM)
142. Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 86, translation modified (KM); *Être singulier pluriel* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 109.
143. Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 82, translation modified (KM); *Être singulier pluriel*, 106.
144. Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 86; *Être singulier pluriel*, 109–10.
145. Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 92, translation modified (KM); *Être singulier pluriel*, 115–16.
146. Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 92; *Être singulier pluriel*, 115.
147. Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 86; *Être singulier pluriel*, 110.
148. See, once again, Werner Hamacher, "Position Exposed" and "Premises" in *Premises*, trans. Peter Fenves (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 222–61; 1–43.
149. George Bataille, *Inner Experience*, trans. Stuart Kendall (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 281; *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 5: *La Somme Athéologique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 483.
150. René Descartes, *Les passions de l'âme*, ed. André Bridoux (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), 723–24.
151. Osip Mandelstam, "About the Nature of the Word," trans. Sidney Monas, *Arion* 2, no. 4 (1975): 506–26, 515.
152. Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg 434, in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963), 515.

Contributors

SUSAN BERNSTEIN is Professor of Comparative Literature and German Studies at Brown University. She is the author of *Housing Problems—Writing and Architecture in Walpole, Goethe, Freud and Heidegger* (Stanford University Press, 2008) and of *Virtuosity of the Nineteenth Century: Performing Music and Language in Heine, Liszt and Baudelaire* (Stanford University Press, 1998). She has also published articles on Nietzsche, Kant, Ronell, synaesthesia, and the uncanny.

MICHÈLE COHEN-HALIMI is *maître de conférences* in Philosophy (charged with directing research), at the University of Paris, Nanterre. She is the author of *Stridence spéculative, Adorno, Lyotard, Derrida* (Payot, 2014); *L'Anagnoste* (Eric Pesty editeur, 2014); *L'Histoire cachée du nihilisme*, with J.-P. Faye (La fabrique, 2008); and *Entendre raison. Essai sur la philosophie pratique de Kant* (Vrin, 2004).

PETER FENVES is the Joan and Serepta Harrison Professor of German, Comparative Literary Studies, and Jewish Studies at Northwestern University. He is the author of several books, most recently *Late Kant: Towards Another Law of the Earth* (Routledge, 2003) and *The Messianic Reduction: Walter Benjamin and the Shape of Time* (Stanford University Press, 2011).

SEAN GURD works at the intersection of aesthetics, media studies, and classical philology, with a special interest in music and sound culture. He is the author of three monographs: *Iphigenias at Aulis: Textual Multiplicity, Radical Philology* (Cornell University Press, 2006); *Work in*

Progress: Literary Revision as Social Performance in Ancient Rome (Oxford University Press, 2012); and *Dissonance: Auditory Aesthetics in Ancient Greece* (Fordham University Press, 2016). He is also the editor of *Philology and its Histories* (Ohio State University Press, 2010).

DANIEL HELLER-ROAZEN is the Arthur W. Marks '19 Professor of Comparative Literature and the Council of the Humanities at Princeton University, where he is also the Director of the Gauss Seminars in Criticism. He is the author of *Dark Tongues: The Art of Rogues and Riddlers* (Zone Books, 2013); *The Fifth Hammer: Pythagoras the Disharmony of the World* (Zone Books, 2011); *The Enemy of All: Piracy and the Law of Nations* (Zone Books, 2009); *The Inner Touch: An Archaeology of a Sensation* (Zone Books, 2007); *Echolalias: On the Forgetting of Language* (Zone Books, 2005); and *Fortune's Faces: The Roman de la Rose and the poetics of Contingency* (JHU Press, 2003). He has also edited *The Norton Critical Edition of the Arabian Nights* (W. W. Norton, 2008) and Giorgio Agamben's *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy* (Stanford University Press, 1999).

JAN PLUG is Associate Professor of English at the University of Western Ontario, where he is also a core member of the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism. The author of *Borders of a Lip: Romanticism, Language, History, Politics* (SUNY, 2004) and *They Have All Been Healed: Walser, Benjamin, Agamben, Sebald, and the Brothers Quay* (Northwestern, forthcoming), he is also the translator, with others, of Jacques Derrida's *Who's Afraid of Philosophy?: Right to Philosophy 1* (Stanford University Press, 2002) and *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2* (Stanford University Press, 2004).

