

[Un]disciplined Gestures and [Un]common sense:
The Sensual, Acoustic Logic[s] of Paradox and Art

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Declaration

“I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree other than that of Doctorate of Philosophy being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised another’s work”

Signed: _____

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Abstract

This dissertation takes as its point of departure, the claim that difference, not identity, is the primary quality of language. This difference is initially argued to be an ‘uncommon sense’; one which does not emerge from a ground, origin, or operate within a dialectic of essence/appearance, but which consists of an economy of acoustic surfaces/timings/spatialities: diffuse, interpenetrative, and unclassifiable: a ‘sensual’ logic, not a logic based on identity, or metaphysics. Traditional philosophies of language tend to flatten out and simplify the space/time /material relations of language, in favour of a stable, timeless, fixed identity, which makes logical thought possible, through fixed, linear, disciplinary forms. They claim that language is able to unambiguously locate concepts, concretely, in time and space, unproblematically supporting thought. In contrast, it is the original contribution of the thesis to extend and complicate categories of logic, to include doubt, paradox, infinity and ‘unstable’ forms of understanding, as evidence of difference as the primary quality of language: a “mimetologic” as Lacoue-Labarthe has termed it, or what Adorno calls an anti-system, or Negative Dialectic. The ‘difference’ which paradox, in its ability to be this/not this, embodies, shows us the limits of representational thinking; as it strains against that limit, while simultaneously (and paradoxically), retrieving the intensity of thought.

Part I draws on the key historical debates within philosophy, as they concern language, logic, and an account of sense. Part II shows that in the search for what Wittgenstein has called “the subliming of our account of logic”, wherein signs equal facts in a relatively simple, way, aporias are inevitable, becoming viral in any system, such logical paradoxes and antinomies undermining any stable, determinable, ground for language. In Part III an ‘acoustic’ logic is posed as an alternative to logics based on visual paradigms, which cannot capture the dynamics of paradox and art, or account for their non-identical ‘surfaces’. Part IV points towards art, literature, and performance in which the mimetological surfaces of language form [Un]disciplined gestures, constituting a praxis of [Un]common sense, whose logic is acoustic. Finally, communication *itself* is seen to be comprised of acoustic, paradoxical, mimetological surface(s), and an acoustic logic is offered as an a-representational, sensual form of understanding.

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“All research is crisis. What is sought is nothing other than the turn of seeking, of research, that occasions this crisis: the critical turn”

—Maurice Blanchot. *The Infinite Conversation*, ‘Plural Speech’, p.32

Introduction

“The presentation of philosophy is not an external matter of indifference to it, but immanent to its idea. Its integral, nonconceptually mimetic moment of expression is objectified only by presentation in language.”¹

— Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*

“What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.”²

— Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

¹ T. W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Trans. E. B. Ashton, (Routledge, 1990). p. 18.

² L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, (Routledge, 2001). p. 89.

This thesis proposes that all language is paradoxical, but suggests that this paradoxical quality is to be understood not as aporia, but as consisting of a series of proliferating surfaces, whose mimetic expressivity exceeds representation, coalescing in a sensual, acoustic form of logic.

Its driving premise and affiliation is in the first instance with those philosophers for whom *all* philosophical writing is a form of immanent reflection. At the same time as it reflects upon contents exterior (objects of thought), philosophy offers insight into conceptual language as a whole, since it either consciously—reflexively—considers language *as* a content, or comments upon language accidentally, by virtue of its reliance upon that medium of expression.

For thinkers such as Adorno, Benjamin, Wittgenstein, and Michel Serres, this issue takes on an especially heightened and nuanced form, wherein philosophical writing is a form of self-reflection that transforms *us*, as it transforms our relationship to the world through our use of language.³

Wittgenstein has gone as far as to say: “The sole remaining task for philosophy is the analysis of language.”⁴ Each, in their own way, suggests that language should explicitly reveal that which was/is hidden from view; the

³ For Adorno, “The unsayable is the very essence of philosophy, and at the same time, impossible”—R. Foster, *Adorno: The Recovery of Experience*. (State University of New York Press, 2007). p. 33. Cf., Benjamin, on the concept of ‘constellation’, in *Illuminations*, Wittgenstein in his extended meditations on language in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Philosophical Investigations*, *On Certainty*, and *The Brown and Blue books*, Michel Serres, in *The Parasite, and others*. The first paradox which this thesis encounters, is the paradox of its own ambition. To talk about languages’ paradoxical qualities, from within language, means that form and content are mutually implicated from the outset. There is no ‘view from nowhere’ from outside language, which can escape being exposed to the contradiction, which seems appropriate to the argument being proposed: that an alternative, or supplementary type of logic is required in order to ‘hear’ language differently.

⁴ As quoted in S. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, (Bantam, 1988), p. 175. Although frequently attributed to Wittgenstein, the original remark by Hawking reads: Philosophers reduced the scope of their inquiries so much that Wittgenstein, the most famous philosopher of this century, said, “The sole remaining task for philosophy is the analysis of language.”

unsayable, silent ‘behind’ of language,⁵ while Walter Benjamin, in *On The Origins Of German Tragic Drama*, emphatically asserts that philosophical writing should: “Continually confront questions... of representation.”⁶ This thesis therefore shares the view that philosophical language which is not aware of its own condition, *as language* (writing/speech, other), is at best naïve; at worst, negligent, and that assessing the possibility of an immanent critique is the urgent condition of any form of philosophical understanding, since (as Hegel, Adorno, Wittgenstein and others have argued), language shapes thought itself. Adorno, in particular, brings this point sharply into focus, reminding us that the materiality of language is itself a philosophical content:

“Philosophical proof is the effort to give statements a binding quality by making them commensurable with the means of discursive thinking. But it does not purely follow from that thinking: the critical reflection of such cogitative productivity is itself a philosophical content.”⁷

Dewey puts it slightly differently: “All language, whatever its medium, involves *what* is said, and *how* it is said, or substance and form.”⁸ Adorno’s claim is that philosophy’s role is to provide an immanent correction to philosophical pinpointing via the ‘is’, since in science, words are merely signs,

⁵ J. Kemp, *Writing the Behind*, 2003. Cf., Kemp on the concept of the ‘behind’ of language, which is described as being that ‘discursive blind spot’ which marks language as ineradicably ‘other’. This ‘behind’ is to be seen in all forms of language, as the unsayable, the non-identical, and, as this thesis will argue, the paradoxical, which cannot be readily erased.

⁶ Cf, Charles Bernstein, for whom poetry is one such form of epistemological reflection and enquiry, since it resists the call of language as transcendence, and fully engages languages’ visual-acoustic materiality.

⁷ T. W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Trans. E. B. Ashton, (Routledge, London, 1990). p. 64

⁸ John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, (Minton, Balch & Company, 1934), ‘Substance and Form’. p.106. Dewey points out that the various languages of the arts, which are spoken in one idiom, cannot readily be translated into another. He also questions the relationship between matter and form, in terms of which precedes which: “Does matter come first ready made, and [the] search for a discovery of form in which to embody it come after?” This raises the question of whether the cognitive content of language is made and shaped by its formal attributes, or vice versa. While this question is outside the scope of what the thesis aims to discuss, it is an important aspect of the various tensions and dynamics which typify the artworks in Part V.

and form a disciplinary language.⁹ Philosophy relies on (written and spoken) texts, despite its denial, and its seeking of a methodological ‘purity’, and in doing so, it denies its linguistic nature. Adorno points out that at some point in the history of philosophy, rhetoric became associated with the ‘lie’: relegated to a question of mere effects. In its detachment from *things*, philosophy and rhetoric were seen to be a part of this detachment, co-partners in a certain disenchantment. However, for Adorno, rhetoric *saved* expression for thought. “In thought, rhetoric represents that which cannot be thought, except in language.”¹⁰ Philosophy has been traditionally allergic to expression, and all of enlightenment thinking has a propensity to ‘punish undisciplined gestures.’¹¹

Language (viewed as neutral signs), has—throughout much of the philosophical tradition discussed in Part I— been conceived as a set of principles for use in scientific and philosophical investigations.¹² Adorno sees this as a destructive move, in which science and philosophy abolished language, and therefore philosophy, in a series of ‘disciplined’ gestures which emerged out of the necessities of the Enlightenment, later becoming totalizing systems in, for example, Kant and Hegel. Philosophy reflected upon things, from a distance, rather than splashing around in what might be described as the

⁹ T. W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (Verso Classics, London, 2008), pp. 17-18. Cf, Heidegger, who ontologizes immanence. Ontology for Heidegger concerns the *Being* of beings, which is solely the province of ‘Dasein’. For him, Science, remains ontic (physical or real) in its manner of dealing with beings: it does not raise the ontological question. See *Being and Time*, (Harper One, 1962). The question of what constitutes a ‘disciplinary language’ will be revisited in Part II.

¹⁰ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 56.

¹¹ Supra Part I, where a number of ‘disciplined gestures’, as part of the move to purify language in support of instrumental reason, by Wilkins, Leibniz and others, will be outlined.

¹² Supra part I.

linguistic cascade,¹³ and recognizing the mimetic, immanent qualities of language.¹⁴ In Part II, these disciplined gestures will be evaluated in relation to art and paradox, in order to establish their difference from the kind of [un]disciplined gestures which the thesis wants to discuss in Part IV. These include the mimetic attributes of paradox and art.

For Adorno, dialectics is language as the organon of thought, and it will be necessary to revisit the importance of dialectics as a contouring process, throughout this thesis.¹⁵ In a fundamental way, dialectics takes us back to language and its relationship to thought, and this is why phenomenology, especially Heidegger and Sartr , tried to remake that link.¹⁶

¹³ Supra Part II '[Un]disciplined Gestures', in which the linguistic cascade of James Joyce's work will be further examined in the light of the argument the thesis makes for an acoustic logic, which can account for artworks such as Joyce's, which are 'nonsensical'.

¹⁴ Adorno, throughout *Aesthetic Theory*, is concerned to point out that the purpose of art's expressivity is precisely *not* to express something, emphasizing mimesis as expression, not as a copy, or as Aristotle and Plato understood it, as the (necessarily imperfect) imitation of nature. While this might seem contradictory, the point has been well made by Amresh Sinha states: "The understanding of mimesis, for Adorno, lies in the fact that as a self-identical entity, the artwork is not produced in relation to the identity of a world or a method, but it is self-identical to its mimetic moment, that is, it is identical to itself and not to the other.", and "Art, as a linguistic expression of form, as in [James] Joyce's prose, sets aside the discursive model of language; it constitutes its own essence. On the other hand, art as a medium of language is no longer an expression of itself, but loses its character and is subordinated to meaning which poses a threat to its identity. And here we are at the crux of the problem. If the meaning of language is expressed through communicative language then it inflicts danger to itself." Amresh Sinha, *Adorno on Mimesis in Aesthetic Theory*, In Briel, Holger and Andreas Kramer, eds., *In Practice: Adorno, Critical Theory and Cultural Studies*. Bern: Lang, 2000, pp. 145-159. These ideas of mimesis/expression, and the danger(s) of breaking with the various logical protocols of rational thought (to be known as [Un]disciplined Gestures), are examined further in Part III of the thesis.

¹⁵ Adorno further explains that "Dialectics — literally: language as the *organon* of thought — would attempt a critical rescue of the rhetorical element, a mutual approximation of thing and expression, to the point where the difference fades. Dialectics appropriates for the power of thought what historically seemed a flaw in its thinking: its link with language, which nothing can wholly break." Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 56.

¹⁶ In Heidegger, the concept activates meaning: it comes to us through language (as its vehicle and medium). For Heidegger, language is the home of meaning. See *Poetry, Language, Thought*, (Harper Perennial, 2001), *On the Way to Language*, (Harper One, 2001), and *Being and Time* (Harper Perennial, 2008). While the thesis will not engage with Sartr 's work, Heidegger's rethinking of principle of identity in *Identity and Difference* will be reviewed in Part II: *The Liar, Paradox, and Other Truths*, as a way to re-evaluate the assumptions which underlie the foundations of identity thinking.

Adorno argues that dialectics privileges the relation between language and thought: consciously centring thought (and content) upon it.¹⁷ Dialectics¹⁸ instates rhetoric as a means of reintegrating subject and object, and thus establishes a *positive* role for language; one in which it participates in the very ‘movement’ of thought. And yet, for Adorno, there is a problem:

“[T]he appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself, in its pure form. To think is to identify. Conceptual order is content to screen what thinking seeks to comprehend.”¹⁹

Abstract conceptualization, paradoxically reaches toward, but cannot account for—nor can it contain—the object of that thought: there is always a ‘something’, beyond the abstraction implicit in conceptual thinking, which metaphysical schemas such as dialectics, by virtue of their very nature, cannot attain: “it indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived.”²⁰ If “conceptual totality is mere appearance,”²¹ then the only realistic challenge to it is to shatter that illusion on its own terms. However, this would involve a challenge to logic, which will not admit of anything which stands outside its terms: all non-conforming aspects are subsumed under the principle of contradiction, and dealt with as aggressive and unwelcome antimonies: unthinkable, and unusable.²² The answer to this

¹⁷ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 56.

¹⁸ Dialectics can be described as an epistemological tool which simultaneously expresses the system and is the means by which the system is understood. In Hegelian dialectical reasoning, the contradiction of thesis/antithesis is reconciled and ‘unified’ in the synthesis (resulting in a totality) which cannot be added to or subtracted from. Negation for Hegel is the name of the unity/totality which comes to equal ‘truth’, and is the driving force of dialectics, taking its very essence from the negative ‘movement’ by which it is enabled. Adorno, in his *Negative Dialectics*, will later challenge these ideas, questioning dialectics as a means of achieving something positive from negation, including repositioning negation as ‘something that can’t be said’: a negative dialectic, or a-system, which retains the non-identical in thought.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

²¹ Ibid., p. 5.

²² Cf. *Excluded Middle*, law of. The oldest example of the principle of contradiction is attributable to Plato, who said: “It’s plain that the same thing won’t be willing at the same time to do or suffer opposites with respect to the same part and in relation to the same

will be to establish a different form of logic, one which does not suffer from those restraints. Identity thinking is the prior condition of such thought, since to possess a concept of the contradictory means to set that thought in opposition to the unity of identity. There is no negation without a positive term of reference, leading Adorno to conclude that: "Contradiction is non-identity under the aspect of identity."²³

How do we differentiate? By having something against which to compare, to identify in relation to. That which is not, is contrasted to that which *is*. However, this is still identity thinking, and raises the following concerns: if language is not posed as fixed identity, but as something truly differentiated, as a pure multiplicity, then how does/can language support thought? What sort of thinking becomes possible if language is acknowledged as an 'undisciplined gesture', which stands outside the terms of reference known as identity thinking? In order to find out, it will first be necessary to explain in more detail how the notion of 'undisciplined gestures' plays out against the background of instrumental reason, and languages' functionality, or

thing" (*The Republic*, 436B). Aristotle's version (see chapter 4, Book IV of *The Metaphysics*) states that: "There is nothing between asserting and denying". i.e. "If neither 'yes' nor 'no' truly answers the question "Is it the case that *P*?", nothing does". This can slide into 'Either *P*' or 'not- *P*' is true', and further into 'Every proposition is true or false' (more properly called the law of bivalence). In modern logic the law usually called excluded middle is "*P* or not- *P*" is valid'. i.e. true on all interpretations of '*P*'. (Oxford Companion to Philosophy, Ed. by Ted Honderich, [Oxford University Press, 1995]), p. 257. Paradoxes, which break with the law of contradiction, can to some degree be dealt with via logics which do not rely on the dialectics of yes/no, *p*, $\sim p$, such as the paralogical, or dialetheism. Paralogicism is a form of reasoning which is false by virtue of its form, that is, in which the conclusion does not follow from the premises [1913 Webster]. Dialetheism is the view there are true contradictions, such that truth can have 'two heads'. In Dialetheic forms of reasoning, *A* can be both *A* and $\sim A$ at the same time. Supra Part III, which will look more closely at alternative logics.

²³ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5.

instrumentality, which initially requires a fracturing of the interwoven nature of identity/thought: “Identity and thought are welded together.”²⁴

In Part III, *Aesthetic Economies*, what might be called the ‘sinful’, or undisciplined body of language, will be examined in its propensity to express, rather than describe, since this expression is non-object-oriented, and untameable. This will be understood to constitute an abyssal logic, and a ‘cruelty’ within language and thought, after Artaud’s *Theatre of Cruelty*:

“Artaud’s lesson is of the cruelty and tyranny of unpredictable, unfathomable forces that transcend the reasoned limits of reality as humanity understands them. The methods used to deliver this brutal lesson are based on a theory of generating a series of shocks, effected by the collision of images, sounds, and savage acts conveyed in a primarily non-verbal, synaesthetic language as Sergei Eisenstein discovered in the film, and which Artaud hoped to establish in the theater.”²⁵

Bataille sets the terms of engagement in the following way: “What is at stake is the very possibility of a nondialectical materialism: matter is heterogeneous; it is what cannot be tamed by any concept.”²⁶ suggesting that materiality, or what Adorno will term the “intramundane”²⁷ will prevail over any kinds of classifications which would close it down in thought. For Bataille, this same point is made in relation to matter, which he sees as the ‘outlaw’ in thought, or the “non-logical difference that represents in relation to the economy of the universe what crime represents in relation to the law”²⁸—note that Bataille

²⁴ Ibid. p. 6 Supra Part II, where some of the breaking points in this assumption will be highlighted, especially as they concern paradox, and the limits of the system, which it destabilizes and at the same time throws into relief.

²⁵ W. H. Rockett, *Devouring Whirlwind*, (Greenwood Press, 1988), p57f.

²⁶ Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide*, (MIT Press, 2000), p. 71.

²⁷ Adorno shows how ‘ordinary, intramundane objects’ have the utmost relevance: “Represented in the inmost cell of thought is that which is unlike thought. The smallest intramundane traits would be of relevance to the absolute, for the micrological view cracks the shells of what, measured by the subsuming cover concept, is helplessly isolated and explodes its identity[.]” Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 408.

²⁸ Yve, Alain Bois in *Formless*, p.71, referring to a comment by Bataille in “The Notion of Expenditure” from *Visions of Excess*. Bataille, (University of Minnesota, 1985), p. 129.

describes this difference as “non-logical”, establishing the failure of philosophical idealism through transcendence—wherein the material event “disrupts objectivity, representation, and nomological knowledge”,²⁹ while Adorno will problematize that relation in the following way:

“The name of dialectics says no more to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder.”³⁰

The Materiality of Translation

To propose, as Derrida, Benjamin and numerous other have done, that communication happens *in* language and not *through* it, posits language as opaque, mediate (as in actively occupying, and retaining, a middle position), instead of transparent, im-mediate; implying that there is a form of materiality in the very act of translation, and of communication, one which possesses an objectivity.³¹

The thesis suggests that this act of translation involves various surface[s] of language, which in turn enact a sensual, acoustic logic; one in which language (and meaning) is im/material, groundless, fractal in nature.³²

²⁹ Ronald Scleifer, *Modernism and Time*, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 88.

³⁰ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5.

³¹ Theodor Adorno’s form of objectivity recognizes that objects rely upon subjects for their meaning, and vice versa. Subjective/objective do not operate in clearly differentiated realms, with strict edges; we are both subjects and objects, and language shows us this. The very act of naming closes the space between the two. To ask “who am I?” requires that we treat the subject (ourselves) as an object, (of study), resulting in a paradox, where knowledge and meaning, subjectivity and objectivity, are contingent, ambiguous, and immanent. Cf., *Negative Dialectics*.

³² Supra Part III, where Deleuze’s work on Plane of Immanence, and/or the Plane of Consistency will be explored further, in relation to the thesis’s aims in outlining a different type of groundless logic. This work acknowledges the turn away from a metaphysics of language, and towards language as a form of ‘active creation’, or excess, inviting a natural comparison with what has been called the ‘use [of] a creation of thought – logic and grammar – to imprison thought’ (C. Colebrook, in *Gilles Deleuze* (Routledge Critical Thinkers, Routledge, London, 2002), p. 20). ‘Active creation’ names the *movement* of language, rather than its role in a simple binaric relation of sign/signifier. Another name that I will use for this movement is ‘surface’. For example for Deleuze, *style* is a surface (or a series of surfaces) to language, and a form of active creation. Style both replaces languages’ representational function, by exceeding the requirements of simple communication (an excess), and makes language ‘strange’ to itself. “When a language is so strained that it starts to stutter, or to murmur or stammer... then language in its entirety reaches the limit that marks its outside and

These linguistic fragments (where fragments refer to their fractal quality: their self-reflexivity) do not refer to any whole, or a pre-existing conceptual order, but operate as immanent affects, refusing a common or visual (representational) sense; functioning acoustically, where acoustic names the non-figurative, mimetic, performative, material, and multiple aspects of language/thought. These will be referred to in chapter three as ‘Acoustic’ economies of understanding, or of sense. As such, these acoustic fragments constitute an [Un]common Sense, and can be glimpsed in the selection of [Un]disciplined Gestures which constitute Part IV, wherein the non-identical in language is mimetically produced, in place of a “logic of identification.”³³ Adorno terms this: “The non-conceptual affinity of a subjective creation with its objective and unposited other”, which in turn closes the illusion of a clear subjective/objective split, via the expressive event of mimesis.³⁴

Paradoxical Surfaces

“The logical unassailability of the Cretan... must prove to be mere appearance, or logic as such would collapse.”³⁵

Throughout the thesis, it will be shown that paradox, far from involving mere surface effects, points to a particular kind of depth in language, where depth is not to be understood as comprising/emerging from a ground or essence, but as consisting of fleeting configurations of mobile, multiple, non-dialectical,

makes it confront silence”. (G. Deleuze, *Critique et Clinique*, as cited in *Deleuze and Language*, Jean-Jacques Lecercle, (Palgrave, 2002), p. 40. Supra Part III.

³³ These Gestures, in turn, challenge the protocols of conventional logics. A. E. Benjamin, *The Problems of Modernity, Adorno and Benjamin*, (Routledge, London, 1989) p. 31.

³⁴ T. W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 80.

³⁵ W. Benjamin: *Selected Writings*, Volume 1, 1913-1926, ‘The Paradox of the Cretan’ (Cambridge MA: Belknap/Harvard, 1996-2003). The ‘Cretan’, or ‘The Liar Paradox’ are different names for the type of self-referential statements such as “this sentence is a lie”, which thwart attempts at stable assignment of truth/validity, being simultaneously both true and false.

fragile/fractal assemblages, which view language as an instrument, not instrumental, and wherein a temporary, frameless, im/mediate acoustic alignment creates meaning, not identity.³⁶ These in turn constitute a series of surfaces to language, or a ‘negative dialectic’³⁷ in which an immanent critique of subjectivity/objectivity results in language being proposed as non-representational, mimetic. In Part II it will be suggested that paradox is an immanent, viral mode of translation, whose fractal nature proposes a form of sensual logic, which resists erasure and/or closure, and in which the paradoxical plays a central, not marginal role in the installation of meaning. The viral nature of a paradox is highly resistant: “Paradox is not eliminated by logic. It, and its effects, are rendered invisible, although they still exist.”³⁸

Various forms of paradox in art, language, and mathematics, are therefore to be employed in this work as a methodological ‘conceit’, to discuss how the material/im/material are mediated via translation, and are themselves a form of translation.³⁹ Unlike an allegory, which is a stable metaphor, employed over time, a ‘conceit’ possesses a complex metaphorical logic, one which is constellation-like, and extended, taking on different forms, and resisting the assignment of a single meaning.⁴⁰ This mode of proceeding is sympathetic to

³⁶ Acoustic here refers to a form of non-harmonic alignment/thought, counterposing rhythm to harmony. Rhythm, while repeatable—as in Deleuze’s concept of ‘refrain’—retains difference and potential, while organizing a temporary meaning out of chaos, where harmony suggests closure or resolution. Supra Part III: ‘Acoustic Economies’.

³⁷ Cf. *Negative Dialectics*, which proposes an immanent critique, and absolute negation, without invoking Hegel’s determinate negation, and the totalizing move of his dialectic.

³⁸ W. Rasch, *In Search of the Lyotard Archipelago, or: How to Live with Paradox and Learn to Like it in Postmodern Literary Theory: an Anthology*, ed. By Niall Lucy, (Wiley Blackwell, 2000), p.364.

³⁹ For Adorno, art itself is a paradox, in that it is both true and false at the same time. The artworks’ illusory nature is, at the same time as being its falsity, its truth. The mediation of art involves both an adherence to, and a transcendence, of this limit, and its content is not what it refers to outside itself, but this very act of mediation. Cf. T. W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, esp. ‘*Semblance and Expression*’, p. 133. W. Benjamin, ‘*The Task of The Translator*’, in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (Schocken, 1969). p. 69.

⁴⁰ Supra Part III, where Benjamin and Adorno’s use of ‘constellation’, as a way to open out an expanded will be more fully amplified. “Constellations, alone, represent from without what

the aims of the thesis, since it wants to claim that paradox similarly resists identification with any single concept, being simultaneously fractal (self-referring/not part of a whole), viral (invasive and destabilizing to systems grounded in identity),⁴¹ singular, not universal, immanent, fleeting, constellatory, delirious, a-temporal, dubious, playful, and cruel.⁴² In other words, a paradox is being posed as the incommensurate, constitutive ‘now’ of the non-identical and fragmentary, momentarily glimpsed through a fleeting temporal assemblage, which refuses to be subsumed by any regime of identification grounded in the principle of identity: $A = A$. A paradox establishes its own type of logic, one which mimetically engages the surface[s] of logic, language, and aesthetic experience, and which Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe has called a ‘mimetologic’.⁴³ Other kinds of understanding become possible as a result of this sensual, mimetic logic, whose closest affiliate is aesthetic experience, and the paradox(es) of art, and wherein an ineradicable difference is seen to be at the core of any claims to identity.

But as will be seen, this claim will first need to be posed in relationship to an understanding of the Enlightenment fear of myth, which is embedded in its attitude to unclear, indistinct language, and whose attempted excision can be seen in the various attempts to create an error-free language, one closer to a

the concept has excised within, the ‘more’ which the concept strives to be, and fails to be in equal measure”. (T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.164). Constellations pay attention to objects, without subsuming them, and allow for the non-identical to emerge: as the direct result of their incommensurability, the non-conceptual is able to be expressed.

⁴¹ As Adorno reminds us, identity thinking cannot deploy concepts to fully capture their objects of reference, since “Abstract classifications do not, however, inhere in objects, but rather are artefacts of intellectual organization”. Review published in: *Making Adorno’s Ethics and Politics Explicit*, Nick Smith, *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol. 29, 2003.

⁴² These concepts will be explored in the latter part of the thesis through the works of Artaud, Deleuze, Bergson, Kierkegaard, Adorno, Benjamin and others.

⁴³ Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Christopher Fynsk, Jacques Derrida, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, (Stanford University Press, 1998). Supra Part III where the ‘mimetological’ will be expanded upon.

calculus or mathesis, than an expressive medium.⁴⁴ Aesthetics will be seen to play no part in the rarified experiments of the 17th century, by Leibniz, John Wilkins and others, whose attempts to ‘mathematize’ language result in a stripped-down, experientially impoverished form of communication in which the ‘sensuously tinted concept’ has no value.⁴⁵ Unclarified concepts and words are to be eliminated from the system, as disruptive and obfuscatory to rational thought. This is the traditional form of logic, where even the subject becomes logical as in Spinoza’s *Ethics*,⁴⁶ and the self becomes transcendental. Subjectivity is ultimately eliminated in favour of the rules of the game, which are neutral and indifferent to the subject, even when ethical matters are under consideration.⁴⁷ Reason, having become instrumental, is a technical process, fixed and immutable, abstracted from the body, the sensual, the subject, and locked within the inevitability of contradiction.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Supra Part II, which outlines some of the key developments in the development of various kinds of mathesis and calculus, primarily by G. Leibnitz and John Wilkins.

⁴⁵ “Concepts are sensually tinted”, states Adorno in *Against Epistemology*, p.36. Adorno claims that the sensuousness of thought, its ornamentality, ultimately has no place in [Husserl’s] philosophical structure. The sensuousness in thought might be productive, but in Husserl’s work, it becomes merely additional/ornamental/superfluous.

⁴⁶ In Spinoza’s *Ethics*, known as the *Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata* (Ethics demonstrated in geometrical order, 1677), he attempts to demonstrate the validity of ethical ideas with recourse to mathematical and deductive forms of proof.

⁴⁷ A different example of how rules supplant content, can be seen in Wittgenstein’s work on mathematics. He points out that the expression ‘and so on’ (continuance of a procedure ad infinitum) is predicated on the *rules* that supply its meaning, by supporting its action, or procedure, but not by observing any content. For example, “1,2,3,4” versus “1,2,3,4 and so on”, or “1,2,3,4 ...” define the difference between finite and infinite procedures by virtue of the rule inscribed in the typographical objects: ‘and so on’, or the ellipsis (...). (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, California Press, 1978, p. 287). Accordingly, a sign for a series, such as “1, 1+1, 1+1+1 ...” embodies the *rules* of infinitude, rather than substituting for the setting out of a list which cannot be completed by its very nature. Wittgenstein is concerned to draw attention away from the physical sign, and redirect our attention to the rule which operates internally to the sign. To intension, rather than extension. However, he also remarks that: “What arithmetic is concerned with is the schema IIII. — But does arithmetic talk about the lines that I draw with pencil on paper? _ Arithmetic doesn’t talk about the lines, it *operates* with them.” (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Grammar*, California Press, 1978, p. 332), bringing us firmly out of the transcendental, and back to the material means of operation.

⁴⁸ Adorno suggests that the problem lies in the fact that: “The invariance of the concept, which would not be unless the temporal [in]determinacy of what is grasped under concepts were ignored, is confused with the unchangability of being in itself”. Op. Cit., *Against Epistemology*, p. 35.

“Reason’s old ambition to be purely an instrument of purposes has finally been fulfilled. The exclusivity of logical laws stems from this obdurate adherence to function and ultimately from the compulsive character of self-preservation. The latter is constantly magnified into the choice between survival and doom, a choice which is reflected even in the principle that, of two contradictory propositions, only one can be true and the other false.”⁴⁹

In contrast, Adorno’s position, throughout his writings, is that, en route from mythology to logic, thought has lost its capacity for self-reflection, and so has, inadvertently, returned to myth: the myth of certainty, immediacy, and objectivity. Such a myth has blinded us to the need for criticality, while ‘logical necessity’ has become the rallying-call and norm of a thoroughly dominated subject. The conclusion he draws is that the stringent and suffocating self-discipline of thought which has been effectuated by Enlightenment reason—and which punishes undisciplined gestures⁵⁰—must “turn against the instruments of domination, which would encompass all—language, weapons, and finally machines—[and] allow themselves to be encompassed by all.”⁵¹ It is at the juncture where language is implicated in this repressive self-disciplining of thought, that this thesis will concern itself, by suggesting that paradox, in its refusal of binaric logic; by virtue of its oscillatory character, in its movement towards infinity, and refusal of representation or static ‘ground’, participates in breaking the hold of instrumental reason, by transgressing; by taking language to the limits of self-reflexivity.⁵² “This sentence is false”⁵³ will be shown to be much more than

⁴⁹ Op. cit., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 30.

⁵⁰ Supra Part IV, in which the notion of ‘undisciplined gestures’ will be returned in a different form, as a positive, not negative attribute. A variety of artists, writers, and performers, whose work could be described as a series of consciously [un]disciplined gestures, will provide a counterpoint to Enlightenment rationality, and participate in promoting a sensual—or sensually ‘tinted’—logic.

⁵¹ Op. cit., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 37.

⁵² Foucault describes the act of transgression as that which “carries the limit right to the limit of its being; transgression forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance, to

mere surface anomaly, or historical aporia⁵⁴ which invites the ‘the liar’s revenge,’⁵⁵ but as offering a glimpse into the “logic of disintegration”⁵⁶, which dissolves logic, transgresses limits, and releases thought from repressive constraints; revealing the non-identical, transitory, and mobile in thought.

“[B]ut what if something significant were revealed about ourselves-about our language and our world, perhaps-in the very failure of an attempt to say what one wanted to say?”⁵⁷

Derrida, in *Writing and Difference* and *Of Grammatology* intends to suggest that neither the event: empirical, particular, temporal, nor the concept: abstract, universal, timeless, will alone account for meaning; something else must supply it, since each of these falls short of providing a full account. By the same token, the inability to speak, rather than being a loss, is itself meaningful,

find itself in what it excludes, (perhaps, to be more exact, it recognizes itself for the first time), to experience its positive truth in its downward fall”. M. Foucault, *Religion and Culture*, Trans and ed. by J. R. Carrette, (Manchester University Press, 1969), p. 60. However, this is not achieved by virtue of being placed in opposition to the limit, but by maintaining the reciprocal relations between them, since transgression would be meaningless without a limit and a limit would not have meaning if it were untransgressable. The act of transgression therefore ‘illuminates’ the limit without displacing it, while placing us in a different relationship to the object of transgression. A comment on the role of the transgressive in Bataille’s language reinforces the point: “[Sexuality] is tied to the still-silent and groping apparition of a form of thought in which the interrogation of the limit replaces the search for totality, and the act of transgression replaces the movement of contradictions. Finally, it involves the questioning of language by language in a circularity that the ‘scandalous’ violence of erotic literature, far from ending, displays from its first use of words”. M. Foucault, ‘A Preface to Transgression’, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Interviews and Essays*, (D. F. Bouchard, Ed.) (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

⁵³ The Liar Paradox, attributed to Eubulides, in the 4th century, is also known as The Paradox of the Cretan, where it takes the form: “Cretans are always liars”. The paradox has proved to be one of the most persistent, pernicious and provocative problems in philosophy, since it confounds the law of contradiction, which states that p cannot be both p and ~p simultaneously.

⁵⁴ Aporia is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses real or simulated doubt or perplexity. In classical rhetoric, *aporia* means placing a claim in doubt by developing arguments on both sides of an issue. In the terminology of deconstruction, *aporia* is a final impasse or paradox—the site at which the text most obviously undermines its own rhetorical structure, dismantles, or deconstructs itself. *Dubitatio*, a form of *aporia*, is the expression of feigned doubt about the ability to speak well. See also, J. Derrida, *Aporias*, (Stanford University Press, 1993).

⁵⁵ Cf. *The Revenge of the Liar: New Essays on the Paradox*, Edited by J. C. Beall, (Oxford University Press, 2008). Beall’s collection of essays shows how one paradox frequently proliferates into another, and another, in a process possibly termed ‘viral’.

⁵⁶ See also Adorno and Horkheimer, for whom the Logic of Disintegration is opposed to the ‘logic of identity’, op. cit., *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*,

⁵⁷ R. Foster, *Adorno: The Recovery of Experience*, (State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 33.

and paradoxes do not threaten the system, but will be shown to engage it on a heightened level. Convention will posit them as ‘undisciplined gestures’; failures of the communicative apparatus, and threats to the system. However, in this thesis, the ‘Acoustic’, which is another term for the sensual—but not an empirical sensual, as will be explained in Part IV—is an attempt to counteract the “denial or repudiation”⁵⁸ of any undisciplined gestures, as well as standing as a marker for this ‘something else’. The Acoustic will be posed, not in opposition to, but ‘para’ to (where para is understood as being beside, next to, or in addition to) disciplinary forms of thinking. To be in opposition would mean to both seek an erasure, or denial of the disciplinary—to negate it with determination—while at the same time requiring it as that which gives the [Un]disciplined its contours; supplies it with meaning. What is to be sought instead is an immanent, acoustic [non-representational], groundless series of unassimilable surface gestures, evidenced on the rolling waves and folds of the Deleuzian Plane of Immanence.

In *The Will to Power*,⁵⁹ Nietzsche questioned logic, while in The ‘Paradox of the Cretan’,⁶⁰ Benjamin asked whether logical paradox could reveal something about depth, not surface. Wittgenstein, in his later works,⁶¹ disavowed logic in favour of language-in-use, while Adorno associated logic with enlightenment domination of the subject.⁶² Deleuze attempted to rethink the basic premises of logic, as a ‘logic of sense’, where Derrida speaks of the

⁵⁸ J. Kemp, *Writing the Behind*, (2003)

⁵⁹ Supra Part III, where Nietzsche’s ideas on logic, including his proposal for a ‘tonal logic’ will be outlined.

⁶⁰ Cf. W. Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, edited by M. W. Jennings and others, trans. by H. Eiland, R. Livingstone and others, Vols 1-4, (Cambridge MA: Belknap/Harvard, 1996-2003), p. 17.

⁶¹ See all post-Tractatus texts by Wittgenstein, especially: *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford Blackwell, 1990). *Philosophical Grammar* (Oxford Blackwell, ed. By R. Reese, Trans. A. Kenny, 1990), *On Certainty* (Oxford Blackwell, Trans. D. Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe, 1998)

⁶² Op. Cit., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Preface.

“plural logic of the aporia” as something which is ‘haunted’⁶³ by non-passage due to the three figures of uncrossable borders, lack of limit, and the impossibility of (logical) contradiction. In chapter four we will see how Kierkegaard’s ‘subjective immediacy becomes an aesthetic move, wherein logic is suspended in favour of the irrational, which requires a leap similar to that of Kant’s sublime, which in its monstrous prodigious form,⁶⁴ becomes analogous to paradox.⁶⁵ In different ways, each of these thinkers will be shown to support the move away from logic as hypostasis, and fixed representation, towards an acoustic, surface economy of understanding. Descartes’, whose work is understood to provide a method for reasoning, will be thrown into question in the light of doubt itself posed as an ‘Acoustic’ economy.

In Defence of [Un]disciplined Gestures

“We possess art lest we perish of the truth”⁶⁶

The claim this thesis makes is that paradox, along with art involves undisciplined gestures and, moreover that they function in similar ways: reflexively, irrationally, and that each require an ‘Acoustic’ logic to be understood. In other words, the claim is that neither can be assimilated into the disciplinary procedures of an overarching system, while at the same time, each structures and constitutes an immanent critique of such systems, by resisting the call to totalizing, binaric forms of logic, and by stretching them to their limit, if not breaking them apart. To test this claim, chapter four will lay forth,

⁶³ Supra Part III, where Derrida’s notion of the ‘Aporia’ is explored in more detail. J. Derrida, *Aporias* (Stanford University Press, 1993).

⁶⁴ Supra Part II, esp. the section on ‘disciplined gestures’.

⁶⁵ Each of these ‘Acoustic Economies’ is analogous to paradox by refusing identification with the concept, exceeding categories, and by being indescribable in any system of representation.

⁶⁶ F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), pp. 796-822.

play with, and ‘offer-up’ possible examples of [Un]disciplined gestures, via artworks⁶⁷ (visual, acoustic, literary), which exemplify the paradoxical, a-systematic qualities the thesis proposes, in place of a logic of identification, or representation.

For Adorno, art refuses the expression of some *thing*, in favour of expression per se; art speaks for itself, in-and-of itself, autonomously, without the necessity of an external referent (although such an ‘other’ is always present, threatening that autonomy). Art’s linguistic character⁶⁸ is characterized by Adorno with reference to James Joyce, who he sees as epitomizing the move from communicative to mimetic forms of language, which no longer pretend to be anything other than indecipherable:

“The efforts of modern prose writers like Joyce, who set discursive language aside or, to say the least, subordinated it to the idea of form to the point where the linguistic construction becomes indecipherable, might then be explained as attempts to move from communicative to mimetic language.”⁶⁹

Both Adorno and Joyce mistrust language as an over-determined form of expression; art should be speechless, silent, mimetic, if it is to be a language at all.⁷⁰ There is a difference between the way art and language function, since in art, the ‘this is me’ establishes a selfhood, or immanence of the object, while language seeks to categorize, classify and compartmentalize out of a totality, and identify the object as part of a schema: to place it, rather than allowing things/language/us to *take* a place. In Adorno’s view, “Owing to its dual character, language is a constitutive principle of art, as well as its mortal

⁶⁷ By artworks is meant any form of creative practice that involves rethinking what it means to ‘make sense’. For the purposes of making the argument within the limits of the thesis, these will primarily be drawn from literature, fine art, and theatre (and by implication, philosophy), but could also include typography, poetry, music, film, fashion, dance, mathematics, etc.

⁶⁸ Supra Parts III.

⁶⁹ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 164

⁷⁰ Ibid. p. 164.

enemy.”⁷¹ For Wittgenstein, Adorno, and John Cage, the inability to express (silence)⁷² takes priority over signification, and becomes the defining characteristic of art: an empty space, but one where space is the dynamic which structures that thought, rather than any linguistic presence.

Finally, if the visual is predominantly a coherent form of making sense, the acoustic marks a space for a different kind of sense, one which is non-totalizing, non-framing, non-representational, groundless.⁷³ Acoustic understanding is immanent, where immanence is non-oppositional, denies a ground or origin for meaning, and opposes transcendence. In his final essay entitled *Immanence: A Life*, Deleuze writes: “It is only when immanence is no longer immanent to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence.”⁷⁴ This immanent, im/material, groundless form of translation will be explored in relation to the work of various artists and writers, from James Joyce to Antonin Artaud, Samuel Beckett and Cy Twombly, for whom meaning is achieved *in* language, not *through* it, and is performed, or presented, rather than [re]presented.⁷⁵ It is also fully engaged in the epistemological attitudes and writings of Adorno, Benjamin, Wittgenstein,

⁷¹ Adorno illustrates that much of the language of art is speechless. He cites an example of Etruscan vases in the Villa Giulia, which “articulate something without using communicative language”, presenting themselves instead with a language that implies “this is me”, or “here I come”. He calls this the “non-significative language of works of art”, which communicative language is in danger of expunging. Cf, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 164

⁷² Among other texts which deal with silence, Cf. esp. J. Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, (Wesleyan, 1964), *Empty Words*, Writings, ’73-’78, (Wesleyan, 1973). Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, M. Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation* (University of Minnesota Press, 1992), Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, (University of Minnesota Press, December 1998).

⁷³ Henri Lefebvre points out that anything which is seen, or visualized, is—according to the scientific ordering of an Enlightenment logic—“reduced to an image – and to an icy coldness”. [H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Blackwell, Oxford, UK Cambridge, USA, 1997) p. 268]. However, the two (visual/Acoustic) will not, throughout this thesis, be posed in strict opposition to one another, but presented as complementary aspects of the production of meaning.

⁷⁴ G. Deleuze: *Pure Immanence, Essays on a Life*, trans. By Anne Boyman, (Zone Books, New York, 2005), p. 27

⁷⁵ Supra Part I, ‘Sense, Surface, Event’, which will detail Richard Schusterman’s arguments about the visible surfaces of language, from the book, *Surface and Depth, Deep Theory and Surface Blindness: On the Aesthetic Visibility of Print*.

Lyotard and others, as an immanent critique of philosophical languages' ability to attain unmediated truth, bringing back the necessity of philosophical language as immanent critique.⁷⁶ In Benjamin, Adorno, and Michel Serres, as well as Joyce and Beckett, this critique is enacted through the very forms of language used, where form and content trace the same path, but without ever perfectly corresponding to a truth: "[T]he tireless emphasis on representation or *Darstellung*... would seem, in advance, to undermine the possibility of some experience of truth that might be separated from its laying out in time and language."⁷⁷ Any form of transcendental truth will be shown to recede in favour of fleeting, transitory constellations, or multiple conceptual configurations, which displace the privilege of universal 'ideas'.

"While verbal language may be described as a series of differential sound values, and while it makes sense to say that it is these differences that allow for meaning, it does not follow that the only meaning these sounds have lies in their difference from other sounds... The claim that certain sound vibrations have an inhering or immutable meaning is the perhaps mystical nodal point of a constellation of iconic attributes of language [...] Iconicity refers to the ability of language to *present*, rather than represent or designate, its meaning. Here, meaning is not something that accompanies the word but is performed by it."⁷⁸

Part I: *Sense, Surface, Event*, will begin by outlining the various debates among philosophers concerning the ways in which language interfaces with the world. This will necessarily be incomplete, but intends to show how questions of sense and reference, denotation, and logic, have been significant but contested areas of philosophical discourse over time. In the latter part of

⁷⁶ Language and/as immanent critique explored further in this thesis. Cf. Adorno (*Negative Dialectics*), Beckett (*End Game*, *Waiting for Godot*), Artaud, (*Theatre of Cruelty*), Joyce (*Ulysses*, *Finnegan's Wake*).

⁷⁷ F. Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno or the Persistence of the Dialectic*, (Verso Radical Thinkers, London, New York, 1990), p. 54.

⁷⁸ J. H. Prynne, *My Way*, pp. 294-5. 'Stars, Tigers and the Shape of Words' was a William Mathews Lecture, delivered at Birkbeck College, London: 1992.

the chapter we will see how the event, time and space, and the notion of ‘surface’ start to take shape, and ground the more detailed discussion of the viral nature of paradox in Part II: *The Liar, Paradox, and other Truths*.

Parts III and IV will explore concerns around aesthetic economies of sense, by laying the (groundless) ground for a new kind of logic, which is capable of accounting for paradox and art.⁷⁹ As will be argued in Part III, this new form of logic (or group of logics), includes ones based on immanence, the sublime, cruelty, and constellation; setting free a transformative force.⁸⁰ These libidinally-charged, non-identical ‘surfaces’, cannot be contained by any concept. They are: ‘irrecoverable instants’, embodying doubt, the nonsensical, tremulousness, and the particular, not the universal.

“Once it has been decided what is to count as thought, that is, what is to count as describing reality, any thought that does not fall under that concept will be attacked as nonsensical: “[h]ence the fanatical intolerance of the method and its total arbitrariness against any arbitrariness as deviation”⁸¹

As a final correlate to this argument, instances of symbolic language will be shown to be structures/events/surfaces, which witness/produce a fundamental paradox, by being simultaneously concrete and abstract. These surfaces will be offered as examples of a fractal economy, which will be shown to constitute an ‘Acoustic’ form of understanding, where ‘Acoustic’ is an assemblage of the non-assimilable, destabilized, anterior, irreducible, intense, and excessive

⁷⁹ Alexander Duttman remarked that there’s a difference in what you can see ‘in’ the image (as in: there is a picture of petals on fire), and what you can see ‘to’ the image (as in: ‘There’s something ‘to’ it). The first is produced by representation, the second by ‘halting’ this process of knowing, in favour of some other way of comprehending. Alexander Duttman, *The Gift of Language, Memory and Promise in Adorno, Benjamin, Heidegger, and Rosenzweig*. Trans. By Arline Lyons, (Syracuse University Press, 2000).

⁸⁰ It is here, that there is an indiscernibility between the ‘what should it be’, and everything ‘should be as it is’. i.e. you can add nothing, nor take anything away. All is as it should be, but not in the sense of a stable, fixed, form of representation. In turn, this reflects the difference between language as representation (concept/object correspondence), and language as event.

⁸¹ Op. cit., *Against Epistemology*, p. 13.

aspects of meaning. Finally, an ‘Acoustic Logic’ will be argued to emerge out of the act of translation from the visual to the acoustic economies of knowledge, and this translation will be seen to possess a specific materiality, which in turn shapes thought differently.

Part I

Sense, Surface, Event

“One understands philosophy by seeking its truth content precisely at the point where it becomes entangled in so-called contradictions.”

— Adorno, “*Lecture Seven*,” *Metaphysics, Concepts, and Problems*⁸²

⁸² T. Adorno, *Lecture Seven, Metaphysics, Concepts, and Problems*, Trans. Edmund Jephcott, (Great Britain: Polity Press, 2000), p. 44.

Introduction

This first part of the thesis will sketch out a brief historical and intellectual progression of the main issues which have concerned philosophies of language over time. Several key themes emerge: ‘ideas’, ‘meaning’, and ‘the sentence’, each one corresponding to a historical period when one or the other was dominant. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Wittgenstein, Gottlob Frege, and Alfred Tarski will be among the key thinkers of these periods. The latter part will introduce some alternative perspectives on philosophy of language, primarily drawing on the work of Deleuze, Derrida, Adorno, and Nietzsche. These later accounts of language are informed by their shared acknowledgment of the increased significance of time, space, event, difference, nuance, and materiality, in understanding language. These thinkers chosen are affiliated by the challenge they pose to many of the fundamental assumptions underpinning traditional philosophies, including questioning the fixed identity of language, its representational, descriptive function, and its reliance upon denotation and signification (sense and reference) as the bases of meaning.⁸³ Surface, paradox, mimesis, and sensual/acoustic logic will be introduced as terms to be explored further in Part II, and this summary of key ideas will ground the more detailed discussion which takes place there.⁸⁴

⁸³ Ian Hacking shows these assumptions to be true, historically, for both the status of individual letters/words, and at the level of language as a whole. Cf., Hacking, I., *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, (Cambridge University Press, 1975).

⁸⁴ The question which persists just below (or at, or even forming) the surface of these concerns, and which will also be introduced in the latter part of this chapter, will be viewed through the lens of Richard Shusterman’s work on the ‘visible’ in language, which asks how, or if, it might be possible to ‘speak’ the event and sense, through the intramundane, micro-material forms of language: words, print, speech. See R. Schusterman, *Surface and Depth, ‘Surface and Depth, Dialectics of Criticism and Culture*, ‘Deep Theory and Surface Blindness: On the Aesthetic Visibility of Print’ (Cornell University Press, 2002). pp 159-172.

1. 1 Why Language Matters to Philosophy

According to Ian Hacking, language matters to philosophy by virtue of the fact that it is the interface between ourselves and the world.⁸⁵ He opens by making a critical distinction between ‘pure’ and ‘applied’ theories of theories of language; those which are concerned to develop a *pure* theory of meaning versus those which aim to *apply* theories about language to traditional philosophical issues such as ethics, perception, knowledge, and the nature of the human mind.⁸⁶ Philosophers in the empiricist tradition, such as Hobbes, Locke and Mill were very clearly engaged with non-linguistic issues such as ethics, and in the 20th century, Noam Chomsky, a linguist, was occupied with questions about the nature of the human mind. G. E. Moore, the later Wittgenstein and J. L. Austin were also essentially preoccupied with such ‘traditional’ problems despite their foundational roles in the philosophy of language as a ‘pure’ subject. Although theories of meaning frequently break from the canon to form their own, discrete academic field of inquiry, “a body of essentially philosophical questions about language persist.”⁸⁷

His work (and this thesis) is situated within what might be called a ‘new pragmatics’ of language: “Pragmatics is important because it establishes the micro-politics of language” Claire Colebrook, *Giles Deleuze*, (Routledge, 2002), p.159. As described by Adorno, this pragmatics denies the universal “cover concept” in language, opening instead onto the “intramundane”; the non-identical, and the coercive/ disruptive forces in language (as will be shown, these include phenomena such as paradox). This is in sharp opposition to dialectical thinking, which passes over the intramundane, in favour of the metaphysical, identity thinking, on route to the ‘whole’. As Adorno states: “The smallest intramundane traits would be of relevance to the absolute, for the micrological view cracks the shells of what, measured by the subsuming cover concept, is helplessly isolated and explodes its identity, the delusion that it is but a specimen. There is solidarity between such thinking and metaphysics at the time of its fall.” Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 1969. Derrida’s work on ‘Trace’ and ‘Différend’ will provide a context, but be addressed in more detail in Part II.

⁸⁵ Cf., Hacking, I., *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, (Cambridge University Press, 1975).

⁸⁶ According to Hacking, applied theories are much more significant to philosophy than pure theories of meaning but much contemporary philosophy concerns itself with the latter.

⁸⁷ Op. cit., *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, p.3.

In answer to the basic question of why language would appear to hold more significance for philosophers, than those from other disciplines, Hacking outlines one of the most familiar and often-cited reasons:

“One reason why language matters to philosophy and not to Zoology is that philosophers are often concerned with domains where our common ways of thinking and arguing lead us not to clarity and a satisfactory technical language, but rather to ambiguity, equivocation, contradiction, and paradox.”⁸⁸

This concern emerges because the same word can have many meanings (Hobbes called this the “inconstancy” of language), and such ambiguity leads to confusion between concepts, whereby a ‘perversion of judgement’ takes place. To counter this, and as a precursor to later work by Leibniz, Spinoza, John Wilkinson and others,⁸⁹ Francis Bacon proposed that a ‘mathematical’ approach to language be adopted; one in which clear and unambiguous definitions of terms were agreed beforehand so that the unruliness, nuances and paradoxical tendencies of language (what he termed ‘vulgar’ speech)⁹⁰ could be eliminated up-front, to avoid the danger, which affects philosophy more than other disciplines, of entanglement, ‘perversion’, and empty speech.”⁹¹

In contrast, the view shared by philosophers from Descartes to Wittgenstein and Spinoza (and through to Deleuze) is that philosophers need

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.5. As the thesis will explain, a number of contemporary philosophers such as Deleuze will claim that the opposite is true, and that “ambiguity, equivocation, contradiction, and paradox”, are precisely where meaning is located; not in clarity and technical precision. Parts II and III will return to this point.

