



Poetics of the same: a philosophical poetic recourse into sameness

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**Poetics of the Same:
A Philosophical Poetic
Recourse into Sameness**

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Abstract

This study endeavours to investigate the philosophical and poetological dimensions, the philological origins, and significant philosophical-literary representations of the Same. It also assesses sameness as a philosophical and poetological *modus operandi*; that is to say, it analyzes the ways in which the Same operates in different types of discourses both as an object of investigation and as an agent of (poetic) thought. The concept of the Same or the operation of sameness as the philosophical question par excellence will be considered in the development of Continental philosophy and philosophical poetics from classical antiquity to Postmodernism, and its transposition into poetry.

The elaboration of the issue of sameness encompasses any philosophical inquiry which seeks to establish the essence of Being and make it susceptible to a general, unifying principle: as a search for an underlying element; for a metaphysical unity or universal, preceding division or difference and amounting to the harmony in the Universe; or for a transcendental absolute totality. Postulations of the pure conceptual difference are likewise examined as part of the elaboration of sameness, and will be viewed as indispensable for revealing the genuine plenitude of sameness.

Part One traces the inception of sameness as a concept of pure *identity*, amounting to the harmony of the Universe by virtue of the operations of belonging (Presocratics), participation (Plato), and emanation (Plotinus), anchored in the relationships between the One and the many, between the Whole and its parts, between the Original and the copy. Part Two inquires into the limits of postulating sameness in terms of pure identity and points to two possible solutions to this problem: a philosophical-aesthetic *digression* from sameness (Kant and related aesthetic theories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and the *return* to sameness as an absolute totality in Part Three (Schelling and Hegel). Part Four investigates the re-postulation of sameness as pure *Difference* (Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida), hence the entire re-organization of thought in terms of the *other*. Part Five analyzes the transposition of sameness from

philosophy into the poetic language of repetition, using Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* as its prime poetic example.

It will be argued that the philosophical displacement of the Same from a concept of identity into that of difference does not amount to an abandonment of its plenitude, but rather points to the need for a precarious balance between sameness and difference, the simultaneous quest for unity and the absolute singularity of the *other*. This balance, it will be argued, must be sought for in every genuine creation.

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Introduction

‘What has to be declared is that the one, which is not,
solely exists as *operation*’.¹

This thesis attempts an investigation of the philosophical and poetological dimensions of the Same. It explores the philological origins as well as significant philosophical and literary representations of the Same as the fundamental underlying principle of cognition and of Being (*idem, το αὐτό ... the same*). In so doing it assesses the Same and sameness as a philosophical and poetological *modus operandi*, too; that is to say, it analyzes the ways in which the Same operates in different types of discourses both as an object of investigation and as an agent of (poetic) thought. The concept of the Same or the operation of sameness as the philosophical question par excellence will be considered in the development of Continental philosophy and philosophical poetics.

Since sameness belongs to the most universal concepts which resist any attempt at definition, or, to formulate it in philosophical terms, since an enigma lies *a priori* in any attempt at its conceptualization, sameness will be elaborated here with regard to its most prominent postulations throughout the history of Continental philosophy and its transposition into poetry. The elaboration of the issue of sameness carried out here will therefore encompass any philosophical inquiry which seeks to achieve knowledge of the *same* world that all humans share and that is presupposed by the very notion of universality. It will also encompass the human quest for the discovery that there is something that is identically the same for humanity, comprising the quest for knowing or establishing the essence of Being and making it susceptible to a general, unifying principle. The assessment of the *same* world, the one in which we all live, is primarily linked to the human dream for plenitude, unity, totality, and harmony, preceding difference, otherness, and contradiction.

¹ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans by Oliver Feltham (USA: Continuum, 2007), p. 24.

The philosophical concept of the Same or the operation of sameness is as old as the discourse of philosophy itself. Yet, once the philosophy of sameness is considered, the Same occurs as a problem rather than as a doctrine. For these reasons, far from providing answers or supervening structures in all of these cases, sameness rather provokes and entices us into philosophical questioning. The philosophical questioning of the issue of sameness allows us to distinguish between its three essential stages: 1) the postulations of sameness with regard to pure identity (from Presocratics to Kant); 2) the postulation of sameness with regard to identity and difference where difference is subordinated to identity (German Idealism); 3) the postulation of pure difference or the absolutely singular differential (from Nietzsche to Postmodernism).

The aim of this inquiry is not only to reveal the significance of the operation of sameness, but also to stress the absolute indispensability of all three stages in its genuine understanding. The significance of the first stage, as that of the inception of the philosophical postulations of the Same or the operation of sameness lies primarily in enabling human thought to transcend earthly phenomena toward the intellectually intelligible realm through the search for an underlying principle of unity or a metaphysical universal amounting to the harmony and plenitude within the Universe. Yet, we have also to acknowledge the limits of these postulations (starting from Plato) which reduce sameness to pure identity by disregarding the factor of difference circulating at the very heart of sameness. The second stage should be credited as the period, starting with which onward, it becomes impossible to think of sameness beyond the mediation of difference which, far from standing for the conception of pure *difference*, is still a conceptual category dominated by identity and included in the Absolute. The impact of the third stage is invaluable for the assessment of the issue of sameness in its plenitude, i.e. from the aspect of searching for the right balance between identity and difference where identity is being experienced in the otherness and *différance* (a Derridean term) of the repetition of the absolutely singular differential. This stage re-establishes the thought of sameness that welcomes difference which has always already been inscribed within it.

The juxtaposition of these three relevant stages within the history of sameness, we suggest, provides an understanding of the necessity of the right balance between identity and difference in artistic creation. This understanding, we believe, will open vistas for establishing new frameworks in artistic creations, liberated not only from the dominance of metaphysical representation and necessity, i.e. from the dominance of pure identity, but also from the dominance of the so called hyperreality and transaesthetics (Baudrillardian metaphors), i.e. from the dominance of pure difference detached from the wisdom of sameness.

The aforementioned fundamental traits of the operation of sameness, developing from a concept of pure identity into the postulation of pure conceptual difference, along with its transposition into the realm of poetry are discussed in detail in the five parts of this study.

Sameness gains systematic significance in Western thought as early as the Presocratics. Part One, *Thinking of Identity*, accordingly attempts to demonstrate the inception of sameness in Ancient Greek philosophy by virtue of the operations of belonging (pre-Socratics), participation (Plato) and emanation (Plotinus), anchored in the relationships between Whole and parts, Original and copy, One and many. The focus is made upon the significance of the paradigmatic treatment of sameness in Plato and its delineation in the form of the *eidé*, thereby differentiating between the supreme realm of the intelligible and its worldly representations (shadows). The opposition between the *eidé* and their shadows — that is, between the intelligible and the material or sensuous — is inscribed decisively into philosophy by Plato. Its relevance with regard to poetics becomes manifest in Plato's claims concerning the mimetic nature of art, particularly poetry, whereby their function is reduced to that of the representation of nothing but the Same, in the form of the *eidé*. Yet, we can also speak of Plato's questioning of sameness alongside his conceptualization of it; a questioning which appears in various assertions, beliefs, metaphors, and sometimes ironies expressed throughout his dialogues.

The characteristic trait of the first stage of the philosophical postulation of sameness is that it focuses merely upon one of its aspects: that of pure identity. A mere outline of this stage which extends up to Kant, focuses upon its

representation of the unity of identity as pure unmediated sameness in its plenitude, by either disregarding the absolutely singular differential or subordinating it to the dominating idea of identity. Far from providing a comprehensive analysis, this outline sketches the development of Western thinking on identity by virtue of *analogy* throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the early Enlightenment, focusing in particular upon the philosophical systems of Spinoza and Leibniz, and aiming to demonstrate the continuity of a tradition which is based in the representation of the unity of identity as mere sameness.

The limits of the postulation of sameness in terms of pure identity are regarded as a vantage point, vis-à-vis of which, Parts Two and Three are constructed.

Part Two, *Digression from Sameness*, points to one of the possible solutions to these acknowledged limits: a philosophical-aesthetic *digression* from sameness, typical of Kant and the aesthetics of seventeenth-eighteenth centuries when philosophy abstains from posing the issue of sameness at all, thereby questioning the status of this philosophical principle par excellence. In so doing, this part traces the digression from sameness which, it will be argued, amounts to an entire reorganization of thought with regard to which the origin of philosophy and of philosophical poetics are being rethought outside the realm of the representation of the Same.

As a characteristic trait of digression, Part Two examines the philosophical system of Kant, since it is Kant who posits understanding or intellect as a substitute for the metaphysical signified of the Same. It also inquires into the aesthetics theories of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries, the function of which is to validate art in non-cognitive terms with regard to its practical functions, according to taste, pleasure, naturalness and truth. As a result, philosophy is *anthropologized*, rethought as a reflection on subjectivity and reduced to the realm of judgements derived from experience or empirical observations and their *a priori* conditions. Here, the subjective assessment of experience, sharply distinguishing between thinking and being, substitutes for the objective assessment of the Same with its posited continuity of thinking and being.

In order to discuss the new standards for validating art — standards which are derived from the suspension of the issue of sameness — and to examine whether they reveal the hitherto concealed mystery of the art-work or represent merely a limited conception, irreconcilable with its genuine essence, this part inquires into the prevailing aesthetic theories of the given period. In so doing, it traces the digression from sameness through the aesthetic validations of the phenomenal appearance of art-works with regard to the categories of the beautiful and the sublime. The newly formed discipline of aesthetics is examined in terms of the transposition of its inquiry from the cognition of the Same (as its object of cognition) into the realization of the ego's subjectivity in respect of the opposed objectivity. This inquiry into late eighteenth and early nineteenth century aesthetic theory will endeavour to demonstrate that according to this paradigm, art is being validated in respect of fortuitous principles and faculties via the analysis of its generic peculiarities, kinds, disposition of qualities, and principles of definition. The process of digression is also examined in the development of empirical, emotional, psychological, and pragmatic interpretations of art, in which the focus on fortuitous principles (the emotions of the reader) substitutes for the prime principle of sameness.

The brief outline of the aesthetic legacy preceding and following Kant provided in Part Two aims at demonstrating not only the limits of digression, but also the conceptual limits of pure identity of sameness and, hence, the need for its re-postulation. These limits condition the search for a re-establishment of sameness as the fundamental question of philosophy.

Part Three, *The Return to Sameness*, offers a discussion of the second approach vis-à-vis the vantage point of the impossibility of representing sameness in terms of pure identity. This approach amounts to the re-establishment of sameness as the central issue of philosophy upon a new speculative level by the philosophy of German Idealism, notably through the systems of Schelling and Hegel. This re-establishment of sameness is accomplished by postulating it upon the level of an absolute totality which encompasses both identity and difference, as opposed to its prior postulation as pure identity in the period of classical metaphysics. This brings about a transposition of the issue of sameness from the

dimension of pure identity into that of a unity of identity and difference. As the inquiry into the texts by Schelling and Hegel demonstrates, in their conceptions of the Absolute (despite the differences in these conceptions) difference has an equal standing with identity and is a means through which the totality manifests itself.

This philosophical-poetic retreat from the period of digression, considered as a quest to re-cohere the dissected and differentiated spheres of cognizance under the aegis of sameness is also examined in view of the validation of art no longer according to the principles of taste, pleasure, and naturalness, but vis-à-vis its relation to sameness.

This part stresses the significance of the return to sameness in several aspects: in that it points to the limits of the philosophical digression from sameness; it considers the re-coherence and re-integration of the formerly dichotomized spheres of cognition; it provides a comprehensive theory of the identity of sameness as the totality of the Absolute; and it postulates the philosophical conception of difference.

The subsequent postulation of pure difference that focuses upon the absolute *otherness* of the singular (dealt with in Part Four) only becomes possible upon this very ground of the comprehensive theory of the identity of sameness. Solely in the precarious balance between identity and difference, it will be argued, does the plenitude of sameness as the experience of the *other* scintillate in its full splendour.

Part Four, *Difference*, has been developed upon the assessment of the limits of both prior approaches: the digression and the return. Its significance lies namely in the postulation of pure difference within sameness, thereby reasserting sameness among the fundamental issues of philosophy and opening up the space of freedom and creativity in experiencing the infinite potentiality of its otherness and *différance*. The conception of *difference* here is no longer conceived as the ground for the circulation of the identical as totality and is not subordinated to the principle of identity, but it is rather identity that is being experienced in the otherness of repetition. *Difference* has no other aim than its own repetition and reproduction via decentring and divergence.

This part also examines the metamorphoses of the issue of sameness due to the limits of its postulations as a transcendental signified of identity and totality and its reestablishment in respect of otherness and difference. What is at stake is the demonstration of the destruction of the Same and the infinite potentiality of an already emancipated sameness opened up by virtue of the destabilization of its integrity. The contrivances of the new postulation of sameness are investigated through their manifestations in philosophical texts by Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, all of whom, despite their very individual attitudes, are viewed as transgressing the coherence of representation and transposing the issue of sameness into an experience: by virtue of the heterogeneity of the singular, the originary postulation of Being, or the overlapping of deconstructive infrastructures. The space of creative freedom, opened up as a result of the liberation from signification is traced in the immediacy of experience, the otherness of the multiple, and the iterability of language and play. The movement of becoming in this context is not directed towards the return of the Same, but is one that creates, destroys, and grounds repetition upon the death of God and the dissolution of the self. This new space of creative freedom is a dynamical one, open up to the endless metamorphoses of the extreme after being pushed to its limits; a culture rightly described as the *veritable* theatrical world of metamorphoses. It is to the very examination of this incredible space of *difference*, credited as founding of the *theatrum philosophicum* that Part Four is dedicated.

In Part Five, entitled *The Transposition of Sameness from Philosophy into the Poetic Language of Repetition*, the transposition of the issue of sameness from the domain of philosophy into that of the poetic language is examined. The preconditions for this transposition lie in the acknowledgement of the impuissance of the philosophical discourse to provide an adequate conceptualization of sameness and the quest to recreate the issue of sameness through the mediation of language. These acknowledgements condition the quest for the pure language empowered to express the experience of sameness in the poetic language of repetition, no longer a repetition of the Same, but of itself as pure signifier, signifying nothing but itself.

The phenomenon of this transposition — starting with Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, and delineated in Part Four — is investigated here through poetic texts by Rainer Maria Rilke, in particular *Die Sonette an Orpheus* (*Sonnets to Orpheus*, 1922). The textual analyses of the poems aim at demonstrating Rilke's coinage of a new poetic language of repetition. The concept of repetition is discussed not only in the ideal organization of pure language in the bare repetition of the singular form of the poem, but is also unfolded in terms of key threads of twentieth century thought, especially several found in postmodernism which challenge and deconstruct the operation of sameness in order to unfold the repetition of the *Other*. The postmodernist understanding of repetition is elaborated through texts by Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, and others.

It is essential to note that it is not within the scope of this study to provide either an investigation of Rilke's poetic legacy, or to cover the field of secondary sources concerned with Rilke, rather an attempt is made to demonstrate the transposition of the issue of sameness from philosophy into the pure poetic language of repetition. This very attempt conditions greatly the choice of certain sonnets from the entire cycle, and also the reason for granting more space to some sonnets rather than to others.

The proceeding discussions of vastly different philosophical systems do not aim at representing the discourse of sameness as an homogeneous meta-discourse; rather they endeavour to stress its significance for Western philosophical and poetic thought. Moreover, all these postulations of sameness in respect of both, identity or difference are likewise inquired into as part of the elaboration of the issue of sameness, and will be viewed as indispensable for revealing its genuine plenitude. Hence, even the controversial stages of Continental philosophy (those of *identity*, *digression*, and *difference*) will be viewed generally as an expression of the need to re-think sameness in an adequate manner.

To sum up, the considerations provided in this account aim primarily at provoking a recognition of the irrefutable role the operation of sameness has always already played in the philosophical and poetic tradition.

Part One: Thinking of Identity

That which is identical, in Latin *idem*, is in Greek το αὐτό ... *the same*.¹

... Listening not to me but to the Logos
It is wise to agree (homo-log-ein) that
All things are one.
Heraclitus.²

The present part traces the inception of the philosophical postulations of the Same or the operation of sameness as the search for an underlying principle of unity and identity amounting to the harmony and plenitude within the Universe. It will both stress the significance of the postulation of sameness, enabling human thought to transcend earthly phenomena toward the intellectually intelligible realm, and the limits of these postulations, which reduce sameness to pure identity.

We will attempt to establish the characteristic traits of the first stage of the philosophical postulation of the Same — extending from the Presocratics to Kant — in so far as it focuses upon one of its aspects only: that of identity. At this stage, generalized in this study under the heading *Thinking of Identity*, the unity of identity is represented as pure unmediated sameness in its plenitude. According to Heidegger, the earliest and most authentic representation of the Same — with Parmenides — is with regard to pure identity. Here, the Same is represented in virtue of ‘the claim of identity’ that ‘speaks from the Being of beings’ or by the speaking of the Same itself, described as the speaking of ‘το αὐτό, that which is identical, in a way that is almost too powerful’.³

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans., and with an intr. by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), p. 23.

² Heraclitus, *The Cosmic Fragments*, ed. by Geoffrey Stephen Kirk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), p. 65.

³ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 27.

As has been observed, the Ancient Greek philosophical thought most often associated with the postulation of sameness as identity, locates the Same in the metaphysical-transcendental dimension. The concept of the Same (*idem*, *το αὐτό* ... *the same*) is postulated here as a unity of identity, homogeneity and plenitude, the ineffable One above all enumeration and the immanent cause of all phenomena. Sameness is traced and marked prominently as far back as the Presocratics, where it is imaged in the philosophical *operation of belonging*, which is either the seeking of ultimate elements and fundamental underlying principles accounting for the earthly phenomena, or the ascent from particulars toward the realm of the universals. The Greek operation of sameness comprises thus either a reduction of all appearances to the prime principle or the ascent toward an intelligible principle.

The present part traces the various postulations of sameness in the Ancient Greek philosophy by virtue of the operations of belonging (the Presocratics), participation (Plato) and emanation (Plotinus), anchored in the relationships between Whole and parts, One and many, Original and image. It also presents the perspectives of the development of an identical thinking in terms of *analogy* throughout the Middle Ages, Renaissance, as well as relevant aspects of the philosophical systems of Spinoza and Leibniz, aiming to demonstrate the continuity of the tradition, rooted in the representation of the unity of identity as mere sameness, disregarding the factor of the absolutely singular differential.

The focus is made here upon the significance of the paradigmatic treatment of sameness in Plato and his postulation of the Same in the realm of the *eidé*, thereby bringing about a strict distinction between the supreme realm of the intelligible and its worldly representations (shadows). The opposition between *eidé* and its shadows, sensible and intelligible inscribed decisively into philosophy by Plato is deeply installed into Western philosophical thought. Its relevance with regard to poetics becomes manifested in Plato's claim of the mimetic nature of art, particularly poetry, whereby their function is reduced to that of the representation of the Same. The mimetic theory of art will be examined in a variety of aspects characteristic of the dialogues: deciphering the mystery of poetry as the reflection of the pure vision of the Same, claiming the impersonality of artistic vision by making metaphysical provision for linking the *eidé* in the individual mind to the universal and unchanging *eidé* of the world pattern, or elevating poetry to an eminence over all human pursuits, in close connection to the *eidé*.

Yet, what must ultimately be accounted for with reference to the intelligible principle of the Same is that it has never been clearly defined or conceptualized in philosophical thought in view of the resistance it shows against the limitations characteristic of the human cognitive powers of sense-perception and discursive reason. Or, probably, this resistance is due to the primal intactness — inscribed in the operation of sameness — of name and thing that rejects any finality of explanation, giving preference to the untellable with respect to the told, the unformed with respect to the formed. Perhaps for this reason, Plato rather questions than conceptualizes the Same, alluding to it through metaphors or investigating it in still another layer of its inexpressibility, or with regard to its non-being. This shift from the being to the non-being of the Same opens vistas for the subsequent analyses of the Multiple, thereby maintaining sameness as an operation. It also marks a possibility for liberating art from the domain of representation and viewing it with respect to the repetition of the *other*.

1. The inception of the Same in Ancient Greece

The conception of sameness in its subtle contrivances has been unceasingly haunting philosophical thought since its inception in Greece. In line with Indian metaphysics and Chinese Taoism, the Greek philosophical traditions, combining diverse influences, forge a philosophy of the ineffable One beyond all differentiation, anchored in the concept of the identity and unity of the Cosmos as a harmonious prime totality. The ontology of the One implies a theory of the univocal Being as the immanent cause of all genera of beings which corresponds to the eminence of Oneness. The Multiple is present in this very One, and the latter is itself present in the Multiple and explicates itself through it. The relationship between the One and the Multiple encompasses thus all the aspects of the operation of sameness or identity: belonging, participation, emanation, and immanence. In the Ancient Greek philosophical tradition the operation of sameness is designated sometimes as the search for the prime irreducible element of things and sometimes as the search for the whole which is more than the sum of its parts. In respect of Greek Cosmology with its inconceivability of Nothingness and its focus on the conception of Being as Cosmic Harmony, the Universe is not created out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, but is moulded from existing material. The operation of belonging is correspondingly the search for the primary material out of which the Greek Cosmos was moulded. Belonging as the elementary form of sameness is historically formed within the philosophical traditions of the Presocratics who, departing from analyzing the fortuitous or derivative attributes of objects, seek the origin or the first principle that unifies all matter. In so doing, they infinitely divide matter in search of ultimate natural elements which possess a given property and account for the oneness of beings, serving as the foundation of the conceptual oneness of the Universe.

The ontological scheme of belonging is thus a descent towards ultimate constituents or a reduction of beings to fundamental elements, such as water, fire, air or the infinite being. According to Thales of Miletus, (c. 624 BC – c. 546 BC), water is the fundamental or primary thing, the primary substance of which all

other things are mere transient forms,⁴ while Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 535 BC – c. 475 BC) reduces the ontological problems of creation, cosmic order and naming to *fire* as the prime constituent, forming the world: ‘This [world-] order did none of gods or men make, but it always was and is and shall be: an ever-living fire, kindling in measures and going out in measures.’⁵ Yet, his conception of *logos* (λόγος),⁶ according to which all things occur, contains elements of participation, which is later fully developed by Plato. The Heraclitean operation of participation grounds between the unity and the multiple an identity of essence implying a concentration of the multiple within the unity, which is itself the cause of the multiple: ‘Things taken together are whole and not whole, something which is being brought together and brought apart, which is in tune and out of tune: out of all things can be made a unity, and out of a unity, all things.’⁷

The most scientific among the operations of belonging is the reduction of all matter to ultimate indivisible, immutable particles, atoms, by the Greek atomists Leucippus of Miletus (first half of the 5th century BC) and Democritus (c. 460 – c. 370 BC). The primary theme of their ontology is the void, while atoms are the second principle of being, after the void. Fragment 47 of Democritus⁸ asserts that the material cause of all things that exist is the coming together of atoms and void. Atoms are eternal, have many different shapes, and can cluster together to create things that are perceivable. Differences in the shape, arrangement, and position of atoms produce different things. The atomist conception of the Universe is a homogeneous infinite vacuum full of infinite number of atoms which, through various formations give birth to the distinctive properties of matter.

Anaximander of Miletos⁹ (c. 610 BC – c. 546 BC) is the first to have introduced the term *Infinite* as the material cause and first element of things, substituting it for the material cause. He claims that the ultimate constituent has to

⁴ *Thales: Fragments*, trans. by John Burnet, (1908), <<http://philoctetes.free.fr/thaleseng.htm>>, [accessed 20 August 2010].

⁵ Heraclitus, *The Cosmic Fragments*, p. 307.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 65.

⁷ Heraclitus, *The Cosmic Fragments*, p. 184.

⁸ Geoffrey Stephen Kirk, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

⁹ *Anaximander: Fragments*, trans. by John Burnet, (1908), <<http://philoctetes.free.fr/anaximander.htm>>, [accessed 20 August 2010].

be a substance different from the elements of water, air or fire which is the *infinite*, from which arise all the heavens and the worlds within them.

The Greek dream of plenitude and harmony with its inconceivability of *nonbeing* is represented at large by Parmenides (c. 515 BC – c. 445 BC), who inextricably links the operation of sameness to the ontology of being and introduces the idea of truth as unconcealment, *Aletheia*. He offers thinking unified with being by viewing nature as the reflection of one and the Same being: ‘The thing that can be thought and that for which the thought exists is the same.’¹⁰ The operation of sameness is revealed through the substantive concept of the Same, which is defined as ‘the same’, which ‘rests in the self-same place’,¹¹ contrary to the *nonbeing*, which can neither be known, nor uttered: ‘thou canst not know what is not — that is impossible — nor utter it’ (4,5).¹²

Parmenides represents an operation of emanation involving a system of the Supreme Monistic Principle of the One, which will become the dominating principle of Neoplatonism. The nature of the One is designated in the poem by virtue of the motions of emanation and reconciliation through which, to use Martin Henn’s words, ‘the microcosm of thought recapitulates the macrocosm of Being, by becoming one with nature’.¹³

Parmenides is the first in Greek thought not only to postulate the Same as a transcendental objective defining it as the ‘continuous one’,¹⁴ but also substantiate it as a concept of plenitude and cohesion, by representing the entire range of its characteristic features: ‘uncreated and indestructible, [...] complete, immovable, and without end’, indivisible, ‘all alike, [...] wholly continuous [...], without beginning and without end.’¹⁵ Parmenides’s *being* coincides with the Greek idea of an identical, homogeneous Cosmos excluding any temporality: ‘nor was it ever, nor will it be, for now it is all alike.’¹⁶

¹⁰ Parmenides, ‘On Nature’, in *Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. by John Burnet (London: A&C Black, 1920), fragment (8), pp. 174 -176.

¹¹ Parmenides, ‘On Nature’, pp. 174 -176.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 173.

¹³ Martin J. Henn, *Parmenides of Elea: A Verse Translation with Interpretative Essays and Commentary to the Text* (London: Praeger Publishers, 2003), p. 53.

¹⁴ Parmenides, ‘On Nature’, pp. 174-176.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 174-176.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 174-176.

The operation of emanation, harboured in the Oneness and harmony of the Cosmos (Pythagoras is the first to apply the term *kosmos*, literally meaning *world-order* and *ornament* to indicate a *beautifully* ordered universe) is reduced to numbers by Pythagoras of Samos (c. 570 BC – c. 495 BC), in respect of whom, numbers, apart from denoting the relationships between things, possess intrinsic meanings. Pythagoras's philosophy reflects the concept of sameness by virtue of a unique science of numbers which, due to the sacred metaphysical dimensions intrinsic in them, lie at the heart of his idea of an identical Cosmos. Through the symbolic usage of numbers, Pythagoras offers the archetypal paradigm of creation as One - Multiple (Two) - Unity (Three), where the number stops being a sign whose function is to denote a specific quantity and is transformed into a qualitative entity. The Pythagoreans thus believe that Oneness, the Monad or the Unity is the principle or the root, from which all things as manifestations of diversity in a unified continuum spring forth. The definition of Theon of Smyrna serves as a characteristic for the Pythagorean operation of emanation, in respect of which the unity emanated into multiplicities remains unchangeable: 'Unity is the principle of all things and the most dominant of all that is: all things emanate from it and it emanates from nothing. It is indivisible and [...] immutable and never departs from its own nature through multiplication.'¹⁷

The Pythagorean scheme implies a preconceived One, Two or the *Dyad* as the beginning of strife or the division between subject and object and Three or the triad as a reunification of the divided. We read: 'The first [...] change from unity is made by the doubling of unity which becomes 2, in which are seen matter and all this is perceptible, the generation of motion, multiplication and addition, composition and the relationship of one thing to another.'¹⁸ The function of the triad is not only to bind together One and Two in a 'Relation or Harmonia', but also to reflect 'the nature of the One in a microcosmic and balanced fashion'.¹⁹

This general formula of creation underlying the cosmogonies of the Greek myth and also those of the early Ionian scientific tradition is succinctly summed up by Cornford: '1) There is an undifferentiated unity. 2) From this unity two

¹⁷ Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library*, compiled and trans. by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1987), p. 21.

¹⁸ Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library* p. 21.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 22.

opposite powers are separated out to form the world order. 3) The two opposites unite again to generate life.’²⁰

The inquiry into the legacy of the Ancient philosophers testifies to the ontological priority of the operation of sameness, which since its inception in Greece has been uninterruptedly reigning over Western philosophical discourse under multiple guises or names, posed with regard to the issues of Being and nothingness, plenitude and void. The dream for plenitude, eventually acquiring the status of a philosophical concept par excellence, is substantiated here as a concept of unity, identity and harmony, posed through an intermingling of the elementary forms of the operations of belonging, emanation and participation.

In the next chapter, we will discuss the Platonic insight into the transcendental objective of the Same which is mostly realized by virtue of an operation of participation and in some way or other has been dominating the entire Western philosophical discourse conditioning the postulation of poetry as that of *mimesis* or a representation of the Same.

²⁰ Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library*, p. 22.

2. The Same: A Metaphysical Universal or an Operation of Participation in Plato?

2.1 Plato's Questioning of Sameness: Philosophical Hypotheses or Poetic Metaphors?

We will inquire into Plato's questioning of sameness through his endeavour to claim for metaphysical inquiry where the target is on seeking the essence of Being. The essence of Being in general is, according to Plato, susceptible to a general, unifying principle. The Platonic operation of sameness is greatly determined through the Presocratic conceptions of principles as the fundamental underlying elements accounting for earthly phenomena, in which both the Eleatic and the Pythagorean traditions are combined. It comprises the two controversial modes of thought of belonging and participation, persisting separately in Presocratic thought: the reduction of all existence into ultimate principles and the generalization ascending from particulars toward the realm of universals or Ideas of identity and harmony. As a combination of the operations of participation and belonging, it offers us, to use Verity Harte's definition, a choice of ones either as 'unified wholes or mereological atoms'.²¹

In respect of the Platonic operation of sameness, the Same is thus conceived from one side as prior to genera or the cause of the ultimate principles, from another it is derived from them. Plato (c. 428/427 BC – c. 348/347 BC) not only combines these varying modes of thought but also applies a dialectical approach in attempting to give an account of the ultimate grounding in the unconditioned unity of the conception of sameness. Questioning the unitary conception of sameness, he inquires into the ultimate causes, principles and elements through which reality should be explicated. He also elaborates the fundamental ontological operation of sameness mainly through the theory of unity and the good, as the principle of being that produces order in the Cosmos. In so doing Plato offers a theological-philosophical understanding of sameness in which

²¹ Verity Harte, *Plato on Parts and Wholes: The Metaphysics of Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 130.

the philosophical dialogue is at times combined with the revelation of the ultimate vision of the plenitude of the Same inundated with divine light (*Phaedrus* 250c).²²

The Same therefore incorporates the human dream for plenitude and harmony, emerging as a transcendental objective or a metaphysical universal par excellence which enables human thought to transcend beyond earthly phenomena. Yet, despite the fact that the Same scintillates in its full splendour through Plato's dialogues, its interpretation is by no means unequivocal; we can rather speak of Plato's questioning of sameness throughout his dialogues and with the application of various techniques, than his postulation of it. The insight into the various philosophical manifestations of the Same²³ demonstrates that the limit of the Platonic postulation lies in the fact of its covering merely one of the fundamental aspects of sameness, that of identity: comprising timelessness, abstraction, and non-being. Disregarding the absolute singularity of the differential, the significance of which is coeval to that of the whole, Plato distorts the precarious balance between the plenitude of the Same and the absolute singularity of the differential.

The failure to postulate the plenitude of the Same as an operation of recurrence of the simultaneously co-existing absolutely unique singularities results in representing the Same as a dominating concept of identity. Conceived as such by virtue of Plato's dialectical method, the Same as the primary cause and ground of all contrariety eventually gains prevalence over the diverse singularities and subordinates them to the predominating idea of a preconceived identity. Furthermore, it is by virtue of the predominance of the identity of the Same over the manifold, by disregarding the singularity of the multiplicity that the operation of sameness becomes reduced to the simple, unitary signified of the Same.

The reduction of the operation of sameness to the transcendental signified of the Same — which is the characteristic feature of the Platonic dialogues — conditions its transposition into a hierarchical concept of identity dominating over the singular differentials.

²² All Plato reference, if not otherwise stated, from *Plato: The Complete Dialogues*, ed. by John M. Cooper, (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997).

²³ While generalizing Plato's conception of the Same, we refer to the dialogues by him that will be discussed below, excluding the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist* which question this conception.

Yet, despite the fact that Plato struggles to get a consistent grip on the operation of sameness and is generally regarded by the analytic approach²⁴ as the first philosopher to pose it (in the form of universals) as a problem, to pursue its formal analysis and to posit its solution, he rather questions sameness than offers an explanation of it. The fact of his giving preference to the Socratic dialogue over the philosophical treatise, testifies to Plato's conviction that philosophy is not fundamentally an assertive but an interrogative activity. He thus rather poses the conception of sameness as a fundamental philosophical question throughout his dialogues, by questioning its essential traits than proposes a definite answer to it. Whether his choice of the dialogical form is conditioned by the influence of the esoteric tradition rooted in the tendency of concealing the sacred wisdom of the Same, thereby protecting it from misinterpretation or whether it presents a transposition of the philosophical issue of sameness into a poetic form remains open.

The transposition of the philosophical issue of sameness into poetic form due to the impossibility of defining it by virtue of clearly stated philosophical propositions is a characteristic trait of the early twentieth century and is expounded at length by Heidegger. Yet, Heidegger points to the persistence of allegory already in the discourse of Plato, remarking that there is an inner necessity to the fact that when Plato says something fundamental in philosophy, he always speaks in an allegory.²⁵ The reason for this is not that Plato 'is unsure about what he is speaking of', but that 'he is *quite sure* that it cannot be described or proved'.²⁶ Aristotle likewise points to this very tendency of Plato who uses nothing, but 'empty words and poetic metaphors'²⁷ (991a21) to explain how the *eidos* (εἶδος) is related to its sensible counterparts. Contemporary scholars of Plato

²⁴ Among the main texts belonging to the analytic approach are Reginald E. Allen, *Studies in Plato's*

Metaphysics (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965); Gregory Vlastos, *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays, 1: Metaphysics and Epistemology* ([S.I.]: Doubleday and Company, 1971), Gail Fine, *Plato on Knowledge and Forms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

²⁵ Drew A. Hyland, *Questioning Platonism: Continental Interpretations of Plato* (Albany N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp. 57 – 64 for a criticism of Heidegger's misinterpretation of Plato.

²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, trans. by Ted Stadler (New York: Continuum Books, 2002), p. 13.

²⁷ Aristotle, 'Metaphysics', in *The Works of Aristotle* trans. into English, general ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

also speak of the ‘poetic language’ of Plato, for example, Julius Moravcsik ascribes ‘the poetic language of the similes of light in Books 6 and 7 of the *Republic*’ to the excitement Plato feels with regard to the ontological discovery, which can be reached ‘only by intellectual efforts that are very remote from ordinary experience’.²⁸

Even though the resistance of the Same against any conceptualization or the difficulty of rendering the sacred vision of the Same, manifested in the form of revelation through verbal means, Plato nonetheless poses sameness merely in the form of hypotheses or poetic metaphors. It thus seems impossible to come to an ultimate definition of sameness, based upon Plato’s various discussions of it in different dialogues, but merely to postulate it in terms of its pure intelligibility or visibility/intelligibility distinction. Yet, despite the fact that the conception of sameness - which becomes more or less tangible through the ideas of the *eidé*, the *One* and the *Good* — is nowhere systematically conceptualized or defined, its existence is maintained throughout the dialogues, which we will now address.

For this reason, and since we are not proposing an interpretation of Plato’s dialogues, but an examination of Plato’s treatment of the operation of sameness and its influence upon his understanding of poetics, we will next address those works by Plato in which there is actual theorizing of his conception of sameness. The focus here is upon the textual evidence of the maintenance by Plato of the existence of sameness throughout his dialogues.

2.2 The Reduction of the Operation of Sameness to the Metaphysical Universal of the Same: The *Eidé* and the *Good*

2.2.1 The *Eidé*: Two Modes of Manifestation of the Metaphysical Universal of the Same

To begin with, we will inquire into the discussion of sameness through the doctrine of the *eidé*, which occupies the entire central part of the *Republic* and is crucial in determining Plato’s understanding of sameness. The hypothesis of the *eidé*, having an eternal, pure unqualified nature and belonging to the realm of the

²⁸ Julius Moravcsik, *Plato and Platonism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 85.

intelligible reflected through the visible are primarily what needs to be examined if we are to grasp the operation of sameness in Plato. Furthermore, it is with Plato's introduction of the theory of *eidé*, constructed upon the very opposition between the intelligible and the visible, reality and appearance that the originary Same eventually gains prevalence over the multiple, reducing their function to that of the mere representation of nothing but the Same.

Plato expresses the translatability of the oneness of the originary Same through the multiple, by virtue of the doctrine of *eidé*. The *eidé* belong to the most fundamental layer of reality and can be grasped through intellectual abstraction from appearances, by transcending from earthly phenomena toward the entities of *eidé*. The entire operation of sameness is rooted in the opposition between the *eidōs* as the unchanging unity, identical in itself, and the sensible particulars as the contingently existing and ambiguous multiplicity. All the individual *eidé* are thus characterized as unities, modes of oneness in the multiplicity and incorporate the basic concept of sameness. They are determined as identical, consistent and similar, and each of them is 'in itself single', even though 'they seem to be a multiplicity because they appear everywhere in combination with actions and material bodies' (*Republic* 476a).²⁹

The translatability of the *eidé* through the multiple can be traced in a passage from the *Republic*, where the *eidé* are described as 'beauty in itself or any eternally unchanging form of beauty' manifested through the sensible particulars. The sensible particulars, contrary to the *eidé*, have shifting appearances and are viewed as a source of duplicity and deception: 'Is there any of these many beautiful objects of yours that may not also seem ugly? Or of your just and righteous acts that may not appear unjust and unrighteous?' (*Republic* 479 a).

The abovementioned rhetorical question testifies to the fundamental distinction between the *eidé* and the multiple, anchored in the scission between the intelligible and the visible, essence and appearance, between 'what is' and 'what appears'.

The translatability of the intelligible Same by virtue of visible images rooted in the etymological explanation of *eidé* as 'to see',³⁰ or that which is seen,

²⁹ All reference to the *Republic* from *Plato: The Republic*, trans. by Desmond Lee (Penguin Books, 2003).

³⁰ See: John Sallis, *Being and Logos: Reading the Platonic Dialogues* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 383 for the accurate translation of *eide* versus its mistranslations as *form*, *idea* or *concept*.

the seen, that which presents itself to a seeing, makes itself manifest or shows itself to showing. The hypothesis of the *eidé* thus brings forth the fundamental distinction between the original which is identical with its being the same as such, and the images through which it shines forth. The two modes of showing of the *eidé* as the one and the same as it is in itself and as the many as it is not itself, introduces the distortion of the precarious balance between the plenitude of the Same and the singularity of the multiple. The showing of the *eidós* as many or in disguise is the showing of nothing but the Same, disregarding the absolute uniqueness of the singular and reducing its function to that of the mere representation of the Same. Sameness is thereby traced through an operation of participation, in which the Same participates in the multiple and relates to the multiple as the original to its image, the whole to its parts, the ‘beauty-in-itself’ or the ‘goodness-in-itself’ to the particular things or the many (*Republic* 507 b). It is thereby demonstrated through an operation of concealing and revealing, where the function of the multiple is reduced to the mere revelation of the concealed Same.

The *eidós* which shows itself as the one identical or as it is in itself; and the *eidós* which shows itself as it is not or as the multiple, is the very same *eidós*. What shows itself in any case is the original Same, i.e. the multiple is the representation of but the Same or is the image of the Same. The image-original correlation is harboured in the preconceived identity between them: the original requires the image to manifest itself or to shine forth through it. Yet, it is simultaneously rooted in the difference between them that can be understood in terms of the dual meaning of showing. Showing itself in the original, means showing itself as it is in itself, whereas showing itself in an image also implies a showing of itself as it is not. The showing of itself of the original as it is not thus implies the appearance of the different or the shadow which, in Plato, are however subordinated to the original. The subordination of the singular differentials to the original Same emphasizes the predominance of the transcendental signified of the Same, as, what the absolutely singular differentials let be manifest is not their own singularity, but merely the identity of the Same.

Given that the *eidé* have not been clearly defined by Plato, they give rise to often controversial argumentations and are interpreted as abstract universals and paradigms, ideas and concepts existing in our minds or are even described realistically as ‘concrete standards whose figures and proportions philosophers

must discern in order to properly measure the truth, the beauty and the goodness [...] not only in the sensible world, but also in ourselves'.³¹

Yet, what we have attempted to demonstrate is that even lacking a clear philosophical definition, the *eidé* incorporate Plato's realization of the dream for the plenitude and harmony of the Same.

2.2.2 The Ontological Discovery of the Good as *Monoeidés* of the Beyond

Plato's dream for plenitude is not, however, limited solely by the postulation of the *eidé*, but is rooted in a gradual ascent: from the visible phenomena toward the intelligible realm of the *eidé*, ascending in their turn toward the abstracted unity of the basic principle of the Good, conceived as a totality of the meta-*eidé*, or the beyond. As a concept of unity and measure, opposed by a contrary principle of multiplicity, the Good is a synthesis of the Presocratic One or the Eleatic doctrine of Being. Yet, as is the case with the *eidé*, the Good is not clearly defined and its concealed unitary essence can solely be derived from juxtaposing the various parts of the *Republic*.

The Good is posed not only as the source of the intelligibility of the objects of knowledge, but also of their 'being and reality', yet without being that reality itself (*Republic* 509 b). The fact of its being positioned 'beyond [...] and superior' (*Republic* 509 b) to that reality differentiates it from all the other *eidé* as a pure unity, from which the meta-*eidé* receive their being. Due to its indivisibility and immutability, this original unity is posed in identity, essence and permanence as the cause and essence of everything that exists, the fundamental element and measure of multiplicity. As a transcendental concept of unity, the Good is simultaneously the limitation of the multiplicity and their unification and shows itself through the multiple by virtue of an operation of participation.

This reading of the *Republic* demonstrates that the position of the Good is ranked as the highest and that it is postulated as a meta-unity of subject-object (or a unity of the beyond) in the cognitive act, giving 'the objects of knowledge their truth and the knower's mind the power of knowing' (*Republic* 508 e). The

³¹ Francis A. Grabowski, *Plato, Metaphysics and the Forms*, Studies in Ancient Philosophy (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 106.

accomplishments of the Good are also designated through a coincidence of being with the knowable, where ‘what fully *is* fully knowable’ (477a).

Identified as such, the Good appears as the foundation of knowledge and truth, surpassing them in being itself the source of knowledge and truth (*Republic* 508 e). It incorporates both the search for a prime principle as the cause of everything and the urge for transcendence toward the realm of ‘fixed and immutable realities [...] where there is no injustice done or suffered, but all is reason and order [...]’ (*Republic* 500 c). The tendency is to show the thing itself which is the illustration of the wholeness and oneness of the Same, prior to the distinction between revealing and concealing or essence and existence (511 b). The Good is always the Same which, through an operation of participation is manifested through visible things. As opposed to the *eidé* which show themselves as multiple, it aspires to showing itself as One by being illuminated and conferring truth and being.

The insight into the hypotheses of the Good demonstrates that it can serve as an early model for the transcendental objective of the Same, dominating over philosophical discourse as the ideal immutable model for imitation (*Republic* 500 c). In respect of these hypotheses, the visible objects are viewed merely as images or imitations of this ultimate model, while the uniqueness of each is being disregarded. This brings forth a fundamental opposition between showing and being, essence and existence that lies at the heart of the primal determinacy with which things first come forth from the arché-form.

The distinction between the visible/intelligible is stressed through introducing a man who sees the *eidé* by themselves and the one who distinguishes between both the forms and their instances. It also conditions the definition of the philosopher directed to the whole or capable of revealing the Same *wholly*, rather than as divided up into the multiple.³² In this context, the prime consideration for the philosopher is to imitate the supreme model or even become assimilated to it (*Republic* 500 c). The same distinction lies in the hypothesis of the third kind of man, capable of distinguishing between image and original, whole and part, the beautiful itself and beautiful things (*Cratylus* 476 c – d, 479 e – 480 a).

The characteristic feature of the operation of sameness in Plato is that it represents different degrees of sameness through an ascending movement: from the grasping of images toward the contemplation of the intelligibility of the

³² John Sallis, *Being and Logos: Reading the Platonic Dialogues*, p. 395.

original Same or from a mode of showing, which is revealing and concealing (through the *eidé*) toward the shining forth of the original Same in itself. This gradual ascent becomes tangible by virtue of the simile of the divided line corresponding to the distinction between intelligible and visible, outlined in the Seventh Book of the *Republic*. While the simile of the divided line develops Plato's basic differentiation between the two orders of reality, it nonetheless views these two orders from the angle of the states of mind. Accordingly, the four sections of the line correspond to the four states of mind: 'to the top section intelligence, to the second reason, to the third belief, and to the last illusion' (*Republic* 511 e). These four states of mind are also arranged in a scale, based upon the assumption that they have degrees of clarity corresponding to the degree of truth possessed by their subject-matter (*Republic* 511 e). The entire procedure is thus a repeated dialectical ascent from assumptions toward the first principle of everything which 'involves nothing in the sensible world, but moves solely through forms to forms, and finishes with forms' (*Republic* 511 c).

John Sallis explicates the entire *divided line* of Plato with regard to the more or less perfect, more or less original showings of the same thing.³³ Representing the divided line as a continuum running from less true to truer modes of showing, he explicates it in respect of a distinction between the intelligible and the visible, original and image. What reveals itself through images is thus always the same original.

The moving from shadows to seeing the fire or the sun, as the source of light by which things themselves are seen, is expounded in the cave analogy (*Republic* 516 b). Here the sun stands for the Good, posed as the cause of everything: of light, vision and objects. The prisoner who has left the cave can only look at the shadows, then at the reflection and then finally at the objects themselves.

This is the development of the idea of making the visibility of the hidden things possible through the idea of the Good. The concealing/revealing analogy in relation to the cave allegory linked to the originary sense of *aletheia*, as *unhiddenness*, forms another significant point in the paradigm of the Same within the framework of truth as *unconcealment*. Together with the distinction between image and original, whole and part, the beautiful itself and beautiful things, One and multiple, the opposition between the hidden and *unconcealment*, anchored in

³³ John Sallis, *Being and Logos: Reading the Platonic Dialogues*, pp. 420 – 421.

the conception of *aletheia* as truth forms the characteristic trait of the operation of sameness.

The search for the ultimate Same which is delineated through the Good as ‘the final thing to be perceived in the intelligible region’ (*Republic* 517 b) by virtue of multiple images results in subordinating the image to the original by depriving one of the capability of seeing the image as image. The image then is the mere representation of the Good which is the source of light, being and truth. Posed as the hypothetical Same par excellence comprised in the operation of sameness, the Good transposes light into the visible region and, being in the intelligible region itself, emerges as the ultimate cause of virtue and of justice, temperance and rationality (*Republic* 517 c). The Good then can merely be grasped through concepts of order combined with those of wisdom and knowledge by those who can take account of the essential nature of the Good, distinguishing it clearly from everything else (*Republic* 534 b c).

The representation of the transcendental objective of the Same in one form as a preconceived identity and the cause of everything, positioned in the place beyond heaven and revealing itself as the pure ultimate vision shining in *Lux resplendes* can be traced in most of the dialogues which, along with the *Republic* belong to the so-called middle period of Plato.

In the *Phaedrus* the pure oneness of this vision is revealed through the metaphor of the light (*Phaedrus* 250 c), while it is described as being prior to any differentiation of shape or colour and lacking any distinct characteristics. We read: ‘What is in this place is without colour and without shape and without solidity, a being that really is what it is, the subject of all true knowledge, visible only to intelligence’ (*Phaedrus* 247 d). The *Phaedrus* maintains the opposition between essence and appearance (*Phaedrus* 259 e) and distinguishes the beautiful, shining in full splendour as a result of a recollection provoked by ‘earthly’ images of the beautiful *logos* as opposed to justice, moderation, etc. which do not shine through their images with sufficient splendour (*Phaedrus* 250 b).

The conception of unity and identity as a limitation of multiplicity postulated by virtue of the Good, of which the beautiful is one aspect, is also unfolded in the *Symposium*. Here, the experience of pure divine beauty itself in one *eidos* (*monoeidos*) (*Symposium* 211 b), with no image and nothing earthly is considered as the highest experience. Posed in the pure oneness, it is the cause out

of which the mundane emerges forth and is built upon the opposition to the earthly phenomena which are mixed and shifting, ever bound to the images.

Beauty itself (*auto to kalon*) is postulated as unconditionally in the present, irrespective of time and place, of the viewer and the angle of viewing and is not differentiated into kinds or species (*Symposium* 211 a - b). It is conceived through an operation of participation by virtue of which the multiple share the immutable oneness of the preconceived identity of always but one form (*monoeidos*), which is ‘but itself by itself with itself’ (211b). Here, the operation of sameness may be traced through an ascent which is delineated as a dialectical movement starting from grasping beautiful things toward catching sight of ‘something wonderfully beautiful in its nature’ (211 a). Plato describes this ascent as an infinitely upward movement for the sake of Beauty, starting out from the gradual rising from beautiful things and bodies to beautiful customs and arriving in the end at the knowing of the very Beauty or the knowing just what it is to be beautiful’ (*Symposium* 211 c - d). The knowing of the intelligible is already beautiful, as wisdom is described as being ‘extremely beautiful’ (*Symposium* 204 b).

2. 3. Questioning the *Monoeidetism* of the Same

The operation of sameness introduced through the participation of the *eidé* in the multiple in the middle period is maintained likewise in the late dialogues of Plato. In the *Timaeus* it is represented through the entity of the Living Thing, comprehending within itself all intelligible living things and participating in all other living things, which constitute its parts, both individually and by kinds (*Timaeus* 30 c – 31). The Living Thing is posed in respect of the good which is beautiful and thereby well-proportioned (*Timaeus* 87 c). Here, the visibility/intelligibility distinction expounded at large in the *Republic* is transposed into an opposition between ‘*that which always is* and has no becoming’ and ‘*that which becomes but never is*’ (*Timaeus* 28). These two contrarities are, however, combined through a third one which accomplishes the bond by proportion (*Timaeus* 31 c – 32). The classical paradigm of sameness, anchored in the intelligible and changeless model of the transcendental objective of the Same (under the guises of the *eidé* or the *Good*) and its imitation by

something visible that possesses becoming is now replaced by adding the third kind as ‘a *receptacle* of all becoming’ to it (*Timaeus* 49).

The fundamental opposition is placed between the Intelligible, residing within being as the first founding *eidōs* of the Cosmos and the anti-*eidōs* of the receptacle functioning as the condition for the possibility of the presence and absence of causes and forms. As opposed to the unifying conception of the Same, appearing as a unification of instances under one *eidōs* (i.e. the *eidōs* of beauty), the anti-*eidōs* of the wandering cause separates things from being and the Cosmos, allowing them to show themselves in the play of images in both their gathering and dispersion. The receptacle, through which things come into being and the Cosmos coming forth as an image, is thus posed as the wandering cause, dispersion and differentiation itself.

We can trace here Plato’s tendency prevailing particularly in the late dialogues to question the *monoeidētia* of the Same through the replacing of the pure vision of the undifferentiated Same by the juxtaposition of the heterogeneous elements. In the *Timaeus* this tendency is manifested from the assumption that everything is made just from the blend of ‘the *Same*, the *Different* and the *Being*’ and is in eternal movement of *the Same*, ‘which revolves in the same place without variation’ and *the Different*, divided ‘six times, to make seven unequal circles’ (*Timaeus* 36 b, d). The entire Cosmos is ruled according to the juxtaposition of the opposing forces from which ‘the first was rotation, an unvarying movement in the same place, by which the god would always think the same thoughts about the same things’, while the second ‘was revolution, a forward motion under the dominance of the circular [...] movement of the Same and uniform’ (*Timaeus* 40, 40 b).

The entire operation of sameness is maintained, however, with a shift from conceiving the pure undifferentiated One into its representation through heterogeneous elements, subordinated to the identity of the One. Bernard Freydberg remarks that despite the fact that the intelligible form is ‘a likely candidate for oneness [...] located in the eternal paradigm [...] beyond the cosmos, in the realm of being’,³⁴ it is now included within the flow of becoming. In contrast to the earlier dialogues, where the Same is represented through the pure vision of the form of the clear *One*, it is no more conceived as

³⁴ Bernard Freydberg, *Provocative Form in Plato, Kant, Nietzsche (and others)*, ed. by Peter Haller (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), vol. 21, p. 60.

unambiguously One. Freydberg explicates this by the fact that ‘there are no clear ‘one’s anywhere in the cosmos [...]’, instead, the entire cosmos is sewn together from images which are not wholes in themselves, but are sewn together from heterogeneous elements.³⁵

Yet, the heterogeneous elements are not postulated in respect of their absolute uniqueness, but are subordinated to the identity of the Same. What counts is, once again, the homogeneity of the *mixture* or its self-sameness: ‘And he took the three mixtures and mixed them together to make a uniform mixture, forcing the Different, which was hard to mix, into conformity with the Same’ (*Timaeus* 35). While the supreme aim is to reconcile the heterogeneous elements within the Same or ‘stabilize the straying revolutions within ourselves by imitating the completely unstraying revolutions of the god’ (*Timaeus*, 47 c).

In the *Timaeus* the operation of sameness is primarily examined in the cosmological dimension and posed as the foundation of the world which is viewed in its completeness and self-sufficiency in the form of the sphere (*Timaeus* 33 – 33 d). Postulated as a homogeneous mixture of the heterogeneous elements, the Cosmos is the formal constellation of beautiful images which issue from the interplay of the Same and the receptacle, and the characteristic features of which are proportion and measure. Plato’s account of ‘this world of ours’ is thus rooted in the concept of the Oneness of the Universe, in respect of which it presents the image of the intelligible Living Thing, participating in it (*Timaeus* 92c).

2. 4. The Non-Being of the Same

The later dialogue *Parmenides* questions all the earlier postulations of the Same as a transcendental objective appearing under the guises of the *eidé* or the Good. It deconstructs any account of the conception of the oneness of the Same, by questioning all the essential characteristic features of the One, as well as its substantiality. Despite the fact that it remains unclear whether the One refers to the Eleatic One or the Platonic *eidos* of the One, all the significant features

³⁵ Bernard Freydberg, *Provocative Form in Plato, Kant, Nietzsche (and others)*, p. 60.

applied to it as to a metaphysical universal of unity and identity are being questioned throughout the entire dialogue.