GERHARD RICHTER teaches critical theory, aesthetics, and literature and philosophy at Brown University, where he is Professor of German Studies and Comparative Literature. Among his books are *The Uncoercive Gaze: Thinking with Adorno* (Fordham University Press, 2019); *Inheriting Walter Benjamin* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); *Verwaiste Hinterlassenschaften. Formen gespentischen Erbens* (Matthes & Seitz Berlin, 2016); *Afterness: Figures of Following in Modern Thought and Aesthetics* (Columbia University Press, 2011); *Thought-Images: Frankfurt School Writers' Reflections from Damaged Life* (Stanford University Press, 2007); *Ästhetik des Ereignisses. Sprache — Geschichte — Medium* (Fink Verlag, 2005); and *Walter Benjamin and the Corpus of Autobi-*

ography (Wayne State University Press, 2000). He also is the editor of seven additional books in the area of European critical thought and aesthetics, including volumes on Benjamin, Adorno, the relation between music and philosophy, literary paternity and literary friendship, and Derrida on photography.

AVITAL RONELL is University Professor of the Humanities at New York University, and Jacques Derrida Professor of Philosophy and Media at the European Graduate School, Switzerland. Her books include *Loser Sons: Politics and Authority* (University of Illinois Press, 2012) and *Fighting Theory* (University of Illinois Press, 2010). A recent play was performed in Berlin, at Hau3, “What was I Thinking? A Spectral Colloquy,” starring Susan Bernstein, Laurence Rickels, and herself as more or less herself.

THOMAS SCHESTAG is Professor of German Studies at Brown University. He is the author of *Lesen–Sprechen–Schreiben (Kritzeln)* (Matthes & Seitz Verlag Berlin, 2014); *Realabsenz, Schatten. Flauberts Erziehung: zur Éducation sentimentale; mit einem Anhang: sensus tacitus* (August Verlag Berlin, 2011); *Die unbewältigte Sprache. Hannah Arendts Theorie der Dichtung* (Urs Engeler Editor Basel, 2006); *Mantisrelikte* (Urs Engeler Editor Basel, 1999); *buk* (Klaus Boer Verlag München, 1994); *Asphalt* (Klaus Boer Verlag München, 1992); *Parerga*: (Klaus Boer Verlag München, 1991); and *para-*(Klaus Boer Verlag München, 1991). He is the editor of two unpublished dossiers by Francis Ponge: *Le Soleil / Die Sonne* (Matthes&Seitz Verlag Berlin, 2015) and *L’Opinion changée quant aux fleurs / Änderung der Ansicht über Blumen* (Urs Engeler Editor Basel, 2005). In 2009 he published *philo: xenia*, Erste Folge (Urs Engeler Editor Basel).

ANN SMOCK is Professor Emerita of French at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Double Dealing* (University of Nebraska Press, 1986), and *What Is There to Say?* (University of Nebraska Press, 2003). Her more recent writing bears on contemporary French poets, especially Jacques Roubaud and Emmanuel Hocquard. She has translated works by Blanchot, Sarah Kofman, and, with William Smock, *A Semite*, by Denis Guenoun (Columbia University Press, 2014).

VINCENT W.J. VAN GERVEN OEI is a philologist, publisher, and co-director of the independent open-access publishing platform punctum books. He is a specialist of the Old Nubian language and co-editor-

in-chief of Dotawo, the imprint of the Union for Nubian Studies. His recent publications include *Cross-Examinations* (MER. Paper Kunsthalles, 2015), and the edited volumes *Going Postcard: The Letter(s) of Jacques Derrida* (punctum books, 2017), and *Allegory of the Cave Painting* (Mousse, 2015; with Mihnea Mircan). His three-volume work *Lapidari* (punctum books, 2015) provides the first complete overview of socialist monumentality in Albania.