⁸⁹ Supra Part II, *The Liar, Paradox, and Other Truths*, which will attempt to tease out the details of the relationships between such mathematical languages and Enlightenment reason through a review of the work of those philosophers such as Leibniz, who attempted to create a *Characterista Universalis*, or Universal Language, which would eliminate the errors associated with natural languages.

⁹⁰ De Landa discusses the continuation of the Latin vernacular due to the ‘vulgarisation’ of the spoken word, rather than the ‘frozen’ written word. *1000 years of non-linear History*, (Zone Books, 1997), pp186-8.

⁹¹ Op. cit., *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, p.6.

to be attentive to the particularities and nuances of language/speech, in order to avoid conceptual traps, and this emerges as a central concern in Wittgenstein's later work on "language games" and "ordinary language."⁹² Locke, for example, would have claimed that the relevance of a philosophical argument can, and must, be read through the nuances and specificities of seventeenth-century English, since those forms of language possess very distinct prohibitions and possibilities that determine the ground of the debate.⁹³

It is likely that language matters to philosophy now in very different ways to the past, since issues come in and out of focus, as our conceptions of the world and of ourselves change, the debates surrounding language change. However, the central issues in the philosophy of language can be broadly broken down into two parts, which reflect how language has served as the interface between 1. Our conceptions of the world, and 2. The 'knowing self', or the Cartesian ego.⁹⁴ As will be seen in the next section of this chapter, *Ideas*⁹⁵ once provided this interface, and yet the assumption that ideas are 'inevitable' is now strange to us. What was once possible to take literally: "the doctrine of ideas" is now a relatively arcane debate located within historical

⁹² Much of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, Post-Tractatus, is concerned to illustrate how ordinary language 'in use' gives everything we need. See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, (Prentice Hall, 1973).

⁹³ While working at the British Library, in the summer of 2009, I was able to see, in person, an original copy of John Wilkins' book: *An Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, (1668, reprinted Thoemmes 2002). The specificities of 17th-century English, including the need to read 'through' the long form of the 's', required a different orientation towards the text, one which made reading both harder, but at the same time, more physical and engaged. The slightly poetic qualities of the written form of English of that time, meant that the premise of the text (the development of a mathematical, symbolic form of writing which prefigures the invention of symbolic logic over 300 years later, and is suggestive of computer coding), was severely undermined by its form, leading to a paradox. These instances of the paradoxical relationship between form and content will be explored in further detail as the thesis progresses; these remarks extending as far as the paradoxical nature of the text presented here.

⁹⁴ By the Cartesian ego is meant the 'self' which is aware of its own existence. This is the unique 'I' that constitutes the knowing subject.

⁹⁵ There is a distinction to be made between ideas and concepts. In one way of setting out the distinction, ideas are whatever is present(ed) to the mind when thinking, while concepts imply the constructed nature of thought: an assemblage, or combination of characteristics.

discourses, and where mental discourse once took precedence over public discourse, this relationship has switched. In place of ideas, sentences are now the “artefact of the knowing subject” and, arguably, *constitute* the knowing subject.⁹⁶ During this time period, the sentence is the simple object taken as fundamental in the explanation of truth, meaning, experiment, and reality, while “Knowledge consists in the fabric of sentences itself, not in what those sentences mean.”⁹⁷

The next three sections will provide a brief review of some of the most fundamental changes in our modes of understanding—and consequently our conceptions of knowledge itself—in which language is centrally implicated, simultaneously demonstrating why philosophy concerns itself so centrally with language.⁹⁸

1.2 The Interiority of Ideas

In the period when ideas were dominant, which broadly refers to the 16th and 17th centuries, philosophers, including John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, made the claim that there is something mental (a mental discourse), which is logically prior to language, and which is made public through the convenience

⁹⁶ Op. cit., *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, p.162.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.197., However, Hacking also reminds us that it’s important to remember that philosophers such as Aristotle, Aquinas and Descartes understood knowledge very differently. Knowledge was based on demonstration from first principles, which was in turn based on acquaintance with essences, rather than being dependent on a sequence of sentences, since: “A demonstration used to be a showing: a showing to the eye, the only eye, the inward eye. That which was shown was the principle: namely the origin, the source. The source was the essence, that which made the object what it is. Knowledge which is acquaintance with essences has little in common with the arrangement of sentences.” p. 161.

⁹⁸ In order to discuss these shifting conceptions, over time, Hacking invents three broad categories under which the main intellectual and historical progression of ideas about language can be grouped: “The Heyday of Ideas”, “The Heyday of Meaning” and “The Heyday of the Sentence”. I will use similar categories as a way to organize the following summary of the key issues.

of language.⁹⁹ The priority of mental discourse over public speech and the belief that outer forms of expression are subservient to inner ‘ideas’ dominate this period, and this notion is closely related to the doctrine of “Philosophical Idealism” in which everything that exists is mental, and matter does not exist.¹⁰⁰ Philosophy of language during time concludes that ideas, or thoughts, are perfect until expressed in language, whose errant nature ‘perverts’ and ‘entangles’ them.¹⁰¹

The contemporary philosopher of language, William Alston, sets out three useful (but incomplete) theories of meaning: ideational, referential, and behavioural.¹⁰² In the *ideational* theory, the meaning of the word is the idea in our mind for which it stands, in the *referential*, the meaning is the actual event referred to, and in the *behavioural*, the meaning is what people do when they hear the words, or what the speaker intends the hearer to do.¹⁰³

According to Hobbes, names are only “signs of conceptions”, not things in and of themselves (therefore ideational). The sign refers to the thought, which in turn, produces other thoughts, which are related to the initial thought, and in this way a chain-reaction of communication occurs. However, the

⁹⁹ George Berkeley would later challenge a claim of Locke’s that ‘the chief and only end of language’ is as “the great instrument and common tie of society.” by stating: “The communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition.” G. Berkeley, *Works*, (T. Nelson, 1957), Vol. 2, p.37.

¹⁰⁰ Or, as Berkeley argued, “to be is to be perceived”. He claims that to understand language correctly is to automatically take up an idealist position. (Op. cit., *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*)

¹⁰¹ The difficulty with this approach is forged by the assumption that we should only attempt to communicate ideas through a language which strives to achieve crystal clear expression. The ‘perversions’ and ‘entanglements’ are exactly what this thesis finds productive, and will seek to engage in later chapters. Wittgenstein’s comment: “Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.”, brings that issue into focus, while providing an ambiguous interpretation of the nature of philosophical ambiguity. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, (Prentice Hall, 1973).

¹⁰² W. Alston, *The Philosophy of Language*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. (Prentice-Hall, 1964), Ch.1.

¹⁰³ Cf. J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, (Harvard, 1975).

meaning of the sign is *either* the thought (mental discourse), *or* the thing referred to (therefore referential). Hobbes said: “things named, are either the *objects* themselves; or the *conception* itself that we have of man, as shape and motion”¹⁰⁴ and so the meanings of words are either the concrete objects they refer to, or the abstract ideas they denote.

Accordingly, Hobbes thought material language has a double purpose: as a memory device for the ideas being expressed by the individual, so that they will not be forgotten, and a means to convey those thoughts to others through their public expression. Locke later examines language in its role as the signs of thought; the marks or sounds which bring them into public space: “The use, then, of words, is to be sensible marks of ideas; and the ideas they stand for are their proper and immediate signification.”¹⁰⁵ This statement infers that the marks/sounds *mean* the idea, either as the individual objects themselves, or the abstract notions to which they refer.¹⁰⁶ However, this will come to be a highly contested notion in contemporary philosophies of language, such as those by Derrida, Deleuze, Agamben, Benjamin, where *idea* recedes into the background and the mark/trace/ surface/event dominate.

The problem with ideas is that they are not always the same, and they do not necessarily signify the same thing in all instances. For example, Locke cites the idea of a Violet, which may mean very different things to different people.¹⁰⁷ You might think Violet, while I think Marigold; an entirely possible discrepancy, and not simply one dictated by colour, since there are, as Locke

¹⁰⁴ T. Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, (Adamant Media Corporation, 2005) Part I, Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁵ J. Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (Oxford University Press, 1979), Book III. Chapter ii, 1., ‘On the Signification of Words’.

¹⁰⁶ Op. cit., *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, p.21.

¹⁰⁷ Op. cit. J. Locke, *True and False Ideas*, Chapter 32, p. 275.

explains, more subtle distinctions at play in terms of our perceptions, across the range of senses:

“Few simple ideas have names. I think it will be needless to enumerate all the particular simple ideas belonging to each sense. Nor indeed is it possible if we would; there being a great many more of them belonging to most of the senses than we have names for. The variety of smells, which are as many almost, if not more, than species of bodies in the world, do most of them want names. Sweet and stinking commonly serve our turn for these ideas, which in effect is little more than to call them pleasing or displeasing; though the smell of a rose and violet, both sweet, are certainly very distinct ideas.”¹⁰⁸

Where the individual ego mediates between the world and itself, on the basis of its ideas, there are no guarantees of point-for-point correspondence when those ideas are shared with other egos. However, this is not necessarily to be viewed as an error, since Locke would assert that *my* ideas are always correct (*to myself*). It is only when we start to share ideas and step outside this fundamentally Cartesian framework of thought that he claims we encounter problems.

Providing more evidence of the danger of reliance on words, George Berkeley illustrates how it is possible to construct public discourse that corresponds to no inner ideas and is, therefore, ‘empty’. Something which is un-thought has no inner object to which we can relate a statement about it and this terminates in the notion that: “esse est percipi”, or “to be is to be perceived.”¹⁰⁹ For Berkeley, everything that exists is an object of thinking, and therefore perceivable:

“That neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor ideas formed by the imagination, exist without the mind, is what everybody will allow. And it seems no less evident that the various sensations or ideas

¹⁰⁸ Op. cit., *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, ‘Of Ideas’, Chapter iii, 2., ‘Of Simple Ideas of Sense’.

¹⁰⁹ G. Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, (Dublin, 1710).

imprinted on the sense, however blended or combined together (that is, whatever objects they compose), cannot exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving them. I think an intuitive knowledge may be obtained of this by any one that shall attend to what is meant by the term exists, when applied to sensible things. The table I write on I say exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it existed- meaning thereby that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. There was an odour, that is, it was smelt; there was a sound, that is, it was heard; a colour or figure, and it was perceived by sight or touch. This is all that I can understand by these and the like expressions. For as to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their esse is percepi, nor is it possible they should have any existence out of the minds or thinking things which perceive them.”¹¹⁰

Proof in this time is closely related to vision, or sight (although an inner, not externally-directed version of it), and consists of removing obstacles to a kind of clear mental perception or vision which, if anything, words hinder “(Descartes)... thought proof a device for getting rid of words, enabling a man to perceive the connections between ideas steadfastly.”¹¹¹ This is quite different to the contemporary notion of proof which, in fields such as mathematics, law and the sciences, is achieved primarily thorough valid sentences, which ‘express’ the proof via clear, unambiguous reasoning.

¹¹⁰ G. Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710, reprinted, Dover 2003). Section 3. Berkeley also uses the example of triangles which are either universal concepts (abstract) or specific (i.e. isosceles or scalene) to show how ideas, as well as specific objects are crucial to abstract reasoning: “Nor do I think them a whit more needful for the enlargement of knowledge than for communication. It is, I know, a point much insisted on, that all knowledge and demonstration are about universal notions, to which I fully agree: but then it doth not appear to me that those notions are formed by abstraction in the manner premised- universality, so far as I can comprehend, not consisting in the absolute, positive nature or conception of anything, but in the relation it bears to the particulars signified or represented by it; by virtue whereof it is that things, names, or notions, being in their own nature particular, are rendered universal. Thus, when I demonstrate any proposition concerning triangles, it is to be supposed that I have in view the universal idea of a triangle; which ought not to be understood as if I could frame an idea of a triangle which was neither equilateral, nor scalenon, nor equicrural; but only that the particular triangle I consider, whether of this or that sort it matters not, doth equally stand for and represent all rectilinear triangles whatsoever, and is in that sense universal. All which seems very plain and not to include any difficulty in it.” Section 15 of *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*.

¹¹¹ Op. cit., *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, p.31.

Leibniz, for example, had the insight that mathematical proof was based on the formal relations within a sequence of sentences, such that proof, or validity, is based on form, not content.¹¹² For Wittgenstein, in the 20th century, mathematical theorems became necessary only *after* they were proved, and not the other way around.¹¹³ However, their validity and necessity, once proved, became incontestable, and Wittgenstein thought that the very ability to prove, is an innate aspect of human nature.¹¹⁴

In summary, the concept of language that mattered to philosophy in the 17th Century was one in which ideas are primary and come before public discourse, are pre-linguistic in nature, and ‘pure’. The sole purpose of language (writing and speaking) is to bring mental discourse (ideas) into the open so that communication can occur, but this activity is not without its dangers to the ‘purity’ of the idea, since language is imperfect and clouds thought.¹¹⁵ The theory of ideas claims that ideas are ‘objects’ that mediate between the self/ego and the world. Words signify ideas: as marks of writing or sounds of speech, words *signify* the ideas being conveyed but not in the sense of *meaning* them (an emphasis on meaning comes later). The relation is, rather, one of precedence-consequence, or cause-and-effect, and ideas are

¹¹² G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, translated M. Morris & G. H. R. Parkinson. (London: Aldine Press, 1973).

¹¹³ L. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, translated G. E. M. Anscombe. (Mass., M.I.T. Press, 1967).

¹¹⁴ Cf. Aristotle, who said: “a man who will not reason about anything is no better than a vegetable”. *Metaphysics*, 1006a

¹¹⁵ Cf. Michel Serres, who thinks of noise as an unavoidable part of the transmission of information. Noise is a form of interference which happens in the process of moving any form of information between sender and receiver; one that occupies a frequency which registers chaos, disorder and nonsense as productive, not disruptive. Rather than seeking to eliminate noise as an unwanted ‘excess’ to communication, Serres suggests that it is *precisely* here, in the midst of this cacophonous environment, that there is the potential for new forms of thinking to emerge from the alternative patterns which are created. Noise, for Serres, implies movement and disruption, instability and disjunction, rather than linear, stable systems which cohere. Out of noise, new pathways, relations, movements, and assemblages are formed. Cf. *The Parasite*, (University of Minnesota Press, 2007) and *Le Cinq Sens* (The Five Senses), (Grasset, 1988).

therefore that for which words are only the signs—inert unless called upon to perform that function.

1.3 The Matter of Meaning

The following fundamental distinctions could be made between the ways in which language is understood by philosophers of different time periods create the interface between the world and ourselves:

“The realist angrily says that the world is there, language or no, the idealist Berkeley says that to be is to be perceived; there is no other world than the perceived one. The extreme linguistic idealist would say, to be is to be spoken about; there is no other world there except what is spoken about.”¹¹⁶

One of the central reasons why language has mattered so much to philosophy over time, is the belief that the structure of language points to the structure of the human mind.¹¹⁷ As explained, in the period dominated by meaning, the structure of language is understood to point beyond the human mind, toward a reality, which lays outside it, in stark contrast to the earlier embracement of *ideas*, which points inward. Theories of meaning, in contrast, are fundamentally concerned with the *public* aspect of language; with the possibility of sharing ideas through what is ‘common’ in language (a common sense). Some of the principal questions internal to these debates are whether ‘signify’ is taken to be the same as ‘mean’, and whether ‘mean’ is another word for ‘common acceptance’. Gottlob Frege qualified the relationship between ‘sense’ (in German, *Sinn*), and ‘reference’ (in German, *Bedeutung*)¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Op. cit., *Why Does Language Matter to Philosophy?*, p.84.

¹¹⁷ Cf. N. Chomsky, *Language and Mind* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1968). Esp. Linguistic Contributions to the Study of Mind. R. Jackendoff, *Patterns in the Mind, Language and Human Nature*. (Basic Books 1994).

¹¹⁸ G. Frege, *On Sense and Reference*, [As reprinted in A.W. Moore (ed.) *Meaning and Reference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Original text 1892], p. 91.

(See Figure 1). Frege pointed out that whereas the individual sign has a definite sense and reference, the referent (object) can have multiple signs associated with it, since different languages and different expressions connect to it. Walter Benjamin will discuss this point in terms of ‘nonsensuous similarities.’¹¹⁹

Initially, Frege claims that ‘Sense and Reference’ [*Sinn and Bedeutung*] are fundamental aspects of language and constitute the two parts of a ‘singular term’ (a proper name or definite description), which provides its meaning.¹²⁰ The reference (or referent) of a proper name is the object or entity named and this is assumed to be a one-to-one relationship, devoid of ambiguity, based in concrete fact (the world).¹²¹ Sense, however (the second part of the process of understanding), is distinguished from reference by virtue of being able to imply ‘sense’ even when the name does not refer to anything. Sense is there in the name, whether or not there is anything for it to refer to. For example, Frege explains how the name ‘Odysseus,’ is clearly intelligible (has sense), in the sentence “Odysseus was set down at the beach in Ithaca”,¹²² despite the fact that there is no individual in the world named Odysseus.

¹¹⁹ Arising from the observation that different languages have different names for the same object, Benjamin talks about ‘nonsensuous similarities’. For Benjamin, dissolution and dissonance, rather than denotation; polyphony, rather than homophony; elision, rather than elucidation, bring meaning [truth] into view. Ideas precede presentation, but are only to be sought in the interstices, the oblique, the constellatory. The mimetic faculty allows us to perceive what he calls ‘nonsensuous [nonsensible] similarities’, in which the ordered surface[s] of language, which ordinarily conceal and subordinate the multiplicity of relationships of similarity within language, are abruptly broken, such that: “something similar can become apparent instantaneously, in a flash”. W. Benjamin, Introduction to Walter Benjamin’s ‘Doctrine of the Similar’ *New German Critique*, No. 17. Special Walter Benjamin Issue, Spring 1979. p.68. Cited in D. Ferris (ed.), *Walter Benjamin: Theoretical questions*, (Stanford University Press, 1996), p.144.

¹²⁰ Op. cit., *Meaning and Reference*, p. 34.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 76.

¹²² Sense being allocated on the basis that the sentence is able to be established as either true or false, at least in the fictional world created for the non-existent ‘Odysseus’. This is because, for Frege, a sentence’s meaning (sense), is a function of the meanings of its parts.

Sense, for Frege, is entirely based in semantics, while reference, although also semantic, is “intimately connected with the named object”. It follows that we can hold a thought, despite the absence of a referent: something truly existing in the world, to which it refers. When we encounter the same reference (the example Frege uses is Mont Blanc—the mountain, not the pen¹²³) in two separate contexts, or sentences, we recognize something which the two statements have in common, which is not *the referent* itself. Frege therefore deduces it must be ‘sense’ which is common to both. Sense happens at the level of language itself (reflexively, and independent of the world), while reference always points beyond language, to an outside ‘world’ which it names (and this relation is its ‘surface’). And yet, each is intrinsically dependent on the other; intimately bound, both in theory and practise.¹²⁴ In any case, his observations radically undermine the relevance of the idea, as understood by 17th Century philosophers, since:

“The reference and sense of a sign are to be distinguished from the associated idea. If the reference of a sign is an object perceivable by the sense, my ideas of it is an internal image, arising from memories of sense impressions which I have had and acts, both internal, which I have performed. Such an idea is often saturated with feeling; the clarity of its separate parts varies and oscillates. The same sense is not always connected, even in the same man, with the same idea. The idea is subjective: one man’s idea is not that of another... [there is] an essential distinction between the idea and the sign’s sense, which may be the common property of many and therefore is not a part of a mode of the individual mind. For one can hardly deny that

¹²³ Op. cit, *Meaning and Reference*, p. 89.

¹²⁴ This means that Frege can comfortably speak of Phosphorous and Hesperus being ‘proper’ names for one and the same planet (the identity statement in the sentence “Hesperus is *the same planet* as Phosphorus”), since even though the ‘sense’ of the names is slightly different, their referent is the same planet. This oddly ambiguous, and mobile operation of Frege’s version of sense, which clearly morphs and changes according to some unexpressed rule, or law, is comfortable in distance (or difference) from the object, while reference requires parity or correspondence (identity). There is much controversy over Frege’s theory, as if the ‘sense’ part, which is so relatively abstract and untamable, threatens to subsume the balance necessary for such a theory to walk the torturous tightrope between the abstract and the concrete, the identical and the different.

mankind has a common store of thoughts which is transmitted from one generation to another.”¹²⁵

Frege believes that language must be meaning based, simply because it is possible to transfer thoughts from generation to generation, and that in order to do so, something must be commonly understood/agreed in it (a common sense). If this were not the case, and all knowledge was located in the individual mind (in ideas), this transference over time would not take place and knowledge would die out. He argued that for public communication of this kind to take place, private ideas had to be displaced. Such theories of meaning, once an unimportant aspect of philosophy, certainly for Locke, Hobbes and Berkeley, who were less interested in public communication than private ideas, or mental discourse, become a central preoccupation of philosophers in the early 20th Century, and take on a major role in the work of Bertrand Russell and Wittgenstein.¹²⁶

Locke asked the following¹²⁷: Is the soul entirely empty, until written on (*tabula rasa*)? Does everything traced there come from the senses/experience, or, as Plato believed, are there latent ideas, which are sometimes ‘awakened’ by external experience?¹²⁸ Some of the metaphors Locke and Leibniz employed to explain this idea include the wax tablet, passively awaiting inscription, and the block of marble, whose grain dictates

¹²⁵ Op. cit., *Meaning and Reference*, p. 58.

¹²⁶ See, B. Russell, whose works are extensive. A selection of relevant texts includes: *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*, London: George Allen and Unwin, (W.W. Norton, 1940), *A History of Western Philosophy*, New York: Simon and Schuster, (George Allen and Unwin, 1946). (1948) *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*, London: George Allen and Unwin, (Simon and Schuster, 1948). Wittgenstein’s works have been cited previously.

¹²⁷ As explained by G. W. Leibniz, *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, preface para. 3 (written by 1703). Trans. A. G. Langley (La sale, III.: Open Court, 1916).

¹²⁸ Cf., *Meno* by Plato. Trans. By B. Jowett. Also see: Kant’s discussion on *a priori/a posteriori*. I. Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysic* (1783). A priori judgments are made in the absence of any prior experience, and therefore universal, while a posteriori judgments are grounded in experience, and are therefore singular.

the shapes, which can be “hewn from it by experience.” The first of these propositions is empiricist, the second rationalist, and the differing ideas relate to the subject of language acquisition, preceding any theories of how language carries ideas, or meaning.¹²⁹

Bertrand Russell rejected the theory of ideas outright. His theory of meaning denied that objects were mental, and in 1918 he projected an alternative theory entitled Logical Atomism. This theory held that the immediate objects of experience—involving sense data and universals such as colour—corresponded to ‘logical atoms’ (expressed in language). For Russell, the fixed elements of reality are atoms of meaning, or ‘simples’, out of which the world is constructed: In Logical Atomism there is a presupposition that there exists a perfect one-to-one correspondence between what Russell terms an ‘atom’ of language, and the corresponding reality.¹³⁰ He calls these elements of reality ‘objects’, which is not to say that they are objects in the traditional sense but, rather, discrete units of experience to which language refers by its naming function. Immediate objects are, for Russell, proper names, or what he terms logically proper names.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Noam Chomsky has more recently explored the idea that we possess innate grammars, which allow us to acquire language(s). He suggests that fundamentally, there is something in common (universal) in the grammar of all languages, which makes it possible for a child to acquire the ‘right’ grammar of, for example Russian, or Italian, with equal ease, if he or she encounters it in the environment. Chomsky observes that, since grammars are so different across languages, it would require a child to have a store of hundreds of possible grammars, unless there were such a ‘universal’ grammar. Chomsky also contends that there is a larger “species-specific innate human grammar”, making the ability to acquire any language innate to human beings.

¹³⁰ Cf., B. Russell, *Logic and Knowledge, Essays, 1901-1950*, (Capricorn, 1918). In *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, (Russell 1956), Russell outlines the principles of his theory. He states at the outset “As I have attempted to prove in *The Principles of Mathematics*, when we analyse mathematics, we bring it all back to logic”. p.178. Wittgenstein's approach to this theory is exemplified in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* of 1921.

¹³¹ Russell's theory is uncompromisingly referential. He states: “the meaning of an expression is that to which we refer when using the expression”. What is denoted by an utterance is what is currently being referred to: something named, although qualities such as ‘orange’ were considered by Russell to be abstract in nature, and were therefore called ‘abstract universals’. This theory allows Russell to claim that statements such as “The present King of France is bald” are entirely meaningful, even though there is no present King of France to refer to, since

However, at the same time, Russell also pointed out that a logically perfect language in which meaning was shared exactly, and unambiguously among speakers would be intolerable and dysfunctional:

“When one person uses a word, he does not mean by it the same thing as another person means by it. I have often heard it said that that is a misfortune. This is a mistake. It would be absolutely fatal if people meant the same things by their words. It would make all intercourse impossible, and language the most hopeless and useless thing imaginable, because the meaning of your words must depend on the nature of the objects you are acquainted with, and since different people are acquainted with different objects, they would not be able to talk to each other unless they attached quite different meanings to their words.”¹³²

The uniqueness of individual experience and reference is retained in Russell’s theory. Defying common sense, communication (and meaning) is made possible by virtue of the essentially private and ambiguous nature of experience. His claim comes close to the idealist’s notions of private *ideas* in arguing that meaning is a private, not public phenomenon, even though, for a proclaimed ‘referentialist’, this seems an odd notion. Logical form also differs from grammatical form (for instance, subject-predicate), and discounts specific content. ‘Pure’ logic states that deductive arguments are valid if the conclusion follows from the premises, and this is true irrespective of content. The content itself may be false, but so long as the ‘form’ of the argument is logically correct, the statement is deemed to be valid.¹³³

Early Wittgenstein, whose conception was similar to Russell’s and influential on his thinking, states in Proposition 1 of the *Tractatus* that: ‘The

‘meaning’ for Russell means ‘stands for’, or ‘has reference’. Ultimately, Russell was interested in what made human knowledge possible, and on what it was founded. His answer was that the world consists of these ‘atoms’ which are not physical, but logical objects, grounded in language. Wittgenstein will later take up, and expand upon, this notion in the *Tractatus*.

¹³² B. Russell, *Logic and Knowledge*, ‘Lectures on Logical Atomism’, p. 195

¹³³ In the example: “All my teachers are men, all men are mortal, so all my teachers are mortal”. The validity of this argument has nothing to do with the mortality of teachers (the content), but with the logical form of the sentence: “all A are B, all B are C, so all A are C”.

facts in logical space are the world'. According to the argument Wittgenstein puts forward in the *Tractatus*, truths and facts align. He claims that through an analysis of the 'logical forms of sentences', we can find out about the world, and calls this line of thought an example of 'linguistic idealism', in which 'being' is connected to the ability to be spoken about. Although the world clearly has an independent 'life' outside *me*, it is only through the "logical scaffolding' of my language" that I know it, and therefore the limits of my language *are*, as Wittgenstein proposed, the limits of my world.¹³⁴

1. The world is all that is the case.
 - 1.1 The world is the totality of facts, not of things.
 - 1.11 The world is determined by the facts, and by their being ALL the facts.
 - 1.12 For the totality of facts determines what is the case, and also whatever is not the case.
 - 1.13. The facts in logical space are the world.
 - 1.2 The world divides into facts.
 - 1.21 Each item can be the case or not the case while everything else remains the same.¹³⁵

In his later works, one of Wittgenstein's main arguments (in the *Philosophical Investigations*, and *Philosophical Grammar*), is that we need to understand the phenomenon of meaning in words, by reference to their role in human action ('in use'), as opposed, say, to their being associated with internal images.¹³⁶ He proposes that the world can be described by a mental 'map' or 'picture', formed through the logical function of language: one stridently opposed to the

¹³⁴ L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus, Logico-Philosophicus*, Trans. Daniel Kolak, (Mayfield, 1998), Proposition 1.

¹³⁵ L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, and *Philosophical Grammar*. See also, J. Perry, 'Davidson's Sentences and Wittgenstein's Builders', Presidential Address, Pacific Division APA, April 1994.

¹³⁶ Bergson elucidates and explores the concept of the memory-image in *Matter and Memory*, see H. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, specifically Chapters 1, 2 & 3. (Translated by N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer. New York: Zone Books, 1991).

possibility of metaphysical thinking in language and grounded in symbolic logic. As is well known, he later recanted large parts of the *Tractatus*,¹³⁷ but in the interim, influenced a generation of Logical Positivists (and later Logical Atomists), including Moritz Schlick, Rudolf Carnap and A. J. Ayer.¹³⁸ The later Wittgenstein, along with philosophers such as J. L. Austin and John Searle, emphasized ‘ordinary language use’, ‘family relationships’ and the concept of language as a ‘game’,¹³⁹ fully embedded in everyday use of language, in preference to the austere, scientific model proposed by the *Tractatus*. His aim in the *Philosophical Investigations*, and later works, is to point the way out of the traps which language puts in the way of understanding, by both clarifying the issues: “philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by language”, whose purpose is to “shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle”¹⁴⁰ and by pushing at the boundaries of what it is possible to say in language in order to illuminate its nature. However, as Daniel Kolak has pointed out: “in trying to show by *saying*, what can only be *shown*, Wittgenstein is doing what he claims is not strictly possible: using language to *see* beyond language”¹⁴¹ “we are invited to journey beyond the limits of our world”,¹⁴² despite the fact that in *The Tractatus*, Wittgenstein previously claims this is not possible:

5.6 *The boundary of my language is the boundary of my world.*

¹³⁷ Even at publication, Wittgenstein had his doubts about his theory, signing Moritz Schilck’s personal copy with the inscription “Each one of these sentences is the expression of a disease”. Kolak, D, 1998

¹³⁸ While a longer explanation of the contributions of these thinkers is outside the scope of this work, additional information can be found in Ayer’s *Language, Truth, and Logic*, (Gollancz, 1946), Schlick’s “Positivism and Realism” (rpt. in Sarkar (1996) and Ayer (1959)), and Carnap’s *Philosophy and Logical Syntax* (Thoemmes, 1996).

¹³⁹ C.f., J. L. Austin, *How to do things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. J. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (1969).

¹⁴⁰ Op. cit., *Philosophical Investigations*. §§109, 309.

¹⁴¹ Op. cit., *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. xi.

¹⁴² Ibid. p. iii

5.61 Logic fills the world: the boundary of logic is also the boundary of the world.

So in logic we cannot say “The world has this and this in it, but not that.”

For that would apparently presuppose that some possibilities were thereby excluded, which cannot be the case, since this would require that logic should extend beyond the boundary of the world; for only then could it have a view from the other side of the boundary.¹⁴³ What we cannot think, that we cannot think: we cannot therefore *say* what we cannot think.¹⁴⁴

In an attempt to qualify the issues, Viennese Logical Empiricist Moritz Schlick distinguished between ‘the pursuit of truth’ and ‘the pursuit of meaning’.¹⁴⁵ In the former (associated with science/objectivity), the focus is on

¹⁴³ The notion of boundaries, or the possibility of achieving views which transcend a boundary, are problematic here. Kant’s Transcendental Unity of Apperception makes clear that if something (x) is transcendent, it lies beyond a boundary, while if x is immanent (although this is a term that Kant is rarely concerned with directly), then it is on this side of the boundary, where immanence implies referring to nothing other than itself. However, if x is *transcendental*, then it is on the fence – perhaps even a property of the fence – in question. The transcendental is therefore that which is neither on one side, nor the other, but populates, or produces the medium, or process itself, collapsing subject/object, word/object, cognitive/cognized division[s]. For a discussion of immanence, Cf. Deleuze: *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?* (1991). Trans. *What Is Philosophy?*, (Columbia University Press, 1996). In Kant, a-priori truths are founded on reason alone, and thus independent of all experience. They are (in logical terms), *necessary* truths. By contrast, a-posteriori truths are grounded in experience, and are empirically-founded, which is to say, they are *contingent*, uncertain, and unreliable. A-priori truths are, therefore, in a general sense universal, while a-posteriori truths are particular. Cf. I. Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Trans. By Norman Kemp Smith (Macmillan, 1992). Further to this point, Hegel, speaking of science and the concomitant fear of error, which would undermine it, remarks: “[Science] takes for granted certain ideas about cognition as an *instrument* and as a *medium*, and assumes that there is a *difference between ourselves and this cognition*. Above all, it presupposes that the Absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other, independent and separated from it, and yet it is something real; or in other words, it presupposes that cognition which, since it is excluded from the Absolute, is surely outside of the truth as well, is nevertheless true, an assumption whereby what calls itself fear of error reveals itself rather as fear of the truth”³. In this context, Hegel wants to suggest that cognition could be seen to be a part of the ‘fence’: *transcendental*, not transcendent, nor immanent. Cognition is the boundary itself, not that which lies on either side of it. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 1807, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford University Press, USA, 1979, p. 49.

¹⁴⁴ Op. cit., *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p.37.

¹⁴⁵ See, M. Schlick, *Philosophical Papers, Volume I, [1925-1936]*, ed. by H. Mulder and F. B. van de Velde-Schlick, (Reidel, 1979). esp. ‘The Future of Philosophy’, p. 217.

revealing ‘contingent theses “about the world”’,¹⁴⁶ whereas in the second (associated with philosophy), the interconnections between concepts in use are emphasized. The Vienna circle claimed that meaning itself is the line of demarcation: physics has meaning, metaphysics does not.¹⁴⁷ This approach sets out to establish a hierarchy between meaning and truth which privileges the former. Logical Positivists such as Russell, Carnap, Schlick and others, used such a move to locate language within the realm of the natural sciences, and to distance it from (unscientific) metaphysical ‘phantoms’; the main methodology for this being empirical observation and verification. However, even Rudolf Carnap, speaking of Heidegger’s metaphysics in ‘The overcoming’,¹⁴⁸ commented: “The very idea of ‘logic’ dissolves in the whirl of a more basic questioning”,¹⁴⁹ which is, at best, an ambiguous comment and at worst (from Carnap’s point of view), comes close to a Heideggerian (metaphysical) perspective, in which: “Declarative sentences that lack cognitive meaning cannot be used to say anything, make no assertion; at best they excite emotions or suggest novelties that they cannot actually express.”¹⁵⁰

Critically undermining the reliability of the distinction being made by the Logical Positivists, Karl Popper points out that not *all* scientific theorizing is based on verifiability.¹⁵¹ For example, the theory of relativity existed in the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 151.

¹⁴⁷ The group of thinkers known as ‘The Vienna Circle’, included Schlick, Carnap, Otto Neurath (who also designed the International System of Typographic Picture Education, known as Isotype, symbol system) and Kurt Gödel. They focussed on the use of symbolic logic as a way to solve philosophical problems,

¹⁴⁸ R. Carnap, *The Elimination of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language*, (1932) ed. by A. J. Ayer, (The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill, 1959).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 494.

¹⁵⁰ Op. cit., *Meaning and Reference*, p. 96.

¹⁵¹ Cf., K. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, 1934 (as *Logik der Forschung*, English translation 1959), Also, ‘*Of Clouds and Clocks*, An Approach to the Problem of Rationality and the Freedom of Man’, The Arthur Holly Compton Memorial Lecture, presented at Washington University, MO, April 21, 1965 (published by Washington University, 1965). In *Of Clouds and Clocks*, Popper advocates an intermediate position between absolute verifiability and sheer randomness, in the form of what he terms a “plastic control”, which would allow for

realm of pure speculation until supported by observation at a later date. Moving from a reliance of ‘full empirical verification’ to a ‘principle of conformability’, Carnap later relaxed the criteria by which meaning is established (weakening the argument to a set of conceivable, or ‘in principle’ propositions) in response to such criticisms. However, the problem of how the verification principle *itself* is subjected to verification is still deeply problematic in all such arguments. In a system where verifiability is the key to meaning, how does one test the test? Or, per Wittgenstein ‘What is to be tested by what?’ The verification principle is relegated to a ‘performative self-contradiction’. To escape the paradox, the principle of verification would have to be in some way self-verifying, which could only be achieved by stepping outside the ‘circle’ of empirical observation/logical process, or, in other words, by stepping outside language itself. This all starts to take on peculiarly, and paradoxically, metaphysical overtones, resulting in a contradiction, since, as Carnap points out “Philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science [and] the logic of science is nothing other than the logical syntax of the language of science.”¹⁵²

In his essay *The Overcoming of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language*,¹⁵³ Rudolph Carnap stages an argument around the absolute, verifiable, meaning of language, in order to undermine what he contends were “metaphysical pseudo statements” made by Heidegger during his 1929 lecture *What is Metaphysics?* The goal of demonstrating a logically perfect language is pursued in Carnap’s essay, through a series of three columns, consisting of

a degree of flexibility to thought (and verification of truth/falsity), while acknowledging the need for a system of some kind. These ideas will be referred back to in Part III.

¹⁵² R. Carnap, *Logische Syntax der Sprache*. English translation 1937, *The Logical Syntax of Language*. Kegan Paul (Routledge, 1964), p. xiii.

¹⁵³ Op. cit., *The Elimination of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language*, p. 478.

statements and questions, some of which are correct, some of which violate the logical form of the sentence. Examples of logically ‘pure’ statements such as “What is outside?”¹⁵⁴ (Rain is outside), which are perfectly verifiable in both empirical and logical terms are contrasted to statements such as ‘The Nothing nothings’,¹⁵⁵ in a withering attack upon Heidegger’s metaphysics. Through this exercise, he maintains that:

“In the domain of metaphysics, including all philosophy of value and normative theory, logical analysis yields the negative result that the alleged statements in this domain are entirely meaningless. Therewith, a radical elimination of metaphysics is maintained.”¹⁵⁶

As Carnap illustrates, even if ‘nothing’ were admitted as a noun, or description of an entity, the statement ‘The Nothing Nothings’ proceeds to deny its own existence, and therefore ends in absurdity, having internally contradicted itself. Contributing to the lack of meaning in metaphysical statements, there is logical inconsistency in the grammatical and syntactical forms of metaphysical sentences. In his turn Heidegger, in *What is Metaphysics*, points out that science “wants to know nothing of the nothing”,¹⁵⁷ and proceeds to elucidate how the concept of the ‘nothing’ drives logic to its limit in requiring it to contemplate the uncontentable. In these two essays, a profound divergence of opinion over the use and purpose of language is laid bare.

“Even those who agree with our results”, he says, “will still feel plagued by something strange: are so many men from a variety of epochs and cultures, among them outstanding minds, really supposed to have expended such effort, indeed passionate fervour, on metaphysics, when it consists of nothing but meaningless strings of words? Is it conceivable that such words could have exerted such

¹⁵⁴ M. Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?,” in *Existence and Being*, ed. W. Brock (Henry Regnery Co., 1949), p. 69.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 636.

¹⁵⁶ Op. cit., *The Elimination of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language*, p. 455.

¹⁵⁷ Op. cit., *Existence and Being*, p. 221.

an effect on readers up to the present day if they contained not even errors, but really nothing at all?”¹⁵⁸

Despite its flaws, metaphysics, according to Carnap, continues to possess a hold over men as a way to express their feelings and emotions towards life, and to concretize their ‘attitudes and dispositions’ towards intangible qualities and other men. He likens metaphysics to a kind of poetry or music, while inscribing the efforts of Metaphysicians with an inevitable futility, stating: “metaphysicians are musicians without a talent for music.”¹⁵⁹ While poetry, music and art have a specific function, and are well-suited to that task, Carnap claims that metaphysics is not well-served by a language which will not readily distribute into true and false positions, which can be verified. In other words, in metaphysics, rhetoric and expression outweigh truth-functions, and the mimetic surfaces of language, while appearing to offer knowledge, conflate art with theory.¹⁶⁰ Art and poetry need to know their limits, and embrace expression, and Nietzsche is, for Carnap, the exemplar of the philosopher whose immanent expression avoids the pitfalls of metaphysicians such as Heidegger. Nietzsche, performing his exhilarating linguistic manoeuvres, in books such as *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, never misleads us into thinking he is dealing with theory (unlike Heidegger, in whose work he feels

¹⁵⁸ Op. cit., *The Elimination of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language*, p. 677.

¹⁵⁹ Op. cit., *The Elimination of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language*. In contrast, Wittgenstein remarked that: “Philosophy ought really to be written only as a *form of poetry*”. (Philosophie dürfte man eigentlich nur *dichten*.) — Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value and Marcel Proust, Selected Letters, 1880-1903* (Doubleday, 1983) p. xxii.

Wittgenstein also reminds us: “Do not forget that a poem, although it is composed in the language of information, is not used in the language-game of giving information”. — Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, ed. Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (University of California Press, 1970).

¹⁶⁰ Supra Parts II of the thesis, where these same confluences will be given a different, more positive, airing.

logical fallacies and pseudo-statements abound), when his philosophy is openly, and unrepentantly an art of poetry.¹⁶¹

Taking all this into account, it is difficult not to ask: if applied rigorously, where would this view of language leave art, poetry, philosophy? If such ruthless logical analysis of language is applied to these areas of production, none would sustain the verification principle, and yet, philosophy has concerned itself with questions of metaphysics and art for thousands of years.

As Simon Critchley explains, Heidegger, for his part, draws a distinction between: “The technical-scientist view of language and the speculative-hermeneutic experience of language.”¹⁶² Language is understood by both as the realm where thinking takes place, but there is fundamental disagreement as to how to describe and define that realm. In the first instance, the way in which thought is contoured by language is understood by the first to be predicated on the elimination of kind of everyday contingencies and ambiguities, which blur access to truth, by insisting upon ‘clarity’ and logical precision.¹⁶³ In the second, language is a living, experiential, and plural

¹⁶¹ According to Carnap, Metaphysics is like art, in that it gives a feeling or expression toward life, but it is ultimately inferior to art because the artist or the poet does not pretend toward a theoretical or cognitive (conceptual) content. Metaphysics is, in this sense, bad art, and the metaphysician a frustrated artist without the ability to express himself in the appropriate way. Carnap views art as being without intellectual substance, and allied solely to the emotional and psychological. As Critchley points out, and as Arne Naess once commented, Carnap ‘reads Heidegger as the devil would read the bible’, in a full-scale collision between the scientific view of matters and the metaphysical, between the rational and the emotive. See also, A. Naess, *Four Modern Philosophers: Carnap, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Sartre* (University of Chicago Press, 1968). Following on from the analysis of language undertaken by Russell, and Wittgenstein during his *Tractatus* phase, Carnap, in *The Elimination of Metaphysics*, broadly claimed that propositions which cannot be analysed in terms of elementary statements of facts are by definition metaphysical in nature; for instance, statements about morals or religion. Such metaphysical statements are dismissed as neither logically nor empirically verifiable, and therefore meaningless. Logical analysis, he states, which acknowledges only tautologies or contradictions, will, necessarily, overcome them in all cases.

¹⁶² S. Critchley, *A Short Introduction to Continental Philosophy*, (Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 104.

¹⁶³ Supra Part III.

‘event’, essentially hermeneutic and discursive, which requires attentiveness to its ambiguities, and sensitivity toward its infinitely porous and supple nature.

Heidegger warned that language is in danger of becoming a technical instrument, part of the ‘technologization’ of the world.¹⁶⁴ He believed that this kind of logical analysis most properly belongs to science, draws its methods from it, and marks the moment when philosophy becomes a form of reductive technical and formal thinking. Critchley puts the problem in this way:

“Logical analysis is the most extreme expression of an objectified experience of language. The living, breathing texture of everyday language is denuded into a formal, technical series of procedures.”¹⁶⁵

From Heidegger’s perspective, the ‘will-to-power’¹⁶⁶ and domination of the natural world by technology are close allies of this form of thought. Moreover, by attempting to simply eliminate the use of words such as ‘being’ and ‘nothingness’, the Logical Positivists revealed (for Heidegger) their unconscious metaphysics, since in his view the entire history of metaphysics was marked by the ‘forgetfulness of being’.¹⁶⁷ Such a denial, in his view, constitutes a radical acknowledgement of this forgetfulness.

To summarise, the early verificationists attempted to eliminate metaphysics by applying a single criterion, but, realizing that the principle of verification collapsed as soon as it was stated, they relaxed the criteria. The attempt to dispense with metaphysics through logical analysis of language is exemplified by the dispute between Carnap and Heidegger over the meaning

¹⁶⁴ Cf., M. Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *Basic Writings*, Ed. David Krell (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993), pp. 284-290.

¹⁶⁵ Op. cit., *A Short Introduction to Continental Philosophy*, p.103.

¹⁶⁶ Op. cit., *Question Concerning Technology*, p. 5. This expands upon this point suggesting that Technology or the Techne is the 'grasp', the 'bringing forth' or 'the enframing' of that which extends from 'man'.

¹⁶⁷ Op. cit., *Being and Time*, p. 388. Heidegger suggests that the forgetfulness constitutes a 'positive rapture' rather than a negation.

and purpose of language. The notion that what cannot be known about does not exist is fundamental during this period and is reinforced through the work of Wittgenstein and others who sought the answer to this question through language. The concern with meanings was dominated by external, not internal issues pertaining to what can be known, supplanting the earlier focus *on ideas*. Syntax, grammar, logic and the relationship between language and external reality are the key issues, as is the belief that *below* the level of what is being said lies meaning. Deleuze and others will later counterclaim that there is, in fact nothing *but* the surface, and that one needs to look no further to find meaning: “everything happens at the border [surface].”¹⁶⁸

1.4 The Sovereignty of the Sentence

“The death of meaning”¹⁶⁹ is signalled by Paul Feyerabend, who is part of the positivist movement that states: “there is nothing to language over and above what is said”. He was able to make this argument because of an observation about the difficulty in claiming that theory is stable within science. If the meanings of words change over time, and/or mean different things to different people whose level of expertise differs¹⁷⁰ then how is it possible to establish

¹⁶⁸ Op. cit., G. Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit); tr. as *The Logic of Sense*, by M. Lester with C. Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p.9. This idea will be returned to in Parts III of the thesis.

¹⁶⁹ Hacking, I., *Ibid.*, p.128. See P. Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (1975), where he states: “[is] it not possible that science as we know it today, or a “search for the truth” in the style of traditional philosophy, will create a monster? Is it not possible that an objective approach that frowns upon personal connections between the entities examined will harm people, turn them into miserable, unfriendly, self-righteous mechanisms without charm or humour? “Is it not possible,” asks Kierkegaard, “that my activity as an objective [or critico-rational] observer of nature will weaken my strength as a human being?” I suspect the answer to many of these questions is affirmative and I believe that a reform of the sciences that makes them more anarchic and more subjective (in Kierkegaard’s sense) is urgently needed.” *Against Method*. p. 154. The need for a different logic which can approach the ‘anarchic and subjective; will be the subject of Parts III and IV of the thesis.

¹⁷⁰ Feyerabend noted that the ability to see sentences involving theoretical terms as meaningful is based on particular forms of knowledge “what we see at any moment is itself often

fixed, reliable meanings which would then allow scientific theorizing to take place? Science, especially, would appear to be reliant upon the fixed meanings of words and the confirmed nature of its laws, which support other hypotheses. He points out that many theories are dependent upon other, overarching theories for their meaning, but that there are theories such as non-Western forms of medicine, which defy description in *this* system and are often dismissed as a result. There is, in other words, what could be termed an incommensurability between theories in different domains:

“Many of the words used in expressing scientific laws denote ideas which depend for their significance on the truth of other laws and would lose all meaning if those laws were not true... A concept is a word denoting an idea, which depends for its meaning or significance on the truth of some law.”¹⁷¹

If this is the case, then when the law changes, or the theory is discredited and replaced by another conclusion, the meaning of such statements changes, and the reliability of scientific theorizing is undermined. It is these kinds of antinomies that lead Feyerabend to conclude that *meaning* as expressed through language is an inadequate and unstable criteria for doing science.¹⁷²

While accepting the inevitable consequence, that incommensurability is embedded in the system, it also permits him to move out of the meaning-based approach to language and claim that possessing a theory of meaning means that we fall into problems:

“The basic error [for Feyerabend], is to have a theory of meaning at all. We should abandon meanings and contemplate only sentences. Consider what we say, not what we mean.”¹⁷³

determined by our knowledge”. Hacking, I., p. 120 Feyerabend wanted to: “Free people from the tyranny of philosophical obfuscation and abstract concepts”, *Against Method*. p. viii.

¹⁷¹ N. Campbell, *Foundations of Science: The Philosophy of Theory and Experiment* (Dover, 2000). p. 45

¹⁷² Op. cit., P. Feyerabend, *Against Method*, (Verso, 1993).

¹⁷³ Op. cit., *Meaning and Reference*, p. 127.

According to Tarski, an axiom and ‘rule of inference’ of this system involves being able to prove the correspondence between any sentence (*s*) of a language such as German (*L*) and a T-sentence (Truth sentence) such as (1). That snow is (in fact) white proves the case. In theory, this axiom can be employed ad infinitum, but, since language is potentially infinite, the number of sentences which would require this ‘test’ is theoretically boundless.

There is, however, a famous objection to Tarski’s theory of truth. It follows from a basic difficulty with Tarski’s notion of ‘truth-in-a-language’, which claims that truth is *within* sentences.¹⁷⁶ The alternative point of view argues that sentences cannot contain within themselves ‘truth’ *per se*, since they are “mere typographical entities”. This begs the question: can the sentences *themselves*, which express propositions that *can* either be true or false, be “properly called true or false”?¹⁷⁷ For example, a theory of truth for a ‘natural’ language such as English or German must take into account the non-objective nature of those languages. Unlike symbolic languages used for mathematics, which do not allow for ambiguities or interpretations, natural languages:

“Must take account of the fact that many sentences vary in truth value depending on the time they are spoken, the speaker, and even, perhaps, the audience. We can accommodate this phenomenon either by declaring that it is particular utterances or speech acts, and not sentences, that have truth-values, or by making truth a relation that holds between a sentence, a speaker, and a time.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ See: A. Tarski, ‘The concept of truth in formalized languages’, *Logic, Semantics and Metamathematics*, (Oxford University Press, Oxford [1956]), 1935, J. H. Woodger (trans.); First published as ‘Der Wahrheitsbegriff in Den Formaliserten Sprachen’, *Studia Philosophica* I (1935).

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p134.

¹⁷⁸ ‘Semantics for Natural Languages’, in *Linguaggia nella Società e nella Tecnica* (Milan: Edizione di Comunita, 1970), p.180.

Bearing in mind the question of whether it is possible to say that sentences themselves are true or false, the following kind of statement can be made: The present sentence, [the 25th line, which begins on page 12 of this essay] is false. The sentence you have just read is well formed in English Language but is false if it is true and true if it is false.¹⁷⁹ This paradox, which relies on languages' ability to be self-referential, evades Tarski's truth test, since there can be no corresponding T-sentence associated with it. In contrast, theories of speech acts assert that truth is not in sentences, but in the speech acts themselves.¹⁸⁰

In summary, in place of ideas and later, meaning, sentences become the interface between the knower and the known. Despite difficulties with establishing exact models of truth, and the contingencies which are a part of the process of translation between languages, the sentence is autonomous. Sentences are essentially public: they are about the 'we', rather than the 'me', marking an essential distance from the time when internal, private ideas dominated. Mental ideas, and meaning are less important than the 'surface[s]' created by a fabric of sentences which form a "world of the sentence" through public, communicable acts of language.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Supra Part II, *The Liar, Paradox, and Other Truths*.

¹⁸⁰ Cf, the work of philosophers such as J.L. Austin in his book: *How to do Things With Words*.

¹⁸¹ Cf, Karl Popper, who rejects the claim that that the very nature of knowledge itself has changed along with these linguistic ruptures. His book *Objective Knowledge* posits an autonomous field of knowledge, with its own laws, residing almost entirely in books and computers, and not in the human mind. He maintains that knowledge itself does not change fundamentally: only its form of presentation.