All the arguments forming the main part of the *Parmenides* are arranged in a way as to contradict each other and demonstrate rather the illusoriness of the transcendental objective of the One posed as the unitary cause of all being. The One is proved to be both unique and yet in some sense many; unlimited and without form and yet having parts (*Parmenides* 137 c, d).³⁶ All the controversial arguments — claiming that the One is neither the same as something, nor different from something (*Parmenides* 138 b), capable of neither motion, nor rest (*Parmenides* 138 c, 139 a), neither like nor unlike either other or itself, neither equal nor unequal to itself (*Parmenides* 140 b) — rather question than define the intelligibility of the One. Furthermore, the impossibility of characterizing the One gives rise to doubts about its existing as such at all and conditions its postulation as non-being.

The assertions that the One is outside time, has nothing to do with time and does not exist in time (*Parmenides* 141 d) amount to the conclusion that the One is not at all and is not the One. It has no part in Being at all, therefore is not at all (*Parmenides* 141 e). The non-being of the One conditions the fact that it cannot be named, described, thought of, known or perceived (*Parmenides* 142 a).

The dialogue as a whole asserts the necessary existence of oneness, yet not the logical proof of the One, suggesting that oneness should be discussed beyond its reduction to the identity of the One (*Parmenides* 142 b). It points to the limits of the earlier discussions of oneness by virtue of the dominating concept of the One or the Same and seeks ways for overcoming it through postulating the One in respect of its infinity in number (*Parmenides* 143 e) and its dividedness (*Parmenides* 144 b) into the many or the multitude of existences (*Parmenides* 144 a).

The *Parmenides* deconstructs the model of the dominating objective of the Same asserted in the earlier dialogues and maintains sameness merely as an operation of participation. The operation of participation is asserted through the relationship of the One and the multiple which is grounded upon the difference and otherness between the being and the One (*Parmenides* 143 b). Yet even the non-being of the One implies the operation of participation, and the One thus split up by existence is viewed as many (*Parmenides* 144 e).

³⁶ All reference to Plato's *Parmenides* from *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, London : William Heinemann Ltd), vol. 9.

The fulcrum of the operation of sameness is thereby transposed from the One into the participation of the many or of those which are other than the One (*Parmenides* 157 b) in the One (*Parmenides* 157 c). The One is then viewed in respect of each of its parts, participating in the One, and yet being other than the One. Here, the word ‘each’ implies the singularity of each of the parts as a part, separated from the rest, and existing by itself but necessarily participating in the One (*Parmenides* 158 a). The designation of the relationship between the One and its parts conditions the postulation of the many as multitudes (*Parmenides* 158 c) in which the One is not, but exists solely as an operation of participation in relation both to itself and to all others (*Parmenides* 160 b).

What is questioned thus is not oneness as such, the knowledge of which is maintained throughout the entire dialogue and the existence of which is often straightforwardly claimed (*Parmenides* 160 d, 161 e, 162 a, etc.), but its reduction to the metaphysical universal of the One. Oneness as an operation of participation is instead grounded upon the difference of the One from other things, implying the conception of a preconceived difference in the One and as belonging to the One, coextensive to the knowledge of the One (*Parmenides* 160 d e). Difference governs the entire relationship of participation between the non-existent One and the multitude and is made tangible through the application of the shifters ‘that’, ‘some’, ‘this’, ‘relation to this’ and ‘these’ (*Parmenides* 161 a). These shifters also imply relations of unlikeness between the One and the multiple, rooted in their being different in kinds (*Parmenides* 161 b).

The further discussions of the non-existence of the One also testify to the fact that it is not oneness which is being questioned, but the dominating objective of the One and that oneness is maintained, though in the form of participation. The non-existence of the One implies the existence of not-being as a bond, so that being is viewed as needing the non-existence of the One in order to attain perfection in the partaking (*Parmenides* 162 a). The One which does not exist participates in the multitude in order to attain non-existence (*Parmenides* 162 b). Furthermore, it is the very non-existence of the One that allows the multiplicity to exist as others of each other or in difference from each other (*Parmenides* 164 bc).

The dialogue concludes in stressing the significance of oneness through demonstrating the absurdity of the existence of the many if the many exist and the One does not (*Parmenides* 165 e). This final stage, based upon the previous deconstruction of the transcendental objective of the One and, hence, the

designation of a relationship of participation between the One and the many aims to stress that the deconstructed One does not imply a deconstruction of oneness. The same method applied earlier in the same dialogue to demonstrate the absurdity of the existence of the One is now applied to demonstrate the absurdity of the inexistence of oneness. It stresses the impossibility to distinguish between the many and the One, like or unlike, the same and the different, being and appearing without admitting the preconceived oneness which should be contained in the others (*Parmenides* 166 b). In the very end, the *Parmenides* proceeds from postulating the non-being of the One toward the posing of pure nothingness (*Parmenides* 166 c).

To summarize, the significance of the *Parmenides* lies in the fact that it points to the limits of reducing sameness to the transcendental objective of the Same, be it under the guises of the *eidé* or the Good. It instead designates sameness as an operation of participation, rooted in the non-being of the One and hence in the being of oneness by virtue of the difference between the multiple themselves and the multiples and the One. Despite the fact that the *Parmenides* does not offer a philosophical conceptualization of the multitude or the difference between them, it still opens up a wider perspective for sameness beyond its limitation by a dominating universal of identity and with regard to the multitude.

The *Sophist* maintains the non-being of the metaphysical universal of the One established by the *Parmenides* in that it does not engage in any discussion of its unitary essence, but instead examines the modes of being of the multiple. The modes of being of the multiple are viewed in respect of the operation of participation between the infinitely divisible other in the One, delineating a differentiation between the concept of unity in itself, the totality of the other and the individual part.

The absolute identity of the Eleatic One is now replaced by a conception of unity in relation to multiplicity participating in both identity and difference. The discussions of the Eleatic conception of the Oneness of the multiple, as well as the Heraclitean assertion of its being a combination of the One and many (*Sophist* 242 d – 243 a)³⁷ are aimed at transposing sameness from its association to the metaphysical universal of the One to the questioning of its non-being. What is radically questioned is the being of the One through questioning the Oneness of

³⁷ References from *The Sophist* are from *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. by Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, London : William Heinemann Ltd), vol. 12.

the Being and its having parts, in order to finally replace it by its participation in the unlimited multiplicity. The operation of participation is regarded not only in respect of being, movement and rest, but also of the same and difference (*Sophist* 255 c – 256 c) substituting for the identity of the One.

2. 5. Poetry as the *Mimesis* of the Same

Plato's conceiving of sameness by virtue of an operation of participation conditions his evaluation of art, particularly poetry. The fundamental distinction between intelligible and visible — by virtue of which the revealed is nothing but the Same — dominating over the Platonic understanding of sameness throughout the *Parmenides*, conditions his postulation of the ideal of art as the endless representation of the Same. It is stemming from his conception of the ideal art that Plato condemns those kinds of art which lead away from the *eidé* and therefore from the Same in *Republic* book X. According to the conception of the ideal model of art, the multiple is not the absolutely unique singularity, but a multiple mode of showing solely the Same.

In the main dialogues of the early and middle periods, where sameness is being postulated primarily with regard to the being of the transcendental objectives of the *eidé* or the Good, poetry is described as both imitative and causing imitations in the souls of its hearers (*Republic* Books II and III). Its function is reduced to that of the representation of always but these *same* dominating concepts of identity. According to Plato, harmony and proportion as the characteristic features of the operation of sameness have to be aesthetically discerned.

Plato positions poetry at the lower end of the visible region due to its being an imitation and remaining trapped within the realm of sensation. Yet on the whole, the *Republic* is not against poetry but against its misunderstanding, whereby poetry remains under the realm of senses and becomes a mere representation of appearances 'at third remove from the throne of truth' (*Republic* 597 e).³⁸ Most probably, Plato's criticism of poetry is conditioned by his

³⁸ Kevin Corrigan and Elena Glazov-Corrigan in *Plato's Dialectic at Play: Argument, Structure, and Myth in the Symposium* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State Press, University Park, 2004) argue that Plato's strongest defense of poetry is not myth, but the dialogue form, and the *Symposium* above all, p. 223.

dissatisfaction with pleasure and entertainment value substituting for truth and symmetry that prevail in some of the works of his time.³⁹

In contrast to this view, the main function of poetry according to Plato is to call forth a vision of the intelligible realm of the *eidé* and the idea of the Good, empowering the human soul to transcend toward them. This can be demonstrated through the final book of the *Republic*, where the paradigm of *eidé* serves as the model for the carpenter who aims to create something similar to the real (*Republic* 597 a). The distinction is between three ‘types of bed’ (*Republic* 596 b – 598 b): the *eidos* of the bed, the bed fashioned by the carpenter (the copy) and the bed drawn by the painter (the copy of a copy). The allegory of the bed demonstrates that the oneness of the *eidé* is what is being endlessly represented by art and testifies to Plato’s understanding of the mimetic nature of poetry. Here again, the conception of the ideal model of poetry as a *mimesis* of the Same is opposed to those kinds of poetry which fail doing this and are therefore considered inferior to philosophy. Given that the nature of poetry is to reveal the concealed essence of the hypothetical Same, it is also described as being a kind of fascination and, thereby having a kind of hypnotic power (*Republic* 607 d). The divine nature of poetry and the divinely possessed personality of the poet are being referred to throughout most of the dialogues.

The dialogues *Ion*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus* engage the reader in a multilayered encounter with the creative process as such, postulating it as the representation of the metaphysical universal of the Same (in the form of the *eidé* or the Good). This assumption conditions their attempt to decipher the mystery of poetry with respect to the poet’s personality as the mediator through whom the divine word is being created. This tendency first becomes expressed in the early dialogue *Ion*, where the poet is described as being inspired, or divinely possessed throughout the creation process (*Ion* 533 e, 534). The process of creation is thus described as a prophetic act through which the concealed wisdom of the Same becomes revealed by the divinely possessed poet (*Ion* 534 b, c). The sublime power of this prophetic art becomes tangible by the metaphor of the *Heracleian stone* [*the magnet*] with its power to draw one iron ring to itself, and through it

³⁹ See: John Gibson Warry, *Greek Aesthetic Theory* (London: Methuen & Co, 1962), pp. 52 – 67 for an account of Plato’s evaluation of art and poetry and Schuhl, Pierre-Maxime *Platon et L’Art de son temps* (Paris: Alcan, 1933) for a detailed account of Plato’s relation to the art of his time.

others (*Ion* 533 d - 534). It stands at the heart of Plato's description of the relations between Gods, poets, and rhapsodes.

The general doctrine of inspiration delineated in the *Ion* becomes distinguished between the divine gift of inspiration and the pathological affliction of madness in the *Phaedrus* (265 a). Here, the kinship between poets and prophets acting in divine possession is unfolded in an absorbing way, embracing even larger aspects of *mystics* and *Love* (*Phaedrus* 265 b). The Socrates of the *Phaedrus* goes even further in stressing the ontological significance of madness as the 'gift of the god' from which 'the best things we have come' (*Phaedrus* 244) and connecting its genealogy to the word *manic* used for 'the finest experts of all — the ones who tell the future — thereby weaving insanity into prophecy' (*Phaedrus* 244 b, c). The description of the poetic process as a 'mania' implies the interweaving of *insanity*, *prophecy*, and *poetry* by virtue of which the wisdom of the Same is transmitted from the transcendental into the mundane realm. Here the process of transmittance is realized by the help of the Muses which belong to the so called species of *daemons*, persisting in various forms in most of the dialogues.⁴⁰ The dubious role of Muses is stressed in this process: 'if anyone comes to the gates of poetry and expects to become an adequate poet by acquiring expert knowledge of the subject without the Muses' madness, he will fail [...]' (*Phaedrus* 245).

The commentary on writing invented by Theuth with regard to memory acquires the active *kynesis* of recollection and is revived in the Aristotelian *anamnesis* or the Husserlian *noesis*. In the *Phaedrus* it conveys the recollection of the feelings that the absent has evoked: 'the recollection of the things our soul saw when it was travelling with god' (*Phaedrus* 249 c). Writing is thus reduced to the recollection of the wisdom of the metaphysical universal of the Same by those who already know it (*Phaedrus* 275 d). It comprises the allusion to a hypothetical universal other than itself or the feelings evoked by this other. The dual position of writing concerns its viewing as 'a potion for memory and for wisdom' or the introducer of 'forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it' (*Phaedrus* 275).

⁴⁰ See a thorough account of the concept of the daemonic and its connection to poetic inspiration in Plato in Angus Nicholls, *Goethe's Concept of the Daemonic* (Columbia S.C.: Camden House, 2006), pp. 53 – 56.

The concept of writing evoking the dual meaning of the Platonic *pharmakon* (*Phaedrus*) as a healing means or as poison for memory is further investigated by Derrida:

Writing, a mnemotechnic means, supplanting good memory, spontaneous memory, signifies forgetfulness. It is exactly what Plato said in the *Phaedrus*, comparing writing to speech [...] Forgetfulness because it is a mediation and the departure of the logos from itself.⁴¹

The *Symposium* also makes a shift into aesthetics, focusing upon the capacity of seeing the divine beauty itself in one form (*monoeidos*). The vision of the Beautiful itself (*Symposium* 211 e) conditions his validation of poetry as ‘beautiful and immortal’ (*Symposium* 209 d). The poetic process is as well regarded as a creation out of nothing (*Symposium* 205 c), whereas being a poet figures eminently, even amongst the virtues of the god, who is described as ‘so skilled a poet that he can make others into poets’ (*Symposium* 196 e).

In the *Timaeus* the reduction of the function of art to that of the representation of the transcendental objective of the Same is demonstrated by virtue of the analogies between divine and artistic creation or the deification of man and the humanization of god. The paradigm of creation comprises the creation of *Kosmos* (order) out of *Chaos* (disorder) or the moulding of the beautiful and harmonious out of the formless: ‘he [the god] took over all that was visible — not at rest but in discordant and disorderly motion - and brought it from a state of disorder to one of order’ (*Timaeus* 30).

The *god, the Demiurge* or the *craftsman* brings order by virtue of the *eidé* as patterns which are imposed onto *receptacles* underlying physical things. An artistic creation, analogous to divine creation, is the forming of the formless in resemblance to a higher reality. It is posed as the representation of some immutable metaphysical universal or ‘modelled after that which is changeless’ (*Timaeus* 29). The process of creation *per se* is described as the *mimesis* of the perfect and intelligible model which is always changeless as opposed to its deceitful images and reflections (*Timaeus*, 49), while the aim of artistic creation,

⁴¹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by G.Ch. Spivak (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 37.

and of speech is to ‘bring order to any orbit in our souls that has become unharmonized, and make concordant with itself’ (*Timaeus* 47 d).

This reading of the dialogues by Plato demonstrates that although Plato does not offer a consistent philosophical theory of art,⁴² he stresses its significance with regard to the issue of the metaphysical universal of the Same. The function of the ideal model of art should respectively be the *mimesis* or representation of solely the Same, the hypothetical universal par excellence. This view of art as the revealing of the concealed wisdom of the Same or the quest for the eternal *eidé* has an indisputable influence over Neoplatonism, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, while Romanticism borrows from the Platonic focus upon the divine power of the artist from which the work of art issues.

2. 6. The Limits of *Mimesis*

The questioning of the mimetic nature of art is manifested in the discussion of image-making crafts in the *Sophist*, where it is claimed that the ‘bold assumption’ of the not-being of the One postulated in the *Parmenides* is what conditions the existence of *phantasmata* (*Sophist* 236 a – 237 a). Here, sophistry postulated as the attempt to utter, say or think of the inconceivable, inexpressible, unspeakable and irrational non-being is opposed to the rationality of the *logos* (*Sophist* 238 c). It is noteworthy that this shift still informed one of the most influential discourses on the question of representation of reality in literature and ‘pure’, that is to say authentic, production of poetic reality, namely Erich Auerbach’s study *Mimesis* (1946).⁴³

The assumption of the non-being of the One thus gives rise to the fundamental differentiation between the making of images and the making of originals that conditions the further division of the making of images into the

⁴² See: Christopher Janaway, *Images of Excellence: Plato’s Critique of the Arts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 7, arguing that Plato does not offer a theory of aesthetic value or aesthetic experience, as he does not regard aesthetic value as sufficient to justify the arts.

⁴³ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Kultur*, 10th ed. (A. Francke Verlag Tübingen und Basel, 1946), cf. his afterword, pp. 515-518.

making of *likenesses* (*eikones*) and the making of *appearances* (*phantasmata*) (*Sophist* 235 e – 236 c). The likeness of the image to the original implies the manifestation of the original through the fact of the image's not-being of the original, while the appearance implies the radical lack, the distortion of the original. The *Sophist* thus juxtaposes two controversial views of art: the mimetic art, which represents nothing but the original Same and a different kind of art, which substitutes the *appearing fine* of the art-work itself for the genuine likeness to the original (*Sophist* 236 a – b). This new art of *phantasma* does not aspire to make a likeness of the metaphysical universal of the original One, as the point of departure is the very non-being of the One, but focuses upon the appearance of the copy itself.

The *Sophist* thus presents two controversial approaches to poetry: in the light of *mimesis* and *simulacrum*. Despite the fact that the ideal model of poetry is *mimesis*, and that sophistry is outlined in a negative implication, the significance of this dialogue lies in that it displays the possibility of questioning the mimetic nature of poetry by offering a controversial approach to it. This juxtaposition is based upon the questioning of the being of the Same in the *Parmenides* and its discussion in the light of its non-being. The questioning of the Parmenidian prohibition of non-being in its establishment of the being of non-being and the non-being of being (241d) represents various discussions of the metaphysical universal of the Same in the dimension of non-being, thereby representing controversial approaches to art.

To sum up, the influence of Plato's questioning of sameness upon the history of Western thought — starting from Plotinus and extending into Christian thought by way of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and into various Platonist and Neoplatonist movements of the Renaissance — has been indisputably profound. Its significance lies primarily in the ascent toward the essence of Being in general which is susceptible to the general, unifying principle of sameness.

The role of Plato is, however, by no means unequivocal: he is both, the first Western philosopher to incorporate the human dream of harmony and plenitude by offering if not a fully conceptualized, still a multi-dimensional postulation of sameness and at the same time, the first to reduce sameness to the metaphysical universal of the Same (under the guises of the *eidé*, the Good or the One). The limits of the postulation of the Same as a hypothetical universal par excellence, conditions its further development into a dominating concept of

identity suppressing any singularity and restricting the function of art to that of the representation of nothing but the Same.⁴⁴ Yet, it is again Plato who offers a way out of the dominating identity of the Same by postulating its non-being in the *Parmenides* and presenting sameness as an operation of participation, thereby opening perspectives for the possibility of liberating art from representation through discussing it in terms of simulacrum or *phantasma*.

⁴⁴ See: Gerard Genette, *The Architext : An Introduction*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 8 – 10 for a discussion of Plato's view on the representational character of poetry and p. 23, claiming of the Platonic-Aristotelian restriction of poetics to the representative weighing heavily on the theory of genres for several centuries.

3. Plotinus: Emanation as a Mode of Conceiving Sameness

3. 1. The Postulation of the Self-Sufficiency of the One

In the Ancient Greek philosophy, the last major mode of thinking of the pure unmediated identity of the Same — along with those of belonging and participation — is that of emanation. Emanative operation is the characteristic mode of the Neoplatonics, particularly Plotinus (204/5 – 270 C.E.) for representing sameness which nonetheless remains obscure in Plato.

Yet, not even Plotinus offers a full conceptualization of sameness in the *Enneads*, but merely delineates it in virtue of the postulation of the first principle of the One and its emanation. The One occupies a twofold position between a metaphysical principle and the result of the mystical experience of Plotinus,⁴⁵ according to which a mystical union with the hypernoetic One is suggested.⁴⁶ Due to its enigmatic nature, this Supreme principle is characterized as ineffable and may be revealed neither by knowing nor by the *Intellection*, but through a presence transcending all knowledge (VI.9.4).⁴⁷ It is thus valid to demonstrate merely the presence, but not the distinct features of the One which is apparently beyond conceivability.

Plotinus however questions even the existence of mere Oneness, stating that any predication of it would turn the first principle of One into two and therefore a plurality (VI.9.4). The solution to the controversial issue of the presence of the One and the questioning of its having essence at all may be found in the

⁴⁵ See: John N. Deck, *Nature, Contemplation, and the One: A Study in the Philosophy of Plotinus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), on the mythical experience of Plotinus based on the texts of Plotinus and Porphyry in p. 8.

⁴⁶ Gerald J. P. O'Daly, *Plotinus's Philosophy of the Self* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1974), pp. 164 -165.

⁴⁷ All reference to the *Enneads* from Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. by St. MacKenna (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1962).

assumption that what Plotinus aims to postulate is a primal conception of sameness, beyond any mediation. This primal sameness is characterized by unity and an unprecedented identity of what Lloyd Gerson calls the identity between essence and existence.⁴⁸

The idea of the pure identity of essence and existence is expressed through the hypothesis of the first principle of the One and its emanation into the multitude. The authentically One is thus postulated *a priori* as both intelligence and intelligible in unqualified simplicity, pure identity, unity and immutability as the incorporation of the desiderata concept of the Same (V.4.1). It stands for the ontological cause of the number and of multitude (III.8.9) which is posterior to the One. The significance of sameness is stressed through characterizing the essential nature of the manifold by the very need for that unity (VI.9.6), in virtue of which only 'beings are beings' (VI.9.1).

The Plotinian understanding of sameness thus expresses the general quest of Antiquity for unity and identity and is at the same time indisputably influenced by Plato's postulates of the metaphysical universals of the *eidé*, the Good and, particularly, the One of the *Parmenides*. On the whole, Plotinus maintains the basic scheme of sameness in virtue of *complication* which implies the inherence of the multiple in the One and vice versa, anchored in the intelligible/visible distinction and thereby, the possibility of revealing the One through the multiple. He himself admits that the distinction of the Platonic *Parmenides* between the primal unity of the One, the One-Many and the One-and-Many is in accordance with his thesis of the Three Kinds (V.1.8). Yet, Plotinus transforms Platonism in a way as to open the issue of sameness up to quite new lines of development and view it not as an operation of participation, but as that of emanation.⁴⁹

The basic difference between Platonism and Neoplatonism, i.e. participation and emanation with regard to sameness, lies in the transposition of the focus of examination from the multiple into the One. The trajectory of transposition is traced from the multiple, as the active agent of representing the Same, incapable of otherwise manifesting itself in Plato into the self-sufficient One, creating the other than itself as a result of overflowing or superabundance in Plotinus (V.2.1). The One which is perfect and, thereby lacks nothing, becomes

⁴⁸ Lloyd P. Gerson, *Plotinus* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 6.

⁴⁹ For a controversial view arguing against the emanative theory see: Lloyd P. Gerson, *Plotinus* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 27.

the active generative and creative agent in an operation of sameness, where emanation substitutes for imitation and, to use Gilles Deleuze's description, 'the idea of a *gift*' substitutes for 'that of violence'.⁵⁰

The Plotinian One is thus postulated primarily with regard to its capacity to make gifts, but is simultaneously beyond this capacity and remains unchanged in itself. Plotinus emphasizes the position of the *beyond* of the highest principle of identity, stating that the One is 'great beyond anything' (VI.9.6) and not only is above the act of giving, but is also described as 'transcending Being' (V.4.1) and transcending 'all of the intellectual nature' (III.8.9). The tracing of the emanation of the Plotinian One reveals the 'self-sufficing essence' and perfection of the One that, together with its attribute of being 'great in power', make it the supreme hierarchical principal of sameness (VI.9.6). As a concept of pure identity par excellence, the One is also described as being 'supremely adequate, autonomous, all-transcending' (VI.9.6).

The fact that the One and the Good have analogical features allows concluding that these two concepts are interchangeable in Plotinus. The Good, similar to the One, is characterized as self-sufficient and posed as the centre and cause of every act (III.8.11). Emilson explicates the fact that the One is also the Good by its being a totally self-sufficient completeness other things aspire to.⁵¹ The One or the Good are thus postulated primarily in respect of their emanative activity which is manifested through the act of giving or the producing out of perfection, whereby the One is qualified as the always perfect, everlasting producer, producing the less than itself (V.1.6 - 7).

⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 2005), p. 170.

⁵¹ Eyjólfur Kjavat Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 72.

3. 2. Distinguishing Between the Same and the Lack of the Same

The primal quest for sameness in Plotinus may be traced primarily in virtue of a differentiation between the perfection of the One, identical in itself and in need of nothing and the manifold, in need of the unity, identity and perfection of the One. The significance of sameness, of an underlying identity and unity is stressed through *need* which, to use Eyjólfur Emilsson's words, 'is a relational stance implying a difference between what is in need and that which it needs'.⁵²

The difference between the self-sufficient One and the manifold which is not self-sufficient and, thereby needs the higher principle of the Good to be able to act and know it, conditions the creation of the less perfect principles of the Intellect and the Soul. The need for the perfect identity of the One guides the aspiring of these inferior principles to the identity of the One.

Despite the fact that this study is not engaged in the investigation of the hypostases of the Intellect and the Soul, it inquires into them in respect of the issue of sameness. As such, the significance of tracing the hierarchical structure of the Soul, the Intellect and the One comprised in the Plotinian system, lies in tracing the emanation of the higher principle of identity, out of perfection, into the lower principles which are in need of identity and perfection. Within this framework, another movement of the lower principles in pursuit of the simple and the irreducible prime principle encompassing all the Ideas or immutable models of things may be traced.

This emanative scheme implies that the highest absolute prime identity of the One, as an infinite potentiality beyond time, creates the eternal actuality of the Intellectual-Principle — circumscribing the Nature of the Authentic Existents — which correspondingly creates the Soul, existing in time, containing Ideal-Principles and on the model of Ideas, giving birth to matter in its diversity (V.1.4). The Intellect, contrary to the pure identity of the One, rooted in the identity of subject/object, is grounded upon their distinction and is characterized by the longing for that identity.

⁵² Eyjólfur Kjavat Emilsson, *Plotinus on Intellect*, p. 84.

These distinctions condition the postulates of the Intellectual-Principle, Existence, Difference, and Identity as the first categories in Plotinus (V.1.4). Motion and Rest are also included, providing for the intellectual act and preserving identity above any differentiation. Plotinus posits the problem of identity and difference as the source for creativity: the different (from the All) in Matter is the generative power that gives rise to myriad forms, which are, however, subordinated to the absolute prime identity (II.4.13).

Identity is the absolute prime principle par excellence, the ontological cause and reason for difference which is always governed by the need for identity and aspires to it. Difference is thus viewed not in its conceptuality, but as the lack of identity, just as evil is explicated by the lack of goodness giving rise to a negative theology equating absence with the negation of quality (II.4.13). Difference thus always has a merely negative value and is defined by the lack of identity which is always positive and dominating.

As we can see, the Plotinian conception of sameness implies the absolute identity of the first principle of the One as an encompassing totality, a unity prior to duality, the source of all oppositions and its emanation into lower degrees of reality which are nothing but images of the One.

3. 3. Images of the Same

The principle of the absolute prime identity of the Same conditions the neo-Platonic conception of art as the quest for this identity, in virtue of creating images of it. What lies at the heart of Plotinus's understanding of art, is thus its being positioned in respect of the intelligible reality and in subordination to that reality. The function of art, in line with the Platonic theory of *mimesis*, is thereby reduced to the representation of the higher reality of the intelligible One.

Plotinus, however, modifies it, by offering the heuristic theory, anchored in the differentiation between god's creation and man's invention. The genuine function of art is thus to help us invent the eternal immutable Same, as the intelligible model or that which is represented through every art-work. The operation of emanation becomes perceptible in art-theory, in respect of which the first principle of the Same becomes less perfect and less concentrated in unity,

while evolving outwards (V.8.1). The images of the higher reality represented in the art-work are then less perfect than the reality itself, as correspondingly is the object of art with respect to the idea of art.

The significance of the neo-Platonic understanding of art lies also in its introspective nature, in respect of which the outside vision of the first principle is transposed within. The artist-creator ‘possessed by Apollo or by one of the Muses’ has to no longer look outside for the vision of the Same, but find the strength to see it within (V.8. 10). The conceiving of sameness here is transposed into the pure identification with it, as to be most truly in beauty is to become one with it (V.8.11).

Here we come upon what Pierre Hadot describes as Plotinus’s central intuition, in respect of which the human self is *not* irrevocably separated from its eternal model which is within ourselves.⁵³ This introspective motion brings about a new understanding of the conception of sameness encompassing the identification of the inner self with the divine principle. Artistic creation is then equated to the mystic unification of the self with the Spirit.⁵⁴ It can be realized by lovers of the pure authentic beauty, having clear vision of the splendour above and creating images of it due to the pain for the lack of it (V.9. 1 & V.9.2).

The pure identity of essence and existence of the ontological One implies the idea of primal silence and the presupposition that all is made silently and without toil, ‘with the partaking of solely Being and Idea’ (V.8.7). The implication of silence brings about the conception of the perfect unity of things and words preceding any discourse of signification and rejecting any finality of expression. This conception of the pure identity of the One conditions both, the mimetic nature of art and the limits of mimesis. From one side, the function of art is the representation of the One, from another it is the acknowledgement of the impossibility of representing its pure identity which is beyond any mediation of signification.

The hypothesis, concerning the formlessness of the One and the limits of giving any definition to it, conditions the transposition of the issue of the Same into the dimension of a pure intactness of name and thing in the truth of silence transcending the sense-realm (V.5.6). This implies the attempt of liberating art

⁵³ Pierre Hadot, *Plotinus or the Simplicity of Vision*, trans. by Michael Chase (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 27.

⁵⁴ See: Pierre Hadot, pp. 32 – 33 for an account of the mystic experience of the self.

from the domain of representation and postulating it in terms of the pure contemplation of the Same.

As a result, the metaphysical universal of the Same is postulated as the indefinable principle of pure identity which cannot be conveyed by any sound or hearing, yet only through images to some extent (V.5.6 & V.8). In this context, the naming of the Same is postulated in terms of an impossibility of naming or talking of the untellable, in which case art may be defined with regard to the 'agony of true creation' (V.5.6) or to its quest for silence, for the yet unreleased energetic intensity preceding creation.

Any discourse of representation is thus posed as the quest to represent the primal vision of the identical One in virtue of the transformation of breath or pneuma into speech (V.5.5) through vibrant air, disseminated via sound waves. Yet, it is simultaneously posed in terms of an impossibility to represent the pure identity of the Same, constituting a mere preliminary affirmation of its absolute simplicity and remaining inadequate to express its nature (V.5.6).

Together with the philosophical operations of belonging and participation, the Plotinian theory of emanation constitutes a major mode within Antiquity for representing the predominating concept of the identity of the metaphysical universal of the Same or the operation of sameness. The neo-Platonic conception of sameness manifested in virtue of the self-sufficient One and its emanation into the inferior hypostases, made a great impact on theological-philosophical thought throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, including Meister Eckhart, Nicolas of Cusa, Giordano Bruno, and up to Spinoza and Leibniz.

4. An Outline of the Perspectives of the Development of Sameness

4.1. Conceiving of Sameness through Christian Monotheism

The notion of sameness in its subtle contrivances anchored in the unity and identity of the Universe and manifesting itself in virtue of the predominance of the metaphysical universal of the Same, that is, as the ontological cause and reason of being, remains significant throughout the Christian Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

The medieval thinkers adopt the Greek paradigm of representation of the intelligible realm in virtue of the visible world, though introducing ways of making it compatible with the divinely created theory of the Universe. Among others, this tendency prevails in the works of the highly influential Christian philosopher St Augustine (354 – 430) who delineates the right order between this world and the higher ‘supreme, unchangeable, eternal’ and immutable realm of equality as that of ‘imitation of eternity’, where ‘earthly things are subject to heavenly things’, associating ‘the cycles of their own duration in rhythmic succession with the song of the great whole’ (Book VI, x. 29).⁵⁵ The cause of the supreme identity of the immutable and eternal rhythm is the Christian God, therefore the way toward its conceiving, lies through the inward movement to God (Augustine, *De Musica*, Book VI, xii. 36).

Conceiving of the supreme identity of the Same, medieval thought attempts to combine the Platonic doctrine of the *eidé* and the Plotinian theory of emanation with their relocation from the outside into the inside of God’s mind, offering a theory of the sovereign freedom of God as the single cause of all existence.⁵⁶ The Greek paradigm of creation, implying the postulate of the ontological Same and its manifestation in virtue of the contingent manifold is maintained, yet with a reorganization in the direction of Christian monotheism,

⁵⁵ All reference to St. Augustine in *St. Augustine’s De Musica*, trans. by William Francis Jackson Knight (London: The Orthological Institute, 1949).

⁵⁶ See: Joseph Koterski, *An Introduction to Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 61 – 82, for a detailed account of this combination.

whereby the classical paradigm is rephrased as that of transubstantiation. Analogously, in the medieval conception of sameness as the explanation of Being, a named, anthropologized, localized and temporized Logos substitutes for the metaphysical universal of the Same. The biographical, ethical, and existential latitudes of the Christian Logos gratifying human needs for the interesting and the spectacle distort the enigma of the Ancient Same and pose the polarized microcosm of the human being, saturated with the existential feelings of love/hatred, belief/despair, good/evil, fear/bravery at the centre of that story.

From now on, the revelation of the transubstantiation and incarnation of the Same is to be sought solely in the Scripture which is the embodiment of the Divine word. Medieval postulations of sameness are thereby reduced to the decipherment and endless interpretations of the Divine word which is presupposed to exist hidden beneath the visible marks of the Scripture. The characteristic traits of the medieval conception of the Scripture as that which allows us to recognize eternal truths can be found in the Italian philosopher and theologian St. Bonaventure (ca. 1217 - 1274). He describes the Scripture as the highest light, illuminating the mind for the understanding of the supreme identity of the One which is beyond reason and cannot be acquired by human research, but comes down by inspiration from God. The conception of identity is delineated through a combination of the Classical understanding of the truth of oneness in its spiritual and mystical sense and the Christian representation of its *threefoldness*: ‘the eternal generation and Incarnation of Christ, the pattern of human life, and the union of the soul with God’ (*On the Reduction of Arts to Theology*, section 5).⁵⁷

The divine light which ‘was in the beginning’, is primarily viewed as the incorporation of the concept of ontological identity in the intactness of words and things, *saying* and *being*.⁵⁸ It is traced in respect of its identity, the distortion of the identity ever since the Adamic naming, even before the myth of Babel and its actualization in language aspiring to re-establish the lost adequacy of words and things.

The concept of identity, prevailing in Ancient Greece, is now being represented in respect of the loss of identity by man — as ‘man became ugly by his own wish. He lost the whole which in obedience to God’s laws, he once

⁵⁷ St. Bonaventure, *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, trans. by Sister Emma Therese Healey, St. Bonaventure (New York: The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure College, 1955).

⁵⁸ Genesis 1.3.

possessed' — and his eternal quest for it (Augustine, *De Musica*, Book VI, xi.30). The concept of sameness is thereby viewed as a redemption narrative in respect of which ever since Adamic naming, God and man perpetually become One in the act of creation, while language represents the infinite potentiality of the unformed through the actuality of formed matter.

Against a background of the philosophical-theological postulations of the intelligibility of the Same, the medieval discourse constitutes thus merely an interpretation of interpretation: an interpretation of the images or *icons* of the Same and the signs and traces of its oneness manifested in the Scriptures. Medieval philosophical and aesthetic discourses are theologized and reduced to the exegesis and interpretation of the perpetually repeated subjects of the Bible, thereby eventually asserting the predominance of the metaphysical universal of the Same. As an endless interpretation of the Same, the medieval discourse applies the techniques of hermeneutics and semiotics to decipher the meaning of its signs and define the laws that link them.

The medieval artist or philosopher is no longer the mytho-poetic creator in analogy with God in the freedom of the pure act of creation, but a craftsman making the already existing shine through shaped matter. The art of interpretation is viewed as a craft, *ars* is *techne*: in order to interpret, the artist is in need of special hermeneutic techniques, the application of which makes the artist a craftsman and art a craft.

The medieval conception of art as an essentially impersonal, or non-subjective representation of the transcendent realm, is derived from the triad of terms given in the Book of Wisdom: number, weight and measure, and is conditioned by the pancalistic vision of the cosmos (based upon the supremacy of beauty).⁵⁹ This vision is anchored in the Platonic idea, viewing the beauty of the world as the image of the Ideal Beauty, combined with the Biblical claim of the harmonious creation of the world. The significance of the idea of beauty in medieval cosmology, and hence in aesthetic vision may be illustrated through Bonaventure's definition of beauty as 'the splendour of all the transcendentals together', comprising those of one, true, good and beautiful.⁶⁰ Medieval aesthetics as the representation of the intelligible realm of the beautiful may rightly be

⁵⁹ Umberto Eco and Hugh Bredin, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Hugh Bredin (London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 17 – 19.

⁶⁰ Umberto Eco and Hugh Bredin, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, p. 24.

defined as that of harmony and proportion.⁶¹ In Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274), it is anchored in the criteria of integrity, proportion and clarity.⁶²

4. 2. *Analogy as a Way of Conceiving of Identity*

In the Middle Ages and throughout the Renaissance the ontological postulation of sameness is transmuted into doctrines of God as the first cause of contingent things, requiring the presence of God who himself exists with no need of a cause. Thomas Aquinas aims to prove rationally (within the framework of *fides quaerens intellectum*, *faith seeking understanding*) the existence of God as the ultimate principle which does not need a casual explanation (*Summa of Theology* 1.11.3).⁶³ He offers a new understanding of sameness, in respect of which the supreme identity is in God, whereby ideas are also viewed as totally identical with God.⁶⁴ The plurality of ideas, arising from the difference in the nature of things is not viewed as a unity of pure intelligible essences in their self-sufficiency, but is subordinated to the absolute identity of the self-existent and uncreated God.⁶⁵

The idea of the absolute identity within God brings about significant modifications in conceiving of sameness in virtue of *analogy*, substituting for that of participation and eventually taking on greater significance in the philosophies of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.⁶⁶ According to it, the plenitude of the Same is present in the multiple not as part of their essence or an accident, but in all things innermost (*Summa of Theology* 1.8.1.c). The relationship between the identity of the Same and the multiple is designated in accordance with analogy or congruence, in respect of which the qualities persisting in the multiple are present in God in a higher modality and intensity.

⁶¹ See: Umberto Eco and Hugh Bredin, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, pp. 28 – 42 on the *aesthetics of proportion*.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 76.

⁶³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa of Theology* in *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. by Anton C. Pegis, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1945).

⁶⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, trans. by Robert W. Mulligan (New York: Preserving Christian Publications, 1993), I, pp. 139 – 141.

⁶⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, p. 147.

⁶⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, p. 175.

Analogy is viewed as a higher form for conceiving of identity, as compared with those already familiar to Greek science and medieval thought, in that it treats not the visible or substantial similitude, but the subtle resemblances of relations drawing together all the figures in the whole universe.⁶⁷

The identity between God and the multiple is thus delineated through what Deleuze describes as the co-presence of two correlative movements of *complicare* and *explicare* substituting for a series of successive subordinate emanations.⁶⁸ Conceived in virtue of analogy, God remains implicitly in himself in complicating the multiple, while the multiple remains inherently in God in explicating and implicating him. The theory of the correlative movements of complication and explication as a way of conceiving the predominating idea of identity, offers the replacement of participating or emanative operations by that of immanence. The operation of immanence implies thus the substitution of an equality of being — anchored in the presence of the multiple to the Same and the presence of the Same in the multiple — for the hierarchy of hypostases dominating throughout the Classical Antiquity.

The idea of a *complicative* God, explicating himself through the multiple, remains persistent in the philosophy of Nicholas Cusanus (1401 - 1464). He conceives of the idea of identity by virtue of the two postulations of God: as the ‘universal complication’, in which everything is and as the ‘universal explication, in the sense that he is in everything’.⁶⁹

The replacement of the participation of the One in the multiple by the operation of analogy gives rise to the metaphysical objective of the Absolute Maximum which encompasses the multiple and is explicated through it. Cusanus postulates this encompassing Absolute in the following passage: ‘In God we must not conceive of distinction and indistinction [...] as two contradictories, but we must conceive of them as antecedently existing in their own most simple beginning, where distinction is not other than indistinction.’⁷⁰ The Maximus is thus described according to the principle of immanence as the absolute unity

⁶⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, a translation of *Les Mots et les choses* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), pp. 21 – 22.

⁶⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, p. 175.

⁶⁹ Nicholas of Cusa, ‘On Learned Ignorance’, II.3.g in Deleuze, Gilles, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, p. 175.

⁷⁰ *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. by H. Lawrence Bond (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), p. 29.

explicated or expressed in virtue of the multiple which, correspondingly is the expression or explication of the Maximum: ‘Absolute maximum is the unity which is all; it enfolds all [...] and as nothing is opposed to it, the minimum as well coincides with it’(Chapter 2).⁷¹ The conceiving of God as the coincidence of opposites or of contradictories is however beyond reason: the mind has to move beyond reason and intellect to see that God is both maximum and minimum, both everywhere and nowhere.⁷²

The actuality of the manifold in Cusanus’s philosophy is thereby reduced to that of the mere representation of the predominating idea of identity or the unfolding of the potentiality of the Absolute, just as ‘number is the unfolding of unity, motion of rest, time of eternity, composition of simplicity, time of the present, magnitude of the point, inequality of equality, diversity of identity’.⁷³

Analogously, finite art is the representation or the image of the infinite divine art, ‘more the perfecting than the copying of created figures’.⁷⁴ It is the dissolution of any differentiation within the absolute identity: ‘absolute creative art, subsisting in itself to such a degree that the art is the artist, and its mastery is the master.’⁷⁵ The principle of analogy, anchored in complication and explication serves as the key concept for explicating not only the creation of the Universe, but artistic invention as well. Willing and performing coincide in the omnipotence of the artist, in whose breath (*spiritus*) ‘exists word or conception as well as power’.⁷⁶ Similarly, God in whom wisdom and omnipotence exist in the most perfect will creates by means of the spirit in which ‘the wisdom of the Son and the omnipotence of the Father dwell’.⁷⁷

The operation of the immediate and adequate expression of the Absolute through the multiple, described by Deleuze as that of expressive immanence, comprehending the aspects of complication, explication, inherence, and implication, embraces the expression of God in the world which is ‘carried into

⁷¹ Nicholas of Cusa, *The Layman On Wisdom and the Mind*, trans. with an intr. by M.L. Fuhrer (Canada: Dovehouse Editions, 1989), p. 58.

⁷² Edward F. Cranz, *Nicholas of Cusa and the Renaissance*, ed. by Thomas M. Izbicki and Gerald Christianson (Aldershot, Brookfield USA: Ashgate Variorum, 2000), p. 23.

⁷³ Nicholas of Cusa, *The Layman On Wisdom and the Mind*, p. 65.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 60.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 99.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 99.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 99.

God in such a way that it loses its limits or finitude, and participates directly in divine infinity'.⁷⁸ From this viewpoint, the relationship between God and the world may be explicated by Giordano Bruno's (1548 - 1600) metaphor of infinity, the centre of which 'is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere [...]' or the circumference of which 'is everywhere, but the centre is not to be found'.⁷⁹

Bruno extends the conception of analogy, viewing the absolute identity of the multiple in the infinite which cannot be subject to change nor can it be altered by these contrary things, since 'in it everything is concordant [...] it is one and the same, [...] infinite, immobile' (Fifth Dialogue).⁸⁰ He offers the idea of an immutable identity complicating within itself the multiple which is merely 'a diverse and different face of the same substance'.⁸¹ The crux of his conception of sameness is thus an unalterable substance which always remains the Same and is explicated or expressed in virtue of the multiplicity, described as 'modes and multiformity of being'.⁸² The diversity of the multiple is subordinated to the predominance of the identity of the Same and is viewed as merely the representation of this identity.

The conception of expressive immanence governs the entire relationship between the identity of the Same and the multiple in Bruno, implying the assumption of the simultaneous co-existence of a complicative Same and an explicative multitude. Everything is thus in perpetual transmutation, moving from possibility to actuality and aspiring to the absolute potency and act of the One and the Same. The trajectory of this movement may be traced in virtue of the ascent 'going up from physical universality [...] to the height of the archetype [...] until [...] a single original and universal substance identical for all'.⁸³

Far from offering an overall analysis, the outline of the development of sameness and the application of new forms for conceiving it in virtue of Christian Monotheism and the Renaissance thought grounded upon a few thinkers, aims to demonstrate the persistence of the thinking of pure unmediated identity in a variety of guises throughout these lengthy periods.

⁷⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, p. 176.

⁷⁹ Giordano Bruno, *Five Dialogues by G. Bruno, Cause, Principle, and Unity* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1976), p. 137.

⁸⁰ Giordano Bruno, *Five Dialogues by G. Bruno, Cause, Principle, and Unity*, p. 135.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 53.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 138.

⁸³ Giordano Bruno, *Five Dialogues by G. Bruno, Cause, Principle, and Unity*, p. 140.

4. 3. Finalizing Thinking in Identical Terms

The last stage in philosophy when it is still valid to think of the plenitude of the Same in respect of the pure unmediated identity is represented by the philosophical systems of Baruch Spinoza (1632 - 1677) and Gottfried Leibniz (1646 - 1716). Far from representing comprehensive analyses of their systems, we will attempt to demonstrate that what still remains at the heart of their thought is the thinking of sameness as pure identity.

As we have attempted to show throughout the present part, the thinking of the identity of the Same has been conceived by virtue of the operations of belonging, participation, and emanation. At a particular moment in its development, in medieval and Renaissance thought, the issue of the Same is tackled by way of analogy which brings about the perspective of viewing it in still another dimension of immanence. Sameness thus is conceived in terms of the Deleuzian formulation of expressive immanence, implying the correlate movements of the complication of the multiple in the Same and its explication by the multiple.

The thinking of the identity of the Same in virtue of an expressive immanence is what links the two philosophers of the seventeenth century, Spinoza and Leibniz who introduce it through the theories of the modes of the invariant substance or through monadology, correspondingly.

What is essential in Spinoza's philosophy is the absolute governance of univocity which enables the forming and grasping of an absolutely adequate idea. The univocity implies *univocity of attributes, univocity of causation, and univocity of ideas*.⁸⁴ The univocity of causation implies that God is the cause of the multiple: 'Whatsoever is, is in God, and without God nothing can be, or conceived' (*Ethics*, part I, Prop. XV).⁸⁵

The first and second *Corollaries* to the XIV Proposition suggest a univocity of attributes, in respect of which attributes are in the same form as the substance which complicates all modes and accidents: 'God is one, that is only one substance can be granted in the universe, and that substance is absolutely

⁸⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, pp. 330 - 333.

⁸⁵ Benedictus de Spinoza, *The Chief Works*, trans. and intr. by R.H.M. Elwes (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1912.), pp. 54-55.

infinite [...] extension and thought are either attributes of God or [...] accidents [...] of the attributes of God.’⁸⁶

The univocity of attributes governs also the postulation of the *finite* as the modification of the *infinite* or as accident or attribute through which, in virtue of its adequacy to the *infinite*, the essence of the infinite is perceived. God is accordingly defined as a ‘substance, consisting of infinite attributes, of which each expresses eternal and infinite essentiality’ (*Ethics*, part I, Prop. XI).⁸⁷

The two modes of univocity imply the third one, the univocity of ideas, implying that the infinite, indivisible substance and the finite share common notions: ‘In God there is necessarily the idea not only of his essence, but also of all things which necessarily follow from his essence’ (*The Ethics*, part II, Prop. III).⁸⁸ The univocity of idea unites God and the multiple in their absolute oneness: ‘The idea of God, from which an infinite number of things follow in infinite ways, can only be one’ (*The Ethics*, part II, Prop. IV).⁸⁹

In Spinoza, univocity as a way of conceiving of sameness conditions his pantheistic worldview, anchored in the adequacy between the depersonalized immanence of God, as the only self-creating cause or *natura naturans*, ‘a being that we conceive clearly and distinctly through itself’⁹⁰ and the multiple as *natura naturata* or the working out of a creative endeavour of the one true substance. The adequacy between the One and the multiple implies the univocity of God and the world, in respect of which God is identical with the world and not beyond: ‘God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things’ (*The Ethics*, part I, Prop. XVIII).⁹¹

Spinoza’s deification of nature, interpreted as an essentially poetic approach to nature and his quest for an adequate knowledge of *Deus sive Natura* (God or Nature) in the created world is what attracts Goethe, Novalis, Lessing,

⁸⁶ Benedictus de Spinoza, *The Chief Works*, p. 55.

⁸⁷ Benedictus de Spinoza, *The Chief Works*, p. 51.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 84.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 85.

⁹⁰ Benedictus de Spinoza, *Short Treatise On God, Man and His Well-being*, trans. and ed. by A. Wolf (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1910), p. 56.

⁹¹ Benedictus de Spinoza, *Short Treatise On God, Man and His Well-being*, p. 62.

Herder, Hölderlin, and Jacobi, who interpret his monistic philosophy not only scientifically but also theologically and aesthetically.⁹²

To sum up, Spinoza construes sameness in virtue of the principle of univocity which is a principle of identity par excellence and is rooted in the common cause, form, and notion persisting in the relationship between the One and the multiple: ‘there is but *One*, which exists through itself, and is a support to all other attributes.’⁹³ The Same in Spinoza, appearing under the guise of one substance as now God, now nature; now mind, now matter, is imbued with a pantheistic sense and is inseparable from the created world. The aesthetic implications of this is that poetry comes to express an indwelling, pantheistic nature; an implication, which will be crucial for Schelling, et al.

The *monadological* philosophy of Leibniz combines the materialistic-empiricist, naturalistic and pantheistic systems coexisting in the 17th-18th centuries in order to ground the true unity of the Same in relation to multiplicity. Sameness is tackled from two fundamentally different positions: from a *quasi-atomistic* worldview, attempting to reduce the Same to a prime indivisible constituent and from a theological one, viewing sameness in virtue of the analogy between the One and the multiple. In both cases, the principles of unity, analogy, and harmony govern the relationship between the One and the multiple.

The monadistic approach to the problem of the Same, reducing all things to one indivisible, incessantly active constituent recalls the similar operation of belonging in the Presocratic atomists. Yet, it differs from them by the spiritualistic approach to the *monad* which is not merely an atomistic, but also a metaphysical concept. The monads are postulated as simple substances or ultimate units of nature, indivisible (3) and having no parts (1), whose energy impels them to ceaseless activity in accordance with their nature.⁹⁴

Leibniz introduces the *monad* in its function of representing the universe as a principle of unity, identity, and harmony. In virtue of its original inner power, independent of that of every other *monad* and as a ‘perpetual living mirror of the universe’ (56), each of the monads reflects the universe in different degrees of

⁹² On Spinoza’s reception by German thought around 1800 see Margarethe Wegenast, *Hölderlin’s Spinoza-Rezeption* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1990).

⁹³ Benedictus de Spinoza, *Short Treatise On God, Man and His Well-being*, p. 33.

⁹⁴ Reference from G.W. Leibniz, *Monadology*, trans. by Nicholas Rescher (London: Routledge, 2002).

clarity and perfection. Yet, the reflected is always but the *same* universe in its unity and infinity, the identity of which dominates upon the different perceptions of the monads.

The introduction of the monad demonstrates that sameness remains at the heart of Leibniz's philosophical system which aims to represent it in terms of pure identity. Sameness is postulated here in virtue of representation: the representation of the intelligible through *psychological* or *purely intellectual elements* by the cognitive function, giving rise to a complete reproduction (*Abbildung*) of the universe which is complemented by the subjective variations of the individual approach.⁹⁵ Sameness is also represented in virtue of expression: of the expression of the pre-established unity, identity and harmony of the macrocosm through the individual substance of the microcosm of the monad.

The conceiving of sameness by Spinoza and Leibniz constitutes the last phase in the thinking of its pure identity. In the next part, we will inquire into the philosophical digression from the Same throughout the 17th and 18th centuries and the consequences it brings about in the philosophical and poetic thought.

⁹⁵ Anna Tereza Tymieniecka, *Leibniz' Cosmological Synthesis* (Assen: Royal VanGorcum Ltd., 1964), p. 98.

Part Two: Digression from Sameness

‘Aesthetics [...] is unable to think of art according to its proper statute, and so long as man is prisoner of an aesthetic perspective; the essence of art remains closed to him’.¹

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the limits of philosophical postulations of sameness in respect of pure identity — in the long philosophical tradition extending from the Presocratics to Leibniz and Spinoza — become tangible. The metaphysical signified of the Same eventually becomes profane from being perpetually circulated as a dominant concept of unity and identity. Philosophy faces a dilemma of either re-postulating sameness by maintaining the classical hypothesis of its being or, by questioning the entire tradition, to suspend the postulation of the Same as the fundamental issue of philosophy. Leaving the examination of the re-postulation of sameness to the third and fourth parts of the present study, *the digression from the Same* will inquire into the second path where philosophy abstains from posing the issue of sameness at all. In so doing, this part will trace the digression from the Same amounting to an entire reorganization of thought, with regard to which the origin of philosophy and philosophical poetics are being re-thought outside the realm of representation.

What are the fundamental directions and consequences of this reorganization in philosophical and poetic thought? Does this reorganization point to the limits of sameness and question the validity of this entire tradition dedicated to the revelation of its enigma, or is it itself a limited conception of philosophy and poetics detached from the issue of sameness? Is the suspension of the issue of sameness the only way out of the limitations of representation? And do the new standards of validation derived from this suspension reveal the hitherto concealed mystery of the art work, or do they represent merely a limited conception irreconcilable with its genuine essence?

¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, trans. by Georgia Albert (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 102.

These and other similar issues will be addressed in this part of the thesis through inquiring into the philosophical system of Kant and the philosophical discipline of aesthetics, the function of which is to validate art in non-cognitive terms with regard to its practical functions according to taste, pleasure, naturalness, and truth.

The essential traits of digression become substantial in Kant who offers understanding or intellect — defined by Hegel as ‘the absolute immovable, insuperable finitude of human Reason’² — as a substitute for the metaphysical signified of the Same. He suggests that the divided, dichotomized, and differentiated spheres of knowledge should substitute for the wisdom of the identity, plenitude, and harmony of the unified Cosmos.