Index

- Abgrund*, xvii, 236, 318
- Adorno, Theodor W.: dialectical reversal of Hegel, 24; within German Studies, 144; on incomprehensibility, 18; influence on Samuel Weber, 169n7; influence on Szondi, 234–35; on interpretation as inspection, 24; on language-likeness (*Sprachähnlichkeit*) of music, 270; against positivistic interpretation, 234–35; and post-war status of German language, 149; on pre-censorship of thought, 9–10; “Punctuation Marks,” 126n10
- Agamben, Giorgio, 6, 123, 126n10
- Ali, Mohammed, 138
- Ammonius, 205–9, 305–6
- Anaximander, 302–4, 306. *See also* Heidegger, Martin
- aoristic language and philology, 304–10
- ápeiron* (*áporon*). *See* Aristotle
- Arendt, Hannah, 149, 170n19
- Aristotle: on *aóriston* 203, 208–9, 300, 304–9, 350n95; on *ápeiron* (*áporon*), xiii, 173, 296–304, 338–39; and Celan, 107; on categorical utterances, 172; on *euuche*, xiii–xiv, 45, 105–6, 108, 115, 117, 172, 173, 174; on friendship, 156; Hamacher on Aristotle and Celan, 228; on the indefinite, 203–5; influence on Hamacher, 59n19; *De Interpretatione* (*Peri Hermeneias*), 16, 33, 105–6, 115, 120, 172–74, 195–200, 202–10, 269, 297; on interruption of thought in poetry, 112, 173–78; on language as definitive of man, xiii, xix, 179–180n3; on *logos apophantikos*, xiii–xiv, 2, 45–47, 49, 105, 108, 172, 297–98; on *prima philosophia*, 251; *Prior Analytics*, 200–202; on privation as “idea,” 212n28; on provenance of being, 302; role in Hamacher’s *95 Theses*, 7, 22; on *thaumázein*, 338; on *thesis* of language, 126; on time, 252; on waiting, 120; on *zōon lógon échōn*, xix, 174–75, 292–99
- askésis*, xli, 33, 90
- Attridge, Derek, 73–74
- Ausonius, 249
- Austin, J. L., 247

- Bachmann, Ingeborg, 146
- Balfour, Ian, 58n4, 59n17, 62n50
- Bally, Charles, 239
- Bataille, Georges, 132–33, 138, 337
- Baudelaire, Charles, 143, 191
- Beckett, Samuel, xxvii, xxviii, 260, 280, 288–89, 353n131
- Benjamin, Walter: aporia as “dam,” 338; on catastrophic interpretations, 30n15; on critical moment of reading, 15; on dialectical image, 327; “dialectics at a standstill,” 329, 339; within German Studies, 144; on Gide, 86, 87; Hamacher on Smock’s reading of Benjamin and Blanchot, 226; and Heidegger, 148–49; on historiographer as “rag-picker,” 321; on Hugo, 353n131; on immanent revolution of time, 351–52n116; on indifference of reflection, 185; on infinity and totality, 352–53n28; on interpolated history, 324; on Karl Kraus, 156; on knowledge, truth, and ideas, 348–49n83; *Kunstkritik*, 186; on language, 59n16, 60n35; letter to Scholem in French, 146–49; on “logic of origin,” 350n95; on Michelet, 22, 30n12; on number of acts in a play, 58n3; on philology as self-termination, 325–26; on Proust, 327–28; Richter on, 227, 319; role within Hamacher’s 95 *Theses*, 7; as student of Rickert, 18; on success, 83–84, 85–88; on travel writing, 87–88; on waiting, 319–21, 326–29, 339
- Works: *Arcades Project*, 25, 29n6, 30n12, 319–20, 321, 326, 352–53n128, 353n131; “Capitalism as Religion,” 92n8; “Goethe’s *Elective Affinities*,” 86, 326, 353n128; “In the Sun,” 90–91; *Origin of the German Mourning Play*, 58n3, 310, 348–49n83, 352–53n28; “Theses on the Concept of History,” 16, 319
- Benn, Gottfried, 227
- Bennett, Benjamin, 169n5
- Benveniste, Émile, 227, 247
- Bernhard, Thomas, 22–25, 227
- Bernstein, Susan, 143, 331–32
- Blanchot, Maurice: on forgetting and being, 346n56; on friendship, 135; Heidegger’s influence on, 251; influence on 95 *Theses*, 85, 226, 264; Lacan’s influence on, 347n63; on language as giving what it does not have, 276; *Pas au delà as Jen-seits weg*, 347n66; on repetition and Stein, 192; on reserved dispersion, 329; on waiting, 88–90, 260–63, 314–17, 346n51
- Boethius, 207–10, 213n45, 305–6
- Brecht, Bertold, 144
- Brower, Reuben, 54
- Büchner, Georg, xxxii, xxxiii
- Cage, John, 270–71
- Celan, Paul, 7, 16, 22, 144, 185, 343n32, 348n80, 353n131; Aristotelian premises, 228; and Daive’s poetry, 115, 118, 122–24; within German Studies, 146; “Give the Word,” 1–2; Hamacher on Celan’s poetry as *prima philologia*, 105, 107, 110, 227–28; Hamacher’s reading of “Und Wie die Gewalt,” 60n32; Hamacher’s “The Second of Inversion,” 6, 45, 47–48, 107–13, 239, 342n28; on language as positing, 247, 272; against the law, 133; “Tübingen, Jänner,” xxxii, xxxiii
- Cervantes, Miguel de, 351n107
- Chase, Cynthia, 4