1.5 Sense /Event

“Philosophy must be ontology, it cannot be anything else; but there is no ontology of essence, there is only an ontology of sense.”¹⁸²

“Sense is this wonderful word which is used in two opposite meanings. On the one hand it means the organ of immediate apprehension [i.e., the sense of smell], but on the other hand we mean by it the sense, the significance, the thought, the universal underlying the thing. And so sense is connected on the one hand with the immediate external aspect of existence, and on the other hand with its inner essence.”¹⁸³

Something is uniformly absent from these various accounts of language, whether ideas, meaning, or sentence-based, and it is what will be termed throughout the thesis as the ‘surface’, or the non-identical. It is this missing ‘surface’ (or rather series of surfaces) which the thesis concerns itself with ‘sounding’.¹⁸⁴ This surface is not to be understood as something opposed to depth—as an appearance—or in contrast to essence. The missing surface comes closest to what Deleuze has termed the ‘event’, which is a form of sense, but not the same kind to be found in the Fregean model of *Sinn*,¹⁸⁵ where sense and reference are separate elements in the production of meaning; clearly delineated, immaterial, unambiguous, and certainly not mingled or paradoxical. This event-based form of sense produces a number of a-identical surfaces, or a negative dialectic as Adorno configures it.¹⁸⁶ For Benjamin, translation is a material event, one which has a specificity, and is contoured.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² N. Widder, *Deleuzian Surface Sense, The Issues (in Contemporary Culture and Aesthetics)*, Vol. 1, (University of Greenwich, 2005), pp. 11-20.

¹⁸³ N. Widder, *Reflections on Time and Politics*, (Penn State University Press, 2008). “Immanence and Sense”, p. 35.

¹⁸⁴ The term ‘sounding’ has been used here, rather than identifying, or locating. To do either would be to fix the meaning, and subordinate what I want to open onto as an ‘acoustic’ form of understanding, to a representational one.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Frege, *On Sense and Reference*.

¹⁸⁶ *Supra* Part III.

¹⁸⁷ W. Benjamin, *Illuminations*. ‘The Task of the Translator’, edited and introduced by Hannah Arendt, and translated by Harry Zohn (Fontana Press, 1992), p.70.

Deleuze thought that there was more to the relationship between words and the ideas/things they denote than simply the act of pointing (whether internally to mental discourse or ideas, or externally, to the world of things). The relatively simple correspondence between the two, assumed in such earlier theories of meaning is undone by Deleuze's suggestion that there exists a 'fourth dimension' of language, operating at a sub-level and which evades any form of representation. However, this intangible and largely indescribable 'sense' is what grounds Deleuze's entire conception of language, and is also the way in which, in his work, the surface comes to be understood as depth, in a reversal of priorities from earlier philosophies of language, and an exposure of their inadequacies in accounting for language, as well as paradox, as will be shown.¹⁸⁸

Deleuze demonstrates how the Epicureans and the Stoics both understood *things* on the basis of what in them language made accessible, or manifest. Where the Epicureans favoured nouns and verbs, since "nouns are like atoms or linguistic bodies which are coordinated through their declension, and adjectives like the qualities of these composites",¹⁸⁹ the Stoics located language at the linguistic surface which is constituted by verbs, conjugation, and incorporeal events, which involve time. Deleuze also attempts to show how the 'event' haunts language.¹⁹⁰ The event, which is unspoken, and incorporeal, nonetheless therefore makes language possible, subsisting in language as its primary means of expression, and partaking in the moment of

¹⁸⁸ Op. cit., *Logic of Sense*, p. 210. Deleuze suggests that there are three, distinct, organizational figures which can be applied to language: the metaphysical or transcendental surface, the incorporeal abstract line and the decentered point. He articulates the convergence of divergent series, which again diverge, without correction, producing paradoxical elements. Supra Chapter three, where these three figures will provide the basis for an articulation of sensual surfaces, and their relationship to art and paradox. Supra Parts III.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p.183.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 'Twenty-Sixth series'.

expression. That which is unable to be represented, but which nonetheless makes expression possible, Deleuze terms the event.¹⁹¹

“Sense is the fourth dimension of the proposition. The Stoics discovered it along with the event: *sense, the expressed of the proposition*, is an incorporeal, complex, and irreducible entity, at the surface of things, a pure event which inheres or subsists in the proposition.”¹⁹²

Representation, according to Deleuze, is extrinsic by nature, operating on the basis of resemblance, or mimesis; exclusively externalized. However, for Deleuze, there is something which consistently escapes this manner of representation; a matter internal to the expression (enveloped, or subsisting within it), which provides its fully ‘comprehensive’ character while remaining enigmatically inexpressible. The example he uses is of this ‘unrepresentable’ is death,¹⁹³ which is a concept forever extrinsic to the signification as long as actual death is not realized: in other words, death is ‘deprived of sense’ in advance of the event of death, and this shows how representation is always abstract and empty; incomplete and unfulfilled.

For Deleuze, without the event, representation would remain ‘lifeless and senseless’. In his theory of sense, the ‘extra-representative’ exceeds the functional, while the tension between the representable and the non-representable is the ‘merely expressed’: that which makes possible the fullest form of representation:

‘Representation envelops the event in another nature, it envelops it at its borders, it stretches until this point, and it brings about this lining or hem. This is the operation which defines living usage, to the extent that representation, when it does not reach this point,

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p.145 (Twentieth series). Deleuze said: ‘The expression, which differs in nature from the representation, acts no less as that which is enveloped (or not) inside the representation... Representation must encompass an expression which it does not represent, but without which it would not be ‘comprehensive’, and would have truth only by chance or from outside’.

¹⁹² Ibid., p.19.

¹⁹³ G. Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, (Zone Books, 2001). pp. 28-29.

remains only a dead letter confronting that which it represents, and stupid in its representiveness'.¹⁹⁴

The assumptions of language-as-representation are precisely what Deleuze suspends and ultimately rejects, in favour of what, inspired by the Stoics, he describes as “the fourth dimension of the proposition”, or “sense”, which is in turn closely allied to ‘the event’. This suggests that sense is simultaneously hidden and revealed within, and by, the structure of language, but at a level which is only enacted through the ‘event’ of language; being both responsible for, and at the same time responsive to it.¹⁹⁵ This is a slippery concept to articulate, since by definition, it eludes categories, and resists representation through language. However, in short: the version of sense which Deleuze identifies, subsists in language, and in material and acoustic forms of expression, but does not correspond to, or ‘belong’ to those forms as a recognizable physical or temporal effect; it operates instead at the im-material surface, at what he calls the “[T]hin film at the limit of words and things.”¹⁹⁶ In contrast, and as we have seen earlier in this chapter, most philosophies of language prior to Deleuze, such as the ones briefly outlined in the first half of this section, take as a given an innate ability of language to quite literally ‘fix’ concepts, or to denote/point toward objects (ideas/things) external to word(s). This version of sense and meaning cannot account for this fourth dimension of sense which Deleuze sees as critical to the ability of language to articulate on behalf of external objects, but also to be articulate in and of itself: immanently.

¹⁹⁴ Op. cit., *Logic of Sense*, p. 146.

¹⁹⁵ This is a point which is developed, and returned to, throughout *The Logic of Sense*.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.31. The use of the term ‘im-material’ here, implies an immanent material surface which is both attached and unattached to the surface of which it forms a part. This will also be described as a ‘Negative Dialectic’ after Adorno, and will be further developed as a way of understanding the acoustic economies of surface, in Part III.

This ‘event/sense’, which inheres in language, in an incorporeal form, and which makes language possible, but is unrepresentable through any form of visual, verbal, or syntactical expression is described by Deleuze in the following way: “The event speaks more than it is spoken about”,¹⁹⁷ and “what is expressed is not the same as its expression.”¹⁹⁸

*“Sense is both the expressible or the expressed of the proposition, and the attribute of the state of affairs. It turns one side toward things and one side toward propositions. But it does not merge with the proposition which expresses it any more than with the state of affairs or the quality which the proposition denotes. It is exactly the boundary between propositions and things... It is in this sense that it is an ‘event’. We will not therefore ask what is the sense of the event: the event is sense itself.”*¹⁹⁹

Describing the effect(s) of ‘event’, in the opening pages of *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze illustrates how in Lewis Carroll’s ‘Alice’ stories, something called the ‘pure event’ is revealed through language. In the statement: ‘Alice becomes larger’, the familiar linear time/space relations in language give way to an ever-deferred present, characterized by an essential simultaneity, involving two or more things happening at the same time; in this case, both larger and smaller in the same instant; pulling in both directions at once; unfixable in any present; mobile.

In this move, Deleuze is able to show how language is never as simple as it appears. Alice is both smaller and larger at the same time by virtue of a

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.181.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.81. An examination of the event in language shows that Deleuze proposes an expression which is both internal and invisible to language, but nonetheless intrinsic and crucial to meaning; something unrepresentable but irreducible and essential. In later chapters, I will argue that the material forms of language are of the nature of an ‘event’ in the sense Deleuze proposes, and that it is at the level of the ‘pure’ event, or its difference to its-self, that language has meaning at all. It is here, where language is both specific in terms of the uniqueness of each ‘event’ of language (each utterance, each printing, each inscription, each performance, with all their peculiar “timbres” and tensions, are unrepeatable events), but where at the same time language is abstracted from its specific application as a bearer of ‘sense’; stripped of its usual denotative character in philosophical accounts of language, that we see the meaningful in language: in its immanent, mimetic, paradoxical surfaces.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

paradoxical aspect of language whereby in the instant of saying ‘Alice becomes larger’ she is by necessity both larger than she was, but at the same time smaller than she will be. Language as ‘becoming’ is irreconcilable with fixity, permanence and identity and the ‘event’, in which *both* senses and directions are available at any given moment, forces us to reconsider notions of permanence, fixed qualities and the ‘present’ of language upon which many accounts of meaning are founded. In one simple example, Deleuze’s reconsideration of time and space in language challenges the idea that language fixes meaning absolutely; questions its representational function, and begins to describe entirely other relations between language and meaning. Language is revealed to be paradoxical, due to its temporal contradictions.²⁰⁰

Deleuze asks:

“Is there something, *aliquid*, which merges neither with the proposition, nor with the object or the state of affairs, which the proposition denotes, neither with the “lived”, or representation or the mental activity of the person who expresses herself in the proposition, nor with concepts or even signified essences? If there is, sense, or that which is expressed by the proposition, would be irreducible to individual states of affairs, particular images, personal beliefs, and universal or general concepts. The Stoics said it all: neither word nor body, neither sensible representation nor rational representation. Better yet, perhaps, sense would be “neutral”, altogether indifferent to both particular and general, singular and universal, personal and impersonal. It would be of an entirely different nature.”²⁰¹

So for Deleuze, ‘Sense’ belongs neither to the signifier (the proposition) nor the signified, as it does for Frege. It stands out/side both, and undoes those binaric distinctions. It is not a form of representation, nor is it one with the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 25. ‘Sense’ could also be explained in this way, with reference to the ‘looking glass’: “To pass to the other side of the mirror is to pass from the relation of denotation to the denotation of expression—without pausing at intermediaries, namely at manifestation and signification. It is to reach a region where language no longer has any relation to that which it denotes, but only to that which it expresses, that is, to sense”.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 23.

concept, or essences. In this respect, ‘sense’ as Deleuze understands it, is beyond and outside attachment to any particular, or any universal.²⁰² However, he also asks whether we need a new conception of sense:

“But is it necessary to recognize such a supplementary instance? Or must we indeed manage to get along with what we already have: denotation, manifestation, and signification?... It is difficult to respond to those who wish to be satisfied with words, things, images, and ideas. For we may not even say that sense exists in things or in the mind; it has neither physical nor mental existence... we can only infer it indirectly, on the basis of the circle where the ordinary dimensions of the proposition lead us. It is only by breaking open the circle, as in the case of the Möbius strip, by unfolding and untwisting it, that the dimension of sense appears for itself, in its irreducibility, and also in its genetic power as it animates an a priori internal model of the proposition.”²⁰³

According to Deleuze, Plato pointed to the existence of two dimensions: one which considers things as fixed, at rest and measurable, the other in a state of ‘pure becoming’, which is immeasurable and never stable. Plato also identified a certain ‘madness’ with the restless ‘becoming’ of language: one, which denies past and present relations, and throws us headlong into the infinite nature of things in a deeply provocative way. Deleuze suggests that Lewis Carroll’s ‘nonsense’ language does more than ‘bewitch’ the reasoning faculties. He asks:

“Is it not possible that there are two distinct dimensions internal to language in general—one always concealed by the other, yet continually coming to the aid of, or subsisting under, the other?... Could this relation be, perhaps, essential to language, as in the case

²⁰² Deleuze argues that denotation and signification are *not* the ground of language, but that they follow it. The event is what grounds language for Deleuze, and sense presupposes/is expressed by it. Again, the event cannot be assigned to either the proposition, nor the one who proposes: “Denotation and manifestation do not found language, they are only made possible with it. They presuppose the expression. The expression is founded on the event, as an entity of the expressible or the expressed. What renders language possible is the event insofar as the event is confused neither with the proposition which expresses it, nor with the state of the one who pronounces it, nor with the state of affairs denoted by the proposition. And in truth, without the event all of this would only be noise—and an indistinct noise. For not only does the event make possible and separate that which it renders, possible, it also makes distinctions within what it renders possible (see, for example, the triple distinction in the proposition of denotation, manifestation, and signification).” *Ibid.*, p. 182.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* p. 23.

of a “flow” of speech, or a wild discourse which would increasingly slide over its referent, without ever stopping?”²⁰⁴

These observations would suggest that the ability to ‘name’ and therefore fix a concept is a fiction, and that (as Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass* suggests) language is inherently elusive and unstable:

“I see nobody on the road”, said Alice.

“I only wish I had such eyes”, the King remarked in a fretful tone,

“To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance, too! Why, it’s as much as I can do to see real people by this light!”²⁰⁵

In *Through the Looking Glass*, language is frequently inverted, while Lewis Carroll applies portmanteau words, puns and peculiar interpretations in order to draw attention to the absurdity of claims that language is logical and unambiguous. One of the main themes running through the ‘Alice’ books is the fear of losing one’s name.²⁰⁶ As Alice enters the ‘looking glass’ wood, she, and everything around her lose their names. Consequently, Fawns no longer fear children, and trees no longer know they are trees since they do not know their names, and consequently how they should behave. In this way, Carroll potently illustrates how elusive and fragile denotation or naming really is.

1. 6 Derrida and Textual Sublation

In the discussion of prefaces to philosophical work which begins the preface to Derrida’s, *Grammatology* it is explained that Hegel’s understanding of the literary convention of the preface involves the theme of sublation:

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p.2

²⁰⁵ L. Carroll, *Alice Through The Looking Glass*, (Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 199.

²⁰⁶ This excerpt counterpoints Heidegger’s metaphysics of ‘nothing’, which Carnap and the Logical Positivists were so quick to dismiss, by making a brief turn of emphasis, illustrating the shifting of meaning within language.

“*Aufhebung* is a relationship between two terms where the second at once annuls the first and lifts it up into a higher sphere of existence.”²⁰⁷ In a hierarchical way: “A successful preface is *aufgehoben* into the text it precedes, just as a word is *aufgehoben* into its meaning.”²⁰⁸ The preface is absorbed into the higher level of meaning of the text itself and the word (material, temporal, sensory) is always subservient to its meaning. “It is as if, to use one of Derrida’s structural metaphors, the son or seed (preface or word), caused or engendered by the father (text or meaning) is recovered by the father and then justified.”²⁰⁹ The ‘actual’ word is thus sublated into the ‘higher’ sphere of meaning and enters into a classic signifier/signified relationship, where signified is assumed to be dominant; superseding and negating (while simultaneously preserving) the signifier.

Derrida points out through this analysis that the word in-and-of-itself has been rendered transparent to the sovereignty of the concept; thoroughly sublated in Hegelian fashion, and proceeds to argue for a model which does not rely on this classic opposition, preferring the term dissemination, which implies a move away from identification and hierarchy in language, toward a fragmentary and self-perpetuating linguistic event. This poses the question of whether the material word inserts itself between signifier and signified in a way similar to the reading/re-reading which Derrida claims produces a ‘simulacrum of the original.’²¹⁰ In doing so, the identity of language is destabilized/reconsidered. One of the questions which subsists in this

²⁰⁷ J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. xi.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. p. xi.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. xi.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. xii, (Johns Hopkins, 1976). Derrida makes the point in the following way: ‘The book is not repeatable in its “identity”: each reading of the book produces a simulacrum of the “original” that is itself the mark of the shifting and unstable subject that Proust describes, using and being used by a language that is also shifting and unstable.’

investigation is whether there anything more *to* the word than the *reading* of it; more than its *meaning*, more than the *idea*, asking in turn, where its meaning lies, and anticipating a point which will be taken up again in Part II: what kind of ‘groundless ground’ language originates from:

“A subject who supposedly would be the absolute origin of his own discourse and supposedly would construct it “out of nothing”, “out of whole cloth”, would be the creator of the verb, the verb itself.”²¹¹

In this fragment, Derrida points to the impossibility of stepping outside language, and this statement could also be read as a challenge to those philosophies which would make claims to attaining ‘pure’ logic through language, which is a point Nietzsche has also made, in *The Will to Power*, and *Human, All Too Human*.²¹² However, sloughing off the ‘received historical discourse’ which shapes thought (what Benjamin will call its historical ‘sedimentation’) would require the reinvention of language at source, replacing one, compromised system of reference, with another, inviolate one.²¹³ In Derrida’s remarks, the notion of ‘verb’, speaks to the system under question, reinforcing it obliquely. There is nothing to suggest that a reinvented language would adopt the forms and structures of the one(s) we know.²¹⁴

²¹¹ J. Derrida, ‘Structure, Sign, Play’, in *Writing and Difference*, (Routledge, 1978), p.360.

²¹² Supra Part III.

²¹³ Supra Part II, where Leibniz, Wilkins and others’ attempts to create inviolate systems of language will be posed as equally problematic.

²¹⁴ It is as if, to use one of Derrida’s structural metaphors, the son or seed (preface or word), caused or engendered by the father (text or meaning) is recovered by the father and then justified.

1.7 Material | Music

Another factor frequently overlooked within traditional philosophies of language, especially as they relate to the establishment of sense, and meaning is the fact that language is experienced in time and space, and has physical presence in both its written and spoken forms: that it is not only supplemented by, but grounded in materiality. For instance, in a very simple example, in spoken language, intonation and the way emphasis is verbally or typographically placed on a word within a sentence (such as italicizing a word for emphasis) can alter the entire meaning of a statement. The use of punctuation can affect the entire temporal and grammatical structure of a piece of text. A simple spelling mistake can push language over the border into unknown territory.²¹⁵ Joyce moved very consciously into the space between signifier and signified, to confound the distinction and open out onto new linguistic experiences made possible only by the abandonment of such hierarchies. What have been termed the ‘Babelain’ form(s) of Joyce’s language²¹⁶ are closer to the rhythms of lived experience and, it could be argued, have more in common with Bergson’s notions of ‘elan vital’²¹⁷ and duration than anything which traditional linguistic models could provide. They present the ‘linguistic cascade’ in full flood, which can be seen in both

²¹⁵ Cf. J. Joyce, *Finnegan’s Wake* (Penguin Classics, 1999), and *Ulysses*, (Penguin Classics, 2000), for numerous examples of purposeful spelling ‘mistakes’. (see fig. 8, 9 10, 11)

²¹⁶ In *Finnegan’s Wake*, James Joyce writes “Soferim Babel... every person and every thing in the chaosmos of alle... was moving and changing every part of the time.”²¹⁶ The story of the Tower of Babel and the subsequent ‘confusion of tongues’ is a paradigm of the essential linguistic character of *Finnegan’s Wake*, linking its themes to the fall of man and the danger of prideful assertion. Finnegan, the hod-carrier and builder, falls from his ladder and dies. In The story of Babel, the tongues are confused and man consequently scattered across the face of the earth, unable to co-operate in the building of the tower. Joyce recognised certain archetypal lessons to be understood from such biblical paradigms and consciously wove them into the text as an internal dialectic.

²¹⁷ H. Bergson, *Key Writings*. Edited by Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey. (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 369.

Ulysses, and *Finnegan's Wake*,²¹⁸ where Joyce asks that we abandon, along with him, any pretence to the reliable symbolic/significatory function of language, in favour of a fully immanent 'experience' of language, which Part III will pose as less visual, than 'acoustic' in nature.

Adorno, speaking of the relationship between music and language,²¹⁹ states that music, while employing "a temporal sequence of articulated sounds which are more than just sounds",²²⁰ along with syntax, and formal structures, does not possess an external 'signified' (as with language). Traditionally, therefore, and by Adorno's own account, music is non-conceptual. However: "if tonality does not quite generate concepts, it may at least be said to create lexical items",²²¹ and this is shown by repetitive sequences, and 'harmonic' figures which reappear, and become 'universal ciphers'.²²² Contextualized, these figures and sequences in turn provide:

"Space for musical specificity, just as concepts do for a particular reality, and at the same time, as with language, their abstractness [is] redeemed by the context in which they [are] located. The only difference is that the identity of these musical concepts [lies] in their own nature and not in a signified outside them."²²³

Adorno also points out the non-identical nature of music and language: while possessing similar attributes, the two divide along the fault-line of intentionality. "With music, intentions are broken and scattered out of their

²¹⁸ One of the essential characteristics of *Finnegan's Wake* is that it is alive, and open to change with reading and re-reading: that its language changes and shifts, figuratively, with every reading. The text is an affirmation of the living character of language and a positive statement on the power of the word. Far from 'confounding language' as in the myth of the Tower of Babel, Joyce is seeking to re-establish the material reality of language.

²¹⁹ Op. cit., *Quasi una Fantasia, Essays on Modern Music*, pp. 3-10.!

²²⁰ Ibid. p. 1.

²²¹ Ibid. p. 2.

²²² In cryptography, a cipher (or cypher) is an algorithm for performing encryption and decryption — a series of well-defined steps that can be followed as a procedure.

²²³ Op. cit., *Quasi una Fantasia*, p. 2.

own force, and reassembled in the configuration of the Name”,²²⁴ showing that the intentionality of music is inherently unstable, only revealing itself in an act of naming that which is ever-elusive to intentional language: the name itself.

In summary; while there are *particular* features to both music and language, some of which are shared, the main force (dynamic, logic, techné) of each is *distinct*, and yet nonetheless able to shed light on the other by showing how they “unfold according to different laws”²²⁵ at the level of a total ‘system’.

Nietzsche, In *The Will to Power*, and *Human All Too Human*, longed for language itself, to be a musical event, which brought the same level of rapture he found in music.²²⁶ His writing aimed to *be* music, but using words instead of notes. The ‘rapture’ which Nietzsche identified within musical form, was lacking for him in language, and his entire body of work can be seen as an attempt to replace the ‘authentic reality’ and ‘colossal power’ which for him was missing in the language, but evident in music. “Music penetrated the core of his being, and it meant everything to him. He hoped the music would never stop, but it did, and he faced the quandary of how to carry on with his existence.”²²⁷ He said, “Everything that... cannot be understood in relation to music engenders... downright aversion and disgust in me.”²²⁸

Referring to his philological background, and the limits he perceived in that activity, Nietzsche proposes that philology be treated musically. This, however, involved more than engaging with musical themes, but of literally creating music: “which happens to be written with words instead of notes.”²²⁹

²²⁴ Ibid. p. 5.

²²⁵ Supra Part III.

²²⁶ Op. cit., *Human, All Too Human*, p. 128.

²²⁷ R. Safranski, *Nietzsche, A Biographical Life*, (W. W. Norton, 2003), p.19.

²²⁸ *Nietzsche's Diaries* B. 3,257; Dec. 21, 1871.

²²⁹ From a letter by Nietzsche, of 1868. See *Samtliche Briefe*, vol. 2, eds. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986), p. 298.

Punctuation was historically related to oral performance, not silent reading, since silent reading only became common after the invention of the printing press.²³⁰ This repertoire of marks, developed and added to over time, became a codified and regularized part of written language, moving, as did language, from the oral world into the silent, written one, later reinforcing grammatical roles. The syntactical role of punctuation came to the fore largely as a result of the standardization and control of language made possible (and politically deemed necessary) by the new technology of printing. A remark by Adorno on the dash, illustrates how the minutiae of material language such as punctuation, can have an impact on, or express, modes of thought:

“In the dash, thought becomes aware of its fragmentary character. It is no accident that in the era of the progressive degeneration of language, this mark of punctuation is neglected precisely insofar as it fulfils its function: when it separates things that feign a connection. All the dash claims to do now is to prepare us in a foolish way for surprises that by that very token are no longer surprising.”²³¹

Nietzsche’s conscious, extended use of the ellipsis, is a way to suggest the fragmentary, ever deferred nature of thought and experience, offering a clear example of how the nature of the thought being undertaken in the work is aided by the small details of the material dimensions of the language. In his book *Being-Singular-Plural*, Jean-Luc-Nancy consciously foregrounds the hyphenated words of the title in order to support his argument for a new ontology based in the relations between these terms, not their separation:

“Being singular plural: in a single stroke, without punctuation, without a mark of equivalence, implication, or sequence. A single, continuous-discontinuous mark tracing out the entirety of the ontological domain, being-with-itself designated as the “with” of

²³⁰ These, and numerous other points are made in M. B. Markes, *Pause and Effect: Punctuation in the West*. (University of California Press, 1993).

²³¹ T. W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature*, Trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen, (Columbia University Press, 1958), Volume 1, p. 93.

being, of the singular and plural, and dealing a blow to ontology—not only another signification but also another syntax. The “meaning of Being”: not only as the “meaning of with,” but also, and above all, as the “with” of meaning. Because none of these three terms precedes or grounds the other, each designates the co-essence of the others. This co-essence puts essence itself in the hyphenation — “being-singular-plural”—which is a mark of union and also a mark of division, a mark of sharing that effaces itself, leaving each term to its isolation and its being-with-the-others.”²³²

Punctuation marks are more than silent, grammatical regulators of text. For example, quotation marks wrench the statement they surround, out from under the ‘neutrality’ of the authorial voice, into the present, bestowing a speech-act such as “I hate you”, with a powerful, affective resonance in time and space. This operates very differently at the level of meaning than the same statement presented as “she said she hated him”. The punctuation marks here, cue and effect a sudden shift in context, from past to present, writing to speech, flat words to sound, absence to presence, neutrality to emotion. They bring the statement into sharp relief.

The exclamation point, used rarely, denotes a strong emotion or command, whereas the period functions more subtly than either of these, in its main function as closure of a complete sentence, delineating the boundaries between complete and incomplete thoughts. The period, followed by a visual space, which translates in the reading to a temporal space, effects both conceptual closure and physical pause. The lack of appropriate period use would mean the loss, not only of temporal ‘flow’ in the text, but also of the ability to establish when a thought is complete. Adorno, attributes a very specific significance to the period:

“The sacrifice of the period leaves the idea short of breath. Prose is reduced to the “protocol sentence,” the darling of the logical

²³² Jean Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, translated by Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O’Brian (Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 37.

positivists, to a mere recording of facts, and when syntax and punctuation relinquish the right to articulate and shape the facts, to critique them, language is getting ready to capitulate to what already exists, even before thought has had time to perform this capitulation eagerly on its own for the second time. It starts with the loss of the semicolon; it ends with the ratification of imbecility by a reasonableness purged of all admixtures.”²³³

Finally, Agamben, in his essay ‘Absolute Immanence’,²³⁴ undertakes an extended, and exquisitely detailed examination of the essay by Deleuze: ‘Immanence, A Life’, titling the piece ‘Philosophy of Punctuation’. In dissecting the minutiae of the punctuation, Agamben is able to demonstrate the significance of subtle punctuation choices, in conveying subtle shifts of meaning, and establishes the way in which Deleuze takes command of the materiality of his language, to express what Agamben calls ‘immanent alterity’. This is a form of the non-identical in language, in whose immanent, material, intramundane aspects, meaning is to be found, but obliquely. This will be seen in Parts III and IV to be a part of what constitute what the thesis calls an ‘Acoustic’ logic.

1.9 Acoustic Surface(s)

A way of thinking through these points slightly differently is provided by Richard Shusterman, for whom the surface is frequently invisible: it often has no more than a residual impact upon our conscious apprehension of windows, pixels, or text:

“We do not usually notice the surface of our glass windows because we are looking through them; nor do we notice the particular colour

²³³ Op. cit., *Notes to Literature*., p. 95.

²³⁴ Cf. G. Agamben, D. Heller-Roazen, *Potentialities, Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ‘Absolute Immanence’ (Stanford, 1999), pp. 208-222.

and size of the pixels on our computer screen as we look at them to grasp the images they constitute.”²³⁵

Shusterman argues that our “aesthetic blindness to surface, a failure to see the importance of the visual face of literature”²³⁶ is rooted in Platonic and Hegelian traditions of indifference to the visual aspects of written language, which favour accounts of language’s oral properties, or ‘spiritual’ dimensions.²³⁷ Oral, or auditory qualities of language have long been held to be aesthetically central to literature (especially poetry), while the visual is largely regarded as aesthetically and semantically irrelevant. Shusterman describes this phenomenon as a lack of attention to those instances when the ‘visible is visible’,²³⁸ this tautological (openly self-reflexive) term relying upon a distinction between two meanings of the word ‘visible’. The first suggests being ‘able to be seen’, while the second suggests the ‘conspicuous’ or ‘strikingly manifest’ aspect(s) of the seen. Shusterman discusses the consistent neglect of the visibility of printed words in literature, in favour of the central role of the oral qualities of language (most evident in poetry). The printed surface of language, where the ‘visible is visible’ has traditionally been viewed as aesthetically and semantically irrelevant in discussions of language. According to aesthetic conservatives, language is broken down into ‘the sound aspect’ and ‘the meaning aspect’. The words or letters which, in addition to morphemes and phonemes, constitute language are ignored by writers on

²³⁵ R. Shusterman, *Surface and Depth, Dialectics of Criticism and Culture* (Cornell, 2002). p.159.

²³⁶ Ibid., p.159.

²³⁷ Ibid, p. 159.

²³⁸ Op. cit., *Surface and Depth*, p.169. This deliberate tautology refers to the conspicuous, notable, or ‘strikingly manifest’ aspects of visible language; those which depart from textual convention and draw attention to themselves. The normal use of the word ‘visible’ as being ‘able to be seen’ is differentiated from those times when visual language calls attention to itself; in other words, becomes markedly ‘visible’. This in turn relies upon the distinction between two meanings of the word ‘visible’. The first suggests being ‘able to be seen’, while the second implies the ‘conspicuous’ or ‘strikingly manifest’ aspect of the seen.

aesthetics, and as a consequence, so is the entire visual aspect of literature: the physicality of language, other than that which is audible, is suppressed.²³⁹

In Shusterman's work, there is an interest in promoting visible language as a factor in meaning; at the surface, while Deleuze proposes an expression which is internal and invisible (immanent) to language, but nonetheless intrinsic and crucial to meaning; something unrepresentable but essential. The visible/invisible distinction traversing these two arguments would seem irreconcilable. However, the material forms of language are of the nature of an 'event' in the sense Deleuze proposes, and that it is at the level of the pure event that language has meaning at all. It is here, where language is both specific in terms of the uniqueness of each 'event' of language (each utterance, each printing, each inscription is an unrepeatable event), but where at the same time language is abstracted from its specific application as a bearer of 'sense' and therefore loses its usual denotative character, that we see something newly-meaningful in language, in its senseless-ness. The point for Deleuze is to:

“... make language stammer, or make it 'wail,' stretch tensors through all of language, even written language, and draw from it cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities.”²⁴⁰

Adorno reminds us that philosophy is only accessible to us through its presentation in language, and that this is not trivial, but contributes, crucially,

²³⁹ See figure 2. The e.e. cummings poem 'Loneliness' (1957), shows clearly that the visual presentation of language has a deeply supportive, if not primary role in establishing meaning. Paul Valéry called the poem: “A prolonged hesitation between sound and meaning” and this remark acknowledges of the role of the visible word, as well as the acoustic, in the sense that this permits rhythm, repetition, and visual space to be an intrinsic part of meaning.

²⁴⁰ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Mille plateaux* (Paris: Minuit); tr. as *A Thousand Plateaus*, by B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 115.

to its idea.²⁴¹ However, the persistence of nonconceptual, expressive (mimetic) qualities of language also reminds us that there are aspects of language which exceed the concept, and which refuse to be contained by language as an objectifying force. For the purposes of initially beginning to unpack these questions, language might be thought of as differently ‘tensioned’, as in the skin of a drum which involves the literal tensioning of a surface to achieve acoustic modulations, and which involve various resonances, expansions, contractions, temporalities, movements.

Part II will consider the role of the following in language: *Recursion*: when a function (or procedure) calls, or re-calls, itself.²⁴² In other words, language as recursive, self-referential and incomplete, rather than logical and progressive, linear and totalizing.²⁴³ As explained earlier in this chapter, sense is described by Deleuze as “the thin film at the limit of words and things”,²⁴⁴ and it is with this describable/[in]describable film/surface/limit in mind that the thesis reflexively engages with language. These concerns seem related to Agamben’s later observation that: “the poet can counter a syntactical limit with an acoustic and metrical limit”,²⁴⁵ where the repetitive, iterative, reproductive potential of language exceeds its bare representative function in a manner not easily assimilated within philosophies of language.

²⁴¹ “The presentation of philosophy is not an external matter of indifference to it, but immanent to its idea. Its integral, nonconceptually mimetic moment of expression is objectified only by presentation in language.” Op. Cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 18.

²⁴² Recursion is the act of defining an object, or solving a problem in terms of itself, or language as process and effect of an unfolding which anticipates its next move, while reflexively engaging with its-self. This will start to open out onto the use of the term ‘fractal’ in Part III, as a way to describe the non-identical movement of Acoustic surfaces, which self-refer but resist being part of any whole (see figures 3a/3b).

²⁴³ The claim under test is that language is bi-directional (after Deleuze) and involves paradox or nonsense (perhaps other words for the notion of incomplete) as core principles, not anomalies. Moreover, that language is not a process of identifiable representational ‘acts’, involving moments of fixed identification within a linear, progressive, propositional, or logical system/mode, but is more a series of intensities, or events at a ‘sur[face]’ which embodies a different ‘logic’ and whose ability to be named is worked through here.

²⁴⁴ Op. cit., *Logic of Sense*, p. 38.

²⁴⁵ Op. cit., *The Situationist International*, p. 317

This work talks about the surfaces of language (which will be seen to be multi-variant), but not solely in terms of visual surfaces (ones concerned simply to describe the importance of the literal, material, visual surface of language), but as a series of conceptual, incorporeal, auditory, sensual, bodily, and visual, criss-crossings and digressions which constitute a type of sur[face] which radically undoes the idea of a surface as a top layer or ‘skin’ as such. For the purposes of the argument, surface is used in the Deleuzian sense of naming a series of barely-topographically describable proximities or relations, a non-place which evaporates, yields, or gives way as soon as description moves too close; but in which language nonetheless ‘takes a place’, topographically and performatively. This will be developed through the Plane of Immanence. In contrast, in the kind of Quinean grid of variables which constitute a mathematical ‘map’ of logical formations, language takes its ‘place’, and this is the kind of surface which is relatively easy to describe (the movement of variables across a surface comprised of potential resting points; linear, processual, anticipatable). The thesis will instead describe, point toward, or infer, the kind of surfaces which makes ‘sense’, but have no thickness: Deleuze’s “thin film at the limit of words and things”.

In Part II, *The Liar, Paradox, and Other Truths*, those surfaces will be described in more detail. Firstly, it will be necessary to show how adherence to the binaric forms of either/or, true/false, yes/no, inside/outside, in language, are not only ontological commitments, but actively produce paradoxes, which are, in turn, the incommensurate: the non-identical. Paradoxes introduce questions of time (and/or timing) as multiple[s], simultaneous, and the viral/infinite proliferation of paradoxes—known as the ‘liars revenge’—radically undermines attempts to locate stable meaning. A sentence which claims of

itself that it is false, or beyond truth and falsity, will frequently return the initial problem in an infinite circularity. "... if one manages to consistently classify a Liar as such-n-so, another Liar emerges..."²⁴⁶

Descartes, speaking on doubt, in *The Meditations*, will show how paradoxes not only open up the system, they destroy its sense of certainty, and force thought to submit to the 'Malicious Cartesian Demon.'²⁴⁷ Nietzsche's remarks on logic, and the need for 'tonal variations' in place of bivalence, Heidegger's rethinking of the Principle of Identity in *Identity and Difference*, Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, and Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*, will provide a platform for developing the argument. Golding's work on fractal philosophy will subtend and steer the debate.²⁴⁸ Finally, Foucault's exchanges with Blanchot will provide a way of talking about the paradoxical surfaces of language, and how they involve 'a limit'. As will be shown, a paradox is madness, infinity, the abyss. It's the unthinkable that forcibly opens a space for the non-identical in thought.

Paradoxes are anxious, tense, agitated, unstable, and indeterminate. Stable identity and/or fixed truth are dismantled by paradoxes, which are by turns pragmatic, disruptive, playful. They operate on the basis of a: "mode of conduct that shields no primacy, harbours no certainty."²⁴⁹ Language offers one example, since paradoxes are also seen in mathematics –in the form of recursion, set-theory, Godel's Incompleteness Theorem, and in art. However

²⁴⁶ J.C.Beall (ed.), *Revenge of the Liar: New Essays on the Paradox* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 4.

²⁴⁷ The Malicious Cartesian Demon is the harbinger of the most profound doubt: "I will suppose... some malicious demon of the utmost power and cunning has employed all his energies in order to deceive me. I shall think that the sky, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds and all external things are merely the delusions of dreams which he has devised to ensnare my judgment." R. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: First Meditation*.

²⁴⁸ J. Golding, *Fractal Philosophy, Trembling a Plane of Immanence and The Small Matter of Learning How to Listen: Attunement as the Task of Art*. To appear in *Deleuze and Art*, S. O'Sullivan and S. Zepke, 2009.

²⁴⁹ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 33-34.

for the purposes of developing this thesis, it is the paradoxes of language that will be shown to be interchangeable with the paradoxes of art.

In Part II, as a ‘viral assemblage,’ paradox will be shown to make a mockery of the notion of closure, absoluteness, and dialectical affirmation. Paradoxes are “abstract surface structures”, which constitute an ‘is’, whose incapacity for being ‘grasped’ nonetheless has a fractal, immanent meaning, or ‘other’ kind of truth.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ Op. Cit., ‘*Trembling a Plane of Immanence and The Small Matter of Learning How to Listen: Attunement as the Task of Art*’.

Part II

The Liar, Paradox, and Other Truths

“... nothing supposed capable of being thought may contain contradictory characteristics.”

—Gottlob Ernst Schulze, *Aenesidemus*, 1792

paradox, n.

1. a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement that is or may be true: *religious truths are often expressed in paradox.*
2. a self-contradictory proposition, such as *I always tell lies.*
3. a person or thing exhibiting apparently contradictory characteristics.
4. an opinion that conflicts with common belief.

[C16: from Late Latin *paradoxum*, from Greek *paradoxos* opposed to existing notions, from PARA + *doxa* opinion]

para-, prefix.

1. beside; near: *parameter*; *parathyroid*.
2. beyond: *parapsychology*.
3. resembling: *paramnesia*.
4. defective; abnormal: *paraesthesia*.
5. subsidiary to: *paraphysics*.

[from the Greek *para* (prep.) alongside, beyond]

opinion, n.

1. judgement or belief not founded on certainty or proof.
2. the prevailing or popular feeling or view: *public opinion*.
3. evaluation, impression, or estimation of the value or worth of a person or thing.

[C13: via Old French from Latin *opinio* belief, from *opinari* to think]

Introduction

“Cretans are always liars”. “This sentence is false”²⁵¹

“The logical unassailability of the Cretan’s assertion... must prove to be mere appearance, for otherwise logic as such would collapse.”²⁵²

“Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of “true” and “false”? It is not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance-different “values,” to use the language of painters?”²⁵³

This thesis amplifies upon a series of interrelated themes, which emerge from a persistent question which has reappeared throughout the course of the research: why does the history of philosophy view paradoxes as aggressive, systemically disruptive antinomies or nonsense, which need to be resolved?²⁵⁴ Furthermore, the thesis asks: instead of trying to erase the ‘difference’ which paradox introduces into a system, and the disruptive process it unleashes, what can paradox offer to an understanding of how language (and thought) operates? Paradox is being posed within this work as a sensual logic, one which requires an aesthetic ‘move’ (a leap of faith) to comprehend it: as the non-identical logic within communication, and the ‘behind’ of language and thought.²⁵⁵ The indeterminacy of an impure, contradictory form of communication is being posed, not as a failure, but an instructive example of

²⁵¹ Supra Part I. See figures 4a/4b/4c for examples of various attempts to use formal logic to resolve the Liar Paradox. These take the form of responses/notes on previous versions.

²⁵² Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings I, 1913-1926*. ‘The Paradox of the Cretan’, (Belknap/Harvard, 2000), p. 210.

²⁵³ F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Translated with commentary by W. Kaufmann. (London: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 34.

²⁵⁴ There are numerous examples of paradox with language (usually concerning self-reference), mathematics, science, physics, and geometry. For example, Cf. Russell’s Paradox of the set-of-all-sets, also configured as the Barber Paradox, Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem (related to The Liar Paradox), The Paradox of Entailment, Curry’s Paradox, Grelling-Nelson Paradox, Zeno’s Paradoxes of movement, Cantor’s paradox (there is no greatest cardinal number), the Mandelbrot Set, Schrodinger’s Cat, etc. Cf. *The Revenge of the Liar: New Essays on the Paradox*, Edited by J. C. Beall, (Oxford University Press, 2008). See Figs. 4a, 4b, 4c, various versions of the Liar Paradox, or the Paradox of the Cretan.

²⁵⁵ Op. cit., Kemp, *Writing the Behind*, (2003).

what Nietzsche has termed a form of creative tonality in thought, in other words: a colourful form of doubt.²⁵⁶ The argument being made is that through paradox, the sensuality of thought is returned to us in the form of an aesthetic surface, or series of surfaces, that refuse compulsory identification with the mythical metanarratives of certainty, absolutism, simple identity, bivalence, or totality.²⁵⁷ A paradox is thus im-pure, immanent difference at work within language; a-rational, a-identical, mimetological,²⁵⁸ a-representational,²⁵⁹ and cruel (after Artaud), in its refusal of determination against any type of ontological, physical, or metaphysical ground. Paradox actively un-works the

²⁵⁶ Cf. F. Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, p. 11, he says, "Logic... rests on assumptions that do not correspond to anything in the real world, e.g., on the assumption of the equality of things, the identity of the same thing at different points in time." Ibid. p.512: "The will to logical truth can be carried through only after a fundamental *falsification* of all events is assumed... logic does *not* spring from will to truth." *Will to Power*, p. 516: "Logic (like geometry and arithmetic) applies only to fictitious entities that we have created. Logic is the attempt to comprehend the actual world by means of a scheme of being posited by ourselves; more correctly, to make it formulatable and calculable for us." *Will to Power*, p. 521: "The world seems logical to us because we have made it logical." Finally, a note from the early 1870's: "logic is merely slavery within the fetters of language." *Will to Power*, p. 522 that "we cease to think when we refuse to do so under the constraint of language." Finally, he attacks the principle of identity itself *Will to Power*, p. 516: "Supposing there were no self-identical 'A', such as is presupposed by every proposition of logic (and of mathematics), and the 'A' were already mere appearance, then logic would have a merely apparent world as its condition ...the 'A' of logic is, like the atom, a reconstruction of the thing." In *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 34, he states "it is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance." Nietzsche also questions the unconditional faith in bivalence, which supports logic. "Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of 'true' and 'false?' It is not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance-different 'values', to use the language of painters?" *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 34 In maintaining that bivalence is an unproven assumption of logicians, he speculates on various shades of values (a 'tonal logic') as an alternative to bivalence as only conceivable option. This allows him to make a leap away from logic, and potentially undermine its very foundations, with that one gesture towards, a multivalent, 'tonal' form of logic. Cf. Steven D. Hales, *Nietzsche on Logic*.

²⁵⁷ Paradox, as will be seen, participates in an Acoustic form of logical *tonality*, not totality.

²⁵⁸ According to Lacoue-Labarthe, mimesis has the logical structure of paradox, since it both represents, but fails to represent (it tells the truth, *and* lies), at the same time. All art is, by this definition, paradoxical, since it fails to reach correspondence with the object, and instead, the resulting 'mimetologic' possesses a perpetually differing (deferring) quality, which destabilizes simple notions of fixed identity. This forms a 'groundless ground', in which paradox establishes its own logic, one which mimetically engages the surface[s] of logic, language, and aesthetic experience, and which Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe has called a 'mimetologic'. Other kinds of understanding become possible as a result of this sensual, mimetic logic, whose closest affiliate is aesthetic experience. Cf. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Christopher Fynsk, Jacques Derrida, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*. (Stanford University Press, 1998).

²⁵⁹ The prefix 'a-' is used in these terms to indicate the Greek use of the prefix 'a-', meaning: no, absence of, without, lack of, not.

system it appears in, showing the limits of that system, and exposing its fault lines and break points in a productive way, rather than being situated within a dialectic of surface and depth, appearance versus illusion. Figures 4a/b/c, show how various philosophers have struggled with the intricacies of developing a way to sidestep the paradox of the Cretan ('The Liar'). These detailed demonstrations indicate how 'viral' paradoxes are thought to be, and how resistant they are to being excised, especially through the means available logicians, which require debts of validity (right or wrong, no in-between terms), be settled in full. Paradoxes cause the system to be viewed in a different light, or to be 'heard' in a different register, by shifting our perspective. They throw the system into relief: foregrounding the system, rather than the content. They make language and thought fold back onto itself in an infinite, doubling movement from which there is no exit. However, as Nietzsche has argued, and multivariant logics such as dialeitheism and paralogics have demonstrated, bivalence is *not* the only option for thought. The prospect of a 'tonal logic', which admits of many variations between true and false, places Paradox at the fulcrum of such a form of logic, since it ultimately collapses the terms yes and no, true and false, $p \sim p$, in the same, sweeping, infinite, oscillatory, dynamic gesture.

This thesis wants to argue that rather than eliminating them, paradoxes provide us with a way to expand and reconfigure our conception of knowledge, and 'logical' thinking, in terms of a creative praxis: an 'art' of thinking.²⁶⁰ In its unworking of the system, paradox is a singularly immanent critique, which keeps doubt alive, and in which doubt disintegrates certainty, reformulates knowledge, and restructures those categories. Paradox is

²⁶⁰ Supra parts III and IV of the thesis, which develop these ideas.

therefore being posed as simply doubt by another name, but also as something more: as an incommensurable, fractal (self-referring), twisted, transtemporal ‘lie’ which reveals the truth to be—not a stable object of thought, graspable—but a dubious construction out of which truth is ‘made’, and unmade, worked and unworked, in the same way as a work of art fleetingly constitutes meaning, only to dissolve it. As will be seen, the ‘fallacy’ of a paradox cannot be resolved from within the system (of logic/language/mathematics) itself, and the malicious Cartesian demon²⁶¹ of deception, which sows the seeds of methodological doubt, is transported from the realm of perception, to logic, where it provides a home for doubt, and restructures thinking.

The further proposal being made is that a paradox, which directs, or turns toward itself (usually through a process of self-reference, or recursion), reveals or indicates something about the non-identical, ‘indissoluble something’²⁶² in language/thought that we usually relegate to an anomaly, and which, ordinarily, by an effort of thought, demands eradication from any system in which it appears. To contextualize this remark, and set out the framework in which this problem appears, a brief review of the different approaches to sense, nonsense, and paradox, in various philosophical schools of thought, has been provided in Part I. It has been pointed out that paradoxes are generally seen as unwelcome attributes of the thinking process, and that traditional logic has sought to excise them in favour of what Benjamin has called a “harmonic concept of truth.”²⁶³

²⁶¹ The ‘Evil Daemon’ of Descartes’ *Meditations on First Philosophy*, is “as clever and deceitful as he is powerful, who has directed his entire effort to misleading me.” *Meditations on First Philosophy: In Which the Existence of God and the Distinction of the Soul from the Body Are Demonstrated*, (BN Publishing, 2008).

²⁶² Op. cit, *Negative Dialectics*, ‘The Indissoluble Something’ p. 135.

²⁶³ “... [] this is the harmonic concept of truth, which we must acquire so that the false quality of watertightness that characterizes its delusion vanishes from the authentic concept, the concept of truth. The truth is not watertight. Much that we expect to find in it slips through the

In the section of the thesis which follows, it will be necessary to contextualize paradox within the history of the presumed unity of identity, and the role of non-contradiction, or excluded-middle propositions. We will first briefly reprise some of the issues pertaining to the Enlightenment search for rationality, via Descartes' approach to doubt, Kant's search for the limits of understanding and knowledge, and Leibniz, John Wilkins and others', search for a 'Characteristica Universalis'. This places the enquiry in the context of an intellectual environment which would punish 'undisciplined gestures', meaning anything which would stand outside the search for unmediated, absolute objects of truth and knowledge, and whose shared epistemological goals are to rid thinking of doubt, contingency, and to render it error-free.

This section will then offer an account of paradoxes when they appear within the systems of formal logic, especially the problems posed by the Liar Paradox, moving onto a review of Benjamin's *Theses on the Problem of Identity*, and a discussion of Heidegger's rethinking of the Principle of Identity in *Identity and Difference*. This will be followed by the significance of Hegelian dialectics, including determinate negation, and Adorno's alternative

net". *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings*, Volume 1, 1913-1926. p. 272. (Belknap/Harvard, 1996). Compare this to Andrei Igamberdiev, speaking of Beethoven's Grosse Fugue: "Beethoven plunges into a violently dissonant double fugue, with a second subject of dramatically leaping tones, and the four instruments of the quartet bursting out in triplets, dotted figures, and cross-rhythms. Following this opening fugal section is a series of sections, in contrasting keys, rhythms and tempi. Sections often break off suddenly, without real preparation, to create a structural texture that is jagged and surprising. Toward the end, there is a slowing, with long pauses, leading into a recapitulation of the overture, and on to a rushing finale that ends the movement. The Fugue can be seen as a multi-movement form contained within a single large movement...counterpoint itself, since time out of mind, has been associated in the thinking of musicians with the profound and the serious". The Fugue's dark, complex tones and lack of harmonic resolution, are singularly uncompromised and complex. The linguistic analogy could be made through conversation, where elements enter and depart with extreme suddenness, the composer/performer adding and subtracting fragments from the main theme at breakneck speed and in multiple layers and in plural times. The word Fugue comes from the Latin 'to flee' and the 'event', where sudden, unexpected, changes and shifts in the movement of the music are the motor-force. The Grosse Fugue is incomplete, self-referential, and recursive; its form and structure is neither finite nor expressly infinite, but the tension between the two keeps the movement and dynamic of the music alive. The following remarks, again by Abir Igamberdiev, illustrate the link between the musical form, and mathematics (especially a mathematics of the infinite).

anti-system: Negative Dialectics, which is posed as an alternative to the Hegelian system. Nietzsche's briefly-stated but pointed antagonism(s) towards logic, and his proposal that a tonal form of logic akin to painterly forms might succeed it, will precede a comment on contemporary attempts to sidestep the problems of paradox, via Paralogics and Dialethism, which allow for multivalent logical 'truths'. In this way, the chapter will lay the groundwork for chapter three, which introduces the possibility of different forms of sensual, acoustic, fractal logics, in which immanent difference shows how meaning is made a-identical, and paradoxical: leading the way to an art of Acoustic Sense in Part IV.

2.1 To Punish Undisciplined Gestures

"Such is the character of the universal language. Without a doubt it is always a logical and "rational" language, which serves as an aid and instrument for thought."²⁶⁴

"The fact that all approved traditional philosophy from Plato down to the semanticists has been allergic to expression, this fact accords with a propensity of all Enlightenment: to punish undisciplined gestures. It is a trait extending all the way to logic, a defense mechanism of the materialized consciousness."²⁶⁵

In contrast to Leibniz, whose attitude towards language is to align it with geometry and mathematics, Adorno has suggested that thought emerges from the materiality of language, not from the (a-priori) concepts which are assumed to precede and dominate it, nor in a geometric/mathematical paradigm. Both theoretically, and in his style of writing, especially in

²⁶⁴ G. Leibniz, *A Specimen of the Philosophical Language Displayed in Geometry*, January 1680 (LH IV 6, 10b). See Chap. VIII, §9.