By conducting his inquiry in the direction of the *a priori* synthesis of subjective experience and the conditions of possibility of experience itself, Kant abstains from the very postulation of sameness. It is, therefore, not the origins, foundation or even limits of the Same that are being reviewed, but the origin of philosophy which, with Kant, digresses from the issue of sameness toward the examination of the conditions of the existence of philosophical knowledge. As a result, philosophy is *anthropologized* and reconsidered as a reflection on subjectivity and reduced to the realm of judgements derived from experience or empirical observations and their *a priori* conditions. The subjective assessment of experience, sharply distinguishing between thinking and being, substitutes for the objective assessment of the Same with its adequacy of thinking and being.

The digression from the sameness will also be traced through the aesthetic postulations of art during this period when the thinking of identity gives way to the analyses of the phenomenal appearance of art-works with regard to the categories of the beautiful and the sublime. The newly formed discipline of aesthetics transposes its inquiry from the cognition of the Same (as its object of cognition) into the realization of the ego’s subjectivity in respect of the opposed objectivity.

The transitory reign of pleasure comes to substitute for the outworn concept of the Same and becomes the subject of debate, reflection, and imaginative

² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, trans. by Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), p. 77.

representation. Jean Starobinski argues that the eighteenth century is primarily famous for questioning the criteria of pleasure, discovering all the problems inherent in pleasure, and actually inventing pleasure.³ Sensibility is accompanied by a paradigm of rationality based upon the dissection of art into innumerable genera and species via clearly stated definitions and categories, and failing to re-cohere it on the ground of an underlying identity. With regard to this paradigm, art is being validated in respect of fortuitous principles and faculties via the analysis of its generic peculiarities, kinds, disposition of qualities, and principles of definition.

The impact of Kant's divide between the fixed and unalterable oppositions of sensibility and understanding will also be traced in the development of empirical, emotional, psychological, and pragmatic interpretations of art. A brief outline of the aesthetic legacy of the aforementioned period will not only demonstrate the digression from sameness but also point to the limits of thinking of the pure identity of sameness.

³ Jean Starobinski, *The Invention of Liberty*, trans. by Bernard C. Swift (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1987), p. 53.

1. Aesthetic Theories as a Transposition into Subjectivity

1. 1 Shifting from the Poetics of Sameness to a Subject-Centred Aesthetics of Reception

Starting from the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries, the metaphysical concept of the Same which dominated philosophical thought from Antiquity to the Renaissance, eventually becomes obsolete. Philosophy stops being concerned with the issue of sameness and the problem of its identical representation via art. The Same eludes the horizon of thought, as we will see, not for good but merely for about two centuries to return afterwards in its full splendour as absolute totality in its plenitude (in Schelling and Hegel) and in the de-forming difference of the Other (in Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and others).

Meanwhile, acknowledging the exhaustion of the issue of sameness as a result of its repeated postulation as a metaphysical signified of pure identity and unity, philosophy throughout the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, rather than re-postulating sameness, chooses to digress from it. The philosophical digression from the Same has its direct influence upon the formation of the discipline of aesthetics, the fulcrum of which becomes David Hume's *Of the Standard of Taste* (1757), as a substitute for the metaphysical discourses on the Same. A brief outline of the prevailing aesthetic theories will, thus, be provided aiming to portray this period as a mere fragment of digression on the general canvas of the philosophy of sameness. This inquiry into aesthetic theory points to the limits of the digression from sameness and the urge for its different postulation. Far from attaining the genuine essence of the art-work, these theories focus upon its derivative functions, thereby allowing us to conclude that a digression from sameness amounts to the digression from art. As Giorgio Agamben rightly argues: 'When the work of art is [...] offered for aesthetic

enjoyment [...] this still remains far from attaining the essential structure of the work of art, that is, the origin that gives itself in the work of art and remains reserved in it.’⁴ The contrasting analysis conducted here aims at emphasizing the significance of the issue of sameness as opposed to the deficiency and temporariness of the newly coined aesthetic categories in their attempt to substitute for it.

The aesthetic theories of this period should be examined from the aspect of the unprecedented unity of rationality and sensibility, order and variety appealing both to judgment and sensibility, as described by Starobinski: ‘With certain aspects of the work of art (symmetry, clarity, etc.), the judgment is given priority. With other aspects (ornamentation, charming oddities), pleasure results from an immediate startling impact.’⁵

This unity of rationality and sensibility is conditioned by historical circumstances. On the one hand, it is conditioned by the rise of the natural sciences which provide a model of rationality (after the work of Galileo and Descartes), striving to explain the laws governing various phenomena by means of experiments, observations, or calculations. This initiates a tendency to attempt distinctions between the arts and the sciences (this distinction is not really fully achieved until the second half of the nineteenth century, especially after 1860, i.e., after Darwin), and the application of the rationalistic method for the analysis of the arts based upon the dissection of art based on particular genera and structural definitions of stylistic or compositional means. With regard to the paradigm of rationality, art is not validated in the light of the prime principle of sameness, but according to fortuitous principles and faculties via the analysis of its generic peculiarities, kinds, disposition of qualities, and principles of definition.

From another angle, the second half of the eighteenth century gains its fundamental importance from the coinage of the term *aesthetics* (Baumgarten is the first to mention this term in a formal way in the middle of the eighteenth century) and the invention of its subject matter with such dominating concepts as taste, sentiment, genius, originality, and creative imagination in their modern

⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, p. 102.

⁵ Jean Starobinski, *The Invention of Liberty*, p. 53.

meaning.⁶ In respect of the aesthetic paradigm, art is validated according to taste, pleasure, naturalness and truth, in which the practical and teleological functions of art take precedence over the onto-theological and epistemological concerns of Classical and Medieval philosophy. Accordingly, art is no longer posed and examined in its essence with regard to its relation to the Same but rather in its relation to the subject. This brings forth a major transformation in thought that can be described as a transposition of philosophical and aesthetic thought from objectivity into subjectivity, from the objective assessment of sameness into the subjective assessment of experience, from concept to judgement.

Yet, as the inquiry into the entire philosophical discourse of the West will demonstrate, this reorganization in the form of a paradigmatic shift from the poetics of sameness into a subject-centred aesthetics of reception or a general psychological aesthetics is merely a temporal digression, a kind of *mutation*, to use Michel Foucault's term. As his archaeology of thought argues, the subject (which takes its beginning from the Cartesian ego) and its reception are neither the oldest nor the most constant object of inquiry compared with 'that profound history of the Same'.⁷ In accordance with Foucault, 'man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end' and 'it is not around him and his secrets that knowledge prowled for so long in the darkness'.⁸ Even more so for the subjective assessment of experience which, to transform Foucault's argument, is by far not the oldest, nor the most constant object of inquiry of philosophical poetics. It is merely from this perspective that we will inquire into the empirical, emotional, psychological, and pragmatic interpretations of art, grouping them under the common title of a temporary digression from sameness.

⁶ See: Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'The Modern System of Arts' for a detailed account of aesthetic theories in the 17-18 centuries, in *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*, ed. by Steven Cahn and Aaron Meskin (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 3-15.

⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, trans. provided by Vintage Books (New York: Random House, Inc., 1994), p. 386.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 386 – 387.

1. 2 Outline of Aesthetic Theories with Particular Reference to the Digression from Sameness

A brief outline of aesthetic theories of the aforementioned period aims at investigating the criteria which substitute for the metaphysical poetic theories, anchored in the understanding of poetry as the representation of the Same. A vast number of aesthetic theories are developed during the eighteenth century attempting to fill the void opened up due to the decline of the Same, yet, as the general outlook will demonstrate, all of them are related to the subject. The inquiry into the main aesthetic theories of the eighteenth century is an attempt to demonstrate the limits of a subject-centred aesthetics and its inability to provide a genuine approach to the art work.

English and German aesthetics developed under the strong influence of the French classicist and neo-classicist movements endeavouring to establish and regulate art according to good sense, taste and reason. Along with the Aristotelian or scholastic inheritance, Horace (his adaptations) and Marco Girolamo Vida are among the authorities regulating art. First and foremost, aesthetics wields the influence of the neo-classical conception of expression in poetry as revealed in the *Ars Poetica* (1674) by the French poet and critic Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636 – 1711). It is essential to underline the characteristic features of the *Art of Poetry* as an imitation of the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, in so far as it lays down the codes and rules for all future French versification in the vein of its Latin prototype. Following the legacy of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Boileau focuses on the verisimilitude and artful design of the versification aiming to affect the reader:

Jamais au spectateur n'offrez rien d'incroyable:
Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable.
(Write not what cannot be with ease conceived:
Some truths may be too strong to be believed.) (Canto III).⁹

⁹ Nicolas Boileau, *Art of Poetry and Lutrin*, trans. by Sir William Soames and John Ozell (London: Oneworld Classics, 2008), pp. 30-31.

This assessment of poetry shifts from its representational to its practical function, aiming to please or affect the reader whose emotions are a prime consideration. The poet's personal emotions and their artful expression serve as a means to an end and as an essential tool for evoking similar emotions in the reader:

Il faut dans la douleur que vous vous abaissiez.
 Pour me tirer des pleurs, il faut que vous pleuriez.
 (In sorrow, you must softer methods keep,
 And to excite our tears you must weep).¹⁰

The French aesthetic theories which greatly influenced English and German theoreticians are those of Jean Baptiste du Bos (1670 - 1742) and Charles Batteux (1713 - 1780). They focus upon the concept of art as an imitation (*imitation de la belle nature*) which conditions the unity and congruence of painting and poetry. Aristotle's mimetic theory, Horace's famous *Ut pictura poesis* and Simonides's saying 'painting is dumb poetry and poetry is a speaking picture' serve as sources for this.

Abbé Du Bos,¹¹ whose *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et la peinture* (1718) exerts a lasting influence on the aesthetics of the eighteenth century, ascribes to art the psychological function of exciting the emotions by evoking an instant of high emotion and excitement, of physical or mental stimulation via vivid images. He recognizes the absolute domination of passion in poetry and the fine arts by asserting that generally men suffer from the absence of passions rather than from the anxieties caused by these passions. Du Bos breaks with the traditional conventions by suppressing the bonds of dependence between pleasure and rational discernment or the edification of the soul, and claims that the *decision of the sensations* precedes reasoning which has merely an auxiliary role in our judgement of a poem or a picture.

¹⁰ Nicolas Boileau, *Art of Poetry and Lutrin*, pp. 34 & 35.

¹¹ See: Marcel Braunschvig, *L'Abbé du Bos, rénovateur de la critique au XVIII siècle* (reproduced by BiblioBazaar, 2010).

Du Bos is also acknowledged as the first aesthetician to remark upon the existing differences between poetry and painting and to differentiate between them according to the signs or symbols of expression (natural and coexistent in painting, conventional and successive in poetry), and the subjects appropriate for poetry and painting (phenomena of the soul are out of the range of the painter's art unless expressed by visible aspects of the body; an unfamiliar subject may be treated by the poet whereas the painter's subject must be known or at least recognizable).

The influential treatise of Abbé Batteux *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (1746) is the first in its kind to codify the modern system of the fine arts. In accordance with it, the general principle common to all the arts is the *imitation of beautiful nature* while those distinguishing between the art forms are pleasure and usefulness.

Both of these influential treatises which combine in their approach rationality and sensibility, exemplify the general disposition of aesthetics in the realm of subjectivity. They constitute the general background for the development of aesthetic theory in Germany in the eighteenth century. Yet, if the French theoreticians, especially Batteux and the Encyclopaedists, are credited with having developed a concrete French conception of the fine arts, then German thought, represented by Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762), is famed for utilizing it in the philosophical theory of aesthetics and formulating its general scope and programme.

German aesthetic thought of the eighteenth century should be viewed, accordingly, as the philosophical conceptualization of aesthetic theory, in which aesthetic pleasure, anchored in the subject's sensuous relationship with the world, substitutes for the role played by metaphysics. The wide range of issues raised by the French, especially those concerning the interrelation of rational and sensual cognition, are systematized, and aesthetics is posed as a separate discipline which focuses on that part of our relationship with the world that is not reducible to scientific cognition but accessible only via sensual perception. This could be made clear through the juxtaposition of the Cartesian term *metaphysics*, concerning

clear and distinct ideas and aesthetics, dealing with ideas that are less than clear and distinct (particularly in Baumgarten).

The eminent figures in German thought contributing to the emergence of aesthetics as an independent philosophical discipline with the paradigmatic shift from the aesthetics of production into the aesthetics of reception and psychological aesthetics are, along with Baumgarten, Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) and Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788). Despite the fact that the age of aesthetic paradigms in philosophy is thought to have begun with Kant,¹² these thinkers merit consideration for opening vistas for the idealists and for influencing greatly the subsequent development of German aesthetics.

The principal trait of German aesthetic thought is the reduction of the theory of art to sensual perception. Within this unifying scope, however, each of the aestheticians demonstrates his individual approach. Baumgarten is predominantly concerned with the cognitive aspect, Mendelssohn with the emotional, i.e. the sense of pleasure derived from the work of art, and Hamann with the advocacy of the poetic language as a re-creation of the original creation of God. Claiming epistemological relevance for sensual perception as opposed to rationality, they reduce aesthetics to ‘a defense of the relevance of sensual perception’ and develop it as ‘advocacy of sensibility, not as a theory of art’.¹³

Baumgarten’s *Aesthetica* (1750, 1758) and Hamann’s *Aesthetica in nuce* (1762) raise the issue of aesthetic pleasure which substitutes for the role played by the metaphysical philosophy of the Same. They view the sensuous relationship to the world as being part of aesthetic pleasure, thereby raising the question of truth as the aesthetic truth of the *Wahrscheinliche* or that which appears as true.

Baumgarten’s theory is an attempt to contribute to rational cognition through sensual cognition, which is posed as a *sine qua non* for the former (*Aesthetica*, 41).¹⁴ The sensual mode of cognition is, thus, analogous to rational procedures, whilst aesthetics is the art of thinking analogous to rationality (*ars analogi rationis*). Artistic emotionality and cognitive achievements, aesthetic immediacy and abstract cognition, sensuality and rationality are no longer opposed to each

¹² Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 20.

¹³ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, p. 4.

¹⁴ The reference to Baumgarten is from *Aesthetica* (G. Olms Publisher, 1986).

other but, instead, reconciled in Baumgarten's theory of aesthetics which, as an individual philosophical discipline, eventually gains independence.

Mendelssohn demonstrates the viability of a metaphysical framework shaped by Leibniz and Wolff, especially concerning the nature and variety of sentiments neglected by that metaphysical tradition and treated with greater sensitivity by English and French authors.¹⁵ His investigation and classification of aesthetic pleasure constitutes an interesting combination of rationality and sensibility, typical of the aesthetic theories of this period. Here, aesthetic pleasure is classified in accordance with three sources of pleasure: beauty (stemming from the unity of the manifold), perfection (stemming from the unanimity of the manifold), and sensual pleasure (stemming from the improvement of our physique). Actually, what Mendelssohn opts for, is to find novel art forms analogous to works of music which contain the combination of all the three elements of pleasure. Along with the psychological aspect of art, Mendelssohn is preoccupied with its practical application, where art serves as an indispensable tool for his theory of perfection. His *Letters on Sensations*, (*Briefe über die Empfindungen*, 1755) aim to perfect man by giving him an aesthetic education.¹⁶

Hammermeister underlines the contribution of Mendelssohn's aesthetics by sketching its further development in three major directions.¹⁷ First, he stresses the fact of Mendelssohn's being the first German philosopher to devote significant attention to the concept of the sublime as the sensual expression of an extraordinary perfection that does not incite terror, but inspires admiration, thereby associating it with an ultimately positive emotional response. Second, he emphasizes the fact that Mendelssohn's notion of the naïve as the simplistic representation of a beautiful and noble soul clearly influenced Schiller's definition of naïve art. Third, he considers Mendelssohn's attempt to classify the individual forms of art according to a semiotic system, by distinguishing the different art forms in accordance with the signs they use, as the first attempt at a semiotic theory of art in Germany that was later taken up by Lessing and Herder. All these

¹⁵ Moses Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, ed. by Daniel O. Dahlstorm, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. ix.

¹⁶ Moses Mendelssohn, *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 7 – 96 for a detailed account.

¹⁷ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, pp. 13 – 20.

issues contribute to establishing aesthetics as an independent discipline in philosophy.

What distinguishes Hamann's aesthetics is his metaphysical conception of language that focuses upon poetic language as an endless process of the translation of a cognition based on sensuality, a translation from a language of angels into a language of humans. Consequently, he conceives of language not merely as the intelligible language of mathematical reason but primarily as the poetic language of passions, senses, and images. The poetic language is considered as *the native language of mankind*, allowing insight into the being of God and helping to divulge God's revelation in nature.

We also need to refer to the Swiss aesthetic critics Johann Georg Bodmer (1786 - 1864) and Johann Jakob Breitinger (1701 - 1776) whose influence upon German aesthetics is observed in a variety of ways. The essential trait of their theory is the emphasis upon the freedom of imagination even while within the framework of Wolffian perfectionism.¹⁸ They proceed toward an aesthetic theory that subsequently gives the play of the mental powers equal importance with the sensible representation of truth by treating the aesthetic qualities of representation as parallel to their purely cognitive qualities. Bodmer and Breitinger hold that novelty is an especially powerful means of making moral truths come alive. In respect of their theory, the moralistic aim of poetry can be better achieved by a free use of imagination in poetry. In most of their joint works, they regard literary exposition as a form of painting on the *tabula rasa* of the imagination.

The critical theories of the Swiss critics tackle the issues inscribed within the framework of general aesthetics, especially those concerning the concept of art being an imitation of nature, conditioning the unity and congruence of painting and poetry. In accordance with their aesthetics, poetry and painting are alike in producing similar effects on the mind although through different media.

¹⁸ Paul Guyer, '18th Century German Aesthetics' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Fall 2008 Edition*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/>.

Along with the French and Swiss influence, German aesthetics is characterized by the interest in ancient sculpture and architecture stimulated by Winckelmann's studies of classical art. The statue *Laocoon* (dated approximately 50 BC, which is presently in the Museum of Vatican) serves as an illustration of theoretical considerations concerning aesthetic principles, and even gives rise to Winckelmann's, Lessing's, Herder's, and Goethe's treatises entitled *Laokoon* (or *Über Laokoon*). The treatises on the *Laokoon* group expound the qualities of the statue corresponding to the aesthetic criteria of their authors. The principles set forth in them are developed according to how the statue, as a work of art, conforms to these criteria. Most artists and theoreticians of this period, define the principal figure in the *Laocoon* group as a model of ideal beauty through the imitation of which the artist corrects the imperfections of Nature.

For a period, the *Laokoon* puts an end to the age-old tradition of the parallel between painting and poetry and, thus, frees poetry from the function of description. Yet, the relationship between poetry and painting is considered as one of the most important elements that precede the formation of the modern comprehensive system of fine arts in respect of which Lessing's *Laokoon* is denounced for its exclusion of music.¹⁹ Along with the Ancients and French critics, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) bears the influences of Edmund Burke, the philosophical systems of the Enlightenment, Leibniz, Christian Wolf and the aesthetics of Baumgarten. Lessing undertakes to establish aesthetic principles through inductive logic, deriding German critics for the application of the deductive method (Chapter XXVI, *Laocoon*)²⁰ in his 1766 influential essay *Laokoon or on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (*Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*). He examines the relationship between poetry and painting, claiming that the affinity between them is based on the function of imitation.

Lessing's definition of a work of art accounts for his posing the beautiful as the principal object of aesthetic inquiry, in which 'the name of *works of art*' should be 'reserved for those alone [...] in which beauty has been his first and last

¹⁹ See Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'The Modern System of Arts' p. 12.

²⁰ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon, Nathan the Wise, etc.* ed. by William A. Steel, J. M. Dent & Sons LTD (London: Aldine House, 1949), p. 97.

object'.²¹ The superiority of the poet over the painter is seen in the poet's capacity to show beauty not delineated in its component parts but 'merely in its effect'.²² Where Baumgarten's influence upon Lessing is concerned, it is his notion of poetry as a perfectly sensuous language stirring the soul with a multitude of perceptions of fear, pleasure, etc., that affects him most.

The significance of Lessing's aesthetic theory is the attribution to poetry of a dramatic expression independent of all pictorial representation, through his opposition to the concept of *ut pictura poesis*. Another important point is the inclusion of the ugly, the ridiculous and the disgusting (Chapters XXIII-XXV)²³ into poetry as opposed to painting which is restricted to the beautiful.

Johann Gottfried Herder's (1744 - 1803) texts belong already to a later, pre-Romantic period, bearing the influences of the Enlightenment in the person of Kant and the opposition of Enlightenment in the person of Hamann. Herder's texts are the result of the combined influence of Kant's system of reason and Hamann's mystical insight into the unconscious and irrational depths of the soul. Herder's conception of beauty is developed in his later work the *Kalligone*, where he suggests, in opposition to the great emphasis traditionally placed on beauty in the philosophy of art that beauty is not in fact nearly as essential to art as it is often taken to be. In particular, he argues that art is much more essentially a matter of *Bildung* — cultural formation or education (especially in moral respects).²⁴

Chronologically, the last text on the *Laokoon* is Johann Wolfgang Goethe's (1749 - 1832) *Über Laokoon* which views the statue as a masterpiece of Greek sculpture. Built on the classical concept of creation as an expression of the ideal, Goethe disregards the statue's reference to the fate of the Trojan priest. Instead, he signifies the figures of the group as human types and, the statue itself, as a depiction of a scene from human life. Goethe's concept of art, as 'supreme

²¹ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon, Nathan the Wise, etc.* p. 40.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

²³ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon, Nathan the Wise*, pp. 86-97.

²⁴ Michael Forster, 'Johann Gottfried von Herder' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/herder/>.

conceptual unity' is in congruence with the Greek ideal characterizing art in its *museworthiness* (*das Musische*).²⁵

The English aesthetic theories also wield the strong influence of the French aesthetic paradigm. The earliest text in English aesthetics, however, is Sir Philip Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*, 1595 which views poetry not as an end in itself but as having certain instructive and moral purposes. Moreover, it propagates the idea of educating the community through poetry by linking poetry to inspirational teaching and knowledge. Sidney emphasizes the irrefutable advantages and efficacy of a poetry-based education which 'in the noblest nations and languages that are known, hath been the first light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse, whose milk by little and little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges.'²⁶ His *Apology* approaches the central stand in the rhetoric of Horace that reduces the function of poetry to pleasing or instructing the reader and claims that 'the poet's aim is either to profit or to please, or to blend in one the delightful and the useful'.²⁷ Even though poetry is superior to history and philosophy thanks to the moral effect it achieves moving the readers more forcefully to virtue. Poetry is used by Sidney in the meaning of *poiesy* from the Greek word *poiein*, to make. In accordance with this etymological appeal, the early Greek philosophers are considered to be poets, while the beauty of Plato's writings is believed to depend 'most of Poetry'.²⁸

The first important treatise in its endeavour to illustrate the likeness of poetry and painting in the vein of the French, is John Dryden's *Parallel* (1695) which draws upon the congruence between painting and poetry stemming from their common end *to please* the reader. Dryden is, however, more famous for his poetry than aesthetic theory.

²⁵ Walter Benjamin, 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism' in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), I, p. 179.

²⁶ Sir Philip Sidney, 'An Apology for Poetry' in *English Critical Essays*, ed. by Edmund P. Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 2.

²⁷ Horace, 'Ars Poetica' in *Literary Criticism, Plato to Dryden*, ed. by A. Gilbert (New York: American Book Co, 1940), p. 139.

²⁸ Sir Philip Sidney, 'An Apology for Poetry', p. 6.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671 - 1713),²⁹ one of the most influential thinkers of the period, approaches the views of French theoreticians, in particular Dubos's concept of *plaisir pur* (pure pleasure) via his notion of aesthetic sensation as *disinterested love* and in respect of the idea about the poetic qualities of the highest type in painting. Yet, due to the influence exerted on him by Plato, Plotinus, and Cicero, he does not make a clear distinction between aesthetics and ethics.

The first English aesthetician to depart from the theory of likeness between poetry and philosophy towards emphasizing poetry's greater power to affect the reader is Edmund Burke (1730 - 1797). He bases his idea of the difference between poetry and painting upon the various degrees of clarity in the use of symbols. In the Chapter *On Words* of his aesthetical treatise entitled *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757),³⁰ Burke asserts that words failing to present clear and definite images have a greater power to fill the mind with affections about the beautiful and the sublime than the clear and distinct images of painting. Painting, thus, reigns in the realm of the beautiful whereas the realm of poetry is the sublime. As an example, he cites Homer's lines in *The Iliad* on the fatal beauty of Helen which say nothing of the particulars of her beauty in contrast to the descriptions made by Spencer on Belphebe. Nonetheless, Burke claims to be much more touched by the way Priam and the old men of his council allude to her than by the long and laboured descriptions of her beauty handed down by tradition.

In the Chapter *On Words*, Burke consistently departs from the paradigm of the congruence between poetry and painting prevailing in English aesthetic thought. He maintains a view similar to the one about the *Iliad*, this time on music's compliance to feeling because of its obscurity in significance. Burke even goes so far as to free the sound from its associated idea as the pure and non-representative expression of the sublime. The tendency to regard music as the apex of the pure reflection of the Spirit, as a non-representational form of

²⁹ Third Earl of Shaftesbury, 'Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times', in *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*, ed. By Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin (Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 77 – 86.

³⁰ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. by Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 156.

articulation for grasping certain non-cognitive aspects of subjectivity, is not typical of English aesthetics. Abrams regards it as belonging more to the German tendencies, exemplified by Herder, Novalis, and Schlegel.³¹

As this delineation of aesthetic thought of the eighteenth century demonstrates, the decline of the Same conditions the urge of poetics to prescribe a function different from that of representing the Same to art. Aesthetics, thus, digresses from the issue of sameness by viewing art in respect of its cognitive and emotional aspects, or in terms of the sense of pleasure derived from the work of art. Three main sources of pleasure are thereby distinguished: the beautiful, the sublime, and sensual pleasure. Art is also viewed in respect of the psychological and moral aspects as a means to affect, cultivate, or instruct the reader. The function of art is, accordingly, defined not in terms of the issue of sameness but in respect of the subject. The emotions of the author aiming at evoking high passions and excitement in the reader are prime considerations, asserting an aesthetics of subjectivity, anchored in the sensuous relationship to the world. Yet, this transformation of thought, does not amount to discovering the absolute uniqueness of the art-work as an experience of creative freedom — a discovery, which is only possible in case of a valid postulation of sameness and difference — but merely reduces art to the subject. The limits of this reduction are already inherent in the aesthetic theories of the eighteenth centuries, conditioning the inevitability of a re-postulation of sameness.

In the next chapter, we will trace the philosophical digression from the Same in the *a priori* synthesis of subjective experience and the questioning of the conditions of the possibility of experience in Kant's works.

³¹ Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 93-94.

2. Kant: The Questioning of Sameness

2.1 Digressing From Identity toward the Transcendental *A Priori* and the Empirical Spheres of Cognition

The turning profane of the metaphysical paradigm grounded upon the dominance of the transcendental concept of the Same and its identical representation conditions not only the formation of aesthetics as traced in the preceding chapter but also the urge of philosophy to rethink its own position in respect of this situation. The rethinking of philosophy in terms of the limits of the identity of the Same is made possible either by rethinking sameness beyond its pure identity, or by rethinking philosophy beyond the very issue of sameness which amounts to the questioning of sameness as the fundamental question of philosophy.

The subsequent development of philosophy will always retrospectively be related in this study to this vantage point of the impossibility of thinking of the Same in its pure identity. When viewing from this vantage point, accordingly, we distinguish between a philosophy of sameness (comprising that of *difference*), rooted in the re-establishing of sameness as the fundamental issue of philosophy through its radical rethinking, and a philosophy of digression from sameness that delimits its own scope beyond it, thereby questioning the very status of sameness in its fundamentality. Leaving the examination of the philosophy of sameness to Parts Three (Schelling and Hegel) and Four (Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida), comprising the major differences of their very individual ways of rethinking the foundation, origin, and limits of the Same, we will now investigate the philosophical digression from sameness accomplished by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

What interests us within the scope of this study, is not the investigation of the entire philosophical system of Kant, but rather his questioning of the issue of sameness as the fundamental question of philosophy by refusing to raise it at all. Kant's philosophy will thus be viewed as a digression from the issue of sameness,

anchored in the identity of thinking and being toward a strict differentiation between the thinking subject and the object of thought. With Kant, the dream of plenitude and harmony represented by the *desiderata* concept of the Same or the category of sameness in the metaphysical philosophy of identity is replaced by the dichotomized polarities of thinking and being, sensibility and understanding, theory and praxis which philosophy or art appear unable and/or unwilling to overcome. Philosophy digresses from the homogeneous field of identity and establishes the transcendental *a priori* on one side and the differentiated empirical spheres of cognition on the other. It digresses from the speculative field of Being to the practical field of reason and from the metaphysical universal of the Same to the category of the Idea.

As is the case with the aesthetic theories outlined in the previous chapter, where the validation of art is transposed from the speculative field of sameness into that of subjective experience, Kant's aesthetic judgments consider the beautiful and the sublime primarily in terms of their effects upon the subject. To use Gilles Deleuze's words: 'It is not the existence of the represented object that counts, but the simple effect of a representation on me.'³² The issue of sameness and its representation in art is, therefore, not among the central concerns of Kant's *Critique of Judgment (Kritik der Urteilskraft, 1790)*, but rather the subjective faculties involved in aesthetic judgments which amounts to a subjective approach to aesthetics.

Kant's particular concern with aesthetics, meant to guarantee the totality of his philosophical system, begins with the *Transcendental Aesthetic* in the *Critique of Pure Reason (Kritik der reinen Vernunft, 1781)* and is developed more extensively in the Third Critique. It is an acknowledged fact that the *Critique of Judgment* is architectonically conceived as an attempt to bridge via the faculty of judgment the gaps between understanding and reason opened up by his First and Second *Critiques*. Consequently, despite the unsurpassed impact of Kant's aesthetical theories upon the disciplines of aesthetics and art in general, aesthetics, as the interpretation of individual art works, does not constitute a central problem

³² Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 1984), p. 46.

for Kant.³³ Instead, Kant is engaged in the scientific exploration and positing of aesthetics as merely part of his broader critical enterprise which is meant to guarantee the unity of reason. He therefore transforms the function of aesthetics from the validation of art as the representation of the Same into a questioning of the conditions of possibility of experience.

This displacement exhibits the limits of representation, transposing art from the realm of the representation of the transcendental objective of the Same into the subjective assessment of experience, thereby also transforming aesthetics into the formalization of the concrete. In general terms, this process may be described as the replacement of the metaphysical investigation of art by the transcendental one which inquires into the self-present subject of intuition and universal experience and poses subjective experience as a universal ground for art. Transcendental aesthetics, thus, studies the perceptions and physiological conditions of the subject. The aesthetic judgment, defined as the expression of the pleasurable subjective state of the free play of imagination and understanding, substitutes for inquiries into art in the light of its being a representation of the Same.

The strict differentiation between the sensible and the intelligible starts with the *Critique of Pure Reason* which grounds the difference between these terms not merely in logical but also in transcendental terms. The transcendental character of that difference is explicated by the fact that it affects not only the form but also the origin and contents of the difference. The structure and schematic organization of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is built upon the very opposition between sensibility and thought, expressed through the divide between the principles of sensibility *a priori*, discussed in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, in opposition to the *Transcendental Logic* which treats of the principles of pure thought. In accordance with Kant's divide of pure knowledge, autonomous fields are sovereign and not brought into synthesis. We can trace how *ideas*, forming the basis of Reason, are not available to intuition and how aesthetics, by contrast, is designed to provide intuitions for the *Understanding*. The introduction of the term *intuition (Anschauung)* into the process of cognition serves as the very ground for further differentiation between appearances (or objects as given to us), and things

³³ See: Mark A. Cheetham, *Kant, Art and Art History: Moments of Discipline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) for a detailed account of Kant's relation to art and artists.

in themselves. In accordance with the scheme of the *Transcendental Aesthetics*, the subject is empowered to attain self-cognizance through speculative reflections of itself as another via representations (*Vorstellungen*), according to sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) which affects us through objects, and which alone supplies us with intuitions (*Anschauungen*). The speculative reflections of the subject are thereby characterised by a vast variety of empirical facts on the one hand, and a system of *a priori* conditions of knowledge on the other, the latter of which substitute for the metaphysical inquiries into the concept of the Same and its representation. As a way to overcome the aforementioned divide, Kant introduces the concept of *critique* along with the concept of a transcendental scheme in response to the necessity for a *third term* that could reconcile understanding with sensibility by partaking of both the intelligible and sensible spheres.³⁴

Kant's subsequent philosophy of aesthetic judgments is a move 'much closer to Baumgarten', as Andrew Bowie argues,³⁵ as compared with the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant claims that Baumgarten's attempt to bring judgments on beauty into philosophy were futile because such judgments were always based on empirical rules that could not have the binding force of the *a priori* rules of science.

2. 2 Reducing Art to the Subject's Faculties of Thought

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant introduces the term *aesthetic ideas* which, as opposed to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, makes ideas available to intuition, thereby transposing aesthetics towards the realm of ideas. It is already a compromise for Kant to admit that besides rational ideas there should also be aesthetic ideas originating in a sensible faculty meant to enliven the faculty of thinking. The faculty for the presentation of aesthetic ideas that animates the

³⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Kemp Smith (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 121-127.

³⁵ Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 17.

works of art is the spirit which, in Kant's formulation, is the power of ideas through which sensibility overcomes its own nature. Again, what is an issue of concern for Kant in validating an art work, is the faculty engaged in its creation or the creation of aesthetic ideas. According to Kant, reason, as the faculty of determined ideas, is not engaged in the creation of art or aesthetic ideas, but only imagination and understanding.

What is at stake in the *Critique of Judgment* is Kant's introduction of the *power of judgment* which, by constituting an intermediary between the faculties of the understanding and of reason, between the principles of pure reason and of practical reason, between theory and practice, and between freedom and nature, is designated to bridge the gap between them. The aforementioned reconciliation is thought to be realized through a reference to the supersensible by virtue of judgment and beauty. The *Third Critique*, correspondingly, appears to be an attempt to link the empirical judgment of pleasure to the universal validity of this pleasure via the harmony between imagination and understanding in cognitive judgments. Kant's system should, however, rather be examined in its power of positing the autonomous spheres of knowledge and conceptualizing the difference between them, rather than as an attempt at reconciliation. An account of Kant's separating rather than reconciling power can be traced in J. M. Bernstein's *The Fate of Art* which refers to Kant's treatise as *Memorial Aesthetics*. He argues that what issues from Kant's reference to the supersensible, is not the recognition of a possible reconciliation but rather a recognition of the separation of the realms of freedom and nature and even a 'sepulchre to stand over their lost unity'.³⁶

The aesthetic concepts of the beautiful and the sublime are analyzed by Kant primarily in that they are the objects of inquiry of reflective aesthetic judgments. As such, they are viewed as causing a feeling of pleasure, which is the result of the agreement between the faculty of imagination and the faculty of the understanding or reason. This agreement of faculties is demonstrated through the function of presentation (*exhibitio*), i.e. that of 'placing a corresponding intuition

³⁶ J.M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1997), p. 18.

beside the concept [...] through [...] imagination' (5: 193).³⁷ Deleuze describes it as an agreement of 'imagination, in its pure freedom [...] with the understanding in its non-specified legality'.³⁸ Aesthetic common sense, however, is not represented as an objective accord of faculties, but once again in terms of subjectivity, as a 'pure subjective harmony where imagination and understanding are exercised spontaneously, each on its own account'.³⁹

Aesthetic pleasure should also be *disinterested*, namely a 'kind of representation through a satisfaction or dissatisfaction **without any interest**' (5:211), which means it should be independent both of speculative and practical interest. The beautiful is, thus, related to the subject laying claim to universal delight, in other words, in whether it 'pleases universally without a concept' (5:219). This means that the imperative of beauty in terms of aesthetic disinterestedness is a pure judgment, independent from knowledge and morality, as well as from the mere subjective pleasure present in the empirical one. The complex relationship between the beautiful and the true is also drawn in the light of the category of disinterestedness.⁴⁰

In Kant, the aesthetic category of the beautiful is reduced to pleasure which arises from the beautiful form in the judgment of taste. Kant differentiates between natural or mechanical beauty and the fine arts, stemming from the fact that the latter gives rise to representations which are not merely of the order of senses, but rather modes of cognition. The judgment of the beautiful work of art needs to be stripped of its determining character and become the mere act of judging suited to beautiful objects. As Rodolphe Gasché remarks: 'Where the concepts guiding their production have undergone such an operation of denudement [...] the products of art have the look of objects of nature.'⁴¹ The indeterminateness of the concept is, thus, the requirement for the production, as well as for the judgment of the beautiful work of art. In a further extrapolation, it

³⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, ed. by Paul Guyer, trans. by Paul Guyer & Eric Mathews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 80, all further reference from this edition.

³⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, p. 48.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 49.

⁴⁰ See: Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 351-357 for an account of the relationship between beauty and morality.

⁴¹ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 185.

becomes clear that the characteristic of a genius is defined in respect of his task of denuding of the arts, or, as Gasché puts it: ‘the genius is the paradoxical *entity* in which nature passes into freedom.’⁴² The definition of *genius* is grounded upon the very differentiation between nature and science and described as ‘the inborn predisposition of the mind (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule to art’ (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:307).

This causes another problem between freedom (the free will of the *I* belonging to the realm of the super-sensuous) as a central issue in Kant’s philosophy and the recurrence of the term *spontaneity* (characteristic of the genius) which goes beyond sensuousness in describing the existence of our self-consciousness. Freedom is defined as an essential factor for art as ‘only production through freedom, i.e. through a capacity for choice that grounds its actions in reason, should be called art’ (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:303).

Denuded of any aesthetic norms, the beautiful work of art is judged as such stemming from a ‘specific arrangement of faculties that is beneficial to cognition in general’.⁴³ What counts in the beautiful arts, is the accord of imagination and understanding brought to life by the genius. The genius expresses the suprasensual unity of all faculties, thereby providing a possibility for extending the rules of the beautiful in nature to the beautiful in art. The interests of the beautiful and of the genius are the main constituent of the so-called Kantian *material* meta-aesthetics, which according to Deleuze, ‘bears witness to a Kantian romanticism.’⁴⁴

As we can see, the beautiful has its origin in the subject, namely in the relationship between the subject’s cognitive faculties, while to judge a work of art means to become attuned to the play of faculties of its creator. The fulcrum here is transposed from the object to the subject or to the concept of the thing as its beautiful representation, while aesthetic ideas are indeterminate concepts the presentation of which is what defines a work of genius. In Kant, the characteristic trait of a work of genius is its having spirit (*Geist*), which again has a subjective sense in its capacity to present aesthetic ideas and thereby stimulate the mind to cognition and representation. We have to distinguish here between the feeling of

⁴² Rodolphe Gasché, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant’s Aesthetics*, p. 187.

⁴³ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant’s Aesthetics*, p. 186.

⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, p. 57.

spirit (*Geistesgefühl*) from its metaphysical analogue in that the idea of totality as spirit, expressed in Kant's category of the sublime as a name given to what is absolutely great, refers not to an object of thought but to the subjective ideas of reason. The very definition of the sublime ('That is sublime which even to be able to think of demonstrates a faculty of the mind that surpasses every measure of the senses' (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:250)) which accounts for an impossibility to grasp the sublime via imagination, provides evidence that sublimity is not a quality of the object but a state of subjectivity.

The possibility of the sublime is rooted in the concept of formlessness which allows thinking to add the ideas of *the whole*, *the infinite*, and *the totality* characteristic for a feeling of spirit. It is useful to cite Gasché on this point: 'if Kant's strict terminology did not prohibit it, one would be inclined to say that boundless formlessness must have the *form* of a whole, in order for it to be sublime.'⁴⁵ Yet, it is essential to bear in mind the philosophical position of digression occupied by Kant, in respect of which art works are no longer formative for the experience of sameness and no longer represent constitutively the concept of the Same but, instead, make Reason sensuously available only in a limited way as a response of the subject rather than as a quality of the object. The sublime, then, as opposed to the limitations of sensuous presentation in the realm of art, is an act of cognition or a mental accomplishment related to the limitlessness or unfathomable in nature or, rather, to the subject's ability to think the infinite by transcending experience via a supersensible faculty of the mind. Kant asserts the necessity of a super-sensuous faculty of the mind for judging the sublime through an estimation of magnitude via imagination and understanding, claiming that 'even being able to think of it as a **whole**' or 'to be able to think the given infinite without contradiction' (*Critique of judgment*, 5:254) require a super-sensible faculty in the human mind. He relates this supersensible faculty for judging the sublime to reason in order to approximate the subjective (the disposition of the mind judging the sublime) with its ideas, just as he relates the imagination in its free play in judging the beautiful to the understanding, in order to agree with its concepts. Moreover, it is precisely with the term sublime that

⁴⁵ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics*, p. 124.

Kant makes aesthetic judgement purposive for reason (presented as the source of ideas) through ‘the necessary enlargement of the imagination to the point of adequacy to that which is unlimited in our faculty of reason, namely the idea of the absolute whole’ (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:260). The boundless formlessness in the sublime, thus, does not amount to the *whole* but merely to the mind’s possessing a supersensible faculty for thinking the whole, which means it is not a thinking of nature but of the subject’s attitude toward it. As Deleuze argues, the experience of the immensity of the sublime ‘cannot be attributed to the natural object, but to the operation of reason which unites immensity of the sensible world into the whole of Idea’.⁴⁶ Drawing on the results from the exposition of the sublime as the supersensible use of the sensible representation of nature and as that which pleases immediately through its resistance to the interest of senses, Kant describes the sublime as ‘an object (of nature) the representation of which determines the mind to think of the unattainability of nature as a presentation of ideas’ (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:268).

Given the fact that the sublime has arisen from a feeling of spirit (*Geistesgefühl*), Kant relates the aesthetic judgement not only to the beautiful as a judgement of taste, but also to the sublime. He grounds the sublime in the position between imagination and thought, providing an example of what Deleuze describes as *discordant harmony*, defined as a relation in which ‘each communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and its divergence from the others’.⁴⁷

The categories of the sublime and the beautiful in Kant are juxtaposed on the common ground of the aesthetic judgement coeval to the juxtaposition of the sensuous and the super-sensible. In the aesthetic judgment of objects in relation to the sublime, Kant proceeds in accordance with the same principles that were used in the analysis of the judgements of taste. However, the division into the *mathematically* and *dynamically* sublime in the judgment of an object contravenes the calm contemplation in the reflection of the beautiful. Kant explains this difference by the sublime’s bringing with it as its characteristic sign ‘a **movement**

⁴⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, p. 50.

⁴⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 183.

in the mind connected with the judging of the object, whereas the taste for the beautiful presupposes and preserves the mind in calm contemplation' (*Critique of Judgment* 5:247).

Here again we deal with a completely different order of thought which is concerned with the judgment of the beautiful and sublime not in terms of the adequacy of a representation of the Same, but in respect of the faculties of thought engaged in the judgment, as well as with the relationship between them. In contrast to the minimal harmony between the powers of cognition present in the representation of a beautiful object, the boundless formlessness of nature encountered in the sublime causes discordance between the imagination and the understanding. The category of the sublime is, accordingly, viewed as confronting us with a direct subjective relationship between imagination and reason. As Deleuze argues, this is a relationship of a discordant accord when the imagination, confronted with its own limit, experiences a violence which stretches it to the extremity of its power and makes it lose its freedom. Yet, at the bottom of this dissension an accord emerges, according to Deleuze, between imagination and reason which allows us to conclude that the feeling of the sublime is rather pain than pleasure.⁴⁸

Kant sustains the boundary of the sensuous and intelligible in the beautiful and the sublime via the cohering function of *imagination* (*Einbildungskraft*). The central position in the problems relating to this boundary is occupied by the *I*, the subject, who describes itself as object but remains divided in itself and fails to attain a full synthesis in self-cognizance. This very opposition and the attempt to overcome it are discussed at length in contemporary aesthetic theory and are characterized as having a great impact on post-Kantian philosophical-aesthetic thought. For one, Bowie describes it as having 'a major effect on German Idealism and early Romanticism, and thus upon aesthetic theory'.⁴⁹ Hammermeister also points to the problematic of the Kantian opposition between beauty resting on the basis of sensory experience and sublimity aiming at abandoning the sensory and moving toward reason.⁵⁰ He points to Schiller's,

⁴⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, pp. 50 – 51.

⁴⁹ Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche*, p. 19.

⁵⁰ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, p. 34.

Schelling's, and Hegel's attempts to overcome this opposition toward a unification of beauty and sublimity, without which the self would remain divided between sensibility and morality.

The achievement of imagination is primarily its capacity to unify the faculties of mind by traversing all the empirical manifestations toward the unity in self-consciousness which is the knowledge of the essence of man. It is again important to distinguish the synthesizing function of the Kantian imagination, designated to unify the dissected faculties of sensibility, understanding, and reason from its representative or *mimetic* function directed at the representation of the Same. As Deleuze defines it, the imagination does not take 'a legislative function [...] but frees itself, so that all the faculties together enter into a free accord'.⁵¹ This productive power of imagination is best exposed in the analysis of poetry's capacity to unify in a harmonious accord the cognitive faculties of sensibility and understanding. The power of poetry is also inherent in its autonomy due to its being/as a product of the *genius*: 'one cannot learn to write inspired poetry, however exhaustive all the rules for the art of poetry and however excellent the models for it may be' (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:309).

The enigma of the *unnameable*, as a combination of spirit and letter in poetry, does not allude, however, to the impossibility of representing the metaphysical universal of the Same, but to a subjective experience, empowered to vivify the cognitive faculties. Here is how Kant defines the unnameable, as 'the feeling of which animates the cognitive faculties and combines spirit with the mere letter of language' (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:316). The power of poetry is, therefore, the production of an indeterminate intuition of the supersensible that animates the mind by the harmonious accord of faculties. Kant's understanding of poetry is, thus, rooted in poetry's ability to reveal aesthetic ideas in full measure:

The poet ventures to make sensible rational ideas of invisible beings [...] as well as to make that of which there are examples in experience [...] sensible beyond experience [...] by means of an imagination that emulates the precedent of reason in attaining to a maximum' (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:314).

⁵¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, p. 68.

The difference between the two arts of speech, of *rhetoric* and *poetry*, lies precisely in different applications of the faculties of understanding and imagination, *Rhetoric* is defined as ‘the art of conducting a business of the understanding as a free play of the imagination’; *poetry*, the other way round, as ‘that of carrying out a free play of the imagination as a business of the understanding’ (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:321). Poetry is, accordingly, examined in its capacity to strengthen the mind in the supersensible judgment of nature and as a play of illusion which can, nevertheless, be purposively employed as an aim by understanding and is opposed to rhetoric which is described as the art of deceiving via illusion and of robbing one’s freedom before one can judge. The priority of poetry over rhetoric, thus, lies in its purity, in having no other aim than pure illusion, in contrast to rhetoric’s aim to persuade and convince via illusion. It is interesting to note Kant’s personal remarks on this point:

I must confess that a beautiful poem has always given me a pure enjoyment, whereas reading the best speech of a Roman popular speaker or a contemporary speaker in parliament or the pulpit has always been mixed with the disagreeable feeling of disapproval of a deceitful art, which understands how to move people, like machines, to a judgment in important matters [...] Eloquence and well-spokenness (together, rhetoric) belong to beautiful art; but the art of the orator (*ars oratoria*), as the art of using the weakness of people for one’s own purposes [...] is not worthy of any **respect** at all (*Critique of Judgment*, 5:327, 5:328).

Kant qualifies the poetic presentation as an unprecedented fullness of thought, capable of raising itself to the level of ideas. Poetry is, thus, elevated to the level of idea, and the fullness of its representation lies beyond the limitations of particular faculties:

It [the art of poetry] expands the mind by setting the imagination free and presenting, within the limits of a given concept and among the unbounded

manifold of forms possibly agreeing with it, the one that connects its presentation with a fullness of thought to which no linguistic expression is fully adequate, and thus elevates itself aesthetically to the level of ideas (5:326).

As we have seen, Kant's philosophical system digresses from sameness as the fundamental issue of philosophy in order to focus upon the subject by inquiring into the interrelation of its mental faculties. The limits of Kant's digression from sameness as the fundamental issue of philosophy may be illustrated by juxtaposing it with subsequent philosophical thought which re-establishes sameness by way of its radical re-postulation in terms of the difference within it. This juxtaposition permits us to conclude that the refutation of the metaphysical universal of the Same is not analogous to that of sameness *per se*, but to the refutation of the dominance of the identity of the Same and its monotonous representation in art. It permits us to trace philosophy as an impossible postulation of sameness in the entire context of often contradictory aspects of identity, difference, and repetition.

2.3 Hegel versus Kant

We can trace the fundamental difference between Kant's digression from sameness and the philosophical urge for the re-consideration of its lost plenitude through Hegel's essay *Faith and Knowledge* (1800). The critique of Kant's philosophical system by Hegel has dual importance. First, it offers the outline of his encompassing theory (*The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1807) which is his original rethinking of sameness in terms of its totality. Second, it conceptualizes the differences between the two opposing paths — that is, his own and Kant's, viewed from the vantage point of the decline of the Same, the philosophy of sameness and that of digression.

The re-consideration of the Same as a totality of Spirit in Hegel contravenes Kant's prime concern about guaranteeing the unity of reason. In what follows, we will see how Hegel criticises Kant's philosophical system for its failure to raise the issue of sameness. Moreover, we will see the difficulties that arise when analyzing a philosophy of digression in terms of sameness, inasmuch as it simply abstains from it. Such an analysis is doomed to failure from the very start due to the difference in the points of departure.

Hegel's criticism of Kant is based upon the lack of a preconceived unity, the hypothetical Same, despite the fact that the very concept of preconceived unity is alien to Kant. It is the characteristic trait of Hegel's own philosophical system, rather than that of Kant's to re-postulate the issue of sameness in terms of plenitude. As we have seen, Kant is not the least concerned with the rethinking of the grounds, origin or even the limits of the Same, but in establishing a philosophical system beyond sameness. This philosophical system is based, instead, upon the differentiating power of reason, anchored in mediations and the sharp distinction, in the process of understanding itself, between subject and object, thinking and being, sensibility and understanding. From a pure Hegelian perspective, this system cannot become effective due to the lack of a preconceived plenitude. Hegel criticises the dissolving power of the understanding in Kant's philosophy of reflection, in which the differentiating and dissecting powers remain meaningless as long as they are not applied with respect to a totality or an original unity.⁵²

Inquiring into Kant's synthetic *a priori* judgments in terms of a preconceived unity of the transcendental ego, Hegel sketches his own theory of re-grounding the Same as the original, absolute totality of the heterogeneous. In the course of the analysis, he views the dissecting form of judgment vis-à-vis a hypothetical preconceived identity and ends up with the futile assertion of its apparent lack. What Hegel fails to observe, is that the very notion of a hypothetical identity which 'sunders itself, and appears as separated into the form

⁵² See: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, pp. 70 – 80, for a systematic account of Kant's philosophical system on the ground of an opposition between objective and subjective idealism.

of a judgment, as subject and predicate, or particular and universal'⁵³ is genuinely Hegelian and apparently alien to Kant's system. Equally ineffective is the exposition of Kant's system from the perspective of the reconciliation between the particular and the universal through transcending thought from the contingency of the particular toward an *archetypal (urbildlich)* intellect analogous to the transcendental imagination, for which 'the possibility of the parts [...] as to their character and integration is dependent on the whole'.⁵⁴ To explicate the character of the parts in their dependency on the whole and trace the conditions of their integration in the totality, is to remain bound within the frames of the philosophy of sameness, which is a typically Hegelian approach as opposed to Kant which is straightforwardly engaged in posing the particular as such, devoid of any synthesis within the whole. Furthermore, Kant fails to reconcile the thinking subject with the objects of thought within a unity, and, therefore, knowledge remains subject to a gap between mere empirical knowledge of objects on the one hand and the understanding of knowledge of the other. We can, therefore, conclude that to pose Kant's philosophical system with respect to the idea of a preconceived unity is ineffective, as it will end up either with the assertion of its lack or the dominance of the empirical knowledge of experience over the absolute truth of totality.

Hegel further inquires into Kant's idea of transcendental imagination, of a pure apperception in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and his notion of an archetypal intellect in the *Critique of Judgement* as an attempt to unify the hitherto dichotomized spheres of intuition and understanding. Viewed from the perspective of unification, Kant's notions of the transcendental imagination or the archetypal intellect account for the transposition of the locus of reconciliation from the metaphysical beyond of the Same into the self-reflection of the thinking subject. Yet, is Kant preoccupied with the idea of a preconceived unity at all or does he instead refuse to pose the issue of sameness?

The inquiry into Kant's philosophical system testifies to the fact that the very idea of a preconceived identical unity as the primary cause of all differentiation is alien to it. Moreover, the juxtaposition of Kant and Hegel on the

⁵³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 72.

⁵⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 88.

premises of the philosophy of the sameness accounts for the fundamental differences between a philosophy of sameness and that of digression.

Hegel sees Kant's attempt at unification via the transcendental imagination or the archetypal intellect as being a failure due to the intermediary position of the faculty of imagination in opposition to the Hegelian requirement that it should be posed as an *a priori* synthetic unity in its *In-itselfness*:

We must not take the faculty of imagination as the middle term that gets inserted between an existing absolute subject and an absolute existing world. The productive imagination must rather be recognized as what is primary and original, as that out of which subjective Ego and objective world first sunder themselves into the necessarily bipartite appearance and product, and as the sole In-itself.⁵⁵

Hegel critiques the Kantian *hypothetical* category of mind, namely the intellectual intuition, for its inability to unify the dichotomized spheres of intuition and understanding. This critique demonstrates the controversial approaches of Hegel and Kant toward the issue of sameness. For Hegel, it is revivable by virtue of the act of sublation of all dialectical oppositions which, in this particular case, is the sublation of empirical experience and thought in the reflecting-back of the empirical experience into the common prior ground of the absolute, an act totally incompatible with Kant's entire system of multiple autonomous principles.

In what follows (in the chapter on Hegel, Part Three), we will trace the development of these sketches by Hegel into a philosophy of his own, namely in his re-establishment of sameness in the form of an absolute preconceived totality of thinking and being. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he re-grounds the reflective oppositions of Kant's empirical experience by defining them as *bifurcations* of an original synthetic unity which encompasses both the opposition of that unity and that which it reunites in a preconceived totality.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 73.