- Chrétien, Jean-Louis, 256, 264, 344–45n48
- Christianity, l-li, 34, 153–54, 177, 178, 282, 302, 310, 348n78; Judeo-Christian Bible and, 125, 154, 163, 168, 282, 318. *See also* Luther, Martin
- Cicero, 101
- Cixous, Hélène, 144
- Coetzee, J. M., 8–9
- Cohen, Hermann, 310, 350n95
- Cohen-Halimi, Michéle, 8, 228–31, 286, 287, 305, 349n89
- Corngold, Stanley, 353n130
- Cortázar, Julio, 249
- Culler, Jonathan, 4
- Daive, Jean, 8, 104, 111–26, 227
- Deleuze, Gilles, 240
- de Man, Paul: *Allegories of Reading*, 20, 29n5, 61n44, 238; on Baudelaire, 143, 191–92; on Californian academic institutions, 136; on death, 243–45; within German Studies, 144, 150; Hamacher on de Man's role in *95 Theses*, 237–38; Hamacher on distance from de Man and Derrida, 247; Hamacher's inheritance of, 53–55, 56, 57, 226, 227, 228; Hamacher's "LECTIO," 16–17; influence on Samuel Weber, 169n7; on interpretation of texts, 20, 51–52, 227; Barbara Johnson's reading of, 143; "The Return to Philology," 6, 61–62n48, 104; on positing and meaning, 246, 276; on prosopopoeia, 238, 241–43, 245, 275; on translation, 147
- Derrida, Jacques: on *archi-écriture*, 249, 262; *beyond* as never beyond, 164; on Blanchot, 346n56; on Celan and Kafka, 133; on the center, 38, 40, 42; deconstruction as philology, 264; on the *Es gibt* of language, 276, 345–46n8; on friendship, 134–35, 137; within German Studies, 146; Hamacher on distance from Derrida and de Man, 247; on Heidegger, 156, 249–50; influence on Ronell, 143, 169n1; influence on Hamacher, 6, 226, 228, 248, 263; influence on Samuel Weber, 169n7; on interpretation as "inspection exercise," 24; on Kant, 142; and *nihil donans*, 264; as non-self-identical, 250, 263; on the paleonymy, 5; on *philia*, 193n24; on repression of writing, 161; Richter on, 227; on rupture, 49, 58–59n13; on translation, 147; the university "without condition," 8; within van Gerven Oei's text, 227–28; on Western metaphysics, 73
- Works: *Dissemination*, 248, 263; *Given Time*, 248, 251, 261, 263, 345–46n48, 346n56; *Glas*, 248, 263; "The Ideality of the Literary Object," 50; "Law of Genre/Gender," 150; "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," 39–41, 58n4, 58–59n13, 115, 240, 249; "The Supplement of the Copula," 50, 106, 112, 227
- Descartes, René, 268, 339
- Dionysios, xxvii, xxviii
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor, 153
- Eckermann, Johann Peter, 136, 163
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 135, 138
- ephexis* (*ephectic*), 32–36, 286–90, 348n78
- epoche*, 32–34, 36, 92n8, 286–88, 312, 346n49
- Es gibt*, xxxv–xxxvi, 251–57, 273, 277, 279, 328, 345–46n48