²⁶⁵ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, pp.55-56. 'Undisciplined gestures' is the basis of the latter part of the dissertation, which seeks to defend them through their immanent potential within artforms, from Cy Twombly to John Cage, etc. The notion of a sensual logic is one which proposes a place for such expressive linguistic qualities, or undisciplined gestures (as a form of criticality), within philosophical language. This is not just poetry, but a different form of thought: a sensual logic.

Aesthetic Theory, and *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno treats language as expressive, performative, and ‘critical’, rather than disciplinary and regulative.²⁶⁶ The notion of language as instrumental has its roots in the Enlightenment, and is a powerful precursor to symbolic logic and analytic philosophy. In this section, I will outline how and why, philosophers such as John Wilkins, Leibniz, and others have attempted to treat language as instrumental, through the construction of a ‘mathesis’ or, in Leibniz’s term, a ‘Characteristica Universalis’, which attempt to suppress languages’ expressive dimensions in favour of hard logic.

John Wilkins, in his 1668 *An Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, is one of the first to attempt to outline a new ‘universal’ language. He says:

“If to every thing and notion there were assigned a distinct *Mark*, together with some *provision* to express Grammatical *Derivations* and *Inflexions*; this might suffice as to one great end of a *Real Character*, namely, the expression of our Conceptions by *Marks* which should signify *things*, and not *words*. And so likewise if several distinct *words* were assigned for the *names* of such things, with certain invariable *Rules* for all such Grammatical *Derivations* and *Inflexions*, and such only as are natural and necessary; this would make a much more easy and convenient Language than is yet in being.”²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ Cf. T. W. Adorno, *The Essay as Form, Notes to Literature*, Trans. Sherry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), Volume one, pp. 3-4.

²⁶⁷ J. Wilkin, *An Essay Towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, 1668, John Martin, Printer to the Royal Society, London. p. 21. [original italics and capitalization retained, language modernized as necessary i.e. *easy* to ‘easy’, *onely* to ‘only’]. Wilkins goes on to say: “by now if these *Marks* or *Notes* could be so contrived, as to have such a *dependance* upon, and relation to, one another, as might be suitable to the nature of things and notions which they represented; and so likewise, of the *Names* of things could be so ordered, as to contain such a kind of *affinity* or *opposition* in their letters and sounds, as might be some way answerable to the nature of the things which they signified; This would be a farther advantage superadded: by which, besides the best way of helping the *Memory* by natural Method, the *Understanding* likewise would be highly improved; and we should, by learning the *Character* and the *Names* of things, be instructed likewise in their *Natures*, the knowledge of both which ought to be conjoined. For the accurate effecting of this, it would be necessary, that the *Theory* it self, upon which such a design were to be founded, should be exactly *suited to the nature of things*. But, on supposal that this *Theory* is defective, either as to the *Fulness* or the *Order* of it, this must needs add much *perplexity* to any such Attempt, and render it *imperfect*. And that this is the case with that common Theory already received, need not much be doubted; which may afford some excuse as to several of those things which may seem to be less conveniently disposed of in the following Tables, or Schemes proposed in the next part”.

However, as Couturat has pointed out, Leibniz, criticized such linguistic systems for their concerns with:

“...practical uses rather than scientific utility, that is, for being chiefly artificial languages intended for international communication and not philosophical languages that would express the logical relations of concepts. ... the true “real characteristic”, ... would express the composition of concepts by the combination of signs representing their simple elements, such that the correspondence between composite ideas and their symbols would be natural and no longer conventional.”²⁶⁸

Leibniz advocated rationality and abstract thinking, promoted by the creation of an entirely artificial symbolic language: the ‘*Characteristica Universalis*’, or a ‘*Mathesis*’²⁶⁹ (see figure 5). In it, ideas are assigned a single symbol, and rules are established for their combinations and use, such that “all abstract reasoning would be reduced to mere algebraic calculations”²⁷⁰ with the result that the errors and uncertainty associated with the figurative, shifting, imaginative language of ordinary discourse are eliminated. Words, which are assigned a precise technical meaning, stand not for themselves, but for concepts: “Words or symbols within mathematics do not derive their meaning from the images which may be used to illustrate them, but stand for clearly defined conceptions.”²⁷¹ The system emulates pure, mathematical reasoning: clear, unambiguous, abstract, error-free, and for Leibniz: “Words are logical

It is clear from this introduction, that Wilkins himself had doubts about the validity and ‘perfectibility’ of such a project, which relied upon an exact and natural correspondence between marks and objects/concepts. Such a closing of the gap between word and object, required a leap of faith. See also page 20, where he explains that while notions are agreed upon, their expression in marks or sounds is not (they are arbitrarily assigned).

²⁶⁸ L. Couturat, *La Logique de Leibniz* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1901), p. 201.

²⁶⁹ The ‘*Mathesis Universalis*’ is a proposal to create a universal science (and associated language based on the same principles), which would incontestably, and eliminate errors of reasoning. It is generally associated with Leibniz, and Jon Wilkinson in the works cited elsewhere in this section of the thesis.

²⁷⁰ S. Hampshire, *Spinoza*, (Pelican, 1951), p. 21.

²⁷¹ Op. cit., *Philosophical Writings*, p. 20.

counters which have a purely intellectual significance, [they] stand in this sense for clear and distinct ideas”,²⁷² and offer an alternative to a language shot through with error and uncertainty; one wholly unsuited to the rationalist doctrine. He wrote:

“If one could find the characters or symbols to express all our thoughts as cleanly and exactly as arithmetics expresses numbers, or as analytic geometry expresses lines, one could do the same as one can do with arithmetics and geometry, as much as they are subject to reasoning. This is because all investigations that depend on reasoning would take place through the transposition of these characters, and by a kind of calculus.”²⁷³

Adorno laments the loss of expression, and the lack of immanent criticality which such a form of language implies, since in its extreme form, language loses its most powerful attributes: “In its neo-positivist version, science becomes aestheticism, a system of detached signs detached of any intention that would transcend the system.”²⁷⁴ The problem of this irreducibility is found “In the impartiality of scientific language, that which is powerless has wholly lost any means of expression, and only the given finds its neutral sign.”²⁷⁵ The difficulty which both Adorno and Benjamin find is that universality in language conceals the fact of its social and historical power, such that the concepts it pretends to be neutral/rational, in fact contain privileged ideas, and dominant themes (in the form of the given). Adorno

²⁷² Ibid., p. 80.

²⁷³ Leibniz From Letter to Nicolas Raymond, 10 January 1714, pp. 654-655; quotation, p. 654. He states: “I should still hope to create a kind of *universal symbolistic* [*spécieuse générale*] in which all truths of reason would be reduced to a kind of calculus. At the same time this could be a kind of universal language or writing, though infinitely different from all such languages which have thus far been proposed, for the characters and the words themselves would give directions to reason, and the errors—except those of fact—would be only mistakes in calculation. It would be very difficult to form or invent this language or characteristic but very easy to learn it without any dictionaries. When we lack sufficient data to arrive at certainty in our truths, it would also serve to estimate degrees of probability and to see what is needed to provide this certainty. Such an estimate would be most important for the problems of life and for practical considerations, where our errors in estimating probabilities often amount to more than a half. . . .”

²⁷⁴ Op. cit., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 18.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

laments the loss this represents: “Our vague ideas of chance and probability are pale shadows of this much richer notion”,²⁷⁶ and goes on to say “Dialectic discloses each image as script. It teaches us to read from its features the admission of falseness which cancels its power and hands it over to truth. Language thereby becomes more than a mere system of signs.”²⁷⁷ Determinate Negation/dialectics in this way promised to liberate the Enlightenment from the positivism (absolutism) it was degenerating into, such that languages’ expressive power was/is retained, while, ultimately, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, Hegel re-inscribed totality in the final outcome of his process, lapsing into the very mythology he sought to escape:

“That fate befell not only his philosophy, as the apotheosis of advancing thought, but enlightenment itself, in the form of the sober matter-of-factness by which it purported to distinguish itself from Hegel, and from metaphysics in general. For enlightenment is totalitarian as only a system can be. Its untruth does not lie in the analytical method, the reduction to elements, the decomposition through reflection, as its Romantic enemies had maintained from the first, but in its assumption that the trial is prejudged.”²⁷⁸

It is clear for these thinkers that we cannot do without language: it forms an integral part of our relationship to society and with ourselves. However, each believes we need to reassess the way(s) in which language supports thought, by asking a series of questions, including, what is a system?²⁷⁹ Why is philosophy driven towards the system? For Adorno and Horkheimer, systematic philosophizing has become impossible today. In a system, nothing is left out, the form governs a totality, and nothing exists outside it.²⁸⁰ This

²⁷⁶ Op. cit., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 118. Originally from Hubert and Mauss, *Theorie generale de la Magie*, (L’Annee Sociologique, 1902-3), p. 100p. 118.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁷⁹ Adorno, *Metaphysics: Concept and Problems*, ed. R. Tiedeman, E. Jephcott, (Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 34.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 38.

leaves us with a situation in which, “If philosophy had succeeded in conceptualizing everything that exists without leaving a remainder, it would necessarily have comprehended the phenomena it has subsumed.”²⁸¹ Kant did not resolve this question, and in Heidegger, the system does not make explicit everything implied by its ‘constitutive, generative’ concept. Some things remain unsaid; the unsayable something. This leads to a change in the concept of system itself, where rather than being an ‘architectonic scheme’, which organizes elements, a system is seen as a ‘latent form’ or ‘force’, in which the potential to cohere into systems is just as easily disintegrated as it is constituted.

In Kant, the system excludes that which does not fit. In Hegel, that which does not fit is discursively included (via Determinate Negation). In Benjamin, truth is a matter of being both entered, and of simultaneously disappearing; truth is not about intention.²⁸² Benjamin’s generation were interested in breaking out of systems, but also in breaking with idealism, in the same way that in Adorno’s logic of disintegration, coherence/ meaning are glimpsed between the lines/in flashes at the same time as meaning disintegrates/dissolves/collapses. Kantian epistemological constraints presuppose certainty. Adorno establishes that, in Enlightenment reason, the process is always decided from the start, that it is teleological. This means that the system cannot transcend itself to gain perspective on this situation. In the same way, language cannot speak about language with any authority, since it is conditioned by, and exposed to, the same method of expression: language. The Enlightenment conflates thought with mathematics, and starts from certainty, not doubt. The infinite world of ideas is to be rendered accessible by

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 67.

²⁸² Supra Part II, ‘Constellation, Style, Performance.’ Where these points are developed.

a rational, unified, systematic method,²⁸³ effectively eliminating any chance encounters, or singularities.

Wittgenstein, in *The Tractatus*, insists that “logic must take care of itself. We are not to intervene or assist logic in providing the transcendental ground of fact, thought, and language”,²⁸⁴ meaning that we must not appeal to the empirical world, to give us the answers to logical antinomies. He comes to this conclusion by observing the logical inability to express certain incompatible colour combinations. A-posteriori truths about phenomena such as colour, would need to be involved in determinations of the procedures of logical analysis, while at the same time logical analysis would provide information about the world of phenomena: a tautology.²⁸⁵ If we should never

²⁸³ For instance, as Adorno states: “When in mathematics the unknown becomes the unknown quantity in an equation, it is made into something long familiar before any value has been assigned. Nature, before and after quantum theory, is what can be registered mathematically; even what cannot be assimilated, the insoluble and irrational, is fenced in by mathematical theorems. In the preemptive identification of the thoroughly mathematized world with truth, enlightenment believes itself safe from the return of the mythical. It equates thought with mathematics... The latter is thereby cut loose, as it were, turned into an absolute authority. “An infinite world, in this case a world of idealities, is conceived as one in which objects are not accessible individually to our cognition in an imperfect and accidental way but are attained by a rational, systematically unified method which finally apprehends each object—in an infinite progression—fully as its own in itself. . . In Galileo’s mathematization of nature, *nature itself* is idealized on the model of the new mathematics. In modern terms, it becomes a mathematical manifold. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 24-25.

²⁸⁴ L. Wittgenstein, as cited in Dale Jacquette, *Wittgenstein’s Thought in Transition* (Purdue University Press, 1980), p.184.

²⁸⁵ In *The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein takes logic to be the principal ‘ground’ of both language and the world (*The Material Word*, Silverman and Torode, Routledge, 1980, p.51). “Logic pervades both reality and how we apprehend reality. To pass beyond its limits, the limits alike of language and world, is to speak non-sense” (p.51). In the 1929 essay *Some Remarks on Logical Form*, which outlines the principles of Logical Positivism which Russell had earlier proposed, he explains how every proposition has both a content and a form, but that the “pure” form is only available to us if we abstract from the meanings of individual words (‘Some Remarks on Logical Form’. p. 1. First appeared in *The Aristotelian Society*, suppl. Vol. 9 (1929). Reprinted in *Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, Ed. Ludlow, p. 209). What counts is not solely word-level semantics; logic must account for variables, which are subject to the same syntactical constraints as the constants. Logic must also avoid the trap which ‘ordinary language’ falls into, of being able to construct seemingly sensible statements which, on closer inspection, are revealed to be “pseudopropositions”. These might involve phrases such as “the Real, though it is an *in itself*, must also be able to become a *for myself*”, effectively rendering large portions of philosophical discourse meaningless. Propositions can be reduced to what Wittgenstein terms “atomic” elements, where more or less complex arrangements of words and sentences containing embedded propositions, “logical sums” or truth functions are progressively stripped away to reveal the most reductive, bare, minimal ‘form’ which underlies the material facts of

have to resort to looking at the world of phenomena to support logic, then this situation is clearly problematic. Wittgenstein identifies this as a deficiency in our notation system within which such nonsensical constructions are made possible. The “ways of projecting facts into the planes of thought and language’ are his key methodological concerns.²⁸⁶

“Our fundamental principle is that every question which can be decided at all by logic can be decided off-hand. (And if we get into a situation where we need to answer such a problem by looking at the world, this shows that we are on a fundamentally wrong track).²⁸⁷

During the Enlightenment, the rituals and practice[s] of thinking became synonymous with mathematics, this objectification of thinking being machinic, and self-activating/self-justifying. “Logical analysis is the most extreme expression of an objectified experience of language. The living, breathing texture of everyday language is denuded into a formal, technical series of procedures.”²⁸⁸ Despite the limitations inherent in the discipline of self-restriction to which thinking submitted, this mathematical turn of emphasis established thought as ‘necessary and objective’, ‘instrumental’ and objective. Such objectified thinking cannot raise metaphysical problems, since they are meaningless within its terms.²⁸⁹ In *A Discourse on Reason*, Descartes

language: “We must eventually reach the ultimate connection of the terms, the immediate connection which cannot be broken, without destroying the propositional form as such. They, then, are the kernels of every proposition, *they* contain the material, and all the rest is only a development of this material.” L. Wittgenstein, *Some Remarks on Logical Form*, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/4106481>, accessed: 06/09/2009. The proper task of a theory of knowledge, according to Wittgenstein, is to find these extra-linguistic, ‘atomic’ facts (which can be thought of broadly as spatio-temporal events) and to make clear how they are constructed out of, or made possible by, the words or symbols of material language.

²⁸⁶ Op. cit., *Wittgenstein’s Thought in Transition*, p. 184.

²⁸⁷ Op. cit., *The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, §5.551.

²⁸⁸ Op. cit., *A Very Short Introduction to Continental Philosophy*, p.103.

²⁸⁹ In his essay *The Overcoming of Metaphysics Through the Logical Analysis of Language*, Rudolph Carnap stages an argument around the absolute, verifiable, meaning of language, in order to undermine what he contends were ‘metaphysical pseudostatements’ made by Heidegger during his 1929 lecture ‘*What is Metaphysics?*’ The goal of demonstrating a logically perfect language is pursued in Carnap’s essay, through a series of 3 columns of

said that, “The faculty of right-judging and distinguishing truth from falsehood (which is properly called understanding, or reason) is naturally equal in all men.”²⁹⁰ From the outset, Descartes claims reason and understanding to be that which distinguishes us from animals, and which is available to all men, equally. The method he employs in the search for truth is based in reason, and yet doubt is at the core of his project:

“[If] among the employments of Men, purely Men, there is any solidly good, and of importance, I dare believe it is that which I have chosen: yet it may be that I deceive myself, and perhaps it is but a little copper and glass which I take for gold and diamonds.”²⁹¹

Estranging himself from the learning available within books, he travelled in search of experience, returning, finally, to the ‘forces of my mind in the choice of the way I was to follow’²⁹² which asserts the individual [subjective] reasoning capacity as the guiding principle of his method, and the way to a better form of truth. Questioning the knowledge which he had been taught, he exchanged received wisdom for understanding, for ‘the rule of reason’.

Descartes suggests, however, that this process is hard, and may be too bold for some, who prefer received instructions to doubt, which is a difficult course to

statements and questions¹, some of which are correct, some of which violate the logical form of the sentence. Through this exercise, he maintains that: “In the domain of metaphysics, including all philosophy of value and normative theory, logical analysis yield the negative result that the alleged statements in this domain are entirely meaningless. Therewith, a radical elimination of metaphysics is maintained.” As Carnap illustrates, even if ‘nothing’ were admitted as a noun, or description of an entity, the statement “The Nothing Nothings” proceeds to deny its own existence, and therefore ends in absurdity, having internally contradicted itself. Contributing to the lack of meaning in metaphysical statements, there is logical inconsistency in the grammatical and syntactical forms of metaphysical sentences. In his turn Heidegger, in ‘What is Metaphysics’ points out that science ‘wants to know nothing of the nothing’, and proceeds to elucidate how the concept of the ‘nothing’ drives logic to its limit in requiring it to contemplate the uncontentable. He concludes: “Philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science [and] the logic of science is nothing other than the logical syntax of the language of science.” Rudolf Carnap, *The Logical Syntax of Language*.

²⁹⁰ René Descartes, *A Discourse on Reason*, Descartes. (London, Thomas Newcombe, printer, 1649), p. 45.

²⁹¹ Ibid. p. 5. “That philosophy affords us the means to speak of all things with probability” [p.9], suggests that Descartes views philosophy as a vehicle of *possible*, not absolute, truths.

²⁹² Ibid. p. 17.

navigate. Truth, for Descartes, is contingent, context-specific, and malleable. It is frequently dependent upon experience, cultural conditioning, and custom, and therefore unreliable. Consensus will not assure truth, while at the same time, method is mathematical, progressive, orderly:

“But as a man that walks alone and in the dark, I resolved to go so softly and use such circumspection in all things, that though I advanced little, I would yet save myself from falling. Neither would I begin quite to reject, some opinions which formerly had had crept into my belief, without the content of my reason, before I had employed enough time carefully to form the project of the work I undertook, and to seek the true method to bring me to the knowledge of all those things, of which my understanding was capable.”²⁹³

Adorno rails against the reductiveness of such a conceptual apparatus:

“The reduction of thought to a mathematical apparatus condemns the world to be its own measure. What appears as the triumph of subjective rationality, the subjection of all existing things to logical formalism, is bought with the obedient subordination of reason to what is directly given.”²⁹⁴

Through knowledge as repetition, which is doubt-free, he claims that the Enlightenment returns us to mythology, in the form of analytic judgment,²⁹⁵ which in turn represents the self-identical status-quo: “The abstract self, which

²⁹³ Ibid. p. 27. See also Nietzsche’s introduction to *The Dawn of Daybreak*, for the value of slow process: “we are friends of the lento, I and my book. I have not been a philologist in vain — perhaps I am one yet: a teacher of slow reading. I even come to write slowly. At present it is not only my habit, but even my taste — a perverted taste, maybe — to write nothing but what will drive to despair every one who is “in a hurry.” For philology is that venerable art which exacts from its followers one thing above all — to step to one side, to leave themselves spare moments, to grow silent, to become slow — the leisurely art of the goldsmith applied to language: an art which must carry out slow, fine work, and attains nothing if not lento. For this very reason philology is now more desirable than ever before; for this very reason it is the highest attraction and incitement in an age of “work”: that is to say, of haste, of unseemly and immoderate hurry-skurry, which is intent upon “getting things done “at once, even every book, whether old or new. Philology itself, perhaps, will not “get things done” so hurriedly: it teaches how to read well: i.e. slowly, profoundly, attentively, prudently, with inner thoughts, with the mental doors ajar, with delicate fingers and eyes... my patient friends, this book appeals only to perfect readers and philologists: learn to read me well!”

²⁹⁴ Op. cit., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 26.

²⁹⁵ Op. cit., *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, where he states: “the world is the totality of facts, not things”, 1.1.

alone confers the legal right to record and systematize, is confronted by nothing but abstract material, which has no other property than to be the substrate of such possession.”²⁹⁶ In the final form of this movement, “Factuality wins the day; cognition is restricted to its repetition; and thought becomes mere tautology.”²⁹⁷

“To grasp existing things as such, not merely to note their abstract spatial-temporal relationships, by which they can then be seized, but, on the contrary, to think of them as surface, as mediated conceptual moments which are only fulfilled by revealing their social, historical, and human meaning—this whole aspiration of knowledge is abandoned. Knowledge does not consist in mere perception, classification, and calculation but precisely in the determining negation of whatever is directly at hand. Instead of such negation, mathematical formalism, whose medium, number, is the most abstract form of the immediate, arrests thought at mere immediacy. The actual is validated, knowledge confines itself to repeating it, thought makes itself mere tautology. The more completely the machinery of thought subjugates existence, the more blindly it is satisfied with reproducing it. Enlightenment thereby regresses to the mythology it has never been able to escape.”²⁹⁸

Complicating enlightenment claims to rationality through the invention of universal characters, in one viewpoint, mathematical symbols do not point toward an external reality, in the sense in which we name objects, or states of affairs, in natural language, since the concepts they describe can *only* be accessed through the symbols themselves; mathematical facts are pure abstractions; there is no such thing as a number to be referred to, only the mathematical ‘rule’ or ‘law’ implied. Such symbols involve a radical movement away from the possibilities of translation ‘back’ into natural language, and stand alone, referring only to themselves. Nor do Mathematical symbols record or represent thoughts; they embody them, and mathematical

²⁹⁶ Op. cit., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 26.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. 26-27.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 26.

symbols are essentially and irreducibly self-referential.²⁹⁹ Controversially, this thought has led to further speculation that numbers *only* exist as marks on paper, pixels on screen, or as abstract markers' in a game of formal rules; that the rules of their employment are all that exist, much as in Wittgenstein's 'language games' and the notion that the meaning of language is in its use'. In the same way that chess pieces exist independently of their physical manifestations because the rules of the game are what count, not the pieces, a mathematical object *is* what it *does*. In each, difference and not objective existence of mathematical entities are the key. The precise mental constructions of mathematics cannot be conveyed in an irredeemably imprecise language, and these constructions are all that mathematics consists of. The innate fallibility of language leads to a lack of ability to communicate the 'essence' of mathematics.³⁰⁰

Term Formalists claim that the essence of mathematics *is* the manipulation of typographical characters. That mathematics is located in the material 'event' of symbolic presence and mobility. This kind of thinking has been called the 'linguistic turn' in mathematics, and stands alongside attempts to identify mathematics and logic in natural language as one and the same thing. "According to the formalist, mathematics is not, or need not be, about anything, or anything beyond the typographical characters and rules for

²⁹⁹ B. Rotman, *Mathematics as Sign*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 132.

³⁰⁰ For example, the expression 'and so on' (continuance of a procedure ad infinitum) is predicated on the *rules* that supply its meaning, by supporting its action, or procedure. For example, "1,2,3,4" versus "1,2,3,4 and so on", or "1,2,3,4 ..." define the difference between finite and infinite procedures by virtue of the rule inscribed in the typographical objects: 'and so on', or the ellipsis (...). Accordingly, a sign for a series, such as "1, 1+1, 1+1+1 ..." embodies the *rules* of infinitude, rather than substituting for the setting out of a list which cannot be completed by its very nature. Wittgenstein is concerned to draw attention away from the physical sign, and redirect our attention to the rule which operates internally to the sign. To intension, rather than extension. "What arithmetic is concerned with is the schema IIII. — But does arithmetic talk about the lines that I draw with pencil on paper? — Arithmetic doesn't talk about the lines, it *operates* with them." Op. cit., *Philosophical Grammar*, p. 332.

manipulating them.”³⁰¹ Irrespective of the medium in which mathematical symbols are transcribed: toner, ink, chalk, pen, even stone, the formalist identifies mathematical entities with their names. Therefore, the numeral ‘2’, inscribed in some fashion, indicates the natural number ‘2’ it stands for the number 2. The complex number ‘ $8 + 2i$ ’ is just the symbol ‘ $8 + 2i$ ’, nothing more, nothing less.

This leads to a number of basic questions about mathematical knowledge, such as the fact that if all that exists are the physical manifestations of the numbers, then the equation $0=0$ (if assumed to be true) becomes difficult to prove: “He or she cannot say that the leftmost area of ink (or toner) shaped like an oval is identical to the right hand area of ink or toner, also shaped like an oval. Clearly, these are two different areas of ink.”³⁰² Strictly speaking, the Term Formalist will interpret the equation to be an instance of two different areas of ink, sharing the same shape. But this means that entities called ‘shapes’ have to be acknowledged. However, when discussing linguistic items such as letters and words, the formalist will sidestep these criticisms by invoking suspiciously Platonic entities called ‘types’ which are the abstract form of all tokens. “Tokens” are the physical events, or manifestations in ink, toner, chalk, of each type (i.e. each letter a). The letter, a, seen in different times and places, is thus merely a token of a primary type. The Roman alphabet is made up of 26 types, not tokens, and even if every example, every token, letter in of the alphabet were destroyed, the types would remain since

³⁰¹ S. Körner, *The Philosophy of Mathematics: an Introductory Essay*, (Courier Dover Publications, 1986), p. 101.

³⁰² Op. cit., *Mathematics as Sign*, p. 132.

they are abstractions, ideal forms. However, it is tokens, not types that we deal with in our encounters with mathematics.³⁰³

Finally, Game formalism likens the practise of mathematics to a game played with linguistic characters, as in chess. In this view, mathematical symbols are meaningless and any meaning they may accidentally have is irrelevant to the playing of the ‘game’. The fact is the symbols of mathematics may as well be meaningless, since they are merely ‘markers’, and there is no attempt at mathematical interpretation of typographical characters in mathematics in this version of formalism.

In contrast to these mathematical notions of ‘rules’, and repetition, in Part III, the thesis will explore the idea that mimesis offers a form of repetition that returns not the same, but the different, the ‘new’, and the expressive, rather than the merely represented.

2.2 Formal Logic, or Logic as Form

“That the subject matter of logic is thought, with that everyone agrees.”³⁰⁴

“The philosopher cannot award the sole birthright by mere logical analysis for there seem to be rival logics governed by different aims.”³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Series’ can be said to be about patterns. Pattern recognition relies, in part, upon understanding the type/token distinction. Presupposed is a difference between the ‘token’ (example) of a letter, and its ‘type’ (a kind of Platonic original, or ‘form’, from which all tokens derive, and are only instances). This relation constitutes a ‘ground’ in that the example presupposes an original (origin) to which it refers. The relation itself is asked deferred in favour of the dichotomous ‘grounds’ of type/token, original/ example, presented/represented. As Schapiro explains, the recognition of varying degrees of abstraction among tokens is great, extending to the use of code, where one token is replaced in an agreed-upon act of substitution. However, while there may be a great difference among the instances (tokens), they share a common relation to the series known as the alphabet. The letter ‘F’ occupies 6th place, while the letter ‘Z’ occupies the 26th position, and this marks their ‘place[s] in a pattern or structure’. S. Schapiro, *Thinking About Mathematics*, (Oxford, 2000), p. 276.

³⁰⁴ G. W. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, (Routledge, 2004), p. 243.

³⁰⁵ R. Schusterman, *Surface and Depth, Dialectics of Criticism and Culture* (Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 86.

Logic is the science of rational thinking—the ultimate disciplined gesture. It determines something, and asserts (predicates) about that something, through a process of shaping, which takes place in language, whether natural or symbolic. “Of its own accord, a determining so understood tries to measure up to that about which the statement is made. The measuring up to that about which the determination and statement are made, the *adequatio*, characterizes what we generally mean by the truth of statements. *Aoyos*, can be adequate or inadequate, true or false.”³⁰⁶ Aristotle locates truth in correspondence, or in other words, in the identity between objects and concepts (in their quality of ‘matching’).³⁰⁷ This concept of truth as a set of correspondences grounded in language, and requiring a perceiving subject, is repeated in Aquinas,³⁰⁸ Leibniz, and later in Kant, who inherits the traditional concept of truth, while introducing new concepts of ‘subject’, ‘knowing’, and ‘judgement’.³⁰⁹ Wittgenstein stated: “The correspondence or non-correspondence of [a proposition] with reality constitutes its truth or falsity.”³¹⁰ In all versions, truth and correspondence, subject (mind) and object, and the search for identity, not difference (which would invite contradiction) are assumed, actively pursued, and considered intrinsic to method, whose constitutive ‘ground’ is this very search for correspondence or identity.³¹¹

³⁰⁶ M. Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, (Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 2.

³⁰⁷ Cf. Aristotle, ‘The Interpretations’, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Jonathan Banes, (Princeton University Press, 1995), vol. 1.

³⁰⁸ Aquinas said: “Truth is a ‘correspondence between intellect [mind/soul] and thing’.” *Quaestiones Disputatae Deveritate*, QI, Art. I.

³⁰⁹ Kant said: “What is truth? The nominal definition of truth, namely that it is the agreement of cognition with its object, is both granted and presupposed.” *Critique of Pure Reason*, A58. Kant goes further to ask: “but one demands to know what is the general and certain criterion of the truth of any cognition”.

³¹⁰ Op. cit., *Tractatus Logicus Philosophicus*, §T2.222.

³¹¹ Martin Heidegger will later inquire into the nature and meaning of this reliance on correspondence or identity, by re-posing it as a relation (mediation/translation) between two ‘somethings’ (mind/object, statement/reality, etc.). His book *Being and Time* is the occasion,

Traditional (formal) logic is grounded in, and requires, a belief in the physical determinism (positivity) of language, aligned with fixed notions of time and space. It demonstrates and infers ‘valid/invalid’ outcomes, based on the formal deployment of language within rule-bound systems of subject-predicate (syllogistic), or symbolic form. In *The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein takes logic to be the principal ‘ground’ of both language and the world;³¹² “Logic pervades both reality and how we apprehend reality. To pass beyond its limits, the limits alike of language and world, is to speak non-sense.”³¹³ In his essay *Some Remarks on Logical Form*,³¹⁴ Wittgenstein outlines the principles of Logical Positivism³¹⁵ which Bertrand Russell had earlier proposed. He explains how every proposition has both a content and a form, but that the ‘pure’ form is only available to us if we abstract from the meanings of individual words.³¹⁶ What counts is not solely word-level semantics; logic must account for variables, which are subject to the same syntactical constraints as the constants. Logic must also avoid the trap which ‘ordinary [natural] language’ falls into, of being able to construct seemingly sensible statements which, on closer inspection, are revealed to be ‘pseudopositions’.³¹⁷ These might involve phrases such as “the Real,

and Dasein is the concept he employs to introduce the essential relation of time to being, and authenticity.

³¹² David Silverman and Brian Torode, *The Material Word, Some Theories of Language and its Limits*, (Routledge, 1980), p. 51.

³¹³ Ibid., p. 51.

³¹⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Some Remarks on Logical Form*. p. 1. First appeared in *The Aristotelian Society*, suppl. Vol. 9 (1929). Reprinted in *Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, Ed. Ludlow, (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1997), p. 209.

³¹⁵ Supra Part I

³¹⁶ Cf. *Some Remarks on Logical Form*,

³¹⁷ Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus-Logicus-Philosophicus*, refused the validity of what he termed philosophical ‘pseudoproblems’, such as metaphysical questions, which he claimed are unspeakable, and therefore nonsense. For example: “I see nobody on the road”, said Alice. “I only wish I had such eyes”, the King remarked in a fretful tone, “To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance, too! Why, it’s as much as I can do to see real people by this light!” *Alice Through the Looking Glass*, Lewis Carroll. However, it might also be claimed that: “If the problems of traditional philosophy cannot be settled as definitely and straightforwardly as the

though it is an *in itself*, must also be able to become a *for myself*”,³¹⁸
effectively rendering large portions of philosophical discourse meaningless. Propositions can be reduced to what Wittgenstein terms ‘atomic’ elements, where more or less complex arrangements of words and sentences containing embedded propositions, ‘logical sums’ or truth functions are progressively stripped away to reveal the most reductive, bare, minimal form, underlying the various material instances of language:

“We must eventually reach the ultimate connection of the terms, the immediate connection which cannot be broken, without destroying the propositional form as such. They, then, are the kernels of every proposition, *they* contain the material, and all the rest is only a development of this material.”³¹⁹

The proper task of a theory of knowledge, according to Wittgenstein, is to find these extra-linguistic, ‘atomic’ facts (which can be thought of broadly as spatio-temporal events) and to make clear how they are constructed out of, or made possible by, the words or symbols of material language. Wittgenstein seeks to establish a hierarchy of linguistic significance, in which the material event of language is subordinate to the formal structures of language. His difficulty is in finding a method for excluding what he feels are the endless misunderstandings which plague ordinary language (its stubborn indeterminacy), while allowing for ‘pure’ form to reveal itself—abstracted from language *as such*. The answer he proposes is a symbol system which exchanges ordinary language for unambiguous, singular, and precise symbolic

problems of mathematics and empirical science, that may only show that they are different kinds of problems, not that they are pseudoproblems.” Dale Jaquette, *Wittgenstein’s Thought in Transition*, (Purdue University Press, 1998), p.148. Wittgenstein’s position requires an adherence to a ‘fact-picturing’ view of language, one in which the only role for language is concrete, representational, and logical (conceptually clearly defined). It necessitates a unilateral mode for language, whose symmetry becomes one of correspondence between language and its objects; between concept and object, via clarity of expression.

³¹⁸ Ibid, p. 1.

³¹⁹ L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by G.E.M. Anscombe. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 21.

representations, which in turn provide a clear image of the logical structure.³²⁰ However, in a further complication, this ‘atomic’ form cannot be seen, nor can it be predicted (a-priori). Ordinary language poses the primary relation of language (and logic) as subject-predicate based, but this leads to an unwelcome generality, a lack of precision which denies the fullness of the abstraction he seeks to express. Phrases participating in the subject-predicate form offer no more precise opportunities for drawing conclusions than that they share this *form*.³²¹ Their content has no guaranteed character of correspondence; it’s unclear how they could be deployed as a means to attain knowledge of the ‘pure’ facts of language.

The situation is further complicated by the sheer multiplicity of the world-phenomena which logical translation meets with, one which requires a logical form capable of embracing this multiplicity, and which simultaneously possesses the same breadth in its own formal architecture and system. Wittgenstein describes how a ‘pure’ logical language must encounter and consist of:

“[T]he whole manifold of special and temporal objects, as colours, sounds, etc., etc., with their gradations, continuous transitions, and combinations in various proportions, all of which we cannot seize by our ordinary means of expression.”³²²

The answer is that ordinary language is to be replaced in logical formations by numbers (rational or irrational), since numbers alone have the ability to represent “atomic propositions” while entering into their very structure;

³²⁰ Leibniz similarly advocated rationality and abstract thinking, promoted by the creation of an entirely artificial symbolic language. He called this the ‘*Characteristica Universalis*’ (1677).

³²¹ For instance, “I am lazy” and “The weather is fine” share no common content, only the same subject-predicate form of organization.

³²² Op. cit., *Wittgenstein’s Thought in Transition*, p.1.

becoming an integral part of the architecture of the expression in a way unavailable to ordinary language.³²³

In other examples, for Noam Chomsky,³²⁴ the symbols of a formal language are meaningless in themselves. In such formal languages, meaning is based solely on position and relation within a system. Logical language is understood as a series of axioms and variables, whose application within the system can be applied universally and confer meaning by virtue of their position alone. This ‘formal’ system of language and philosophy held that the ambiguities of ordinary language were unsuitable for doing precise conceptual analysis and so language had to first be translated into a formal language to which mathematical logic could apply. This language would be logically clear and precise or ‘pure’. Similarly, Quine offered the following thought: ‘*To be is to be the value of a variable*’.³²⁵ Apart from the ontological commitment this statement involves, it also demonstrates how Quine’s philosophy of language holds that the objects of language (words, utterances) are to be understood as a series of axioms and variables, which are meaningless in themselves, but

³²³ See figure 6. Wittgenstein explains this by using the visual model of a system of coordinate axes in space (“cross wires”). An arbitrary scale is affixed, such that every part of the field of vision can be assigned a numerical coordinate such as “[6-9, 3-8]”, with the further possibility to designate a quality to that spatial coordinate, such as Red (which is both a universal *and* a particular). This would modify the coordinate to: “[6-9, 3-8] R”. In this simple example, the patch ‘P’ is represented by a coordinate in time and space, and the proposition is represented by ‘R’. “The system of co-ordinates here is part of the mode of expression; it is part of the method of projection by which the reality is projected onto our symbolism”³²³ and while this is an incomplete thought (he does not account for time, only space, and the two-dimensional character of the illustration is restrictive), the model is intended to be indicative of the kind of rich, multiple system of analysis he wishes to secure for logical thought. The kind of logical form presented here (the emphasis being on analysing visual phenomena), differs significantly from the one which ordinary language presupposes, and makes possible. He doesn’t consider the use of numbers as an example of a ‘special’ symbolic system, but as an “unavoidable feature of the representation”, when “we are dealing with properties which admit of gradation, i.e., properties as the length of an interval, the pitch of a tone, the brightness or redness of a shade of colour, etc”. L. Wittgenstein, ‘Some Remarks on Logical Form’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, Vol. 9, Knowledge, Experience and Realism (1929), pp. 162-171.

³²⁴ Cf. N. Chomsky, *Language and Mind* (Harcourt, 1972), pp. 102- 110.

³²⁵ Cf. W. Quine, *Quintessence: Basic Readings from the Philosophy of W. V. Quine*, (Belknap Press, 2008), p. 189.

whose application within the system can be applied universally, attaining meaning with respect to position alone.

Formal/symbolic systems of logic hold that the ambiguities (and ‘intensities’) of ordinary language are unsuitable for doing precise conceptual analysis, and so language first has to be translated into a formal language to which a rigorous ‘mathematical’ logic could apply. Language would be rendered logically clear and precise or ‘pure’ as a result of this operation:

“Scientific (or philosophical) theories are systems of axioms in mathematical logic, where the symbols are meaningless and need to be interpreted in terms of set-theoretical models... Technically, a logical form in itself is meaningless-just a group of symbols” ... “A formal language needs to be interpreted to be meaningful.”³²⁶

Such ‘mathematical’ languages are distinct from natural languages (‘formal’ versus ‘everyday’ language) and the underlying assumption (shared by Chomsky and others) is that for language to be precise and scientifically rigorous, it is essential to theorize from within such a formal system of language. In other words, within formal languages (such as logic), it is not possible to see meaning in the symbols themselves, but only in the *relations* between those symbols. In them, syntax is independent of semantics, and these are a consequence of a-priori philosophical assumptions about the relation between language and thought, language and self, and language to *its*-self: its identity. It follows automatically that to engage with such languages, and the theories that encircle them, is to accept the world-view they partake of, and that they in turn reinforce.

³²⁶ G. Lakoff and M. Johnston, *Philosophy in the Flesh, The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, (Basic Books, 1999), p.447-449.

Language becomes a technical instrument, part of the ‘technologization’ of the world which Heidegger warned against the dangers of.³²⁷ This kind of logical analysis most properly belongs to science, and marks the moment when philosophy becomes a form of reductive technical and formal thinking. The ‘will-to-power’ and domination of the natural world by technology are close allies of this form of thought. Moreover, by attempting to simply eliminate the use of words such as ‘being’ and ‘nothingness’, for Heidegger, the Logical Positivists paradoxically revealed their unconscious metaphysics, since in his view the entire history of metaphysics was marked by the ‘forgetfulness of being’.³²⁸ Such a denial, in his view, constitutes a radical acknowledgement of this very forgetfulness.

In Kant, a-priori truths are founded on reason alone, and thus independent of all experience. They are (in logical terms), *necessary* truths. By contrast, a-posteriori truths are grounded in experience, and are empirically-founded, which is to say, they are *contingent*, uncertain, and unreliable. A-priori truths are, therefore, in a general sense universal, while a-posteriori truths are particular. Moreover, Kant’s Transcendental Unity of Apperception also makes clear that if something (x) is transcendent, it lies beyond a boundary, while if x is immanent, then it is on this side of the boundary, where immanence implies referring to nothing other than itself.³²⁹ However, if x is *transcendental*, then it is on the fence – perhaps even a property of the fence – in question. The transcendental is therefore that which is neither on one side, nor the other, but populates, or produces the medium, or process itself,

³²⁷ These ideas are explored in: M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, (Harper Perennial, 1982).

³²⁸ Cf. C. B. Guignon, *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger (Cambridge Companions to Philosophy)*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993). pp. 51-60.

³²⁹ Cf. G. Deleuze: *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (1991). Trans. *What Is Philosophy?* (Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 35-48.

collapsing subject/object, word/object, cognitive/cognized division[s]. Hegel, speaking of science and the concomitant fear of error, which would undermine it, remarks:

“[Science] takes for granted certain ideas about cognition as an *instrument* and as a *medium*, and assumes that there is a *difference between ourselves and this cognition*. Above all, it presupposes that the Absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other, independent and separated from it, and yet it is something real; or in other words, it presupposes that cognition which, since it is excluded from the Absolute, is surely outside of the truth as well, is nevertheless true, an assumption whereby what calls itself fear of error reveals itself rather as fear of the truth.”³³⁰

In this context, Hegel might be seen to suggest that cognition could be seen to be a part of the ‘boundary’: *transcendental*, not transcendent, nor immanent. Cognition is the boundary itself, not that which lies on either side of it.

Mathematical propositions fall into the category of the a-priori, while paradox, by this definition, could be argued to be strictly a-posteriori, since a paradox reflexively directs refers us back to the object itself (including its language, existence in time and space), which simplified concepts, and logical structures grounded in identity want to consume/subsume. Paradoxes refuse the compulsory identification Theodor Adorno warns against: “By means of logic, dialectics grasps the coercive character of logic, hoping that it may yield—for that coercion itself is the mythical delusion, the compulsory identity.”³³¹ In the effort to reinforce similarity, the unique, particular, and concrete in a given object is overlooked.³³² The resistance to compulsory

³³⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 1807, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Trans. A. V. Miller, (Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 49.

³³¹ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 406.

³³² For example, so long as you don’t attempt to subsume the given object under the concept ‘art’, Duchamp’s urinal can be seen as a sculpturally interesting, materially beautiful object in its own right, even though Duchamp’s own project (paradoxically), was to provide a counterpoint or challenge to agreed-upon notions of aesthetic taste: “I threw ...the urinal in their faces as a challenge, and now they admire it for its aesthetic beauty.”

identification is true for all forms of paradox, including linguistic, logical, aesthetic, since each instance of contradiction throws the conceptual system off-course, and forces attention back onto the intramundane, the particular, the material, and away from pre-given conceptual categories, which attempt to shape content and prefigure truth. As Adorno reminds us, identity thinking cannot deploy concepts to fully capture their objects of reference, since “Abstract classifications do not, however, inhere in objects, but rather are artifacts of intellectual organization.”³³³

2.3 Benjamin on The Paradox of the Cretan

“Cretans are always liars”. “This sentence is false”³³⁴

“The logical unassailability of the Cretan’s assertion... must prove to be mere appearance, for otherwise logic as such would collapse.”³³⁵

There are two basic forms of (non-visual and non-physical³³⁶) paradox: logical or set-theoretical, and semantic. The set-theoretical variant leads to Russell’s

³³³ Review published in: *Making Adorno’s Ethics and Politics Explicit*, Nick Smith, *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol. 29, 2003.

³³⁴ The Liar Paradox, attributed to Eubulides, in the 4th century, is also known as The Paradox of the Cretan, where it takes the form: “Cretans are always liars”. The ‘Grelling-Nelson Paradox’ is further evidence of how language, when it self-refers, as in The Liar Paradox, often leads to a contradiction. In autological³³⁴ words, the distance between word and concept is small, if non-existent. In describing its attributes, (as in the word ‘short’, which is a short word), an adjective can be described as autological, when the word as a physical event, and the concept to which it refers, are as one: each maps point-for-point onto the other, or if not point-for-point, enjoy a very close relationship. In heterological³³⁴ words, there is, in the first instance, no such relationship of proximity, or self-reference. The word long, is, in fact, a short word, and therefore heterological by definition. The paradox arises when the question is asked slightly differently. Is the word “heterological” itself a heterological (non-self-referring) word? If ‘yes’, then “heterological” is autological; since it refers to itself (a paradox). If ‘no’, then “heterological” is heterological (another paradox). Either case leads to an inevitable contradiction/antinomy.

³³⁵ Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings I, 1913-1926*. ‘The Paradox of the Cretan’, (Belknap/Harvard, 2000), p. 210.

³³⁶ Physical paradoxes involve situations where there is a contradiction in physical descriptions of the universe, and are frequently attributed to flaws in theoretical frameworks, since they defy ‘common sense’. For instance, Quantum physics has required that scientific knowledge adjust its assumptions, to accommodate new paradigms, and special relativity

paradox, where the set of all sets that does not contain itself as a member leads to a paradox of inclusion. Such a set is a member of itself if and only if it is *not* a member of itself, resulting in the paradox. Semantic paradoxes, while similar in form, revolve around contradictory outcomes in the realm of meaning, and truth values. In the ancient Greek paradox stated by Epimenides, by suggesting that all Cretans state the opposite of what is true, *every* time they speak,³³⁷ a contradiction is set in motion, a vicious cycle which reverses time in the proposition, and refuses an exit based on the classical law of contradiction ($p \rightarrow \neg p$), first described by Aristotle, and which, in its simplest form states: something cannot be both true and not true at the same time.³³⁸ As Walter Benjamin remarked, regarding the paradox of the Cretan if “every one of my assertions without exceptions accords with the truth”,³³⁹ then it would necessarily mean that this one was also untrue. Hence, a paradox: something irresolvable within the system as stated. The unavoidable chain of contradictions is circular: language is thrown back on itself, in an infinitely recursive move which forms an inescapable abyss. True is false, and false is true, at one and the same time, in an abyssal form of logic, where each possibility sits temporally on top of, or under, or inside/enfolded in the other, coexisting; comingling; coterminous; in any event, not adjacent to one another, or in a linear movement, but mutually exposed. In short: in the Liar Paradox, there is no easily escapable scenario, based on a set of logical exclusions, which move from simple identity, progressively, to a bivalent resolution which neatly separates truth and falsity in time and space.

throws up several paradoxes, including ‘the twin paradox’, in which an identical twin, returning from outer space will (theoretically) have aged less than the earth-bound twin.

³³⁷ Cf., ‘I lie, I speak’ in Foucault /Blanchot: Maurice Blanchot: *The Thought from Outside and Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him* (Zone Books, 1989).

³³⁸ Supra Part I where the Law of Contradiction is explained.

³³⁹ Op. cit., *The Paradox of the Cretan*, p. 210.

Therefore, the problem, as Benjamin points out, is not that the statement has no meaning as such, but that “This ‘fallacy’ is insoluble within logic itself”, that the system within which it is being considered (logic) cannot contain it.³⁴⁰

In ‘The Paradox of the Cretan’, Benjamin raises three considerations: the first is that the “insolubly contradictory inferences”³⁴¹ of the paradox may be unique, the second is that while the logical environment cannot accommodate its “chain of contradictions”, this does not mean to suggest that the statement is meaningless or entirely nonsensical in itself. The ‘Cartesian demon’, which undoes certainty in the realm of perception, by suggesting that all perception may be just a dream—and that doubt alone remains as a singular certainty—might well take advantage of this paradox, since it performs the same deceptive trickery, and throws doubt into the equation. Third, only the person to whom the statement is attributed (a Cretan) can make the claim in this particular form of the paradox, and set in motion the violent, anti-systemic, rhizomatic antinomy it represents.³⁴² A non-Cretan undoes its power, and de-animates its force. Subject and object are set apart by a non-Cretan voice, while the Cretan collapses the distinction.

This allows Benjamin to say that: “[The Paradox of the Cretan], forms its insoluble chain of contradictions in the realm of logic, without being in any

³⁴⁰ By deterritorializing the space of logic, and destabilizing its temporal hierarchies, a dissonant departure from the usual form of logical sense is provided, where all that remains is the ‘inbetween’ (the excluded middle of the terms), which refuses to settle into one term or another. The moment there appears to be any form of closure, or settlement of the terms into true or false, a second’s further thought shows how the form of the sentence once again sweeps up the terms into disarray and conflict, creating paradox.

³⁴¹ Op. cit., *The Paradox of the Cretan*. p. 211.

³⁴² Supra Part III, where it will be argued (through Deleuze) that paradoxes are Rhizomatic, that they are a plane of consistency (plane of immanence), which are/form a surface that brings forth a rhizomatic ontology. Paradoxes represent deterritorialized planes of flux, in a fragmentary, diversified, proliferating, expansive, intensity-filled space, since all that exists is the middle, the ‘now’, no beginning and end. It is because paradoxes work differently, and are a-identical, that any attempts to ratify them within the system of (bivalent) logic will fail. They are viral, non-grounded infinities: oscillations, intensities, variations, or modulations on a theme, not the theme itself. They constitute anti-structural surfaces, disorganized, instruments, which are improvisational, non-hierarchical and process-driven.

way meaningless or nonsensical in itself—that is to say, on the ontological plane.”³⁴³ By further suggesting that while it may not be possible to incorporate a paradox within a system of logic, that does not mean that it does not have a ‘sense’, he opens a space for nonsense (the Hegelian form of the dialectic, in which x and $-x$ can and do coexist in the same time and space).³⁴⁴ Moreover, Benjamin’s statement goes as far as to suggest that the Paradox of the Cretan possesses such a “powerful metaphysical intensity”³⁴⁵ that it has the ability to undermine formal logic itself, and with it, a form of certainty allied to instrumental reason; one grounded in the first of the Classical Laws of thought, especially The Principle of Identity, where: $A=A$, and the Law of Non Contradiction.³⁴⁶ Graham Priest has described the essence of the liar as “a particular twisted construction which forces a sentence, if it is in the bona fide truths, to be in ‘the rest’ (too); conversely, if it is in ‘the rest’, it is in the bona fide truths.”³⁴⁷ The liar paradox breaks into two parts, the truthful statement, and the ‘rest’. If it falls under the truthful, then it also falls under the ‘rest’, and if it falls under the ‘rest’, it also falls under the truthful. This conflict actively produces the contradiction, and the ‘twisted construction’ which Priest describes, is produced in the bivalent framework within which the sentence

³⁴³ Op. cit., *The Paradox of the Cretan*, p. 211.

³⁴⁴ Supra chapter one for an account of the contested notions of ‘sense’ which have attended different philosophies of language.

³⁴⁵ Op. cit., *The Paradox of the Cretan*, p. 211.

³⁴⁶ Supra chapter two, in which Heidegger’s reformulation of the Principle of Identity will be noted and outlined. The thesis will amplify and offer variations upon a claim that paradoxes collapse, even curve, time and space, and that in them, proximity/speed/limits are constantly exceeded. If non-identity is infinite, while identity is finite; a Paradox is clearly a non-identical infinity, showing that a reversible, infinite, unstable relation to (any) identity exists: one which requires multivalent timings and multiple surfaces to understand its movement. It will be shown in later chapters how paradox comes to be this non-identical infinity, where a reversible relation to (any) identity exists. In this formulation of identity, $A = A$ becomes A repeats/reverses A , infinitely; offering a deformed and disjunctive dynamic in place of a static, unidirectional Principle of Identity, which is the basis of all prior logics, and which (for Heidegger), grounds Being (Cf. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*) as an attribute of a pre-existing identity.