⁵⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Arnold Vincent Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 10.

3. Post-Kantian Aesthetic Theories

As the next parts of this study will demonstrate, the philosophical-aesthetic digression is a transitory position with regard to sameness, rather than a radical solution to the problem caused by the decline of the metaphysical universal of the Same. This brief inquiry into post-Kantian aesthetics or poetics aims to stress the limits of these perspectives and the urge for a new re-postulation of sameness, hence, a re-thinking of art beyond these limitations. It is within these frames that we will present a brief outline of the post-Kantian aesthetic and poetic theories which attempt to provide a valid theory of art either from the perspective of rationality or a subjective assessment of art.

English aesthetic theories which originated from the subjective assessment of art are expressive theories, focusing on the sincere expression of the author's intense feelings and their transportation to the reader. The most eminent representatives are William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850) and William Hazlitt (1778 - 1830) who display Longinus's influence (1 – 3 c. A.D.) and transform Thomas Hobbes's (1588 - 1679) principle which regards the power-drive as the prime human motive. Remaining bound to neo-classical theories of sensibility these aesthetic theories merely displace the aesthetic paradigm from imitation into expression or, as Abrams describes: 'from the mirror to the fountain, the lamp, and related analogues.'⁵⁷ The alignment from the emotions of the reader to the emotions of the poet in their spontaneity as the characteristic trait of the romantic period does not bring about any significant change, but remains trapped within the subjective assessment of art with its focus upon sensibility.

Included among the aesthetic theories which contrast subjective assessment to the scientific worldview is the one claiming the absolute sovereignty of the unconscious in poetic creation. The cornerstone of the aesthetics of the romantic poets John Keats (1795 - 1821) and William Blake (1757 - 1827), the main representatives of this movement, is the poetic imagination as the organ of

⁵⁷ Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, p.57.

intuition beyond experience: infinity is intuited through the finite appearance of the poetic intuition. Abrams considers Keats's axiom on poetry's coming 'as naturally as the leaves to a tree' and Blake's claim for poetic automatism (Blake writes of his *Milton*: 'I have written this Poem from immediate Dictation [...] without Premeditation and even against my will') as prime examples of unconscious invention in English criticism.⁵⁸

Aesthetic theories, anchored in the scientific interpretation of poetic invention (connected with Isaac Newton's science of mechanics and David Hume's associative principles of the mind), in contrast, denounce expressive poetic theories and consider poetry as useless in the age of science. Undoubtedly, this approach is incapable of providing any valid theory of art, but rather deepens the dichotomy between art and nature, science and poetry or philosophy and poetry. The dichotomy between them may be observed in the polemics between Thomas Peacock's (1785 - 1866) *Four Ages of Poetry* (1820) and Percy Bysshe Shelley's (1792 - 1822) *Defence of Poetry* (1821). Thomas Peacock's criticism of expressive poetic theories in general and Wordsworth's poetic tenets of naturalism in particular are an attempt to prove their uselessness from a scientific standpoint, while Shelley's essay is an attempt to overcome this dichotomy. In his defence of poetry, Shelley attempts to reconcile poetry, philosophy and science by resurrecting the metaphysical paradigm of sameness. Poetry is, accordingly, reduced to its function of representing the metaphysical universal of the Same through the metaphors of the mirror ('a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted'⁵⁹) and the sacred silence of the primordial word commensurate with the Spirit or the Same, designated to translate the plenitude of the Spirit for mortals and 'temper this planetary music for mortal ears'.⁶⁰ The limit of Shelley's approach to sameness is, however, linked to the limits of classical metaphysics and representation. As we have attempted to demonstrate, the decline of the metaphysical universal of the Same points to the impossibility of reducing the

⁵⁸ Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, pp. 214, 215.

⁵⁹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry*, ed. by A. Cook (Boston, USA: Ginn & Co, 1891), p. 10.

⁶⁰ Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry*, pp. 10 and 13.

function of poetry to that of the representation of the Same and conditions the urge of philosophy not only to re-ground it, but also rethink the origin of poetry.

Among other influential theories is the organic theory of imagination by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 - 1834) who views the creative process as reflected in the primary imagination by which all individual minds develop out into their perception of this universe echoed, again, in the secondary or re-creative imagination which is possessed only by the poet of genius.⁶¹ The primary imagination in Coleridge is primary by virtue of being a repetition, as Paul Hamilton argues, 'a repetition in the finite mind of the infinite I AM', which, can define what is absolute *for us* because it 'repeats an originally divine contraction'.⁶² The poet, possessing *the secondary or re-creative imagination* is frequently referred to as not only the mediator but also the mythical personage endowed with the power of imagination to reconcile or diffuse discordant qualities 'of sameness, with difference; of the general with the concrete; the idea with the image'.⁶³ Coleridge's belief in the poetic power of relating the finite to the infinite or representing the 'translucence of the eternal through and in the Temporal'⁶⁴ does not provide a new theory for art, but explains his being influenced by Kant and Schelling.

In German post-Kantian thought, among the first philosophers attempting to overcome Kant's subjective and ahistorical attitude towards aesthetics via a theory of art that offers objective criteria for its definition is Friedrich Schiller (1759 - 1805). Schiller's aesthetic views are expressed in the essay *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* [*Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, 1795] whose primary aim is to arrive at freedom through beauty as the only possible expression of freedom in appearance, thus marking a distinct break with Kant's subjective beauty.⁶⁵ Dieter Henrich inquires into Schiller's conception of beauty and freedom further taken up by Schelling and Hegel as one

⁶¹ Meyer H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, p. 283.

⁶² Paul Hamilton, *Coleridge and German Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2007), p. 57.

⁶³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (London: J.M.Dent & Sons, 1949), p. 151.

⁶⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, p. 221.

⁶⁵ Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man: A Series of Letters*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

of the several ways to overcome the subject/object division in Kant's works.⁶⁶ The introduction of the concept of *Spieltrieb* — the *play drive* that bridges the gap between *Stofftrieb*, the *material drive* and *Formtrieb*, the *form drive* — is of utmost importance as the conception of humanity that has the ability to unify materiality with form, contingency with necessity, suffering with freedom (AL, letter 15). It stands for the aesthetic principle, referring to the contemplation of the beautiful in play, in which the true nature of the man, no longer divided into sensuality and morality, is revealed. The beautiful serves as the mediator between these drives through Schiller's conception of *love* and is neither purely empirical nor purely transcendental.

In his 1796 essay *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* [Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung], Schiller designates the model of a historical development based upon the paradigm of the Greek culture that anchors in the perfection of the man brought about by the perfection of art and bridges the gap between beautiful form and moral energy.⁶⁷

The subjective moment in Kant's system is precisely what stimulates the philosophy of German Idealism and early Romanticism to seek ways of moving beyond the limitations of subjectivity toward a new representation of the infinite via the finite. Kant's distinction of the beautiful and the sublime becomes the basis of the philosophical tension between the desire for a *new mythology* (*Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism* and F. Schlegel's *Rede über die Mythologie*) and the idea of the autonomy of the aesthetic work.⁶⁸ A *new mythology* would integrate science and art in the sensuous representation of Reason, whereas the autonomy of the aesthetic work would preserve independent ways of articulating the world that are beyond instrumental purposes.

We will briefly stop only at the early Romantic attempt to solve the problem of the Kantian divide, since the reunification of the separated spheres of knowledge within a preconceived totality attempted by German Idealism will be considered in individual chapters on Schelling and Hegel in Part Three.

⁶⁶ Dieter Henrich, 'Beauty and Freedom: Schiller's Struggle with Kant's Aesthetics' in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, ed. by Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), pp. 237 – 257.

⁶⁷ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, pp. 44 – 58.

⁶⁸ Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche*, p. 40.

The urge and impossibility to represent and invoke the infinite via the finite is at the heart of Romantic art and is one of the major concerns of Romantic philosophy. Among the principal traits of Romantic criticism is the grasping of the infinite via the finite form of art, namely in the assimilation of the art work, at the price of its ruin, to the Absolute. The particular art work is viewed in its ascent toward the universal medium of art (the idea of art) and, in the next stage, to the grasping of the Absolute. Walter Benjamin defines it as ‘the medium in which the restriction of the individual work refers methodically to the infinitude of art and finally [*endlich*] is transformed into that infinitude [*Unendlichkeit*]’.⁶⁹

The central ideas of early German Romanticism are expressed in the theoretical writings of Karl Wilhelm Friedrich (later: von) Schlegel (1772 – 1829) on the notions of the ability of the individual work capable of transcending toward the level of idea, the literary fragment, the Romantic *Witz* and allegory. The significance of the Romantic *Witz* as the development of the Idea towards ‘Idea’s self-knowledge in its manifestation’⁷⁰ is stressed in the discussion of *eidaesthetics*, namely a separate theory of *eidetics*, which is always capable of shifting into aesthetics by virtue of the expression of the Idea within a work of art by Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy. Where the allusive form of the fragment is concerned, it is adequate for expressing both the Romantic quest for grasping the Absolute and the impossibility to grasp its plenitude via the finiteness of form. In accordance with Robert Crawford’s description, there is an analogy between the fragment and the lost plenitude of the Same: ‘The fragment [...] hints at something beyond itself and/or beyond the language in which it is embedded. In the past the fragment has gestured towards a lost aboriginal wholeness, and has been associated with tragedy or loss.’⁷¹

The conception of the aesthetic autonomy of art, irreducible to ethical, historical or any other discourses that would lead to a philosophy of the Absolute, is also among the central concerns of Friedrich Schlegel (Fragment 252 from the

⁶⁹ Walter Benjamin, ‘The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism, I, p. 152.

⁷⁰ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 53.

⁷¹ Robert Crawford, *The Modern Poet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 68.

Athenaeum Fragments, 1798 - 1800).⁷² He likewise departs from the common aesthetic theories which consider the work of art as the precondition for pleasing or instructing the reader. Instead, he employs Kant's notion of the sublime, transcribed as an impossibility to represent the infinite via the Romantic term of allegory which parallels the Kantian sublime in its function of referring to something beyond itself and incorporating the impossibility of reaching the *Highest*.⁷³ The way of overcoming the disparate disciplines of art, philosophy, science, and theology through the formation of a new synthesizing mythology formed from the depths of spirit and encompassing all other arts within it, is another concern of Schlegel.⁷⁴

The integration of both poetic and philosophical forces is also introduced by Novalis's (1772 - 1801) notion of *mythical* criticism in which 'poetic spirit and philosophic spirit have interpenetrated in their entire fullness'.⁷⁵ He focuses upon the possibility of educating (*Bildung*) the community through poetry in unity with philosophy as the most intimate communion of the finite and the infinite (*Logological Fragments* I, F 25).⁷⁶ The central idea of *Bildung* forms the elevation of the self (analogous to the *Werden* of Schlegel, *A* 116) towards its genuine identity which is, again, realizable via poetry.⁷⁷

What Novalis attempts to achieve is primarily the reconciliation of the dichotomized spheres of knowledge within a preconceived metaphysical identity (*Miscellaneous Observations*, F75),⁷⁸ by disregarding the already accomplished decline of the metaphysical universal of the Same and the need for its re-postulation. He attempts to ground his theory upon the already exhausted revelation-redemption-resurrection formula of the metaphysical Same, in accordance with which, the manifold is borne from the preconceived identity of

⁷² Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Fragmente*, ed. by Ernst Behler and Hans Eichner (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna, Zürich, 1988), v. 2, p. 129. English analogues from *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, ed. by Frederick C. Beiser (Indiana University, 1996).

⁷³ Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Fragmente*, V, p. 105.

⁷⁴ Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Fragmente*, II, p. 201.

⁷⁵ Novalis, 'Schriften', cited by W. Benjamin in 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism', I p. 154.

⁷⁶ Novalis, *Philosophical Writings* (State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 35.

⁷⁷ Novalis, *Philosophical Writings*, p. 36.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 36.

the One in order to represent it and return to it after having achieved freedom and self-consciousness. This view may be illustrated by Novalis's argument: 'Before abstraction everything is one — but it is one as chaos is — after abstraction everything is again unified — but this unification is a free alliance of independent, self determined beings'. (*Miscellaneous Observations*, F 94).⁷⁹ From the perspective of the idea of a preconceived identity which the Romantics attempt to resurrect, art is reduced to the realization of the Same due to its incapacity for self-realization: 'Actually in all true arts — one spirit — is — realized, is produced from within — the world of spirits' (*Logological Fragments* II, F 19).⁸⁰ However, this view returns art to the realm of the representation of the Same, a return which proves to be impossible due to the decline of the Same and the need for its adequate re-postulation.

The inquiry into the post-Kantian aesthetic situation demonstrates the limits of the aesthetical and poetic theories which either attempt to validate art in respect of subjectivity or the already exhausted metaphysical universal of the Same. In order to establish new criteria for validating the singularity of the art work, inherent in the uniqueness of its inner organization, philosophical thought faces the need for an adequate re-postulation of sameness beyond classical metaphysics. Schelling and Hegel distinctly acknowledge the limits of a philosophical-aesthetic digression, attempting to return philosophy to the grounds of sameness by introducing the term Absolute. Whether or not this is the right path for re-thinking philosophy and for adequately judging the proper statute of the work of art, will be examined in the next part.

⁷⁹ Novalis, *Philosophical Writings*, p. 41.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Part Three: The Return to Sameness

As we have seen, the limits of the metaphysical postulations of the Same as pure identity conditioned the philosophical urge for its re-consideration either in the form of questioning of its statute or its re-assertion on a new speculative level. In Part Two of the present study, we attempted to demonstrate the inefficiency of the first path of questioning the statute of sameness by refusing to pose it at all in the period named philosophical digression and alluded to the possibility of a return to sameness. It is the very possibility of the philosophical-poetic return from the above period of digression to the re-establishment of sameness as the central issue of philosophy, and, hence to the validation of art no longer in respect of the fortuitous principles of taste, pleasure, naturalness, and truth, but vis-à-vis its relation to sameness that this Part will discuss. The philosophical reconsideration of sameness as a quest to re-cohere the dissected and differentiated spheres of cognizance under the aegis of sameness will be discussed through the philosophy of German Idealism, namely the systems of Schelling and Hegel.

The re-establishment of sameness by Schelling and Hegel is accomplished by postulating it upon the level of an absolute totality which encompasses both identity and difference, as opposed to its prior postulation as pure identity in the period of classical metaphysics. This brings about a transposition of the issue of sameness from the dimension of pure identity into that of a unity of identity and difference. This radical transposition is discussed by Heidegger, who argues that:

The philosophy of speculative Idealism, prepared by Leibniz and Kant, through Fichte, Schelling and Hegel established an abode for the essence of identity, whereby since the era of speculative Idealism, it is no longer possible to represent the unity of identity as mere sameness, disregarding the mediation that prevails in unity.¹

From this period onward, it becomes impossible to think of sameness beyond the mediation of difference which, far from representing the conception of

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. and with an introduction by Joan Stambaugh (London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), p. 25.

pure *difference*, is a conceptual category included in the Absolute. Sameness, accordingly, becomes conceived through the concept of the Absolute which entails the identity of oppositions, of the positive and negative dissolving within the identical. In this context, *difference* is reduced to negativity extending to the point of contradiction and posed as internal to the Absolute, in subordination to identity as part of the whole or an element of the Absolute.

In Schelling, the category of the Absolute which substantiates sameness is a preconceived totality, a synthesis of identity and difference. Its primacy conditions Schelling's introduction of the discipline of the philosophy of art which elaborates new criteria for the validation of art, as opposed to the fortuitous criteria applied in the period of digression. Moreover, Schelling prioritizes art in its power to reveal the concealed enigma of the Absolute which becomes re-asserted as the fundamental issue of philosophy and art and the ground for their potential reconciliation.

Hegel's conception of the Absolute differs from that of Schelling, in that despite their common function of representing sameness, the first is conceived as a totality of becoming, while the second, as a preconceived totality. We will inquire into the subtleties of Hegel's conception of sameness as the totality of the Absolute, guided by the view that it is the most comprehensive postulation of its identity or, to use Gilles Deleuze's words concerning Hegel's *innovation*, 'the final and most powerful homage rendered to the old principle'.² From the aspect of re-establishing sameness as the fundamental issue of philosophy, Hegel's philosophy should be credited not only for providing the most comprehensive theory of identity but also for postulating difference, though still subordinated to identity. As the inquiry into the texts by Hegel will demonstrate, in his conception of the Absolute difference has an equal stand with identity and is a means through which totality manifests itself. As opposed to the subsequent postulations of pure difference (by Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida), the Hegelian difference takes the form of the inscription of double negation within totality and, hence, the assertion of identity. The dissimilarity between the two postulations of difference can be traced through Gilles Deleuze's opposition of Hegel's circle to the eternal

² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 61.

return of Nietzsche, arguing that the first is ‘only the infinite circulation of the identical by means of negativity’.³ In sum, in Hegel’s conception of sameness, the principle of identity is radicalized as the dominant principle coextensive with that of totality, while difference is still included in the concept of identity and serves as the ground for its self-realization.

The issue of language is radicalized in this context to the point of substantiating the sacred absence of the Same through the presence in the word. Its tragic instance constitutes the impossibility of transmuting the formlessness of the Same through the formed word, bringing about the oppositions between infinite and finite, the language of Angels and the non-being of language, the *being* of the Word, the poverty of words, and silence.

The re-establishment of the issue of sameness is significant in that it points to the limits of the philosophical digression from sameness, re-coheres the dichotomized spheres of cognizance, provides a comprehensive theory of the identity of sameness as the totality of the Absolute, and postulates the philosophical conception of difference. The philosophical postulation of pure difference, focusing upon the absolute *otherness* of the singular (dealt with in Part Four) becomes only possible, we believe, upon the ground of the comprehensive theory of the identity of sameness. Solely in the precarious balance between identity and difference, we argue, the plenitude of sameness as the experience of the other, scintillates in its full splendour.

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 61.

1. Schelling: Re-postulating Sameness as the Absolute

1. 1 Rethinking of Sameness beyond its Pure Identity

To examine the philosophy of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775 - 1854) with regard to the issue of sameness, we have to relate it to the vantage point of the decline of the metaphysical universal of the Same and the end of the period of its infinite representation. As we have noted earlier, the impossibility of postulating the Same as pure identity urges philosophy to either re-postulate sameness or question whether it is the fundamental issue of philosophy. Schelling, as opposed to Kant, whose philosophical system digresses from sameness, seeks ways for resurrecting it through conceiving the Same as the Absolute transcending all differentiations. In so doing, Schelling radically critiques Kant's philosophical approach which, laying claim to reflecting the *a priori* conditions of knowledge, makes a shift into subjectivity and brings forth the divide between the sensible/intelligible. Among the principal issues that Schelling pursues since 1797 when he publishes the *Philosophy of Nature (Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur)* is the distinctive character of nature and the *Ich*. Yet, he sees both philosophy of nature and the speculative conception of *Ich* as two complementary sides of one philosophy.

Schelling sees the possibility of overcoming the Kantian lacuna and transposing philosophy from the ground of self-reflection into that of objectivity through his system of *identity*, (*Identitätsphilosophie*). Schelling's system of identity proceeds in the direction of objective idealism which is one among the three systems of German Idealism attempting to re-cohere the spheres of thinking and being, separated by the Kantian philosophy: Fichte's subjective idealism and Hegel's subjective-objective or absolute idealism, erasing the difference between subjective and objective idealism.⁴ The crucial move of Schelling's *identity*

⁴ See also: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. by H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (New York: State University of New York Press, 1977), p. 139.

philosophy is his return to the philosophy of sameness through re-postulating it as an absolute preconceived identity which precedes the subject/object bifurcation and manifests itself as such through it. In so doing, Schelling introduces the notion of absolute as a substitute for the metaphysical universal of the Same, as the encompassing of the sensuous and intelligible which, to use Andrew Bowie's description, 'only differ from each other in degree, as part of the same continuum'.⁵

In the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (*System des transzendentalen Idealismus*) of 1800, Schelling develops the idea of sameness into the *organ of all transcendental thinking* as an organ belonging to his system of objective idealism that demonstrates the Oneness of nature and human knowledge.⁶ In the final part, Schelling extends the idea of reconciliation, by representing the idea of a *new mythology* encompassing the differentiated spheres of cognizance, ethics, and aesthetics. In accordance with it, science and philosophy should return to the *general ocean of poetry* (*Poesie*), from which they were originally born. In general, the *new mythology* has the function of unifying art as an epistemological instrument with practical philosophy, although the transition from the apolitical individual work of art to the socially committed *new mythology* may be considered as problematic.⁷

In distinction from the classical metaphysics which has been postulating the transcendental objective of the Same as an absolute preconceived identity, Schelling's postulation of sameness as absolute identity manifesting itself through the multiple, already encompasses the concept of *difference*. Yet, it is essential to note that *difference* here is still subordinated to the dominating concept of identity and is designated as a means for making identity manifest. Schelling's conception of sameness is also distinct from classical metaphysics in that it bears the influence of Romanticism, with respect to which it is imbued with the sense of loss or impossibility.

⁵ Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 105.

⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, trans. by Peter Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia: 1978), p. 12.

⁷ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 77.

The significance of Schelling's (and Hegel's in a more comprehensive way) resurrection of sameness lies in the fact that the transcendental objective of the Same is no longer limited to being presented as pure identity, but, instead, is designated as a synthesis of opposites juxtaposed with respect to this identity. Seeking ways to re-think sameness beyond the terms of pure identity, Schelling postulates difference as opposed to identity, nonetheless belonging together with it to the encompassing absolute as a means to let it be manifest. It is, therefore, with the very postulation of difference, although still a conceptual difference within the Same, that Schelling's philosophy re-postulates sameness as the fundamental issue of philosophy.

1.2 The Romantic Idea of Art

The return to the issue of sameness via the notion of the Absolute brings forth the need to seek new criteria for validating art as distinct from those adopted throughout the transitory stage of digression. In contrast to the preceding aesthetic theories which have been validating art in respect of the fortuitous criteria rooted in the subject, Schelling undertakes its investigation with regard to the prime principle of the resurrected sameness. For a short period following the philosophical digression from the Same and preceding the philosophy of Nietzsche, the function of art is re-postulated in terms of representation, namely, it is reduced to the mere signifier of the transcendental signified of the Absolute. The validation of art with regard to the Absolute, as well as the re-grounding of the relationship between the polarities of identity and difference, the One and the Multiple, the ideal and the real, the conscious and the unconscious upon the same ground are congruent with the Idealist conception of the primacy of an ultimate identity encompassing all differentiation or of a comprehensive poetic knowledge encompassing subjective knowledge.⁸ Consequently, Schelling's philosophical

⁸ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)*, pp. 219 – 229.

system may be considered mainly as part of the body of thought known as German Idealism, the core of which is the certitude in art's capacity to link the sensible and intelligible in the representation of the Absolute. Schelling's statement from the *System of Transcendental Idealism* serves as an account for this congruence: 'Philosophy of art is the true organon of philosophy.'⁹

Yet, under the influence of the early German Romantics (Novalis, Schlegel, etc.), Schelling views art from the Romantic perspective, according to which it is considered superior to philosophy in its capacity to grasp and reflect the identity of the Absolute in non-theoretical terms. This perspective both grants art the privilege of reflecting upon the Absolute and poses the Absolute as an entity that cannot be fully amenable to conceptual articulation, but may fully be represented primarily via art. From the Romantic perspective, art is represented as a unity of the conscious and unconscious productivities of the artist that are opposed in the artwork with no possibility for reconciliation, while the Absolute is imbued with the sense of a lost unity and the longing for it. This perspective conditions the conceiving of art in its dual function of representing the Absolute and the impossibility of representing it.

The Romantic belief in art's privileged position for reflecting upon the Absolute — an operation which is the fundamental concern of Schelling's philosophy — is among the prime factors conditioning the irrefutable influence of Hölderlin upon Schelling. Hölderlin's aesthetic fragments of the latter half of the 1790s, containing both the idea of the rationally ever-elusive Absolute and that of beauty as the means to enable its experiential realization, influence Schelling's conceiving of aesthetics as the *via regia* to the Absolute that remains unknowable by all conceptual means.¹⁰ Schelling's idea of dependency of the world of knowledge upon the *loss* of the Absolute also bears Hölderlin's influence.¹¹ The idea of loss presumably haunts Schelling's theoretical reflections as deeply as those of Hölderlin who, in Blanchot's opinion, expresses it through both the impossibility of limiting the All and its assertion through poetry: the Empedoclean impossibility of limiting the *Allheit* as the all-present Nature (*allgegenwärtig*) or

⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), p. 14.

¹⁰ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, p. 64.

¹¹ Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 26.

the *boundless totality* and, simultaneously, the assertion of this *Allheit* wherever poetry asserts itself.¹²

An inquiry into Hölderlin's epistolary novel *Hyperion* aims to examine the meaning of the *Allheit* in Heraclitian terms as the *one differentiated in itself* in order to grasp its influence upon Schelling's philosophy. What presumably influences Schelling is the precarious balance between the feeling of *the one*, the *loss* of the *one*, and its reconstitution in art. These complex issues, comprising the limitlessness of the *Allheit* and its limiting experience through speech, and yet, the giving of being to the *Allheit* through the finiteness of speech, immensely influence Schelling. They imbue his philosophical investigations with the sense of impossibility of translating the Absolute in adequate terms.

The realization of the impossible is expanded by Hölderlin into the problem of naming: it refers to the impossibility of naming and the ambiguous value of silence. In the primal silence, described as the peaceful state of 'a forgetting of all existence, a hush of our being',¹³ a human being feels he has found the sense of the *Allheit*; in the same state of silence, in the *final* silence as the retreat of speech and being, he feels he has lost the *Allheit*. Language, then, is the extinguishing of silence and the return to silence through *the tones of death* in the *swan song*. It is posed as the impossible 'reconciliation of the Sacred with Speech',¹⁴ as a means *to fill the void* and even an expression of overflowing with the oneness of nature. In this context, the impossibility of naming is expressed by the metaphor of the indifferent echo and is always a post-language: 'Never now did I say to the flower, 'You are my sister', and to the springs, 'We are of *one* race'. Now, like an echo, I faithfully gave each thing its name.'¹⁵

All that remains after the *loss* of the *Allheit* influencing Schelling's conception of the Absolute, is the final return to silence as a retreat of speech and representation, a return to oneness without names again: 'as I am now I have no names for things.'¹⁶

¹² Maurice Blanchot, 'The 'Sacred' Speech of Hölderlin', in *The Work of Fire*, trans. by Charlotte Mandell (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 114.

¹³ Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, trans. by Williard R. Task, ed. by Eric L. Santner (New York: Continuum, 1990), p. 32.

¹⁴ Maurice Blanchot, 'The 'Sacred' Speech of Hölderlin', p. 131.

¹⁵ Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, p. 33.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

The influence of Hölderlin is also tangible in Schelling's concern with the ontological understanding of the subject/object separation and its dissolution into the Absolute; a concern represented in his *identity philosophy* which follows the *System of Transcendental Philosophy* and extends as the key issue throughout his entire philosophy. The juxtaposition of Schelling's idea of the Absolute as a synthesis arising via the conflict of multiplicity against the original unity with Hölderlin's conception of the arche-separation (*die Ur-Teilung*) accounts for this influence:

In the highest and strictest sense [judgement] is the original separation of object and subject which are the most deeply united in intellectual intuition, that separation through which alone object and subject become possible, the arche-separation (*die Ur-Teilung*).¹⁷

The issues concerning the validation of art with regard to the Absolute are displayed in Schelling's *Philosophy of Art (Philosophie der Kunst, 1802-3)* in a deeper manner.

1. 3 Differences between Digression and Sameness

The prime concern of Schelling in undertaking a thorough investigation of art is both to re-postulate art with regard to the revived concept of the Absolute and to grasp the essence of the Absolute via art in its power to reflect upon it. As we can see, this approach radically differs from the ones adopted in the pre-Kantian aesthetic theories and in the philosophy of Kant. The difference between them is the fundamental demarcation between a philosophy of sameness and that of digression, a demarcation patently displayed in Schelling's criticism of aesthetics.

To conceptualize the necessity for founding a new theory of art, Schelling expresses his disagreement with the fundamental principles of the pre-Kantian and

¹⁷ Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters on Theory*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Pfau (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 37.

Kantian aesthetic theories, namely those which allowed us to classify them under the category of digression. The fundamental categories of the philosophical digression from sameness in validating art that are subjected to Schelling's criticism are the categories applied in judging art as a sensual production ('as sensual stimulation, as recreation, as relaxation for a spirit fatigued by more serious matters and as a pleasant stimulant'¹⁸), the psychological categories influenced by the English and the French, and those of philosophical empiricism.¹⁹ To sum up, Schelling's criticism is directed against the very lack of any universally valid fundamental underlying principle in the aesthetic theories and, hence its replacement by fortuitous principles.²⁰ Schelling also criticizes Kantian aesthetics for not reflecting the idea of the beautiful as the archetypal element revealing itself in the real world, and for its dependency on the moral and useful. The *Kantians* are defined as extremely tasteless, the Kantian philosophy, as a *complete sterility of spirit*. Schelling's witty description of various aesthetic theories is worth citing at length:

One tried to explain beauty using empirical psychology, and in general treated the miracles of art the same way one treated ghost stories and other superstitions: by enlightening us and explaining them away [...]. Other aesthetics are virtual recipes or cookbooks in which the recipe for a tragedy reads approximately as follows: a great deal of fright, but not too much; as much sympathy as possible, and tears without end.²¹

Upon the ground of a clear demarcation from aesthetic theories of digression, Schelling targets at re-establishing art in accordance with the first principles of philosophy and at an adequate representation of these principles through art. Hence, the self-elevation from individual moments or individualized beauty to the idea of the *whole* in validating art is at stake. The entire treatise of the *Philosophy of Art* is constructed upon the application of the prime principles which are expressed in the form of general philosophical propositions, to defining

¹⁸ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, ed., trans. and introduction. by Douglas W. Stot (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 4.

¹⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 12.

²¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 12.

the essence of art. In so doing, Schelling applies the key Kantian concept of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) along with its synthesizing power to reveal the Absolute. Imagination synthesizes images of the object world into a cognitive discourse, thus making art one of the forms of the disclosure of the Absolute. The prime philosophical propositions anchored in the concept of the preconceived encompassing Absolute serve as the basis for Schelling's theory of art which construes art as the representation of this Absolute, as 'a tool of the gods, a proclaimer of divine mysteries, the unveiler of ideas'.²² The propositions concerning the implicit identity underlying the category of art beyond particular works of art are also illustrated through the history of art. Schelling aims to conceptualize the category of art by proving the essential and inner unity of all artworks through the construction of the forms of art and its history.²³ Moreover, these propositions serve as the theoretical ground for Schelling's *philosophy of art*, anchored in the ideal reconciliation of philosophy and art in the idea of the Absolute. This reconciliation becomes possible by foregrounding art and philosophy upon primary principles, in respect of the ontological concept of truth and, in harmony with the implicit order of the universe.²⁴ It also becomes possible through an intuition of eternal beauty or the archetypes of the beautiful, underscoring the equal access which both, art and philosophy have to the ideas or archetypes (the relationship between ideas and archetypes is first introduced by Schelling in his study of Giordano Bruno²⁵).

The idea of reconciliation contravenes the Kantian demarcation between philosophy and art, the reason of which Schelling sees in the very misapprehension of art and its validation in respect of the false principle of empiricism. The misinterpretation of the essence of art is, therefore, defined as the reason which made philosophy distinguish itself from the *flaccid sensuality* of art, by bringing forth the irreconcilability of philosophy and art.²⁶ By contrast, Schelling views the reconciliation of art/philosophy possible from the perspective

²² Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁴ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 10.

²⁵ See: Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *Bruno: Or, On the Natural and Divine Principles of Things*, trans. by Michael G. Vater (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).

²⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 204.

of the philosophy of sameness, provided that this reconciliation stems from the imperative of the Absolute. This implies the transcending of the contradictions of the phenomenal appearances of philosophy and art toward the higher perspective of the encompassing law of the universe as pure absoluteness. A philosophy of art is, accordingly, considered valid, based upon the identity of philosophy and art in their *teleological* affinity to disclose the Absolute.

To summarize, Schelling's philosophy of art testifies to the return from a philosophy of digression to a philosophy of sameness, in terms of which art constitutes the signifier of the metaphysical *incommensurable* of the Absolute which cannot be grasped otherwise than via *translatability* into scientific terms.

1. 4 Art as an *Ideal Potency* of the Same

As we have noted earlier, the positive impact of the *Philosophy of Art* is the revivification of the issue of sameness via the concept of the Absolute and, hence, the re-grounding of art in the light of its prime principles. Its significance lies primarily in re-postulating sameness, conceived as a unity of identity and difference, as the fundamental issue of philosophy and in reminding of its forgotten enigma through the *desiderata* concepts of the harmony, oneness, and unity of the universe. The return to the Same had a particular significance in the period of digression when not only did the genuine value of the art work remain concealed, but also when (not needed) a whole bunch of aesthetic theories dictated false criteria for art by conditioning the development of art-works designated for mere enjoyment.

Yet, the limits of the Schellingian Absolute lie in its representing a limited conception of sameness, in which the difference is subordinated to the higher perspective of identity and is a means for representing it. This approach reduces sameness to a dominating metaphysical universal, namely the Absolute, thereby postulating art as its representation. It also disregards the absolute singularity of

the work of art, making the latter subordinate to the idea of art as the representation of the Absolute.²⁷

It is from the dual perspectives of an essential return to sameness, comprising both the elucidation of its hitherto concealed subtleties and, at the same time, the limits of its reduction to the concept of the Absolute that we will now inquire into Schelling's *Philosophy of Art*.

The central idea of Schelling's philosophy of art is the re-postulation of the metaphysical universal of the Same in its unity, identity, and immutability by virtue of the indivisible wholeness of the Absolute and the possibility of its representation through the particular determination of art. This re-postulation aims at the resurrection of the One from Ancient Greek philosophy by providing evidence for the existence of actually and basically *one* essence, *one* absolute reality based upon fundamental philosophical propositions. These propositions account for the immutability of this one essence which can neither change into other essences, nor undergo any changes due to the process of determination. The undivided wholeness of the One as the *pure essence* that inheres in nature, art, and history can be represented solely by determinations which are defined as *ideal potencies* by Schelling. The individual *potency* of the philosophy of art is accordingly defined as '*the science of the All in the form or potency of art*' which considers not the particularity of the work of art, but rather '*the universe in the form of art*'.²⁸ The classification of philosophy and art as *ideal potencies* of the Absolute, whereby their function is reduced to that of representation, also serves as the ground for conceptualizing the congruence between them with regard to the congruence between beauty and truth. Here is Schelling's argument on this point: 'Just as for philosophy in general the absolute is the archetype of truth, so also for art is it the archetype of *beauty*. We must therefore show that truth and beauty are merely two different ways of viewing the absolute'²⁹ To make his identification intellectually valid, Schelling refers to the following philosophical proposition alluding to the metaphysical philosophy of the Same: '*The universe is formed in God as an absolute work of art and in eternal beauty*'; and its annotation: 'It

²⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 7.

²⁸ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 16.

²⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 17.

follows [...] that all things [...] are formed in absolute beauty, and that the archetypes of all things, just as they are absolutely true, are absolutely beautiful.³⁰

As further reading of the *Philosophy of Art* makes clear, Schelling grounds his theory of art upon the onto-theological primacy of the preconceived identity of the Absolute as the cause, possibility, and source of all things, thereby prescribing the function of representing the Absolute to art. We read: ‘*The immediate cause of all art is God, for God is by means of his absolute identity the source of all mutual informing [...] of the real and the ideal upon which all art rests*’; or: ‘God is the source of the ideas. The ideas originate only in God. Art, however, is the representation of the archetypes, hence God himself is the immediate cause and the final possibility of all art.’³¹

Schelling introduces the conception of the pure oneness of substance and form in the pre-existing Absolute, and therefore, in the principle of art. The transition from substance into form is viewed as the precondition for the manifestation of the Absolute which would otherwise remain a ‘self-enclosed subjectivity without being discerned or distinguished’.³² The preconceived oneness of substance and form in the Absolute and the abovementioned transition condition the re-postulation of art as the translatability of the Absolute or, to use Schelling’s definition, as: ‘*the form of the informing of the infinite into the finite as particular form*’.³³ The essence of art is, accordingly, defined with regard to the Absolute which is posed in its creative and generative capacity. The corroboration of the creativity of the Absolute as the combined creation of itself within an infinite potentiality beyond time and of its creation of something other than itself is a form of return to the Neoplatonic concept of emanation in the sense of overflowing as a result of its fullness: ‘Seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect and, in our metaphor, has overflowed, and its exuberance has produced the new.’³⁴

³⁰ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 31.

³¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 32.

³² Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 119.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³⁴ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. by Stephen Mackenna (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1962), p. 380.

Schelling differentiates between a variety of arts, in respect of an interrelation of form and matter, in which the latter is the lowest, shaped and differentiated kind, as opposed to the shapeless, undifferentiated and undetermined purity of the Absolute. From this Neoplatonic perspective,³⁵ music is classified as a privileged art in so far as in music the pure form appears liberated from matter:

Music, which from the one perspective is the most closed of all arts, the one that comprehends forms still within chaos and without differentiation, and that expresses only the pure form of these movements separated from corporeality, similarly takes up the absolute model or figure only as rhythm, harmony, and melody, that is, for the first potency, even though within this sphere it is the most boundless of all arts.³⁶

All the arts are, accordingly, posed as emanations of the Absolute and differentiated according to the juxtaposition of the ideal/real: music, as the informing of the ideal into the real; painting, as a model of the real portrayal of the *forms and contours* of the ideal; and the plastic arts, as the total transformation of the infinite into the finite.³⁷ The classification of painting and plastic arts in respect of the juxtaposition of the finite/infinite also derives from several borrowed propositions concerning *light*, as ‘*the infinite concept of all finite things, insofar as it is contained in the real unity*’.³⁸ Schelling revivifies the tropology of light, both, in opposition to *nonlight* (as colour)³⁹ and as *absolute light* as a way for conceiving the *idea itself*. The Neoplatonic metaphor of *absolute light*, as ‘the light within itself, unmingled, pure, suddenly gleaming’⁴⁰ is metamorphosed into a fundamental Schellingian presupposition regarding light and matter as *one* in pre-established harmony through gravity. It comprises the Neoplatonic sense of reabsorbing of the difference within identity appearing as light only as something relatively ideal and, therefore, in both opposition and relative unity with corporeality.

³⁵ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, p. 108.

³⁶ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 118.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴⁰ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, p. 409.

An essential point in Schelling's discussion of the arts is the resurrection of the Platonic-Neoplatonic ascending dialectics, according to which the real is transcended into the ideal: 'Matter gradually dematerializes into the ideal: in painting as far as the relative-ideal, through light; then, in music and even so in speech and poesy, into the genuinely ideal, the most complete manifestation of the absolute cognitive act'.⁴¹

The function of the verbal arts, defined as the universal *form* of poesy, is also reduced to the representation of the Absolute or the portrayal of the ideas in speech and language. It is corroborated by the juxtaposition of the divine and human languages, in terms of which matter is 'the divine word that has entered into the finite; [...] recognizable in sonority through pure differences'.⁴² Language is accordingly conceived through the infinite chain of ascending and descending dialectics as the eternal creative activity of the Absolute, by virtue of which it eternally objectifies itself through matter and returns to itself. Moreover, language is the most appropriate symbol of the absolute or infinite affirmation of God in the process of integration, since this affirmation *here* represents itself through something real without ceasing to be ideal (which is precisely the highest requirement). This approach is a return to the metaphysical understanding of language as the primal unity of thing/name in *logos* that is transformed into the Romantic intensity of loss of unity, the longing for it and the quest for resurrection of this lost unity. The quest for the primal intactness of name/thing through speech rejecting any finality of explanation refers back to Plotinus's 'agony for a true expression; [...] the untellable', when 'we name, only to indicate for our own use as best we may'.⁴³ Schelling recalls the philosophical-theological legacy in his attempt to re-establish the lost adequacy of being and speaking in the *logos*: 'in most philosophical and religious systems, [...] the eternal and absolute act of self-affirmation in God — his eternal act of creating — is designated as the *speaking word* of God, the *logos*, which is simultaneously God himself'.⁴⁴ Language is thereby identified in its referential function as the quest to represent the Absolute and the impossibility of representing it, thereby establishing the

⁴¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 121.

⁴² Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 204.

⁴³ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, p. 408.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

function of language as the naming of the unnameable or, to use Schelling's words, as poesy's constructing of its bodies of ideas from the chaos.⁴⁵

The significance of re-establishing language in terms of a separation of *speech* from the totality of language is substantiated in the transposition of poetry from the region of aesthetics into that of the philosophy of language by subtracting the poetic work from the realm of the sensible to hand it over to truth. The separation of speech, named its *rhythm* (the control and subjugation of time, defined as *music within music*) is due to the *internal* regularity of the work of art, whereby it becomes self-contained and possesses its own internal time as opposed to the *external* free movement. The concept of rhythm is a means to introduce an element of difference into the system of identity, albeit the difference of rhythm is subordinated to the identity of the cosmic harmony and a means to make the latter manifest: 'it thus includes change, yet an autonomously ordered change subordinated to the identity of that in which the change takes place.'⁴⁶ The poetic text is, accordingly, examined from a dual perspective: as a self-enclosed entity, a '*whole* possessive of its own internal time and momentum, and thereby separated from the larger whole of language'⁴⁷ and as an entity implicitly representing the infinity of the Absolute in its adequacy with language. Schelling describes it emerging daringly in its heterogeneous rhythm and alien to the common regulations of aesthetics, as *poesy* which 'never has its purpose outside itself, although it does also elicit externally that particular feeling inhering internally within it'.⁴⁸

These general observations concerning the philosophical investigation of art, namely the verbal art are also demonstrated by Schelling's approach to particular works of art.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 205.

⁴⁶ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, p. 205.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 206.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 207.

1.5 Schelling's Reading of Dante's *Commedia*

The investigation of individual genres, authors or particular works of art is for Schelling still another way of expounding upon the general observations on the essence of art as portrayal of the Absolute. Here, the particularity of form as both *pure limitation* and *undivided absoluteness* is designated to reveal the formlessness of this Absolute. We will view Schelling's analysis of the *Divine Comedy* (*La divina commedia*) by Dante as the realization of his theoretical assumptions on the essence of art, language, and the issue of the reconciliation of philosophy/art.

The choice of the *Commedia* is presumably conditioned by the fact that Schelling's own theory of a possible reconciliation between art and philosophy is realized to a greater extent in it. Schelling traces the substantiation of his theory through an intertwining of the *potencies* of philosophy, poetry, theology, and science in their common function of representing the Absolute.⁴⁹ George Steiner also observes the overlapping of the three semantic fields in Dante, claiming that 'he [Dante] organizes, makes irreducibly vital, the reciprocities of religious, metaphysical and aesthetic codes in respect of being and generation'.⁵⁰

Schelling conceives of the interweaving of *philosophy*, *physics*, and *astronomy* with the *poesy itself* only because artwork is given the status of an *archetype*, as an *image of the universe* and is declared commensurate with a *universal worldview*.⁵¹ Referring to Dante's poetic composition, Schelling introduces the concept of universality as the essence of poesy, according to which the particularity is regarded not in its absolute singularity, but in the/its infinite process of perfection toward the Absolute.⁵² Schelling's view of art constituting an ideal potency of the Absolute is substantiated in his analysis of the *Commedia* as a paradigm of creation in congruence with God's creation of the universe, in which the pattern of artistic creation is analogous to God's invention. Steiner stresses the pertinence of creation in the *Commedia* as an act of liberty with

⁴⁹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 240.

⁵⁰ George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001), p. 64.

⁵¹ George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, p. 243.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 241.

ontological implication, according to which God's *ideas* could take on autonomous identity.⁵³ The profundity of the poetic form of the *Commedia* is for Schelling nothing but a model of the identical universe portraying the identity of the universe created by God and its congruity as a whole. Accordingly, the inner construction of each of the three parts and the *spiritual rhythm* through which they are juxtaposed to one another are disclosed with regard to the cosmic order of the universe. The exposition of the unique artistic invention of form, colour, and tone of each part of the *Commedia* in its intactness is designated to represent the harmony of the universe and the preconceived identity of the Absolute:

The *Inferno*, just as it contains the most terrible of objects, is also the strongest in expression, the most austere in diction, and verbally the darkest and most dreadful. In [...] *Purgatorio* a deep stillness resides, since the laments of the lower world go silent; on the heights, the antecourts of heaven, everything becomes color. The *Paradiso* is a true music of the spheres.⁵⁴

Schelling demonstrates the individuality of each part: the musicality and lyricism of *Paradiso* expressed through the frequent use of Latin words from church hymns; the pure inventiveness of the metamorphosis in the *Inferno* capable of revealing the sublime and beautiful even through the dreadful and base; and the picturesque designation of the *Purgatorio* in its graphical and light effects. This original insight is not aimed at displaying the *otherness* of each part, but solely the reintegration of the *otherness* into a coherent whole which serves as a model of the implicit identity of the universe encompassing all differentiations. The insight into the admirable statute of the poetic creation of the *Commedia* is thus a means for Schelling to reinforce his view of the fusion of all artistic genres: 'neither plastic, picturesque, nor musical, but rather all this at once and in consonant harmony'.⁵⁵

What the philosophical inquiry into *The Divine Comedy* aims to demonstrate, is the validity of the philosophy of art in examining art as a representation of the transcendental objective of the Absolute, as opposed to the

⁵³ George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, p. 87.

⁵⁴ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 245.

⁵⁵ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 247.

prevailing aesthetic theories. Schelling believes that this investigation is not inimical to the very nature of art, but has the capacity for generating ever new significances. By virtue of the designation of *The Comedy* as the portrayal of an elevation toward the Spirit, toward the pure sphere of the absolute light, where vision resolves itself, and poesy becomes music, not only does Schelling demonstrate the validity of his theoretical premises on art or the possibility of philosophy/art reconciliation, but also reminds the reader of the ancient wisdom of sameness. The elucidation of Dante's tropes of the One as boundless totality, absolute light or eternal love manifesting itself through a multiplicity of reflections, though remaining itself unalterable, not only displays the congruence between Schelling and Dante, philosophy and art, but also alludes to the metaphysical philosophy of the Same and re-establishes its lost plenitude. A passage from Dante's text may serve as an illustration to this:

The Primal Light that irradiates them all is received by them in as many ways as are the splendors to which it joins itself. Wherefore since the affection follows upon the act of conceiving, the sweetness of love glows variously in them, more and less. Behold now the height and breadth of the Eternal Goodness, since it has made itself so many mirrors wherein it is reflected, remaining in itself One as before.⁵⁶

The readings of Dante's and Schelling's texts, as well as Schelling's interpretation of Dante account for a philosophy of sameness, anchored in the preconceived identity of the metaphysical universal of the Same, of which philosophy and art are mere representations. The re-postulation of sameness through the Absolute is, thus, Schelling's own way to reconcile the dichotomized spheres of the sensible/intelligible and to emancipate art from being misinterpreted by aesthetical theories of digression. What he primarily aims to achieve, is the establishment of the pure formlessness of the Absolute by means of the distinctive forms of poetry and philosophy. The poet and the philosopher are, accordingly, united in their ascent toward the sphere of the divine substance (*per aspera ad astra*): through the metamorphoses of darkness - colour (as the unity of

⁵⁶ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Paradiso*, Canto XXIX, trans. by Ch. S. Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 333.

light and matter) toward the purity of the absolute light. Schelling's reading of Dante serves as an illustration of this:

The poet has penetrated through the heart of the earth itself to light. In the darkness of the underworld only form itself could be distinguished. In the *Purgatorio*, light emerges still wedded to earthly matter and becomes color. In the *Paradiso*, only the pure music of light remains; the reflex ceases, and the poet elevates himself in stages to the vision of the colorless, pure substance of the deity itself.⁵⁷

To summarize, Schelling's philosophy is an attempt to resurrect the metaphysical philosophy of sameness after the transitory realm of digression by postulating the preconceived identity of the Absolute and posing art, as its ideal potency designated to represent the Absolute. Despite the fact that the limits of this re-postulation imply disregarding the pure *otherness* of the absolutely singular and the viewing of only one aspect of sameness, namely its identity, its positive impact is indisputable. The positive impact of Schelling's philosophy includes his resurrection of the concept of sameness in its plenitude, by reminding the reader of the lost harmony of the universe and the re-postulation of art in respect of this plenitude in its power to allude to the unnameable. Schelling should also be credited for the philosophical postulation of the conceptual difference which, though still subject to dissolution in the Absolute and a mere means for representing its unity, opens vistas for its further corroboration in terms of pure otherness from Nietzsche and on.⁵⁸

The next chapter will inquire into Hegel's postulation of sameness as a totality of becoming which, along with conceptual differences from Schelling's system (Hegel's objective-subjective idealism versus Schelling's objective idealism) is nonetheless congruent with it in its attempt to resurrect sameness as the fundamental issue of philosophy.

⁵⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 246.

⁵⁸ See also on Schelling's influence on Theodor W. Adorno: Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, p. 211

2. Hegel: The Same as the Totality of Becoming

2.1 Sketches of the Concept of Totality

In around 1800, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 - 1831), together with Schelling, promulgates objective idealism as a way to surmount the antinomies manifest in Kant's philosophy of subjectivity and to re-establish sameness as the fundamental issue of philosophy. To bridge the Kantian divide in its refusal to meet the fundamental philosophical requirement of unity, he initially offers the preconceived unity of the transcendental objective of the Absolute.

Hegel's first attempts to bring forth a unity capable of surmounting the Kantian dichotomy — still with the contribution of Schelling and Hölderlin — are reflected in the *Oldest System Program of German Idealism* of 1796 (*Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus*),⁵⁹ the aim of which is to stress the urge for a new mythology. The power for unification is designated as a mythology of *reason* integrating the diversity of the sensuous and intelligible in the manner that myths used to integrate the diversity between nature, art, and society. It would be introduced as a new religion through making ideas aesthetic (i.e. mythological), and mythology reasonable: 'mythology must become philosophical and the people reasonable, and philosophy must become mythological in order to make the philosophers sensuous.'⁶⁰

To reconcile the dichotomized spheres of the sensuous and intelligible through the aesthetic power, the *System Program* poses the Idea of *beauty* in the higher Platonic sense as an aesthetic act, the highest act of reason encompassing all *Ideas*, thereby posing the philosophy of spirit as aesthetic philosophy. The equal development of every human faculty is considered possible through the *sensibility* of a poetically founded religion as an ethical totality which is described

⁵⁹ See on the disputes of its authorship in: Christoph Jamme und Helmut Schneider 'Der Streit um die Verfasser Schaft', in *Mythologie der Vernunft: Hegels ältestes Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus*, hg. v. Christoph Jamme und Helmut Schneider (Frankfurt a. M.), pp. 63 – 76.

⁶⁰ Andrew Bowie 'The Oldest System Programme of German Idealism', in *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), Appendix, p. 266.

by Jürgen Habermas as *mythopoetry*.⁶¹ As a result, for a limited period poetry regains its priority over the sciences and arts by functioning as the *teacher* of humanity and constituting the form of the new mythology up to the point where it is replaced with the idea of speculative reason. Hegel henceforth presupposes the Absolute as the power of unification, the totality encompassing identity and non-identity, the finite and the infinite. The Absolute totality is asserted by virtue of the continual processing and self-negation of the non-identical within the totality. It is with the various meanings of the identical concept of the Absolute that Hegel's subjective-objective idealism diverges from the objective idealism of Schelling. Despite the fact that both Schellingian and Hegelian conceptions of the Absolute are meant to return philosophy from digression toward sameness, they differ in that Hegel postulates it as a totality of becoming, while Schelling poses it in its preconceived identity. Starting his discourse on modernity with Hegel, Habermas, whose conception of communication derives from Hegel's *logology*, contrasts the Hegelian Absolute which unfolds itself only in the process of the relationship between the finite and infinite with Hölderlin's and Schelling's Absolute, preceding the world process either as being or as intellectual intuition: 'The absolute [in Hegel] comes to be neither as substance nor as subject; it is apprehended only as the mediating process of a relation-to-self that produces itself free from conditions.'⁶²

The difference between Hegel's and Schelling's postulations of the Absolute can also be derived from Hegel's treatise *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801), in which Hegel evokes the concept of a totality encompassing the difference as well as the identity of the opposites. In the Hegelian totality, this opposition is not nullified, but each of the opposites within it has a separate standing.⁶³ This contravenes Schelling's concept of the Absolute, posed as a preconceived synthesis in which the opposition of difference and identity of subject and object is dissolved.

⁶¹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. by Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 32.

⁶² Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, pp. 31-32.

⁶³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, p. 156.

Hegel's principal objection to objective idealism is its incapability of self-reflection, hence the failure to pose the Same upon the ground of an absolute totality through the dialectics of an absolute subject-object identity. This serves as a point of departure for the development of Hegel's speculative discourse engaged in the conceptualization of the total identity of subject and object; an identity, in which neither subjective, nor objective synthesis prevails, but all opposition is overcome under the aegis of the Absolute.⁶⁴ To achieve this absolute totality at the price of a suspension of all opposition, Hegel (even if he finds fault with Kant's explanation) takes up Kant's hypothesis of a ternary structure of the proposition and develops it into the syllogism.⁶⁵ This serves as a basis for the development of the Hegelian dialectics, first described by Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus (1796–1862) as comprising three dialectical stages of development: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. The dialectical method means that the Absolute must always pass through the phase of the Negative, the overcoming of which becomes possible through the Hegelian *Aufhebung* or sublation.

From the perspective of a philosophical conceiving/conception of sameness, Hegel's discourse is unprecedented in so far as it adds the layer of self-cognition to the cognitive discourse of the Same, thereby transmuting a philosophical representation into an all-encompassing speculative discourse, anchored in the identity of self-cognition and the cognition of the Same. Rodolphe Gasché rightly describes the speculative discourse of Hegel as 'the full exposition of all the logically possible moments of the *logos*, a process that is completed as soon as the *logos* is folded back into itself'.⁶⁶ It aims at re-postulating sameness which has been perpetually postulated since the inception of Western philosophy in Greece, as a totality encompassing all opposition. Moreover, in distinction from preceding theories which merely presuppose this totality, Hegel builds an entire philosophical edifice and elaborates upon it in a comprehensive, speculative discourse. Gasché rightly remarks that Hegel cannot be satisfied with the mystic rapture that the all-devouring Absolute invites, but must 'expound the intrinsic

⁶⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, pp. 173 – 174.