- euche*, xiii, xiv, xvi–xvii, 3, 45, 105, 106, 108, 115, 117, 118, 172, 173, 181, 224
- Fenves, Peter, 7, 142, 292–96, 300–301, 342n28, 343n38, 352n127
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 186, 235, 236, 247, 275, 285, 347n72
- Flaubert, Gustave, 138–39
- Fliess, Wilhelm, xliii–xliv, xlviii–xlix, 226
- Frege, Gottlob, 240–41
- Freud, Sigmund: on apotropaion, 342n26; cathetic reading, 15; cultural *Unbehagen*, 161–62; on death drive and repetition compulsion, 1–li; Goethe’s latent presence in, 170n18; on Hamlet and friendship, 141; letter to Fliess, xliii–xliv, xlviii–xlix, 84, 226; and multivocality of language, 218; notion of “laughing off,” 280; Rat Man, 133; role in Hamacher’s 95 *Theses*, 22; Ronell on, 126n10; and suppression, 158; troubling the *beyond*, 164; on the *überlaut*, 141
- Fynsk, Christopher, 150
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg, 143
- Gasché, Rodolphe, 133
- Gauthiot, Robert, 239
- Gegenstand*, xiii, xiv, xxxi, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxviii, xxxix, xlvii, 17–21, 29n5, 186, 291, 314–15, 351n100
- Genette, Gérard, 238
- George, Stefan, 250, 253
- Gide, Andre, 86–87
- Goebel, Eckart, 170n16
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von: Benjamin on, 86, 326, 353n128; as complaint, 167; *Elective Affinities*, 23, 164, 326, 353n128; *Faust* and *Faust II*, 151, 255–56, 344n48; within German Studies, 145; Hamacher on, 227; within Hamacher’s 95 *Theses*, 256; and *nihil donans*, 264; on reading as self-gathering, 27; *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 23, 151, 157–66; *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, 166–68; on writing as confession, 156, 282
- Goodman, Steve, 73
- Gurd, Sean, 3, 8, 264–70, 272
- Habermas, Jürgen, 144
- Hamacher, Ursula, 133
- Hamacher, Werner, works by: “Affirmative, Strike,” 92n8, 247; “Anataxis. Komma. Balance.,” 112, 127n32, 227; “Apotropäische Figur,” 239, 324n26; “Bemerkungen zur Klage,” 348n74, 350n95; “Bogengebete,” 343n32; “Diese Praxis—Lesen—,” 351n107; “Époque poème,” 343n32, 348n80; *Für—die Philologie*, 4, 11n1, 11n5, 43, 51, 55, 56, 59n16, 60n32, 104, 247, 343n41; “Guilt History,” 92n8; “Hypertax (Ett försök),” 349n85; “Intensive Sprachen,” 349–50n90; “To Leave the Word to Someone Else” 20; “LECTIO,” 16–17; *Pleroma*, 6, 249, 342n26; “Position Exposed,” 186, 247, 331, 335, 347n72, 354n148; *Premises*, 61n37, 181, 186, 193n13, 247, 331, 341n4, 342n28, 343n38, 347n72, 348n81; “The Promise of Interpretation,” 6; “The Quaking of Presentation,” 6; “The Right Not to Use Right,” 284, 348n75; “The Right to Have Rights,” 284, 348n75; “The Second of Inversion,” 6, 45, 47–48, 107–13, 239, 342n28; “Das Theologisch-politische Fragment,” 351–52n16; “Unlesbarkeit” 29n5; “The Word Wolke—If It Is One,” 59n16
- Hamann, Johann Georg, 219, 227

- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich: on aoristic judgment, 306–10; on friendship, 164; within German Studies, 146; Hamacher as inheritor of, 135, 186, 227; Hamacher's reading of, 6, 249, 342n26; the inversion of negation of negation, 108; negation of the word, 60n32; as non-self-identical, 250; and philology, 340; philosophy of subjectivity, 47; in relation to Nancy's "being-with," 335–36; on self-generation and self-revelation, 235; on spirit, 47, 234; sublation, 266, 334; on "Sunday of Life," xxix, 3, 92; on waiting, 311–13, 317, 329; on the whole as the true, 24
- Heidegger, Martin: and Benjamin, 148–49; and Cervantes, 351n107; on downturn after pre-Socratics, 162; "Es gibt," 251–58, 276, 345n48; on greeting, 152; Hamacher on Derrida's departure from, 250; on Heraclitus, 190; influence on Hamacher, 22, 227, 250; influence on Nancy, 331, 335–36; influence on Bernhard, 24; "language speaks," 281; on Leibniz's Principle of Sufficient Reason, 188–89; Mitsein, 166; on "Nichts ist ohne Grund," 190, 193n20; on philology as friendship, 191; on reading as gathering, 26–28, 317–21, 351n107; Richter on, 227, 317; on Scheffler, 189–91; on *Schreiben/schrei*, 156; as student of Rickert, 18; on the unconcealment of being, 262; on waiting, 314–15, 321, 329, 339, 346n51
- Works: "Anaximander Fragment," 262, 344–45n48; *Being and Time*, 250, 319; "Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit," 314, 321, 346n51, 350n98; *The Essence of Language*, 251–53, 346n48; *Der Satz vom Grund*, 188–91, 193n20, 331–32; *Time and Being*, 250, 253, 345–46n48; "Was Heißt Denken?," 10, 26–27, 30n19, 141, 153; "Was Heißt Lesen?," 25–29, 134–35, 141, 145, 146, 317; *On the Way to Language*, 258, 260, 280, 298, 344–45n48; "Das Verhältnes," 346n49
- Heller-Roazen, Daniel, 7, 59n19, 60n34, 61n37, 303–6
- Heraclitus, 190, 227, 259, 264, 279
- Hobbes, Thomas, 203
- Hocquard, Emmanuel, 1
- Hofmann, E. T. A., 146
- Hölderlin, Friedrich: "Andenken," 152; on the comma, liv–lv, 113; "free rhythms," 1; on groundless ground, 331; influence on Celan, xxxii–xxxiii; influence on Hamacher, 7, 22, 227; "Is There a Measure on Earth?" xxxi; on lament and praise, 282; resistance to universal concepts, 235–36; *Stimmung* (attunement), 10
- Homer, 74, 203, 218, 265, 269
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley, 341n4
- Humboldt, Alexander von, 8
- Hume, David, 227
- Husserl, Edmund, 37n8, 146, 162, 227, 249, 251, 261, 287, 312
- Jakobson, Roman, xxxiv–xxxv, 22, 68–69, 189, 239–41, 264–68, 272
- Jankélévitch, Vladimir, 256, 264, 276, 344–45n48
- Johnson, Barbara, 143
- Joyce, James, xxx–xxxii, 32, 34, 220, 316, 340
- Judaism, 16, 39, 154, 170n16, 282. *See also* Scholem, Gershom: "95 Theses on Judaism"