³⁴⁷ G. Priest, *In Contradiction: a Study of the Transconsistent*, (Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 23.

finds itself, since it is not sufficient to establish it as falling within one set or the other. As Benjamin agrees, the bivalent construction is the problem, causing the contradiction, not the particular form of language itself. The standard Liar: ‘This sentence is false’, is just a particular instance of this, producing a contradiction within the bivalent framework, in which ‘the rest’ is identified with the set of the false sentences.³⁴⁸

Walter Benjamin further speaks of language as being under constant disintegration, or dissolution, wherein translation itself is that process of disintegration.³⁴⁹ Meaning attaches fleetingly to a term, only to be immediately displaced. The moment sense is established, it shifts location, slipping out of view, causing “meaning [to] plunge from abyss to abyss.”³⁵⁰

2. 4 The Principle[s] of Identity

Heidegger, in his lectures from 1957, wants to rethink the principle of identity as one of relation (with the emphasis on the relation), rather than one in which the terms being related take precedence. $A=A$ becomes $A \text{ is } A$, where the ‘is’ takes precedence over the identities of the individual A ’s. This represents a

³⁴⁸ In its standard version, the Liar paradox arises within the following sentence: (1). (1) is false. In this sentence, (1) refers to itself and tells us something about (1) itself: its truth value. The argument then proceeds: Suppose (1) is true: then what it says is the case, so it is false. Then, suppose (1) is false: this is what it claims to be, so it is true. If we accept the Law of Bivalence (also known as the Law of Non-Contradiction); the principle according to which all sentences must be either true or false, both alternatives lead to a contradiction: (1) is both true and false, that is, it forms a *dialetheia*, against the Law of Non-Contradiction. A *dialetheia* is a two-headed form of truth, which sometimes employs a paraconsistent form of logic in which contradictions can be accommodated. “The inspiration for the name was a passage in Wittgenstein’s *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, where he describes the Liar sentence (‘This sentence is not true’) as a Janus-headed figure facing both truth and falsity (1978, IV.59). Hence a *di-aletheia* is a two (-way) truth”. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. The value of *dialetheism* and paraconsistent forms of logic will be assessed later in this chapter. For now, it is important to note that they are an attempt to address the need for a logic which does not fall foul of the ‘Liar’s Revenge’, which shows how resilient the paradoxes are: attempts to solve them within the framework of bivalent logic often simply succeed in relocating the paradoxes elsewhere, in so called ‘strengthened’ forms.

³⁴⁹ W. Benjamin, In *Illuminations*, by Hannah Arendt, *The Task of the Translator*, iv.1.21.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

move away from metaphysics, which always casts the same as a self-unity.

“The event of appropriation... should now serve as the key term in the service of thinking.”³⁵¹

How is it possible for Heidegger make this claim? Because the event of appropriation is a singularity [an event] which delivers over beings into Being. Whereas metaphysics asserts that identity *presupposes* Being (Being is subservient to identity: identity is its ground[ing]). In the event as posed, identity is recast as the relationship between the *together* in terms of the *belonging*, and not in favour of the terms being related. Perdurance is the term Heidegger uses for the simultaneous withholding and closure of the space between the terms; one which is forever in a state of oscillation between them.

In Heidegger’s conception of the event of appropriation, language itself provides the tools for this type of thought, since through its ‘self-suspended structure’, language holds everything in a fragile, delicate, susceptible framework, one which is infinitely collapsible at any point. The event of appropriation is thus to be found, and is founded, in language; in that ‘self-vibrating realm’ where we dwell. Heidegger states it in this way: “The doctrine of Metaphysics represents identity as a fundamental characteristic of Being.”³⁵²

In this new formulation, the essential quality of identity is to be found within the event of appropriation. Metaphysics presupposes that Being is the ground of beings, and forms its identity; gives it its characteristics. However, the ‘spring’ constitutes a leap into the ‘abyss’ of the event of appropriation. However, this abyss is not a place of loss or confusion, but the space of a more originary relation of identity, one where the vibration, or oscillation between

³⁵¹ M. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, (Chicago University Press, 2002), p. 36.

³⁵² Ibid. p. 38.

beings and Beings is retained. Thinking is transformed by this movement, and the ‘essential origin of identity’ is retained through that which joins and separates them, simultaneously (perdurance). Identity [in Hegel] is mediated. This took two thousand years to establish. The ‘spring’ will not be accepted as a reformulation, in a day. Rather than calculating (planning) the relation, we need to think it, and this takes time.

2.5 Hegel’s Dialectical Method

Dialectics is an epistemological tool which simultaneously expresses the system and is the means by which the system is understood. In dialectical reasoning, the contradiction of thesis/antithesis is reconciled and ‘unified’ in the synthesis (resulting in a totality) which cannot be added to or subtracted from. In this method, things are determined through their relation to other things, negation being the means by which identity is established. Starting out by indicating what things are not, rather than what they are, the moment of synthesis in the dialectical method overcomes the initial negation. For Hegel, the dialectic involves a ‘totality of differences’ within which nothing is unknowable; the goal of which is to attain the highest form of ‘truth’: absolute knowledge. Moving dialectically beyond the ‘now’ (immediate or unmediated knowledge), through the various stages of intuition, sense-certainty, perception, understanding, and finally arriving at absolute knowledge (the end-point of the exercise), Hegel establishes dialectics as the method by which knowledge/’truth’ is attained and in doing so places everything prior to the final synthesis in a subservient relationship to ‘absolute knowledge’. Negation for Hegel is the very name of the unity/totality which comes to equal ‘truth’,

and is the driving force of dialectics, taking its very essence from the negative ‘movement’ by which it is enabled.³⁵³

“ ‘The battle of reason is the struggle to break up the rigidity to which the understanding has reduced everything’, the understanding being the form of thought which continues to apply rigid rules and categories, which apply well in ordinary finite contexts, to the new, fluid, iridescent contexts and objects of reason.”³⁵⁴

In his books *The Science of Logic*, and *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel sets forth the possibility of a transcendental form of discourse; one which simultaneously embraces and avoids the persistent contradiction(s) which earlier forms of (pre-critical) discourse have been incapable of navigating; and is able to capture, account for, and speak to, metaphysics:³⁵⁵ “[W]hen one leaves the finite things of ordinary discourse, one also leaves the rules that govern discourse about such things.”³⁵⁶ New senses, usage and expressions are to be applied to old questions, in order that idealism can find a ‘home’, prompting Hegel to state: “The metaphysics of understanding is dogmatic, because it maintains half-truths in their isolation, whereas the idealism of speculative philosophy carries out the principle of totality and can reach beyond the inadequate formularies of abstract thought.”³⁵⁷ Rather than simply

³⁵³ Adorno will later challenge these ideas, questioning dialectics as a means of achieving something positive from negation, repositioning negation as ‘something that can’t be said’: the indissoluble something. Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, esp. pp135-7.

³⁵⁴ *Hegel’s Logic, Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Science* (1830), Trans. W. Wallace, (Oxford, 1975), Foreword, p. xi.

³⁵⁵ Dialectics is a form of philosophical reasoning based, historically, in dialogue, and therefore, in language. Socratic dialogue involved posing points of view, which were then interrogated by the opposing participant (the interlocutor), with the aim of revealing illogicalities, or of leading the first into contradictions. This kind of questioning forms a method, which relies upon progressive questioning, followed by refutation, oscillating between question and answer, always with the goal of exposing weakness in the others’ position. Frequently, no conclusive answer or final agreement is arrived at, but the questions simply proliferate, in the form of extended argument: a lengthy ‘testing’ of an initial premise, was designed to reveal insights. More important than truth, was the ability to argue well, and to ‘trip-up’ the opponent by sophistry; employing the various surfaces of language to imply veracity, while frequently hiding false reasoning.

³⁵⁶ Op. cit., *The Logic*, p. x.

³⁵⁷ Ibid. §32

modifying existing language, to suit the new purpose, these ‘language-games’ will perform/re-enact/archaeologize, a ‘deeper’ logic—building upon older forms of discourse, and adopting their patterns—while being uniquely capable of avoiding the sort of self-contradiction which undermined those earlier forms.³⁵⁸ Hegel’s discourse aims to be ‘iridescent’; a language which is fluid, infinite, and differentiated, both internally, and with respect to its object: metaphysics. Language, discourse, reason, and the relationship between finite/infinite, are to be mutually and inextricably interrelated, and totalized:

‘That there is such a sphere of truly transcendental discourse, superseding yet gathering together all the forms of discourse that lead up to it, is, of course the crowning thought of Hegel’.³⁵⁹

Dialectical thought advances hierarchically, from a recognition of the “insufficiency of the premises”, through “incompleteness and conflict”, and toward ‘absolute being’ [via sublation].³⁶⁰ It denies a stable ground for knowledge, arguing that all such grounds are merely subjectively acquired through semblance. Thought should perform a negation of its premises, rather than taking them to be fixed positions. In fact, it is the very ‘insufficiency’ of those premises that provides the momentum, preserving the promise of

³⁵⁸ Aristotelian logic, also known as ‘term logic’, dominated thinking until the late nineteenth century, when predicate logic, allied to science and mathematics was formalized as a method (Cf. Wittgenstein, *The Tractatus*, Frege, Russell). In Aristotle’s method, propositions are ‘double’, in that they consist of two terms (predicate and subject), which are either affirmed or denied, true or false, universal or particular. In syllogistic reasoning, the conclusion is inferred from two premises, in the form: all M are P, All S are M, therefore all S are P. There are several parts: the major premise (a general or universal statement, such as ‘all men are mortal’), the minor premise (a specific or particular statement, such as ‘Socrates is a man’), and the conclusion. Drawn from the two preceding premises, it follows that we can say ‘Socrates is mortal’. However, the same type of reasoning can lead to contradictions, or false statements. For example, all pine trees are green (universal), the object before me is green (particular), therefore, this is a pine tree (conclusion), is clearly false, based on experience. In this form of reasoning, the logical form (model) is distinct from the content (subject-matter), which consequently leads to the potential for contradictions which run counter to common-sense and/or experience.

³⁵⁹ Op. cit., *The Logic*, p. xi.

³⁶⁰ “Those who expect all thought-advance to be that if the deduction of conclusions from firmly established premisses, are quite incapable of dialectical thinking: it is the insufficiency of the premises that leads to the more sufficient conclusions”. Op. Cit, *The Logic*, p. xiii.

harmony and [final] reconciliation, via its upward movement.³⁶¹ “[A] fixed, solid basis, from which we pass on to something which has the same solidity as its premises”,³⁶² loses its self-subsistency in the process of determinate negation, in which the negation of the negation becomes a positive term, stripped of any remainder or ‘excess’.³⁶³

“As science, truth is pure self-consciousness in its self-development and has the shape of the self, so that the absolute truth of being is the known Notion and the Notion as such is the absolute truth of being. This objective thinking, is the content of pure science. Consequently, far from it being formal, far from it standing in need of a matter to constitute an actual and true cognition, it is its content alone which has absolute truth, or, if one still wanted to employ the word matter, it is the veritable matter - but a matter which is not external to the form, since this matter is rather pure thought and hence the absolute form itself. Accordingly, logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought.”³⁶⁴

In *The Science of Logic*, Hegel outlines the three ‘moments’ of logic.³⁶⁵ In the first ‘moment’, the Understanding, seeks to separate things, as distinct ‘in-themselves’, such that they are invariant, context-independent, scrutable, and self-identifying; capable of being organized and analysed. However, such clear separation is, in practise, impossible, since contents are mutually implicated, and interdependent; their parameters and boundaries being far from ineluctable:

“There is, in fact, a logical flux, a passing of contents tracelessly into one another, which is even more ineluctable and ultimate than the sensible flux from which it is so easy to retreat by an effort of abstraction. This logical passage makes it impossible to achieve the clearness, distinctness, and fixity which the Understanding desiderates, except for a limited range or span.”³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ Ibid. p. xiii.

³⁶² Ibid. p. 4.

³⁶³ However, it is precisely this remainder or excess which drives the paradoxical dynamic, and the Acoustic Economies in Part III are evidence of this dynamic excess to thought.

³⁶⁴ Op. cit., *Science of Logic*, p 49-50.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 199.

³⁶⁶ Ibid. xv (W. Wallace, (trans.) in the *Introduction*)

Thought cannot rely upon the ‘objects’ of thought to stay fixed, still, closed, in order that it can perform its operations. Even Plato was forced to move towards conceding this, in both the *Cratylus*, and *Parmenides*.

There is always (despite our best efforts to contain it), movement, contingency, and slippage between the concepts, terms, and objects, which we apply our thought to.

This recognition leads Hegel to the next logical ‘moment’, in which the dissolution of one set of fixities and separations, previously established by the Understanding, is superseded, and replaced, by another set, having passed through a moment of fluidity; a process of ‘becoming’, which is ultimately hypostatized/brought to a standstill, along with its objects of perusal, but which continues as an ongoing process. This movement is called ‘Dialectic Proper’ by Hegel, and recognizes that its self-contradiction and destructive quality is simply an inescapable by-product of any attempt to separate and fix anything, in the manner that the Understanding aspires to; in fact, the very requirement and struggle to eliminate such ‘dynamics’, produces them. Hegel will argue that this ‘movement’ applies not only to the field of logic, and thought, but to the ‘perpetual flux of being in the world’³⁶⁷ [an ‘essential flux’]; and that, in fact, the latter is merely a reflection of the former. Moreover, the flux thus described cannot itself be fixed, but is only a part of the third, and final ‘moment’, Reason, which moves inexorably :

“This Reason has some of the reasonableness of ordinary speech, which shuns an utter exactness which it knows it cannot reach, and which is not afraid to hesitate and to refuse to say either Yay or Nay in certain obviously borderline situations.”³⁶⁸

³⁶⁷ Ibid. p. xvi

³⁶⁸ Ibid. p. xvi.

Identity for Hegel consists of what is unique to a thing, and of its relation to other things. Identity is a statement of what a thing *is*; and more importantly, what it *is* over time. Identity involves those aspects of a thing which endure, as its unchangeable attributes, or essence. Identity is crucial for Hegel, since his entire philosophy is premised on its links to knowability/ truth. He wants and needs identity to stay the same, and to be fixed, immutable.

To say that something has an identity, is, moreover, to say what it isn't. The standard way to discuss the identity of something is to list its properties (weight/colour/shape/size, etc.).³⁶⁹ In Hegel's system, all properties therefore have an 'x-is-y' relation, wherein you describe what a thing is *not*, rather than what it *is*, in order to establish its identity. Therefore, what something isn't is also wrapped up in its identity, but only as a relation between things. For example, identity can be established through the 'place' that something takes up in the world. i.e. London is not New York. The place called London is identified in relation to what it is not (New York). Identity for Hegel presupposes what it isn't, forming in turn, the dialectic (thesis/antithesis), where the identity of a thing also consists of everything that it is not, in a point-for-point way.

In Hegel's philosophy, everything is connected. The most distant thing from X is its 'not-x' (antithesis): to say that something is not something. Negation thus has a duality: x is not x. (which equals the totality). In this formation, the *not* both separates and links the two at the same time, since they are placed in a relation, but are also at polar opposites of a spectrum. To say that something is not the totality is to say that the identity of x and

³⁶⁹ However, all of these properties imply relational attributes, so that red is only red from the point of view of a specific observation, and so uncertainty is already a part of the system.

(-x)— the absolute negation of x—: the notion, or concept are connected to absolute knowing, that within the dialectic, the x and (-x), are needed for the Absolute. X (-x) is the greatest form of difference you could have for Hegel. However, this identity is only a moment, in the movement of the dialectic, which reconciles these differences, and synthesizes them into a whole, which then grounds the next movement, and so on and so forth. This constitutes Hegel's positive negation (determinate negation), in which the non-identical already presupposes its reaching beyond itself towards the 'whole'. Hegel's form of identity is thus not absolute in itself (in its moments), but only in relation to the whole of which it is a part. In Hegel, identity is graspable, the not-this is able to be grasped and clearly defined. In Adorno and Benjamin, the not-this is indescribably infinite—an indeterminate negation in which negation cannot be determined, while In Hegel negation is determinate.

“The Hegelian concept of the non-identical, therefore, cannot serve in any way to challenge the speculative conception of non-identity. Rather than something that falls through the net of the Absolute, it is part of the net that itself constitutes the relational whole in question”³⁷⁰

For Hegel, free floating fragments (are a piece of the whole), rather than a free-floating fragment which is not part of a whole, which in Adorno/Benjamin equates to the inassimilable, the unsayable something, or the non-identical. While as seen above, Hegel's formula relies on a positive negation, Adorno will work away from it by posing the non-identity of x and (-x), in terms of the negative dialectic. Benjamin will call this same move the Constellation, Derrida will call it the *différance*, and Deleuze will call it the Rhizome. Hegel's notion of difference is spatialized through a

³⁷⁰ R. Gasché, *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida*, p. 220

notion of opposites and this is a very ‘flat’ conception, since there are other relations of space and time (in wormholes, space is folded). In paradox, space is folded, time is multiple (as it is not linear, but collapsed, infinite, recursive, like the mobius band of Lyotard),³⁷¹ and so paradox becomes a critique of the critique of identity (which will come to be known as a surface). The spatial question a paradox asks is: rather than being in opposite corners of the piece of paper, what if the ‘paper’ is folded, so that they meet? as in curved-space time relations, which would require an entirely new way of thinking through a logic.³⁷²

2.6 Negation as Negation

As we have seen, Adorno’s Negative Dialectics is a form of thinking which concerns itself with exposing non-identity, not with establishing identity: it follows that it also does not take identity as a given within the dialectical movement, nor does it base that movement upon it. In Hegel’s dialectic, the negation of a term, results in a positive outcome, which then becomes the ground for a further negation, and so on and so forth; finally attaining the goal of absolute knowledge. This form of thought requires an overcoming of anything which does not fit the concept under scrutiny by the dialectical process³⁷³ in such a way that universal concepts prevail over particulars. Identity thinking will, by virtue of its own epistemological necessity, exclude or subsume anything deemed irregular, incompatible, contradictory, or unrecognized, from its categories. It maintains a strict adherence to the

³⁷¹ J. F. Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*. Translated by I. H. Grant. (London: The Athlone Press, 1993). pp. 3-11.

³⁷² This curved space-time relation is the key to understanding how paradox works, but is beyond the scope of this thesis to detail.

³⁷³ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*. p. 135. Adorno will call this irresolvable, non-identical substrate or remainder “the indissoluble something”.

relationship between an inside and an outside of concepts, and a fundamentally positivist outlook.

Hegel dismissed the non-conceptual, the material, or the factual as mere 'brute existence', whereas Adorno wants to reclaim the dignity and relevance of the object in-itself: its preponderance, as a vital part of thought, which might relieve philosophy of its pretensions to absolute knowledge, or unmediated truth. Rather than words and the things they refer to corresponding, so that the meaning of things is contained in those words,³⁷⁴ for negative dialectics 'the thing in itself is by no means a thought product. It is non-identity through identity'.³⁷⁵ Or, as Adorno explains: "The concept moves towards its opposite, the non-conceptual",³⁷⁶ since the concept is incapable of containing the thing which is placed under it. The concept 'language', for example, could never account for the diversity and complexity of language itself, but becomes an abstraction, which takes a reduced set of characteristics as being common to all instances of language; imposing conceptual closure along with an insupportable unity upon languages' heterogeneity. Conversely, a concept is always more than its constituent parts. Freedom goes beyond individual, subjective freedoms, to indicate and participate in, the larger concept of freedom, which both contains those individual freedoms, but also exceeds them.³⁷⁷

Adorno's position is that any form of reflective thought worth its name will not seek to resist or eliminate the non-conceptual (non-identical,

³⁷⁴ Op. cit., *Lectures on Metaphysics*, p. xv.

³⁷⁵ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics* p. 189.

³⁷⁶ Op. cit., *Lectures on Metaphysics*, p. 6.

³⁷⁷ Op. cit., *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p. 7. This 'freedom' is also an 'unsayable something', in which the concept of reality outstrips its particulars. Moving in either direction: from concept to object, or from object to concept, there is always more that is non-identical than identical. Difference, not identity, defines thinking, and the concept/object relationship is in a perpetual process of divergence, not convergence.

particular) from its progress, but will actively seek to retain and acknowledge it.³⁷⁸ Rather than the concept shaping and delimiting the object, the object (the ‘something’ necessary for thought to proceed), extrudes, or ‘sticks out’ cogitatively. This is the ‘something’ that resists sublation, and which the shell of the concept cannot contain. Rather than the transcendent move of Hegel’s dialectic, there are only an infinity of surfaces, which can never be resolved within the system, since the removal of one surface only reveals another. Within negative dialectics, Being and thought are not presupposed to correspond to one another. Instead, concept and thing, subject and object, are shown to diverge, in an unresolved, antagonistic relationship, which never rest in a simple identification of one with the other. Such an “*immanent* contradiction, a contradiction in the object itself”,³⁷⁹ is internal to the object (language/society), and does not involve a contradiction *between* things, but *within* them: ‘within the object itself’.

“Only thoughts that go to the limit are facing up to the omnipotent impotence of certain accord; only a cerebral acrobatics keeps relating to the matter, for which, according to the *fable convenu*, it has nothing but disdain for the sake of its self-satisfaction.”³⁸⁰

For Adorno, the ratio becomes irrational when it forgets that, within any thought, there is ineradicable excess to thought – the non-identical – which inheres in thinking as the non-thought. To hypostatize (materialize) thought, arbitrarily arrests the dynamic of thought, in the service of its tendency to lean towards solidity, certainty, and primacy. This demands resistance to the

³⁷⁸ This has profound implications for the urgent need to develop a political outlook and socio-political formation[s] which will not exclude the ‘other’ as something which escapes ideological categorization, and which has the potential to resist the tendency toward fascism implied in the very conceptual structures of identity-thinking.

³⁷⁹ Op. cit., *Lectures on Metaphysics*, p. 9.

³⁸⁰ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 34.

semblance which is total identity, in the form of immanent³⁸¹ critique: “By colliding with its own boundary [*Grenze*], unitary thought surpasses itself. Dialectics is the consistent consciousness of nonidentity.”³⁸² Contradiction is evidence of the non-identical within the concept, however, when it is posed in opposition to the identical, it reaffirms the principle of contradiction as the measure of that which exceeds it, and as informing and contouring that which ‘thinks against thought’.

Adorno reminds us that the root cause of the will to identify, and to resolve the kinds of animating contradictions which threaten to destabilize identity, is found in an intrinsic desire to achieve a mastery over all things. The compulsion to identify within thought, is nothing more than the continuation of a principle of ad-infinitum domination, which is to be seen in social structures, in our relationship with nature, and in politics; in any external relationship with that which exceeds the subject. That which is encountered must be tamed, abstracted, and its ‘alterity’ and/or dissonance repressed by the conceptual apparatus and constraints of identity-thinking.³⁸³

2.7 Identity and Concept

“The name of dialectics says no more to begin with, than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder.”³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ In Deleuze’s work, immanence is opposed to transcendence. In *Immanence: A Life*, he writes: “It is only when immanence is no longer immanent to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence.” If immanence *is* immanent substance (immanent to itself), not immanent *to* substance, then by virtue of the same distinction, language, for example, is immanent *in and of* itself, not in relation to an outside (language is not a transcendental property, nor does it require an external reference to provide its meaning). In immanence, mind is not differentiated from body, in the Cartesian sense, and idealism does not involve the subject in a one-sided, unilateral mediation between itself, and external objects or events, where such mediation would normally seek to intervene between and resolve contradictions/ oppositions. Immanence does not involve oppositions.

³⁸² Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5.

³⁸³ Op. cit., *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p. 9

³⁸⁴ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5.

From a number of vantage points, or via a variety of ‘conceits’, including mathematical/ linguistic/artistic, this thesis wishes to make the argument that *paradox* is the *is* of language. Paradox enacts and evidences an immanent difference, which is productive, rather than destructive, and which is uniquely constitutive of meaning. Rather than seeking to eliminate it as a viral presence in any system (mathematical/ linguistic/ artistic), paradox is being presented here as evidence of the very dynamic that keeps the system from atrophying: as that which keeps it open and full; alive to potential; ever in movement, vibrant and colourful. Paradox is the non-categorical; the non-identical; that which holds language/thought, apart and together, at one and the same instant.³⁸⁵ As Nietzsche reminds us, this is a game of speed and intensity; one which denies a stable/causal ground for meaning:

“Causality eludes us; to suppose a direct causal link between thoughts, as logic does—that is the consequence of the crudest and clumsiest observation. Between two thoughts, all kinds of affects play their game: but their motions are too fast, therefore we fail to recognize them, we deny them.”³⁸⁶

Much of what happens in language takes place, Nietzsche claims, beyond the radar screen, since the non-metaphysical, affective attributes of language, including speed and intensity, are denied. To claim that causality is a simple relation (as logic does), is too simplistic a position. The argument being presented in this thesis is that paradoxes form an [un]common sense, whose various paradoxical surfaces collapse temporal, conceptual, sensory (as in both sense, and sensual), assumptions and boundaries to thought. Moreover, that those surfaces are frequently hidden, or denied. Not everything can be (nor

³⁸⁵ This can also be seen in relation to the event of appropriation, and perdurance (Cf. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*).

³⁸⁶ F. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, Translated by W. A. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, (Vintage Books, 1967), p. 477.

should be) stated unambiguously, and thought should strain against its own limits, in search of conceptual integrity.³⁸⁷

“Dialectics — literally: language as the organon of thought — would attempt a critical rescue of the rhetorical element, a mutual approximation of thing and expression, to the point where the difference fades. Dialectics appropriates for the power of thought what historically seemed a flaw in its thinking: its link with language, which nothing can wholly break.”³⁸⁸

In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno, argues that dialectics privileges the relation between language and thought: consciously centering thought, and content upon it. Dialectics instantiates rhetoric as a means of reintegrating subject and object, and thus establishes a *positive* role for language; one in which it participates in the very ‘movement’ of thought. And yet, for Adorno, there is a problem: “[T]he appearance of identity is inherent in thought itself, in its pure form. To think is to identify. Conceptual order is content to screen what thinking seeks to comprehend.”³⁸⁹ Abstract conceptualization, paradoxically reaches toward, but cannot account for, nor can it contain, the object of that thought: there is always a ‘something’, beyond the abstraction implicit in conceptual thinking, which metaphysical schemas such as dialectics, by virtue of their very nature, cannot attain. “It indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived.”³⁹⁰

As discussed earlier, if the totality of the concept is nothing more than a surface appearance, then for Adorno, the only realistic challenge to it is to shatter that illusion on its own terms. However, this would involve a challenge

³⁸⁷ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics, The Disenchantment of the Concept*, p.12. Adorno puts the point in this way: “Initially, such concepts as that of “being” at the start of Hegel’s *Logic* emphatically mean non-conceptualities; as Lask put it, they “mean beyond themselves.” Dissatisfaction with their own conceptuality is part of their meaning, though the inclusion of non-conceptuality in their meaning makes it tendentially their equal and thus keeps them trapped within themselves”.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 56.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 5.

³⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 5.

to logic, which will not admit of anything which stands outside its terms: all non-conforming aspects are subsumed under the principle of contradiction, and dealt with as aggressive and unwelcome antimonies: unassimilable.

Identity thinking claims absolute priority, since even to possess a concept of the contradictory means to set that thought (to counterpose it) in opposition to the unity of the concept (its identity). There is no negation without a positive term of reference, leading Adorno to conclude that:

“Contradiction is non-identity under the aspect of identity.”³⁹¹ We differentiate by having something against which to compare, to identify in relation to. That which is not, is contrasted to that which *is*, and this is still identity thinking.³⁹² This poses a series of questions: what does it mean to have pure difference, a difference in-itself? If language is not posed as identity, but as something truly differentiated, as a pure multiplicity, then how does/can language support thought? What sort of thinking becomes possible if, instead of seeing language as fixed, immutable, stable, and metaphysical, language is acknowledged as an ‘undisciplined gesture’, which stands outside the terms of reference (the Archimedean point) of identity thinking? Part III will explore these questions in more detail.

“Identity and thought are welded together. Total contradiction is nothing but the manifested untruth of total identification. Contradiction is non-identity under the rule of a law that affects the nonidentical as well.”³⁹³

For Adorno, ideas are not the same as things. Ideas and things diverge, not converge. Nonetheless, things remain. However, to ‘paste the particulars’³⁹⁴ is not an antidote to idealism, since “Dialectics unfolds the difference between

³⁹¹ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 5

³⁹² Supra ‘Hegel’s Dialectical Method’, earlier in this section.

³⁹³ Ibid., p. 6

³⁹⁴ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 11.

the particular and the universal, dictated by the universal.”³⁹⁵ He claims that the true concern of philosophy should be the things which Hegel denied any importance to: “A matter of urgency to the concept would be what it fails to cover, what its abstractionist mechanism eliminates, what is not already a case of the concept.”³⁹⁶

Adorno claimed that we cannot do away with conceptual thought, and there can be no philosophy without concepts; concepts constitute evidence of, and are products of, thought, for the very act of thinking is one of identification, and *language* is this act of identification.³⁹⁷ It follows that to contemplate thinking means to contemplate language, since each is implicated, or enfolded in the other. Philosophy is a linguistic activity, dependent upon textual modes of presentation, which in turn consist of symbolic expression, and syntactical arrangement; language as a material event.³⁹⁸ This work, through the ‘conceit’ of paradox, concerns itself with the relationship between the material event of language, and thinking. Moving beyond the search for ‘universal’, and the ‘conceptual’ in language, and toward the ‘particular’ and the ‘substantive’ infers a search for the infinite, mobile, and the temporal, in place of a finite, identitarian regime of codification. It requires the reinsertion of the negative/ movement into language/ thought, in place of static, positivist and/or idealist reliance on categories which would refuse the specific qualities of language as ‘event’, and would suppress language (thought’s) innate heterogeneity and multiplicity.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

³⁹⁷ The strict categories and conceptual certainties that language operates within do not allow for heterogeneous responses to thought. Thought is limited by its mode of presentation.

³⁹⁸ By ‘material’ I mean to suggest those visible, aural, tactile and other dimensions of language which constitute language as an ‘event’, and whose materiality is coterminous with the concept.

While the stability of identity thinking reassures, and language supports and participates in its myth, the particularized movement(s) which are a part of language/ thought are part of what makes language 'work'. Rather than seeking to eliminate contradiction, or to ignore the swift affects which are immanent to language, in favour of the firm but reductive ground of identity thinking, if the 'play' of paradox-as-doubt could be retained as a mobile/transitory, and fractured 'ground' for language, then a different kind of thought might be possible.

Gilles Deleuze mistrusts language as 'the source of all illusion', and yet philosophy attains its concepts through language as it is both the medium, and the instrument of philosophy. In its dependence upon language, language *is* philosophy, and the converse holds. This is the paradox which Deleuze centres his work upon, especially in *The Logic of Sense*.³⁹⁹ The extension of the stringency of Enlightenment thought involves the 'punishment of undisciplined gestures', where this kind of paradox can be seen as an undisciplined gesture which runs counter to the approved modes of logical thought. In logic, an 'undisciplined gesture' would by definition be something unthinkable, incommensurable, a-identical: a paradox. If logic is seen instead

³⁹⁹ "The only way to express one's hatred and contempt for language, or one's distrust of it, is through language" (Jean-Jaques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, p.1). "Deleuze is the philosopher of surfaces and planes" (*Deleuze and Language*, p.2). For him, language is a problem (in the Deleuzian sense of problem). Deleuze cites the example of 'Shifters', which are different every time they occur. For instance, 'it'. Such shifters are empty of meaning in themselves, but are filled with meaning by the context in which they are found. They are 'universal designators'. In 'Anti-Oedipus', Deleuze attempts to displace the centrality of language in the culture of structuralism (*Deleuze and Language*, p.18), by introducing a radical materiality of the body, and a machinic structure, but there is a paradoxical element to this. The most effective 'machine' is that which takes inarticulate sounds, and converts them into language: the voice (phone into logos). Poets try and take language to its limit, which ultimately means (paradoxically) silence. Philosophers also try and take language to its limit, but they look at problems and concepts as a 'life outside' language. (*Deleuze and Language*, p.21). In contrast to what he describes as 'The Imperialism of Language'. (*Deleuze and Language*, p.22), Deleuze argues that there are other semiotics than linguistics (other codes). He moves toward empiricism and thought, not language and does not place language at the centre, as Hegel/Chomsky and others do.

to be sensual and material, paradox becomes the relation; the techné; the grasp, and the persistence of doubt as a complex tonality and multiplicity, rather than a grey monologue of singular indeterminism. Paradox is the non-categorical; the conceptual which flees its own boundaries in search of a limit, and its own non-conceptuality. Paradox is that which holds apart and together at one and the same instant. It's the aesthetics of assemblage, which is consistently dissolving and reassembling itself; seeking out and repeating differences, not identities, spac[ings], not space, and tim[ings], not time. However, these ideas run counter to static notions of time/space/identity, as will be seen below.

2.8 Wittgenstein and doubt

“Wittgenstein makes language with its ambiguities the ground of philosophy. His games are played on the Lawn of Excluded Middle.”⁴⁰⁰

“Can one say: “Where there is no doubt there is no knowledge either”?”⁴⁰¹

In his post-*Tractatus* work, Wittgenstein consistently questions the ‘unity’ of dialectics, challenging the final moment of synthesis, wherein negative and positive are reconciled. In his writings he constantly prises open a space for doubt, by the very form of his writing, which uses a dialectical structure, but without seeking resolution. He remarks: “but mustn’t anyone who knows something be capable of doubt?, [since] doubting means thinking”,⁴⁰² opposing the final move of dialectics, which seeks the exclusion of doubt in favour of an absolute knowledge which would be unified, complete. As

⁴⁰⁰ Rosmarie Waldrop, *Lawn of Excluded Middle*, ed. Lee Ann Brown, (Tender Button Books, 1993). In her extended poem which explores the ‘excluded’ of the Law of Excluded Middle, Waldrop also describes poetry as “an alternate, less linear logic.”

⁴⁰¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, ed. By G.E.M Anscombe, and G.H. Wright. Trans. By Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1997), §121.

⁴⁰² Ibid. §480.

Rosmarie Walthrop makes clear, his language games operate within the ‘Lawn of Excluded Middle’, not the ‘Law of excluded middle’.

For Wittgenstein, the question, and the problem of philosophy, is situated firmly within the ‘language game’; those frequently unchallenged system of rules, judgements and propositions upholding the production of ‘truth’. It is within this environment that he suggests we can begin to ask questions about the way in which dialectics fails to provide the unity it promises. Paradoxically, the very nature of the dialectical method necessitates the systematic introduction of doubt, where unexamined certainty, might otherwise prevail, suggesting that the system is by no means complete and total, after the synthesis stage. As Gottlob Schulze said: “Truth is a curved line and philosophy is the number of tangents which approach it to infinity without ever reaching it, — the asymptotes.”⁴⁰³ In an asymptote of a curve, a comparison between it and a line is made, moving toward infinity, and away from their origin.⁴⁰⁴ However, the curve and the line never coincide, rendering them asymptotic: philosophy never coincides with the truth, but only comes close to it (see figures 7a/7b).

Certainty, Wittgenstein argues, is largely contingent upon a framework composed of—and compromised by—linguistic manoeuvres, so that in order to understand how knowledge is attained, we need to understand how language functions, and how we use it. All of his interrogations into rule/judgement/meaning/ evidence/test lead back to doubt as the means by which to show that the system by which we think we know anything, is

⁴⁰³ ‘The Asymptotes’, or *Aenesidemus* by Schultz.

⁴⁰⁴ There are numerous forms of asymptote, including Horizontal, Vertical, Oblique, Non-Linear and Multiple. However, the simplest form is one in which the Cartesian coordinate system shows the movement of the curves, away from coincidence with the lines. (see figures 7a /7b).

fundamentally flawed and imprecise. “[C]ertainty resides in the nature of the language-game”,⁴⁰⁵ but that game is infiltrated by multiple levels of doubt, since the question arises why the investigation (of anything) is not itself under investigation. Commenting on the pervasiveness, compulsion and danger of the linguistic game, he states: “One is often bewitched by a word. For example, by the word ‘know’.”⁴⁰⁶ Language (and the way we use it) is consistently revealed as the ‘Trojan horse’ which is both the source of, and perpetrator of the error.

Wittgenstein therefore asks, what if anything, is exempted from doubt in the sense of what propositions can be relied upon, and thereby form the ‘ground’ for other propositions. In short: in the production of certainty, ‘what is to be tested by what? what can be known, and how? Saying that we know something is no certainty (or proof) that we know it. Any certainty is already presupposed within and by that language game, and my ability to distinguish truth from falsity is set against a backdrop of the system which enframes those notions as achievable goals. In other words, the very concept of knowing is synonymous with, and coproduced by, the language-game. When we allow certainty to arise from within a language-game, we are already immersed in a system whose internal logic pre-empts the conclusions:

“All testing, all confirmation and disconfirmation of a hypothesis takes places already within a system. And this system is not a more or less arbitrary and doubtful point of departure for all our arguments: no, it belongs to the essence of what we call an argument. The system is not so much the point of departure, as the element in which all arguments have their life.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. §457.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid. §435.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. §462.

According to Wittgenstein, we are captives of the language-game until such time as we examine the presuppositions inherent within our argumentative and propositional methods, revealing their linguistic dependence and logical weaknesses. It is the language-game, which we are inducted into from childhood, which permits us to think in terms of certainty, truth and knowledge, although the ground on which these concepts are based is often weak and easily submits to the introduction of doubt, illustrating at the same time both the problem he raises and the value of his methodology, which involves raising doubt at every point. At the same time, in some situations, absence of doubt becomes the necessary prerequisite for gaining knowledge, since there are certain things that must be exempted from doubt in order to allow knowledge to be achieved, that form the ground for other propositions: “That is to say, the questions that we raise and our doubts depend upon the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn.” He goes on to say, “But it isn’t that the situation is like this: We just can’t investigate everything, and for that reason we are forced to rest content with assumption. If I want the door to turn, the hinges must stay put... My life consists in my being content to accept many things.”⁴⁰⁸

In his investigations, Wittgenstein raises questions which concern dialectics. In examining of the role of language ‘in use’, he critiques the assumption that it leads to the objective establishment of truth. Far from being clear cut, language in every day use can lead to false conclusions, and however rigorously applied, uncritical use of language encounters something the outside of a logical system, which cannot be answered for (thereby exposing the system, as in paradox). He concludes that language itself cannot

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid. §341, 343, and 344 respectively.

conclusively prove anything, that the method of dialectics is too neat, and there are no absolute truths, since everything is mobile in relation to everything else within the language game. Knowing itself can never be fully unified and total in the way that dialectics suggests, in part because language (by which we construct logical arguments) eludes absolutes, forever opening onto and into and ultimately beyond, rather than closing and sealing the system. Contradicting his early work in *The Tractatus*, he contends that there is no one-to-one relation between objects and the words assigned to them, and that “the meaning of a word is its use in the language”, or put slightly differently, that meaning is contextual and dependent on knowing the rules of the game and what the pieces do, as in Chess.

2. 9 The Paradoxes of Time, Space, Becoming

For Henri Bergson, language is in a state of ‘becoming’; is itself a form of moving reality. He asks: how do the symbols of a language: immobile, static, and singular, stand in relation to that reality?

“The real, the experienced, and the concrete are recognized by the fact that they are variability itself; the element by the fact that it is invariable. And the element is invariable by definition, being a diagram, a simplified reconstruction, often a mere symbol, in any case a motionless view of the moving reality.”⁴⁰⁹

The elements of a written language, at the level of individual words, and letters, are reminiscent of the ‘stoppages’ or ‘snapshots’ which, as Bergson points out, offer us nothing but an illusion of movement, based on projecting movement onto an infinite series of points along a line. Zeno’s paradox of movement thus emerges from a wrong conception, since a line is not divisible

⁴⁰⁹ Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Trans. By T. E. Hulme, (Hackett Publishing), p. 42.

by an infinite number of such mathematical points, each one of which is static, fixed, standing in a relation to the next. The paradox of the impossibility of movement is the direct result of thinking in such points and static moments, rather than in terms of duration or becoming, which, in undoing that model, simultaneously undoes the paradox. Movement is not a series of points, but a continuum; there is no moment in time which can be isolated, and represented as that moment, and no other [a singularity]. Time and movement simply passes through, in a constant flow Language is not only the passing of information, it *acts* (as in performance/gestures) in the world; it's an event.

“In so far as [...] reality is communicable, it must be expressed in metaphors or “fluid concepts” quite different from the static abstractions of logic.”⁴¹⁰

The judge proclaims the accused as the condemned, and a change has taken place as a result of this instantaneous event (declarative statements *create* change). In the same way, paradoxes are events, as they occupy both the past and the future, alongside the present, and move constantly between these, taking the form of intensities.

In paradox, time is multivalent, and space *can* be occupied by two things at the same time (and by implication, be both right and wrong) such that the principle of identity, and the law of contradiction both collapse under the weight of evidence that paradoxes supply. Walter Benjamin is instructive in this regard:

“The formula of identity is “A=A”, not “A remains A.” It does not assert the equality of two spatially or temporally distinct stages of A. But neither can it express the identity of any A existing in space or time, for any assertion would already presuppose that identity. The A whose identity with A is expressed in the identity-relation must therefore exist beyond time and space.”⁴¹¹

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. p. 12.

⁴¹¹ Op. cit., *Selected Writings*, p. 456.

A is no longer equal to A, but to be set in an a-temporal (recursive/fractal) relation, which involves infinite movement and a process of assemblage/reassemblage. This is an advance from Hegel's synthetic form of logic, which sought to replace, and advance upon, older, Aristotelian logic. According to Aristotle, the principle of identity is formulated in the following way: A is equal to A, and A cannot be its negation (non-A) at the same time and in the same place. The relation between the two is static, and relies upon temporal/spatial exclusivity. For Hegel, Aristotelian logic is faulty since it fails to understand or reflect how reality operates. For him reality is never identical with itself, but wedded to temporality, changing at every moment, passing from what it is, to something that it is not.⁴¹²

A paradox is therefore to be understood as the non-identical; its primary quality is depth, not surface, where surface is understood as a Plane of Immanence, whose unstable structure gathers momentum from doubt, and which operates from a groundless ground. A paradox radically refuses hypostasis: moreover, paradoxes are viral, infinite, abyssal, participating of a cruelty within thought, and a dissonant harmony:

“... [] this is the harmonic concept of truth, which we must acquire so that the false quality of water-tightness that characterizes its delusion vanishes from the authentic concept, the concept of truth.

⁴¹² Contradiction is at the heart of reality for Hegel, not static identity. In his logic, he introduces time/negation as a dynamic rhythm and process, which reconciles contradictions into a higher, (synthesized) term. This logic is understood to be concrete rather than formal, or abstract: “This, then, is the Hegelian ‘concrete universality’: at every stage of the dialectical process, the concrete figure ‘colours’ the totality of the process, i.e. the universal frame of the process becomes part of (or, rather, drawn into) the particular content. To put it in Ernesto Laclau’s terms, at every stage its particular content is not only a subspecies of the universality of the total process: it ‘hegemonises’ this very universality, the ‘dialectical process’ is nothing but the name for this permanent shift of the particular content which ‘hegemonises’ the universality.” S. li"ek, *The Fright of Real Tears*: Krzysztof Kie#lowski, Between Theory and Post-Theory. (BFI Publishing, 2001).

The truth is not watertight. Much that we expect to find in it slips through the net.”⁴¹³

Immanent critique seeks to keep the process of philosophising in a state of constant self-renewal. A paradox is pure process, and to try and resolve it ignores its dynamic, its texture, its movement: to force a paradox to a resolution by eliminating inconsistencies and contradictions, is to ignore its specific qualities, and try to drive it under a cover concept; to make it identical. Adorno, referring to Schoenberg remarks: “in traditional musicology, one really learns from it only how a movement begins and ends, nothing about the movement itself and its course.”⁴¹⁴ Philosophy, instead of being reduced to categories, would require (by the musical analogy), a model based on *composing*, rather than composition, such that a ‘frictive’ and “ceaseless self-renewal” would take the place of categorical thought, which for Adorno, serves only to immobilize cognition. Rather than seeking a thesis or position, thought should mobilize its full critical armoury, in pursuit of the texture of ideas, not their simple explication or resolution (in the form of a synthesis).

In fact, for Adorno, the very “expoundability” of ideas is their downfall, exemplified nowhere better than in Hegel’s desire for his dialectical method to equal a *prima philosophia*, which accounts for all things, and whose goal is absolute subjectivity and knowledge. Paradox is the ‘remainder’ for Adorno, where identity thinking fails, as concepts and objects fail to coincide. “Truth is suspended and frail, due to its temporal substance”,⁴¹⁵ Adorno proposes that: “In philosophy, we [should] literally seek to immerse ourselves

⁴¹³ Op. cit., *Selected Writings*, p. 71.

⁴¹⁴ Op. Cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 33.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. p. 34.

in things that are heterogeneous to it, without placing those things in prefabricated categories... Philosophical contents can only be grasped where philosophy does not impose them.”⁴¹⁶ but the problem lies in the fact that, “Traditional philosophy thinks of itself as possessing an infinite object, and in that belief it becomes finite, conclusive philosophy.”⁴¹⁷ Adorno thinks that, rather than thinking itself in possession of the infinite, through the vehicle of finite procedures (such as logic, and non-contradiction), philosophy should relinquish this claim, and seek a finite dimension in its “scorning [of] solidification in a body of enumerable theorems.”⁴¹⁸ The means by which the infinite is grasped is, for Adorno, compromised by the ‘finite’ mechanics of doing that philosophy (and language is the vehicle of expression in which that finitude is expressed). The substance of such a reworked philosophy would be found instead in the “diversity of objects that impinge upon it... a diversity not wrought by any schema.”⁴¹⁹ What Adorno objects to specifically, is the reduction of diversity in thought, to a series of categories which would offer concretion at the expense of heterogeneity:

“Philosophical contents can only be grasped where philosophy does not impose them. The illusion that it might confine the essence in its finite definitions will have to be given up.”⁴²⁰

Both Nietzsche and Adorno suggest that rather than seeking to reduce the number of objects it encounters (simplified categories, conceptualization), philosophy should seek to enlarge them infinitely. This would place it in a relationship of ‘conceptual reflection’, rather than reducing experience and the world to empirically impoverished categories. “In principle, philosophy can

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. p. 13.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. p. 45.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. p. 56.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. p. 15.

⁴²⁰ Ibid. p. 23.

always go astray, which is the sole reason it can go forward”,⁴²¹ suggesting that works of art elide *absolute* identification with the concept. However, in whichever way the act of interpretation allows meaning (truth) to come forth, there is a fundamental irreconcilability between the artwork as a material object, and the idea, despite the fact that the work needs to be placed under this spotlight in order to be allowed to ‘speak’. However, as a potential redemption, “Philosophy has a playful element which the traditional view of it as a science would like to exorcise.”⁴²²

Privileging reason, Hegel rejects the contingent, the accidental, and the playful. He did not allow for: “types and distinctions determined by external chance and play, not by reason.”⁴²³ However, to reinforce ‘play’ and the importance of the aesthetic moment in philosophy is to suggest that perhaps the aesthetic *itself* is a form of play (a-rational); in its mimetic nature, allowing Adorno to offer the crucial insight that: “cogency and play are the two poles of philosophy.”⁴²⁴ The ‘formal law of the work’ may well reside in the cogency of the coming together of the play-figure of art, where ‘play’ is an undisciplined gesture. Nietzsche, in *Will to Power*, describes the compulsion within logic to suppress the sensual in thought:

“In the formation of reason, logic, the categories, it was need that was authoritative: the need, not to “know”, but to subsume, to schematize, for the purposes of intelligibility and calculation (the development of reason is adjustment, invention, with the aim of making similar, equal-the same process that every sense impression goes through).”⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ Ibid. p. 19.

⁴²² Ibid. p. 14.

⁴²³ Ibid. p. 20.

⁴²⁴ Ibid. p. 15.

⁴²⁵ Op. Cit., *Will to Power*, p. 56.

For Adorno, while close to art, philosophy does not share the right to borrow the ‘divine inspiration’, which art is supposed to possess. The truth is that inspiration/intuition does not happen in this way, as if from some place outside the work, but immanently, they are *made*:

“They (intuitions) hang together with the formal law of the work; if one tried to extract and preserve then, they would dissolve... Both keep faith with their own substance through their opposites: art by making itself resistant to its meanings; philosophy, by refusing to clutch at any immediate thing.”⁴²⁶

The kind of ‘acoustic’, immanent critique which this thesis wants to pose, and which art and its process of *making* forges, offers a way out, or Kantian ‘exit’ to an impasse, wherein paradoxical thought is embraced as mimetic, but non-representational, embedding different tim[ings] and fractal assemblages. Any ‘resistance to meanings’ becomes constructive, not destructive. Through creative events, and aesthetic acts, a way to move beyond the uncomplicated identification of concepts with objects—of identity as simple correspondence—is glimpsed as a potential, in an *en passant* move.⁴²⁷ The not-sayable something of that which is, and that which isn’t, at the same time, but which [still] names, and has rules/contours is the enigmatic object of pursuit.

“If the problems of traditional philosophy cannot be settled as definitely and straightforwardly as the problems of mathematics and empirical science, that may only show that they are different kinds of problems, not that they are pseudoproblems.”⁴²⁸

A paradox is a pure event, since it stays problematic, it has no specific or singular solution; it’s always in a state of becoming and divergence. So, as

⁴²⁶ Ibid. p. 45.

⁴²⁷ Cf Golding’s political ‘en passant’ from the term in chess. “*En passant (or how pawn learned to capture king)*,” in *Proceedings* (Maastricht/ Amsterdam: The Jan van Eyck Academy, 2003), pp. 174-177, 211-213.

⁴²⁸ Op. cit., *Wittgenstein’s Thought in Transition*, p. 148.

with Deleuze, Nietzsche and Adorno, the issue is not to try and resolve problems, but to allow them to stay problematic via immanent critique. Paradox offers an image of such immanent critique, and in staying irresolvable, and at the best, *paralogical*, or *paraconsistent*,⁴²⁹ has the potential to redefine the terms of logic, as sensual, indeterminate, incommensurable. Conceptual concretion comes at the expense of the event, stability at the expense of tim[ing].⁴³⁰

“Even those who agree with our results”, he says, “will still feel plagued by something strange: are so many men from a variety of epochs and cultures, among them outstanding minds, really supposed to have expended such effort, indeed passionate fervour, on metaphysics, when it consists of nothing but meaningless strings of words? Is it conceivable that such words could have exerted such an effect on readers up to the present day if they contained not even errors, but really nothing at all?”⁴³¹

Despite its flaws, metaphysics, according to Carnap, continues to possess a hold over men as a way to express their feelings and emotions towards life, and to concretize their “attitudes and dispositions” towards intangible qualities and other men. He likens metaphysics to a kind of poetry or music, while inscribing the efforts of Metaphysicians with an inevitable futility: “metaphysicians are musicians without a talent for music.”⁴³² While poetry, music and art have a specific function, and are well-suited to that task, Carnap claims that metaphysics is not well-served by a language which will not readily distribute into true and false positions, which can be verified. In other words, in metaphysics, rhetoric and expression outweigh truth-functions, and

⁴²⁹ Cf. Dialethism (two-headed truth). Hegel endorses Dialetheism. For example, in the *Logic* Hegel states: “Something moves, not because at one moment it is here and another there, but because at one and the same moment it is here and not here, because in this ‘here’, it at once is and is not” (1831, p. 440). This is the root of the dialectic, moving history/society/thought forward via contradiction.

⁴³⁰ Cf. Adorno for the entity/concept dialectic at play.

⁴³¹ Carnap, *Overcoming of Metaphysics*, p. 12.

⁴³² Ibid. p. 240.

the mimetic surfaces of language, while appearing to offer knowledge, conflate art with theory.

Art and poetry need to know their limits, and embrace expression, and Nietzsche is, for Carnap, the exemplar of the philosopher whose immanent expression avoids the pitfalls of metaphysicians such as Heidegger. Nietzsche, performing his exhilarating linguistic manoeuvres, in books such as *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, never misleads us into thinking he is dealing with theory (unlike Heidegger, in whose work logical fallacies and pseudo-statements abound), when his philosophy is openly, and unrepentantly an art of poetry.