⁶⁵ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 47.

⁶⁶ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 54.

links between the Absolute and its content' and 'try to posit this manifold as internally connected to the Absolute'.⁶⁷

Expounding the concept of totality, Hegel, in distinction from classical metaphysics, poses identity as only one of its aspects, since, in order for a totality to be complete, it must also admit the negative moment or the *claims of separation*. The Hegelian Absolute is thereby posed as 'the identity of identity and non-identity', in which 'being opposed and being one are both together'.⁶⁸ This postulation of sameness as absolute totality, encompassing both identity and difference is well depicted as different from both classical metaphysics and the so called philosophical thought of difference (from Nietzsche onwards). As we have stated earlier, Hegel's postulation of sameness is distinguished from classical metaphysics and from Schelling's system in that the first covers merely the identity of sameness, while the latter postulates it as a preconceived identity, where difference is a means to represent the totality. The divergence from the philosophy of difference constitutes in the fact that the latter is concerned with the very postulation of pure *difference*, manifesting not the totality of the Absolute, but only itself as such.

This intermediary position of Hegel in respect of sameness is stressed in Gasché's analysis which describes the Hegelian totality as based upon the continuity of identity and difference or the 'unity of itself and of the disunion that such a unity must presuppose'.⁶⁹ It is also from this angle that he defines the totality in Hegel as 'the result of a self-construction in which identity turns into totality by maintaining the identical poles' nonidentity'.⁷⁰ Difference or non-identity comprised in the concept of totality in Hegel differs from its analogues discussed in the philosophy of difference in that its function still remains in the representation of a totality free of contradictions and oppositions. The Hegelian conception of difference is subordinated to that of identity in the dynamics or becoming of diversities, a becoming which is still the becoming of totality as opposed to the recurrence of the *other*. From the perspective of its subordination

⁶⁷ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 59.

⁶⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, p. 156.

⁶⁹ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 57.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 56-57.

to identity, Hegel's becoming which is created through the mediation of the *negative* is opposed to the free movement of diversities postulated by the philosophy of difference. From this angle, as opposed to the free movement of diversities, Hegel's becoming is qualified as a *false movement* by Gilles Deleuze.⁷¹ As we can see, the Hegelian becoming still belongs to the realm of representation and is posed as a mediation having only a single centre and a unique and receding perspective. It resurrects the infinite representation of the Same, ensuring the identity of all moments as belonging to the Same and posing the difference and otherness between the moments constituting the Same.

In what follows, we will inquire into Hegel's philosophical works not only as a way to surpass the philosophical-aesthetic digression from sameness, but as the most encompassing postulation of sameness, comprising the wisdom of its harmony, yet opening new vistas for the postulation of the absolute singularity of the *other*. As such, the Hegelian dialectics is viewed as the postulation of the totality as a becoming of identity and non-identity, in combination with self-reflection or the surmounting of the dichotomy between being and thinking through focusing upon the very process of thinking. As a result, art is detached from the realm of digression and rendered to truth, thereby functioning as the sensuous representation of the Absolute itself. From the same perspective, language is no longer regarded as a mere tool of representation but rethought in relation to the intactness of thought/utterance and the issue of the impossible expression of the totality of being and thinking.

These and other issues will be discussed through the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 1807), with the appearance of which in its opposition of spirit to nature, the break of Hegel with Schelling becomes final.

⁷¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 63.

2.2 The Totality as *Geist*

The Hegelian postulation of sameness in terms of the conception of the Absolute as a transition from being into becoming, from pure identity into totality, in which *otherness* insinuates itself under the guise of the idea of *Geist* as *das Negative* substantiates in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel poses identity in its interrelation with non-identity within totality to reveal Being not as a static given-Being (*Sein*), but as *Becoming* (*Werden*). In so doing, he brings forth the possibility of a redemption or recreation of itself by virtue of the *otherness* or negation of itself as given. The Spirit is therefore defined as the totality of becoming by virtue of the opposing poles of identity and difference, as at once ‘the essence and the actuality of the whole, which sunders itself into a substance which endures, and a substance which sacrifices itself, and which at the same time also takes them back into its unity’.⁷²

Alexandre Kojève juxtaposes the ontological categories of identity and negativity to stress the factor of negativity in its ability to withdraw being from its static state, where it was always nothing but the *same* being, eternally *identical* to itself, but different from the others. In the transposition of the static being into a dynamical becoming, he stresses the role of *Negativity*, by virtue of which ‘an identical being can negate or overcome its identity with itself and become other than it is, even its own opposite’.⁷³ As a result, the negating being becomes capable of leaving ‘the place that was assigned to it in the Cosmos’ and ends up with ‘not being what it is and being what it is not’ (*das nicht zu sein, was es ist, und das zu sein, was es nicht ist*).⁷⁴ Accordingly, the role assigned to the negative, as to the pole opposed to the identical and having a similar standing within the totality of the Absolute, is merely a means to assert the superior form of totality. What is at stake, thus, is not pure negativity, but negativity as the extreme limit of difference. In its subordination to identity, negativity is imbued with the function

⁷² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Arnold Vincent Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 300.

⁷³ Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed. by Allan Bloom, tr. by James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996) p. 200.

⁷⁴ Hegel quotes from: Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 200.

of distorting the equilibrium of the Absolute, by setting it into motion and affirming its identity and totality only by expiation. It is therefore not the postulation of negativity, but the processing of negativity into identity within the totality of the dialectical circle that Hegel opts for. As we can see, the conception of *difference*, posed as *negativity*, is subordinated to the totality of Being and *dialectically overcome* in and by this totality. To summarize, Hegel resurrects the philosophy of sameness by virtue of a conception of totality, within which identity and negativity do not exist in an isolated state, but ‘are only complementary aspects of one and the same real being’.⁷⁵

As the most comprehensive postulation of sameness, the Hegelian *Phenomenology* represents all the complementary stages of the redemption of the Same, comprising the self-alienation and the Return through which the Spirit as a purified self-identity is manifest. The Return of the Spirit to its Sameness, i.e. its assertion as a *being-in-and-for-itself* is realized through Natural Religion and the Religion of Art, in the form of consciousness and self-consciousness, correspondingly. Judged from this angle, art is no longer validated according to the fortuitous criteria of the period of digression, but re-postulated in the form of self-consciousness as the representation of the metaphysical universal of the Same (under the guise of the Spirit). It is returned to the realm of representation, whereby its function is reduced to the unfolding of the Spirit by virtue of the immediacy of the self-consciousness or the ‘*shape of shapelessness*’.⁷⁶ This re-postulation concerns not only art, but also the wider context of creation which is re-established as a movement of externalization of the Spirit by virtue of its *otherness*, defined as ‘torrents of light, [...] the genesis of its being-for-self and the return [...], streams of fire destructive of [all] structured form’.⁷⁷ Creation — enfolding the creation of the self, as well as creation in the form of art — is the moment of the *otherness* or difference; yet difference or otherness is not postulated as such, but is sublated within totality.

This brings forth a re-establishment of the philosophy of sameness and hence, the re-definition of the process of creation, comprising the otherness of art

⁷⁵ Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 188, p. 206.

⁷⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 419.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 419.

as the substantiation of the infinite formlessness of Spirit or the naming of the ‘many-named One [...] clothed with the manifold powers of existence and with the *shapes* of reality’.⁷⁸ Analogous to the classical paradigm of translatability, the *manifold shapes* of art that lack a message of their own are reduced to being the messengers of the One, ‘messengers of its might, visions of its glory, voices in its praise’.⁷⁹ This process, however, is no longer limited by the Spirit’s being in need of substantiation in art in order to manifest itself, but is reciprocated by art’s being in need of the Spirit’s sacrifice of its primal wholeness in order to come to existence. In sum, the redemption narrative substitutes for the translatability paradigm and, accordingly, art is re-defined as the redemption of the sacrificed wholeness or the lost world of the Spirit in the epoch when the Spirit ‘mourns over the loss of its world, and now out of the purity of self creates its own essence, which is raised above the real world’.⁸⁰ With regard to the redemption narrative — comprising the whole, the sacrifice of the whole and its redemption through the manifold — *the simple inner* is blended with *the multiform outer*,⁸¹ whilst art is transcended from being a mere representation of the Spirit toward becoming one with it in absolute sameness, so that ‘the Notion and the work of art produced know each other as one and the same’.⁸² The redemption narrative is further substantiated with the classical topology of light: ‘Pure Light disperses its unitary nature into an infinity of forms, and offers up itself as a sacrifice to being-for-self, so that from its substance the individual may take an enduring existence for itself.’⁸³

The re-establishing of the process of creation as redemption narrative conditions also the re-postulation of the artist in terms of an absolute identity of the Spirit, the artist, and the work of art. By virtue of the same sacrificial act of creation, in/as a result of which the Spirit loses its unitary nature to give birth to the manifold, it is identified with the artist: ‘Spirit is *Artist*’.⁸⁴ Similarly, the artist depersonalizes himself and rises to the abstraction of pure action in order to create

⁷⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 419.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 420.

⁸⁰ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 426.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 426.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 420.

⁸⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 423.

a work of art, which will become one with the artist and the Spirit. The work of art thereby forms a *whole* merely as referred to the genesis of its own creation and to the genesis of creation *per se*.⁸⁵

From the perspective of the redemption narrative, not only art but also religion and philosophy are considered in the ascent toward the absolute revelation of the Spirit, as their fundamental aim. In Hegel's formulation: 'the hopes and expectations of the world up till now had pressed forward solely to this revelation, to behold what absolute Being is, and in it to find itself.'⁸⁶ This revelation is realized in the phase of absolute religion as the highest one, in which Spirit, conscious of its own externalization, retains its self-identity in its otherness and realizes itself as essentially a *self-conscious Being*.⁸⁷ The differentiations in the forms of art, science, or religion are all reconciled in the redemption narrative, in respect of which they have come to existence due to the sacrificial act of the Spirit in order for the latter to redeem itself in the '*form of simple oneness*'.⁸⁸ In other words, they all have come to existence solely due to the negation or *otherness* of the pure unitary essence of the Spirit when it sacrificed its wholeness to enter into actual or *immediate* existence, *other* to itself. Moreover, the actually existing world is nothing but the sacrifice of the wholeness of the Spirit, since it is by virtue of this very sacrificial act that the Spirit 'creates a world'.⁸⁹

To summarize, what Hegel aims at is the re-establishment of the philosophy of sameness as Absolute totality and the subordination of all creative processes to its absolute *Oneness*, stemming from the fundamental proposition that 'what is differentiated is itself just as much only *one* thing'.⁹⁰ Identity and difference are likewise posed in terms of the becoming of the totality of the Absolute and hence, subordinated to the hierarchy of the Same: 'simple sameness is an abstraction and hence absolute difference, but this, as difference in itself, is distinguished from itself and is therefore selfsameness.'⁹¹ As a result, a new hitherto unsurpassed postulation of sameness as a totality of selfsameness is accomplished, in respect

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 429.

⁸⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 461.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 461.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 465.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 467.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 469.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 473.

of which ‘the world is indeed *implicitly* reconciled with the divine being’ and the alienated is reunited with the One in order to be ‘identical with it in its love’.⁹²

In this context, an essential role is prescribed to language, by virtue of which solely, the *pure being* which would otherwise remain a non-existent potentiality, a non-being, an *other* which is not *there*, not *this* is actualized. The sacrifice of the whole or its self-alienation in the world of culture is thus realized by language functioning as the existence (*Dasein*) of Spirit, the *real existence* of the pure being for itself *qua independent separate individuality* existing for others. The entire process of creation becomes in its essence the nocturnal creation of language as *another* mode of coming forth of *the god*, in which, ‘out of his creative night’, he is *immediately* present in his *universality*.⁹³ Moreover, language as the retaining within itself the immediacy of its individuality, yet presenting itself as universality is identified with the single unity of Spirit. The unity of the universal self-consciousness of Spirit is, according to Hegel, by virtue of its pure inwardness, no less than the being-for-others and the being-for-self of the individuals.⁹⁴ While the unity of language as pure thought is due to its inwardness and outer existence.⁹⁵

The issue of language is also discussed in terms of the shaping of the unshaped or the forming of the formless through finite forms. Its trajectory is sketched starting from *the first form of the god’s utterance* through its objectification in the *pure pathos of substance*, developing further into the *form of contingent existence* and finally into the return to the lucidity of the univocal word in which ‘the universal truth [...] was revealed by the divine Light’.⁹⁶ The function of language is likewise the revelation of reality which in Hegel is always a *revealed reality*. In respect of Kojève’s reading of the *Phenomenology* this is equal to the *reality plus the revelation of the reality* through discourse. The revelation of the reality becomes possible through the *difference* present in human discourse between the real and the discourse which reveals it. As Kojève

⁹² Ibid., p. 478.

⁹³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 430.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 431.

formulates it: ‘Without Man, Being would be mute: it would be *there (Dasein)*, but it would not be *true (das Wahre)*.’⁹⁷

Another fundamental dimension of language is that of the interrelation between thought/utterance, in terms of which the knowledge of being is revealed by speech as *sense certainty (sinnliche Gewissheit)*. By means of difference and negation, speech transforms Being and, by transforming it, transforms itself in the ascent from the elementary form of Consciousness towards Self-Consciousness. In this process of transformation, Being emerges into real existence from ‘the darkness of thought’ through the potentiality of nothingness, which precedes negation. It only becomes substantiated by virtue of language, through the ‘clarity of utterance’, from which in its realization as the pure Absolute, it further withdraws itself dissociating itself from its imperfect existence.⁹⁸

Hegel prefigures the conception of a *truthful language* that questions the *sense-certainty* of the *This (das Diese)* and the *Now*, and in this questioning always already encompasses the negativity of an entity (*Seiendes*) proving itself to be simultaneously a non-entity (*Nichtseiendes*). He signifies language as the naming of the unnameable, of that which remains unnamed in every naming through the grasping of the negativity of the name. Language thus asserts the universal (*Allgemeines*) as the true content of sense-certainty, as ‘a simple thing [...] which is through negation, which is neither This nor That’.⁹⁹ The significance of this conception is that for the first time in the history of philosophy, Hegel posits the negativity of nothing within the temporality of language, between the immediacy of sense-certainty and the universal: ‘The this is, therefore, established as *not* This, or as something superseded (*aufgehoben*); and hence not as Nothing, but as a determinate Nothing, the Nothing of a content, viz. of the This.’¹⁰⁰

The return to sameness for Hegel is also the return to the primordial Word (*das ur-sprüngliche Wort*), conceived as a unity of name/thing designated through a unity of voice, letters, and silence. In this context, nothing is postulated in its potential transmutation into being, while human word — in its quest for the primordial Word. Giorgio Agamben inquires into the Hegelian unification of the

⁹⁷ Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 188.

⁹⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 308.

⁹⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁰⁰ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 68.

metaphysically inseparable categories of language and death: ‘*death and voice have the same negative structure and [...] are metaphysically inseparable*’.¹⁰¹ He discusses the negativity in language in its difference with respect to the entity and links the path leading to the disclosure of being to the experiencing of the taking place of language not as a givenness, but as an absence, the *Voice of Death*. In so doing, he defines the Voice in Hegel as ‘a silent and unspeakable voice [...] the supreme shifter, which permits thought to experience the taking place of language and to ground, with it, the dimension of being in its difference with respect to the entity’.¹⁰² Moreover, the significance of language as the silent and unspeakable *Voice of Death* in Hegel is viewed as constituting the model according to which Western culture construes the relation and passage between nature and culture, *phusis and logos*. Agamben not only defines Voice as ‘the original mythogeme of metaphysics’,¹⁰³ but poses its discussion as *the science of the removed voice*¹⁰⁴ at the heart of ontology.

2.3 Reconsidering Aesthetics

The point of departure for Hegel’s *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik, published posthumously) is the need to establish new criteria for the validation of art as opposed to those acknowledged in the period of digression. In so doing, Hegel transposes the issue of art from the philosophy of digression into that of sameness and postulates it in its relatedness to the Absolute. The essence of art is therefore defined by its reciprocal relation vis-à-vis the Absolute, according to which it comes into existence through the sacrificial loss of the pure being of the Absolute and belongs to the three moments in which the truth of the Absolute Spirit is revealed. Art is, accordingly, the sublation

¹⁰¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, trans. by Karen E. Pinkus and Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 86.

¹⁰² Giorgio Agamben, *Language and Death*, p. 85.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 86.

[*Aufhebung*] of the materialization of the idea along with religion and philosophy. In this context, religion is posed as the combination of image and idea in the representation [*Vorstellung*] of the Absolute, while philosophy is viewed as conceptual knowledge on which truth depends. Philosophy, religion, and art are all postulated in their relatedness vis-à-vis the Absolute, as three modes of consciousness of the Idea. Upon the ground of this postulation, the function of art is not the *representation* of Idea, as Charles Taylor argues, but its *mode of consciousness*.¹⁰⁵

Despite the difference in forms, art, philosophy, and religion are all placed in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the prime principle of the Absolute and are thereby conceived as similar *modes of consciousness* of the Spirit. Art reveals the Spirit intuitively as the unity of externalization and redemption, while religion or philosophy represent and conceive of the Absolute cognitively. What distinguishes this view from classical metaphysics is that art, philosophy, and religion are not viewed as static forms, but in their perpetual transformation into something other, in their transcendence toward a sphere where they are re-transformed into Idea. Hegel analyzes them dialectically in their ascent toward the Absolute as the gradual unfolding of the Spirit.

A significant point for Hegel's speculation on theology and aesthetics is the accord between the Absolute as portrayed in a given period and the stages of development attained by the human spirit in that same period. This accord can be reached by the essential combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches in rendering the Absolute. From this perspective art is defined as both historical in its origin and its function.¹⁰⁶ Hegel applies this approach in differentiating between symbolic, classical, and romantic stages of art by grounding his differentiation on a view that links the development of art to the elimination of the significance of the sensuous. Hegel believes this elimination makes the human being creative and capable of disinterested contemplation of the world as it is in itself. From this perspective, the early theological ideas, such as those prevalent among the Egyptians, Persians, and Indians could be expressed to a certain degree

¹⁰⁵ Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 470.

¹⁰⁶ See: William Desmond, *Art and the Absolute: A Study of Hegel's Aesthetics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986) for a detailed account of Hegel's aesthetic theory.

of adequacy only in art and not yet in philosophical thought. Art at the stage of these ancient oriental cultures is described as belonging to the symbolic stage of artistic manifestation, as pre-art [*Vorkunst*] in which the vague idea is manifest in inadequate forms. The age of Greek sculpture is the representation of the Spirit in its ideal sensual form and is defined as the classical stage of art in which there is no distinction between the manifestation of truth in religion and in art. In its final stage, the romantic art subsumes the works of art created under the concept of Christianity. To summarize: art, if viewed from this angle, plays the function of a manifestation of truth merely within the historical frames of one historical period, namely, that of the art-religion [*Kunstreligion*] of the Greek civilization, whereas starting with Christianity, the role of manifestation of truth is transposed into the images of the New Testament.

These considerations concerning the historical origin of art and its ability (together with philosophy and religion) to undergo transformations serve as a ground for Hegel to develop his problematic thesis concerning the end of art. He predicts that art will move beyond itself in its highest stage, at the ‘age of prose’, and that everything timely and consequential in art will eventually be taken up into philosophical knowledge. The perspectives of the gradual sublimation of art into religion, and religion into philosophy are delineated.¹⁰⁷

In defining the essence of art, Hegel reduces the function of the artist to the representation of the Absolute, whereby he encounters the idea of the Absolute and attempts to represent it through symbols and forms of sensual expressions. The self-manifestation of the united totality of the Absolute by virtue of art is realizable through the unity of content and its appropriate mode of manifestation.¹⁰⁸ It is accomplished by a juxtaposition of the particular and the universal, since the *abstract universal* needs the *concreteness* of art for its *phenomenal manifestation*.¹⁰⁹ To demonstrate these assertions, Hegel claims that the enunciation of God, as simply the One, is merely a lifeless abstraction of the

¹⁰⁷Curtis L. Carter, ‘A Reexamination of the ‘Death of Art’ Interpretation of Hegel’s Aesthetics’, in *Selected Essays on G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. by Lawrence Stepelevich (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 11 – 26.

¹⁰⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, ed. by Michael Inwood, trans. by Bernard Bosanquet (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 76.

¹⁰⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 77.

irrational understanding which can provide no material for art unless apprehended in concrete truth (in the *Division of the Subject*, Chapter V). As an example, he presents the idea of the Christian God, conceived in his divine truth as both the *One* and the *Trinity*, and therefore, in Himself thoroughly concrete: ‘Here *One* is essentiality, universality, and particularity, together with their reconciled unity; and it is only such unity that constitutes the concrete.’¹¹⁰ The subsequent speculations of Hegel gesture toward the character of concreteness as sensuous concreteness, capable of representing the Spirit and belonging both to the content and to the representation, as the point where both may coincide and correspond to one another. These considerations introduce the concrete content in itself, involving the element of external, actual, and sensible manifestation.

Hegel’s dialectical method, introduced in the previous chapter of this study, is applied likewise to the analysis of individual works in their gradual ascent toward particular art-types, then toward the idea of Art and finally toward the Spirit. The differentiated art-types (*objective* and *subjective*; *symbolic*, *classical* and *romantic*), constituting the self-unfolding Idea of beauty escalate next towards Art *per se* which is the self-unfolding Idea of the Spirit. The central concern of Hegel in analyzing the artworks is to demonstrate the power of art, as the self-unfolding *Idea of Spirit*, to transcend and finally dissolve into the Spirit:

What the particular arts realize in individual works of art are according to their abstract conception simply the universal types which constitute the self-unfolding Idea of beauty. It is as the external realization of this Idea that the wide Pantheon of art is being erected, whose architect and builder is the spirit of beauty as it awakens to self-knowledge, and to complete which the history of the world will need its evolution of ages.¹¹¹

In speculating on the conception of beauty, anchored in the idea of totality, Hegel who is not ready to admit that art can in fact be *ugly*, disregards ugliness as merely the flow of variations.¹¹² The classification of particular art-types,

¹¹⁰ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 77.

¹¹¹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 97.

¹¹² See: Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*, for a detailed account of this issue, pp. 105 – 108.

analogous to archetypes is thus made with regard to the Idea of beauty as an ultimate and fundamental law, a higher principle to which the derivative attributes should be subordinated. Here, the Idea of beauty *per se* substitutes for the conception of the beautiful anchored in the sensuous mode or the purely abstract attributes of space and time. Classifying between the *symbolic*, *classical*, and *romantic* art-types, Hegel, accordingly, views them as the universal stages or elements of the Idea of beauty. In so doing, he describes the Classical art as the completion of the realm of beautiful, (nothing is or can become more beautiful), while the Romantic art as the one where beauty is no longer the ultimate aim.

As we have stated before, at the heart of Hegel's differentiation between art-types, lies the principle of the absolute totality manifesting itself through art. According to it, *symbolic* art which starts with the particular and is therefore not adequate for representing the universal truth of Spirit, attains its most adequate reality and most complete application in *architecture*; *classical* art as a unity of meaning and corporeality, finds adequate realization in sculpture; while *romantic* art, as an expression of the idea of transubstantiation, takes possession of painting, music, and poetic representation. Romantic art is therefore the reflective presentation of the Absolute combined with the symbolic. Hegel concentrates in particular upon the romantic art type which realizes itself in painting, music, and poetry, by regarding them not as isolated aesthetic modes in themselves, but in their mutual transitions and their dissolution into the Absolute Spirit. As we can see, the unifying idea for these aesthetic modes, distinct in their mediums of representation, is the higher principle of the absolute totality which they come to represent and of which they form particular manifestations or simply different gradations. Henceforth, painting, as the first art in this escalation, is viewed in its development into the second art-type, namely music. As a medium for its content and for the plastic embodiment of the content, painting employs visibility specialized in its own nature, i.e. as developed into colour. The quality of visibility in painting — *the visibility and the rendering visible* — is already distinct from the one employed in architecture and sculpture, since it is of more ideal form for its being based on colour (simple light, differentiating itself by virtue of its contrast with darkness). According to Hegel, they [the visibility and

the rendering visible] ‘liberate art from the sensuous completeness in space which attaches to material things, by restricting themselves to a plane surface’.¹¹³ By contrast, music, with its still sensuous medium ‘treats the sensuous as ideal, and does so by negating and idealizing into the individual isolation of a single point, the indifferent externality of space, whose complete semblance is accepted and imitated by painting’.¹¹⁴

The classification of art-types clearly accounts for the fact that they are viewed particularly in their development toward the partial representation of the Absolute. The single point of transition in music — surpassing the abstract spatial sensuousness, such as painting, employs and approaching the abstract spirituality of poetry — is the temporal *ideality* of sound. Music is thereby positioned between painting and poetry, forming ‘the center of the romantic arts, just as sculpture represents the central point between architecture and the arts of romantic subjectivity’.¹¹⁵

By converting the abstract visibility of painting into the audibility of sound, Hegel demonstrates the feasibility of the idea of an absolute totality asserting itself through the becoming of the multiplicity, in which the ideal content is liberated from its immersion in matter. From the perspective of the fundamental Hegelian argument concerning the need for Spirit to overcome the sensuous in order to achieve its highest conceptuality, music, *with its still sensuous medium* is posed as inferior to language. As an expression of the sensuous, it is distinctly differentiated from verbal language, posed as the medium of truth. The higher form of truth, derived from Hegel’s conception of language as the self-recognition of Spirit in the other, is only found via the articulation of conceptual ideas, leading to the belief in language’s capacity to name the unnameable. This belief lies at the heart of Hegel’s definition of poetry as the third and most spiritual mode of representation of the romantic art-type, possessing the power of liberating art from the sensuous element. In poetry, sound, as the point of intersection or transition of music into poetry is no longer the feeling of the sonorous itself, but is the *sign*, void of import, the sign of the idea that is concrete in itself. Hegel develops the

¹¹³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 94.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹¹⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 95.

temporality of sound into language: the sensuous element with inward feeling in music is separated from the content of consciousness in poetry, and music develops into poetry.¹¹⁶ This content of consciousness consolidates gradually into the shape of ideas in poetry which treats sound solely as a symbol with no value or import. Thus considered, sound reduced by Hegel to a mere letter, becomes a mere indication of mind for the audible just as for the visible. These considerations allow him to conceive the proper medium of a poetical representation as the poetical imagination and intellectual portrayal itself. Moreover, they allow viewing *poetry* as an extended or synthetic type of art that extends over and runs through all art-types. The main reason for this is that poetry's proper medium is the artistic imagination which is considered essential to every product that belongs to the beautiful and is independently developed in each. Quoting Hegel: 'Poetry is the universal art of mind which has become free in its own nature, and which is not tied to find its realization in external sensuous matter, but expatiates exclusively in the inner space and inner time of the ideas and feelings.'¹¹⁷

Yet, even poetry as the highest phase of art is for Hegel merely a reflection of the absolute totality, the very point where the absolute spirit, on its way to complete self-knowledge transcends its artistic manifestation transforming into philosophical thought. We read: 'Yet just in this its highest phase art ends by transcending itself, inasmuch as it abandons the medium of a harmonious embodiment of mind in sensuous form, and passes from the poetry of imagination into the prose of thought.'¹¹⁸

As we can see, Hegel's postulation of the Absolute as a totality of becoming through absolute reflection is not only a way for surmounting the Kantian bifurcations excluding any idea of wholeness, but also the last and most complete representation of the identity of sameness which has been haunting philosophical thought since its very inception. Yet, as a general rule, a thing, reaching its highest point, begins to transform itself into its own *Other* or, to use Hegel's own words: 'The highest maturity, the highest stage, which anything can attain is that in which

¹¹⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 95.

¹¹⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 96.

¹¹⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, p. 96

its downfall begins.’¹¹⁹ To apply Hegel’s own words to the philosophy of sameness, we can conclude that having reached its *highest maturity* with Hegel, philosophical thinking ceases postulating the identity and totality of the Same, and, thus, ceases postulating art as its representation. Instead, philosophy faces the urge of passing over into another mode of thought in conceiving of the plenitude of sameness. It therefore substitutes the postulation of the *Other* for the postulation of the Same, the postulation of *Difference* for that of *Identity*, thereby withdrawing art from the realm of representation. After Hegel, predominantly from Nietzsche onwards, philosophical thought becomes preoccupied with the postulation of pure *Difference*, hence the postulation of the artwork as a pure signifier in its absolutely singular *otherness*.

¹¹⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. by Arnold Vincent Miller (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), p. 611.

Part Four: Difference

This part investigates the third path for the development of the issue of sameness viewed from the vantage point delineated in Part two when, due to the acknowledged limits of its philosophical postulations as pure identity, Continental philosophy from Kant onwards faces the dilemma of either re-postulating sameness or suspending its postulation as the fundamental issue of philosophy. In Parts Two and Three we have examined the legacy of two controversial approaches to this dilemma: the digression from the Same (by Kant (*Kritik der Urteilskraft* and the aesthetic theories of the end of seventeenth and beginning of eighteenth centuries) and the return to sameness (by Hegel and Schelling). This third path, namely the postulation of the pure difference within the Same, is being developed upon the assessment of the limits of both approaches. Its significance lies in the reassertion of sameness among the fundamental issues of philosophy and the opening up of the space of freedom and creativity in experiencing the infinite potentiality of its otherness and *différance* (a Derridean term). The conception of *difference* (from the Nietzschean difference to the Derridean *différance*) here is no longer viewed as the ground for the circulation of the identical as totality, neither is it subordinated to the principle of identity. It is rather identity that is being experienced in the otherness of repetition. *Difference* has no other aim than its own repetition and reproduction via decentring and divergence. It can be illustrated as the Eternal Return under the symbol of a circle, of which ‘Difference is at the centre and the Same is only on the periphery: it is a constantly decentred, continually tortuous circle which revolves only around the unequal’.¹

Here we will trace the metamorphoses of the issue of sameness due to the limits of its postulations as a transcendental signified of pure identity and totality and its reestablishment in respect of otherness and difference. What is at stake is the demonstration of the destruction of the Same and the infinite potentiality of

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 67.

an already de-sedimented sameness opened up via the destabilization of its integrity. We will follow the contrivances of the new postulation of sameness in Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida who, despite their very individual attitudes, display a rigour as transgressing the coherence of representation and as transposing the issue of sameness into an experience by virtue of the heterogeneity of the singular, the originary postulation of Being or the overlapping of deconstructive *infrastructures*.

The conception of sameness in respect of difference conditions a different development of literature and literary criticism, distinguished by an impossibility to reduce a text to meaning, content, and theme or rather by the resistance of writing to such a reduction. The liberation from signification accomplished by the thought of *difference* brings about a space of creative freedom anchored in the immediacy of experience, the otherness of the multiple, the *iterability* of language and play. The movement of becoming in this context is not directed towards the return of the Same, but rather creates, destroys, and grounds repetition upon the death of God and the dissolution of the self. This new space of creative freedom is a dynamic one, opened up to the endless metamorphoses of the extreme after being pushed to its limits; a culture rightly described as the *veritable* theatrical world of metamorphoses.

With regard to Gilles Deleuze's definition, what is at stake in this space is the question of 'making movement itself a work [...], of substituting direct signs for mediate representations; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind'.²

We will subsequently inquire into this incredible space of *difference*, credited for the founding of the *theatrum philosophicum*: 'an incredible equivalent of theatre within philosophy, thereby founding simultaneously this theatre of the future and a new philosophy.'³

² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 9.

³ *Ibid*, p. 9

1. Nietzsche: The Affirmation of the Same as Non-Same

1. 1. Surmounting the Same: God is Dead

To distinguish Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844 - 1900) position with respect to sameness, we need to refer back to the conceptual point delineated in Part two when, due to the limits of the philosophical postulations of sameness as pure identity, philosophy faces the dilemma of either re-postulating sameness or suspending its postulation as the fundamental issue of philosophy. Nietzsche's philosophical position is developed in response to the legacy of two controversial approaches to this dilemma: the digression from sameness (either by Kant or aesthetic theories, examined in Part two of this thesis) and the return to the Same (by Hegel and Schelling, examined in Part three). Furthermore, it is being developed upon the assessment of the limits of both approaches: the impossibility of suspending sameness and reducing it to fortuitous principles of subjectivity; and the limits of re-postulating sameness as a pre-existing totality on a new speculative level.

Due to the limits of both approaches, Nietzsche's position will be regarded from the perspective of the philosophy of sameness as a third path which re-postulates sameness as the recurrence of the absolutely singular differential. As the one '*whose duty is wakefulness itself*' (Preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886)⁴ in a period when the thinking of the pure identity of the Same has been surmounted, Nietzsche poses the philosophical conception of the pure conceptual difference, anchored in the recurrence of the absolute singularity of the differential. What we will attempt to demonstrate, is not only the irrefutable significance of Nietzsche's position with regard to sameness for both philosophy and art, but its being the only right solution to the abovementioned dilemma of the Same. Anchored in the ideal balance between the plenitude of the Same and the uniqueness of the differential, Nietzsche's philosophy liberates human thought both from the endless chain of representation and from the trap

⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human, Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. by Helen Zimmern and Paul V. Cohn (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2008).

of subjectivity, exposing it to freedom, to the infinite resources of a new language of pureness, and a dazzling experience. It is in this intermediate region of madness and pure language, to use Michel Foucault's definition, that we find Nietzsche.⁵

The point of departure for Nietzsche is his contestation of metaphysics which serves his claim for the death of God, thereby implying the refutation of the domination of the unitary signified of the Same under whatever guises it may have appeared: as 'Plato's invention of Pure Spirit and the Good in Itself'; as Christianity or 'Platonism for the *people*'; as the '*superfluous* teleological principles' of Spinoza; or as the *false* synthetic judgements of Kant (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface & Chapter 1, sections 13, 11 correspondingly). However, more than anything else, the surmounting of metaphysics for Nietzsche is the disenchantment from the seductive powers of the Eleatic error of Being and the getting rid of God through getting rid of grammar or 'reason in language' (*Twilight of the Idols*, 1889, *Reason in Philosophy*, section 5).⁶ Finally, Nietzsche objects the Hegelian idea of dialectics for its unfounded philosophical optimism, opposing to Hegel's divinized reason, the unreason and chance in logic itself and suggesting that we should understand the evolution of the human being through the greatest unreason.⁷ All these rejected metaphysical concepts implying the metaphysical universal of the Same — that of Being, of the Absolute, of Goodness, of Truth, and of Perfection — are generalized as *causa sui* and described as attaining to 'their stupendous concept *God*' which is 'the last, most attenuated and emptiest thing (*Twilight of the Idols*, *Reason in Philosophy*, section 4). Pointing to the limits of the metaphysical postulations of the Same, Nietzsche defines the *causa sui* as the best self-contradiction that has so far been conceived, a sort of logical violation and unnaturalness (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Chapter 1, section 21).

The surmounting of the metaphysical universal of the Same under the guise of the death of God is repeatedly expressed in various writings by Nietzsche. In *Zarathustra* it appears in the form of an impossibility to disregard this fact: 'Could this be possible! This old holy man in his forest has heard

⁵ Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Freud, Marx', in Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, ed. by James D. Faubion, trans. by Robert Hurley and others (London: Penguin Books, 2000), II, p. 278.

⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols with the Antichrist and Ecce Homo*, trans. by Antony M. Ludovici (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2007).

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols (Berlin/New York, 1988), XI, p. 253.

nothing of this yet, that *God is dead!*' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Part 1, section 2).⁸ In the *Gay Science* it is asserted through the laughter of 'the many [...] who did not believe in God' when they encounter the madman who seeks God (*The Gay Science*, 1882, section 125),⁹ while in the *Twilight of the Idols* it takes the form of a denial of God, and hence the denial of the responsibility of God for the sake of saving the world (*Twilight of the Idols*, *The Four Great Errors* section 8).

The significance of Nietzsche's postulation of sameness or, as Derrida argues, his exceeding of metaphysics and Platonism is rightly described by Heidegger as the transformation of the very value of hierarchy itself or as the transformation of the hierarchical structure itself.¹⁰

1. 2. Dispelling the Chimeras of Truth

Nietzsche's refutation of the metaphysical universal of the Same in all its contrivances points to the erroneousness of any postulation of 'unity, identity, permanence, substance, cause, materiality and being' (*Twilight of the Idols*, *Reason in Philosophy*, section 5). It implies also the impugning of the traditional concept of truth, as the revealing of the concealed, its illumination or unveiling and hence the recognition of *untruth as a condition of life* (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Chapter 1, section 4). As a result, the metaphysical concept of truth is cast, to use Jacques Derrida's definition, 'into its bottomless abyss as non-truth, veiling and dissimulation'.¹¹

In Derrida's reading of Nietzsche, the self-presentation of truth in the idea is traced through the process of the becoming female of the idea:¹² from the Platonic *eidé*, implying the identification of truth with the philosopher to the severing of the philosopher from truth as a result of his exile, or the exile of the idea. The philosopher is transformed then into the follower of the trace of truth which has become transcendental, inaccessible and seductive. Yet, in Nietzsche's texts 'there is no such thing as a woman, as a truth in itself of

⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. by Graham Parkes, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. by Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Syles*, trans. by Barbara Harlow (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979) p. 81.

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Syles*, p. 119

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 87 – 89.

woman in itself', but only multiple, variegated, contradictory 'not-truths', a surfeit of truth in the plural.¹³ The refutation of truth leads to the suspension of the decidable oppositions of true/untrue, veiled/unveiled, whereby reading is freed from the hermeneutic horizon of the meaning or truth of being, and the spurring operation becomes more powerful than any content, thesis or meaning.¹⁴

The surmounting of truth amounts to the overcoming of the primordial truth of the Same, anchored in the revelation of always but the identical via multiplicity. It is the challenge of the pursuit of origin [*Ursprung*] as an attempt to capture the exact essence of things and their genuine identities, daring the metaphysical assumption of the existence of intelligible forms that precede the external world of accident.

Foucault traces this challenge in Nietzsche's replacement of the word *Ursprung*, as the search for the truth of the identical, by *Entstehung und Herkunft*, designating *emergence*, the moment of arising in recording the true object of genealogy, seeking to re-establish the 'hazardous play of dominations'.¹⁵ Rather than the value of truth Nietzsche suggests that the genealogist should instead listen to history to dispel the chimeras of origin, to find that the very secret of things lies in their having no essence, or, to use Foucault's words, 'their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms' and should examine the history of reason to learn that it was born from chance.¹⁶ The challenge of the metaphysical concept of truth that necessitates the removal of every mask for the sake of the ultimate disclosure of the original identity is hereby replaced by the discovery of non-truth at the exteriority of accidents, the emergence of masks of the other, the fragmenting/fragmentation of the unified whole and the demonstration of its heterogeneity.

The dispelling of the domination of the metaphysical concept of truth is significant for the re-postulation of sameness by means of making the difference and discontinuities of the multiple visible. The re-postulation then becomes the task of the genealogist who inquires into history to reveal the very heterogeneity of the multiple rather than the ontology of the identity of the Same as the

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, p. 103.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 107.

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, II, pp. 369 – 389; these references p. 373 & p. 376.

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', II, p. 371.

synthesis of multiplicity. This task of re-postulation is realized in Nietzsche by dissipating and segmenting the preconceived identity of the Same which is no more represented by the successive configurations of multiples amounting to the identical meaning of always but the Same, but rather the disclosure of the differences and dispersions of the singular randomness of the multiples themselves.

The recognition of untruth as a condition of life, with the concomitant removal of the opposition in the visible/intelligible and the illusion of the moral judgement beneath them (*Twilight of the Idols, The 'Improvers' of Mankind*, section 1) is Nietzsche's demand upon philosophers who, venturing to do so, place themselves beyond good and evil (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Chapter 1, section 4). Upon the ground of this recognition, a new order of philosophers is appearing, designated by Nietzsche as 'tempters' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Chapter 2, section 42), and a new philosophy of theatre, the *theatrum philosophicum*,¹⁷ is substituting for the philosophies of identity and digression. The *theatrum philosophicum*, as the theatre of mime with multiple, fugitive and instantaneous scenes, is the inquiry into the non-place of truth, hence the decentred and asymmetrical place of the interplay of the chance, difference, and heterogeneity of the multiple rooted in the intensity of inner experience and the infinite repetition in language.

1. 3. The Space of Freedom

Nietzsche designates the space liberated from the domination of the metaphysical universal of the Same, be it in the guise of God or truth, as a decentred, asymmetrical space of interplay of heterogeneity, difference, abyss, and hiatus. It is, however, not a dispelling of the Same, as even the most extreme statement 'God is dead', implies the presumed knowledge of God's being or, to use Maurice Blanchot's words, that God is complicit with his sacrificial act and that it is accomplished by his consent.¹⁸ It is instead the attainment of the Same as non-Same by revealing the very mediation that prevails in the identity of the

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, 'Theatrum Philosophicum', in Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, II, pp. 343 – 368.

¹⁸ Maurice Blanchot, 'On Nietzsche's Side', in *The Work of Fire*, trans. by Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 292 – 293.

Same rather than the absolute identity of the Same above any differentiation. In virtue of this act, Nietzsche liberates the Same from the obsession of transcendence, the monotony of being represented as an irrefutable metaphysical concept of identity by opening up infinite perspectives for the possibility of discovering it anew for innumerable times in the endless diversity of the singular, its absolute uniqueness, and, hence its difference from others. Furthermore, it opens perspectives for a new conception of sameness outside representation in the absolute adequacy of the Same and the singular.

This act of Nietzsche's should thus be regarded as a positive act of liberation, of the freedom to revolt against the givenness of the Same and of the affirmation of the positivity of the Same as non-Same, as the Other. The affirmation of non-Same is the affirmation of God as non-God, his double, Death of God as Dionysus and the Crucified One.¹⁹ Blanchot describes this very negation of God in Nietzsche as affirmation, and asserts that the negation of God is linked to the restless negativity of man, his power to deny God endlessly, his passionate questioning, limitless dissatisfaction and will to sacrifice.²⁰ This is a negation for the sake of affirmation of freedom: affirming man as infinite power of negation in his ability to be always equal to what surpasses him, what is other than he is, what is different from himself. It is the affirmation of freedom upon the ground of pure nothing contrary to the nothingness of God conceived as the rejection of the absolute: 'The infinite collapse of God allows freedom to become aware of the nothing that is its foundation, without making an absolute of this nothing.'²¹

Nietzsche's approach to sameness appears to be the only way to return to the Same, to resurrect the Same by means of a departure from the Same and in the death of the Same. Subjecting the Same to danger, risking and gambling it, Nietzsche awakens man by offering him the rigour of creating and destroying an infinite number of ever different combinations in order finally to confess with Foucault, that:

To awaken us from the confused sleep of dialectics and of anthropology, we required the Nietzschean figures of tragedy, of Dionysus, of the death of God,

¹⁹ Maurice Blanchot, 'On Nietzsche's Side', p. 297.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 294.

²¹ Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', p. 296.

of the philosopher's hammer, of the Superman approaching with the steps of a dove, of the Return.²²

Now the space opened up by the death of God is to be filled with the Overhuman which is the overcoming of the human (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Fourth and Last Part, section 13,2 & 13,3). This overcoming becomes possible by overcoming the transcendence 'behind the stars', going under and sacrificing the human to the earth (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, First Part, section 4). It becomes possible through overcoming anthropology by viewing the human as a bridge *going over* and *going under* toward the Overman who is the lightning and the madness (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, First Part, sections 3, 4).

This overcoming of the transcendence of the Same is realized through what Georges Bataille describes as the *inner experience* or the ecstatic experience of the meaning of nonmeaning which again becomes the nonmeaning of meaning with no possible outcome.²³ It is overcome by laughter which, in Bataille's explication, is the laughing at oneself (at the tasks one undertook in the manner of Zarathustra) due to the intoxication with nothingness, experienced as the free and empty foundation of the world's nonmeaning.²⁴ To annihilate the heaviness of the world and the 'inhuman term' of the absolute, one thus needs a sudden impulse and an irrepressible need.²⁵

The space of Nietzschean freedom is to be filled therefore with intoxicated and impulsive individuals chosen by chance to surpass the unified universe and relate the love for the identity and transcendence of the Same to an earthly love, echoing to infinity.²⁶ Here, the Other is posited as the Same, the Overman beyond the human-all-too-human, and 'playing and dancing' are opposed to 'betting and leaping'.²⁷ In this space of freedom, chance stands higher than necessity; the fragment, higher than the whole, the time of Aeon higher than Chronos, and the Return is not the return of the perfect circle, but the *Recurrence of difference*.²⁸

²² Michel Foucault, 'A Preface to Transgression', in Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, II, p. 76.

²³ Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, trans. by Bruce Boone (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 135.

²⁴ Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, pp. 55 – 61 & 84.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 61 & 69.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 70 & 72.

²⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 34.

²⁸ Michel Foucault, 'Theatrum Philosophicum', II, pp. 364 – 365.

1.4 Eternal Ring of Recurrence

Oh how should I not lust after Eternity and after the nuptial ring of all rings – the ring of recurrence! (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Third Part, section 16)

The metamorphoses marking the beginning of a period of absence, hiatus and distancing in philosophy, conditioned by the death of God as the guarantor of the identity of the self, can be traced through the substitution of the *Circulus vitiosus deus* for the image of the perfect circle prevailing in Western thought throughout the long period of *identity*. In Nietzsche, the Eternal Recurrence²⁹ refers not to the return of the Same through the multiple expressed in the form of a well-centered circle but to the recurrence, freed from the curvature of the circle.³⁰ It relates not to the hierarchical world of the well-centered Same, but to ‘a world of differences implicated one in the other, to a complicated, properly chaotic world *without identity*’.³¹

Nietzsche sees the means of enduring the thought of the Eternal Recurrence in the transvaluation of all values: pleasure is no longer to be found in certainty, but in uncertainty, it is no longer the will to self-preservation, but rather to power (*The Will to Power*, 1059).³²

Nietzsche’s thought of the Eternal Recurrence is itself the result of an ecstatic experience of a sudden unveiling in the midst of a ‘*Stimmung*, a certain tonality of the soul’.³³ Emerging as a lived experience, the Eternal Recurrence is no longer the representation of the Same, unable to manifest itself, but a combination of anamnesis and forgetting. The function of forgetting in this revelation is the indispensable condition for the actualization of all possible identities of the subject through the forgetting of its present identity. The fulcrum is transposed from the revelation of the Same through the consciousness of an identical self into that of innumerable selves as a result of the loss of the identity of this particular self. The self thus liberates itself from a prior identity with the Same and emerges as the representation of itself as such, susceptible to

²⁹ See: Rüdiger Görner, ‘From Liederkreis to the Eternal Recurrence of the Same’, in *KulturPoetik* (Journal for Cultural Poetics, Bd. 7,2, 2007), pp. 159 -163 for a detailed account of Nietzsche’s conception of the Eternal Recurrence in relation to Wagner.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, ‘Theatrum Philosophicum’, II, p. 366.

³¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 69.

³² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. by Anthony M. Ludovici (Obscure Press, 2008), all further reference from this edition.

³³ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith (London: Athlone, 1997), p. 56.

becoming all possible selves. The circular movement of the Recurrence is merged with the unconscious of the self who, having experienced all its possible selves re-wills itself, as Pierre Klossowski explicates, ‘as a fortuitous moment whose very fortuity implies the necessity of the integral return of the whole series’.³⁴

The theory of *recurrence* is developed through the renunciation of the possibility for the self’s being a fortuitous moment *once and for all* and the assertion of its being ‘*nothing* except this capacity to receive this revelation at *all the other moments* of the circular movement: nowhere in particular [...], but always in the movement as a whole’.³⁵ It is presented as the manifestation of the recurrence of the heterogeneity of the multiple with respect to the homogeneity of the whole.

The designation of the Eternal recurrence as a lived experience through a *Stimmung*, namely through a fluctuation of intensity is Nietzsche’s solution to the problem of signification in which the latter is nothing but intensity. The fluctuations of intensity are merely designations and do not imply any signification ‘other than that of being an intensity’.³⁶ From this perspective, Klossowski assigns the sign of the *Circulus vitiosus deus* to the movement of flux and reflux of the intensity of Nietzsche’s *Stimmungen*, a sign marking not only the trace of a fluctuation but also the absence of intensity. Signification thus existing only through affluxes ‘*can never absolutely disengage itself* from the moving chasms it masks’, remaining ‘a function of Chaos, out of which meaning is generated’.³⁷

The earth is then described as a Gods’ table which trembles with creative new-words and Gods’ dice-throws in the play of dice with Gods, so that the earth quaked and broke open and pushed up floods of fire (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Third Part, section 16,3). The recurrence of the fortuitous moment in its relation to all given moments is demonstrated in virtue of the single dice-throw in its relation to all the possible dice-throws and their opposition to the whole: ‘Each roll of the dice is isolated from every other one. Nothing brings them together as a whole. The whole is necessity. The dice are free’.³⁸

³⁴ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 58.

³⁵ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, pp. 59-60.

³⁶ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 61.

³⁷ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 62.

³⁸ Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, p. 129.

The Eternal Recurrence is identified as a synthesis of forces with ‘the reproduction of diversity at the heart of synthesis’, anchored in ‘the differential and genetic element of forces which directly confront one another’.³⁹ It is the affirmation of multiple forms reproducing themselves as such, all of which are possible without a single one being assigned. It is the actualization of one point at the expense of multiple others remaining as passive possibilities. This single point is identified by Deleuze as a ‘single dicethrow’ which, coming to reproduce itself as such, is opposed to ‘several dicethrows, which, because of their number, finally reproduce the same combination.’⁴⁰

1.5 The Eternal Lust of Becoming in Art

The postulation of the Same as non-Same in all its contrivances brings about a radical transformation in the understanding of the Same from a transcendental signified into a correlation of differences, from a supreme total consciousness (God, the One, Spirit, etc.) into its reduction to the tension of the incoherent moments in the unconscious. The decentring of philosophy from the paradigm of the identity of the Same, hence the liberation from the domination of truth, opens up an unprecedented space of freedom and intense experience that not only greatly influences the major transformations in the philosophy of art, but also conditions the transposition of the issue of sameness from philosophy into art, and even, into the domain of pure language. Furthermore, it enables us to grasp, together with Nietzsche, the universe as ‘a dance of the gods: *the universe being nothing but a perpetual flight from itself, and a perpetual re-finding of itself in multiple gods*’.⁴¹

The world itself is regarded by Nietzsche as ‘self-generating work of art’ (*The Will to Power*, 796). This transition is well traced by Klossowski who defines it as a matter of generating the conditions of a new freedom, a creative freedom of ‘retranslating the *conscious semiotic* into the *semiotic of impulses*’.⁴² It inevitably brings about a transformation in the function of art, shifting from that of the representation of the identity and totality of the Same into the manifestation of itself,

³⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 48.

⁴⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 24.

⁴¹ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 65.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 50.

described as ‘the stimulant of the will to power, something that excites willing’, ‘magnifies the *world as error*, [...] sanctifies the lie’.⁴³

Art is no longer anchored in the representation of a higher totality but in play, uselessness and ‘the childishness of God’ (*The Will to Power*, 797). Creation then transmits into the breaking of the *gregariousness* of the mediocrity or an act of violence directed against the totality of the Same; from now on, ‘to create is to *do violence* to what exists, and thus to the integrity of beings’.⁴⁴

The tendency of the radicalization of art persists in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) which regards art as the precondition for a highly cultural society, a means to remedy the affliction of *modern* society and ‘the highest task and true metaphysical activity of this life’.⁴⁵ Furthermore, moral and ontological dimensions are reduced to aesthetics which is radicalized as the sole justification of existence empowered to discharge the absurdity of existence: ‘only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* is existence and the world eternally *justified*’.⁴⁶ The paradigm for a *highly cultured* society is the artistic culture of *archaic Greece* in the period from Homer to the middle of the fifth century, the return to which is thought in the form of repetition. Klossowski explicates the return to the Attic tragedy in the form of the *Circulus vitiosus deus* which takes on ‘a divine physiognomy under the aspect of Dionysus’.⁴⁷

The Birth of Tragedy should not be read as a reflection on Ancient culture, but more as the foundation of a Deleuzian theatre within philosophy, a theatre of the future and a new philosophy. What matters for Nietzsche in this *theatrum philosophicum*, is the illustration of the form of the absolute difference in the eternal recurrence by filling of the ‘inner emptiness of the mask within a theatrical space: by multiplying the superimposed masks and inscribing the omnipresence of Dionysus in that superimposition’.⁴⁸

The dispersion of the totality of sameness makes possible its presentation as the becoming of the multiple and affirmation of diversities in art which becomes the release of the Same or that through which the becoming of its unity emerges as the tension of semblance and difference, dream and intoxication. From the *The Birth of Tragedy* through to *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche remains

⁴³ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, pp. 95-96.

⁴⁴ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 129.

⁴⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Spiers, trans. By Ronald Spiers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 32.

⁴⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, p. 33.

⁴⁷ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 66.

⁴⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 11.

concerned with these principal conditions in which art manifests itself as a constraint to visionary states (the Apollonian) or an orgiastic impulse (the Dionysiac) and the tension or *enormous opposition* between them. He establishes the synthesis of these contrasting forces as the Eternal Recurrence, thereby posing the reproduction of diversity at the heart of synthesis.⁴⁹ The highest form of art thus emerges as the synthesis of the confrontation of the Apolline image-world of dream that embodies the drive toward distinction and individuality, moderation and self-control, the making of boundaries and limits as ‘the magnificent divine image (*Götterbild*) of the *principum individuationis*, whose gesture and gaze speak to us of all the intense pleasure, wisdom and beauty of *semblance*’ and the Dionysiac world of intoxication, as the drive towards the excess, transgression of limits, the dissolution of boundaries, the destruction of individuality and the ‘breakdown of the *principum individuationis*’⁵⁰ by imparting a mystical sense of oneness.

Nietzsche praises equally the Apolline and Dionysiac drives as those of semblance and ecstatic vision, through which the *veil of maya* is destroyed, and the primordial One shines forth. The Eternal Recurrence should, accordingly, be understood not as a return to the identity of the Same through the alliance of Dionysus and Apollo, but as the return of Dionysus and Apollo as diversities.