- Kafka, Franz, lvi, 22, 133, 146, 164, 167
- Kant, Immanuel: Aristotle's influence on, 172, 176–77, 180n8; Bernard on, 23; categorical imperative, 171; “Copernican turn,” 108; *Critique of Practical Reason*, 171; *Critique of Pure Reason*, 171, 177, 180n8, 349–50n90; Derrida on, 142; *Doctrine of Right*, 177, 180n7; on ethical reason, 236; on individual as determined, 235–36; influence on Benjamin, 352–53n128; influence on Hamacher, 6, 7, 16, 173, 176–77; influence on Heidegger, 251; influence on Rieckert, 18; Kantian enthusiasm, 139; philosophy of subjectivity 47, 302; table of “Nothing,” 306, 349–50n90; transcendental forms, 328
- Kierkegaard, Søren, 158, 312, 319
- Kittler, Friedrich, 11n5, 142–45, 150–51, 169n5, 169n6, 170n14
- Klage*, 149, 153–54, 157–58, 165, 167, 170n15, 285, 348n74, 350n95
- Kleist, Heinrich von, 6, 16
- Kofman, Sarah, 146
- Kraus, Karl, 156
- Krell, David Farrell, 26, 345n38
- La Bruyère, Jean de, 186, 188
- Lacan, Jacques, 26, 30n18, 115, 119, 121, 228, 238, 240, 264, 347n63
- Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe, 143, 146, 150
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 189, 240, 331
- Lenin, Vladimir, 9
- Levinas, Emmanuel, 146, 164, 251
- Levine, Michael, 169n5
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 238, 240, 241, 343n30
- Lichtenberg, Georg Christoph, 218
- Linder, Isaac, 128n36
- Lipsius, Justus, 98, 103n3
- Livingstone, Rodney, 83
- logos apophantikos*. See under Aristotle
- Lucier, Alvin, 63–65, 66, 68–69, 269
- Lucilius, 95–102
- Luhmann, Niklas, 144
- Luther, Martin, I, 16, 32, 34, 39, 107, 126n5, 177–78, 301, 339
- Lytotard, Jean-François, 107, 146, 165
- Maimonides, xxvii, xxviii
- Mallarmé, Stéphane, 7, 112, 118, 122, 187, 227, 331
- Mandelstamm, Ossip, 339
- Manet, Édouard, 132
- Mann, Thomas, 21, 226–27
- Marx, Karl, lvi, 16, 144, 170n19
- Massumi, Brian, 73
- Miller, Jacques-Alain, 240
- Montaigne, Michel de, 32, 36n2, 135, 286, 287
- Nägele, Rainer, 133, 169n5
- Nancy, Jean-Luc, 6, 7, 143, 150; on Christian praise, 153; on Mallarmé, 187–88; on philology as being with others, 191, 331–36; on philology as sense, 182, 184; role in revitalizing German Studies, 146
- Nietzsche, Friedrich: on the abyss 28, 318; *Dis-tanz*, 132; on friendship, 134–35, 137, 140; within German Studies, 143, 146, 150, 164; Hamacher on Kant and Nietzsche, 6; influence on Hamacher, 16, 18; on “noble traitor,” 161–62; on philology, 5, 98, 103n4, 340; on philology as *ephexis*, 286–87, 348n78; on philology as future, 290; on philology as slow reading (*lento*), xxxviii, 21, 24, 91n6, 131; on Plato, xxiii; role in Hamacher's 95 *Theses*, 7, 21–22; on translation and tempo