Nietzsche's views on the failure of logic, and the necessity of forming a logic which is tonal (or a-tonal), sensual, and many-graded (granulated) in formation, provide an important way to rethink logic as an aesthetic indeterminacy. In Part III, Benjamin and Adorno on Constellation and Mimesis, Artaud on Cruelty, Deleuze on Immanence, and Kierkegaard on subjective immediacy, will form a group of aesthetic economies, which will be seen to embrace/express/enact the mimetological excesses, or sensual/acoustic/tonal forms of logic.

Part III

Acoustic Economies

“We possess art lest we perish of the truth”⁴³³ — Nietzsche

“Between the too warm flesh of the literal event and the cold skin of the concept runs meaning.”⁴³⁴ — Derrida

⁴³³ F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), pp. 796-822.

⁴³⁴ J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, (University of Chicago Press, 1978), p.75.

Introduction

“Representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference. Representation has only a single centre, a unique and receding perspective, and in consequence a false depth. It mediates everything, but mobilises and moves nothing. Movement, for its part, implies a plurality of centres, a superposition of perspectives, a tangle of points of view, a coexistence of movements which essentially distort representation.”⁴³⁵

As introduced in Part II, throughout the latter part of this thesis, the surfaces of language (and art),⁴³⁶ are being offered as examples of a fractal economy, one which constitutes an ‘Acoustic’ form of understanding, where ‘Acoustic’ names the transient temporal assemblages of the non-assimilable, nonrepresentable, destabilized, anterior, irreducible, non-identical, intensive (rather than extensive), excessive aspects of meaning.⁴³⁷ The acoustic names a fragment, but not of a whole: a fractal. A fractal is not a fraction, but a nodal point, or a jump-cut.⁴³⁸

In Part I—through an examination of various philosophies of language when theorizing about language, and the problems they encounter in

⁴³⁵ Op. cit., *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 55-56.

⁴³⁶ Supra Part II,

⁴³⁷ In other words: the non-identical.

⁴³⁸ Rhizomes ‘spore’, and when they spore, they connect. They can be connected to anything, in a heterogenic manner, which is random, but not completely haphazard. In contrast, rhizomes assemble, in a non-dialectical, non-arboreal way, which allows multiplicities to appear/reappear. Cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*. Dialectics closes-off the possibility of such multiple assemblages in its move towards a flat surface of the absolute. For example, the sign itself can be explained by semiotics (sign + signifier = signified). But it cannot explain *why* this sign is more powerful than another one (cross, swastika). The problem with dialectics is that it could go some way to explaining this but only in large parameters (the deep cut of binaric thinking, or generalizations such as male/female, etc.). The star of David is more than just two triangles; something more takes place than just a simply attributable meaning. In this form of thinking, the deep cut of contradiction in dialectics defines the line along which meaning will take place. However, in a fractal economy, there is no whole to which the parts can refer—one which inevitably results in an unwelcome excess of meaning—there are only free-floating fragments, unattributable to any common-sense chain of equivalences which might answer to the question of meaning. (These remarks are drawn from conversations with Professor S. Golding, and lecture notes taken during 2009)

attempting to establish truth—it has also been shown, through a variety of ‘conceits’ and examples, that the mistake made in many of these philosophies is in assuming languages’ one-to-one relationship with objects (things/thought): in other words, in a reliance upon its representational qualities, which Deleuze, argues provides only a false depth, and an immobile, singular perspective which does not respect difference.⁴³⁹ As seen in Part II, paradoxes frequently result from a conception of language as finite, immobile, closed, and referentially singular; they show the fault lines in conceptions of logic,⁴⁴⁰ direct products of a flawed, and closed system which needs rethinking, rather than paradoxes being viewed as excesses which need to be suppressed. The Paradox of the Liar (see Figs. 4a, 4b, 4c in the appendix) is the most clearly defined of these, and as demonstrated, has been viewed within the history of philosophy as a most unwelcome, viral contamination of an otherwise tightly-regulated, disciplined system, of which classical logic is the gatekeeper.⁴⁴¹

In response, the thesis argues away from paradox and contradiction as problems to be solved, or as unwelcome antinomies or aporias; instead building a case for retaining, accepting, and in some cases (as will be seen in this section), deliberately producing them, as vital instances of the non-identical ‘unsayable something’ in thought: viewing them, not as problems, but instead, as an ‘art’ of paradox, or a mimetic contradiction, where paradoxes supply evidence of the persistence of doubt as the most vibrant,

⁴³⁹ For an extended meditation on the relationship between Language and its objects, including the question of translation, Cf., G. Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman*, (Faber and Faber, 1967) esp. ‘Preface’, ‘The Retreat from the Word’, also see, G. Steiner, *After Babel*, esp. ‘Language and Gnosis’, ‘Word Against Object’ (Oxford, 1975). See also, Walter Benjamin, ‘On the Task of the Translator’, in *Illuminations*, (Pimlico, 1999), p. 70. ‘The Doctrine of the Similar’ (1933), and ‘On the Mimetic Faculty’ (1933)

⁴⁴⁰ Op. cit., *Selected Writings*, ‘The Paradox of the Cretan’. Supra Part II.

⁴⁴¹ See Figs. 4a, 4b, 4c, for examples of the viral nature of the ‘unsolvable’ Liar Paradox.

colourful part of any system. This ‘unsayable’ in this respect is not a question of silence,⁴⁴² but points toward that which exceeds concept/object relations: the incommensurable, the incomplete, the differing, and the non-identical, which escapes the conceptual machinery of thought. The claim could be made (and has, by Adorno and Nietzsche), that language has more in common with music, in that it both represents, but doesn’t represent, at the same time,⁴⁴³ or with art, which is paradoxically both true and not true at the same time, than with linear, mathematical conceptions of meaning,⁴⁴⁴ which seek to purify thought along the unassailable lines of reason and exactitude, employing direct, point-for-point mimesis, corresponding to its object. This leads to the inevitable excess which this form of translation produces: a ‘material’ excess.

“Schubert’s resignation has its locus not in the purported mood of his music, nor in how he was feeling—as if the music could give a clue to this—but in the It is thus, that it announces with the gesture of letting oneself fall: This is its expression. Its quintessence is art’s character of eloquence, fundamentally distinct from language as a medium.”⁴⁴⁵

A productive metaphor, which has been given before, is that of an asymptotic relation between two lines that never quite meet, but tend towards infinity, describing the non-convergence of concept and object, language and thing.⁴⁴⁶ (figs. 7a/7b) Acoustic understanding/philosophy/ logic[s] are necessary as the possibility for, and the recognition of, creative, [un]disciplined gestures: a way of thinking, which allows for difference and paradox to be productive. Within an Acoustic logic, problems are re-posed as colourful doubts, paradoxes are

⁴⁴² Silence is not a simple act of negation: however, for Beckett, this is an important attribute of the work. (Cf. Beckett: *Endgame*, *Waiting for Godot*).

⁴⁴³ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory* (several sections on music), for Adorno’s ideas on music and language, also see the following texts: *Quasi una fantasia*, *Music and Language*, A Fragment.

⁴⁴⁴ Supra Part II

⁴⁴⁵ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 112.

⁴⁴⁶ Asymptote is taken from the Greek for ‘not falling together.’ Cf. Steiner, G ‘Word and Thing’, from *Language and Silence*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1985).

viral disruptions to limited static identities, and the non-identical and immanent critique (as Adorno, Deleuze and others establish) is productive, constructive (rather than constrictive), and creative. Rather than illogical, this Acoustic logic is a-logical, and para-logical, resisting assimilation into any overarching system. It cannot be stated, or translated into an unambiguous form of language, but only inferred, indirectly pointed to, or experienced. Unlike philosophies of language which rely upon identity, and dialectical reasoning (logic), the particular methodology of the section entitled ‘Acoustic Economies’, involves a move away from dialectics and metaphysics, toward what I am terming a sensual/acoustic logic;⁴⁴⁷ one which initially situates language itself as the subject, and which pursues a primarily non-representational investigation into its mode of expression, where ‘event’, ‘materiality’, and ‘timing’ are key concepts.

Art (and language), cannot be assimilated/categorized within or under a representational form of synthesis: instead, they form an ‘Acoustic Sense’.⁴⁴⁸ Posed as a series of undisciplined gestures/uncommon sense, these take the form of a series of enactments, performances, and [Un]disciplined gestures, which demolish the simple correspondence of word and thing, or the solid foundations of identity: comprising instead, a ‘doing of art’, or event, where sense is *made/ constructed/assembled*, but not pre-given. This kind of sense corresponds most closely to Deleuze’s enigmatic concept of a: “[T]hin film at the limit of words and things”,⁴⁴⁹ which collapses the notion of an inside/outside, subject/object relation, since the sense is located neither with

⁴⁴⁷ A sensual logic, as opposed to a non-sensual logic, is one in which tone/rhythm/pattern/shape, etc. contribute to the formation of meaning, every bit as much as any metaphysical aspect of language. The term sensual therefore describes those aspects of language as a material event, which are ordinarily excluded from formal logic.

⁴⁴⁸ Examples of ‘The Art of Acoustic Sense’ will be given in Part IV.

⁴⁴⁹ Op. cit., *Logic of Sense*, p. 38.

language, nor with things, but at another type of surface which is non-identical with either. Or with Derrida, whose similarly enigmatic: “Between the too warm flesh of the literal event and the cold skin of the concept runs meaning”,⁴⁵⁰ suggests that meaning is to be found in a place somewhere between the empirical and the ideal: in a space neither inside, nor outside, but in another, unspecified locus. As will be suggested, art and language both comprise of a series of contradictory, [un]disciplined gestures, which never correspond with their objects; being paradoxical at all levels. A paradox never aligns with its object: it attempts to grasp but misses, and, as with art, this is what makes it interesting in the context of the thesis. Paradox and art consist of vibrations/oscillations/ suspensions/impossibility/ uncertainty, at the same time collapsing the kinds of arbitrary divisions based on subject/object, inside/outside, identity/non-identity.

“[Infancy] is an *experimentum linguae* of this kind, in which the limits of language are to be found not outside language, in the direction of its referent, but in an experience of language as such, in its pure self-reference.”⁴⁵¹

Giorgio Agamben’s concept of *Experimentum Linguae* is a model of this kind of reflexive critique, which takes language as experience of itself. Only when we take a look at language, closely, and strip it out from the flow of meaning, do we see what language really consists of. A linguistic paradox is an example of such a reflexive critique, where the word is arrested mid-flight, plucked from the flow of meaning and exhibited ‘as such’.

This mode of enquiry (and these aesthetic economies) therefore asks about language, not from the position of what language does, or of what is

⁴⁵⁰ J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, (University of Chicago Press, 1978), p.75.

⁴⁵¹ G. Agamben, *Infancy and History: Essays on the Destruction of Experience*. Translated by Liz Heron. London: Verso Books, 1993, p. 5.

extrinsic to it (what it describes), but by arresting it ‘mid-flight’, and looking at what is intrinsic to it, at how language ‘moves’.⁴⁵² At the centre of this approach, is languages’ particular, immanent, mimetic form of logic (rather than logic as a system which utilizes language); its sensuality, and its reflexive qualities. Another way of saying this is that language is to be viewed as an instrument, rather than as instrumental.⁴⁵³ This will be developed into the notion of an Acoustic Logic, or Acoustic Sense.

The work acknowledges a turn away from a metaphysics of language, and towards language as a form of ‘active creation’, or excess, which has been approached and amplified in the thesis, through an examination of the work of Deleuze, Adorno and others. This position invites a natural comparison with what might be argued to be the “use [of] a creation of thought – logic and grammar – to imprison thought.”⁴⁵⁴ ‘Active creation’ names the *movement* of

⁴⁵² The traditional meaning of ‘philosophy of language’ is: that branch of philosophy which engages in reflection upon language, and which seeks to determine the following four questions: 1. The nature of *meaning*. 2. How language and the world (or reality) relate. 3. How language is *used*. 4. The process of language cognition (or understanding). The thesis approaches those question from an immanent, or intrinsic, not extrinsic, or descriptive point of view. This part of the thesis outlines a selection of aesthetic economies, by which is meant, the different aesthetic systems, methodologies, strategies, or set of relations by which language can be understood, or enframed. In other words, how meaning gets established differently. The thesis as a whole participates in a meta-critique of language as representation; in particular of language as something transparent, communicative, unmediated. It attempts to name an[other] way of saying the same thing within philosophy; and at the same time implies the *need* to state that something differently. The possibility that certain aspects of the philosophy of language *can* be stated, enquired about, or understood differently, is the premise of the work. Another way to state this is: “In postmodern poetics, there is a paradigmatic shift from the idea that language is transparent, to the disclosure of its physicality, its intimacy, its obdurate persistence, and its paradoxical fragility.” McCorkle, James, ‘The Inscription of Postmodernism in Poetry’, in *International Postmodernism: Theory and Literary Practice*, Eds. Bertrens and Fokkema, (U. of Utrecht, 1997).

⁴⁵³ Representational painting or literature points beyond itself to an external world (secondarity); it is essentially ‘about’ something other than itself. It is referential/instrumental, a part of instrumental reason’s capacity. Conceptual art, concrete poetry, and other forms of aesthetic practice, including art about the *act* of making art, or about the surface of the work, is self-referring. Non-representational artforms, direct attention to themselves; toward their sensory, affective qualities, and this ‘concrete visual order of signifiers’ takes precedence in any semiotic account of it. Drawing attention to language as an image of itself, reveals its own characteristics and immanent qualities. We learn something about language’s limits and possibilities; its inherent instability, as well as its productivity, when contemplating its non-referential character as pure form.

⁴⁵⁴ C. Colebrook, *Giles Deleuze*, (Routledge, 2002), p. 20.

language, rather than its role in a simple binaric relation of sign/signifier. Another name for this movement is ‘surface’, after Adorno and Deleuze, and this term will be amplified/expanded upon further on in this section. For example, for both Adorno and Deleuze, *style* is a surface (or a series of surfaces) to language, and a form of ‘active creation’. Style both replaces languages’ representational function, by exceeding the requirements of simple communication (an excess), and makes language ‘strange’ to itself. “When a language is so strained that it starts to stutter, or to murmur or stammer... then language in its entirety reaches the limit that marks its outside and makes it confront silence.”⁴⁵⁵ Similarly, both quoting Samuel Beckett, and as exemplified in his work: “Style [is] the foreign language within language.”

“That is what style is, or rather the absence of style – asyntactic, agrammatical: the moment when language is no longer defined by what it says, even by what makes it a signifying thing, but by what causes it to move, to flow and explode – desire. For literature is like schizophrenia: a process, and not a goal, a production and not an expression.”⁴⁵⁶

When knowledge about language is the objective of philosophy, that knowledge, being expressed almost exclusively within language (written/verbal), means that form and content are mutually implicated as explication proceeds; they trace the same line, occupy the same surface(s), become paradoxically entwined. Whether acknowledged or not, whether an explicit part of method (as in Derrida), or not, all Philosophies of language are therefore unavoidably reflexive; language is directed or turned back on itself as the subject, such that the production of that knowledge is inextricable from the mode of expression, and retains its implicit assumptions. The impossibility

⁴⁵⁵ Deleuze, ‘*Critique et Clinique*’, as cited in ‘*Deleuze and Language*’, Jean-Jacques Lecercle, (Palgrave, 2002).

⁴⁵⁶ Op. cit., *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 145.

of attaining a viewpoint on language from a mythical ‘outside’, which is a demand of metaphysics, therefore requires new ways of asking old questions.⁴⁵⁷ For example, there needs to be a method of doing philosophy of language, which neither seeks to ignore the persistently troubling self-referential nature of paradox, nor relegate it to a ‘minor’ canon of literature/poetry, or inconsequential anomaly, but to embrace it as the expression of an irreducible complexity to language; as one of its many surfaces; to offer it instead as concrete evidence of languages’ plural nature.

The selection of ‘Acoustic Economies’ which are outlined in the following section of the thesis, share certain characteristics: they each exceed the limits of classificatory systems, pushing thought (along with language) to the limit, and resisting assimilation into any form of absolute, by their *sheer force*. This force (which, according to Adorno, was once directed towards the building of systems), is to be found, instead, in the objective phenomena of which they are composed, and in their extreme non-identity with their concepts. In other words, where they exceed their concepts, they become more than themselves, in the form of a series of non-assimilable, surfaces. ‘Surface’ is another word for the non-identical, the negative dialectic, or immanence, which Adorno and Deleuze have shown, retains the excess in thought.

The term Acoustic Economies refers to an interconnectedness (a loose form of system, an assemblage, or a constellation) which is not an

⁴⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger deconstructs the Western Metaphysics that the modern science and technology are based on. He argues that this Metaphysics anticipates such a truth as “the true, whether it be a matter or a proposition, is what accords, the accorant” [das Wahre, sei es eine wahre Sache oder ein wahre Satz, ist das, was stimmt, das Stimmende]. (Von Wesen der Wahrheit, Vittorio Klostermann, p.7, *Pathmarks*, Trans. by William McNeill, (Cambridge University Press, s138).

exterior one, imposed by a knowing subject, who distributes the parts within a pre-given whole, but a groundless, immanent version; forming a fractal, negative dialectic; one which *builds, creates* or *makes* sense, on its own terms. In this respect, the Acoustic Economies offered here are a-systematic, rather than anti-systemic, and the individual phenomena are emphasized, not their coherence within a whole schema, or architecture of thinking. The next section will briefly reprise some of the main systems of thought which are being addressed—or indeed embraced—in this thesis, as a way to set the scene for the group of Aesthetic Economies which follow.

3.1 What is a system?

“Thinking would be a form of thinking that is not itself a system, but one in which system and the systematic impulse are consumed; a form of thinking that in its analysis of individual phenomena demonstrates the power that formerly aspired to build systems.”⁴⁵⁸

Deleuze, along with Adorno, challenges Hegel’s system, in terms of his prioritization of identity over difference. As we have seen in parts I and II, Adorno offered in its place, a dialectic based in non-identity, or the non-identical, while Deleuze states the problem with the Hegelian dialectic in the following way:

‘Hegelian contradiction appears to push difference to the limit, but this path is a dead end which brings it back to identity, making identity the sufficient condition for difference to exist and be thought. It is only in relation to the identical, as a function of the identical, that contradiction is the greatest difference.’⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ Op. cit., *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p. 40.

⁴⁵⁹ Op. cit., *Difference and Repetition*, p.263.

In Hegel, the priority of identity is retained in the dialectical movement, and difference is exiled to an imaginary outside of thought, whereas both Deleuze and Adorno seek to bring difference *as* difference back into the fold. While in Hegel there is a notional excess, and this excess to thought is always sublated back into identity, being subsumed within the whole, neither Deleuze nor Adorno want to exclude this difference, or merely pay lip service to it, but to make it an integral part of thinking. This requires (certainly for Deleuze) an entirely non-dialectical form of thought, while Adorno attempts to pose this possibility from within the a-system of a negative dialectics, pointing out that there is always an ineradicable excess to conceptual thought, since: “Concepts do not go into their objects without leaving a remainder.”⁴⁶⁰ So while the Hegelian dialectic *appears* to push difference to a limit, it takes the priority of identity as a presupposition, and so misses that opportunity. “The intoxications and giddiness are feigned, the obscure is already clarified from the outset.”⁴⁶¹ However, in *The Fold*, Deleuze elucidates this new conception of a non-assimilable, non-unified, and non-dualistic form of difference.⁴⁶² This was, for Deleuze, to be a philosophy of ‘becoming’ where in the place of an atomistic conception of identity (which by virtue of its form, could not occupy the same place at the same, time,

⁴⁶⁰ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*. Hegel’s dialectic consumes the remainder, or excess in thought, within the ‘dialectical mill’.

⁴⁶¹ Op. cit., *Difference and Repetition*, p. 263. Deleuze goes further to point out that the Leibnizian notion of impossibility is irreducible to contradiction, while compossibility is not reducible to identity. As with the asymptotic lines that never meet, their proximity is infinitely closer, but never aligned in a point-for-point relationship. Representation may be infinite, since it cannot confirm either ‘divergence or decentring’. It relies upon convergence and monocentrism, and only gives the illusion of difference. “[In] which one is only apparently intoxicated, in which reason acts the drunkard, and sings a Dionysian tune while none the less remaining ‘pure’ reason”, p. 264.

⁴⁶² See Deleuze, *The Fold, Leibniz and The Baroque*. (University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

leading inevitably to contradiction), a conception of a series of differentiations over time allowed identity to be seen as a process, instead of fixed points in time and space.⁴⁶³

In systems of thought which are grounded in static conceptions of identity, difference and paradox are usually viewed as aporias: issues to be resolved, illogical excesses to the purity of the system. However, in an identity based on becoming, those ‘problems’ slip away, as immanence replaces transcendence. Difference is no longer to be seen as an ‘other’, but as immanent and enfolded. Identity is not reducible to $A=A$, as two distinct entities, but becomes a fluid relationship between the two, which allows for an intertwining of them in an “immanent, non-dialectical way.”⁴⁶⁴

The extreme economies, which are here named Acoustic, are paradoxical, and resist closure, or stabilized meaning. Each one of these a-systematic economies is offered as part of a constellation of concepts and modes of *making* sense. None is posed as superior; inferior; in opposition to, or as correct, nor are they to be seen as a complete catalogue of possibilities. While they may augment one another, they are at the same time singular, fractal ‘moments’ of a specific modality; a way of thinking through (and thinking *through*) the limits of the classical forms of logic, which have been outlined in the thesis so far, and of the failure of closed systems in general.

“And it is from this standpoint that I would like you to understand the concept of a negative dialectic—as the consciousness, the self-critical consciousness of such a change in the idea of a philosophical system in the sense that as it disappears, it releases the powers contained in itself.”⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Cf. Dr. Anne Cormack for her comments on Deleuze’s conception of identity and becoming, in her thesis *Gambling Against Rawls*, 2007, esp. pp. 181-182.

⁴⁶⁴ Op. cit., *Gambling against Rawls*, p. 182.

⁴⁶⁵ Op. cit., *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p. 38.

As Adorno points out, logical systems, are meant to provide a counterbalance to arbitrariness. Their aim is to avoid elements taking up an unconnected and ambiguous shape: systems govern totalities, where nothing is excluded (as in Hegel's Absolute). The concept (and promise of) of a system has dominated philosophy, from Plato to Hegel and Kant, where it has an ambition which exceeds its possibility, since, in their drive towards positivism, and completion, systems create closed frames.⁴⁶⁶ The alternative non-system posed here is comprised, instead, of a series of micro-frames, or fractal frames, none of which is intended to summarize, or stand in for the whole, but to point towards a way of thinking which will accommodate paradox, and incompleteness. Paradox is the underlying motor-force of each fragment offered here, in which the contradictory, simultaneously yes/no, right/wrong inconclusive, and excessive surfaces (the non-identical), are retained for thought.

Kierkegaard will retain paradox in the form of the ethical suspension required by faith. Artaud will pose paradox in terms of the limits of representation (paradoxes of form) which is seen in cruelty. Adorno and Lacoue Labarthe will see paradox in terms of mimesis, and mimetological surfaces. Nietzsche's 'tonal' logic offers a way out of the impasse of logical

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid. Cf. Derrida, for whom the idea of Parergon, in which frames are there to be exceeded Cf. *The truth in Painting*, (University of Chicago Press, 1987). See also Cy Twombly, whose work exceeds the physical and conceptual frames of art. Never completed, never within the frame, never a totality, always excessive to that frame. Adorno points out that, early on in his work, even Benjamin said that philosophy is not possible without systems. (Cf. *Selected Writings*, edited by Michael W. Jennings and others, trans. by Howard Eiland, Rodney Livingstone and others, Vols 1-4, (Cambridge MA: Belknap/Harvard, 1996-2003), p369, for example). He then proceeded to unpack this premise in his work, through the notions of fragment, constellation, and translation. Wittgenstein did the same, moving from the *Tractatus* to the *Philosophical Investigations*, moving from systems to doubt (Cf. *On Certainty*, ed. by G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, and translated by D. Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

systems which require the deep cut of the law of contradiction to operate.

These selected examples will each show, in a different way, that not every phenomena can be accommodated within a system, or a schematic. Something necessarily pushes beyond the frame ('sticks out cogitatively'. The negative dialectic of Adorno, accepts this paradoxical tension between a system which, in sustaining itself, simultaneously moves towards its dissolution. Foucault describes the act of transgression as that which "carries the limit right to the limit of its being; transgression forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance, to find itself in what it excludes, (perhaps, to be more exact, it recognizes itself for the first time), to experience its positive truth in its downward fall."⁴⁶⁷ However, this is not achieved by virtue of being placed in opposition to the limit, but by maintaining the reciprocal relations between them, since transgression would be meaningless without a limit and a limit would not have meaning if it were untransgressable. The act of transgression therefore 'illuminates' the limit without displacing it, while placing us in a different relationship to the object of transgression (in Blanchot's project, language). A comment on the role of the transgressive in Bataille's language reinforces the point:

"[Sexuality] is tied to the still-silent and groping apparition of a form of thought in which the interrogation of the limit replaces the search for totality, and the act of transgression replaces the movement of contradictions. Finally, it involves the questioning of language by language in a circularity that the "scandalous" violence of erotic literature, far from ending, displays from its first use of words."⁴⁶⁸

However, it must be remembered that while posed as a non-system, negative dialectics is still a system, in the same way that even Nietzsche, who was aggressively anti-system, had a system. The kind of system, which Adorno

⁴⁶⁷ Op. cit., *Religion and Culture*, p. 60.

⁴⁶⁸ *ibid.* p. 70.

and these other artists/thinkers want to avoid, is best summarized by Adorno as one which is hampered by: “The clunking sounds of conceptual machinery.”⁴⁶⁹ In other words, they agree that any forced reconciliation between the non-identical, and the system which seeks to enclose it, creates a tension which is frequently counterproductive, and nullifying, rather than one which is productive and creative, and so this thesis argues that the avoidance of the ‘clunking sounds’, requires a different logic, or multiple logics, to accommodate the non-identical.

This invites the question: can a system be irrational, paradoxical, where paradoxical is another name for the irrational, or illogical in thought, one lacking clarity, or coherence? In other words, is the notion of rationality implied in the concept of system, or can a system be illogical and still *make* sense? What this thesis aims to set out, and which is its most original contribution, involves assessing the possibility of a paradoxical, acoustic form of logic (or rather multiple such logics), which are comprised of non-identical surfaces (negative dialectics), which are fractal, not totalizing: an illogical system that makes sense (with the emphasis on *making* sense, not a sense which prefigures, or grounds understanding, and into which disparate phenomena are fitted). This is what will be called an [un]common sense, which allows for the kind of [un]disciplined gestures which constitute the dynamic capacity of the artworks discussed in part IV. This shares an affiliation with Blanchot’s notion of a “foreign”, or “nomadic” truth:

“A nomadic [‘foreign’] truth would therefore set itself outside the relations of a firmly established property and identity, that is to say, also, outside the relations by which the self-subject—if only by the grasp that is comprehension, and through the secularity afforded by

⁴⁶⁹ Op. cit., *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*, p. 37.

the homogeneity of the concept and of discourse—would secure its reign and its name.”⁴⁷⁰

Adorno speaks of the necessity of a latent system, one which ties disparate phenomena together, but not one which operates under any architectonic organization (schema). Through a constellation of different approaches, this section of the thesis will therefore look at how disparate insights⁴⁷¹ can form a fractal non-system, in which the surface (another name for the negative dialectic, which always sticks out beyond the frame, and is both attached and not attached to the concept, at the same time), forming a supple, acoustic, non-representational and immanent assemblage: an a-logical (rather than illogical) economy of the surface, which *makes* an [un]common sense.

3.2 Assemblages, Fractals, and the Plane of Immanence

As Karl Popper has shown, in his lecture ‘Of Clouds and Clocks’, all things can be calculated; there is a pattern to any system, even clouds of gnats, but it’s an imprecise one, an imperfect calculation, based on probability rather than certainty.⁴⁷² Where Newtonian physics requires a closed environment, and a perfect system, the indeterminate whole[s] of the fractal environment require the plane of immanence, and/or *becoming*, to be understandable.⁴⁷³ In a fractal environment, there is no grounding position, no origin, but only nodal

⁴⁷⁰ Op. cit., *The Infinite Conversation*, p. xxxii.

⁴⁷¹ Albeit ones which share certain common affinities and concerns for language, paradox, conceptual excess, and the non-identical (expand point: offer examples).

⁴⁷² K. Popper, *Of Clouds and Clocks*, An Approach to the Problem of Rationality and the Freedom of Man’, The Arthur Holly Compton Memorial Lecture, presented at Washington University, MO, April 21, 1965 (published by Washington University, 1965). See XVI for the idea of a ‘Plastic Control’, where a midway position between total control and chaos/randomness is developed. This raises the following question in relation to the thesis, could there be a ‘plastic logic’, one which retains a middle position between truth and falsity?

⁴⁷³ Cf. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, by B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), esp. Chapter 10, pp. 256-342.

points, or intensities which allow the discourse to hang together. This complements the Heideggerian Dasein, wherein the groundless ground of the Plane of Consistency, accounts for the 'out there' in terms of the event of appropriation, as the event that forms the plateaus: "immanence is the very vertigo of philosophy."⁴⁷⁴

For Deleuze, immanence ("existing or remaining within") is opposed to transcendence. In *Immanence: A Life*, Deleuze writes: "It is only when immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence." Immanence is a-temporal: an assemblage is a transient, dynamic, fleetingly coherent group of singularities, which eliminates the subject/object split, and produces a certain force and intensity. The Plane of Immanence is a groundless ground, a plane of virtualities and potential space for temporary assemblages to emerge (the plane is always/already a site of becoming/desire). The Plane of Immanence yields more than the dialectic, since it's immaterial, a-temporal, groundless: a transient assemblage. In other words: a groundless ground.⁴⁷⁵

Time is the ground for stable, finite, linear forms of logic. However, what if time has intersecting times/timings, allowing for things to be both large and small at the same time, or for yes and no to coexist in the same moment? This would allow for paradox to form a non-representational materiality, a 'present' which has a form of materiality, consisting of a multivalent 'now-time'. A multiply-timed logic.

⁴⁷⁴ *Expressionism in Philosophy*, p. 180, quoted in Giorgio Agamben, "Absolute Immanence" in *Potentialities*, p. 226.

⁴⁷⁵ Op. cit., *Immanence: a life*, p. 35. Is empiricism the opposite of rationalism? For Hume they are not in opposition, but co-implicated. (Deleuzian Social Ontology, for a description of assemblage, and its relation to Hume's theory of Association. p. 253). By this account, conversation, which requires language is a specialized assemblage, wherein expression is not direct, but requires a code to provide meaning. Conversation as temporal assemblages, are an example.

If immanence *is* immanent substance (immanent to itself), not immanent *to* substance, then paradoxical language is, by virtue of the same distinction, immanent *in and of* itself, not in relation to an outside: in other words, it is not shackled to the transcendent, descriptive functions of language. Such language can therefore be understood as self-identical (immanent), rather than identical with an object beyond itself. Fractals are self-referring: in them, meaning is evoked; they are singular, but not in the sense of the Kantian idea of singularity, in which an aesthetic judgment is subjective, immediate, and non-conceptual (not universal, but singular to any given moment or individual). In contrast, fractals form surfaces without edges, are parts without wholes, and exist as non-identical fragments, performing as non-conceptual resonances, and enacting mimetic comportment.

A different kind of ‘ground’ is therefore established through an understanding of the non-system of the Plane of Immanence, assemblage, and fractals; one not reliant on closure, inside/outside, or the split between essence and appearance, but which creates what might be called fractal surface(s), where there is only the surface, and no ground from which it emerges. This grammar without a ground implies a non-origin for language, not one seeking the ‘essential’ in language, or based on a fixed identity, but which nonetheless allows meaning to emerge. This anarchy, or chaos, is productive, and makes ‘sense’, but acoustically, rather than closing-off meaning within a conceptual schema. Paradox (doubt/art) is a type of representation that can’t be represented: a fractal economy of sense.⁴⁷⁶ It exceeds the structural

⁴⁷⁶ Fractals are recursive. Their smaller parts are repetitions of their larger parts (each is embedded). Paradoxes are also recursive. They are defined in terms of themselves, and are infinitely nested. “Self-recursion is a recursion that is defined in terms of itself, resulting in an ill-defined infinite regress.” <http://mathworld.wolfram.com/Self-Recursion.html> (see also: Hofstadter, D. R. ‘On Self-Referential Sentences,’ ‘On Self-

possibilities of representation, and moves to an acoustic, or sonic form of expression.

“As Deleuze has said to me, however... there is no heart, there is no centering, only decenterings, series, from one to another, with the limp of a presence and an absence of an excess, of a deficiency.”⁴⁷⁷

Foucault, in *Theatrum Philosophicum*, shows how Deleuze rejects, for thinking, the model of the circle, with its promise of closure, centre and certainty, in favour of ‘fibrils and bifurcations’, which open out onto extended and unanticipated series, and defy principles of organization. In all of his work, Nietzsche directly confronts the concept of a ‘ground’,⁴⁷⁸ upon which to base a philosophy, offering instead, a deconstruction, or critique of the tradition. Thinking against ‘the reason and fetish of the totality’⁴⁷⁹, he seeks to dismantle the universal account, replacing it with a series of fragmentary, unstable perspectives on truth, knowledge, and subjectivity: “For Nietzsche, the world consists of an absolute parallax, infinite points of view determined and defined by, and within, a fragmented poetic fabrication.”⁴⁸⁰ In other words: shifting objects and observers, coupled with shifting positions, produces shifting meaning, and it is through the fragmentary, aphoristic style of his writing that Nietzsche articulates this unstable plurality. The correspondence between Nietzsche and Deleuze’s approach is clear. Similarly,

Referential Sentences: A Follow-Up," and "On Viral Sentences and Self-Replicating Structures." Chs. 1-3 in *Metamagical Themas: Questing of Mind and Pattern*. New York: BasicBooks, pp. 1-69, 1985.). “In order to understand recursion, one must first understand recursion.” Attrib. to Anon. Paradoxes are recursive. They infinitely rerun the procedure. There is no termination procedure in a recursive process (nothing that stops it from rerunning). Therefore, paradoxes are infinite, and self-referential.

⁴⁷⁷ Op. cit., *Theatrum Philosophicum*, p. 161.

⁴⁷⁸ G. B. Madison, *Coping with Nietzsche’s Legacy: Rorty, Derrida, Gadamer, The Politics of Postmodernity*, Essays in Applied Hermeneutics. p. 1.

⁴⁷⁹ T. Eagleton, „Awakening from modernity. *Times Literary Supplement*, 20th February, 1987.

⁴⁸⁰ S. Barker, *Nietzsche/Derrida, Blanchot/Beckett: Fragmentary Progressions of the Unnamable*, (California, 1995).

Walter Benjamin proposes that “meaning hangs loosely, as departure,... tangentially,... like a royal robe with ample folds”⁴⁸¹ and that in language: “Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together... need not to be like another... as fragments of a greater language.”⁴⁸² Each view language itself as a productive site of philosophical critique, and question its ability to provide singular, unambiguous and final meaning. In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche throws out a strident challenge that even those philosophers of the ‘modern’ era, who grounded understanding in science and mathematics are shadowed by the same pursuit: “They are far from being Free Spirits: for they still have faith in truth.”⁴⁸³

This work primarily emerges from an engagement with those theories and creative acts which challenge the basic assumption that *identity* forms the ground of language, and that meaning, and therefore ‘truth’ can be established on its basis. Thinkers such as Deleuze and Derrida suggest that an alternative ‘logic of representation’⁴⁸⁴ is possible, one where an ‘a-signifying, a-syntactic material’⁴⁸⁵ forms the ground for a discretely different grammar. This in turn instantiates other forms of understanding, or: “an essentially heterogeneous reality”⁴⁸⁶ Deleuze and Guattari explain how: “A method of the Rhizome type [on the contrary], can analyze language only by decentering it onto other

⁴⁸¹ Walter Benjamin, “*The Task of the Translator*”, in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, (London, Fontana, 1992) pp. 70-82.

⁴⁸² Ibid. p. 73.

⁴⁸³ Quoted in G. B. Madison, *Coping with Nietzsche’s Legacy* p.1

⁴⁸⁴ *Points... Interviews, 1974-1994*, Jacques Derrida, Ed. Elizabeth Weber (California: Stanford, 1995), p.75.

⁴⁸⁵ G. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, (Continuum Publishing Group, 2005), pp. 43-44.

⁴⁸⁶ Op. cit., *A Thousand Plateaus*. Deleuze and Guattari preface their remarks about heterogeneity with: “A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community.” Ibid. p. 8.

dimensions and other registers”, also suggesting that language can only be scrutinized sideways, tangentially, without looking directly at the object itself. Alongside Deleuze, Guattari, Nietzsche and Benjamin, Derrida provide a further useful model, that of: ‘Parergon’. While Kant defines ‘ergon’ as the work itself, in his text ‘The Truth in Painting’, Derrida refers to Kant’s concept of ‘Parergon’, which is distinguished as that which lies outside the work, and is ‘accessory, foreign, or secondary object’. “The *parergon*,” Derrida tells us, “inscribes something which comes as an extra, exterior to the proper field . . . but whose transcendent exteriority comes to play, abut onto, brush against, rub, press against the limit itself and intervene in the inside only to the extent that the inside is lacking. It is lacking *in* something and it is lacking *from itself*.”⁴⁸⁷ That which is ‘Parergon’ to the text is both of it, and outside it, simultaneously, and permits the kind of immanent yet transcendent meditation suggested by Deleuze and Guattari.⁴⁸⁸

The concept of system can be viewed from a different vantage point: one which finds its closest relation in the a-system of a negative dialectic, and which comprises and assembles the non-identical surface[s] of thought, language, art, and paradox. The form of logic (an a-logic) which constitutes these multiple surfaces is best understood, not so much as a system, but as a groundless, unstable structure, or assemblage (after Deleuze); requiring an altogether different kind of logic to cohere. Since a key part of the argument this thesis wants to make is that art is paradoxical and paradox is an art, a new kind of logic is needed, to explain how both paradox and art work, and in what ways they ‘make’ sense. This logic is closer to what Karl Popper has termed a

⁴⁸⁷ J. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, (University Of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 46.

⁴⁸⁸ See Walter Benjamin, works cited previously, for the idea that there is a “crucial distinction between the sentence (the container of information) and syntax (the container of cadence).”

form of ‘plastic control’,⁴⁸⁹ somewhere between certainty and doubt, or between the nebulous and rigid extremes of clouds and clocks. It’s based on mimesis as expression, not as representation, and a form of understanding which is acoustic, and not visual.

The kind of structure, or a-system being proposed is incomplete, uncertain, temporary, fractal, and unrelated to a whole (unlike the Hegelian model). An initial explanation of ‘surface’ as a negative dialectic, will be followed by an explanation of how the term ‘acoustic’ has been arrived at, as distinct from any other form of logic, and finally, how an acoustic surface is logical. This a-logic will be seen to be non-identical, sensual, and substantial, but not in the sense of depth versus substance, or essence versus appearance—where one must prevail over the other term—but as having contours or tonal depth, while remaining elusive, non-identical, fractal, and non-oppositional. This type of non-visual, acoustic logic challenges the closure of thought which Nietzsche and others feared would consume experience and create rigid limits for thought.

3.3 The Paradox of Art

In a paradox, time is multivalent and intersecting, permitting yes/no, right/wrong to coexist at the same time, and in the same place. This is also true for art, which consistently defies its categories, and collapses time and space. Linear logic relies on Newtonian time, and stable categories: that which is non-identical is deemed immaterial, because it is not ‘graspable’. A paradox will show that the unrepresentable, which is outside the ‘grasp’ of thought, simply requires a different, non-representational logic, to understand it, and to

⁴⁸⁹Op. cit., *Clouds and Clocks*, pp. 21-23.

this extent, it shares a place with art. Language, it will be argued, is a paradoxical art, which consistently exceeds its limits, by referring back to itself in a folding movement, and which therefore breaks with representational thought, becoming 'acoustic'. An 'acoustic' logic allows for the sensual, diffuse, non-instrumental attributes of art and language to be at the forefront of thought, and opens out onto doubt as its primary ground; remaining firmly in the 'now' of experience. In such a logic, paradoxes are evidence of the vitality of such thought, not of its failure. The fragments of art and language offered in Part IV do not add up to a complete system of thought, or a total account of the ways in which such a logic might supplement thinking, but points out the paradoxical nature of both, and their instability, in a way which is potentially productive, not constrictive. In the end, paradox, doubt, art, language, are unstable surface structures which can't be represented. They require an acoustic/sonic form of logic, which is immanent, fractal, material. What matters in this logic is expression, not the represented. The mimetic (or mimetological as Labarthe has termed it), forms a hyperbologic, which is by turns, unpredictable, cruel, multiply-timed, mobile, and which always breaks out of, and breaks apart, systems. The use of the term 'economies' is an attempt to suggest that such creative acts 'take a place', rather than becoming part of a pre-existent system.

3.4 How is a Negative Dialectic a Surface?

How does negation work and/or come to produce, paradox? What kind of surface does it represent/require? In order to answer this question, we need a working definition of 'surface'. Another name for the 'surface' is the negative dialectic. This surface is both attached to a structure, but separate

from it, and is therefore non-identical with that structure, while retaining a relation to it. In removing any surface, another one appears, and another, and another. There is no depth, only a series of proliferating surfaces, which both exist/don't exist at the same time. Another way of talking about this surface, which 'sticks out cogitatively', is as an ineradicable excess to thought, language, art. In other words, the surface is produced by a form of dialectical negation which does not erase difference in a movement towards a synthesis: producing paradox. Since a surface is never completely *of* a structure, nor is it separate from it, this is why it's always 'other' (non-identical). For example, in art and paradox, things are never really part of the structure, they always remain 'other', while remaining connected to it. Moreover, these surfaces are fractal, rhizomatic, and involve multiplicities (of time, space). The paradoxical captures the contradictory nature of space/time, and the kind of logic it points to is sensual, material, open, non-dialectical, and surface-oriented. This surface is what Adorno calls the non-identical, which is irreducible, but which has a specific materiality which can only be understood 'acoustically'.

3.5 How is a Surface Acoustic?

"All art aspires to the condition of music."⁴⁹⁰

An acoustic surface is a non-identical logic of the sensual, and as such, it captures what other, more restrictive logics cannot. Sound, or 'aural' are not being used as a metaphors in this work, and 'acoustic' refers not to sound as such, but to the way in which a system can be flexible/open/sensual, and

⁴⁹⁰ A. Durant, *Conditions of music*. (Macmillan, 1984). p. 3.

indeterminate, rather than descriptive or representational. The acoustic names a non-representational logic, which retains the creative tension in thought; the non-identical, negative surface: the immanent critique. The acoustic is:

1. Sensuous (material, open, non-dialectical, surface-oriented)
2. Paradoxical (it captures the contradictory nature of space/time)
3. Non-figurative (non-representational, non-visual)
4. The Acoustic names a non-representational logic (retaining creative tension)
5. Non-identical/fractal (without referring to a totality or system)

The Acoustic is posed as parallel to the aesthetic, not in place of, but ‘para’, meaning next to. It operates in a parallel universe to aesthetic gestures, but does not supplant or displace them: instead cooperating with the aesthetic, and becoming a part of the way that this aesthetic makes sense. The Acoustic form of logic is non-Hegelian; fractal; tense; mimetic. Meaning gets *made* in these environments, and is a question of *Making* sense, not of having a sense which is pre-given. The Acoustic is the fabric, or weave of a sense which gets *made/makes/sense/works* in a number of different ways.

These are the basic attributes of the acoustic economies which are gathered in this section. In short: bad logic involves point-for-point mimesis, while a good logic involves mimesis which is not point-for-point (asymptotic).

Rather than a series of disciplined gestures in which transgression is punished (supra chapter I), this logic is a sensuous a-system. In it, cruelty is an aesthetic logic (after Artaud), paradox is logical (since two things can exist in the same place at the same time), translation is material (after Benjamin), and the flatness of surfaces are instead broken apart and reassembled. These forms of art and language, are unfinished, incomplete,

fractal (as in Cy Twombly's unfinished, dispersed, canvases). They still make sense, but an 'acoustic' sense, which is not closed off by the demands of representation. Both art and paradox are acoustic, but paradox is the ultimate 'acoustic' sense, since it is fully mimetological, not logical in a point-for-point way. In an acoustic economy, language *makes* sense. It produces it based on these aesthetic logics of the surface, which in turn break down the subject/object division. They render that device, that break-point, that contradiction, unnecessary, and in doing so, the main theoretical apparatuses of Kant and Hegel are displaced.

3.6 How is an Acoustic Surface a logic?

How does one understand an acoustic surface as a logic? The answer is that it's a fuzzy logic of the negative, the non-identical. For Karl Popper, in 'Of Clouds and Clocks', the question he starts out with is 'how do you conceive of a logic? As a cloud or a clock? The clock implies rigidity, precision, and certainty, in the same way that science wants to reassure us that everything can be calculated. But not everything can be calculated. Before Einstein, the notion that everything can be precise makes sense: afterwards, this assumption is less secure. The metaphor of the cloud refers to imprecision, diffusion, chaos, and doubt, and yet it still coheres as a cloud. Clouds can be quite precise and determinate, but free-flowing. Their causality has a precision, a pattern, The dialectical process of Hegel cannot achieve a fuzzy logic. Everything needs to fit the system as it is proposed. All contradictions must be sublated in the move towards the absolute, and this is what Adorno objects to, since it does not allow for the surface (the non-identical) to be acknowledged. Time is

understood as timing, as an event, simultaneous, differing (non-identical), uncertain, Einsteinian, not Newtonian time.

The process of something (art/language/paradox), has a form; the movement and event translation has a specific materiality which evades the grasp of conventional thought or logic. Technical arrangements are always inflected through a level of indetermination: they are infected with doubt, the unsayable has contours:

“[His] ultimate purpose – to create this pleasure at once so sensual and abstract, to translate into vibrating air this non-language whose meanings were forever just beyond reach, suspended tantalisingly at a point where emotion and intellect fused.”⁴⁹¹

The sign that is the surface. The detailing of how something works the sensuousness. A confluence of things that come together (constellation). The unsayable has contours (Adorno), the elements have a rationality to them. The Plane of Immanence brings things together, but only in the sense that they cohere fleetingly, only to disappear back into the virtuality of the plane.

3.7 Style, Presentation, Constellation

It is Adorno's argument that rather than employing concepts to 'fix', conclusively, the meaning of something existent, a constellation of concepts is necessary to unlock the non-identical: "The cognitive utopia would be to use concepts to unseal the non-conceptual, without making it their equal."⁴⁹² The idea of 'constellation' is one Adorno borrows from Walter Benjamin, and is essential to understanding the aesthetic and formal qualities of the writing[s] of both, which are in turn immanent to their philosophical project[s]. In each

⁴⁹¹ I. McEwen, *Amsterdam*, <http://nigelbeale.com/2007/11/wicked-quotes-from-amsterdam-by-ian-mcewen/>, accessed: 23/06/2009. McEwan is referring to Clive Linley, a fictional composer.

⁴⁹² Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 10.

writers' work, form and content are not arbitrarily detached, but follow a simultaneously tightly woven but divergent path, which denies the claim that: "In positivist practice, the content, once fixed in the model of the protocol sentence, is supposed to be neutral with respect to its presentation, which is supposed to be conventional and not determined by the subject."⁴⁹³ Here, presentation (form) is a disinterested participant in the production of ideas. However, in his short work 'The Essay as Form', Adorno outlines the manner in which the form of philosophical writing, and its content, should be recognized as interdependent, in the same way that content and method are not to be rendered as separate, but intrinsically bound to one another. The goal is to: "To prise open the aspect of its objects that cannot be accommodated by concepts."⁴⁹⁴ The social and historical conditions of knowledge, which are lodged in discourse, and delimited by concepts, makes it impossible to know objects in themselves. There needs to be a method of conceptual reflection which allows for the complexity and non-identity of experience to be foregrounded, and this is the role of the constellation, and of 'style'.

"The presentation of philosophy is not an external matter of indifference to it, but immanent to its idea. Its integral, nonconceptually mimetic moment of expression is objectified only by presentation in language."⁴⁹⁵

"Philosophical proof is the effort to give statements a binding quality by making them commensurable with the means of discursive thinking. But it does not purely follow from that thinking: the critical reflection of such cogitative productivity is itself a philosophical content."⁴⁹⁶

Style is therefore to be seen as Adorno's means of forging a relationship with ideas; through "heterogeneous presentation." The method is not one which

⁴⁹³ Op. cit., *Notes to Literature*, p. 5.

⁴⁹⁴ Op. cit., *The Essay as Form*, vol. 1, p. 23.

⁴⁹⁵ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 18.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 64.

organizes or explains ideas, but ‘presents’ it, much in the way that Benjamin’s *Darstellung* acknowledges that truth cannot be the direct object of communication, but can only be glimpsed ‘para’ to its mode of expression, since it is not yet communicable in that form of presentation. The non-identical is the not-able-to-be said, which nonetheless makes its claim. The mimetic faculty is always in a relationship of mediation between concept and object, but presentation itself is not mediation, since what is presented is not what is being said.⁴⁹⁷ Philosophy moves beyond the illusory promise of cognition, to a limit, and beyond, without ever naming its object: language cannot meditate. There is always an excess to communication, wherein truth can only ever be referred to indirectly, since words are not signs, or instruments of reason, but have lost their presentational power to the role of ‘cognitive meaning’.⁴⁹⁸

For Benjamin, thought necessarily involves the discontinuous presentation of ‘fragments of thoughts’, set in an interruptive relationship of infinite detours. Coherence is to be found in the ‘flashes’ and gaps between perceptible knowledge; not in the coherent sequencing of ideas, or in the relatively uncomplicated collision of ideas and their presentation. Dissolution and dissonance, rather than denotation; polyphony, rather than homophony; elision, rather than elucidation, bring meaning [truth] into view. Ideas precede presentation, but are only to be sought in the interstices, the oblique, the constellatory. The mimetic faculty allows us to perceive what he calls “nonsensuous [nonsensible] similarities”, in which the ordered surface[s] of language, which ordinarily conceal and subordinate the multiplicity of

⁴⁹⁷ D. S. Ferris, *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴⁹⁸ Op. cit., *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 36.

relationships of similarity [and difference] within language, are abruptly broken, such that: “something similar can become apparent instantaneously, in a flash.”⁴⁹⁹ These types of discontinuous assemblages are not subordinate to understanding, but equally valid methods of approaching meaning.

Wittgenstein declared in several contexts that he had nothing to say, only to show, while for Benjamin and Adorno alike: “The truth content of the object can be grasped only by the most scrupulous immersion in the minute details of the subject-matter.”⁵⁰⁰ Goethe, in his *Scientific Studies* remarked: “There is a delicate empiricism which so intimately involves itself with the object that it becomes true theory.”⁵⁰¹ He points to the fundamental difficulty with correspondence theories of truth, grounded in identity: “How difficult it is... to refrain from replacing the thing with its sign, to keep the object alive before us instead of killing it with the word.”⁵⁰² Benjamin explains the constellation as the place where:

“[I]deas are not represented in themselves, but solely and exclusively in an arrangement of concrete elements in the concept: as the configuration of these elements... Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars.”⁵⁰³

For Benjamin, the constellation configures the conceptual and the empirical into their original intimate relation, so that the sign and its object are reunited. He does not seek to resolve contradictions or oppositions, but to retain them as “residue”: the non-communicable, the unsayable, or the excess.⁵⁰⁴ Benjamin’s claim is that language has, over time, become predominantly instrumental,

⁴⁹⁹ W. Benjamin and K. Tarnowski, *Doctrine of the Similar* (1933), <http://www.jstor.org/pss/488010>, accessed: 16/04/2009.

⁵⁰⁰ Op. cit., *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 29.

⁵⁰¹ W. Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, (Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 307.

⁵⁰² Op. cit., *Scientific Studies*, p. 275.

⁵⁰³ Op. cit., *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*.