The Attic tragedy, with its fragile synthesis of the Apolline and Dionysian, is endangered by Socratic rationalism (‘In order to be beautiful everything must be reasonable’⁵¹) with its abstract theoretical generalizations and by morality which, for Deleuze, constitutes the first, *Euripidean* death of tragedy along with its second death at the hands of Christianity and the third death under the combined blows of the modern dialectic and Wagner himself.⁵² The *restlessly advancing spirit of science* destroys *myth* and poetry as the spirit of art par excellence and, in Nietzsche’s description, drives poetry from its natural, ideal soil, so that it becomes homeless from that point onwards.⁵³

⁴⁹ See: Paul de Man, ‘Rhetoric of Tropes’, in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 119 – 131 for a different view about the contradiction inherent in the authoritative claims and the statements provided by the text, arguing that the Dionysian vocabulary is used only to make the Apollonian mode that destructs it more intelligible.

⁵⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, p. 17.

⁵¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, p. 62.

⁵² Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 10.

⁵³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, p. 82.

Nietzsche's point here is the impossibility of creating a cultured society based entirely upon *non-Dionysiac* foundations, i.e. upon mere cognition, positivism, and optimistic knowledge, in which 'the lovely madness of artistic enthusiasm never glowed' and which 'was debarred from ever looking with pleasure into the abysses of the Dionysiac'.⁵⁴

Readdressing the issues of the *Birth of Tragedy* in the *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche reasserts the eternal lust of Becoming which also involves the *lust of destruction* found in Dionysus as the manifestation of excessive energy (*Twilight of the Idols, Things I Owe to the Ancients*, 4 & 5). The idea concerning the experience of the primal pain by the Dionysiac artist who is described as the echo of this pain,⁵⁵ remains persistent in the later texts by Nietzsche. The Dionysiac state is thus primarily the eternal recurrence of life and the triumphant Yea to life despite death and change through eternal pain which acts as a *stimulus* within the scope of the psychology of orgiasm, conceived as the feeling of a superabundance of vitality and strength (*Twilight of the Idols, Things I Owe to the Ancients*, 4 & 5). These views condition the shift from the Classical understanding of the artist as the divinely possessed prophet into the final requirement which claims that 'Artists should not see things as they are, they should see them fuller, simpler, stronger' (*The Will to Power*, 800).

1. 6. The Pure Language of Becoming

'Nietzsche says that *we have no language to express what is in becoming*'.⁵⁶

The re-postulation of art in respect of the eternal lust of Becoming conditions the formation and development of the conception of the pure language of becoming outside the realm of representation (examined in Part One and Three) and subjective assessments (examined in Part Two), a rigorous language which will neither 'reveal the secret of man's natural being, nor will it express the serenity of anthropological truths, but rather it will say that he exists without God'.⁵⁷ The conception of pure language is thus contemporaneous to the dispelling of the

⁵⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, pp. 67-68.

⁵⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, p. 30.

⁵⁶ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 49.

⁵⁷ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, II, p. 70.

transcendental signified of the Same: 'the death of God profoundly influenced our language.'⁵⁸ As a result of the acknowledgement of the death of God, the function of language shifts from the signification of the transcendental signified of the Same into that of pure repetition. Sameness becomes transposed into the repetition of the absolutely singular differential at the threshold of language which endlessly mirrors nothing but itself in virtue of the mask, the double, the simulacrum. Instead of representing the totality of the Same, language questions its limit through replacing the act of representation by that of transgression and the act of the Return by that of the Eternal Recurrence of the different. Arriving at its limits, language eventually becomes transformed into a poetic language par excellence, whereupon sameness becomes transposed to the threshold of language.

From his early works on, Nietzsche forges a philosophy grounded upon the diffusion of the concept of the Same (as *das Ur-Eine*) into the non-Same or into a negativity or nothingness he ventures to name. The quest for naming the non-Same conditions the need for a different language of becoming, which would substitute for the dialectical discourse of philosophy. This would be the pure language transgressing the function of successive fixation of systematic thought towards a discontinuity analogous to the unconscious state of mind. It is the lack of this pure language of becoming that the late Nietzsche stresses while criticizing certain aspects of the *Birth of Tragedy* in the new introduction to the second edition (*An Attempt at Self-Criticism*, in 1886). The late Nietzsche does not repudiate the central stand of his work which he himself calls a work of Romantic mythology (it develops the early Romantic approach towards myth: the same idea of the identification of Dionysus, the Greek wine-god with Christ was earlier taken up by Hölderlin, Novalis, and Schlegel),⁵⁹ but the form in which it is expressed. Criticizing his own language, Nietzsche feels the incompatibility between the novel postulation of the conception of the Same as Non-Same and the classical philosophical discourse through which it is postulated. He feels deeply the lack of a different language, that of *becoming*, asserting itself as the affirmation of negativity, the void of the absented God or the trace He has left behind. This lack is expressed in the regret Nietzsche feels about the time of writing *The Birth of Tragedy*, a time during which he did not

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 19.

⁵⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, p. 11.

yet have the *courage* or *immodesty* to permit himself *a language of his very own*, instead of the new evaluations in Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulations. The urge for a pure poetic language is expressed in his confession that he ought to have expressed himself by singing rather than philosophizing: ‘It ought to have *sung*, this *new soul*, and not talked! What a pity it is that I did not dare to say what I had to say at that time as a poet; perhaps I could have done it!’⁶⁰

The quest for a different language accompanies Nietzsche throughout different stages of his life. In *The Genealogy of Morals* it appears as a quest for the language of *active philology* transgressing the function of sealing things with names. Nietzsche stresses the need for conceiving the origin of language looking to discover who it is that speaks and names: ‘Who uses a particular word, what does he apply it to first of all; himself, someone else who listens, [...] and with what intention? What does he will by uttering a particular word?’ (*Genealogy of Morals*, I 4, 5, 10, 11).⁶¹ Throughout most of his writings language is postulated as a language of freedom contingent with that of psychology, the signs of which are dependent upon the excitation of the unconscious through the re-excitation of the ‘already-existing signifying traces [...] by a more or less variable afflux’.⁶² All these various functions of language are, however, cohered under a common quest for a pure language of becoming that transgresses the realm of representation toward the free manifestation of itself as repetition.

Jürgen Habermas’s *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* is relevant in validating Nietzsche’s philosophy with regard to its great impact upon modernity and for tracing its subsequent development in two directions:

The skeptic scholar who wants to unmask the perversion of the will to power, the revolt of reactionary forces, and the emergence of a subject-centered reason by using anthropological, psychological, and historical methods has successors in Bataille, Lacan, and Foucault; the initiate-critic of metaphysics who pretends to a unique kind of knowledge and pursues the rise of the philosophy of the subject back to its pre-Socratic beginnings has successors in Heidegger and Derrida.⁶³

⁶⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, p. 10 and p. 6.

⁶¹ Cited in Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, pp. 69-70.

⁶² Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, p. 47.

⁶³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. by Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 97.

While the critical texts by Bataille and Foucault have been traced throughout this study in respect of their assessment of various issues related to the conception of sameness, the philosophies of Heidegger and Derrida will be subject to a more thorough scrutiny in respect of their unique postulations of the conception of pure difference, to which this part is dedicated.

2. Heidegger: The emerging-abiding sway of Being as Alētheia

2. 1. Sameness manifested as *Being* in its relatedness to *Dasein*

Martin Heidegger's (1889 - 1976) philosophy is significant within the scope of this study primarily because of his raising anew the issue of sameness as Being in its originary (*ur-sprüngliche*, in the Heideggerian sense of primordial) plenitude in the unique belonging-together of the primal Same and the absolutely singular event through a conceptualization of difference and Nothing. The issue is to demonstrate that Heidegger's capturing of the enigma of the unspoken in sameness in view of a conceiving of Nothing in poetic language is the most adequate postulation of sameness. Not only does this approach reassert sameness as the fundamental issue of philosophy, but it also grants poetic language the exclusive power of grasping sameness, thereby establishing poetry as the discipline par excellence. The absolutely unique repetition of the poem is placed on the verge of naming and impossibility to name. Its unsurpassed gesture of unconcealing the plenitude of Being as an unmediated gift of a letting-be of presence as *aletheia* makes it the most originary manifestation of sameness.

Heidegger's concern with sameness can be traced from *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*, 1927) where it is delineated in terms of the question of Being (*Das Sein*) as that of an event, in which all beings are understandable as such and the issue of *Dasein* as the being for whom Being is at issue. This reformulation of sameness brings forth the possibility of analyzing the relationship between its universality and absolute singularity. The issue of sameness manifested in terms of the general question of Being is thus examined in its relatedness to the absolute singularity of *Dasein* or the very own *existence* of the being who has an understanding of the issue of *Being* and is capable of raising it.

What becomes clear just from the Introduction to *Being and Time*, is Heidegger's quest for the primordial plenitude of Being which has been haunting human thought since its very inception. For this reason, not only does Heidegger raise anew the question of the meaning of Being as the fundamental issue of

philosophy, but embraces and intensifies the positive value which persists in the long philosophical tradition from the Presocratics to Nietzsche and Husserl. Heidegger acknowledges the need for reawakening an understanding for the meaning of this question which provided a ‘stimulus for researchers of Plato and Aristotle [...] as a theme for actual investigation’.⁶⁴ He has all respect for their utmost intellectual efforts, fragmentary and incipient though they were, aiming to liberate the question of Being from the subsequent trivialization it underwent. Yet, he likewise points to the limits of its metaphysical postulations and the blindness of all ontology which has not previously clarified the meaning of Being and grasped it as its fundamental task.

The point of departure for the re-postulation of the question of Being is, as Heidegger argues, its liberation from the dogmas rooted in the presuppositions of ancient ontology. These misleading presuppositions concern the stating of Being as the most universal concept which needs no further clarification, the indefinability of Being due to limitations in ancient ontology or traditional logic and the fact that Being is a self-evident concept. Heidegger argues that these very presuppositions condition the need for an adequate reformulation of the question of Being (demanding that we look this question in the face) which still remains veiled in darkness.⁶⁵

Heidegger first attempts to liberate the question of Being from the classical metaphysical interpretation of conceiving the Being of beings as itself a being by suggesting that we should avoid determining beings as beings by tracing them back in their origins to another being. To reformulate the issue of sameness through raising anew the question of Being, it is thus essential to avoid reducing it to the ontological universal of the Same, i.e. to Being, posed as the origin from which all beings emerge, but rather to conceptualize it in respect of *Dasein*, i.e., the being, perspicuous in his Being. In Heidegger, this reformulation avoids the metaphysical circle rooted in the concept of the preconceived universal of some metaphysical Being and its deduction, in order to lay bare and exhibit its very ground in virtue of its relatedness to *Dasein*.

Sameness as a questioning of Being is thus grounded upon the destructuring of the history of ontology (a destructuring, which does not wish to bury the past in nullity, but has a *positive* intent) and transposed into the

⁶⁴All reference to *Being and Time* from Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and ed. by Basil Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), p. 21.

⁶⁵Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 22 – 24.

interpretation of *Dasein* in its factual rootedness in the world which is reflected back upon the interpretation of *Dasein*. The essential structures which are demonstrated in everydayness, but remain determinative in every mode of being of factual *Dasein* become indispensable for re-postulating the problem of Being. These structures are grounded in an interpretation of time, posed as the horizon for the understanding of Being in terms of the temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*] of *Dasein*. The temporality of *Dasein* is the condition of the possibility of historicity:⁶⁶ it pursues possibilities for the future, bears the weight of its past and acts in the present (hence the three constituents of *Dasein*: existentiality, facticity and *thrownness*).

The issue of sameness as the underlying differentiated unity of Being is hereby posed in its relatedness to the Being of *Dasein*. Moreover, it is through the temporality of *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world that the primordial constitution of the question of Being is to be understood.⁶⁷ The temporality of *Dasein* is also its extreme possibility for Death, described as the impossibility to be *there* any longer. It is one of the fundamental dimensions, in which the question of Being is brought to its very limits and disclosed in its primordial plenitude.

Heidegger discloses the universality of the question of Being in the singular experience of Death, or as Stephen Mulhall formulates it: 'by actualizing its potential for Being-a-whole, *Dasein* would enact an authentic mode of Being-towards death.'⁶⁸ *Dasein* can authentically confront the question of Being solely in virtue of grasping the full depth of its finitude. Or, to formulate otherwise, the plenitude of Being can solely be grasped through the loss of this plenitude by the no-longer-Being-there of *Dasein*. In its very thrownness into life,⁶⁹ *Dasein* is thrown into the finitude of its Being-there, hence into confronting the universal question of Being from the intensity of its own finitude. Death is then *Dasein*'s ownmost possibility for conceiving the question of Being; a possibility which is non-relational and which is not to be outstripped.⁷⁰ In sum, the core of *Dasein*'s possibility for Death lies in the possibility of grasping the general question of Being from the ownmost moment of one's finitude.

⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 427.

⁶⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 488.

⁶⁸ Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 140.

⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 400.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 294.

The existentiality of Dasein in Heidegger is inextricably linked to the question of Being, hence, what is constitutive for the human being is the interpretation of the immediacy of experience through cognition. As Paul de Man puts it, the word ‘existential’ in Heidegger means philosophically conscious knowledge as opposed to immediate, intuitive, experienced knowledge; it means that ‘we are human to the extent that we are able to understand our own subjectivity by transforming it into language’.⁷¹

The disclosing of Dasein is thus possible through its capability of interpreting itself through language and of keeping silent: ‘To be able to keep silent, Dasein [...] must have at its disposal an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself.’⁷² Heidegger’s distinction between the language of Being and the discourse, which has lost its primary relationship-of-Being in a way that allowed it be appropriated in a primordial manner conditions his subsequent turn to poetry as the authentic language of Being.

The raising of the question of Being is thereby linked to the issue of language in its primary relationship-to-Being which is both one of concealment and unconcealment. The Word is posed in its difference from words as ‘the enunciation of the Word in words’.⁷³ However, this is an impossible *enunciation* of the Word conceived as ‘the soundless Voice of Being,’⁷⁴ through which man experiences *Being* as difference and nothingness. According to Giorgio Agamben, the notion of the Voice in Heidegger is ‘the originary negative articulation’, whereby the experience of the taking place of language lies in the removal of the voice through the ‘nullifying power [...] inherent in [...] *da*’, (*Da-sein, as the Being-the-there*).⁷⁵

It is thus possible to raise the question of Being only through phenomenology, rooted in the self-showing of the phenomenon or the Being of beings. The question of Being becomes the object of inquiry of phenomenology as the method which expresses the maxim ‘To the things themselves’.⁷⁶ Heidegger understands phenomenology in respect of the two semantic elements of *phenomenon* and *logos*. The basic meaning of *logos* is discourse as the

⁷¹ Paul de Man, ‘Heidegger Reconsidered’, in *Critical Writings 1953 – 1978*, Theory and History of Literature (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), v. 66, p. 104.

⁷² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 208.

⁷³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 389.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 389.

⁷⁵ Giorgio Agamben, *Language and Death*, trans. by Karen E. Pinkus with Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p. 37.

⁷⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 50.

making manifest of what one is talking about in one's discourse,⁷⁷ while the term *phenomenon* signifies that which shows itself in itself, the manifest or the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to the light.⁷⁸ Phenomenology in Heidegger is thus defined by 'letting the nonapparent appear as nonapparent'.⁷⁹

The question of Being is accordingly viewed as a phenomenon in the phenomenological sense, as something that does not show itself at all or lies hidden, but at the same time belongs to what thus shows itself; and it belongs to it so essentially as to constitute its meaning. Yet, that which remains hidden or shows itself in disguise is the Being of entities.⁸⁰

It is precisely in these dimensions that the answer to the question of Being which is re-established, but remains unanswered in *Being and Time*, should be sought.

2.2 Reestablishing Being as Nothing

Heidegger suggests in the Preface to *Being and Time* of 1953⁸¹ that its reader should refer simultaneously to the *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935). This is an evidence of the fact that his point of departure in the investigation of the question of Being remains *Being and Time* which should be taken as the ground for his later works. The latter should, accordingly, be read as an attempt to find an answer to the question of Being which remains open in *Being and Time*.

The destructuring of the question of Being initiated in *Being and Time* is transformed here into a question of language, whereby the issue of sameness is brought back to the primordial intactness of language and things by virtue of the naming force of words, in which things first come to be and are.⁸² The focal point, the new centre of gravity between the concealed and unconcealed, the presence of the absent and the emphasis of its presence through absence is

⁷⁷ Ibid, p, 56.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 51.

⁷⁹ Robert Bernasconi, *The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being* (London: Macmillan Press, 1985), p. 85.

⁸⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 59.

⁸¹ See: *Translators Introduction*, p. vii in Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁸² All reference from Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 15.

language.⁸³ As Habermas remarks, in Heidegger's philosophy 'the luminous force of world-disclosing language is hypostatized'.⁸⁴ Language is presented primarily as the naming of Being within the problem of nothingness as *No-thing*, the crossing over of negativity and difference in order to return towards the inconceivable unity of the primordial. *No-thing* is then linked to Being via the equivocal relationship of concealment/unconcealment, saying and silence.

Here sameness is revealed in its primordial plenitude through the Greek questioning of beings as such and as a whole or the Being of beings. It is manifested through the initial meaning of the word *phusis*, or that which emerges from itself, the unfolding that opens itself up, the coming-into-appearance or the emerging-abiding sway.⁸⁵ *Phusis* as the emergent self-upraising, the self-unfolding that abides is also the overwhelming coming-to-presence of Being as *parousia* or *ousia*. Within *parousia*, that which comes to presence from concealment essentially unfolds as beings. This sway, stepping forth from concealment (*alētheia*) struggles forth as a world, through which beings first come into being.⁸⁶ The emerging-abiding sway as *phusis* is not experienced through natural processes but on the basis of a fundamental experience of Being in poetry and thought.

What is at stake here is the impossibility of laying hold of the Being of beings directly and, hence the need to investigate it from the point of view of its disclosedness or the openedness of what the oblivion of Being closes off and conceals.⁸⁷ The question of Being ('How does it stand with Being?') is therefore transposed into the extreme limits and the abrupt abysses of Nothing, where it is formulated as the fundamental question of philosophy: 'Why are there beings at all instead of Nothing?' This formulation belongs to Heidegger's continuing questioning of Negativity beginning with *Being and Time*:

Has anyone ever posed the problem of the *ontological source* of negativity (*Nichtheit*), or, *prior to that*, even sought the mere *conditions* on the basis of which the problem of the *not* and its notness and the possibility of that

⁸³ See: Heribert Boeder, *Seditions: Heidegger and the Limit of Modernity*, trans. by Marcus Brainart (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997) for a detailed account on reason's interest in language (Heidegger's, Wittgenstein's, Hegel's conceptions of language), pp. 213 – 225.

⁸⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, p. 154.

⁸⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 15.

⁸⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 64.

⁸⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 21.

notness can be raised? And how else are these conditions to be found *except by the thematic clarification of the meaning of Being in general?*⁸⁸

The subsequent texts repeatedly stress the urge to go expressly up to the limit of Nothing in the question about Being and to take Nothing into the question of Being.⁸⁹ Nothing, however, cannot be spoken of directly, but merely indicated. The possibility of grappling with the question of Being as that of Nothing requires therefore a different spiritual rank characteristic of philosophy, defined as the questioning of the extra-ordinary.⁹⁰ The raising of the issue of sameness re-formulated as that of Nothing becomes likewise the privilege of the poet who can talk about Nothing ‘because an essential superiority of the spirit holds sway in poetry’.⁹¹ The postulation of Being as Nothing conditions the reestablishment of poetry and philosophy as the ability to present common and familiar things as unfamiliar (as demonstrated by Heidegger through the text by Knut Hamsun⁹²) and indicate Nothing. The unheard, the hitherto un-said and unthought can be projected by the creators (poets, thinkers and statesmen), who throw the counterweight of their work against the overwhelming sway and thereby open up the world in their work: Beings as such now first come into being.⁹³

This re-postulation amounts to the transposition of the question of Being into the field of endless creation, a radical reestablishing of the question of Being in respect of creativity is taking place: ‘Even when an age still makes an effort just to uphold the inherited level [...] of its Dasein, the level already sinks. It can be upheld only insofar as at all times it is creatively transcended’.⁹⁴ Moreover, a radical reestablishment of Being in language which is reformulated as *grammata*, the *coming to a stand* of the spoken, the standing of the world in the written image, in the written signs or letters is coming to realization: ‘It is thus grammar that represents language as something in being, whereas through the flow of talk, language drains away into the impermanent.’⁹⁵

Still another mode of the self-showing of Being upon the ground of the Greek *phusis* is unfolded in poetry. Heidegger postulates Being as seeming

⁸⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 331-32.

⁸⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 156.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 28 – 29.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 67.

⁹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 68.

which is no less powerful than Being as unconcealment.⁹⁶ He explicates it by referring to the etymology of the word *phainesthai*, in the sense of lighting-up, self-showing or appearing. The naming force of this word is clarified through the great poetry of Pindar for whom *phua* (what is original and authentic) is the fundamental characteristic of *Dasein*.⁹⁷ Here Being means appearing or essentially unfolds as appearing or *phusis*; the unconcealment as *alētheia* comes to a stand in showing itself, whereby ‘standing-in-itself means nothing other than standing-in-the-light’.⁹⁸

2. 3. *Identity and Difference*

Another fundamental dimension in which Being can be grasped in its originarity is that of the unity of *phusis* and *logos*, Being and thinking, where *logos* has the sense of the constant gatheredness of Being or of gathered harmony.⁹⁹ The significance of *logos* in the question of Being lies in its twofold meaning: on the one hand, it is the unifying One in the sense of what is everywhere primal and thus most universal, and at the same time it is the unifying One in the sense of the All-Highest.¹⁰⁰ As the grounding and gatherer of everything into the universal, and, simultaneously, the gatherer of everything in terms of the unique, the *logos* thus interpreted opens up the question of sameness to the possibility of being, postulated in terms of a unique belonging-together of its originary plenitude and the singularity of the *Ereignis* which is usually translated as *event* or *the event of appropriation* (Heidegger himself has said that as a key term, it can no more be translated than the Greek *logos* or the Chinese *Tao*¹⁰¹).

Heidegger returns here to the primordial sameness of Being and thinking where oneness must be understood in the sense of the belonging-together of that which is originally unified. Being and thinking are the same in their belonging-together in the sense of contending with each other. This originary sameness is

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 114.

⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 106 – 107.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 107.

⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 144.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 69.

¹⁰¹ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. and intr. by Joan Stambaugh (London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1969), p. 36.

designated upon the former postulation of Being as *phusis*; the standing in the light, appearing or stepping into unconcealment of Being. In this holding sway of Being, thinking as the apprehension of Being holds sway as belonging to Being, it is identical with Being. Apprehension originally belongs to *phusis*, the sway of *phusis* shares its sway with apprehension which is defined as ‘the receptive bringing-to-a-stand of the constant that shows itself in itself’.¹⁰²

In order to demonstrate the originarity of sameness, Heidegger refers to Heraclitus and Parmenides in whose poeticized thought Being and Dasein [a Dasein belonging to Being] are authentically founded. Heidegger asserts that Being opens itself up only to poetic and thoughtful projection and that it is the privilege of poets and thinkers to bring their Dasein to stand in the Being of beings.¹⁰³ What Heidegger aims at, is the pursuit of the originary plenitude of the Same in the unity of thinking and Being when ‘thinking and Being belong together in the Same and by virtue of this Same’.¹⁰⁴ It is upon the ground of this originary identity that Heidegger defines the Being-here of humanity, its *Da-Sein*.¹⁰⁵ Man is essentially and only the relationship of responding to Being; Man and Being are designated in belonging to each other.¹⁰⁶ Heidegger creates a new notion of *the Ereignis, the event of appropriation* in the *singulare tantum* to describe the absolute singularity of the constellation of Being and man in which both reach each other and achieve their active nature by losing the qualities endowed by metaphysics.¹⁰⁷ The origin of language is likewise postulated in respect of this originary sameness, on the basis of a fundamental orientation to Being in its originarity. The origin of language is delineated in its delicacy which makes it the most susceptible vibration holding everything within the suspended structure of the appropriation.¹⁰⁸

In order to demonstrate the significance of this originarity for the genuine elucidation of the question of Being, Heidegger traces the further development of thought in its inability to hold on to the inception in its genuine plenitude.¹⁰⁹ Among the major consequences of the distortion of this plenitude is the postulation of the human being as the builder or inventor of language and Being,

¹⁰² Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 147.

¹⁰³ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 141.

¹⁰⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 219.

¹⁰⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 36 – 37.

¹⁰⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 165.

instead of the originary acknowledgment of the human being as belonging to Being by virtue of the violence-doing of poetic saying and thoughtful projection.¹¹⁰ The postulation of art as the originary act of violence-doing is its defining as *technē* not because it involves technical skills, but because it brings Being to stand in the work as a being, it sets-to-work Being through an act which is an opening-up and keeping-open or knowing.¹¹¹

Heidegger explains the very possibility of the existence of beings by the initial distortion of sameness through the violence-doing-of-creation. Yet, it is simultaneously in virtue of the creative act as violence-doing that human being dares the setting out into the un-said and the breaking into the un-thought. The unconcealment of Being in its originarity becomes thus possible through the daring to surmount Being and, hence the risking of the assault of un-being, disintegration, un-constancy, unstructure and un-fittingness.¹¹² The raising of the question of the plenitude of Being becomes possible by tracing the difference within it through the violence-doing-creation which draws the line of opposition between beings as a whole as overwhelming and the violence-doing human being as the creator.

The plenitude of Being may be grasped precisely in the difference between the excessive violence of the metaphysical universal of the Same and the absolutely singular which shatters it by the act of violence. Being thus posed breaks in its appearance by virtue of the violence-doing-creation. Moreover, it is this breaking in of the uniqueness and suddenness of Dasein that discloses Being in its plenitude as *phusis*. The originary division, whose intensity and originary disjunction sustains history, is thus, according to Heidegger, the distinction between Being and beings.¹¹³ In this way, the plenitude of the Same as *Being* can merely be grasped in its ownmost proper meaning as *difference*; as a univocal Being encompassing the individualities remaining equivocal within it.

Focusing upon the *difference* between Being and beings, Heidegger provides an adequate answer to the issue of the sameness in terms of a negativity that permeates its essence. Deleuze explains the Heideggerian *difference* in the sense of the Fold, (*Zweifalt*), as constitutive of Being and of the manner in which Being constitutes being, in the double movement of *clearing* and *veiling*. He

¹¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 167.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 170.

¹¹² Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 172.

¹¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 218 - 219.

links Heidegger's thinking of the ontological origin (*ontologischer Ursprung*) of the Same in relation to itself to the definition of Being as 'the differentiator of difference'.¹¹⁴ He designates the Heideggerian relationship of difference between Being and beings via horizontal and vertical lines. They incorporate the commencement of the singularity on the horizontal line forming the moments of a bare repetition (of beings) and a recommencement on the vertical line condensing singularities and on which the other repetition, that of the Being of beings is woven.¹¹⁵

The revelation of the Same as Being, as being-there, *Da-sein*, keeps abreast with that of difference which intersects and dominates it. The classical notion of the Same as the ontological ground of multiplicity is now reestablished as a simultaneity of equally original structures which are defined by Heidegger as *equiprimordial* (*gleichursprünglich*). The oneness of *Being* is thus defined in terms of the *equiprimordials* or the simultaneously coexisting coeval structures of *Being-in* or *Being-in-the-World* as a multiplicity of characteristics constitutive for it.¹¹⁶ As Heidegger remarks, thinking has needed more than two thousand years to understand the relation of mediation within identity.¹¹⁷

It is upon the ground of Being as *phusis* that Heidegger poses language as *logos*, gathering or poetry, as the breakaway of humanity into Being where Being becomes word.¹¹⁸ Language is thereby posed as the primal poetry, in which people poetize Being and through which they step into history. The being human in its history-opening essence is thereby hidden in the phenomenon of *logos*, in the sense of revealing or apprehending the Being of beings or the difference between them by the act of violence. Language is accordingly the primary opening-up of Being in the structure of its gatheredness in which human beings are the gatherers, standing and acting in the *logos*. It is primarily posed in its difference from the everyday discourse toward the truth of its gatheredness, in the sense of Being.

Heidegger traces the loss of the originary plenitude of Being in the disjoining of essence and existence, Being and appearing, *on* and *phainomenon*.¹¹⁹ This involves the reduction of the primal sameness to the

¹¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 78.

¹¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 252.

¹¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 170.

¹¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 41.

¹¹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, pp. 182 – 183.

¹¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 197.

prototype of the Same *eidos*, according to which all opening of beings should be directed toward resembling or equaling to this dominating prototype. To quote Heidegger: ‘The truth of physis [...] now becomes [...] mimesis.’¹²⁰

The distancing of Being from the originary inception at the age of Greek *Dasein* is delineated by Heidegger through endurance (as Being in contradistinction to becoming), perpetual identity or the enduring prototype (in contradistinction to seeming), presence-at-hand (Being in contradistinction to thinking) and lying at hand (in contradistinction to the ought).¹²¹ All of them, Heidegger argues, at bottom say the same: constant presence, *on* as *ousia*.¹²²

Heidegger’s juxtaposition of his own postulation of Being with that of Hegel is significant as an account for the continuity of the issue of sameness and for conceiving the difference in the forms of its postulations: as an absolute concept in which difference is a mere manifestation of the preconceived identity and totality (in Hegel) and the thinking of the pure difference (in Heidegger). Here is Heidegger’s conclusion:

For Hegel, the matter of thinking is: Being with respect to beings [...] as absolute thinking. For us, the matter of thinking is the Same, and thus Being – but Being with respect to its difference from beings. [...] for Hegel, the matter of thinking is the idea as the absolute concept. For us, [...] the matter of thinking is the difference *as* difference.¹²³

This juxtaposition testifies to the significance of the issue of sameness throughout the entire philosophical discourse (provided that Hegel’s philosophical system is the culmination of thinking of the identity of the Same) and the fundamental transformation in philosophy which reestablishes the issue of sameness by unfolding it in the unfamiliarity of nothing and difference; the *difference* between Being and beings.

It is essential here to conceive of difference not as a denial of sameness, but as the sole way for reestablishing its originary plenitude and admit with Heidegger that ‘we think of Being rigorously only when we think of it in its difference with beings, and of beings in their difference with Being’.¹²⁴ And we

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 197.

¹²¹ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 216.

¹²² Ibid, p. 216.

¹²³ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 47.

¹²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 62.

have to admit again with Heidegger that the sole way to Being lies in thinking of it rigorously, i.e. in venturing to think of the un-thought, un-said and un-being in Being; of its pure non-Being or the absolute Nothing. Likewise, this means admitting the endless creation as the sole way for upholding the *Dasein*.

2.4 The *Ursprung* of Art as the Originating of the Concealed

The difference which appears through the withdrawal of Being or its otherness from beings, is manifested in the historicity of art in so far as it is the creative preservation of truth in the work.¹²⁵ In defining the origin of art, Heidegger is concerned to demonstrate it as the originating of the concealed by a leap or the bringing of the concealed out of its essential source in a founding leap. In so doing, he bases his inquiry upon the literal meaning of the word ‘origin’ [*Ursprung*] as primal leap.¹²⁶

The origin of the work of art is then the refusal to ground art upon the universality of the Same and its transposition instead to the unconcealing gesture of the earth¹²⁷ which lets things appear in their absolutely unique singularity or difference. Heidegger’s discussion of the concept of thingness is anchored in the notion of the thing as formed matter and its distinction from that which does not exist as a thing (including God and man). Aesthetics is thus viewed as a means of discovering the thingness of things via the experience of art which is the revealing of the concealed and the self-concealment.

The essence of art is thereby reduced to the actuality of the work, defined by the happening of truth.¹²⁸ In this context, the (peasant?) shoes in Van Gogh’s painting are the suspension of meaning for the unconcealment to happen as such in regard to beings as a whole. The essence of unconcealment is dominated by a constant concealment in the double form of refusal and

¹²⁵ Martin Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, in *Basic Writings*, ed. by David Farrell Krell, trans. Albert Hofstadter (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 202.

¹²⁶ Martin Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, p. 202.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹²⁸ Martin Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, p. 182.

dissembling.¹²⁹ The shoes then should be regarded, as Derrida notes, in the originarity of painting as ‘this detachment which loses its footing’, by making a picture of the picture and inviting you not to forget the very thing it makes you forget: you have painting and not shoes.¹³⁰

Derrida stresses the significance of the loosening of the laces of the shoes as a determined form of stricture, a logic of detachment permitting us to take account of the possibility of the risk or loss of meaning (the shoes are neither attached nor detached, neither full nor empty, any stricture is simultaneously stricturation and destricturation) which brings forth the structure/stricture of indeterminacy and play.¹³¹

Art as the realm of indeterminacy and play is the happening of poetry in the triple sense of bestowing, grounding, and beginning.¹³² Heidegger here accords poetry a privileged position because of the fundamental place language occupies in it. His belief in the revelation of the sacred, purely unmediated Being through language as the house of Being conditions his new positing of *Ursprungsphilosophie* through poetry. The unveiling or disclosure of Being as *Alētheia* in the sense of concealment/unconcealment is traced through poetry as the identification of the message of the *two-fold's unconcealment*. The essence of poetry is thereby transmitted into a completely new dimension: from speaking (*sprechen*) towards saying (*reden*), from representation towards repetition. While the issue of sameness manifested as the question of Being has essentially become poetical. In this context, art and particularly poetry is reduced to the concept of Truth or to the *enunciation of the Word*: ‘Art, as the setting-into-work of truth, is poetry. Not only the creation of the work is poetic, but equally poetic, though in its own way, is the preserving of the word’ or: ‘The nature of art is poetry. The nature of poetry, in turn is the founding of truth’.¹³³

What matters for Heidegger from *Being and Time* to his late inquiries into language (in the lectures delivered in 1953, 1957, 1958 & 1959 and published under the common title *On the Way to Language*) is the bringing out the Being of beings in its originarity, outside the realm of representation as ‘the presence of present beings, the two-fold of the two in virtue of their simple

¹²⁹ Ibid p. 179.

¹³⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. By Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 342.

¹³¹ J. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, p. 340.

¹³² Martin Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, p. 202.

¹³³ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 74, 75

oneness'.¹³⁴ The originary identity between presence and the present beings substituting for the unmediated identity of the metaphysical universal of the Same is posited in the register of its most radical impossibility. The crux is no longer the identity and totality of Being as the Same, but the encompassing of all the intensities, diversities, and modalities in the *voice of Being*. Heidegger poses the *voice of Being* as the voice of difference that 'determines and tunes' the nature of man walking the 'boundary of the boundless'.¹³⁵

2.5 *On the Way to Language*

Due to the inadequacy of the fundamental concepts of Western Metaphysics for grasping the originary voice of Being, Heidegger turns to the Eastern technique of the *hint* as the message of the veiling that opens up. He thereby imbues poetry with the sense of immediate presence of Being disclosing itself in the pure delight of the beckoning stillness. The subtle vibrations of the voice of Being can be grasped in the saying of silence of the poetic language as the shining forth of the openness or the nothing. A new poetic language is being coined, rooted in the purity of language itself outside the realm of representation.

Heidegger imbues the poetical disclosure of Being with the East Asian sense of *Iki* as the bringing forth of the radiance of the suprasensuous through sensuous radiance; the bringing forth of *Ku*, the emptiness, the open through *Iro*, colour.¹³⁶ In so doing, he suggests an understanding of poetry as *graciousness*, in the sense of putting into words 'the breathlike advent of the stillness of delight'.¹³⁷ Solely language as Saying (*reden*) implied with the Eastern sense of showing, letting appear and shine in the manner of hinting, similar to *Koto ba*, the Japanese word for language is valid for the unconcealment of the originary Being. *Koto ba* — in the sense of 'petals that stem from *Koto*',¹³⁸ where *Koto* is the 'holding sway over that which needs the shelter of all that flourishes and

¹³⁴ Martin Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language', *On the Way to Language*, trans. by Peter D. Hertz (USA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1982), p. 30.

¹³⁵ Martin Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language', p. 41.

¹³⁶ Martin Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language', p. 14.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

flowers'¹³⁹ or in the sense of 'flower petals that flourish out of the lightning message of the graciousness that brings forth'¹⁴⁰ — transgresses the conventional understanding of language as representation towards the realm of imagination. This transgression is itself poetical in the sense of putting into language the experience the poet undergoes with language.

The valid language for *Being* is sought in the transformation when 'the being of language becomes the language of being'.¹⁴¹ The urge that the language of Being be empowered to allude to what remains unspoken in it, after the utterance of all names guides Heidegger to refer to Lao Tzu's *Tao*, way, in the sense of an originary identity in the *logos* which *speaks* simultaneously 'as the name for Being and for Saying'.¹⁴²

The way to the question of Being lies through the *way to language* which is a completely different attitude toward the being of language. This attitude implies the possibility to speak 'from out of language's reality and be led to its reality',¹⁴³ instead of the usual taking up of a position above it or of treating language as an object. The originary dialogue appropriated to Saying as the veiled relation of message and messenger's course substitutes for the hermeneutic circle.

The question of Being in Heidegger becomes eventually reduced to a reflection on language in the urge to name or rather the impossibility of naming. Poetry is then viewed as *poiesy*, in the sense of the disclosure of the concealed as pure and absolute unconcealedness via repetition. The unconcealment/concealment correlation is rooted in the interpretation of *phusis* as the emerging and rising in and from itself and all things. The Heideggerian substitution of the poetics of presence for that of *mimesis* may be demonstrated via the famous example of the temple, ('The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air'¹⁴⁴), in which the *temple* no longer signifies a higher signified, but renders visible the full presence of itself and the concealed space of air. Here, a work of art functions as a disclosure of truth, a world-disclosing tool that holds the openness of the world open.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 47.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 53.

¹⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, 'The Nature of Language', p. 72.

¹⁴² Martin Heidegger 'A Dialogue on Language', p. 80.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 51.

¹⁴⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 42.

To find the valid language for Being, Heidegger inquires into its functions as a disclosure of Being for man before and prior to the production of works of art. It is this originary function of language that Heidegger seeks in the infinite possibilities of the poet's entrance into the relation of word to thing. The power of the word is thus investigated in respect of its endowing the thing with Being or the *bethinging* of the thing, in virtue of which the sense of Being appears like an endowment dedicated to the thing from the word. The personality of the poet is subordinated to the lack of the poetic power of the word which conditions his becoming a poet.

The significance of Heidegger's conception of the originary sameness of Being within language in the scope of this study lies primarily in his reassessment of the Western understanding of the relationship between being and saying, voice and word. This reassessment can be traced in the proximity between *Logos* and *Being*, in the sense of Saying through the belonging to each other of word and thing. It endows the Word with the function of the giver, of that which *gives Being*, simultaneously endowing the function of the thinker with that of the seeker of the word as giver.¹⁴⁵

The essential pertinence of nothing and difference to language and Being serves as the key concept for Heidegger's postulation of sameness. It is through this articulation of a being-other of language as Saying, namely the showing or making appear of the world through lighting and concealing that the genuine origin of Being is manifested. The power of Saying as the *vibrating, hovering, and trembling* sound of the Word brings about the 'lighting-concealing-releasing offer of world'.¹⁴⁶ The sounding word is the sole way for listening to the 'ringing of stillness'¹⁴⁷ in the originary voice of Being, the appropriating event through which *Being* itself comes into its own presence. The question of Being is, accordingly, postulated in respect of the radical impossibility to be spoken and of that which remains unsaid in the said: 'what remains unsaid, what is not yet shown, what has not yet reached its appearance.'¹⁴⁸

The reestablishing of the question of Being becomes thus possible upon the ground of a reassessment of the lack of Being, the attempt of bringing it about through the Word and the impossibility of doing so. The question of Being

¹⁴⁵ Martin Heidegger, 'The Nature of Language', p. 88.

¹⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, 'The Nature of Language', p. 107.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 108.

¹⁴⁸ Martin Heidegger, 'The Way to Language', in *On the Way to Language*, p. 122.

is thereby reassessed as both an attempt to resay what has already been manifested as the Same which ‘stays the Same as the message’,¹⁴⁹ and the impossibility of doing so.

It is predominantly with the above-mentioned aspects of Being and Nothing, the issues of Saying, speaking, and silence that the late Heidegger is engaged, attuning the reader to the sacral power of language and poetry.

2. 6 A Philosophical Recourse to the Poetic Texts

Along with purely theoretical investigations, Heidegger makes a philosophical recourse to the poetic texts of Stefan George, Georg Trakl, and Hölderlin to inquire into the experience that the poet has undergone with language. In so doing, Heidegger is cautious to maintain the vibration, hovering, and ringing of the poetic Word in the univocal philosophical discourse which he names ‘the rigid groove of a univocal statement’.¹⁵⁰ His philosophical inquiry into poetry transposes the question of Being into the pure repetition of the poem, by endowing thought with pure experience of language in the sense of *cutting furrows into the soil of Being*. Here, Heidegger even refers to Nietzsche’s words, stressing the need for the thought to have ‘a vigorous fragrance, like a wheatfield on a summer’s night’ (Grossoktav WW XI, 20).¹⁵¹

Here the privilege of the poem as our innermost possibility of reliving within language is stressed and demonstrated through reservations about the highest thought and the claims that pure thought can never be a substitute for our listening to the inner peace of the poem.

What is at stake in the interpretation of the poem, is the deciphering of the unspeakable experience of Being which manifests itself in each of the singular poems and the totality of the poems reduced to a single poetic statement. The task of the interpreter is thus to situate the poet’s *site* in the intensity of its gathering and pervading power, by a clarification of individual poems. Heidegger applies the term *clarification* in the ontological sense of

¹⁴⁹ Martin Heidegger, ‘A Dialogue on Language’, p. 54.

¹⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, ‘The Nature of Language’, p. 64.

¹⁵¹ Martin Heidegger, ‘The Nature of Language’, p. 70.

bringing forth the ‘purity which shimmers in everything said poetically’ to its *first appearance*.¹⁵²

In accordance with the aforementioned theory, Heidegger interprets the site of Georg Trakl’s poetic work as that of *apartness* circling around the wandering stranger. It emerges as the song of the wandering soul which is about ‘to gain the earth by its wandering, the earth that is the stiller home of the homecoming generation’.¹⁵³ This interpretation is the revelation of the ‘rigorous unison of the many voiced language’¹⁵⁴ of Trakl’s poetry that remains unsaid in the multiple ambiguity of the poetic saying.

The inquiry into the poem *Words* by Stefan George is an encounter with the poetic word as the bringing of the unsaid or pure Nothing into language. What is at stake here is the experience (*Erlebnis*¹⁵⁵) of the pure language outside the realm of representation, beyond the signification of things by words. Language is posed at the brink of naming the unsaid and the radical lack for the name. Robert Bernasconi interprets this experience of the lack for the word as ‘the lack of the word for the word’ which means the lack of the name for the Being of language.¹⁵⁶

The poet is the one who seeks for the word of Being and, due to the lack of this word, for ‘the treasure’ that ‘never graced’ his land, renounces (‘So I renounced and sadly see:/Where word breaks off no thing may be’; from *Words*).¹⁵⁷ He is the one, who experiences both, the treasured power of language and the impossibility of owning it (‘And straight it vanished from my hand’).¹⁵⁸ The *bethinging* (*die Bedingnis*) power of the word conditions the commitment of the poet to the mystery of the word in the form of a nondenial of the self that says: ‘may there be.’¹⁵⁹

Heidegger interprets renunciation as an unsayable experience, ‘the transformation of Saying into the echo of an inexpressible Saying whose sound is barely perceptible and songlike’.¹⁶⁰ He links it to the *may there be* that reveals

¹⁵² Martin Heidegger, ‘Language in the Poem’, in *On the Way to Language*, p. 160.

¹⁵³ Martin Heidegger, ‘Language in the Poem’, p. 196.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

¹⁵⁵ See: Robert Bernasconi Robert, *The Question of Language in Heidegger’s History of Being* (London: Macmillan Press, 1985), pp. 81 – 82 for an account of Heidegger’s concept of *Erlebnis* as lived experience and its influence from G. Simmel.

¹⁵⁶ Robert Bernasconi Robert, *The Question of Language in Heidegger’s History of Being*, p. 53.

¹⁵⁷ Martin Heidegger, ‘Words’, in *On the Way to Language*, p. 140.

¹⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger, ‘Words’, p. 140.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

the concealed purity of the *is* in the sense of thanksgiving that is attuned to joy. In this context the mystery of the word is both remote in the sense of *mystery* and near, in the sense of being experienced.

Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin's poems stems from the premises of his philosophy and serves as a proof of his own thought. The postscript to Heidegger's essay 'What is Metaphysics?', which includes the sentences 'The poet names the holy. The thinker says Being',¹⁶¹ may serve as a clue for this interpretation in so far as the poet and the thinker are united in their experience of the lack of the holy or of Being. They both experience the lack of the word for Being, for an experience of language; the poet through the word *holy*, the thinker through the truth of Being.

In Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin, both the poet and the thinker, experience the lack of the truth of Being and aspire to reestablish it differently in the pure speaking of an originary language. According to Paul De Man, Heidegger chooses Hölderlin because he is 'in need of a witness, of someone of whom he can say that he has named the immediate presence of Being'.¹⁶² The fact of Hölderlin's being a witness of Being enables Heidegger to realize his concern of transposing the question of Being into the pure event of language in respect of its radical resistance to being named. Being is transposed into the immediacy of the poetic language: in Heidegger it is interpreted as the unconcealment of the concealed as unconcealment, whereas in Hölderlin, it is the impossibility and strife of unconcealment.

Heidegger's essay *Remembrance of the Poet* on Hölderlin's poem *Heimkunft, Homecoming* reveals the genuine vocation of the poet as the return 'into the proximity of the source'¹⁶³ after having wandered for a long time in search of the homeland which is near and not near. The mystery of the homeland is near as an experience and not near, as a mystery. The homecoming of the poet is then his getting to know the mystery of the home as the bereft source not 'by unveiling or analyzing it', but 'by carefully guarding *as* mystery'.¹⁶⁴

The return home is designated as commensurate with *grasping the High One* through naming it. The mission of the poet is thus the unconcealment of the

¹⁶¹ Martin Heidegger, 'What is Metaphysics?', postscript from: Robert Bernasconi, *The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being*, p. 54.

¹⁶² Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 252.

¹⁶³ Martin Heidegger, *Existence and Being*, intr. by Werner Brock (London: Vision Press, 1968.), p. 279.

¹⁶⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Existence and Being*, p.279.

concealed Being through the immediacy of the poetic Word, empowered to bring Being into existence by naming it. Hölderlin, however, faces the impossibility of revealing Being through the mediation of the name.

Heidegger privileges the poet as the one empowered to name the holy or the High One in the time of the *failure* of god, making it appear in the very utterance of the name, in the granting of the initial word.¹⁶⁵ The reservations concerning the distortion of the unity of word and Being once the word is uttered by the poet and achieved by other persons can be overcome by remembrance.¹⁶⁶ It is however the very distortion of the initial identity that enables the existence of the multiplicity through finding for each person ‘a homecoming in the manner appropriate for him’.¹⁶⁷

In another essay, *Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry*, Heidegger defines the essence of poetry as the ‘most innocent of all occupations and language, as the most dangerous of possessions [...] given to man’.¹⁶⁸ Here likewise the emphatic presence of Being as the purest and most concealed, is unconcealed through language. Heidegger stresses the *bethinging* power of language, asserting its function as that of the founder of Being. The gods have acquired names, and a world has appeared by virtue of language: ‘the real conversation, which we ourselves are’ consists in ‘the naming of the gods, and in the transmutation of the world into word.’¹⁶⁹

Heidegger sacralizes the creative power of the word, establishing the world in itself through a nomination, and equally sacralizes the poetic being as the supreme form of being; with his conviction: ‘Poetically, dwells man on his earth’.¹⁷⁰ He believes in the re-establishing of the primeval unity of things and words via poetry, conceived as ‘the establishing of being by means of the word’ and as that ‘which first makes language possible’.¹⁷¹ In the same way, he sacralizes the vocation of the poet, as the one ‘through whom the spirit speaks’¹⁷² who is struck by *Apollo* and is selected to transpose the truth of this supreme vision by words in order to bring it into being.

¹⁶⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Existence and Being*, p. 285 and p. 286.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 293.

¹⁶⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Existence and Being*, p. 303.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 309.

The Heideggerian belief in the world-creating power of the Word becomes more distinctly illustrated through his exegeses of poetic texts. For Heidegger, the belief in the power of the Word is equally a belief in the supreme power of poetry as a manifestation of pure language. It becomes manifested in the entirety of a re-unification of words and things and a re-creation of the sacral vision by virtue of a pure nomination.

The Heideggerian belief in the supreme power of the poetic language can be viewed as the confession of a philosopher impuissant to recreate the primeval lucidity of the sacred vision of Being through a philosophical discourse. Solely the pure poetic language of repetition which is beyond any signifying function is empowered to become the language of Being. Heidegger's belief in the poetic power of language is the reason for his interpreting Hölderlin via a reversal of his poetic site from an *impossibility to name* into a *naming* empowered to *bething*. It can be viewed as Heidegger's unwillingness to face the impuissance of the poetic Word of bringing Being into presence and his unwillingness to face *the poet of the poet* in his impuissance of recreating the ultimate vision through the ineffable mediation of the Word.

What speaks in the speech *between* the poet and the thinker, whether by virtue of speech or the impossibility of speech, is, as Derrida argues (referring to Heidegger's *Gespräch* with Trakl), the very language, which 'speaks about itself, refers to itself in deferring itself'.¹⁷³

The significance of Heidegger's postulation of sameness within the scope of this study is primarily the reestablishing of the originary Being within a pure speaking of language (*Die Sprache spricht*). As Derrida argues, the call of Being as promise has already taken place wherever language comes: 'This would also be a promise of *spirit*'.¹⁷⁴ It would be a promise of spirit, *Geist* as flame, in the affirmative determination of which the internal possibility of the worst is already lodged.¹⁷⁵

In Heidegger the promise of spirit or the promise of language becomes possible by virtue of an originary of Being in the certain thinking of *Ereignis* as the event of a promise which has already taken place. It becomes possible in the

¹⁷³ Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger and the Question*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (London and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 83.

¹⁷⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger and the Question*, p. 94.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

relation of spirit to itself as the *gathering (Versammlung)* of the unique in the One (*in das Eine*).

To sum up, the issue of sameness is reestablished in Heidegger in its originarity by virtue of a pure speaking of language as repetition. It is reflected in Heidegger's assumption that exceptional poetry (by Hölderlin, Trakl, Rilke and, up to a point George) can attain *purity* in speech and speaking. This pure repetition is designated by Derrida as a *retrait* or an advance towards the most originary, the *pre-archi-originary* which thinks *more* by thinking *nothing more* and opens onto what remains *origin-heterogeneous*.¹⁷⁶

To rethink what Derrida describes as the most *matutinal* (the *other* origin-heterogeneous birth) possibility of the *same* issue of Being, Heidegger chooses the path of pure repetition, of the most vertiginous and abyssal repetition which crosses the path of the entirely other to re-call the other under the Same.

Jacques Derrida follows the same path.

¹⁷⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger and the Question*, pp. 112 – 113.

3. Derrida: The Deconstruction of the Same

3.1 Experiencing the Sameness in the Other

As we have attempted to demonstrate, the essential characteristic of Nietzsche's and Heidegger's positions is the inquiry into the limits of the unity and totality of the issue of the Same in order to reveal the origin of the very *difference* as the ultimate foundation of all knowledge.

Jacques Derrida follows their path of attaining the 'ultimate foundations'¹⁷⁷ of knowledge, the rationality of which is, however, to be discovered by deconstruction. Deconstruction, as Derrida defines it, does not issue from logos, but inaugurates the destruction or de-sedimentation of all the significations that have their source in the logos.¹⁷⁸ According to his explanation, deconstruction should be viewed as 'broaching the deconstruction of *the greatest totality* — the concept of the *episteme* and logocentric metaphysics'.¹⁷⁹

Before going into the details of Derrida's corroboration of difference within sameness — which remains the central concern of this chapter — we have to mention that Postmodernism in general and Deconstruction in particular, arouse heated debates among contemporary critics. We will outline here the position contrasting to ours which disparages Postmodernism's desire for disintegration by viewing it as a condition where identity no longer prevails. Consequently, the central postmodernist conception of difference is opposed to identity and, thereby considered as detached from sameness. Due to this position, then, the postmodernist unleashing of a force of pure transgression is transformed into a kind of negative capability. Postmodernism is accordingly qualified as a complex maneuvering in which knowledge is deemed questionable, the human subject is dispossessed, humanism is unmasked as a form of covert oppression, and narrative logic as one of the central organizing

¹⁷⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); p. 60; all further reference from this edition.

¹⁷⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 10.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

principles of western thought, is broken down.¹⁸⁰ From this perspective, then, deconstruction is not viewed as the de-sedimentation of sameness in order to release its hidden energy, but rather a resistance to totality, teleology, or to any kind of closures, such as narrative, conceptual, or metaphysical. The deconstructive movement against the thinking of the pure identity of sameness and its devolving into the desire to convert the singularity of the different into sameness is thus misjudged as a resistance to sameness in general with its fundamental human values. Moreover, the postmodernist liberation of philosophy and art from endless representation, as well as from their subordination to the subject is misinterpreted as ‘quite explicitly antihumanist, denying human beings the instrumental command of language [...]’,¹⁸¹ while its spirit is defined as specifically anti-humanistic.¹⁸² The postmodernist remission of the power of the artist and the refusal of the integrity of the art work are misinterpreted as the disruption of the whole of western traditions which arouse ethical issues concerning the neglected responsibility and obligations.¹⁸³ Yet, our central concern is to stress the significance of the postmodern thought of sameness based on a more primordial response to the different. We aim to show that postmodernism is by no means the denial of sameness, but its assessment upon the different and the other which has always already been inscribed within sameness. Moreover, we argue that both, the condition in which identity no longer prevails and the one in which the different is either subordinated to identity or disregarded are bleak and malevolent prospects for humanity. For this reason, the investigation of the ways of the genuine encounter of the Same and the other are under focus.

It is precisely from the aspect of de-sedimentation that we will inquire into Derrida’s deconstruction of the Same not as a demolition of the Same, but as an impossibility to think of its plenitude in a non-contradictory way. Hence, deconstruction will be viewed as a unique way which ventures to show the Same in its full splendour by questioning its static transcendentality and by making

¹⁸⁰ See: Paul Sheehan, *Postmodernism and Philosophy* in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, ed. by Steven Connor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 20 - 42.

¹⁸¹ Paul Sheehan, *Postmodernism and Philosophy*, p. 23.

¹⁸² Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay On Antihumanism* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), p. 8.