- 30n11; on waiting, 312, 319; and writing as complaint, 141, 153, 161
- nihil donans*, xxxv, 256, 264, 299, 336
- nihil negativum*, xxxv, 256, 299, 333–34, 336, 349n90
- Novalis, xxi–xxii, 22, 24
- Pascal, xxxvii, 20–21, 22, 24, 30n9, 61n44, 340
- Pepper, Thomas, 143
- Petrilli, R., 207
- Plato: the cardinal problem of Platonic thought, 172–73, 175; *chōra*, 298; envisioning a twenty-first-century symposium, 9; holding a place for the indefinite, 306; human logic as “*metoichē*,” 180n3; Neoplatonist Proclus, 305; Nietzsche on, xxiii; on *philia*, xxvi, l–li; philology as *epēkeina tes ousias*, xiii, 172–73, 303; philology in the *Phaedrus*, 178, 223–25; the Platonic idea, 300; on wonder, 338
- Plotinus, 256, 263, 264, 276, 293, 306, 344–45
- Plug, Jan, 1, 238, 249–50
- Ponge, Francis, xxx–xxxii, 7, 8, 34–36, 228–31, 305, 353n131
- prima philologia*, poetry as, xvii, 8, 34, 105, 107, 110, 227–28
- Proclus, 264, 305, 306
- prosopopoeia, xxxiv, 47, 100, 238, 242–43
- Protagoras, xxxi–xxxii
- Proust, Marcel, 327–28
- Pseudo-Magenticus, 205
- Pyrrho, 286, 348n79
- Queneau, Raymond, xxix, 3, 7, 92n8
- Richter, Gerhard, 136, 142, 226–27, 317–19, 347n68, 351n100, 351n106, 351nn108–9, 353n132
- Rickels, Laurence (Larry), 136, 139, 143, 357
- Rickert, Heinrich, 18
- Riegl, Alois, xxvi–xxvii, 330
- Rilke, Rainer Maria, 99, 100, 282, 319
- Ronell, Avital, 6–7, 126n10, 227, 230, 231, 280, 281–85
- Rosenzweig, Franz, 350n95
- Russell, Bertrand, 241
- Sappho, 7, 8, 65–73, 265–69, 272
- Saussure, Ferdinand de, 58n13, 115, 119, 121, 228
- Schäfer, Martin, 142, 170n19
- Scheffler, Johannes, 188–90, 193n20
- Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph, 312
- Schestag, Thomas, 7–8, 193n20, 322–24, 352n119, 352n122, 352n124
- Schiller, Friedrich, 145, 285
- Schlegel, August, 341n4
- Schlegel, Friedrich: on singularity of philological knowledge, 235; on friendship, 149, 164; within German Studies, 146; Hamacher on, 7, 16, 188; on philology as “logical affect,” 78n13, 184–85, 188; on philosophy and philology, xix–xx, 5, 181, 325; role of the fragment in German Romanticism, 24; “Über die Unverständlichkeit,” 18
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich, 5, 235
- Schmitt, Carl, 146
- Scholem, Gershom, 92n8, 146–49, 324; “95 Theses on Judaism,” xlvi, 16, 39, 127n15, 350n95
- Schopenhauer, Arthur, 23
- Schürmann, Rainer, 149
- Segal, Charles, 70–71, 265–66
- Seneca, 95–103, 322–24, 329
- Shakespeare, xxxix–xl, 1–2, 7, 133, 140–41, 150, 160