⁵⁰⁴ Cf. R. Woodfield, Kathryn Bush, *Art History as Cultural History*, ‘Mimesis and Allegory, on Aby Warbur and Walter Benjamin’. (Routledge, 2001), p. 137.

such that its mimetic, expressive aspects have been subordinated to its role as sign.⁵⁰⁵ His contention is that the ‘paradisal’ relationship between language and object has been eroded over time, in favour of an aesthetically and experientially impoverished linguistic systematization where: “Logical analysis is the most extreme expression of an objectified experience of language. The living, breathing texture of everyday language is denuded into a formal, technical series of procedures.”⁵⁰⁶

What Benjamin and Adorno share is a belief that the non-identical and art are commensurate, while mimesis and rationality in art are fundamentally irreconcilable. The former engage in a persistent, [playful] ongoing dialectical relationship, in which neither yields fully to the other, while the latter relationship limits and restricts thought and expression. The interplay between the two poles (of both pairs) is revealed through both praxis, and the act of objectification within art (which states both more and less than philosophy can, by its very act of non-stating), such that the mimetic and rational, in their mutual interpenetration, participate in a heightened form of self-criticality on behalf of rationality. This is art’s singular enigma, and at the same time its critical function: to bring the repressed dimensions of rationality to the fore, through its essential ‘interpretive indeterminacy’, and to provide a space for

⁵⁰⁵ Saussure sees the sign as an arbitrary link between signifier and signified. Structuralism privileges a system of differences, in which signs are networked and relational, rather than possessing intrinsic/expressive/mimetically-announced meaning in and of themselves. Their value depends on their being oppositional to other signs within the system as a whole. “The essential feature of Saussure's linguistic sign is that, being intrinsically arbitrary, it can be identified only by contrast with coexisting signs of the same nature, which together constitute a structured system” Roy Harris (trans.), F de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, p. x. Signs are not concrete, or grounded in experience, but abstract: markers or tokens in a structure to which they defer. “A sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern” Ibid. p. 66. The sound of an element in speech is the signified, while the thought to which it relates is the signified. However, it is only within a system of similar ‘linked’ relationships between sound/concept, and sign/signified that meaning gets established.

⁵⁰⁶ Simon Critchley, *A Very Short Introduction to Continental Philosophy*, (Oxford, 2001). p.104.

resistance to the reconciliation of the mimetic and rational. Paradoxically, art can neither speak to, nor can it not speak to truth. However, in its praxis, truth is a 'setting free' which emerges directly out of non-conceptual identification and art's fundamental autonomy and self-referentiality (its immanence and reflexivity). Art is, therefore paradoxical, and paradox is an art/aesthetic, wherein "What is at stake is the very possibility of a nondialectical materialism: matter is heterogeneous; it is what cannot be tamed by any concept."⁵⁰⁷ Mimetic and Communicative language (also distinguished as language and linguistics), are different for Adorno. The first tries to point away from itself, referring to the world beyond, while the second, points towards itself; is self-identical, or self-referential, in the same way as any artwork. One is for-itself, the other is for-another.⁵⁰⁸ The non-identical is that which doesn't identify with an 'other'. By identifying with themselves, and by directing attention towards their mimetic expression, art and language thus allow communication *in*, and not *through* them.

3.8 Adorno's Atonal Aesthetic

"Arguably, the idea of 'truth content' (*Wahrheitsgehalt*) is the pivotal center around which all the concentric circles of Adorno's aesthetics turn."⁵⁰⁹

"To gain access to this center one must temporarily suspend standard theories about the nature of truth (whether as correspondence, coherence,

⁵⁰⁷ Yve, Alain Bois in *Formless, A User's Guide*, (Zone Books, 1997) p. 71, referring to a comment by Bataille in "The Notion of Expenditure" from *Visions of Excess Selected Writings, 1927-39*. (University of Minnesota, 1985). For Bataille, matter is the "non-logical difference that represents in relation to the economy of the universe what crime represents in relation to the law". George Bataille, 'The Notion of Expenditure', trans. and ed., Allan Stoekl, *Georges Bataille: Visions of Excess - Selected Writings, 1927-1939* (Minneapolis: U Minn, 1989). p. 319.

⁵⁰⁸ A. C. Danto, *After the End of Art*. (NJ.: Princetown University Press, 1997), p. 148. Cf A. Danto on the self-referentiality of conceptual art as against figurative art.

⁵⁰⁹ Zuidervaat 1991; Wellmer 1991, 1-35; Jarvis 1998, pp. 90-123.

or pragmatic success), and allow for artistic truth to be dialectical, disclosive, and nonpropositional.”⁵¹⁰

In Aesthetic Theory, Adorno sets out to establish a materialist aesthetic, one which offers the “priority of the object in art”,⁵¹¹ in place of idealism. Where both Kant and Hegel privilege the subject over the object in their meditations on art; forming an idealist aesthetic, in which subjective perceptions determine the experience and truth content of a work, Adorno asserts that there is a truth-content within both the object itself, and in our aesthetic experience of it.⁵¹² Truth-content in art is thus cognitive, and, unlike Kant, of a form which is “not exhausted either by the subjective intentions of its producers or by the subjective responses of its consumers”,⁵¹³ but which, through analysis can be revealed. For Kant, beauty is experienced subjectively, while Adorno wants to claim that beauty mediates between subject and object, and that beauty is to be found in the “cognitive of truth content of works of art”, since works of art

⁵¹⁰ L. Zuidervaat, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/>, accessed: 25/04/2009.

⁵¹¹ Jarvis, S. *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 1998. p.99. This is also linked to Adorno’s larger project (Cf *Negative Dialectics*), of anti-foundationalism. While Heidegger proposed being as the foundation of philosophy, Adorno wants to ground his philosophy neither on a theory of knowledge (epistemology), nor on being (ontology).

⁵¹² Hegel thought that art would, over time, take on the role of philosophy, moving away from objective beauty, or subjective perception, becoming increasingly discursive and theoretical: “At this highest stage, art now transcends itself, in that it forsakes the element of reconciled embodiment of the spirit in sensuous form and passes over from the poetry of imagination to the prose of thought.” G.W.F. Hegel: *Introduction to Aesthetics: The Introduction to the Berlin Aesthetics Lectures of the 1820s*. Translation: T.M. Knox. (Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 89). This reached its apotheosis in the work of conceptual artists such as Joseph Kosuth, who claimed: “The propositions of art are not factual, but linguistic in character, that is, they do not describe the behavior of physical or even mental objects: they express definitions of art, or the formal consequences of definitions of art.” Joseph Kosuth: “Art After Philosophy I & II.” *Studio International*, October/November 1969. The continued move away from materiality, and towards the conceptual is historical: “With the unassisted Ready-Made, art changed its focus from the form of the language to what was being said. Which means that it changed the nature of art from a question of morphology to a question of function. This change – one from ‘appearance’ to ‘conception’ – was the beginning of ‘modern’ art and the beginning of ‘conceptual’ art.” (Kosuth: 1969, p. 135.) Finally, “The ‘purest’ definition of conceptual art would be that it is inquiry into the foundation of the concept ‘art’, as it has come to mean.” (Kosuth: 1969, p. 160.) Robert Smithson concurs: “My sense of language is that it is matter and not ideas - i.e., “printed matter”. Robert Smithson, 1972. (Cf. [Press Release 1967.](#)).

⁵¹³ Jarvis, S. *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 1998. p.98.

“are not merely inert objects, valued or known by the subject; rather, they have themselves a subjective moment because they are themselves cognitive.”⁵¹⁴

Adorno suggests that it is in the persistent analysis of the dialectical *relationship* between object and the subject, that beauty is revealed, not in the isolated subjective experience.

There is, in art, Adorno claims, a basic dichotomy between the rational and the sensuous; the intuitive and conceptual; one which society upholds, and which correlates to, and is [re]inscribed within its larger ideological structures.⁵¹⁵ For Adorno, it is art’s work to break down this dichotomy, by staging an immanent, objective critique of the opposition between sensuous forms of representation, and their non-sensuous counterpart; between the material manifestations of the artwork, and its concept or idea. In doing so, an immanent dialectical relationship between the particular and the universal is established. For Adorno, emancipation from aesthetic harmony— a stage in the move to rehabilitate the expressive dimensions of mimesis— is also a move away from semblance (likeness). His ‘atonal philosophy’ seeks to retain the dialectical contradictions immanent to a work,⁵¹⁶ such that the internal contradictions which this process reveals, in turn expose the larger contradictions within society, and thereby, a truth-content. Some works are seen to be more effective at this than others:

“Under the conditions of late capitalism, the best art, and politically the most effective, so thoroughly works out its own internal contradictions that the hidden contradictions in society can no longer be ignored. The plays of Samuel Beckett, to whom Adorno had intended to dedicate *Aesthetic Theory*, are emblematic in that regard. Adorno finds them more true than many other artworks.”⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁴ Ibid. p. 96.

⁵¹⁵ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 98.

⁵¹⁶ Cf. S. Webber, *Aesthetic Theory*.

⁵¹⁷ L. Zuidervaat, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/>, accessed: 25/04/2009.

For Adorno, freedom from the strictures of harmony simultaneously involves a move away from representation. However, even in music, which is “inimical to the illusory”⁵¹⁸ (the fictive/semblance), he sees that the crisis of semblance has drawn music toward representation. Only as the elements move toward nothingness (asymptotically), ‘as a pure process of becoming’, do they come to be a whole. However, the parts want to be a preexistent motif or theme. The more organized a piece of work is, the more the ‘gravitational’ pull towards formlessness; the more its immanent nothingness is realized. The formlessness makes the work possible.

Adorno points out that art, when closely scrutinized, explodes, splinters, collapses. An artwork is so mediated, that under close examination, when one thinks one has a grasp of it, it dissolves, become undifferentiated, its concretion (particularity in the details, etc.) vanishes. For Adorno, artworks are not then objective. The process by which they are made, and which leads to the objective shape, opposes its ‘fixation as something to point to’. This is the same for language, where ‘becoming’ and internal differentiation of the objective forms of language, are constantly undoing the ‘fixity’ of language. However, even non-representational artworks suffer from illusion. “The truth of artworks depends on whether they succeed in absorbing into their immanent necessity, what is not identical with the concept, what is according to that concept accidental (excessive).”⁵¹⁹

“The purposefulness of artworks requires the purposeless, with the result that their own consistency is predicated on the illusory: semblance is indeed their [primary/fundamental/inescapable] logic.”⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁸ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory*, p.133.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. p. 101.

⁵²⁰ Ibid. p. 101.

For Art “To exist, their purposefulness must be suspended through its other”. This is the negation, which also applies to language, which requires negation, and purposelessness to exist, and is paradoxically exemplified by nonsense, which is the purposeless, and the non-identical. Semblance consumes art at the point it thinks it has escaped it, while artworks disclaim knowledge of, the objectivity they produce.

Adorno points out that the various contradictions in the aesthetic semblance of artworks consists of the relationship between what the work is, and what it appears to be. Even work which honours the negative, cannot escape the positivity of its appearance, suggesting a pathos that work cannot eliminate. Adorno points out that in the 19thc, art wanted to suppress its means of making, to deny the mediated qualities of artworks, in favour of an illusory immediacy. However, Modernism countered this, by making process an explicit part of form, and that this also happens in literary forms, such as the novel, which start to self-refer, rather than being a ‘box, and a world beyond’. However, Adorno also claims that “art must transcend its concept in order to fulfil it”, even though, as appearance is mediated to reality as its determinate (final/conclusive) negation.⁵²¹ The notion of semblance as ‘purely in itself’, cannot be escaped from, even in art that self-consciously seeks to destroy semblance.

“The mimesis of artworks is their resemblance to themselves”. This is not the artists’ account, but that of the work itself. (its ‘law’).⁵²²

The ineffable is that which cannot be explained in words. Expression (which is also the ineffable) is the language of art, it is non-specific, independent of any subjective demands, and non-emotional in content (as in music). It is non-

⁵²¹ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 103

⁵²² Ibid. p. 104

particular, and artworks have an autonomous form, such that any attempt to incorporate the absolute by way of symbols will fail. Aesthetic images are like graven images: prohibited. They do not present what transcends them as though they were 'Being' occupying an ultimate realm. For Adorno, Modern art is radically progressive, both in truth content, not just techniques. Adorno's relationship to modernism, is summarized by Stefan Morawski, and is worth repeating at length:

"Art, we read, is always cognitive, but its truth content remains ever equivocal [two possible interpretations], a riddle not only to even the best critic, but to the artist himself. This manifold and flexible meaning of the artwork is enshrined in the interactions of *Erscheinung* and *Geist*, of semblance and spirit. The Hegelian concept of semblance is here assimilated by Adorno, and understood as revealing the untruth of the pathogenic world around us. Modern times (Adorno goes on) have engendered two polar attitudes: either of subordination to an alienated reality, or a constant counter-alienation. Art, in Adorno's view, is one of the main ways of achieving at least a partial victory in this contest. Why? Because, thanks to its virtuality, to the semblance which by its negation of what goes on in the muzzled world of reality and through which it unmasks the *Unwahrheit*, the un-truth of this reality, art shows the potentialities of another, more human reality. The paradox of this *Wahrheit der' unwahrheit* [truth/untruth, revealing/concealing] doesn't require any political or even ideological engagement, nor does it require mimesis. What it needs (as is shown in the work of Schonberg, Beckett, Stravinsky, Kafka, and Ionesco), is a distinctive, innovative craftsmanship capable of producing artistic structures alternative to the *entzauberte und entkunstete Welt*. Of course, Beckett's alternative vision cannot be reduced to what I called (following Langer) primary virtuality. It is much more than that, and it is precisely this "*Mehr als Form*," this something more than form, that, in Adorno's view, makes the author of *Endgame* the perfect visionary of our atrocious and delirious times. Nonetheless, it is fundamentally *Schein*, or semblance, which constitutes the realm of art and which provides us the blessed opportunity to oppose the history of our own time, which is so full of cruelty and nonsense and which deprives existence of any meaningfulness."⁵²³

The language of art 'in itself', is 'expression'. Indeterminate, non-particular.

Heterogeneous. "Even while art indicts the concealed essence, as monstrous,

⁵²³ Stefan Morawski, *Art as Semblance*, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 81, No. 11, Eighty-First Annual Meeting American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division (Nov., 1984), p. 668.

this negation at the same time posits as its own measure an essence that is not present, that of possibility; meaning inheres even in the disavowal of meaning.”⁵²⁴

“Concealed in the paradox of the tour de force, of making the impossible possible, is the paradox of the aesthetic as a whole: How can making bring into appearance what is not the result of making; how can what, according to its own concept is not true, nevertheless be true?”⁵²⁵

Semblance and content must be distinct for this to happen... yet artworks rely on semblance (form). “Semblance is not the Formal Characteristics of artworks, but rather materiality, the trace of the damage artworks want to revoke.”⁵²⁶

3.9 The Sublime/Libidinal Logics

Expression is reverberation: resonance. Expression in language, is the unmediated dimension of language: its non-representational form. It’s that which is hidden, and cannot be stated. “The feeling of the sublime (for Kant) is as a trembling between nature and freedom.”⁵²⁷

“[The postmodern sublime] Would be that which in the modern invokes the unrepresentable in presentation itself, that which refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible, and inquires into new presentations—not to take pleasure in them, but to better produce the feeling that there is something unrepresentable.”⁵²⁸

Following on from Kierkegaard’s appeal to aesthetic experience as a way out of the impasse of subjective experience reduced by the rigidity of fixed concepts and symbols, Jean-Francois Lyotard has talked about the ‘Sublime’

⁵²⁴ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 105.

⁵²⁵ Ibid. p.107.

⁵²⁶ Ibid. p. 106.

⁵²⁷ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 113.

⁵²⁸ J. F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition, A Report on Knowledge* (University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 237.

as that which invokes the unrepresentable, keeping open that which would otherwise be foreclosed by information technologies and by commodification. Concepts do not account for particularities, for Adorno, Benjamin or Lyotard. Whereas, the sublime recognizes the tension between reason and the imagination; between what can be understood, and what can be experienced. This form of difference involves the mind driving towards the limits of its abilities, toward the edge of conceptuality, invoking Foucault's 'thought from the outside'.⁵²⁹

Kant, in *The Critique of Judgment*, makes reference to the 'prodigious' or 'monstrous' as being at, or exceeding the limit of, the sublime as a pure (immanent) magnitude. "An object is monstrous if by its magnitude it nullifies the purpose that constitutes its concept."⁵³⁰ In this sense, the monstrous can be seen to aggressively exceed and consume its own concept; courting self-destruction. This form of the sublime violates the commonality of judgments by exceeding our powers of apprehension. This section will consider paradox as a form of the sublime (monstrous) aesthetic, which exceeds the concept: libidinal, erotic, unrepresentable.

3.10 Abyssal Logics and The Cruelty of Thought

"The multiple anarchic force of thought always at its limit, about to happen and having happened, an ungraspable image of thought... Artaud's sense of cruelty is a confrontation with the force of thought which in another sense confronts the mind with the soul"... [T]hought as a fixed point is certainly not painful."⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ For Jaques Derrida *Différance*, names the relationship between words and concepts, which establishes meaning. Words never mean directly, but refer through a process of addition, and chains of signifiers.

⁵³⁰ Immanuel Kant, § 26, 'On Estimating the Magnitude', *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W. S. Pluhar, (Hackett, 1987), p. 109.

⁵³¹ C.Dale, 'Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze', in *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. By Brian Massumi, (Routledge, 2001), p. 90.

For Artaud, events are destroyed when the understanding comes into play:

“An event is always destroyed when understanding or perception divide it into consecutive states that hide the inseparability of its continuous transformation of reality”.⁵³² However, in paradox, such understanding fails to account for the materiality of the paradoxical ‘event’, since paradoxes escape identification with the concept, flipping between truth and falsity. “[T]ruth arrives without reason but very soon becomes reasonable.”⁵³³ Arriving undifferentiated and violent, thought is soon to be tamed and transformed into reason, via logic.

Cruelty is about unpredictability (Artaud). It’s also about exceeding the limit.

“Artaud’s ‘theatre of cruelty’ ... reduces the role of understanding, shrinking the size of logic’s importance, and highlighting words as objects of cruelty and direction. Words will be construed in an incantational, truly magical sense – for their shape and their sensual emanations, not only for their meaning’.”⁵³⁴

This shrinking of logic’s importance, points the way to a sensual logic, one in which cruelty is combative, abyssal, and productive. In this schizophrenic thought, words lose their meaning, but not their affects, and in presenting the paradox of language and things, Artaud creates signs rather than meaning, at the same time as the intensity of his thought threatens to implode upon itself, reaching and exceeding the limit which is the fixed point of thought. For Deleuze, this is thought as the unrepresentable: a thought without image, which, unable to be immobilized in language, remains mobile, affective, cruel. For Artaud, this is the quality of the ‘pure event’: a form of thought which challenges the mind/body dichotomy, and remains at a visceral, sensual, material level.

⁵³² Ibid. p. 91.

⁵³³ Ibid. p. 86.

⁵³⁴ Ibid. p. 92.

Language is a kind of controlled chaos, borne of the marks and sounds made by the body. However, it is irreducibly complex at the surface, and while articulation takes place, and communication does happen, it frequently does so at the expense of that complexity.⁵³⁵ “The materiality of sounds is inseparable from the ideality of articulate language.”⁵³⁶

Poetry is an example of the residual anarchy of language, whose complexity has not been entirely stripped away: “literature is concerned with the event *of* language, far more than the event *in* language.”⁵³⁷ Wittgenstein went as far as to say that “philosophy ought to be written only as a form of poetry”,⁵³⁸ suggesting that the only way to do philosophy is to take it to the limits (and beyond) of language, and to critique it on its own terms, immanently, in the same way that poetry becomes a critique of language. This involves a movement away from the positive identity of language, and towards its surface(s), which perform an immanent critique, or negative dialectic. Adorno’s work exemplifies this.

“[For Deleuze], writing means pushing the language, the syntax, all the way to a particular limit, a limit that can be a language of silence, or a language of music, or... for example, a painful wailing.”⁵³⁹

3.11 Kierkegaard and the Dialectic of Subjective Immediacy

The plane of immanence (plane of 'inwardness', or 'plane of consistency) can be understood as a rethinking of subjectivity or the subjective mind (but not equivalent). Arguably, the key philosopher of immanence is Kierkegaard, who

⁵³⁵ J. J. Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*. (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), chapter 3.

⁵³⁶ Ibid. p. 129.

⁵³⁷ Ibid. p. 130.

⁵³⁸ L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and value*, (University of Chicago Press, 1984)

⁵³⁹ G. Deleuze, *ABC Primer*,

<http://www.after1968.org/app/webroot/uploads/ABCDeleAnimal.pdf>, p. 4.

aestheticizes and theologizes inwardness, or memory: 'the virtual' (past and futures[s] have a slippery relation to the 'now' time of the real). Kierkegaard in 'fear and trembling' is anti-Hegelian, that to say anti-universal or anti-ethical (the social or objective realm: which is external. In the case of the thesis presented, the difference would be between language and communication. They are not the same thing.

Kierkegaard's concept of the immediacy of subjective reflection, stages a non-reconcilable dialectic, since Hegelian dialectics superseded any individual thinkers' ability to synthesize all ontological conditions: "Insofar as both moments are regarded as real, the human thinker will oscillate from one to the other in a never-ending relentless striving."⁵⁴⁰ Thought, for Kierkegaard, cannot be logically reconciled in the manner of the Hegelian dialectical synthesis, but stays in a perpetual, paradoxical state of tension or distress. Inward subjectivity tears objective certainty from its ground: "An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an individual... [when] subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth becomes objectively, a paradox."⁵⁴¹ The limit to thought can never be dialectically overcome; thought stays firmly in the immediate, both retaining, and infinitely re-straining against an abyssal form of internal, subjectively-mediated contradiction. The difficulty Kierkegaard has with Hegel is that he has stripped the dialectic of its subjective force, and constrained it to the primacy of the Idea, where Kierkegaard wants to rethink the subject in an immanent relation to thought, in a space where the universal and particular are with/held in a suspenseful

⁵⁴⁰ H. Broudy, Kierkegaard *On Indirect Communication*, The Journal of Philosophy, vol. 58. No. 9, April 27, 1961 pp. 225-233.

⁵⁴¹ Kierkegaard, S. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. Trans. By David. F. Swensen and Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, 1941. P. 183.

agonism.⁵⁴² The paradoxical relationship between the universal/particular, is revisited by Jean-Luc Nancy in 'Being Singular Plural':

“At this exact point, then, one becomes most aware of the essence of singularity: it is not individuality; it is, each time, the punctuality of a “with” that establishes a certain origin of meaning and connects it to an infinity of other possible origins. Therefore, it is, at one and the same time, infra-/intraindividual and transindividual, and always the two together.”⁵⁴³

For Kierkegaard, 'indirect communication' is the medium of this subjectivity; the sole one available to truth, and uniquely capable of expressing that subjectivity. He sees direct communication as unable to account for the ambiguous and dialectical nature of subjective truth, since it uses unambiguous symbols (i.e. language), to express existential ambiguity, and concepts with fixed meanings which cannot capture process. This echoes/foresees Benjamin and Adorno's non-reconcilable 'constellation', and is reinforced by Henri Bergson: “The real, the experienced, and the concrete are recognized by the fact that they are variability itself; the element by the fact that it is invariable. And the element is invariable by definition, being a diagram, a simplified reconstruction, often a mere symbol, in any case a motionless view of the moving reality.”⁵⁴⁴

A potential way out of this impasse, for Kierkegaard, is aesthetic experience. In art, direct communication is relinquished, in favour of the sort of conceptually non-identical, mimetic moments Adorno refers to, which retains an oscillation between the mimetic and the rational, and where truth is always a matter of the not-sayable, which emerges through praxis, or process.

⁵⁴² C.f. Heidegger, who offers the term *perdurantia*, as the means by which memory is temporalized. It combines the desire for sameness and permanence, stretching over time (duration) with the ability to retain movement, or becoming. In this way, fixity and flux are reconciled. The relationship between past, present and future affirmed.

⁵⁴³ J. L. Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, (Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 85.

⁵⁴⁴ H. Bergson: *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, (Hackett Publishing, 1999), p. 42.

Descartes said:

“The faculty of right-judging and distinguishing truth from falsehood (which is properly called understanding, or reason) is naturally equal in all men”.⁵⁴⁵

By which he suggests that there is a common sense of understanding, of which all reasonable men partake, and which allows truth and falsehood to be identified unambiguously. The implicit medium for this movement is language. In an eloquent condemnation by Nietzsche, the stakes are high for a language that would escape the constrictive nature of language as point-for-point mimesis:

“Compared with music all communication by words is shameless; words dilute and brutalize; words depersonalize; words make the uncommon common.”⁵⁴⁶

Nietzsche accords music the superior position, in contrast to what he sees as the impoverishment and limited means of language to reflect individual subjective experience. The uncommon sense he points towards is what this thesis poses as another name for Acoustic sense, or an Acoustic logic, one which is closer to music than mathematics, and reflected in the [Un]disciplined gestures of art, language, and paradox.

⁵⁴⁵ Descartes, *A Discourse on Reason*. 1649, Thomas Newcombe, London (printer).

⁵⁴⁶ F. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, Book Three: *Principles of a New Evaluation*, p.429, §811 (Spring-Fall, 1887). Part IV. ‘The Will to Power as Art’. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, Ed. By Walter Kaufmann. (Vintage, New York, 1965).

Part IV

[Un]common Sense and [Un]disciplined Gestures:

The Art of Acoustic Sense

“Anyone who does not hear the bees in Didier-Pouget’s picture of the flowery heath does not see it with the eye of the artist.”⁵⁴⁷

— Schweitzer

“The *materia prima* [raw material] is what exists prior to the division operated by meaning: an enormous paradox since nothing, in the human order, comes to man unless it is immediately accompanied by a meaning, the meaning which other men have given it, and so on, in an infinite regress.”⁵⁴⁸

— Barthes

⁵⁴⁷ A. Schweitzer, ‘J. S. Bach’, English translation by Ernest Newman, 2 Volj. (Leipzig : Breitkopf & Hartel, 1911), II, p. 14

⁵⁴⁸ R. Barthes, ‘The Wisdom of Art’, 1979, in *Writings on Cy Twombly*, Ed. By Nicola Del Roscio (Germany, Schirmer/Mosel, 2002). p. 102

Introduction

“...To attempt a breakthrough toward the beyond of philosophical discourse, you cannot possibly succeed *within language* ... except by *formally* and *thematically* posing the *question of the relations between belonging and breaking out, the question of closure.*”⁵⁴⁹

This thesis emerges from a belief that the kinds of artforms which engage the material ‘event’ of language, come closer to expressing languages’ surfaces and sensual logics, than those found in metaphysical logic(s), or in Hegelian dialectics, both of which wrest language from its material contexts, while at the same time leaving doubt/uncertainty exiled. It has been argued instead, that doubt/uncertainty, rather than being problems, or aporias, are welcome attributes, since they keep a system alive and mobile, and moreover that the sensual surfaces of language have a specific kind of meaning, which is non-identical/excessive to the concept, and which ‘break through’ in the way which Derrida proposes. The proposal being made in this thesis is that to make sense of the way in which language/paradox/art operate, and to rethink the relationship of language to philosophical discourse, requires more than just another linguistic manoeuvre, but a sharp break (or caesura), with the ordinary ways of posing questions about such issues, in turn requiring a different kind of logic altogether.

In Part III, various alternative aesthetic economies and sensual logics have therefore been pointed towards; each offered as means of sidestepping the inherent problems of using classical logics, in understanding how language and artworks operate, and to allow a space for paradox. These alternative logics have been named Acoustic, and have been shown to form a form a loose

⁵⁴⁹ J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, translated and introduced by A. Bass. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 110.

‘economy’, or open system, which have affinities with what Karl Popper, in ‘Of Clouds and Clocks’ calls a form ‘plastic control’, or what Nietzsche terms a ‘tonal logic’.⁵⁵⁰

“It is worth speculating whether the former is incompatible with the latter; that would in part explain the effort of prose since Joyce to put discursive language out of action, or at least to subordinate it to formal categories to the point that construction becomes unrecognizable. The new art tries to bring about the transformation of communicative into mimetic language. By virtue of its double character, language is a constituent of art, and its mortal enemy.”⁵⁵¹

As Walter Benjamin recognizes, for James Joyce, language is a form of activity which constitutes its *own* essence, rather than participating in pre-established discursive forms. His efforts are directed towards breaking the link between language and meaning as something pre-constituted, in favour of language as a mimetologically, constitutive medium in its own right. Joyce’s language *does* something, *creates* meaning (although, in truth, language never arrives for Joyce, it’s always on detour), and actively engages Beckett’s injunction that language should be ‘alive’. Speaking of Joyce’s work, in his text *Dante, Bruno, Vico, Joyce*, Beckett writes: “Words are not the polite contortions of 20th century printer’s ink. They are alive.”⁵⁵² For Joyce, both life and language are immanent: they have no ground, or origin.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ Op. cit., *Of Clouds and Clocks*, pp. 21-23, XVI-XVII. Nietzsche’s conception of a ‘tonal logic’ appears in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Trans. Kaufmann, (New York, 1966) Section 34, pp.46-47. where he writes: “Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition of “true” and “false”? Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance-different “values,” to use the language of painters?”

⁵⁵¹ W. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, Edited and introduced by H. Arendt, and translated by H. Zohn. (London: Fontana Press, 1992). p. 112. Benjamin writes: “language communicates nothing to those who would understand it.”

⁵⁵² Cf., L. Ben-Zvi, ‘Samuel Beckett, Fritz Mauthner, and the Limits of Language’. Published by: The Modern Language Association. Vol. 95, No. 2 (Mar., 1980), pp. 183-200. Beckett said: “There is no communication because there are no vehicles of communication.” S. Beckett. Proust (1931: rpt. New York: Grove, 1957). p. 47. In *Dante, Bruno, Vico, Joyce*, his claims that language should be ‘alive’ can be found on pages 15-16. On page 15 of the same, he also notes that Joyce effects: “a quintessential extraction of language and painting and gesture, with all the inevitable clarity of the old

John Berger, in 'The Wisdom of Art', refers to Cy Twombly's art as an 'event'. One in which the *means of making* appear as a *fact*. He uses his materials as "absolute matter", not means to an end. According to Berger, paint and graphite in Twombly's work have an "obstinate presence" which insist on themselves as primary event, refusing the "division operated by meaning". His work operates on the basis of intervals, where spacing and gesture are its dominant logic. Meaning as conventionally understood is therefore elusive in Twombly's work, while the sensual, diffuse, non-instrumental aspects of language appear as primary (the between-spaces, or the indeterminate, as meaningful).

"In his own particular way, Twombly tells us that the essence of writing is neither a form nor a use, but simply a gesture, the gesture that produces it by allowing it to happen: a scrawl, almost a smudge, a negligence. (...) The essence of an object has something to do with the way it turns into trash. It's not necessarily what remains after the objects have been used, it's rather what is thrown away in use."⁵⁵⁴

This work is situated within what might be called a 'new pragmatics' of language: "Pragmatics is important because it establishes the micro-politics of language."⁵⁵⁵ As described by Adorno, this pragmatics denies the universal "cover concept"⁵⁵⁶ in language, opening instead onto the "intramundane"⁵⁵⁷; the non-identical, and the coercive/disruptive forces in language. This is in

inarticulation." For Beckett, Joyce is able to move beyond what he sees as the inherent abstraction and limits of English, to find a raw, direct authenticity which is closer to gestural forms of painting, out of the immanent/immersive act of *making* language... art.... Note that Deleuze's Plane of Consistency is similarly self-identical and self-constituting, groundless.

⁵⁵³ See figures 8/9/10/11 for examples of James Joyce's literary self-constitutions. In these examples, which include both Joyce's proof-level annotations, and the playwright Thornton Wilder's attempts to 'understand' the text (or to decode it), through extensive personal annotation, we see how the text resists the assignment of singular meanings.

⁵⁵⁴ Roland Barthes, 'The Wisdom of Art', 1979, in *Writings on Cy Twombly*, Ed. By Nicola Del Roscio (Germany, Schirmer/Mosel, 2002).

⁵⁵⁵ Colebrook, C. *Giles Deleuze*, (Routledge, 2002), p. 159.

⁵⁵⁶ Op. cit., *Negative Dialectics*, p. 152f.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 72.

sharp opposition to dialectical thinking, which passes over the intramundane, in favour of metaphysical, identity thinking, or the ‘whole’, so that:

“The smallest intramundane traits would be of relevance to the absolute, for the micrological view cracks the shells of what, measured by the subsuming cover concept, Is helplessly isolated and explodes its identity, the delusion that it is but a specimen. There is solidarity between such thinking and metaphysics at the time of its fall.”⁵⁵⁸

This part of the thesis will point to ways in which art and languages’ various a-identical ‘surfaces’ (which, as we have seen are composed of various dynamics, paradoxes, and intensities), expose the possibility of a new relation to meaning, via what is being termed an Acoustic Logic, which requires/allows /invites a different ‘reading’ of those works. If all of the aesthetic economies in Part III are paradoxical, a-identical, and forming a series of surfaces, the question which is raised here is: how *do* they give meaning? By looking at art/literature/ performance/sound/poetry/typography and music which operates ‘acoustically, we see how this works, in *practice*.

The thesis has proposed that paradoxes are anarchic rhizomes, structural crises, a-identical logics, where traditional logical form breaks down and reassembles as the ‘acoustic’, and where ‘acoustic’ names the fractal, (non-totalizing) movement of thought. A paradox shows where logic disintegrates.⁵⁵⁹ It performs a mimetological, Dionysian, not Apollonian, form of constitutive reasoning. If paradox is at the core of meaning, not in an essentialist sense, but as a kind of dynamic/techné that moves thought, then this thesis argues that it provides it through an acoustic logic of the surface,

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 408.

⁵⁵⁹ Cf., *The Paradox of the Cretan*, W. Benjamin., especially Benjamin’s warning about the unsolvability the Paradox of the Cretan indicating not simply a surface phenomenon, or aporia, but the crisis point where logic itself collapses. Adorno will call this a ‘logic of disintegration’. Cf., *Negative Dialectics*.

where there is no depth, no escape, no exit. Paradox is not aporia, it's a productive, creative, tonal (and a-tonal/dissonant), a-identical logic, wherein variant terms between right and wrong, yes, and no, *are* possible. It's a logic of the surface, not of depth, which is nonetheless the potential that Benjamin points out in the 'Paradox of the Cretan', for breaking apart systems. However, the whole system doesn't break down irretrievably as a result, but instead reassembles on the basis of an alternative logical premise. How this makes meaning happen is the purpose of this final part of the thesis, which looks at how meaning gets established within an aesthetic context.

In the case of Cy Twombly, the acoustic logic is enacted through a mimetological deferral, where meaning is never fixed, static, but always in movement, expressive, beyond classification. In Artaud, it's cruelty which does the work/produces the paradox. In Kant, it's the sublime (the monstrous prodigious version of), wherein concepts and categories are exceeded. Each takes the form of what Phillipe Lacoue Labarthe has termed a hyperbological or mimetological excess.⁵⁶⁰ These artists/writers/philosophers, all share a paradoxical quality, and all *make* sense, by producing it, rather than taking sense as a given which can be expressed in a simple, unmediated way; via a paradoxical, infinite, rather than a 'finite' logic.

⁵⁶⁰ According to Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe, The hyperbologic operates in the following way: "without being negative, or being subject to a dialectic, it both organizes and disorganizes what it appears to determine; it belongs to and yet escapes the order of its own series'. Cf., *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, 'Diderot: Paradox and Mimesis' Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, ed. Christopher Fynsk (Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 60. "The logic of the paradox, the hyperbologic, is nothing other than the very logic of mimesis. That is to say, if I may be allowed the formulation, *mimetologic*" *ibid.* p. 260. In his further comments on semblance in art, paradox, writing, acting, Labarthe offers the thought that: "The more it resembles, the more it differs"... "The same, in its sameness, is the other itself, which cannot in turn be called "itself", and so on infinitely..." *ibid.* p.60. The mimetological is *disquieting*.

4.1 Cy Twombly's [Un]disciplined Gestures



Cy Twombly: *Untitled*, Lexington, 1959, House paint, crayon and graphite on canvas. 152.5 x 188.5 cm, 60 x 74 1/4 inches

Cy Twombly's work can be seen as an acoustic/immanent critique of difference. For Giorgio Agamben, language *itself* is what is experienced, not an external referent to that language. As something that purely references itself, paradox points out the limits of language, in what Agamben calls an 'experimentum linguae'. He states: "... the limits of language are to be found not outside language, in the direction of its referent, but in an experience of language as such, in its pure self-reference".⁵⁶¹ What links Agamben and Artaud is the *experience* of language: its materiality, not its external referent[s], nor its instrumentality. In Artaud this takes the form of cruelty, in Agamben, in self-referentiality. Paradox is the ultimate form of self-referentiality and 'difference'/the non-identical, and as such forms the 'is' of language. As immanent critique, language as material experience becomes a form of material translation, and translation as material: what I am calling in this thesis, an [Un]common Sense.

"The materia prima [raw material] is what exists prior to the division operated by meaning: an enormous paradox since nothing, in the human order, comes to man unless it is immediately accompanied by a meaning, the meaning which other men have given it, and so on, in an infinite regress. The demiurgic power of the painter is in this, that he makes the materials exist as matter; even if some meaning comes out of the painting, pencil and colour remain as "things", as stubborn substances whose obstinacy in "being there" nothing (no subsequent meaning) can destroy."⁵⁶²

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze suggests that an understanding of difference might initially be conceived as occupying a midway position

⁵⁶¹ G. Agamben, *Preface to Infancy and History*, p. 5.

⁵⁶² Roland Barthes, 'The Wisdom of Art', 1979, in *Writings on Cy Twombly*, Ed. By Nicola Del Roscio (Germany, Schirmer/Mosel, 2002). p. 102 .

between two extremes.⁵⁶³ Indifference, is either an indeterminate field out of which nothing distinct arises: “the black nothingness, the indeterminate animal in which everything is dissolved an abyss.”⁵⁶⁴ Or is comprised of a series of disconnected, mutually indifferent elements, which appear in the “...white nothingness, the once more calm surface upon which float unconnected determinations like scattered members.”⁵⁶⁵ Such fragmentary, mutually exclusive determinations are no less indifferent than the first version, since they lack overall coherence, each being a singular indifference. In either, the problem for Deleuze is that difference is presented as a relation *between* elements, and its production relies upon the ability to draw sharp divisions between the constituent parts of previously undifferentiated fields, concepts, or elements, such that the figure is set in a determinate relation to a ground. This attitude invokes the allure of the deep cut, the either/or, the right/wrong, and the classical laws of thought.⁵⁶⁶ Does the simultaneity of reading and seeing,⁵⁶⁷ of drawing as both trace and performance, in Cy Twombly’s work, collapse the relationship between figure and ground in a way which acknowledges this notion of difference?

⁵⁶³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference & Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, (Continuum, London and New York, 2001) p. 28.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 35.

⁵⁶⁵ “...a head without a neck, an arm without a shoulder, eyes without brows”. Ibid. p. 28.

⁵⁶⁶ Aristotelian logic is based on the following three Laws of Thought: The Principle of Identity (where A is A), the Principle of Contradiction, (where A cannot be *both* B and not B); and the Principle of the Excluded Middle (where A is *either* B or not B). In ‘The Wisdom of Art’, Barthes suggests that Twombly’s work is differently configured: “It is in a way another logic, a kind of challenge, on the part of the poet (and the painter) to the Aristotelian rules of structure” pp. 107-108.

⁵⁶⁷ Cf. Richard Block, ‘Scribbles from Italy: Cy Twombly’s Experiment in seeing Goethe See Language’, *The Enlightened Eye: Goethe & Visual Culture* (Rodopi, 2007), p. 289. Giorgio Agamben explains this point in reference to Holderlin, translating Sophocles’s ideas of “caesura” and “ant-rhythmic interruption”. The word is arrested “mid-flight”, and in that moment reveals *itself*, as language, not in terms of what it says, or denotes. Language, emptied of its content, a vehicle without a passenger, “falls” in to a void, an abyss, a beautiful silence, a “de-creation”, where the collapse of meaning negates the necessary condition of figure/ground, and reading and the act of reading are mutually complicit: indistinguishable. Giorgio Agamben, ‘Beauty that Falls’, 1998, in *Writings on Cy Twombly*, ed. By Nicola Del Roscio, (Schirmer/Mosel, 2003), p. 285.

For Deleuze, pure difference is not to be found in the distinction *from* something else, in the *difference between* two things, but in an immanent, intrinsic (unilateral) differing within the object, thought, event, itself, which nonetheless persistently carries along with it, its relation to that from which it seeks individuation. This form of difference then becomes the new extreme in thought, since, rather than a difference in which the boundaries are observable, exterior to the object or concept under consideration, and satisfyingly (clearly) drawn, he suggests that true difference is a question of “determination *as such*”⁵⁶⁸ or difference in-itself:

“... instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself—and yet that from which it distinguishes itself does not distinguish itself from it.”⁵⁶⁹

Difference conceived in this way, is the ability to be both distinguished from, but at the same time to stay *with*, that which foregrounds it, such that figure and ground are mutually implicated. He uses the following example: while lightening might take its distinguishing character from the black sky, that sky is simultaneously, and inextricably, part of what gives the lightening its form (and therefore its meaning). In such a relation: “It is as if the ground rose to be surface, without ceasing to be ground”⁵⁷⁰. Figure and ground are as one; empirically interdependent, but consistently interrelated, without being posed in a hierarchy, or severing the figure from a ground conceived as an origin. The sky trails the lightening, while the lightening insistently seeks to be relieved of that relation, in a tight and tense interlocking and weaving of the different and the indifferent. In the same way, Twombly’s work is simultaneously a performance of the work, in which the process cannot be

⁵⁶⁸ Op. cit., *Difference & Repetition*, p. 28.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 67.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 36.

divorced from the outcome, and whose heterogeneity, or ‘excess’, is always primary and in which any satisfying unification of the disparate and dissolute, the sign and the signified, under a final concept or representation, is withheld.

Deleuze will call this experience a form of ‘cruelty’ to thought, since the desired flight from the “elusive adversary”⁵⁷¹ (the indifferent), can never fully take place. In other words: the ‘deep cut’ which establishes meaning as difference, is illusory. Difference is the refusal of the power of representation (based on identity, sameness, resemblance, or similarity) as a means of unproblematically engaging ideas/objects; offering instead an affirmative, immanent difference, which allows concepts to proliferate, and to be productive:

“Difference is not the difference between different forms, or the difference from some original model, difference is the power that over and over again produces new forms.”⁵⁷²

Being, therefore, a question of unilateral distinction, not a distinction *from*, but a *with*, rather than a without, difference is “made” by the interpenetration of an autonomous ground rising to the surface, the form[s] which dissolve in it, and the movement of both, which collapses determinations and the indeterminate in a single move: “...Form distinguishes itself from matter, or the ground, but not the converse, since distinction is itself a form.”⁵⁷³ Mimesis, which is the non-imitative, non-communicable form of expression, immanent to art and language, and which finds its home there, similarly collapses determinations, in a fluid movement and exchange between word and thing, subject and object; forfeiting the kind of clarity and sharp delineations necessary for

⁵⁷¹ Ibid. p. 36. This “elusive adversary” is posed as the intimate, entwined, but ultimately paralysing relationship between the different and the indifferent, which cannot be undone.

⁵⁷² Claire Colebrook, *Routledge Guide to Critical Thinkers, Gilles Deleuze*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2002) p. 123.

⁵⁷³ Op. cit., *Difference & Repetition*, p. 28.

rationality to flourish, by bringing ground, surface and form[s] into a non-equivalent, pulsating relation.

Artaud defined cruelty as: “[...] nothing but determination *as such*, that precise point at which the determined maintains its relation to the undetermined”,⁵⁷⁴ and Deleuze will claim such cruelty to be the definitive character of thinking itself, as thought maintains its precise and ‘unilateral’ relation to the indeterminate. There is a cold, clinical dialectic at play in this withholding relation between the indeterminate and the determinate; one fraught with tension and paradox, since “there is no sin other than raising the ground and dissolving the form”,⁵⁷⁵ and this violence of distinction and form-giving is named as reason itself. In rationality, real difference is cursed, made ‘monstrous’ if it forfeits a willing surrender to the determinate, and yet this is the starting point for Deleuze’s philosophy of difference; one which might also be termed an [un]common sense. Common sense is that which is taken as a given in thought: it consists of agreed upon terms of reference which allow thought to conspire around unexamined, unproblematic concepts.⁵⁷⁶ An [un]common sense would explode the mythical ‘common’ which orients sense in relation to the same, rather than the different. It would open a space for the truly differing, rather than the different as not-something else (an other), and it would make nonsense an attribute of, rather than a negation of, sense. Paradox

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 29.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 28.

⁵⁷⁶ Deleuze does not think of problems as there to be solved, but as ideas which, unlike closed concepts, continue to proliferate and be productive. To be unproblematic, for Deleuze, is to deny the creative potential of thought. Common sense relies upon judgment, involving recognition, opposition, analogy and similarity (all mechanisms of the faculties), which recall, rather than encounter an object of thought. Thinking, which for Deleuze can only be sensed, not recognized [as in the form of a representation, grounded in identity-thinking], and which implies immanent encounters and events, ends, where agreement and conceptual identification begins. Thought’s dynamic is tempered by the object of thought which has been tamed, de-intensified, reconciled via ‘a little bit of order’ which takes us out of the pre-philosophical chaos, but halts thought, as it culminates in transcendence.

would no longer be the insoluble, the unwelcome, the trivialized epiphenomenon, but evidence of true difference at work, and of multiple time[ing]s. The gestures/traces of language seen in the sensual surfaces of undifferentiated marks and sounds, would be meaningful, and ‘name’ meaning differently. In [un]common sense, cruelty is productive, and the monstrous, the refusal of assimilation to a norm; both escape the tyranny of representation⁵⁷⁷. In place of sharp determinations, difference founded on opposition, and a form of thinking grounded in identity and the same (representation), indetermination, difference-in-itself, intensity, and paradox are posed as a violently ‘discordant harmony’, which runs counter to common sense, and in turn invoke the richly productive conflict between imagination and reason which drives the Kantian sublime.⁵⁷⁸ Thinking, as this form of difference, is intensity without being sutured to the symbolic, sense which can embrace, not oppose nonsense, and negation as freedom, not loss. Such intensity, while escaping the trap of representation in thought, simultaneously denies the power of grammar and logic as imprisonments of thought.⁵⁷⁹

“The sign or point of departure for that which forces thought is thus the coexistence of contraries, the coexistence of more and less in an unlimited qualitative becoming. Recognition, by contrast, measures and limits the quality by relating it to something, thereby interrupting the mad-becoming.”⁵⁸⁰

A paradox stays at the level of such a mad-becoming. Contraries coexist in it.

More and less are intertwined. A paradox is an inassimilable event; it features

⁵⁷⁷ Cf. Kant’s reference to the ‘prodigious’ or ‘monstrous’ as being at, or exceeding the limit of, the sublime as a pure (immanent) magnitude. “An object is monstrous if by its magnitude it nullifies the purpose that constitutes its concept” Immanuel Kant, § 26, ‘On Estimating the Magnitude’, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. W. S. Pluhar, (Hackett, 1987), p. 109. 253. In this sense, the monstrous can be seen to aggressively exceed and consume its own concept; courting self-destruction. This form of the sublime violates the commonality of judgments by exceeding our powers of apprehension.

⁵⁷⁸ Op. cit., *Difference & Repetition*, p. 146

⁵⁷⁹ Op. cit., *Routledge Guide to Critical Thinkers*, p. 14.

⁵⁸⁰ Op. cit., *Difference & Repetition*, p. 141.

the “indissoluble something” which haunts the concept.⁵⁸¹ In the opening pages of ‘The Logic of Sense’, Deleuze illustrates how in Lewis Carroll’s ‘Alice’ stories¹, something called the ‘pure event’ is revealed through language. In the statement: ‘Alice becomes larger’, the familiar linear time/space relations in language give way to an ever-deferred present, characterized by an essential simultaneity, involving two or more things happening at the same time; in this case, both larger and smaller in the same instant; pulling in both directions at once; unfixable in any present; mobile. Alice is both smaller and larger at the same time by virtue of a paradoxical aspect of language whereby in the instant of saying ‘Alice becomes larger’ she is by necessity both larger than she was, but at the same time smaller than she will be. Language as ‘becoming’ is irreconcilable with fixity, permanence and identity: its requirement is multivalent time[s]. The ‘event’, in which *both* senses and directions are available at any given moment, forces us to reconsider notions of permanence, fixed qualities and the ‘present’ of language upon which numerous accounts of meaning are founded. Henri Bergson describes the rigidity and a-temporality that inhibit suppleness on the part of identity-thinking:

“The real, the experienced, and the concrete are recognized by the fact that they are variability itself; the element by the fact that it is invariable. And the element is invariable by definition, being a diagram, a simplified reconstruction, often a mere symbol, in any case a motionless view of the moving reality.”⁵⁸²

⁵⁸¹ For Adorno, The “indissoluble something” is the non-identical aspect of any concept, which cannot be represented, but which nonetheless persists, and whose impossibility and indispensability brings forth truth. The collision of concept and object always leaves a remainder, which thought cannot erase by any effort. When the concept of paradox meets its object, a ‘something’ is released which is irreducible to the concept; Adorno’s ‘non-identical’; Twombly’s dissolute graphemes: his undisciplined gestures. Cf., Adorno, ‘The Indissoluble Something’, op. cit., pp. 135-136.

⁵⁸² Op. cit., *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 42

Cy Twombly's work is not founded on invariable symbolic elements, nor is it attempting to reconstruct or diagram something which lies beyond itself, in the sense of to 'point', propose, or designate. Its grammar is non-indicative; its form non-denotational. In its inhabitation of matter as meaning[full]-in-itself, and its refusal to hold the figural to its promise of an uncomplicated and distinct relation to the ground, Twombly's work acknowledges the potential in Deleuze's claim that representational thinking based on the identical, the similar, the analogous, and oppositional (this and not that), is too limited to provide a space for real difference to emerge. In denying the inevitability of sameness, or recognition, as a way to make meaning, and in its place, celebrating divergence, disparateness, and the dissimilar,⁵⁸³ Twombly's work exemplifies the power of the negative as affirmation, not erasure; the mobile, transitory, and un-nameable contradictory impulses and drives of thought; movement and becoming in place of abstract concepts; immanence, mutability; and the infinite nature and instability of paradox, which coalesce in an [un]common sense, and a sense of the uncommon: an Acoustic logic.

Cy Twombly's work makes matter *matter*, and in place of concepts, which inhibit thoughts' intensity, permits ideas and problems to proliferate, without suffering the fatal closure of representation. As an 'event' of mark-making without determination; an exemplification of non-representational thought, and a paradoxical, plural performance of the facts of 'materia prima' [raw material]; in its stubborn indeterminacy, and refusal to submit to a form of cruelty which positions thought as closure⁵⁸⁴; in its indifference to the harsh

⁵⁸³ Op. cit., *The Wisdom of Art*, p. 56.

⁵⁸⁴ Cruelty, for both Deleuze, and Artaud, is a productive force, in its creation of a dynamic tension, and an aesthetic. Cruelty pushes thought to its limit, gives it definition, while simultaneously (paradoxically), enacting the deep-cut of meaning. However, in another reading of Deleuze (*Difference and Repetition*, p.28), determinations, and fixed points of

division of meaning (being immanently and obstinately *in*-difference),

Twombly's work can be seen as an embodiment of Benjamin's proposal that

"it is always a question of, and questioning of, understanding"⁵⁸⁵, or in other

words: an Undisciplined Gesture.

"...[T]hese gestures, which aim to establish matter as fact, are all associated with making something dirty. Here is a paradox: a fact is more purely defined if it is not clean. Take a common object: it is not its new and virgin state which best accounts for its essence; it is rather a state in which it is deformed, a little worn, a little dirtied, a little forlorn: the truth of things is best read in refuse. It is in a smear that we find the truth of redness; it is in a wobbly line that we find the truth of pencil. Ideas (in the Platonic sense of the word) are not metallic and shiny Figures, in conceptual corsets, but rather faint shaky stains, on a vague background."⁵⁸⁶

reference, are conceits of the intellect, which restrain and limit thought. In other words: they are a cruelty within thought, and do it harm. In contrast, Deleuze also proposes that language is not representation, or comprised of a series of fixed, static points, but purebecoming. Concepts cannot fix ideas, since ideas will always expand beyond the boundaries which seek to contain them, and are thus simplified and restrictive in comparison.