¹⁸³ See: Robert Eaglestone, *Postmodernism and Ethics against the Metaphysics of Comprehension* in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, ed. by Steven Connor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 182-193.

visible the Other to the Same as the limit of its possibility. Moreover, it will be viewed as a significant shift from the philosophical conceptualization of the Same throughout the history of Western philosophy into the experiencing of the Same in its ever different singularity by risking it and pushing it to the limits. Deconstruction will thus be traced in its innermost possibility of reviving the issue of sameness, no longer by raising, postulating or reestablishing it, but by allowing us to experience the Same in its ever same and ever different repetition of the Other. As Derrida demonstrates, the Other or the different begins only at the limits of the totality of the Same and it can be considered only from the assumption that difference was always already inscribed within the Same. We will therefore trace the opening up of this dynamic space of difference in its subtlest contrivances and endless energetic potential via the interplay of overlapping structures and the infinite number of possible combinations, condensed in the absolute singularity of every given combination. In tracing this open space of deconstruction, it is essential to remember the impossibility of further questioning the essence or origin of the Same in whatever form of philosophical conceptualization, but rather experience it in every single act of freedom.

The investigation of the major postulations of sameness in Western philosophy — starting from its inception in Greece throughout its deconstruction by Derrida — allows us to generalize the history of philosophy in terms of the urge to rethink sameness in a peculiar manner. As we have attempted to demonstrate, philosophy up to Hegel (with the period of digression, delineated in Part Two) had been postulating sameness either in terms of pure identity or of a totality, in which difference is subordinated to the higher identity or dissolved into it. By contrast, Derrida employs the term *différance* as the ‘limit, the interruption, the destruction of the Hegelian *relève wherever* it operates’¹⁸⁴ in order to de-sediment the Same by pointing to the *otherness* inscribed within it. This brings forth an asymmetry among the symmetrical philosophical oppositions of *praxis/theoria*, *conscious/unconscious* and a disorganization of these oppositions which are no longer designed to make possible the ultimate

¹⁸⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), pp. 40 – 41.

sublation (*aufheben*) of difference according to the process of Hegelian negativity.¹⁸⁵

The possibility of existence of this *différance* which is the abyss itself, must be sought, as Irene Harvey argues, within the very structure, the rationality housed within all interiority, within the subject (as absence) and within the object (as a certain spacing).¹⁸⁶ As a result, the Same is no longer represented as a transcendental signified in the static plenitude of its meaning, arresting the concatenation of writing, but rather functions as a potently meaningful matrix of *différance* that can be experienced in the *jouissance*, in the dynamical openness to new contexts. It is precisely this ‘effect, if not the mission, of liberating forbidden *jouissance*’¹⁸⁷ as the possibility of experiencing sameness that characterizes deconstruction.

To liberate, to show up the forbidden *jouissance* as an experience of freedom in an open de-centered system, which has been eventually unfolding itself upon the ruins of the metaphysical signified of the Same, is the very aim of deconstruction. Deconstruction thus encompasses two interrelated operations: the interruption and destruction of the remnants of the metaphysical signified of the Same, hence the entire chain of onto-teleolo-theological representations and the possibility of experiencing sameness in the *jouissance* of creating endless structural combinations. In both operations, the issue of sameness is transformed into an experience: in the first operation the intensity of its experience is coeval with the rigour (force) of destruction (which needs to be greater than the force of its assertion); in the second one, it is coeval with the liberation of the forbidden *jouissance* as an experience of freedom in the process of creating endless structural combinations to unfold the *absolutely pure* singularity of the Other.

To reduce the Same to the singularity of the Other, deconstruction divides the conceptual generality of meaning. The singularity is thus divided and takes *its* part in the genre, the type, the context, and the meaning. It loses itself to offer itself, *to belong*, and *to participate* as a *trait*, a *differential* trait different *with itself*. Derrida explains the possibility of singularity by its *différance*, in its double meaning of difference and to defer: ‘Singularity differs from itself, it is

¹⁸⁵ See: Arkady Plotnitsky, *Points and Counterpoints: Between Hegel and Derrida* for an account of Derrida’s entanglement with Hegel (*Questioning Derrida With his Replies on Philosophy*, ed. by Michel Meyer (Belgium: University of Brussels, 2001), pp. 66 – 79.

¹⁸⁶ Irene, E. Harvey, *Derrida and the Economy of Différance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 204.

¹⁸⁷ ‘An Interview with Jacques Derrida’, in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 56; all further reference from this edition.

deferred [*se diffère*] so as to be what it is and to be repeated in its very singularity.’¹⁸⁸

The deconstruction of the Same is realized by the eventual deconstruction of the philosophical categories of identity, origin, logocentrism and mimesis through staging, transforming, *wrenching* these concepts out of their traditional contexts and showing them to be other than they usually are taken to be. To deny the risk of regressing to the system that is being deconstructed while leaving the names of old categories in circulation, Derrida describes the signifier, in this case the name, as a merely circumstantial or conventional occurrence of the concept or as ‘a concession without any specific effect’.¹⁸⁹ The traditional system of general textuality anchored in the sensible or intelligible presence of the referent in its manifold modes as *meaning, essence, existence* or *form, appearance, content, substance* is thereby disorganized. A new form of *writing* as the disappearance of the name is asserted instead.

In this new context, the subject is liberated from the supremacy of *logocentrism*, namely the powerful belief that the presence of some metaphysical signified or *centre*, an *essence* or *beginning* which precedes language and prevails over it, governs the structure of language. The concept of the Same as a transcendental signified beyond language that makes the latter subordinate and secondary is deconstructed. Instead, a different form of language and writing empowered to disturb the homogeneity of thought and touching on limits where things are reversed and heterogeneity becomes apparent, is brought forth.

Différance is thus the deconstruction of the Same in its pure identity, functioning as the metaphysical signified by emphasizing its experience through the difference of co-existing fragmented elements in an open decentralized system. This deconstruction is accomplished through the deconstruction of the fundamental concepts by dividing them, posing in the difference from other concepts, depriving them of their meaning through syntactical play, simulacra, and mimicry.

¹⁸⁸ ‘An Interview with Jacques Derrida’, p. 68.

¹⁸⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. by and with an Introduction by Barbara Johnson (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 5; all further reference from this edition.

3. 2. The Interplay of Infrastructures

As has been stated in the previous section, the deconstructive approach aims to account for the heterogeneity, *différance*, dissension and fissures constitutive of the classical philosophical discourse. Rodolphe Gasché rightly considers the grounding of these contradictions in the philosophical *quasiconcepts of infrastructures*, as well as the discovery of the concept of *infrastructure* as the *formal rule* that each time regulates differently the play of the contradictions in question, an intrinsic part of Derrida's contribution to philosophy.¹⁹⁰ The necessity to apply the rule of infrastructures is linked with the insufficiency of the traditional concepts (*eidos*, *totality*, *Gestalt*, *essence*, *form*, *etc.*) and the unwillingness to use them any longer.¹⁹¹

While focusing upon the deconstructive grounding of contradictions in infrastructures, it is, however, essential to bear in mind Gasché's explanation of the deconstructive operation of grounding in terms of its repetition or miming.¹⁹² The grounding operation is mimed or repeated in order to account for/explain/describe the difference between a ground and that which is grounded. If on this view infrastructures are said to ground origins, it must be added that they unground them at the same time. They are also more and less than an origin, in so far as they are situated within syntax without origin to represent the irreducible plurality in contrast with the origin they make both possible and impossible. In our attempt to reveal the infrastructures inherent in Derrida's texts, we will deploy the aforementioned definition of infrastructures.

The deconstruction of the philosophy of mimesis or representation in *Dissemination* is accomplished, for example, through the deconstruction of Plato's *Phaedrus* by the semantic deconstruction of the words *pharmakeia-pharmakon-pharmakeus* within the play of syntax. What is at stake is the deconstruction of the semantic meaning of the word *pharmakon* as a mixture of two heterogeneous terms, *remedy* and/or *poison*, and the task of tracing this duality as a guiding thread within the whole Platonic problematic of the mixture. The word *pharmakon* introduces itself into the body of Platonic discourse with all of its ambivalence, in the entirety of its connotations. It should be

¹⁹⁰ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 142.

¹⁹¹ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978), p. 301.

¹⁹² Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 142 – 161.

acknowledged alternately or simultaneously in its indefiniteness as a *substance* and/or an *antisubstance* that resists any philosopheme, exceeding its bounds as non-identity, non-essence, and non-substance.

The difficulty in translating the word *pharmakon* as *remedy*, *recipe*, *poison*, *drug*, *philtre*, etc., and in transferring a *nonphilosopheme* into a *philosopheme* enables Derrida to reflect upon the indefiniteness of Plato's text and the resistance of language against the domination of a univocal interpretation.

Derrida reduces the ontological semantics, the lexical richness of Plato's text, its depth or breadth, the opposition between the contradictory layers of signification (continuity/discontinuity, inside/outside, identity/difference) to the infinite play of syntax, the syntactical *praxis* that composes and decomposes it. This syntactical operation is realized by the displacement of the words and the naming of fusion and separation. The words involved in this operation get a double, contradictory, and indefinite value not from the content, but deriving from the syntax that carries all the force of the operation. The displacement of Platonism and its heritage is thus realized through the very act of displacement as an effect of language or writing, and syntax. The classical acts of reading are displaced by a focus upon the plays of the signifier and by the erasure of any signified. The excess of syntax over semantics is an illustration of Derrida's attempt at allowing syntax an independent form (this attempt is considered by Gasché as 'the most radical attempt ever made'¹⁹³).

Among the syntactical operations are the focusing upon spacing through supplementary syntactical effects and the analysis of the articulation and blank spaces in Mallarmé's texts, thereby pointing to the disorganization of any logocentric distinctions between the sensible and the intelligible, the ideal and the material. According to Derrida's reading of Mallarmé's texts, an excess of signifiers is observed: unhooked, dislodged, cut off from their historical contexts or disengaged from their historic polarization.¹⁹⁴ The book then is a repetition of the process of spacing folded back upon itself, of a certain play propagating itself 'through unequal displacements, abrupt slowdowns or bursts of speed, strategic effects of insistence or ellipsis'.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 245.

¹⁹⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'The Double Session', in *Dissemination*, trans. by and with an Introduction by Barbara Johnson (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 244.

¹⁹⁵ Jacques Derrida, 'The Double Session', p. 244.

Plato's mimetic paradigm of the cave is deconstructed via the same syntactical ambiguities, a play of articulations, oppositions, and allusions. The syntactical displacement is based upon the homonymy between Plato's *antre* (cave) and Mallarmé's *entre* (between) and the introduction of the term *hymen* as the medium between opposites in its *in-betweenness*. The significance of the *between* lies precisely in its semantic void: signifying nothing but spacing and articulation, it marks the articulated opening of the opposition between semantics and syntax. As we have seen, in Derrida's readings the syntactical operations are offered as a substitute for semantic ones. As David Wills remarks of Derrida's analyses of writing, they often concentrate on the syntactic as 'a troubling as well as a reinforcement of the semantic, the means by which the self-extensions of language as the graphic other of the scriptural come into play as both a cohesive and disruptive force'.¹⁹⁶

The medium of the *hymen*, according to Derrida, 'outwits and undoes all ontologies, all philosophemes, all manners of dialectics'.¹⁹⁷ It interposes itself between mimicry and *mimēsis*, 'a copy of a copy, a simulacrum that simulates the Platonic simulacrum'.¹⁹⁸ The double meanings and multiple functioning of the word *hymen* (membrane and marriage) and the *syntagm* 'lit' (bed and to read) are complicated to the point of admitting a multitude of subjects illustrate that the mime's operation both preserves and erases the difference between the imitator and the imitated; the Mime is not an imitator, but mimes imitation. The Mime does not *do* anything, he is not an acting agent and aims toward no form of verisimilitude. Along with the play of syntax which is no longer subject to the meaning of words, Derrida introduces the issue of simulacrum which is no longer subject to truth.

Another coexisting infrastructure deconstructs the whole of Western metaphysics in its conceptuality by deconstructing the permanence of the Platonic schema based upon the supremacy of the origin and power of *logos* as speech. Writing, proposed, presented, and asserted as a *pharmakon* is unfolded as intimately bound to the absence of the father. It is bound to death where the breathless sign substitutes for the living voice.

¹⁹⁶ David Wills, *Lemming in Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Tom Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 114.

¹⁹⁷ Jacques Derrida, 'The Double Session', p. 226.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

The focusing upon *citational* play, the *anagram*, the very textuality of the text, rooted in the relation between Plato and his language, individual discourse and language itself demonstrates the absolutely heterogeneous textuality constituted ‘by differences and by differences from differences’, and this is, as Derrida confesses, the single theme of this essay.¹⁹⁹

The multiple senses of the word *pharmakon* open up access to other contexts, namely to the space of writing or *space as writing* supplementing memory placed in the subtle difference between *mnēmē* and *hypomnēsis*, knowledge as memory and nonknowledge as remembrance. Derrida generalizes the opposition between *mnēmē* and *hypomnēsis* presiding over the meaning of *writing* by viewing it within all the great structural oppositions within Platonism.

Insofar as writing sows *forgetfulness in the soul*, it turns it toward *death*, toward *the nontruth*, *inanimate* and *nonknowledge*. It *turns* but does not *confound* it with *death*, *nontruth*, *the inanimate* and *nonknowledge*. It is at this point that Derrida brings forth the understanding of writing as having no essence or value, whether positive or negative, of its own, but functioning as simulacrum, as ‘the mime of memory, of knowledge, of truth’.²⁰⁰ In accordance with the more subtle excess of truth, namely the *simulacrum*, the metaphysical concepts of the *philosophia* and the *ēpistēmē* are displaced into a completely different field, philosophy asserts itself as an operation which mimes absolute knowledge (Bataille’s expression used by Derrida).²⁰¹

Such a reading of Plato deconstructs not only the recognized models of commentary, but also the very genealogy or structural reconstitution of a system attempting to corroborate, refute, or comprehend it under a simple concept. It suggests a certain excess in the form of displacement or *simulacra*, a *folding-back* [*repli*] or *re-mark*²⁰² as an exit out of the series of the model of classical reading.

It suggests *différance* as the process of *writing* that writes itself, as opposed to the metaphysical *identity*, referring back to a Same that is not the identical, but the medium of any possible dissociation. As Derrida himself notes:

¹⁹⁹ ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, in Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 101.

²⁰⁰ Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, p. 108.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

²⁰² Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, p. 106.

‘Such a functional displacement, which concerns differences [...] more than any conceptual identities signified, is a real and necessary challenge’.²⁰³

The *pharmakon* then reappears after its Derridean dismemberment, holding the opposites in its *diacritical, differing, deferring* reserve as ‘the movement, the locus, and the play: (the production of) difference’, as the ‘différance of difference’.²⁰⁴ It reappears between the ambiguities of paternity and language, through Plato’s transgressing the law in order to make up for the father’s death (‘condemning writing as a lost or parricidal son, Plato behaves like a son *writing* this condemnation, at once repairing and confirming the death of Socrates’²⁰⁵).

Writing thus emancipated from representation is compared with the lost trace, the *dissemination* of a nonviable seed scattered wastefully outside, ‘a force wandering outside the domain of life, incapable of engendering anything [...], of regenerating itself’.²⁰⁶ The open space of dissemination as the simultaneous co-existence of infrastructures substituting for that of representation in Derrida is, as Gasché describes, ‘the name by which the in-advance divided unity is *affirmed*’.²⁰⁷ It is manifested through the constant ellipsis of the verb *to be* and its complementariness to the practice of *play* in Mallarmé’s writing: ‘The *casting aside* [*mise à l’écart*] of being defines itself and literally (im)prints itself in dissemination, *as dissemination*’.²⁰⁸

Dissemination then presents itself as writing without a book, enfolded in the blankness of the page and as an allusion to the limitlessness of literature voiding itself in the infinity of references. In this context, literature is deprived of essence or truth, whilst the question concerning the essence of literature is formulated merely as an attempt to find out the subject and reasons of what has been represented and determined under the name *literature*.

Writing is located within the problematic of *truth* between the ambiguities of a writing of *alētheia* and the playful *hypomnesic* (between memory and forgetting) writing: ‘less between presence and the trace than between the dialectical trace and the nondialectical trace’.²⁰⁹ It is no longer the

²⁰³ Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, p. 106.

²⁰⁴ Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, p. 130.

²⁰⁵ *Plato’s Pharmacy* in Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 152.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

²⁰⁷ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 237.

²⁰⁸ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Double Session’, p. 226.

²⁰⁹ Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, pp. 153-154.

representation of the Same, but a process of play, of differences, of simulacrum. Having no essence of its own, writing erases itself:

Having no essence, introducing difference as the condition for the presence of essence, opening up the possibility of the double, the copy, the imitation, the simulacrum – the game and the *graphē* are constantly disappearing as they go along. They cannot, in classical affirmation, be affirmed without being negated.²¹⁰

The deconstructive infrastructures thus devalue a *generalized* writing as the signification of the Same, to assert the construction of a *literary* work, ‘outside and independent of its logocentric *content*’, in which the latter is among its inscribed functions and ‘can be read in its anagrammatical texture’.²¹¹

Derrida brings to the fore the absolute indispensability of the scriptural reference at the point at which the principle of difference must be considered as the very condition of signification. He bases his argument on both Plato’s mathematical play of proportionalities based on a *logos* without voice or God’s calculation expressed in the silence of numbers and Saussure’s *Course in General Linguistics*. He presents writing as *parricidal* in its disruptive intrusion of otherness and nonbeing, illustrates it as a play of difference and places it at the brink of madness by directing it against the paternal figure of Parmenides with his thesis of the unity of being.

The Platonic concept of the absent origin beyond *beingness* and presence gives rise to a structure of *supplements* in which every presence stands for the absent and all differences will be its irreducible effect. Différance as the disappearance of the originary presence becomes both the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of truth. The absent origin then appears in the presence of its identity as ‘the possibility of its own most proper non-truth, of its pseudo-truth reflected in the icon, the phantasm, or the simulacrum’.²¹² Hence, the *graphics of supplementarity* supplying another unit, which is half the same and half the other, for the lack of a full unity makes repetition possible.

²¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, p. 155.

²¹¹ Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, pp. 156-157.

²¹² Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, p. 166.

It is at this point that Derrida brings forth the inseparability of the two types of *repetition* according to the graphics of supplementarity beyond the metaphysical binary oppositions: the dialectics of the repetition and the return of the Same and the *repetition* of the dispersed and multiplied presence via phantasms and simulacra in the form of writing designed as ‘Death rehearsal. Unreserved spending. The irreducible excess through the play of the supplement’.²¹³ It is at this point and within this reversibility that the *Same* is deprived of identity, deconstructed, and operated as supplement in *différance*, in writing.

3. 3. Mimicry of Totality

The deconstruction of the metaphysical universal of the Same through infrastructures brings forth an entire reorganization of thought shifting from the mode of representation toward that of repetition. The point of departure is transposed from the transcendental signified into its deconstruction which accounts precisely for the heterogeneity inherent in the classical philosophical discourse. In so doing, it offers a different reading of the classical philosophical texts which have served as a ground for the manifestation of the unity and totality of the Same. What is at stake is no longer the thinking of the truth of Being, but the thinking of the thought which, as Derrida points out in *Positions*, exceeds meaning; the ‘thought-that-means-nothing’.²¹⁴ This new thought which exceeds meaning is simultaneously the exceeding of the Same, its presence and truth by the play of infrastructures that reveals aporias, discrepancies, and fissures inherent in the classical discourse.

Among the ways of deconstructing the ontological understanding of *mimēsis* rooted in the relationship between the signified and the signifier is its reduction to the very matrix of *mimesis*. Derrida elaborates upon a certain play between literature and truth conditioning the whole of history by juxtaposing Mallarmé’s *Mimique* and the Platonic texts. It is anchored in the finiteness of

²¹³ Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, p. 166.

²¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, p. 12,

language and, hence, in *play* as a field of infinite substitutions, deprived of any center that arrests and grounds the play of substitutions.²¹⁵

The interpretation of *mimēsis* as that of any other discourse about the relationship between literature and truth, according to Derrida, ‘bumps up against the enigmatic possibility of repetition’.²¹⁶ To be more precise, it *bumps up* against the inseparability of the two types of *repetition* delineated according to the *graphics* of supplementarity: the classical *repetition* of the Same and the *repetition* of the multiplied presence via phantasms and simulacra. The displacement of the classical model of the repetition which makes the self-identity of the transcendental signified of the Same manifest is possible by introducing the infrastructure of the iterability. The infrastructure of iterability is, as Gasché describes, the reunification of two incommensurable meanings: the possibility of iteration or repetition, and also the possibility of alteration.²¹⁷ It becomes possible due to the lack of plenitude of the repeated which inscribes within itself the possibility of nonidentity, and, at the same time, as a means to fill this lack. In this way, the repeated is always already something other than what it purports to be.

The experiencing of otherness becomes therefore possible through a variety of overlapping operations which can be characterized as mimicry of the totality. All of them stem from the common belief that ‘at first, there are sources, the source is other and plural’.²¹⁸ The exceeding of *mimēsis* as an imitation of *logos* or the unveiling of the Same is accomplished by substituting a copy for it or through the double’s resemblance (*homoiōsis*). Here is how Derrida sketches the schema of these relations:

Logos must indeed be shaped according to the model of the *eidōs*; the book then reproduces the *logos*, and the whole is organized by this relation of repetition, resemblance (*homoiōsis*), doubling, duplication, this sort of specular process and play of reflections where things (*onta*), speech, and writing come to repeat and mirror each other.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 289.

²¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Double Session’, p. 202.

²¹⁷ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 212 – 217.

²¹⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), p. 277.

²¹⁹ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Double Session’, p. 201.

It is predominantly this classical order of truth, the precedence [pré-séance] of the imitated or the hierarchy of the metaphysical signified of the Same which governs the ‘philosophical or critical interpretation of *literature*, if not the operation of literary writing’²²⁰ that Derrida aims to exceed. This exceeding becomes possible by the introduction of new operations no longer belonging to the system of truth. Among them, the Mime from the Mallarmean text of *Mimique* is not subjected to the authority of any book, except for writing himself on the white page, inscribing himself as at once image and model or neither image nor model, ‘both passive and active, matter and form, the author, the means, and the raw material of his mimodrama’.²²¹

In this way, the space opened up by the exceeding of the Same becomes occupied by another reading, in which writing refers to itself as a determinate structure at once open and closed. The process of cross-referencing is both endless and useless in respect of Mallarmé’s text. This text then reverses the metaphysical concept of truth as the search for the *arkhē*, the *eskhaton*, and the *telos* that governs the relationship between the signified and the signifier into truth ‘as the present unveiling of the present: monstration, manifestation, production, *alētheia*’.²²² It preserves the differential structure of *mimēsis*, *phantasma* (the simulacrum as the copy of a copy), but without its Platonic or metaphysical interpretation; the metaphysical name of the *idea*, but in order to mark *non-being*, the *nonreal*, the *nonpresent*. This interplay of overlapping infrastructures, in which there is no longer any model, and hence, no copy, is no longer being referred back to any ontology or dialectic, but becomes a dramatization which *illustrates nothing* which illustrates *the nothing* in the *theatrum philosophicum*.

There is thus nothing but the staging of the stage, on which the difference between difference and nondifference, the future (desire) and the present (fulfilment), the past (remembrance) and the present (perpetration), ‘the gaping void of desire, and presence, the fullness of enjoyment’²²³ are abolished, leaving space solely for a series of temporal differences. In fact, we deal with mimicry imitating nothing, having no reference, but acting as a simulacrum, *a simulacrum of Platonism or Hegelianism*, separated from what it simulates only

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 205.

²²¹ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Double Session’, p. 209.

²²² Jacques Derrida, ‘The Double Session’, p. 216.

²²³ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Double Session’, p. 219.

by a barely perceptible veil, running unnoticed ‘between Platonism and itself, between Hegelianism and itself. Between Mallarmé’s text and itself’.²²⁴

The mimed event is thus nothing other than the space of writing, mimicry without imitation or verisimilitude, the spacing as traces, a nothing, a blank as a yet unwritten page, a difference between two lines defined as ‘hymen, crime, suicide, spasm [...] — in which nothing happens, in which the simulacrum is a transgression and the transgression a simulacrum’.²²⁵

3. 4 The Other of Philosophy

Within the boundaries of an understanding of the cluster of overlapping infrastructures which make us experience the Other, we can approach Derrida’s elaboration of the issues concerned with literature or literary criticism. It is essential to note here that literature is for Derrida, as J. Hillis Miller describes, ‘the possibility of any utterance, writing, or mark to be iterated in innumerable contexts and to function in absence of identifiable [...] context’.²²⁶ The deconstructive approach to literature will be viewed in the frame of a relation of philosophy to its Other which is located *within* philosophy as ‘the margin of infrastructural possibilities’.²²⁷

What is at issue in the deconstructive approach to literature is its approach vis-à-vis metaphysics: it tends to deconstruct the metaphysical understanding of literature as a discipline deprived of its specificity and reduced to the function of merely the signifier of the metaphysical signified of the Same, its message or truth. To use Derrida’s words, what he tends to deconstruct is precisely the tendency predominating in the Western tradition of the history of texts concerned with the *transcendental* of reading, in its search for the signified.²²⁸

From another angle, Derrida takes interest in the power of literature (since Mallarmé) to resist its reduction to ‘the transcendental authority and

²²⁴ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Double Session’, p. 218.

²²⁵ Jacques Derrida, ‘The Double Session’, p. 218.

²²⁶ Miller J.Hillis, ‘Derrida and Literature’. in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Tom Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 59.

²²⁷ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 176.

²²⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 160.

dominant category of the *episteme*: being'.²²⁹ This resistance presupposes 'a break with what has tied the history of the literary arts to the history of metaphysics'.²³⁰ Moreover, he takes interest in the power of literature to achieve the exposition of the Other as an experience of the Same by virtue of an experience of pure language as repetition, outside the realm of representation. We will subsequently trace Derrida's attitude to literature in terms of what Bernstein describes as 'the very marking of otherness in terms of the textual operation of non-concepts'.²³¹

In light of the aforementioned perspectives, Derrida inquires into the capacity of literary criticism to face up to the crisis of literature and to de-limit it. He is concerned with the crisis of thematic criticism anchored in the ontological interpretation of mimesis or metaphysical *mimetologism*, namely its quest for the preexisting meaning or signified of literature. What he aims to demonstrate is the limit of this criticism which is focused upon content, meaning, or the signified and the impossibility of determining a meaning through a text, pronouncing a decision upon it and saying that a theme is posed as such. In so doing, Derrida critiques the thematic approach, in its phenomenological, hermeneutic, and dialectical projects with its application of overloaded terms and concepts which treats the text as a form of expression by reducing it to a signified theme, a nuclear unit of meaning located outside of its signifier. *Thematicism* as such thus ignores the play that dissects the word, cutting it up and putting its pieces to work according to new networks of differences. The poverty of thematic criticism, as Derrida describes it, is that one sees themes 'in the very spot where the nontheme, that which cannot become a theme, the very thing that has no meaning, is ceaselessly re-marking itself — that is disappearing'.²³²

This critique of thematic criticism conditions the subversion of the very possibility of the institution of literary criticism as such. It is a subversion which, in respect of Gasché's argumentation, is not the annihilation of literary criticism, but the 'decapitation [...] of its pretensions, and thus an assignment of its locus'.²³³ A different kind of literary criticism, accounting for the ultimate

²²⁹ Ibid, p. 92.

²³⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, p. 11.

²³¹ J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (Great Britain: Polity Press, 1997), p. 175.

²³² Jacques Derrida, 'The Double Session', p. 259.

²³³ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 266.

possibility of a text's meaning, hinges on the deconstruction of thematic criticism. Derrida offers a different kind of criticism which is supposed to account for the specificity of the work of literature in the *undecidability* of the text cut off from any signified and in the non-sense or non-theme of its spacing. This kind of literary criticism would rather focus upon the operation of writing which is indistinguishable from and accounts for the *graphics of the hymen* as opposed to the '*dialecticity* that has remained profoundly inseparable from metaphysics, from Plato to Hegel'.²³⁴ According to a non-Hegelian identity, this new criticism implies interruption that suspends the equation between the mark and the meaning. It sees *marks* as opposed to seeing *themes*, sees the structurally necessary position of the surplus mark, the margin of meaning inserted in the text to the extent that it does not exist outside the text and has no transcendental privilege. In so doing, the new criticism concentrates upon phonic and graphic differences rather than on plenitudes or intuitive presences showing the displacement of the existing taxonomy that writing achieves.

What Derrida aims at is, generally speaking, the replacement of the hermeneutic concept of *polysemy* by dissemination, the meaning of which is the impossible return to the rejoined, readjusted unity of meaning. This replacement is only possible if literary criticism destroys itself as commentary by exhuming the originary unity encompassing the differences between work and commentary, force and signification, literature and philosophy, etc.²³⁵ The aim of deconstructive reading is, then, as Bernstein defines it, 'to traverse texts, [...] by discovering a blind spot in a text that exceeds the author's intentions yet governs the logic of the text'.²³⁶

The reading of Philippe Sollers's novel *Numbers* (as well as a number of other readings of literary works) demonstrates the operation of this different kind of literary criticism, accounting for the deconstructive infrastructures in the singularity of this given text and the actual transmutations of the operation of writing due to its transgression of the signifying paradigm by substituting *graphicity* for the *extratext*, pure signifiers beyond representation for the extra-textual signified of the Same. Transgressing the paradigm of signification, writing no longer contents itself with the act of making or producing in the sense

²³⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'The Double Session', p. 256.

²³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 174.

²³⁶ J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno*, p. 168.

of unveiling or manifesting and is no longer governed by the motif of truth. It is instead 'just as rigorously accountable for *non*production, for operations of nullification and deduction, and for the workings of a certain textual zero'.²³⁷ It 'modulates expropriation, repeats it, regularly displaces it, and tirelessly enumerates it'.²³⁸

The infrastructure of iterability is introduced here through numbers which enumerate, write, and read themselves by suspending the voice and dislocating the living presence represented by speech. The death of the voice, of the representative function of speech designating the truth of a signified does not amount to silence but to a polyphonic inscription. The values of vocal spacing are then regulated by an operation *within* voice, not by the authority of the word or the signified, but in respect of the general rule of textuality. Within the frame of the textual difference, the text indefinitely refers to endless connections and to the indefinitely articulated regress of the beginning. Here, the distinction between reader/spectator/author is erased. The author is depersonalized and re-inscribed within this program becoming both part of the spectacle and part of the audience. His *I* is identified with the full force of writing as simulacrum that ceaselessly dislocates any identity.

Subject to the infrastructure of iterability, in respect of which all oppositions based on the distinction between the original and the derived, the first and the second, one and two, etc. lose their pertinence, the text reproduces 'the process of its own triggering'²³⁹ by accounting for the possibility of what comes to inscribe itself as a supernumerary that divides or displaces the numbers. The whole cluster of infrastructures of *accidents*, *secondaries*, and *surplus* is in operation: '*Two* is no more an accident of *one* than *one* is a secondary surplus of *zero* (or vice versa)'.²⁴⁰ Phonetic writing finds itself *grafted* (where the graft is the heterogeneity of writing) to nonphonetic types of writing, particularly via the scission or disarticulation of silent spacing (bars, hyphens, dashes, numerals, quotation marks, blanks, etc.).

The deactivated oppositions are only reactivated as effects of the game, as the trace imprinting itself by referring to another trace and by letting itself be *upstaged* and forgotten. According to Derrida's description, 'its force of

²³⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 326.

²³⁸ Ibid, p. 364.

²³⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 322.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 364.

production stands in necessary relation to the energy of its erasure'.²⁴¹ The text is thus a network of traces endlessly referring to something other than themselves (yet never to an extra-text) and tied in with Otherness in an irreducible manner. This network is, however, not subjected to an ultimate totality; neither is its linkage oriented by oneness and totality. According to Gasché, if the general text is an interlacing at all, it is not because it interconnects homogeneous threads into one totality but because 'in an almost nonsensical, nonaesthetic manner, it links heterogeneous forces, which constantly tend to annul the text's precarious unity'.²⁴²

From this perspective of textuality, the paradigm of the four in the same novel *Numbers* presented by the word *square* [*carré*] refers endlessly to cross-roads, squares, and other four-sided figures deconstructing the metaphysical binary oppositions and the *tetragram*, the ternary rhythm (Oedipus, Trinity, Dialectics) of the Trinitarian foundations of Western thought. The fourth surface not only encompasses the *Platonic moment*, but also dismantles the hierarchy of the order of presence leading up to the visibility of the *eidos*. Its hierarchy is replaced by a *hierarchy of the mirror* — included in the totality of all *onta* and their images — through which things become present.

In respect of a deconstructive reading, however, the novel *Numbers* is by no means reduced to a signified content or absolute referent, but demonstrates *the distorted reflection of writing on the fourth panel*, a certain *squaring* of the text. This makes the difference between the reading of a text and the revealing of a theme analogous to the choice between the *interminable motion of writing* and *the polythematicism or polysemy*. This is *difference itself*: the difference between discursive polysemy and textual dissemination, between the semantic as 'the reappropriation of the seed within presence' and the seminal which 'disseminates itself without ever having *been* itself and without coming back to itself'.²⁴³ This is, in the final accounting, the disseminative exposure of dissemination that breaks the circuit of representation, inscribing itself via writing through some ungovernable excess or loss.

The deconstructive interplay of infrastructures, beyond the chain of signification conditions likewise Derrida's approach to poetic texts. Poetic texts, predominantly those of Stéphane Mallarmé, Francis Ponge, Paul Celan, and

²⁴¹ Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 364.

²⁴² Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 290.

²⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, p. 385.

Edmond Jabès enact intensely the paradoxes which lie at the heart of Derrida's theory of deconstruction. Despite the fact that Derrida reads them in the light of their absolute singularity, the point of his departure is the infrastructure of iterability, as clearly stated in his text *Che cos'è la poesia?* which was originally a general reply to the question of the Italian journal *Poesia*: 'What is poetry?'. Poetry, the singularity of the poem can solely be retained through learning it by heart, i.e., in the poetic language, as pure repetition.²⁴⁴

Derrida's deconstructive approach toward the elimination of the dominating signified of the Same and, hence the signifying function of literature becomes apparent in his inquiry into poetic texts as an experience of the *absolutely heterogeneous Other*. In the reading of Francis Ponge's poem *Fable*, it takes the form of a certain experience of the impossible, namely the experience of the *other* as the invention of the impossible or the only possible invention. Derrida distinguishes between the invention as a return to the Same that does not invent anything, but amounts to the Same, and the impossible invention of *the other* as the production of a new event, beyond the speech act that allows *the other* to come.²⁴⁵ Derrida tackles the enigma of invention by deconstructing this metaphysically overloaded term (from the Port Royal Logic to Descartes, Leibniz, and Schelling). What is deconstructed is primarily the notion of *possibility*, viewed as the becoming of an available set of rule-governed procedures, methods, and accessible approaches. This deconstruction breaks the convention by inserting a disorder into the ordering of things and inventing something on this subject.

The reading of Mallarmé's texts starts from the elusion of the categories of history, literary classification, criticism, and all kinds of philosophies and hermeneutics. What is at stake is the limit of thematic criticism expressed in the claim for the impossibility of judging the Mallarmean text as *event* or interpreting its *meaning* except by falling short of it. Derrida generalizes this tendency as a crisis of criticism which 'will always use judgement *to decide* (*krinein*) on value and meaning [...]. A crisis, equally, of rhetoric, which arms criticism with an entire hidden philosophy. A philosophy of *meaning*, of the *word*, of the *name*'.²⁴⁶ In this crisis, the writing of Mallarmé marks both a

²⁴⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'Che cos'è la poesia', in Jon Cook, *Poetry in Theory, An Anthology 1900 – 2000* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 536.

²⁴⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, pp. 339 – 340.

²⁴⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 113.

rupture and a repetition, by revealing ‘the essence of past literature for what it is’.²⁴⁷

Derrida instead introduces another kind of criticism where the meaning remains undecidable, and ‘the signifier no longer lets itself be traversed, it remains, resists, exists and draws attention to itself’.²⁴⁸ Mallarmé’s style is characterized by a resistance against the pull of language toward a *determinable* meaning. This undecidability ‘is no longer attached to a multiplicity of meanings, to a metaphorical richness, to a system of correspondences’,²⁴⁹ but rather directs the signifier toward itself.

Derrida demonstrates Mallarmé’s tendency for tracking down any signification in favour of the presence of the pure sign in the text, referring to nothing but itself. The disappearance of the text, as well as the disappearance of the author substitute for any search for definite meaning.²⁵⁰

Mallarmé’s dream book rests upon the radical separation of word and being, and, hence the release of language from its bondage to being. It is emptied from any external point of reference, aspiring to the void, the primal nothing which Mallarmé confesses to have found without any knowledge of Buddhism in the face of an overwhelming vision.

What in Derrida’s description passes *through* or traverses Mallarmé is the emerging poetics of nothing or impersonality, the contemplation of this nothing, and the self-annihilation of the author in the text.²⁵¹ It is anchored in the understanding of the *pure poem*, in which the poet’s voice must be stilled and the initiative taken by the words themselves. The collision of words is compared with the flaming out of the swathe of fire, substituting for the classical understanding of lyric as audible breathing which stands for the poet’s own personal and passionate control of verse.

Derrida traces the deconstructive tendency of liberating the forbidden *jouissance* in Mallarmé’s decomposition of the *word*, described as *disintegration*, by which he ‘liberated its energy’.²⁵² He also stresses the deconstructive tendency of replacing semantics by the free play of syntax in Mallarmé’s urge to *seize relationships* and the *interval* which marks the end of a

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 113.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 114.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 115.

²⁵⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 113.

²⁵¹ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 112.

²⁵² Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 116.

culture in which the exploitation of semantic richness has been a critically foregrounded feature of poetry. The fulcrum is transposed from the *inexhaustible resources of the word* to a *certain play of syntax*. It is worth recalling Derrida's citation of Mallarmé's comment on this account: 'I am profoundly and scrupulously a syntaxer'.²⁵³

The word thus liberated is fixed in an empty space, in the spatial and visual field of the blank page, marked by *undecidable* relations between multiple meanings, meaning and form, by different grammatical categories. The frequent application of the mark *and/or*²⁵⁴ also signs the position of the word as a structure of pure relations in Mallarmé's texts.

Derrida applies the deconstructive term *writing* to Mallarmé's texts and generalizes them as a system of *différance* which transgresses the appearance of identity. Through the textual analyses of Mallarmé's texts, he deconstructs the classical understanding of poetry which involved itself in mere representation, and replaces it by the one which grounds its intelligibility upon its own laws of development. The new understanding of poetry as *writing* implies not the representation of the totality and identity of the Same, but the repetition of manifold fragments, the disposition of parts and their heterogeneity.

It is noteworthy to follow Derrida's deconstructive reading of Mallarmé which instead of prescribing a definite meaning to his poetic texts, demonstrates its very nonmeaning. The erasure of meaning is realized, for example by the effacement of the semantic meaning of the referent *gold* [*or*]: through *extraction* and *condensation*, the mixture of grammatical categories (hesitating between the form of the possessive adjective and that of the noun; the value of the noun and that of the determinative adjective), the play of homonyms or synonyms, the etymology, and even through referring to its English homonym or homogram. As a result, the hypothetical signified *Or*, its natural substance, is deconstructed by the multiple forms of the monetary sign of the signifier *Or* in such a way that only the sparkle of gold is left:

All Mallarmean sunsets are moments of crisis, whose gliding [*dorure*] is continually evoked in the text by a dust of golden gleams [*une poussiere d'éclats d'or*] (*dehORs* ['outside'], *fantasmagORiques* ['phantasmagorical'], *tresOR* ['treasure'], *hORizon* ['horizon'], *majORe* ['increase'], *hORs* ['outside'])

²⁵³ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 114.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

until the '*effacement de l'or*' ['disappearance of the gold'], which loses itself in the numerous o's of this page, in the accumulated zeros which increase the value only to return to the void.²⁵⁵

Does the deconstruction of the noun *Or*, [gold], its meaning and function, lead towards an initial identity, a rhythmic totality? Or does it bring language through a plethora of signifiers to the primal void, the nothingness of the yet-unnamed, the very silence, the zero? Is *or*, here, one word or several words? Does Mallarmé evoke the mythical unity of word and being or rather return to the original absence of the name?

Derrida leaves the chain of these questions open, alluding to the *alchemy of the verb* empowered to embrace the Orphic and Hermetic powers of the word, making things 'appear and disappear by the simple declaration of its name'.²⁵⁶ He rereads Mallarmé on this account:

I say: a flower! and beyond the oblivion to which my voice relegates any shape, insofar as it is something other than the calyx, there arises musically, as the suave idea itself, the one absent from every bouquet. (*Crise de vers*, 368).²⁵⁷

Derrida's reading of Mallarmé predicates the language of his texts upon a condition of namelessness that embraces all names and is bereft of a dominance of meaning. The word thus liberated of things and meaning becomes the diaphanous momentum preceding speech, that which by virtue of its presence, conjures the non-presence of language.

To sum up, a deconstructive reading treats all of Mallarmé's texts as a quest for the primordial nothing through a materiality of language, erasing itself in the very process of its existence. This is accomplished by means of various syntactical, grammatical, and typographical devices, and a reduction of meaning to the letters of the alphabet.

Derrida aims to illustrate how the Mallarmean conception of undecidability takes over 'a multiplicity of meanings, [...] a metaphorical richness, [...] a system of correspondences'.²⁵⁸ In so doing, Derrida

²⁵⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 122.

²⁵⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 116.

²⁵⁷ Cited in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 116.

²⁵⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 115.

demonstrates, among other issues, how in his texts the spatial relationships among words are constructed through typography that creates the illusion of words forming the blank page. The free dance of words liberated from meaning becomes a visual experience, in which the main theme (*Un coup de dès jamais n'abolira le hasard, A Dice Throw At Any Time Never Will Abolish Chance*) distinguishes itself through 48-point print, surrounded by secondary themes printed in smaller types. The central stand, however, is the creation of a blank space through the sign *blanc*, [white] which 'permeates Mallarmé's entire text, as if by symbolic magnetization'.²⁵⁹ The essential point here is the reduction of the sign *white* from the vast reservoir of meanings to *the spacing of reading*.

We can see how Derrida abstains from giving a totalizing meaning to the *Dice Throw* or from constructing any kind of philosophical discourse on the themes of the *game of necessity and chance*. He abstains from *casting the dice to produce the fatal combination*, and therefore from making an act of choice that would abolish chance. He instead mentions all the issues he should have spoken of in a thematic discourse in the parentheses: (of Stéphane Mallarmé, his life, his work, his thought, of his unconscious and of his themes, of what he obstinately wanted to say, etc.). In so doing, he demonstrates the possibility of a different kind of criticism which opens up the overlapping of a variety of combinations, a multiplicity of co-existing infrastructures in a single *dicethrow* which, due to a number of combinations come to produce the essential transformation and affirmation of the Book. The dream Book is not the production of one author, but of none or many; it is not the Being of a single outburst, but the eternal Becoming grasped in the iridescences of multitudinous successive fragments. It is both, 'unique and changing', as the 'number-constellation [...] or [...] the work of art as outcome and justification of the world'.²⁶⁰

The Dream Book of Mallarmé is at the same time the 'promise of a still unheard-of language' or 'a sole poem previously inaudible',²⁶¹ to which the texts by Derrida respond endlessly. The way to this language lies through risking the norms and the body of the given language and the stereotypes or cultural clichés which surround it, by leaving the road and giving himself the slip, as he himself

²⁵⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, p. 115.

²⁶⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, pp. 30-31.

²⁶¹ Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other or the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. by Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 67.

confesses.²⁶² It is to the inventing of the impossible path of this promise of language, of the ‘monolanguage of the other’²⁶³ that Derrida’s entire efforts are aimed.

The reading of various texts by Derrida testifies to the forms of polemic that the philosophical method of deconstruction takes against the metaphysically overloaded *philosopheme* of the Same by de-sedimenting and deconstructing its dominance for the sake of making us experience sameness in *otherness*, in the iterability of the absolutely singular, in the *différance* of the overlapping infrastructures and the liberation of the forbidden *jouissance* in the endless process of free creativity.

The next chapter will examine the transposition of the issue of sameness into the repetition of the poetic texts by Rainer Maria Rilke.

²⁶² Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other or the Prosthesis of Origin*, p. 66.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Part Five: The Transposition of Sameness from Philosophy into the Poetic Language of Repetition

Art does not imitate, above all because it repeats ...

Gilles Deleuze.¹

This part will examine the transposition of the issue of sameness from the domain of philosophy into that of the poetic language. The acknowledgement of the impuissance of the philosophical discourse to provide an adequate conceptualization of sameness and to recreate the issue of sameness through the mediation of language constitute the preconditions for this transposition. These acknowledgements condition the quest for the pure language empowered to express the experience of sameness that has been haunting philosophy since its inception in Greece, but with particular intensity from Hegel onward. In Hegel, this is still the language of representation, posed between the naming of the ineffable experience of the Same and an impossibility of naming. Yet, from Nietzsche on, with the postulation of pure difference, the language of sameness becomes liberated from the function of representation and transformed into the poetic language of repetition, no longer a repetition of the Same, but of itself as pure signifier, signifying nothing but itself.

As investigated in the previous Part of this study, the transposition of the issue of sameness from the philosophical into poetic language has been realized upon the philosophical ground of pure difference. The phenomenon of this transposition starts with Nietzsche's establishment of the *theatrum philosophicum* and his sketching the contours of the pure poetic language as the language of freedom, of the unconscious and inner experience, transgressing the realm of representation toward the free manifestation of nothing but itself as repetition. It is

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 365.

subsequently developed by Heidegger's quest for the originary voice of Being, disclosing itself in the pure delight of the beckoning stillness of the pure poetic language as the shining forth of the openness or nothing. In Derrida, the pure language takes the form of the most abyssal repetition that crosses the path of the entirely Other through dissemination, the mimicry of totality, and the simulacrum. As a play of difference, it is transmuted into the disruptive intrusion of *Otherness*, nonbeing, and multiplied presence of the phantasms. This transmutation substantiates in Derrida's outline of the poetic language as the *monolingualism of the Other*, anchored in the infrastructure of *iterability* that implies the repetition of the absolutely singular *Other*, retained by the learning by heart of the poem.

What is at stake in this Part, is, therefore, the inquiry into this space of pure repetition, grounded upon the rupture of the conceptual framework of the representation of the identity of the Same and the opening up of the philosophical thought of pure difference, in which everything rests upon the disparity, divergence and otherness of the singularity of the differential. The concept of repetition, we argue, is best manifested in the ideal organization of pure language in the bare repetition of the singular form of the poem. In this way, sameness appears as the recurrence of the absolutely singular *Other* in the modern(ist) understanding of poetic language as that of pure repetition.

The space of repetition will be investigated not only through the texts belonging to philosophical postmodernism (Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, and others), but also through the poetic texts by Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die Sonette an Orpheus* (*Sonnets to Orpheus*, 1922). It is essential to note that it is not within the scope of this study to provide an investigation of Rilke's poetic legacy, or cover the field of secondary sources concerning Rilke. It is rather an attempt to demonstrate the transposition of the issue of sameness from philosophy into the pure poetic language of repetition, an attempt that conditions greatly the choice of certain sonnets from the entire cycle or the reason for granting unequal space and attention to their analyses.

1. Shifting from the Repetition of the Same into the Repetition of the *Other*

The process of the eventual transposition of the issue of sameness from the philosophical discourse into the pure poetic language of repetition takes its start with the postulation of pure conceptual difference (from Nietzsche onwards). This is no longer the repetition of the metaphysical signified of the Same that infinitely represents and exposes nothing but the Same, but the dynamic repetition of the variable *differentials* as pure signifiers which repeat nothing but themselves. The difference between two kinds of repetition may be traced by Deleuze's juxtaposition of a repetition 'of asymmetry *in the cause*', or a repetition 'of selection and freedom' and the classical 'repetition of equality and symmetry *in the effect*' or the 'repetition of mechanism and precision'.²

This new space of repetition substituting for the repetition of the Same is the space of *difference*, transgression and chaos, formed by the dissemination of simultaneously correlating singular differentials and the resonance established between them. Forming part of Foucault's *theatrum philosophicum*,³ it dramatizes ideas instead of representing concepts and illustrates solely the pure space of nothing (as opposed to the metaphysical nothingness), in which repetition is interwoven from the differences between differential points, from the play of masks as pure signifiers, from simulacra. The theatre of repetition, in which we experience the freedom of dance and the dynamics of pure movement, is opposed in kind to the theatre of representation, anchored in the identity in concepts or representations. It shifts from the representation of the absolute identity of the Same into the repetition of the free play of the multiple configurations, appearing in the immediacy of the *once-and-for-allness*. The dominance of the ontological oneness of the Same is overcome by the dispersion of multiple fragments, repeating nothing but their pure singularity and introducing disequilibrium and dissymmetry into the identity of the Same.

² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 359.

³ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, ed. by James D. Faubion, trans. by Robert Hurley and others (London: Penguin Books, 2000), II, pp. 343 – 368.

This reorganization of thought strives to re-invent sameness in its difference and otherness or, according to Foucault, to show how ‘the Other, the Distant, is also the Near and the Same’, by posing the issue of sameness as that, which is ‘still to be conquered in its contradiction’.⁴ In so doing, the repetition of the other and the different; the appearance of the Double, the hiatus and ‘the distance creating a vacuum within the Same’⁵ liberate sameness from the sedimentations of ontological and dialectical thought and re-postulate it as the central issue of philosophy. Moreover, the shift from representation into repetition reasserts thought as moving not towards ‘the never-completed formation of Difference, but towards the ever-to-be-accomplished unveiling of the Same’.⁶

The thought of pure repetition, which is the ‘repetition of the signifier, repetition that is null or annulling, repetition of death’,⁷ realizes itself by virtue of writing as dissemination. In this context writing is no longer subjected to the authority of the Same, but is the mere inscription of itself or the effacement of itself on the blank page. The blank page, as the erasure of what has ever been written on it and all that is being written on it always but for the first time, is the disappearance of the speaking subject or the discourse and the appearance of language in its raw being endlessly repeating itself. This is a pure repetition beyond the realm of representation in so far as it does not reveal, represent or translate the transcendental signified of the Same or constitute a relationship of identity between writing and the Same. Instead, it illustrates nothing but the pure intensity of language as the manifold play of multiple differentials and fragments which gain more importance than the whole. In this reorganization of culture where the metaphysical signified of the Same loses its Platonic pertinence as the original, and, therefore, writing loses the pertinence of being its copy, the entire value of literature is reconsidered. From now on, it emerges as a theatre of thought, in which the invariant of the Same is deactivated and the trace becomes

⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, A translation of *Les Mots et les choses* (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 1994), p. 339.

⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 340.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. and with an Introduction by Barbara Johnson (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 136 – 137.

not the trace signifying the Same, but merely an imprint of itself, in its relatedness to other traces and in the constant erasure of itself.

Yet, the new writing of pure repetition does not cease to inquire into the enigma of sameness, but is itself an inquiry into its infinite power. It constantly dislocates and displaces the identity of the Same, by pushing it to its utmost limit in order to let sameness shine in its full splendour. Moreover, in this zone of transgression writing is, to use Foucault's words, not only the 'sole manner of discovering the sacred in its unmediated substance, but also a way of recomposing its empty form [...] through which it becomes all the more scintillating'.⁸

This pure repetition lies in the power of language and, according to Deleuze, 'it implies an always excessive Idea of poetry'.⁹ The ideal organization of language appears at its best in the form of repetition in the poem which produces bare repetition by combining nominal concepts and concepts of freedom. In the absolutely singular form of the poem (its measure, rhyme, elliptical form, absence of the constraint of the plot), 'to the extent that it purports to say both itself and its sense, while appearing as always displaced and disguised nonsense',¹⁰ sameness scintillates in its full unmediated splendour. Moreover, it is by virtue of the singular form of the poem that the enigma of sameness reappears in the full array of difference and otherness no longer as a dominant concept of identity, but as the infinite recurrence of the absolutely unique co-existing singularities. The otherness of the poetic form, by virtue of an otherness in rhythm, sound-pattern, grammar, semantics, structural disorganization and the rupture between sound/sense, deconstructs the homogeneity of representation to open up the hidden resources of language in its distance and proximity to the Same.¹¹ Here is how Roland Barthes describes modern poetry, referring to the Word as to an expansion of the letter, standing for the poem:

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, p. 70.

⁹ See for a detailed account on poetry as repetition in Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 363 – 365; this citation in p. 363.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 363 – 365; this citation in p. 363.

¹¹ See on this issue in Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, p. 134.

Elle ne garde des rapports que leur mouvement, leur musique, non leur vérité. Le Mot éclaté au-dessus d'une ligne de rapports évidés, la grammaire est dépourvue de sa finalité, [...] elle n'est plus qu'une inflexion qui dure pour présenter le Mot'.¹²

Modern poetry emerges as an absolutely unique repetition, i.e. a form of writing of which the sum remains necessarily uncountable and the account impossible. The deconstruction of the metaphysical concept of poetry belonging to *poiesis* can be traced in Derrida who cuts all ties with genealogy, discursive and literary poetry of the sublime and the incorporeal to assert the singularity of the poem. The singularity of the poem — displaced outside poetry in general, before any *poiesis*, pure poetry, pure rhetoric, *reine Sprache* or the *setting-forth-of-truth-in-the-work*¹³ — can be retained solely through learning it by heart. What is at stake thus is solely the *angelic* poem as the singular mark, the signature that repeats its dispersion, the event whose singularity no longer separates the *ideality* from the body of the letter, but seals together the meaning and the letter, like a rhythm spacing out time, 'rhythm but dissymmetry'.¹⁴ The origin of the poetic, in terms of the modern(ist) understanding of poetry as repetition lies in the very 'desire of this absolute inseparation, the absolute non-absolute',¹⁵ in which the Same is simultaneously itself and the Other.

In summary, this is a period when sameness becomes transposed into the pure being of language as repetition, as an experience of death and absence, where the mirror and the simulacra enact their roles. In this period sameness as a language of repetition becomes of greatest urgency for philosophers, as well as for poets (with Nietzsche and Mallarmé onwards). The poets become greatly concerned with creating a zone of pure transgression, in which language is pushed to its limits to mirror nothing but itself, repeat nothing but its own singularity in the multiple configurations of words. The role of the poet is greatly stressed in

¹² Roland Barthes, *Le degré zero de l'écriture* (Éditions du Seuil, 1953 et 1972), p. 37. (It [the Modern poetry] retains only the movement, the music of relationship, not their reality. The Word explodes above a line of emptied relations, grammar is bereft of finality, ... it becomes nothing but an inflexion which lasts to present the word).