- Silesius, Angelus, 331, 334
 Simplicius, 302
 Smock, Ann, 136, 143, 154, 226, 314-15
 Solanas, Valerie, 162
 Stein, Gertrude, 112, 114, 192, 227
 Stephanus of Alexandria, 205
 Sterne, Laurence, 21, 226-27
 Stevens, Wallace, 217
 Strowick, Elizabeth, 143
 Szondi, Peter: influence on
 Hamacher, 5-6, 144-45, 226, 227, 228; influence on Samuel Weber, 169n7; postwar relationship to German language, 149; "On Textual Understanding," 234-37
- Taubes, Jacob, 143
 Theophrastus of Eresus, 205-6, 208-9
 Trotsky, Leon, 83-84, 86, 89
- Ungaretti, Giuseppe, xxvii, 22
- Valéry, Paul, 235, 260, 353n131
 van Gerven Oei, Vincent, 8, 227-28, 237-38
 Virgil, 95-96, 98-102, 322-24, 329
 Visman, Cornelia, 142
 von Arnim, Bettina, 138-39, 150
- waiting, Aristotle on, 120; Benjamin on, 319-21, 326-29, 339; Blanchot on, 88-90, 260-63, 314-17, 346n51; as complaint, 156-57; Hamacher on, xli, 1, 131, 260-63, 310-17, 319-21, 326-30, 338-39, 353n131; Hegel on, 310-13, 317, 329; Heidegger on, 314-15, 321, 329, 339, 346n51; Seneca on, 95-103
- Walser, Robert, 60-61n35
 Weber, Elizabeth, 142-43
 Weber, Max, 172n19
 Weber, Samuel, 143, 150, 169n7
 Weidemann, Hinrich, 347n66
 Wellbery, David, 133, 169n5
 Wheatley, Phillis, 157
 with-without-with, 250, 270, 272, 334, 336, 339
 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 93n22
 Wordsworth, William, 243
- zero point/zero sign, xxxiv-xxxv, 33, 69, 104-5, 230, 239-42, 244, 246-47, 255-56, 268, 272, 287-88, 342n28, 343n29
zōōn lōgon échōn, xix, 174-75, 292-99
- Index created by Karen Embry

In the Stages Series

*The Rushdie Letters: Freedom to Speak,
Freedom to Write*

Edited by Steve MacDonogh in
association with Article 19

Mimologics

By Gérard Genette

Edited and translated by Thaïs Morgan

*Playtexts: Ludics in
Contemporary Literature*

By Warren Motte

*New Novel, New Wave, New Politics:
Fiction and the Representation of*

History in Postwar France

By Lynn A. Higgins

Art for Art's Sake and Literary Life:

*How Politics and Markets Helped
Shape the Ideology and Culture*

of Aestheticism, 1790–1990

By Gene H. Bell-Villada

*Semiotic Investigations: Towards
an Effective Semiotics*

By Alec McHoul

Rue Ordener, Rue Labat

By Sarah Kofman

Translated by Ann Smock

*Palimpsests: Literature in
the Second Degree*

By Gérard Genette

Translated by Channa Newman
and Claude Doubinsky

The Mirror of Ideas

By Michel Tournier

Translated by Jonathan F. Krell

*Fascism's Return: Scandal, Revision,
and Ideology since 1980*

Edited by Richard J. Golsan

*Jacob, Menahem, and
Mimoun: A Family Epic*

By Marcel Bénabou

Translated by Steven Rendall

Naming and Unnaming:

On Raymond Queneau

By Jordan Stump

*Small Worlds: Minimalism in
Contemporary French Literature*

By Warren Motte

Loiterature

By Ross Chambers

The Derrida Reader: Writing Performances

Edited by Julian Wolfreys

Rhetorical Narratology

By Michael Kearns

Speaking of Crime: Narratives of Prisoners

By Patricia E. O'Connor

Dump This Book While You Still Can!

By Marcel Bénabou

Translated by Steven Rendall

*Listening In: Music, Mind, and
the Modernist Narrative*

By Eric Prieto

Essays in Aesthetics

By Gérard Genette

Translated by Dorrit Cohn

Fuzzy Fiction

By Jean-Louis Hippolyte

In Praise of Flattery

By Willis Goth Regier

*Jail Sentences: Representing Prison in
Twentieth-Century French Fiction*

By Andrew Sobanet

Why Fiction?

By Jean-Marie Schaeffer

Translated by Dorrit Cohn

Quotology

By Willis Goth Regier

The Other Book: Bewilderments of Fiction

By Jordan Stump

Pictures into Words: Images in

Contemporary French Fiction

By Ari J. Blatt

Give the Word: Responses to Werner

Hamacher's 95 Theses on Philology

Edited by Gerhard Richter

and Ann Smock

To order or obtain more information on these or other University
of Nebraska Press titles, visit nebraskapress.unl.edu.