"The multiple anarchic force of thought always at its limit, about to happen and having happened, an ungraspable image of thought... Artauds' sense of cruelty is a confrontation with the force of thought which in another sense confronts the mind with the soul"... [T]hought as a fixed point is certainly not painful". (Catherine Dale, 'Cruel: Antonin Artaud and Gilles Deleuze', *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. By Brian Massumi, Routledge, 2001, pp. 89-90). "Artaud spies difference in itself as the act of cruelty in thought, and cruelty as the primary object of change. Cruelty is determination as such" (Dale, p.91). The lack of determinate objects in Cy Twombly's work constitutes this type of productive force which Artaud and Deleuze describe as cruelty, in its refusal of the sharp division of meaning, and its raising of surface and depth to the same plane. At the same time it refuses the 'other' version of cruelty, in which "Cruelty signifies rigor, implacable intention and decision, irreversible and absolute determination" (Dale, p.92).

⁵⁸⁵ C. Jacobs, 'Letters From Walter Benjamin', *In The Language of Walter Benjamin*, (Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins, 1999), p.1.

⁵⁸⁶ Op. cit., *The Wisdom of Art*, p. 104. Walter Benjamin's notion of *Darstellung* [performance] acknowledges that truth cannot be the direct object of communication, but can only be glimpsed 'para' to (as in beside; near; alongside; beyond, incorrect; abnormal; similar to; resembling; subsidiary; assistant to; of, or relating to) its mode of expression, since it is not yet communicable *in* that form of presentation. There is always an excess to communication, wherein truth can only ever be referred to indirectly, since words are not signs, or instruments of reason, but have lost their presentational power to their role in 'cognitive meaning' (Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, [Verso, 2009] p. 36).

4.2 [In]de[finite] de[script]ions

“Ideas (in the Platonic sense of the word) are not metallic and shiny figures in conceptual corsets. But rather faint shaky stains on a vague Background.”⁵⁸⁷

“Sense is the thin film at the limit of words and things. Sense is ‘extra-being’. What is expressed does not exist outside the expression.”⁵⁸⁸

John Berger refers to Twombly’s art as an ‘event’. One in which the means of making appear as a fact. Twombly uses materials as ‘absolute matter’, not means to an end. Paint and graphite in Twombly’s work have an obstinate presence which insist on themselves as primary event, refusing the ‘division operated by meaning’. His work operates on the basis of intervals. Spacing is its dominant logic, space and gesture. Meaning is elusive: the sensual, diffuse, non-instrumental aspects of language appear.

“A phoneme, while perfectly describable means nothing in itself. It participates in meaning only when integrated into a word, and the word itself must be integrated into a sentence.”⁵⁸⁹

“Broken up into parts [phenomena] are deprived of their false unity in order to take part in the genuine unity of truth.”⁵⁹⁰

Barthes suggests the possibility of breaking the link between writing and meaning, and Benjamin suggests that there is a truth which does not participate in unity, Cy Twombly’s work with language constitutes a ‘performance’ (Darstellung) of writing, not writing itself; a fragmentation of the presumed unity of language which points to a different kind of ‘truth’.

Barthes said: “Twombly’s ‘writing’ has neither syntax nor logic, but quivers

⁵⁸⁷ J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972), p. 90.

⁵⁸⁸ Op. cit., *Logic of Sense*, p. 38.

⁵⁸⁹ R. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*; (Hill and Wang 1988), p. 86.

⁵⁹⁰ Op. cit., *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 208.

with life, its murmuring penetrating to the very depths of things.”⁵⁹¹ His use of the gestures of writing, fragments and distorts our experience, insisting that the marks of language are more significant than any meaning, claiming that there is only surface, no depth (deep structure) to linguistic form. For Twombly, the material phenomena of language is never subservient to the concept, rather, it participates fully in the concept, since, as Benjamin also pointed out, ‘ideas cannot and do not present themselves in themselves’.⁵⁹² In Carol Jacobs’ *Letters from Walter Benjamin*, she writes that Benjamin insisted that truth ‘escapes projection into the realm of knowledge’ but that it is ‘grasped, at every turn, through the most precise immersion in the minute detail of subject matter’.⁵⁹³ Twombly’s complete immersion in the subject matter of language itself, his performance of infinite detours and fragmentation across the field of sense and meaning, is an expression of this kind of truth.⁵⁹⁴ Twombly’s “writing, which has also been called a ‘script which has nothing in common with it other than the name’”⁵⁹⁵ can also be seen as an embodiment of Benjamin’s proposal that “No piece of writing, neither translation nor original, communicates very much to the reader ‘who understands it’”⁵⁹⁶ and of Benjamin’s claim that “it is always a question of and a questioning of, understanding.”⁵⁹⁷ As Carol Jacobs states, there is, after Benjamin, no way in which ‘one might position oneself properly and solidly with respect to [the] object [of language]’.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹¹ Op. cit., *Image, Music, Text*, p. 507.

⁵⁹² Op. cit., *In The Language of Walter Benjamin*, p. 35.

⁵⁹³ Ibid. p. 85.

⁵⁹⁴ And which is being named throughout this thesis as ‘Acoustic’ surface logic.

⁵⁹⁵ Op. cit., *The Wisdom of Art*, p 56.

⁵⁹⁶ Op. cit., *In The Language of Walter Benjamin*, p. 1.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 1.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 28.

Benjamin, in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, says:

“The Darstellung of ideas, that other originary task of philosophy, takes place in the medium of, and by means of the empirical. For ideas do not present themselves in themselves, “but rather solely and exclusively in an ordering of material elements in the concept. And they do this as the configuration of the elements.”⁵⁹⁹

Benjamin and Twombly both “reject the romantic sense of ‘symbolic’ language, with its promise of unity of appearance and being.”⁶⁰⁰ However, where Benjamin offers the allegory, and the fragment as alternatives to the ‘tyrannical and usurpatory notion of the symbol’,⁶⁰¹ Twombly concentrates on the marks and the process of writing/drawing itself enacting a fragmentation of meaning across a spatio-temporal field of such gestures; an alternative ‘constellation’ which does not begin and end in the ‘framed’ work.

As Manfred la Motte said, Twombly’s work involves “the self-presentation of reading and the call to do so. “[his] theme is reading, not legibility”⁶⁰² However, La Motte claims that there *is* meaning, but it is to be found elsewhere, not only in the marks and gestures but also in the visual/acoustic timing and patterning used to control and lead the eye through the work, teasing the viewer with the pursuit of half-meanings which relying upon the compulsion to seek them out:

“Here, reading is less deciphering and more allowing the eye to be captivated by sequences and passages, rhythmically teasing out the reports, be they roughly structured or finely tuned. This is especially evident in those pictures where graphic metaphors are repeated and Twombly actually bother to number the sequences. On occasion the unclearly drawn number also stand for counting: it stands alone in a chain. These series of numbers are often interrupted rather than continuous, and then the eye lingers a little longer trying to find the next highest number. Thus, Twombly has made use of the most ruthless, because most insignificant, of means to create a score for

⁵⁹⁹ Op. cit., *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 214.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 40.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. p. 91.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

reading, in which for all the purported confusion, clear control reigns supreme, to be created by the eye in a specific time.”⁶⁰³

“what there is to listen to takes a back seat to the act of listening.”⁶⁰⁴

In the essay ‘Art’, James Fitzsimmons⁶⁰⁵ asks of certain abstract expressionist works “at what point does substance, or expression, end and finish begin?” He proposes that the finished painting is not a surface which conceals the “bones and vital organs” of the work, implying an interior/exterior relation; defining form with respect to content. Twombly’s work does not attempt to ‘finish’ in the sense Fitzsimmons poses the question, but to extend the time of the painting beyond the point when the artist’s hand has ceased to intervene. His interest is firmly grounded in process, not product, in the event of making, not that which is made. Twombly touches the surface of paper, canvas, with hesitant, tremulous half-signs, inscribing nothing but the gesture of writing or symbol, which in turn point to the “unique unrepeatable presence of life.”⁶⁰⁶ His is an acknowledgement of the fragile, plural and indeterminate passing of lived time and experience, of the pulse of memory and “the slender thread of hope of communicating with the invisible”.⁶⁰⁷

“One represents a rose, one co-presents a crowd; the poet who grasps the voices of the world represents a wall on which idle signs have transfused a welcome human warmth, humble or haughty, strayed desires, broken words, tender, mocking, loving words, the unconscious mirage of coming to halt, despair at passing on; poor, tenuous signs count for nothing, you can lay on a whitewash, the voices fade now truly dead, the surface is white, everything is ready to begin again.”⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Op. cit., *Writings on Cy Twombly*, p. 52.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 29.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid, p.144.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 44.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 50.

For Fitzsimmons, there is a danger in an “abdication of intelligence, of consciousness, of metier, of everything except instinct”, since it makes thinking as a critical and formative activity impossible. While the attitude of an artist such as Twombly clears a space for the possibility of “A philosophy of art that rejects the intellect, rather than relegating it to a question of complementarity among the other functions”, ultimately, Fitzsimmons sees this as “a regressive philosophy tending toward the abasement of consciousness.” What would a philosophy be like that followed in Twombly’s stride?

“Twombly’s ‘writing’ – and this is the miracle – has neither syntax nor logic, but quivers with life, its murmuring penetrating to the very depths of things.”⁶⁰⁹

“What there is to listen to takes a back seat to the act of listening.”⁶¹⁰

In the same way, Twombly’s work foregrounds the act of the work of art, not the art itself. It asks you to ‘hear’ the hearing of the work, to ‘read’ the reading, not focus on the work itself but look through the surface presentation of the work. La Motte speaks of the ‘dynamic duration’ which Twombly’s work incorporates, causing viewers to *experience* “time” and “speed” instead of simply creating the illusion of these within the work. He calls this ‘reading time’ or ‘experiential time’, which is akin to the rules of modern music and suggests the presence of literature, “to be created by the eye in a specific time.” Despite the surface confusion, there is a strong element of control running through the work, as Twombly allows you freedom to choose how the work is digested, while nonetheless predetermining this action by use of space,

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 38.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid. p. 52.

time, visual pauses, interrupted flow.⁶¹¹ This gives the work a peculiar autonomy and emphatic subjectivity where:

“In the final analysis, he owes nothing to anybody. He makes use of all the common areas of current symbolism, but at the exact moment when their significance becomes exhausted – that is, when the cross is no longer a cross, when a number is more itself than part of a numerical sequence... The miracle of Twombly is precisely this manner of *writing*, of dis-figuring symbols, alphabets and numbers; and of expressing nothing but himself, with the claim of absolute totality, when he accomplishes this revolution of the sign.”⁶¹²

Suzanne Delahanty puts it in terms of the act of drawing itself, of mark-making as an incorporation and enactment of personal experience: “Drawing is the alchemy of Twombly’s mind and hand, memory and imagination, reason and passion. Drawing transforms his experience into a personal actuality of sign and system.”⁶¹³ Working three-dimensionally was a way of exploring materials. He “collaborated with his paint; he drew lines with his fingernails, incised the surface with pencil and palette knife”. In 1955, Frank O’Hara remarked of his work:

“a bird seems to have passed through the impasto with cream-coloured screams and bitter claw-marks.” His admirable esoteric information, every wash or line struggling for survival, particularizes the sentiment.”⁶¹⁴

According to Nicholas Calas, in antiquity, an artist would commonly sign a painting accompanied by the word *egraphen*, meaning ‘written by’: the relation between painting and writing being accepted to the extent that the creation of an artwork constituted a form of writing. Twombly’s journeys through “sign and system, autobiography and landscape, eros and logos”

⁶¹¹ Twombly had an early interest in the ‘automatic writing’ work of surrealist artists, and in symbolist poetry. He similarly affirmed the creative moment, the event of making, the process, over the thing made: extending beyond any system of signs.

⁶¹² Ibid., p. 43.

⁶¹³ Ibid., p. 61.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

continue this tradition, involving a prolonged search for a personal ‘signature’ or ‘handwriting’.

Twombly frequently embedded multiple references to antiquity within the work, drawn extensively from Greek and Roman historical sources. In ‘Arcadia’ where a more legible series of inscriptions are evident, he used words to hold thoughts which drawings could not. As Calas explains, these explore the difference between reading and seeing, and such perceptual ambiguity is central to Twombly’s system of either/or/and readings. Equivocal symbols and words complete his vocabulary of signs.”⁶¹⁵

“In the final analysis, he owes nothing to anybody. He makes use of all the common areas of current symbolism, but at the exact moment when their significance becomes exhausted – that is, when the cross is no longer a cross, when a number is more itself than part of a numerical sequence. The miracle of Twombly is precisely this manner of *writing*, of dis-figuring symbols, alphabets and numbers; and of expressing nothing but himself, with the claim of absolute totality, when he accomplishes this revolution of the sign”
Expressing nothing but himself, totally – that is the fluctuating rhythm, contradictory, secret and esoteric, of the creative act.”⁶¹⁶

The essence of Twombly’s writing is gesture; scratching, smudging, smearing. This in turn constitutes another logic: a logic of paint[ing], where the work is verb driven, not resulting in meaning, but residing in process, and in which language elides full identification with the concept, or full correspondence between concept and object. Event/gesture/change/ causality/non-identification/automatism are primary modes of conduct. This constitutes a different type of corporeality, informed by material translation (after Benjamin), and it is what Adorno and Deleuze propose as immanent critique: the non-identical. In Twombly’s work there is a preoccupation with the bodily, and with impertinent scratchings or scrapings. The work is by turns grotesque,

⁶¹⁵ Ibid. p. 65

⁶¹⁶ Ibid. p. 47

polluted, viral, mobile. It operates on the tremor of the ‘stumble’, the ‘shudder’ in Kierkegaard, the ‘event of appropriation’ in Heidegger, the ‘tensor’ in Lyotard. It offers the ‘stain’ as an index of the real, and exemplifies Adorno’s concern for the power of the intramundane. The logic of Twombly’s work escapes identification with any concept, and stays in motion; in deferral, oscillating between possible terms which would contain it, in a way which is fully paradoxical/nonsensical. However, it still *makes* sense. Although its libidinally-charged, sensual surfaces cannot be contained by any concept: they are ‘irrecoverable instants’. Doubtful. Tremulous. Particular. Paradoxical. Mimetological. Acoustic.

“Once it has been decided what is to count as thought, that is, what is to count as describing reality, any thought that does not fall under that concept will be attacked as nonsensical: “[h]ence the fanatical intolerance of the method and its total arbitrariness against any arbitrariness as deviation.”⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁷ Op. cit., *Against Epistemology*, p. 13.

Conclusion

This thesis has initially argued that thought emerges from the materiality of language, not from concepts, and not from a metaphysical logic. Language has been shown to be less disciplinary and regulative (in the form of a series of disciplined gestures), than it is expressive, performative, and ‘critical’ (a series of undisciplined gestures). This is in contrast to the way in which language is ordinarily viewed as allied to a ‘disciplinary’ science of logical form, where, as Adorno writes: “In its neo-positivist version, science becomes aestheticism, a system of detached signs detached of any intention that would transcend the system.”⁶¹⁸

We cannot do without language. It’s an integral part of our relationship to society and with ourselves. However, a fundamental question subtending and inspiring this thesis is the claim that we need to reassess the way[s] in which language supports thought, including questioning what a system is⁶¹⁹ Adorno enquired: why is philosophy driven towards the system? He concluded that systematic philosophizing has become impossible today, since, in a system, nothing is left out and that the form governs a totality in such a way that nothing exists outside it:⁶²⁰ “If philosophy had succeeded in conceptualizing everything that exists without leaving a remainder, it would necessarily have comprehended the phenomena it has subsumed,” pointing out the fundamental paradox of this situation. Some things remain unsaid, beyond expression, outside the system and this has been named in the thesis, ‘the unsayable something’ (the excess), after Adorno. Rather than being an ‘architectonic scheme’ which organizes elements, a system can be seen as a

⁶¹⁸ Op. cit., *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 18.

⁶¹⁹ Op. cit., *Lectures on Metaphysics*, p. 34.

⁶²⁰ Op. cit., *Lectures on Metaphysics*, p. 38.

‘latent form’ or ‘force’ in which the potential to cohere into systems is just as easily disintegrated, and Deleuzes’ notion of a Plane of Immanence, or Plane of Consistency, has provided a groundless ground for these investigations.

This line of thought has resulted in a proposal for what is being termed an ‘Acoustic’ Logic, where coherence/meaning are glimpsed between the lines/in flashes, in other words: ‘para’ to the communicative mode of expression, in the form of a series of mimetological surface[s] which escape subsumption into any system. This is a logic based not on representation, or the relative coherence of visual paradigm, but on a model of sonic dissonance, or dispersion, closer to an ‘atonal’ form of knowledge: producing an excessive, non-identical force, which exceeds any system. Paradox’s peculiarly resistant, viral quality has been the starting point for this line of un-reasoning. The thesis takes a series of positions on these questions, from within the fields of art, paradox, mathematics, music, typography, poetry, theatre, and philosophy. These are ‘conceits’ which allow a constellation of interrelated but singular ideas to emerge, rather than a system: constituting a fractal acoustic economy.

It has been shown that for Hegel, that which does not fit is discursively included, via Determinate Negation, while for Adorno, the negative remains an ineradicable excess thought: a cogitative extrusion. In Benjamin, truth is a matter of being both entered, and of simultaneously disappearing, such that truth is not about intention, and where translation has a materiality which cannot be erased. Kantian epistemological constraints presuppose a particular form of Cartesian certainty, but doubt has been shown to be at the core of certainty, through readings of Descartes, Wittgenstein, and Adorno.

Adorno asserts the “priority of the object in art,” or what is called a materialist aesthetic, in contrast to the idealist aesthetic of Kant which privileges the subject over the object.⁶²¹ For Kant, the experience of art is a product of the perceptions of the subject, while for Adorno, the art object and the aesthetic experience of the art object contain a truth-content. Truth-content is a cognitive content “which is not exhausted either by the subjective intentions of its producers or by the subjective responses of its consumers”, and that may be revealed through analysis.⁶²² Whereas Kant conceives of beauty as a subjective experience, Adorno suggests that beauty mediates between subject and object. Beauty is contained in the cognitive or truth-content of works of art. As Adorno writes in *Aesthetic Theory*: “All beauty reveals itself to persistent analysis”⁶²³. But works of art “are not merely inert objects, valued or known by the subject; rather, they have themselves a subjective moment because they are themselves cognitive.”⁶²⁴ It is in the shared experience of object and subject, the *joint* analysis, that beauty/meaning is revealed, and this has been described through a series of surfaces to art/logic/language, wherein the subject and object are reunited in the mimetic expressivity of those forms.

The thesis has therefore pointed toward painting/literature/performance/music, for evidence of an alternative logic, one rooted in the sensual, ‘tonal’ forms Nietzsche spoke of, rather than unidirectional, finite, fixed forms. To this end, it has explored different forms of dialectics, and the unsayable-something in the work of art. The negative dialectic or surface of the work, which is attached to its structure, but separate from it (the non-

⁶²¹ S. Jarvis. *Adorno: A Critical Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 1998. p.99.

⁶²² *ibid.* p. 96.

⁶²³ *Op. cit.*, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 69.

⁶²⁴ *Op. cit.*, *Adorno*, p. 96.

identical) has generated the question: how does the negation work within/come to produce, paradox? What kind of surface does it represent/require? There is, in art, Adorno claims, a basic dichotomy between the rational and the sensuous; the intuitive and conceptual; one which society upholds, and which correlates to, and is [re]inscribed within its larger ideological structures.⁶²⁵ For Adorno, it is art's work to break down this dichotomy, by staging an immanent, objective critique of the opposition between sensuous forms of representation, and their non-sensuous counterpart; between the material manifestations of the artwork, and its concept or idea. In doing so, an immanent dialectical relationship between the particular and the universal is established.

The alternative suggestion which has been made in this thesis is that any Paradox, rather than invoking 'pseudoproblems', is a viral presence at the root of all identity thinking, threatening the primacy and stability of that mode of conceptual 'comportment'. It's an abyss which requires the Kierkegaardian leap of faith, the Heideggerian step back, and the courage to recognize doubt as a system with its own sensual dynamic. In other words, paradox is difference at work; where the difference becomes visible (or 'heard'). A paradox is a momentary glimpse into the operations of the Lyotardian tensor, in which the fleeting cooling of the bar thereafter continues its frantic movement. Paradoxes collapse time and space into one, and in them, proximity/speed/ limits are constantly exceeded. Non-identity is shown to be infinite, while identity is finite. A Paradox is therefore a non-identical infinity, showing that a reversible relation to (any) identity exists. $A = A$ becomes A repeats/reverses A , infinitely, offering a deformed and disjunctive dynamic in

⁶²⁵ Op. cit., *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 98.

place of the static, unidirectional Principle of Identity which grounds all prior logics, and . The logic of mimesis is finally seen to be another name for the ‘not sayable’; the sensual, surfaces, which are posed, finally, as another name for the non-identical (the a-identical), and as the condition for, and the possibility of, communication itself. ⁶²⁶

⁶²⁶ Future directions for the work involve exploring Acoustic logics through various art practices, and theoretical writing on individual artists and writers such as James Joyce, Artaud, Cage, the composer Nico Muhly, and others. There is much work still to be done on the way(s) in which Acoustic logic(s) which are ‘tonal’, or multivalent, extend paralogical, or dialetheic forms of logic, in contrast to ‘classical’ logics. For example, the originality of Nietzsche’s proposal for a tonal logic is under-examined, and deserves an extended review.

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Figure 1. Sense and Reference, *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* (after Gottlob Frege).

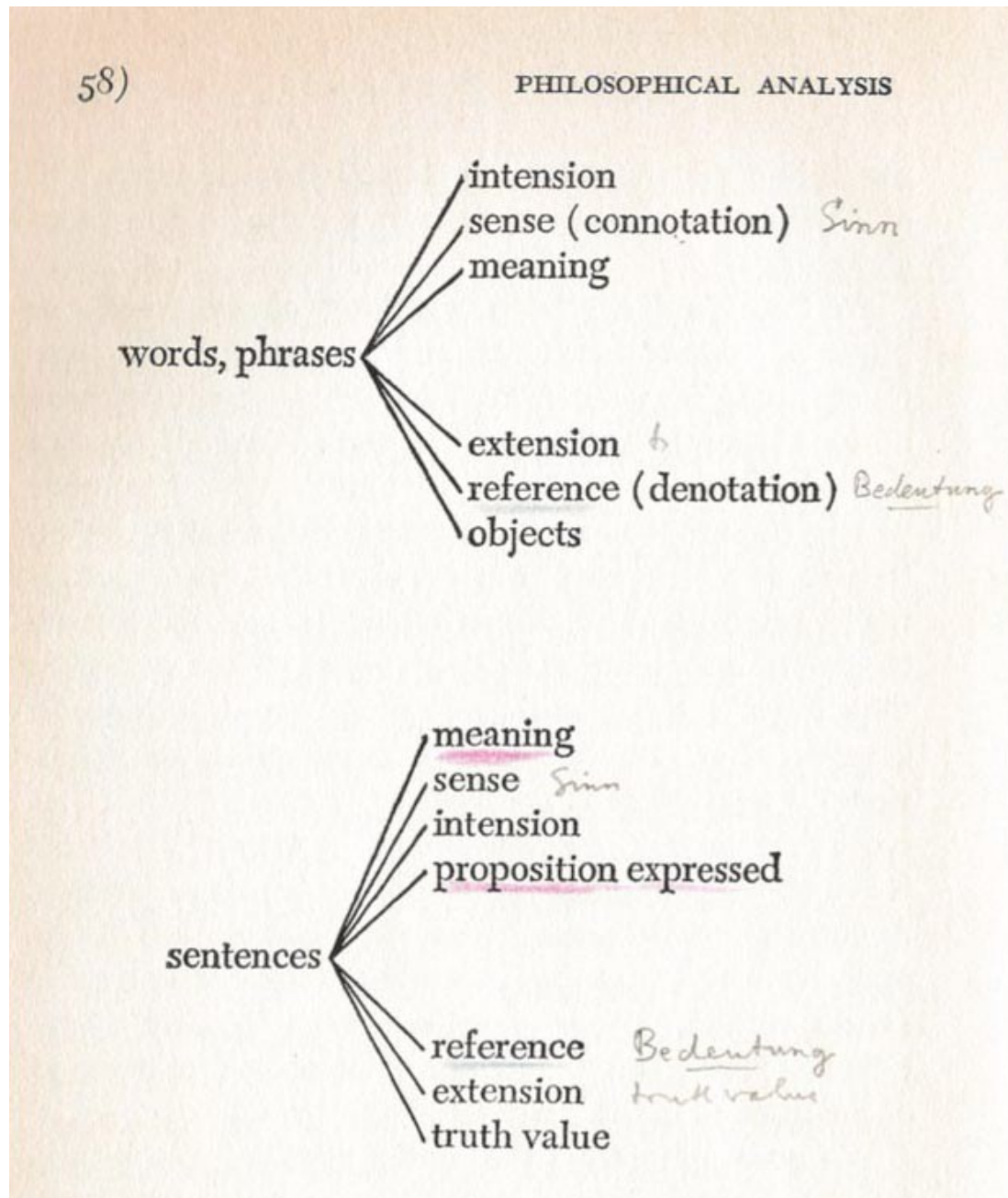


Figure 2. 'Loneliness': e. e. cummings, 1958. A 'parenthetical' poem. The use of caesura, parentheses, dispersion, and 'sonic' typographic form, reinforce meaning at the material level of language.

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Figure 3a. Recursion (proof without words).

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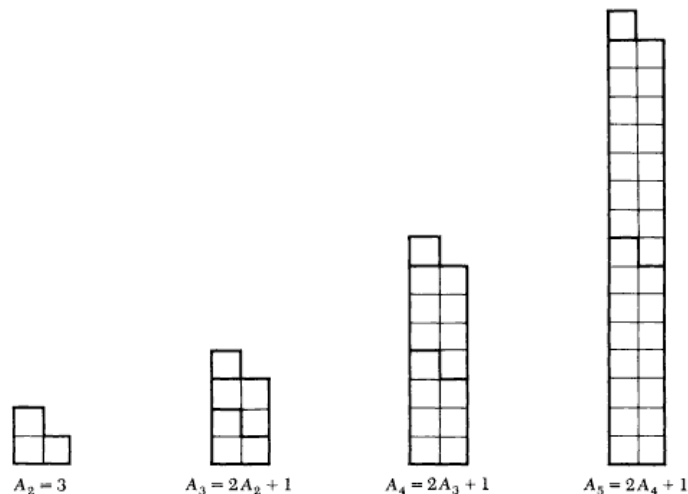
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another very tall player named Akeem Olajuwon, went to the NBA championship series, where they lost to the Boston Celtics in six games.

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Proof without Words:
Recursion



$$A_2 = 3 \text{ \& } A_n = 2A_{n-1} + 1 \Leftrightarrow A_n = 2(2^{n-1}) - 1 = 2^n - 1$$

—SHIRLEY WAKIN
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN
NEW HAVEN, CT 06516

Figure 3b. Recursion (proof without words).

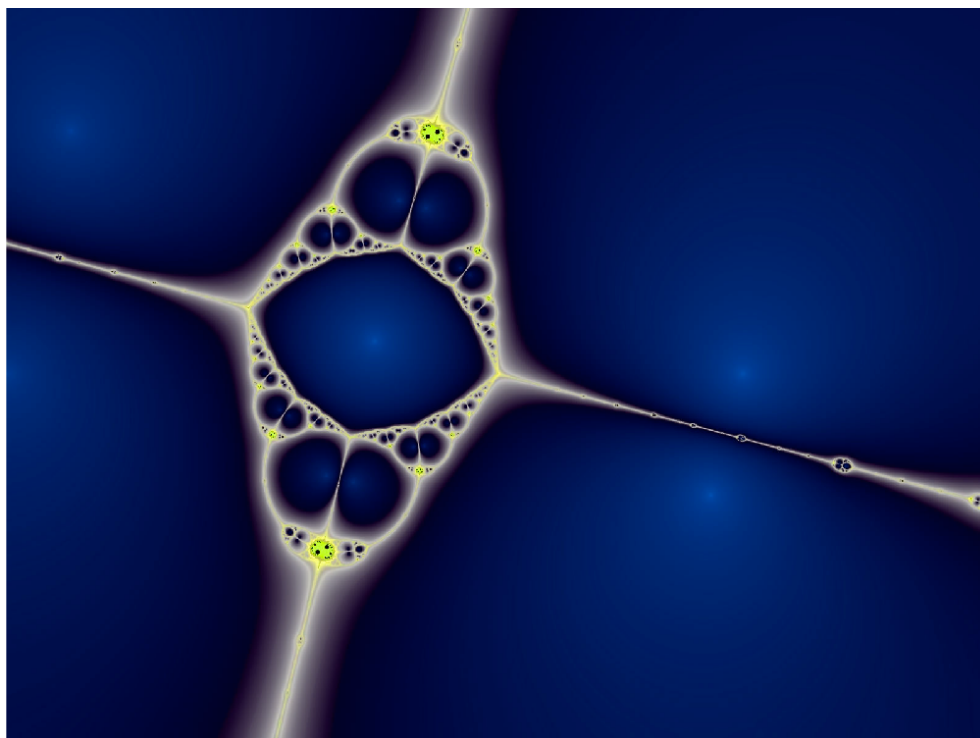


Figure 4a. A. P. Ushenko. A Note on The Liar Paradox.
Mind 1955 LXIV(256):543; doi:10.1093/mind/LXIV.256.543

A NOTE ON THE LIAR-PARADOX

MR. ENCARNACION has argued, in the January 1955 issue of *Mind*, that my version of the liar-paradox depends upon a symbolic fallacy. To demonstrate his error, i.e., to show that symbolism is not essential to my version, let me restate my argument in plain English as follows:

It is false that there is a true statement
within the rectangle of Fig. 1.

FIG. 1.

According to Russell's treatment, the sentence within the rectangle of Fig. 1 is meaningless, and may be called a pseudo-statement, because it is a version of the liar-paradox. But Russell's treatment is unsatisfactory because it resolves the original paradox at the price of a new one. For, if the sentence of Fig. 1 is meaningless, we must admit, since we observe that there are no other sentences within the rectangle, that it is false that there is a genuine or meaningful statement within the rectangle of Fig. 1. And, if there is no statement within the rectangle of Fig. 1, then *it is false that there is a true statement within the rectangle of Fig. 1*. The italicised part of the preceding sentence will be recognized as identical with (even if a different token of) the sentence within the rectangle of Fig. 1. And since the italicised sentence is true, and therefore a meaningful statement, the sentence within the rectangle is not a pseudo-statement either. Thus if the sentence in question is meaningless, then it is meaningful and *vice versa*.

It is a different question whether I have symbolised the above argument correctly. Mr. Encarnacion tells us that I have not, but I am not convinced. Let me mention one of my doubts. In the last but one paragraph of his paper Mr. Encarnacion says that the significance of the same symbol changes with the change of context: he says that 'p' as a conjunct is used as a variable for propositions whereas as an argument to 'f' it is used as a variable for names of propositions. Why cannot I follow suit, and say that 'a' is an abbreviation of the sentence of Fig. 1 when 'a' stands alone but is a name of such an abbreviation when it is taken to be an argument to 'f'? And if I can say that, then I am no longer committed, as my critic contends, to the insignificant expression "It is false that there is a true statement within the rectangle of Fig. 1 is within the rectangle of Fig. 1," but entitled to write instead: 'It is false that there is a true statement within the rectangle of Fig. 1' is within the rectangle of Fig. 1. However, Mr. Encarnacion's paragraph is obscure, and it is possible that he only meant to say that my interpretation of 'p' differs with the change of context without intending to assert contextual change of significance as a requirement of symbolic notation.

A. P. USHENKO.

Indiana University

Figure 4b. A Note on the Liar Paradox. Keith S. Donnellan, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (Jul., 1957), pp. 394-397

A NOTE ON THE LIAR PARADOX

IN A recent discussion of the Liar Paradox,¹ Mr. Eric Toms argues that it cannot be avoided by claiming that the paradoxical sentence does not express a proposition. His argument is a revision of one given by Professor A. P. Ushenko.² Mr. Toms tries to show that assuming the sentence not to express a proposition leads to a contradiction. If correct, this would show that an application of a theory of types or language levels does not resolve the paradox. More generally, his argument would undermine any suggested resolution that depends upon holding the paradoxical sentence not to express a proposition. In this note I shall try to show that Mr. Toms can derive a contradiction only through misconstruing this sort of resolution of the Liar Paradox. For this purpose I consider only the second of the versions of the paradox which he uses. If correct, however, what I shall say would apply both to the first version he uses and to Professor Ushenko's original argument.

Mr. Toms's argument is as follows:³

No true proposition is written
within the rectangle of Fig. 1.

Figure 1.

- (1) fa
- (2) $\sim (\mathcal{T}p) \cdot [fp \cdot \sim (p = a)]$
- (3) $a = (p) \cdot (fp \supset \sim Tp)$.

Where "f" means "written within the rectangle of Figure 1"; "T" means "belongs to the class of true sentences"; and "a" designates the expression written within the rectangle of Figure 1.

Then, if we assume that a does not express a proposition (written by Mr. Toms as: $\sim Ma$), it follows that a does not express a true proposition ($\sim Ta$). Then:

¹ *Philosophical Review*, LXV (1956), 542-547.

² *The Problems of Logic* (Princeton, 1941), 78-80; and *Mind*, LXIV (1955), 543.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 544 ff. I have paraphrased.

Figure 4c. Reply to a Note on the Liar Paradox. Eric Toms, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (Jan., 1958), pp. 101-105

REPLY TO A NOTE ON THE LIAR PARADOX

IN *A Note on the Liar Paradox*¹ Mr. Keith S. Donnellan has objected to an argument of mine² which is essentially Professor A. P. Ushenko's argument³ against a Type solution to the Liar Paradox. If valid, this argument applies equally against a solution in terms of language levels,⁴ since it attacks the supposition that the paradoxical sentence is meaningless.

The argument can be stated briefly as follows:

Let "f" mean "written within the rectangle of Figure 1."

Let "T" mean "belongs to the class of true sentences."

Let "a" designate the expression written within the rectangle of Figure 1.

No true proposition is written
within the rectangle of Figure 1.

Figure 1

(1) fa

(2) $\sim (\exists p) \cdot [fp \cdot \sim (p = a)]$

(3) $a = (p) \cdot (fp \supset \sim Tp)$

Assume that a does not belong to the class of meaningful sentences.

It follows that $\sim Ta$, and hence:

(4) $(p) \cdot (p = a \cdot \supset \sim Tp)$

(5) $(p) \cdot (fp \supset p = a)$ [from (2)]

(6) $(p) \cdot (fp \supset \sim Tp)$ [from (4) and (5)]

(7) Ta [from (6) and (3)]

which contradicts the assumption that a is meaningless.

¹ *Philosophical Review*, LXVI (1957), 394-397.

² *Philosophical Review*, LXV (1956), 542-547.

³ *The Problems of Logic*, (Princeton, 1941), p. 78-80; and *Mind*, LXIV (1955), 543.

⁴ I shall subsequently use the expression "Type theory" in general reference to both the theory of Types and the theory of language levels.

Figure 5. Leibniz, *The Characteristica Universalis*

Top: the frontispiece to his 1666 *De Arte Combinatoria* (*On the Art of Combinations*).
The Aristotelian theory of the four elements: earth, water, fire and air, which make up all material things.

Below: the 'binary notation' medallion designed for the Duke of Brunswick, 1697:
Frequently considered a precursor to binary logic and computing.

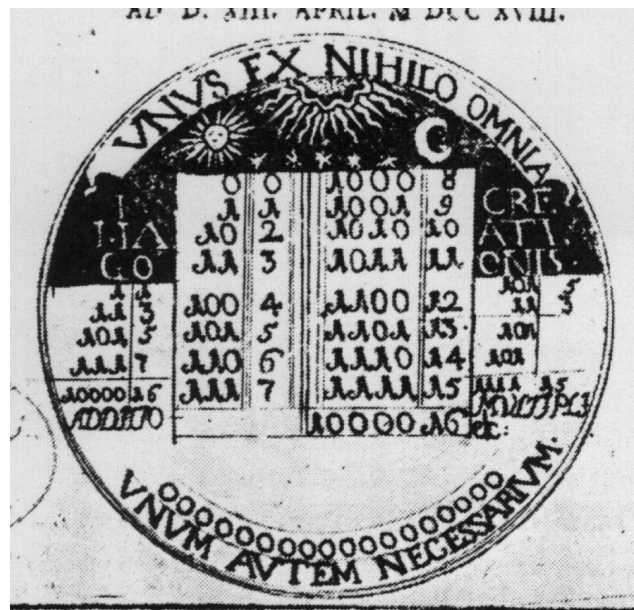


Figure 6. L. Wittgenstein, 'Some Remarks on Logical Form', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, Vol. 9, Knowledge, Experience and Realism (1929), pp. 162-171

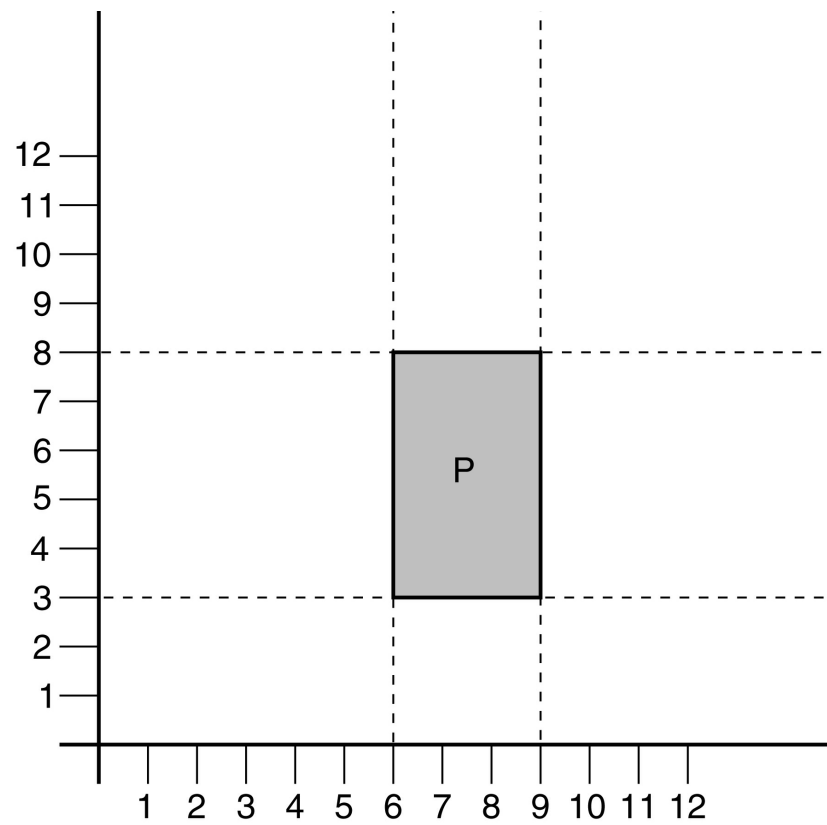


Figure 7a. Asymptote. Hyperbola_over_one.

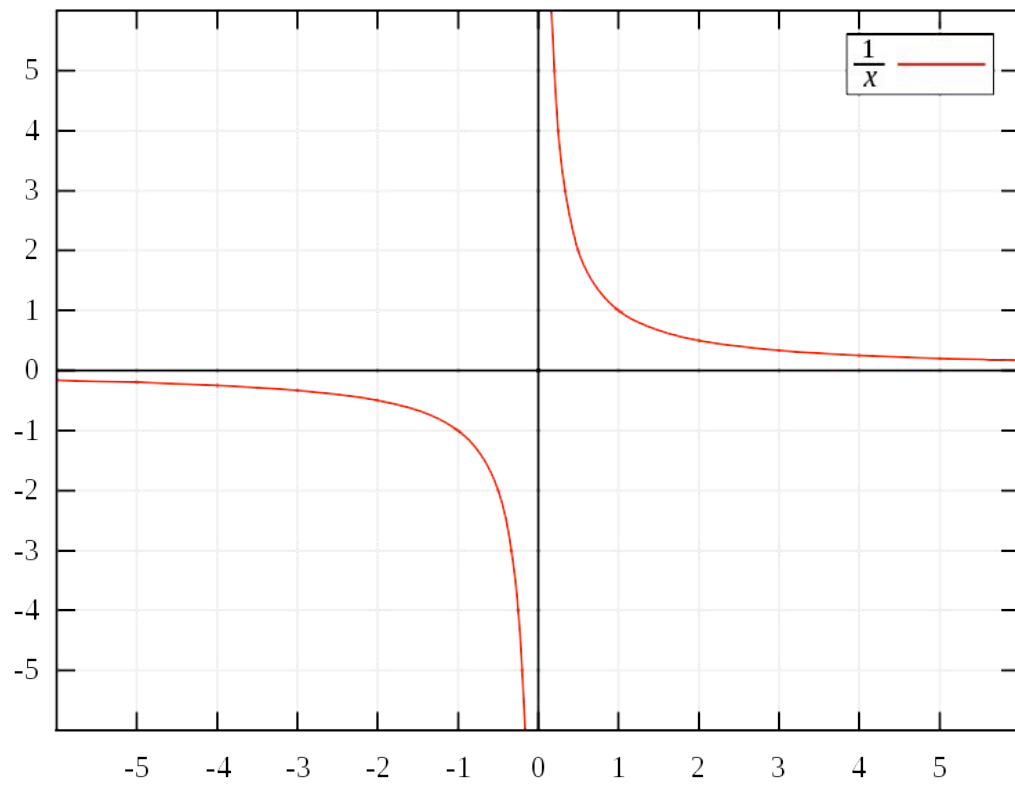


Figure 7b. Asymptote, with infinitely intersecting curve.

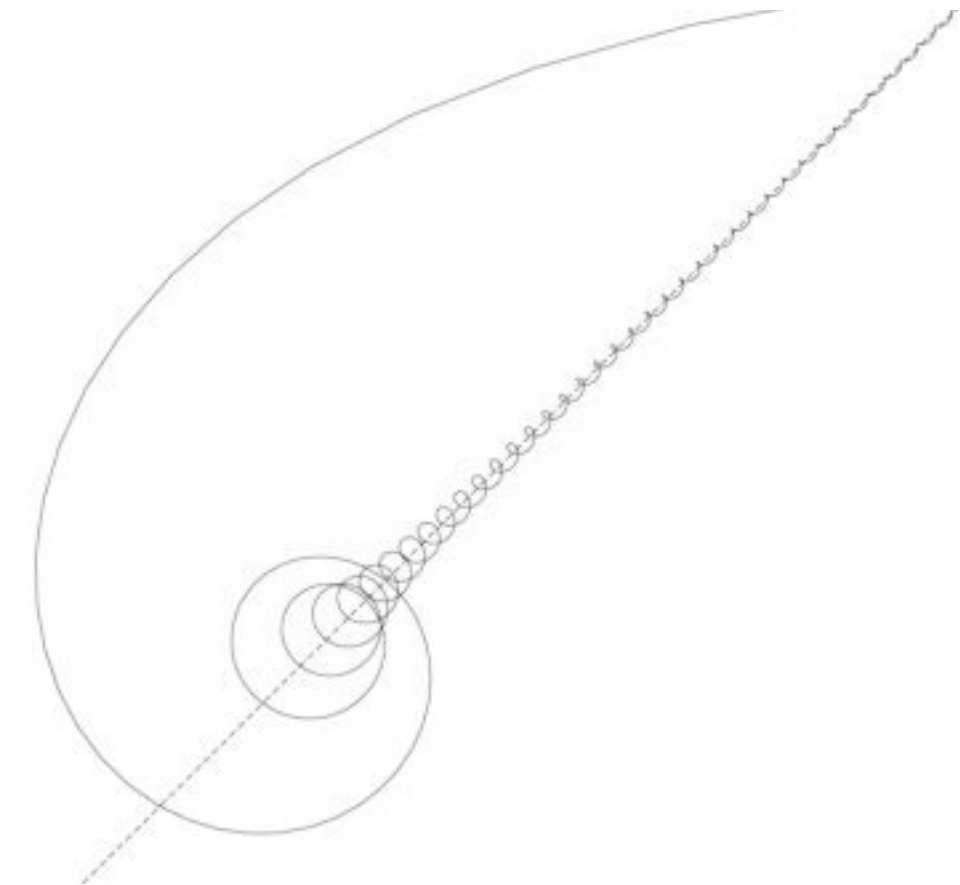


Figure 9. Page Proofs to James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (annotations by Thornton Wilder)

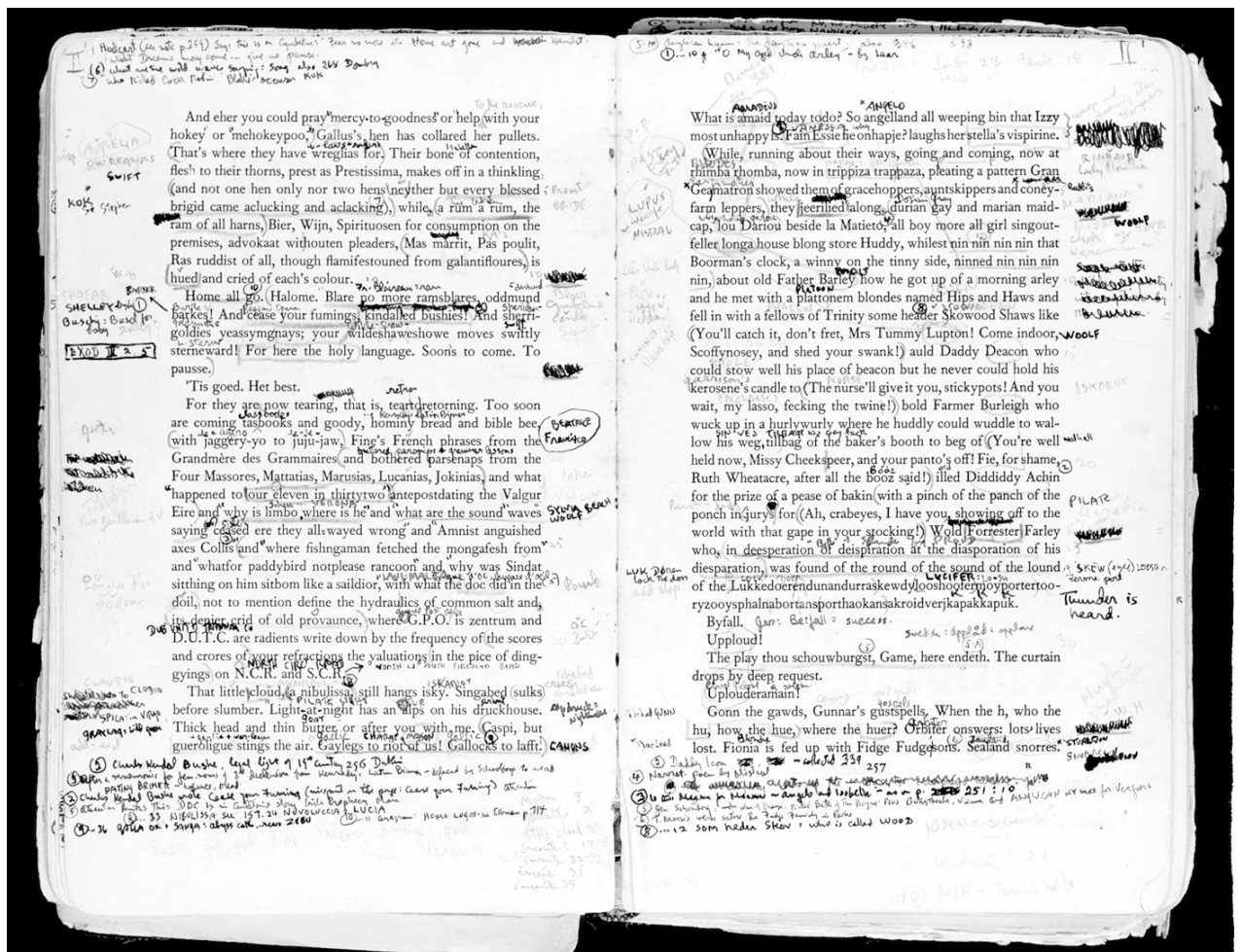
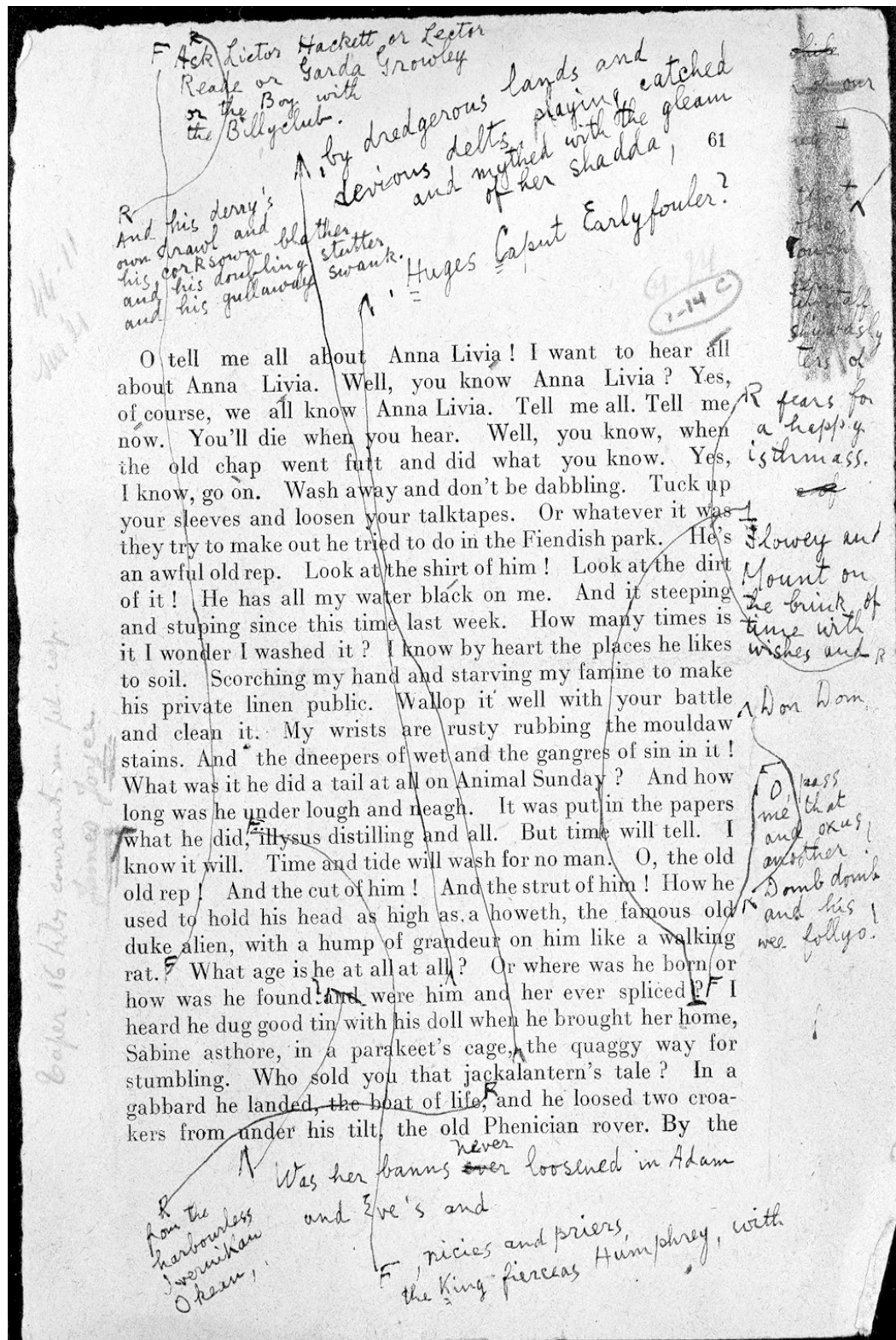


Figure 10. Page Proofs to James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. 1930 (annotations by James Joyce).



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