¹³ Jacques Derrida, 'Che cos'è la poesia', in Jon Cook, *Poetry in Theory: An Anthology 1900 – 2000* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 536.

¹⁴ Derrida, Jacques 'Che cos'è la poesia', p. 536.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 534.

this period. For example, Alain Badiou has rightly suggested calling this lengthy period beginning with Hölderlin when ‘the poem rallied round same essential philosophical themes’, ‘the age of the poet’.¹⁶ Walter Strauss introduces the category of poet-thinkers (comprising all the major poets of the 19 – 20th centuries since Hölderlin, with Rilke and Ponge among them) who, in the absence of cogent philosophical and theological frameworks for thinking, have tried to propose a coherent vision of their world and have been compelled to assimilate their linguistic creation, their *parole*, to the exigencies of their thought.¹⁷ Erich Heller views the reconciliation of the poet and the philosopher, *Dichter und Denker*, Rilke and Nietzsche realizable via the return to Oneness by virtue of a return to the primordial word, or a transposition onto the ontological ground of speech, where the void is desperately filled with the unutterable word, the unnameable name. The poet and the philosopher are united then through speech and the impossibility of speech, through a dedication to ‘a belief in everything that has never been uttered before, and to the adventure of willing what nobody has ever dared to will’.¹⁸

For the abovementioned reasons, we will subsequently inquire into the repetition of the poetic language in the singular form of the poem as a transposition of the issue of sameness from philosophy into poetry. What the examination of the poetic texts will attempt to demonstrate, is the reassessment of the issue sameness through its liberation from representation in order to be manifest in the pure poetic language. In this period, poetry exhausts itself in the search of the nothing and, according to Badiou: ‘propagates the idea of an intuition of the nothing in which being would reside when there is not even the site for such intuition’.¹⁹

We are also concerned with investigating the establishment of the new mode of thought beyond representation (by the beginning of the twentieth century) that grapples with the issue of sameness in its otherness and difference, in the abyss of

¹⁶ Alain Badiou, *Conditions*, trans. by Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 39.

¹⁷ Walter A. Strauss, Rilke and Ponge: ‘L’Objet c’est la Poétique’ in *Rilke: the Alchemy of Alienation*, ed. by Frank Baron, Ernst S. Dick, and Warren R. Maurer (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1980), p. 90.

¹⁸ Erich Heller, *The Disinherited Mind* (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1952), p. 103.

¹⁹ Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. by Oliver Feltham (USA: Continuum, 2007), p. 54.

nothingness and the double, through the pure repetition of the poem. It is in this very period that philosophy and poetry are more than ever engaged with the same task and, to use Rainer Maria Rilke's (1875 - 1926) words, become more closely linked than before through their search for truth and beauty.²⁰ In other words, what we are particularly engaged with is the inquiry into Rilke's coinage of a new poetic language of pure repetition as an experience of sameness in its otherness. We will also inquire into Rilke's reflection upon the fundamental philosophical question of 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' in respect of a *somethingness* which is sometimes transformed into the mystical experience of *nothingness*.²¹

The movement toward this new mode of thought, by virtue of which the issue of sameness is manifested in the full array of its contradictions in poetic language, will be demonstrated through Rilke's poetic texts from *Die Sonette an Orpheus* (*Sonnets to Orpheus*, 1922). The choice of these texts is primarily conditioned by the fact that Rilke poses his quest for the new poetic language both in respect of and in contrast to the Orphic dimension by offering a different understanding of poetic Orphism. As we will attempt to demonstrate through Rilke's poetic texts, the unveiling of the issue of sameness in the poetic language is best accomplished through the precarious balance between identity and difference where the thought of the Same is already stripped of representation, but is not yet forgotten. We argue that it is solely in the precarious balance when difference is no longer subordinated to identity, but is not yet unlinked from sameness; when the Other is not dominated by the Same, but does not itself become a dominating idea bereft of the wisdom of sameness, that the issue of sameness reveals itself in its real plenitude: as the affirmation and positive recurrence of the absolutely unique differentials in their otherness.

This brings us to conclude that the new criteria for validating art are to be sought in the precarious balance between identity and difference. A balance which only becomes possible through the revelation of the plenitude of sameness which

²⁰ Rainer Maria Rilke, 'Essay on Maurice Maeterlinck', in (KA IV, 217) cited in Paul Bishop, 'Rilke: Thought and Mysticism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Rilke*, ed. by Karen Leeder and Robert Vilain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 159.

²¹ See details of this view in: Paul Bishop, 'Rilke: Thought and Mysticism', p. 168.

means that the Same should be stripped not only of being represented as a totalizing, dominating concept of pure identity, but also of becoming annulled and forgotten. The latter tendency is characteristic of contemporary art which has either forgotten the enigma of sameness or is confused by its metaphysical dominance. This allows speaking of the duplicity of contemporary art which, to use Jean Baudrillard's words, asserts 'nullity, insignificance, meaninglessness' and strives for 'nullity, when already null and void'.²² Nullity or nothing, as the 'real insignificance, the victorious challenge to meaning'²³ is, however, a rare quality of a few exceptional works, anchored rather in experiencing its plenitude in the precarious balance of identity and difference than the annulment of sameness. A quality which we believe is characteristic of Rilke's poetic texts. The poetic singularity of Rilke's text is manifested in the very unveiling of the plenitude of sameness by virtue of the vertiginous experience of void and nothing, in his reintegrating the voice of repetition into language to shape its own praising-space. In this praising-space, the praising of the plenitude of sameness becomes the praising of what Baudrillard calls the 'spirituality of language', the praising of language itself, of 'the energy and happiness of language'.²⁴

We will subsequently inquire into Rilke's poetic texts as a paradigm of poetic language liberated from the domain of representation. In this pure being of language as repetition, we will trace the ever more scintillating plenitude of the sameness, encompassing all the characteristic traits of transgression: the double, the other, the simulacra, the phantasm, and the nothing. In case the examination proceeds with the close-reading of the sonnet, the entire text of the sonnet with its English translation will be provided.

²² Jean Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art* (Semiotext(e)) (New York: Columbia University, 2005), p. 27.

²³ Jean Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art* (Semiotext(e)), p. 27.

²⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *The Conspiracy of Art* (Semiotext(e)), p. 174.

2. Rilke's Poetic Language of Repetition

2. 1. The Poetic Space of Rilke

The significance of Rilke's authorship and oeuvres gives rise to a vast body of investigations which have engaged with his personality, legacy, and issues relating to the translations of his works. A number of them have linked Rilke's life to his work, resulting in the emergence of biographical and psychoanalytic investigations of Rilke that expose the documented life of the poet to the public.²⁵ Others consider his correspondence, full of deep meditations on life and art, indispensable for gaining a full understanding of the poet, given the profundity of thought expressed.²⁶

The present study, however, is not engaged with the aforementioned aspects of Rilke, but proceeds instead from an alternate reading of his poetic texts on Orpheus as a coinage of a new poetic language, or, to use Rüdiger Görner's words, as Rilke's 'contribution to German culture in terms of its poetic language'.²⁷ In so doing, it views the poetic language of Rilke within the framework of the recurring theory of the disappearance of the author. This theory stems from the argument that the task of criticism is not to bring out the work's relationships with the author, or reconstruct through the text a thought or experience, but rather analyze the work through its structure, architecture, intrinsic form and the play of its internal relationships.²⁸ Rilke's texts are, therefore, read as a pure repetition of language, beyond the confines of the writing subject or within a space where the latter constantly disappears. They are read in terms of writing [écriture] which appears as a result of the disappearance of the subject

²⁵ Among them: Donald Prater, *A Ringing Glass* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), Patricia Pollock Brodsky, *Rainer Maria Rilke* (Boston: Twayne, 1988), David Kleinbard, *The Beginning of Terror* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), Ralph Freedman, *Life of a Poet: Rainer Maria Rilke* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), and others.

²⁶ See: Ulrich Baer, 'The Status of the Correspondence in Rilke's Work', in *The Cambridge Companion to Rilke*, pp. 27 – 38.

²⁷ Rüdiger Görner, 'Rilke: A Biographical Exploration', in *The Cambridge Companion to Rilke*, p. 20.

²⁸ See a detailed account of this view in Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?', in *Aesthetics, Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, pp. 205 – 222.

marking ‘the signature of an unceasing omission’ and pointing to its very absence.²⁹

The preconditions for the manifestation of the pure language of repetition in Rilke’s *Sonnets* lie in the deconstruction of the tradition of myth, the discourse of history, and the classical genre of the sonnet. This deconstructive process in Rilke is remarked by Volker Durr who draws analogies between Nietzsche’s ‘revaluation of all values’ and Orpheus’s ultimate message of overcoming established notions or enacting the reverse of all traditional assumptions.³⁰ Rilke’s unique treatment of the Orphic myth provides primarily a reconsideration of the poetic figure of Orpheus and of the ontological understanding of poetry offered by it, in order to suggest a new poetic language beyond representation.³¹ Or, to use Erika Nelson’s words, we can speak of Rilke’s own ‘vision of the modern poet who recaptures, recreates, and revises the traditional power and scope of the Orphic vision in all its complexities for the modern world’.³² It is from the scope of Rilke’s coinage of a new poetic language in his overall ‘project to revolutionize poetry and the poetic tradition of the modern age’³³ that his *Sonnets* will subsequently be analyzed.

The myth of Orpheus emerges as a central theme in modern French poetry, particularly in the later poetry of Mallarmé, whose influence on Rilke is referred to in secondary sources. Judith Ryan, for one, mentions Mallarmé’s ‘sparse, hermetic poetry’ which influences Rilke,³⁴ while according to Rilke’s letter, he himself considers Mallarmé to be ‘der sublimste, der *dichteste* Dichter unserer Zeit’.³⁵ Yet, Rilke’s own attempt at liberating language from representation lies not in the removal of the voice (as in case of Mallarmé), but its re-inscription into

²⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 113.

³⁰ Volker Durr, ‘Rainer Maria Rilke: The Poet’s Trajectory’, in *Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature*, ed. by Horst S. Daemrich (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2006), pp. 132 – 133.

³¹ See: Dianna C. Niebylski, *The Poem on the Edge of the Word: The Limits of Language and the Uses of Silence in the Poetry of Mallarmé, Rilke, and Vallejo* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1993) on the crisis of language in Modern poetry, pp. 3- 10.

³² Erika M. Nelson, ‘Reading Rilke’s Orphic Identity’, in *Studies in Modern German Literature*, vol. 101 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), p. 22.

³³ Erika M. Nelson, ‘Reading Rilke’s Orphic Identity’, p. 169.

³⁴ Judith Ryan, *Rilke, Modernism and Poetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 156.

³⁵ Letter to Rudolf Bodländer, March 23, 1922, cited in Erika M Nelson, ‘Reading Rilke’s Orphic Identity’, p. 64.

the language of praising. This is the reason why Rilke's reintroduction of the Orphic tradition should be regarded in terms of the coinage of a pure praising of language, or as Gaston Bachelard describes it, as 'an exaltation of joy, the outward expression of the joy of breathing'.³⁶

This is realized through recomposing the traditional sonnet by the otherness of the poetic form, in which the intriguing play of identity and difference is demonstrated. Rilke preserves the formal architectonic organization of the sonnet, while transforming some of its characteristic features, such as rhyme patterns (abab in the first quatrain and cddc in the second one), metre (comprising stanzas of different length of lines; for example in sonnet 1,9), feet (the combination of dactyls, i.e. a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed ones; for example in 1, 18 & 2, 18 or the implication of exclusively dactyls, which traditionally was a feature of the elegy; as in 1,7; 1,9 and 2, 20), and the overrunning of the divide between the quatrain and the tercet by an enjambment which links both parts of the sonnet.³⁷ His modification of the rhyming scheme, particularly the changing of the length of the line of the traditional sonnet, characteristic also of Mallarmé (the sonnet *Salut*, preceding Rilke's Sonnets) and Valéry (the sonnet *Le Sylphe*, published in 1921), affects the structure of the form to such an extent that, to use Belmore's words, it becomes difficult to accept some of these poems as sonnets at all.³⁸ His alteration of rhyming through the present participles used as nouns, acquires the significance of philosophical conceptions in their generalization, while the pairing of antithetical notions stresses the underlying differences concealed under apparent similarities. Belmore stresses the revolution accomplished by Rilke in rhyming, stating it may well be the first time that rhymes have been thus used and that a 'subtler way of using them can hardly be imagined'.³⁹

Upon the ground of this general outline of Rilke's attempt to coin a language of pure repetition we will subsequently follow his deconstruction of the *Same*

³⁶ Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams*, trans. by Edith and Frederick Farrell (Dallas: Dallas Inst Humanities & Culture, 1988), p. 239.

³⁷ See an account of the changes inscribed into the classical form of the sonnet in Thomas Martinec, 'The Sonnets to Orpheus', in *The Cambridge Companion to Rilke*, pp. 103 – 105.

³⁸ Herbert William Belmore, *Rilke's Craftsmanship: An Analysis of his Poetic Style* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1954), pp. 12 – 13.

³⁹ Herbert William Belmore, *Rilke's Craftsmanship: An Analysis of his Poetic Style*, p. 24.

myth of Orpheus, the decomposition of the *Same* sonnet-form and the dismemberment of any preconceived whole in order to liberate the hidden energy of language. We will trace the absolutely unique space of Rilke's writing as a transposition of the plenitude of sameness into the poetic language of pure repetition where it scintillates in its full splendour.

Rilke's quest for a new poetic language outside representation is expressed intensely from the very first sonnets which will be read as the key elements of the entire cycle. The close-reading of the first two sonnets will provide access to the remaining sonnets which will be discussed briefly in respect of the scope of our subject-matter (as it would be the task of a separate monograph to treat each of the sonnets at any length). Likewise, in our reading of the poems, we will emphasize the original German, relying on the English translations of J. B. Leishman⁴⁰ and Howard A. Landman,⁴¹ but replacing them with our own literal translations, wherever the subtleties of language require it. So all translations, if not indicated otherwise, are our own literal translations. We will also provide the entire texts of the first three sonnets and the English translations by Landman, given that their analyses are based upon the close-reading of the texts. The texts of the remaining sonnets will merely be indicated by pointing to the number of the cycle (I or II), the sonnet, and the line, correspondingly.

⁴⁰ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, trans. by J. B. Leishman (London: The Hogarth Press, 1946).

⁴¹ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, trans. by Howard A. Landman, from [Howard A. Landman / *howard@polyamory.org*](#).

2.2. *Die Sonette an Orpheus*: Inventing a Poetic Language of Repetition

2.2.1 Reinventing Sameness through the Poetic Language of Recurrence

The present reading of *Die Sonette an Orpheus*⁴² is an inquiry into Rilke's invention of a new poetic language of repetition beyond the realm of representation. We will trace the displacement of the dominant metaphysical universal of the Same, corroborated by the Orphic myth as the world-building capacity of the *logos* by the poetic singularity of the *other*, manifested as the very advent of language. Rilke's departure from the myth of Orpheus is reflected primarily in the withdrawal of Orpheus from the majority of the sonnets which have come to existence solely due to his absence and are marked by this absence. The departure from the Orphic myth is simultaneously a departure from the transcendental signified of the Same in order to reinvent it through the recurrence of the event of the word, extending itself in the silence and the voice, in its being and *non-being*, as the impossible shaping of nothing.⁴³ This departure serves as a ground for Ryan's original characterization of the *Sonnets* as a converting of Symbolist and classicising moments into 'a sonnet sequence decisively modernist in character'.⁴⁴

This chapter will examine the first Sonnet as the key to Rilke's quest for coining a new poetic language of repetition beyond the realm of representation.⁴⁵ Given that the examination will be based upon the close-reading of the text, we are providing the entire text of the sonnet.

⁴² All references to Rilke's poetry are from Rainer Maria Rilke, *Werke: Kommentierte Ausgabe* (KA), ed. by Manfred Engel and others, 4 vols (Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig: Beck, 1996).

⁴³ See: Rainer Maria Rilke und Marina Zwetajewa: *Ein Gespräch in Briefen*, Herausgegeben von Konstantin M. Asadowski, übersetzt von Angela Martini-Wonde (Frankfurt am Main und Leipzig: Suhrkamp, 1998) for Zwetajewa's opinion of Rilke's coinage of a pure poetic language, pp. 54 – 57.

⁴⁴ Judith Ryan, *Rilke, Modernism and Poetic Tradition*, p. 171.

⁴⁵ See: Theodore Ziolkowski *Die Welt im Gedicht. Rilkes Sonnette an Orpheus II,4* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2010) for a recent example of singling out one of the sonnets from the entire cycle.

Sonnets to Orpheus I, 1

by R. M. Rilke

translated by H. Landman

A tree ascended there. Oh pure
transcendence!
Oh Orpheus sings! Oh tall tree in the
ear!
And all grew hushed. But in that very
silence
a new beginning, sign and change
appeared.

Quiet creatures gathered from the
clear
unhurried forest, out of lair and nest;
and so it must have been, their
stealthiness
was not born out of cunning or of fear,

but just from hearing. Bellow, cry, and
roar
seemed tiny in their hearts. And where
before
there barely stood a hut to take this in,

a hiding place of deepest darkest yens,
and with an entryway whose
doorposts trembled -
you built for them an auditory temple.

Da stieg ein Baum. O reine
Übersteigung!
O Orpheus singt! O hoher Baum im Ohr!
Und alles schwieg. Doch selbst in der
Verschweigung
ging neuer Anfang, Wink und Wandlung
vor.

Tiere aus Stille drangen aus dem klaren
gelösten Wald von Lager und Genist;
und da ergab sich, daß sie nicht aus List
und nicht aus Angst in sich so leise
waren,

sondern aus Hören. Brüllen, Schrei,
Geröhr
schien klein in ihren Herzen. Und wo
eben
kaum eine Hütte war, dies zu empfangen,

ein Unterschlupf aus dunkelstem
Verlangen
mit einem Zugang, dessen Pfosten beben,
-
da schufst du ihnen Tempel im Gehör.

The first Sonnet to Orpheus as the opening sonnet to the entire cycle substantiates the quest for an impossible language beyond the realm of representation which is delineated through the limiting experiences of discursiveness, historicity, and culture. As the key sonnet, it intensifies and accumulates the major tendencies of the entire cycle, making clear that its dedication to Orpheus in the classical sonnet-form is not a return to myth but the very questioning of it; a quest for a different language, affirming itself as pure event, writing without literature, myth, or author.

The transposition of the philosophical question of sameness into the poetic language of pure repetition is unfolded through the intrusion of the *otherness* of

the key phrase ‘*Orpheus singt*’ (Orpheus sings, line 2; 1,1) into the otherwise coherent discourse of the poem. The singing of Orpheus as a pure signifier disperses the infinite discourse of representation through the displacement of the poetic language into the abyss, the void or, in Maurice Blanchot’s words, the ‘space of dispersion’.⁴⁶ This key phrase stands for the poetic language of repetition in its quest to overcome the alienation of sameness within the discourse of signification and return it to its original status of the ungraspable by virtue of the *other*, the void, or the absolute singularity of the differential.

Moreover, the entire structure of the sonnet is based upon the matrix of the divergence of the phrase ‘*Orpheus singt*’ from the coherent narrative stretching throughout the sonnet; the divergence of the poetic language as the pure sign, the very indication of itself from the discourse of signification. It is the confrontation of an *Orpheussian* singing with myth; the confrontation of the pure event of language with the discourse of representation unfolded by virtue of the subtleties of language. We will attempt to demonstrate how the entire sonnet is based upon the very tension between these two modes of arrangement.

The difference between these two modes becomes explicit by the opposition of the past and present tenses (the prevailing past tense of the sonnet as opposed to the present tense of the key phrase ‘*O Orpheus singt*’) and the application of the present tense (‘*O Orpheus singt*’) to the mythological narrative of Orpheus that should normally be in the Past Indefinite. The replacement of the past tense, usually typical for a mythological narrative, with the Present Indefinite stresses the event of Orpheus’s singing and testifies to the sonnet’s being not the least concerned with either the return to myth or the demythologization of Orpheus: the Orpheus of the sonnet is demythologized from the very start.

Besides, constituting the only present point, this key phrase diverges from the rest of the sonnet which is in the Past Indefinite, emphasizing the significance of the poetic singing. The otherness of the phrase emphasizes the *presentness* of singing as an infinite repetition of itself, intersecting the representation of the Same. *Singing* in the present is the detachment of the Same from the discourse of signification to pose it in the impossible experience of poetic language as the

⁴⁶ Maurice Blanchot, ‘The Limit-Experience’, in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. by Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 187.

experience of the unattainable which is *present* through the voice, but also the elimination of the voice. This dual function or rather exposition of the poetic voice and its relatedness to sameness has been among the central concerns of Rilke; according to Ben Hutchinson, Rilke maintains a striking conceptual consistency about the notion of silence which ‘regenerates language precisely through its suppression’.⁴⁷

The present tense of the key sentence is opposed to the rest of the sonnet, in which the application of the Past Indefinite⁴⁸ in combination with the third person creates what Emile Benveniste calls the objective situation of the *domain* of the third person.⁴⁹ It stresses the impersonality of the narrative stretching coherently throughout the entire sonnet (from the first line up to the end, with the exception of the phrase ‘*Orpheus singt*’) and the disinterestedness of the sonnet with the discourse of representation, contrary to the poetic singing.

In one sense, the domain of the third person in combination with the past tense creates an atmosphere of dispassionateness and distance between narrator and narration, an indefinite space of writing beyond passion and mystification, beyond negation and affirmation, beyond dialectics. In another, it composes the interminable net of coherent discourses, of the *discursivity* of human language in service of history, myth, and literature under the domain of signification. We will see through the textual analysis attempted below how relinquishing the ‘reign of circumspect consciousness’⁵⁰ of the *I* and the intensity of the Present Indefinite, the application of the Past Indefinite tense in combination with the neutral third person creates a general discourse of representation, simultaneously demonstrating the sonnet’s disinterestedness with and detachment from the realm of representation. This disinterestedness is emphasized through the sudden experience of the *presentness* of the *singt* which emerges as an element of incoherence, fracturing the highly organized structure of the discourse, protected

⁴⁷ Ben Hutchinson, *Rilke’s Poetics of Becoming* (London: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2006), p. 160.

⁴⁸ See: Roland Barthes, *L’écriture du Roman* in *Le Degré zero de l’écriture* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), pp. 25 – 32, for a detailed account of the meaning of the Past Indefinite.

⁴⁹ Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. by Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, Fla: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 221.

⁵⁰ Maurice Blanchot, ‘The Absence of the Book’, in *The Infinite Conversation*, p. 384.

by the indestructibility of its *pastness*. The past discourse is constantly viewed in relation to the present point of the *singt*, in its remoteness and relatedness to it.

The contrast of the tenses intensifies the opposition between the immanence of the poetic singing as a repetition of *otherness* and the discourse which represents nothing but the Same. Repetition is implied in the act of Orphic singing which is a singular event of language in the form of repetition — the singularity of which is stressed through the application of the proper noun of Orpheus — that has existed and is repeated an infinite number of times.

The divergence of the key phrase (*‘O Orpheus singt’*) — as a pure event of language — from the entire discourse of the poem becomes explicit from its juxtaposition to the opening phrase, *‘Da stieg ein Baum’* (A tree ascended there), where language exists merely as a discourse of signification, infinitely signifying things. The past tense in *stieg*, the third person of *ein Baum*, and especially the shifter *da* testify to a narrative governed by plot, usually characteristic of the neutral discourses of representation. The application of the pronoun *da* shifts this narrative toward the domain of representation, where language serves as a tool, forming the coherent discourse of signification. The sense of the *universal*, implied by the pronoun *there*, [*da*] which can be reformulated as a *not-here* and a *not-now*, and, hence a confrontation with the *here* and the *now*, brings about a confrontation of the discourse of signification with the immanence of language, having no attestable referent but itself.

The coherence of the discourse of signification is reserved not by the lines immediately following the first sentence, but starting only from the third line, *Und alles schwieg*, (And all grew silent, line 3) and expanding throughout the end of the poem. The linearity of the narrative from the first, straight to the third line and on — with an eclipse of the three intermediary sentences between the first and the third lines — is stressed through the logical succession in plot, a unified intonation (*Da stieg ein Baum. [...] Und alles schwieg*), and the application of the conjunction *und*. The implicit order of signification and causality indicated through the neutrality of the discourse is interrupted by means of a scission — intruded via three exclamatory sentences — that cancels the continuity of the discourse.

The three exclamatory sentences, constructed in accordance with the ternary rhythm, ‘O reine Übersteigung! O Orpheus singt! O hoher Baum in Ohr!’ (O pure transcendence!, O Orpheus sings!, O tall tree in the ear, lines 1 & 2) and thrown upon the unity of the coherent discourse bring about an element of incoherence and heterogeneity by transgressing its circularity and suggesting an inexhaustible experience of poetic language outside the realm of representation. The exclamation marks which, according to Görner, ‘simultaneously interrupt and interconnect the parts of this sequence’,⁵¹ stand for intensity in language and explode the congruent narrative of the poem by attempting to reduce the language of representation to the primordial cry. Hence, Rilke’s urge for *another* language beyond representation as both naming and the cancellation of the name.

In these lines, the recurrence of the open vowels [O] in various configurations has different readings. Due to its circular form, the [O] brings about the notion of the neutralized circularity of the signifying discourse: an infinite, yet distanced singing which aspires to the pure transcendence (*reine Übersteigung*) embodied in the form of the dual symbol of the tree as that belonging to the earth and aspiring to heaven.

However, it also refers back to the pure primordial cry, withdrawn from the circularity of the discourse and transgressing its circularity in order to push language to its utmost limits. Yet, more than anything else, the accumulation of the O-s stands for Nothing, for the pure void that cancels all topological relations and remains unsaid in the said. The circularity of the discourse and the primordial cry dissolve into the *nothing* of the O. Rilke’s dedication of the sonnets to the demythologized Orpheus indicates his bewilderment in facing the task of uttering the void or filling it, and the impossibility of doing so. Any attempt to utter the void is doomed to failure. The void is lost in every single utterance, in every attempt to find it in the word; similar to Orpheus’s loss of Eurydice in every single attempt to embrace her.

The void, thus, only becomes tangible through loss, evasion, and allusion; through a singing outside signification as a manifestation of lost unity, death, and

⁵¹ Rüdiger Görner, ‘Dancing the Orange’ in *Agenda: A Reconsideration of Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. by Patricia McCarthy (East Sussex: Agenda and Editions Charitable Trust, 2007), v. 42, nos. 3-4, p. 140.

sacrifice. In all three sentences the void, expressed through the recurrence of the *O*, is juxtaposed with singing in both its embodiment in the word and the impossibility of embodiment.

Yet, the phrase '*O Orpheus singt!*' diverges not only from the homogeneous discourse of the poem, but also from the unity of the three phrases of similar constructions: '*O reine Übersteigung! O Orpheus singt! O hoher Baum in Ohr!*'. The first and last phrases of this trinity are in dual relation to the signifying discourse of the sonnet: despite their divergence from it and due to the differences in their structure discussed above, they are still linked to it via the application of the conceptualized nouns *Übersteigung* and *Baum*. Sharing the same semantic root with the verb *steigen*, the noun *Übersteigung* refers back to the initial phrase, while the last exclamatory phrase of the unity is linked to it through the recurrence of the noun *Baum*. The intermediary sentence '*O Orpheus singt!*', however, has no links with the central discourse of representation and stands outside it in its *otherness* as pure singing, devoid of any conceptuality, cut off even from the two analogously constructed exclamatory sentences.

The sentence '*Und alles schwieg*' which follows the intermission of the three exclamatory sentences continues building a general discourse of signification as opposed to the immanence of the Orphic *singing*. The combination of the conjunction *Und*, the Past Indefinite of the verb *schweigen*, and the universal sense of the pronoun *alles* in the neutral third person account for its relatedness to the discourse of signification.

The subsequent discussion about the possibility of a new beginning, '*neuer Anfang, Wink und Wandlung*' (a new beginning, sign and change, line 4) which would fill the void, the *Verschweigung* (the silence), equally refers back to the myth of Orpheus and the ontological discourse of signification. In accordance with both, speech is empowered to fill the void, grasp the ungraspable, and give birth to a new beginning.

What the sonnet questions, however, is the very fecundity of the word, its Orphic power. Rilke's search for a '*neuer Anfang*', a new beginning which, Görner finds consistent enough to be generalized as a '*Rhetorik des Anfangs*', ('A

rhetoric of beginning),⁵² leads him outside myth or discourse toward the ever new repetition of the poetic word. The poetic repetition, the recurrence of the singular event of the word cancels the concept of *beginning*, *Anfang*, overloaded by the meanings of *symbol and change*, *Wirk und Wandlung*. Discussions about the origin of the word through ontological options of a *beginning-of* or *beginning-in* remain in the realm of representation, from which Rilke has departed. The theme of disinterestedness with these discussions becomes explicit through leading them in the impartial narrative of the Past Indefinite in combination with the neutral third person, contrary to the Present tense of the *singt* combined with the proper noun *Orpheus*.

What the sonnet opts for is a pure, absolute singing, detached from any discourse of representation;⁵³ the Same, yet always the *different*, unidentified with it as the repetition of the singularity of the poetic language which is not an attempt to fill the void, but rather the very void itself.

The quest for another language is thus unfolded through the structural asymmetry of the sentence ‘*O Orpheus singt!*’ with regard to the symmetrical entity of the poem. The structural asymmetry is extended not only through the above asymmetry in tense, but also via the choice of grammatical categories, sentence types or the phonetic and semantic structure of the key sentence.

Amongst the significant factors distinguishing the phrase ‘*O Orpheus singt!*’ from the entire discourse of signification, constitutes the choice of the grammatical categories of verb/noun. The structurally simple sentence ‘*O Orpheus singt!*’, comprising an equilibrium of verb/noun, with a single proper noun (*Orpheus*) against a verb, is opposed to the entire first stanza which accumulates a vast number of conceptually overloaded nouns. This opposition marks the difference between the poetic language as absence or void and the substantial presence of the discourse of signification. The dominance of the transcendental objective of the Same which is made explicit via the application of

⁵² See Rüdiger Görner, *Rainer Maria Rilke: Im Herzwerk der Sprache* (Vienna: Zsolnay, 2004), p. 40.

⁵³ See: Ian Cooper, *The Near and the Distant God* (London: Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2008), pp. 121- 174, for a recent account of a controversial view, which considers Rilke’s poetry as an attempt to redeem the signified standing behind the poetic utterance and ‘to turn beyond poetry in order to redeem poetry’, p. 170.

the conceptual noun *Übersteigung* ('*reine Übersteigung*', *pure transcendence*), is eventually absorbed into the intensity of a poetic singing, expressed via the dynamics of the verb *singt* (sings).

The dominance of meaning, name and sign, characteristic of the semantically overloaded discourse of representation, is made explicit via the vast number of conceptual nouns. The substantiality of nouns weighs down over the free floating process of singing as that of lightness and play. This opposition, as well as Rilke's quest for a poetic language outside the domain of signification are demonstrated via the implication in the first stanza of an insignificant number of verbs (*stieg, singt, schwieg, ging*, ascended, sings, grew hushed, departed), contrary to the vast number of conceptually overloaded nouns (*Baum (2), Übersteigung, Orpheus, Ohr, Verschweigung, Anfang, Wink, and Wandlung*, tree, transcendence, Orpheus, ear, silence, beginning, sign, and change; 4/9).

Apparently, all these nouns assembled in the opening stanza constitute signifiers of philosophically overloaded concepts, which are being signified or represented by them. The dominance of the discourse of signification becomes explicit through the accumulation of nouns standing as static signs either with the omitted verb *sein*, (*to be*) in '*O reine Übersteigung!*' and '*O hoher Baum in Ohr*', or in combination with a substantiated verb sharing the same root with the noun. The recurrence of the same root as the carrier of meaning (*seme*) in the noun and the corresponding verb as in *stieg — Übersteigung, schwieg — Verschweigung*, stresses the dominance of semantic meaning in the general discourse of representation. Here, again, the line '*O Orpheus singt*' stands for an exemption, comprising the dynamical verb *singt*, devoid of any conceptuality. The lack of any corresponding noun which could share the same semantic root with the verb *singt*, contrary to the abovementioned examples, stresses the opposition of the dynamical immanence of *singt* to the static substantiality of noun-concepts in the signifying discourse. The opposition between the text overloaded with nouns and the one in which verbs dominate, lies at the basis of a distinction between a *poetics of particles* and a *poetic of waves*. Daniel Albright notes of the significant traits of the wave-poetics as that of the loss of the prestige of noun: 'The sheer heft of the noun, the density of its gravitational field, makes it attractive to

particle-aesthetics; but wave-aesthetics prefers the verb'.⁵⁴ It opposes the notion of the poetic language as a pure signifier to the discourse of representation. The divergence of this key phrase in relation to the remaining parts of the sonnet is stressed, along with the difference in tense (present/past), the prevailing category (verb/noun) and semantic dependency (relatedness or unrelatedness to a conceptual noun of the same *seme*), also through the difference in phonetics. Here again, the latent similarities come to stress the underlying differences. The verb *singt*, which due to its category forms a contingent part in the coherent continuity of the verbal chain, among *stieg*, *singt*, *schweig*, *ging*, also has typological affinities with them via the recurrence of the letter [s] in the verbs *stieg*, *singt*, *schweig*, and the letter [g] in these words and also in the verb *ging*. Yet, these affinities merely underline the *otherness* of *singt*, appearing this time in the form of an opposition between voice and inscription (an implicit opposition, which will become more explicit in the subsequent sonnets) expressed via the opening letter [s] and its pronunciation as sonorous [z] in contrast to the pronunciation of the same letter [s] as voiceless hushing sibilant [sch] in the other verbs starting with the letter [s]; and the sonority of the [g], followed by [t] as compared with the unstressed [g]-s in the other verbs.

The linearity of the homogeneous discourse which becomes tangible through the application of the Past Indefinite in the third person, is maintained in the second stanza. Here, the *interesting*, displayed through the intertwining of the mythological narrative with elements belonging to the history of evolution substitutes for the philosophical discourse of the first stanza. We will trace the alienation of language, not only in the philosophical and mythological discourses, but also within the *interesting* in plot.

The plot stretching throughout the sonnet designates the evolution of human culture in accordance with the famous dialectical scheme from negation toward affirmation, from the negation of cunning and fear ('nicht aus List und nicht aus Angst', lines 7 & 8) toward the assertion of an inner hearing ('sondern aus Hören', line 9), from lair and nest ('von Lager und Genist', line 6) to hut and

⁵⁴ Daniel Albright, *Quantum Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 20.

temple ('Und wo eben kaum ein Hütte war', 'da schufst du ihnen Tempel', lines 11 & 14).

Yet, the same narrative which tells the *story* of evolution in a distanced way, contains elements that question the positive value of this evolution. Rilke applies the construction 'und da ergab sich' ('and so it must have been', line 7) as an intermediary sentence which not only strengthens the factor of the *interesting*, but also brings in an element of doubt and questions either the truth-value of the narrative, or the very process of evolution.

The enjambment, i.e. the transposition of the last fragment of the sentence, 'sondern aus Hören' (but from hearing, line 9) which thematically belongs to the second quatrain into the first tercet, stresses the significance of *Hören* in Rilke's phonocentric system, simultaneously underlining that it is the very principle of phonocentrism, posed as the governing principle of his poetics, that is being questioned. This underlined fragment should thus be viewed in its intermediary position vis-à-vis both the quatrain (thematically) and the tercet (phonetically) that separates and links the semantic and phonic dimensions of language.

The emphatic construction of the transposed fragment '*sondern aus Hören*' that disperses the coherence of the *interesting* narrative of the second quatrain establishes a double correspondence on the one hand with the tercets and, on the other, with the first quatrain of the poem. By its sudden intrusion, emphatically starting with the conjunction *sondern* which adds a semantic layer to the structural divergence, the fragment disrupts the coherence of the discourse, by offering the appearance of the sonnet as a closed system.

The phonic and semantic correspondences of *Hören* to the noun *Ohr* of the first quatrain and the nouns *Geröhr* and *Gehör* of the first and second tercets disorganize the closed systems of the quatrains and tercets in order to expand them spatially and temporally into the infinite metamorphoses of language. The dispersion of these semantic and phonic units throughout the space and temporary rhythm of the poem reorganizes the quatrains and the tercets in chiasmus and dichotomy.

The relations of repulsion and attraction based upon the opposition between sound and sense can be traced in the following diagram: *im*

Ohr←*Hören*→*Geröhr*→*Gehör*. The poetic language, posed as a system of differences thus deconstructs the images of the ear ('O hoher Baum im Ohr!') and that of Orpheus, as the phonocentric *Ear-god*, constructed in the first stanza. The euphony of the assonances both stresses the phonic dimension of language or, what Paul de Man names 'the perfect coalescence of the metaphorical dimension with the sound-pattern',⁵⁵ and destroys the dominance of phonocentrism. The sound-sense opposition underlying the aforementioned chain thus stands as the matrix of the Rilkean poetics, based in the liberation of poetic language not only from an entanglement in discourse, but equally from the dominance of phonocentrism.

The sonnet questions the very process of evolution from immanence to transcendence, from inside (expressed through the combinations 'in ihren Herzen', 'zu empfangen', 'ein Unterschlupf aus dunkelstem Verlangen', in their hearts, to take in, a hiding place of darkest desire, lines 10, 11, 12) to outside, to an *Übersteigerung* or a *Tempel im Gehör* (Transcendence or an auditory temple, lines 1 & 14). The patently non-evolutionary character, the instability of such an ascendance and, as de Man calls it, 'the dynamic axis'⁵⁶ of this movement are substantiated through the metaphor of an 'entryway whose doorposts trembled', '*einem Zugang, dessen Pfosten beben*' (line 13), implied in the last stanza. What primarily is at stake here is the very questioning of such an evolution, as a result of which the primal language evolves into a discourse of signification that disregards the very advent of language as a pure signifier without any claim to an extra-textual signified.

The interplay of identities and differences in language, displayed through the opposition between sound and sense is magnified in the last pair of the abovementioned chain, *Geröhr*→*Gehör*. The similarity of sound-effect built via the technique of rhyming and assonances stresses the underlying identity concealed under the latently opposed semantic texture. The effect of phonic conversion in the pairing *Geröhr* and *Gehör*, the primal cry and the inner temple, attained through the change of location of the letter *h*, implies a semantic conversion which can be designated as *Geröhr* ⇔ *Gehör*, in which the evolution

⁵⁵ Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 35.

⁵⁶ Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 34.

from *Geröhr* to *Gehör* is juxtaposed to the desiderata process of the return from *Gehör* to *Geröhr*.

The phonic and semantic similarities and differences observed between the pair *Geröhr* and *Gehör* allude to the equivocal character of the patently simple dialectical scheme of evolution from the primal cry, *Geröhr*, to an inner auditory temple, [*Tempel im*] *Gehör*. The dialectical scheme of evolution is reversed into the endless metamorphoses of language in the quest to liberate language from the dominance of discourse and the phonocentric system through returning it back to the primal cry.

In the final sentence, the subjectivity of the author that has been erased in the course of wanderings through the infinite labyrinths of language by the constant application of the neutral third person, re-emerges from its non-being via the personal pronoun *du* which substitutes for the proper noun Orpheus ('*da schufst du ihnen Tempel im Gehör*'). The voyage, starting with the proper noun of *Orpheus* and extended throughout the alienated space of the poem unexpectedly ends up with the pronoun *du*, you, instead of its corresponding abbreviated substitute *er*, *he*. The intrusion of the *du* implies the reciprocal relation to the *I*, *ich* which, transcending the alienated discourse in the third person asserts the return of the consciousness and marks a sudden intrusion of subjectivity — of the voice of the author, reconstituting itself as a *subject* — into the objective *domain* of the third person. To reverse the analysis of Benveniste,⁵⁷ based upon the *I* positing the *you*, we can trace the *you*, *du* of the poem, positing the concealed *I* as the one completely exterior to the *you*, and becoming the echo of the *you* when they reciprocally address to each other as *you*, *du*.

The polarity between the intruded *du*, *you* and the concealed *ich*, *I* encountered within language asserts, however, a relationship of reversibility and immanence between the subjectivity of the author and Orpheus, both having abandoned the *Tempel im Gehör*, the transcendental temple in the past, for the sake of a *singing* in the present as the very being of language.

The conceptual affinity of the first sonnet to the second is exposed through the conjunction *Und*, initiating the second sonnet and testifying to its belonging to

⁵⁷ Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, p. 225.

the *same* net of coherent narratives prevailing in the first sonnet. Its unprecedented recurrence (5 times in the first quatrain and 3 times in the second) points to the still persisting discourse of signification which Rilke has attempted to liberate language from.

2.2.2 The Impossible Invention of the *Other*

Sonnets to Orpheus I, 2

by R. M. Rilke
translated by H. Landman

She was a maid almost, emerging here
from this united joy of song and lyre
and shone clear through her vernal
veils like fire
and made herself a bed inside my ear.

And slept in me. And all was in her
sleep.
The trees, which I always admired,
such
palpable distance, the meadow felt so
much
and every wonder, that affected me.

She slept the world. Oh singing god,
how did
you so complete her, that she did not
care
to wake up first? Look, she stood and
dreamed.

Where is her death? Will you invent
this theme
before your song consumes itself? To
where
sinks she away from me? ... Almost a
maid ...

Und fast ein Mädchen wars und ging
hervor
aus diesem einigen Glück von Sang und
Leier
und glänzte klar durch ihre
Frühlingsschleier
und machte sich ein Bett in meinem Ohr.

Und schlief in mir. Und alles war ihr
Schlaf.
Die Bäume, die ich je bewundert, diese
fühlbare Ferne, die gefühlte Wiese
und jedes Staunen, das mich selbst
betraf.

Sie schlief die Welt. Singender Gott, wie
hast
du sie vollendet, daß sie nicht begehrte,
erst wach zu sein? Sieh, sie erstand und
schlief.

Wo ist ihr Tod? O, wirst du dies Motiv
erfinden noch, eh sich dein Lied
verzehrte? -
Wo sinkt sie hin aus mir? ... Ein
Mädchen fast ...

In the second Sonnet, the opposition between the classical discourse of metaphysics and the new poetic language of repetition introduced in the first one is demonstrated through the opposition between the quatrains and the tercets, where the quatrains stand for the classical discourse of representation while the tercets for the poetic language as pure signifier. The entire second sonnet is rooted in this opposition between the classical and the new, the metaphysical discourse of signification, representing nothing but the Same and the poetic language of repetition, signifying nothing but itself. The major features of the classical discourse of representation are exposed in the quatrains only for their subsequent deconstruction in the tercets.

The exposition of the classical discourse of signification by the quatrains through the poetic elucidation of its major tropes is transgressed by the gradual transposition and the final intensification of the thematic fulcrum of the sonnet in the tercets. The tercets are differentiated from the quatrains by difference in tense, sentence-types and the persistence of fragmental fractures substituting for the preceding coherent narrative. The difference between them is also manifested in the recurrence of the conjunction *und* as an element of narration only in the first part of the sonnet (in the quatrains) in the decreasing order from 5 to 3. The consistent application of the Past Indefinite Tense throughout the quatrains indicates their belonging to a unified coherent discourse of representation of nothing but the Same. The two quatrains are linked not only by the application of the Past Indefinite, but also by a characteristic reiteration: their initial sentences starting with the same conjunction *und*, (and), recurring throughout the two quatrains.

The quatrains stand for the exposition of all major tropes of the classical metaphysical discourse that will subsequently be deconstructed by the tercets. The first quatrain emerges as a representation of the ontology of the Same and vital tropes constituting the metaphysical discourse of signification, signifying nothing but the transcendental signified of the Same. The dominance of the metaphysical universal of the Same upon philosophy and art throughout the classical age and its reducing of poetry into a mere discourse of signification is illustrated by the application of the metaphor of *ein Mädchen*, a maid almost (*‘Und fast ein*

Mädchen') in corresponding contexts. This metaphor alludes both to the mythological personage of Eurydice as the one who Orpheus sings of incessantly and to the ontology of the primal Word comprising its Orphic metamorphoses. The application of this metaphor aims at the exposition of two interrelated dominating themes of representation: the myth of Orpheus and the ontology of the primordial Word. The inverted syntax of the sentence '*Und fast ein Mädchen*', and the fact of its being the opening sentence of the sonnet, builds a parallelism with the biblical saying about the primacy of the *logos*, which was in the beginning: 'Am Anfang war das Wort', 'En arche én ho logos'. The allusion here is to the belief adopted by classical metaphysics of writing's being a mere imitation of the *logos*. The quatrain exposes the primacy of the *logos* through the ontological evidence of its having emerged from a united joy of song and lyre ('*aus diesem einigen Glück von Sang und Leier*', line 2) and refers to the genealogy of the univocal word as a self-enclosed unity which, according to classical metaphysics, is signified through the particularity of each utterance. The representative discourse of signification is designated by the relationship between signified/signifier, in which the universality of the signified is incessantly manifested through the particularity of the signifier. It is exposed through the demonstrative pronoun *diesem* as an immediate presence of universality as particularity.

As we can see, the opening quartet demonstrates the fundamental features of representation: the existence of an extra-textual authority (the Same, the *logos*, the One, etc.) and its incessant signification through art by stressing the domination of phonocentrism and the ontological element in it. The characteristic features of the metaphysical paradigm are intensified through the lexical richness and semantic depth of the overloaded nouns *Mädchen*, *Glück*, *Sang und Leier*, *Frühlingsschleier*, *Ohr* (maid, joy, song and lyre, spring-veil, ear) and the corresponding forms of the verbs *hervorgehen* and *glänzen* (emerge and shine); the former belonging to the ontological context with the latter referring to the tropology of light. The primacy of the *logos* and its infinite representation by art is exposed through its identification with the pure light which disperses its unitary nature into multiple forms; a phenomenon, which was in the the constant focus of

attention from Plato to Hegel. The poeticized *logos* appearing under the metaphorical image of the *Mädchen* has maintained its capability to shine forth, (*glänzte klar*) which is stressed by the phonic element: throughout the two lines (2, 3), in which the ontology of the *Mädchen* and her shining power are described, we can observe an excessive number of [l]'s (appearing 6 times). The agglomeration of the gliding and flowing liquid with its glissando – adopting the definition of the letter [l] by Roman Jakobson⁵⁸ — creates an imitation of the shining of the pure light.

Another significant point, upon which the paradigm of representation is based, is the exposition of truth through the phenomenon of shining which, if we adopt Heidegger's analysis of Being, is posed as *Aletheia*, the *unveiling-disclosure* of what lies *concealed*. Rilke exposes the metaphysical concept of truth as the unveiling of the concealed through the metaphor *Frühlingsschleier*, (spring-veil, line 3), beneath which the *Mädchen* shines forth. In so doing, the first quatrain poetically alludes to the major dimensions of the Same, postulated as the prime transcendental objective of metaphysics. Poetry according to this postulation is nothing but the representation of the Same, the lifting of the veil from the thing itself, allowing it to shine forth through shaped matter, (*Gestalt*).

The recurrence of the noun *Ohr*, (ear) (which first appeared in line 2 of the first sonnet) in the last line of the first quatrain, underlines the persistence of phonocentrism, as the governing principle of the poetics of representation questioned in the first sonnet. The appearance of the personal pronoun *meinem*, (my) for the first time throughout the two sonnets (as applied in respect of the noun *Ohr*, (ear) in the same last line (4) of the first quatrain) testifies to the persistence of phonocentrism. Yet, the application of the Past Indefinite and the noun *Bett*, (bed) to the same line 4 creates an atmosphere of passivity, neutralizing the intensity implied by the pronoun *meinem* and testifying to the distance between the *I* in its quest for a writing beyond representation (in the present) and the *I* engaged with phonocentrism (in the past). The last line of the first quatrain also hints (by the noun *Bett*) at the central theme of sleep which unfolds the

⁵⁸ Roman Jakobson, 'Baudelaire's 'Les Chats'', in *Language in Literature*, ed. by Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1987), p. 187.

transposition of poetry from objectivity into subjectivity and will be expounded at length throughout the second quatrain and the first tercet.

The theme of sleep is of central significance not only to the second quatrain and the first tercet, in which it is latently exposed, but to the entire sonnet. Through the exposition of the theme of sleep, in which from the very first line (*‘Und schlief in mir’*, line 5), it is linked to the subjectivity of the *I* (*in mir*), comprising the realm of the sub-conscious, the second quatrain unfolds subjectivity as another domain within which poetry has been trapped. Along with the objectivity of the metaphysical universal of the Same, the subjectivity of the *I* is viewed as an obstacle which should be surmounted for the coinage of a new poetic language outside representation.

The combination *‘ihr Schlaf’*, (her sleep), to which the being of the universal all (*alles*) is reduced (line 5), and where the subjective and already personalized sleep substitutes for the conceptuality of *sleep* in its metaphysical beyond is already a lapse into subjectivity. The entire second quatrain unfolds the aesthetic understanding of poetry in terms of the subjective emotions of the poet, comprising all the possible shades of dream: desire, perception and memory. Subjectivity is expressed by the poetic remembrance of the perceived images to which they gave rise. It is intensified by the agglomeration of the corresponding forms of the verbs of sense perception: *‘bewundern, fühlen, betreffen’*, (to admire, to feel, to be affected) and the noun *Staunen*, wonder (lines 6-8). The sentence *‘Und alles war ihr Schlaf’*, (And all was her sleep), (line 5), in which the pronoun *alles*, (all) encompasses the images of nature (*Die Bäume, die Wiese, the trees, the meadow*) and the feelings associated with them, testifies to the primacy of art as imitation of nature over nature itself. Yet, the application of the past tense and the intermediary word-combination *‘diese fühlbare Ferne’*, (such palpable distance) points to the distance that separates the new poetic language from the subjectivity of the period of philosophical-aesthetic digression. These issues point to the need of liberating language equally from representation and subjectivity for the coinage of the new poetic language.

The first tercet, with its combination of interrogative and exclamatory sentences (lines 9-11), brings about a fissure in the coherent narrative of

representation prevailing in the two preceding quatrains. It brings about Rilke's quest for a different poetic language beyond signification. The simple structure of the first sentence of the tercet (*Sie schlief die Welt, She slept the world*), the recurrence of the theme of sleep (*schlief*, lines 5 & 9 and *Schlaf*, line 5) and the pronoun *sie*, standing for both the subject of this sentence and the omitted subject of the sentence *Und schlief in mir* (line 5) patently refer back to the first line of the second quatrain (line 5). Together, they create the/an illusion that the first sentence of the tercet is the logical development of the coherent narrative stretching forth throughout the quatrains. Yet, what lies hidden beneath the aforementioned identities is a conceptual difference, splitting up the signifying discourse prevailing in the quatrains and re-inscribing it within sequences which do not support the thematic unity of the discourse. The sentence *Sie schlief die Welt*, (line 9) thus in spite of apparent affinities with the quatrains, transgresses the theme of sleep conceptualized in the quatrains, demonstrating that in this different poetic language there should be no place for a thematic meaning, but only a textual system of identities and differences.

It similarly disrupts the ontological discourse concerning the creative power of the *logos*, its world-building capacity. The syntactical organization of the sentence, together with the prior identification of *sie* with *ein Mädchen* (despite the fact that the noun 'das Mädchen' is neuter, it is often used in the feminine) and with the *logos*, would assume an operation of *building* or *creating* the world (*die Welt*). Furthermore, this operation is also assumed by the myth about the Orphic power of creating the world through the word. Rilke, however, aims at the cancellation of the world-creating operation of the word by describing a state of sleep that remains untouched by worldliness, hence aiming to coin a different poetic language, *creating* but itself. He realizes this cancellation operation by the application of the verb *schlafen* instead of *bilden* which would be assumed by the context. Moreover, the *a-grammatical* application of the intransitive verb *schlafen* as a transitive verb in the combination *schlief die Welt*, substantiates its substitution for *bilden*, hence making the cancellation tangible. To recall Erich Heller's words concerning the reverse process of using transitive verbs

intransitively, this substitution is ‘more than a matter of mere grammar: grammar, as often it does, mirrors here the grammar of consciousness itself’.⁵⁹

The significance of this key sentence (line 9) which starts the process of disorganization of the coherent narrative of signification with an operation of cancellation, lies also in releasing the verb *schlafen* from any subjective meaning or detaching it from its customary relation to the subjectivity of the *I*. The subsequent sentence gives us a clue about the displacement of *schlafen* from the ordinary sequence of sleep/wake, stressing the uselessness of waking: ‘*sie nicht beehrte, / erst wach zu sein ?*’, (*she did not care / to wake up first?*, lines 10-11). The meaning of *completeness*, brought forth through the word *vollendet* and alluding to the metaphysical paradigm of the preconceived completeness of the transcendental objective of the Same, its sacrifice into the manifold and its final redemption through them is reversed here. The process whereby the word becomes complete through redemption, analogous to the metaphysical context of waking up, is reversed, negated (*nicht beehrte*). Whereas for the difference to take place, it is necessary, to recall Michel Foucault’s words, ‘to divide the *same* through contradiction, to limit its infinite identity through nonbeing, to transform its indeterminate positivity through the negative’.⁶⁰ The completeness of the word is accordingly limited by introducing another meaning of completeness as a state of sleep that does not have the need to wake up first. Similarly, the Orphic legend is demythologized by introducing another singing through a *sleeping* word, substituting for the creating one. Here, the opposition of the *sleeping*, voiceless word and the *logos*, as the singing voice of Orpheus is substantiated through the phonic opposition of the voiceless [sch] in *schliefe* and the voiced [s] in *singender*, (line 9). The intensity of the rhetorical question addressed to the singing god, (*Singender Gott*) testifies to Rilke’s quest for another language, a deactivated word as the complete void itself, freed from teleological or eschatological functions and from the urge of naming. The last sentence of the first tercet (‘*Sieh, sie erstand und schlief*’, Look, she stood and slept) finalizes the de-contextualization of the theme of sleep, modifying it from a horizontal into a vertical position. The vertical but sleeping position of the *logos* alludes to the

⁵⁹ Erich Heller, *In the Age of Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 49.

⁶⁰ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, p. 358.

sleep of the seed in its ability to emerge as a pure disseminated repetition. Writing therefore is no longer the representation of the *Same* or any unified truth that would be derived from it but an unfolding of the identities and differences of language. The impossible mixture of the Past Indefinite (*erstand, schlief, stood, slept*) with the present tense of *Sieh, (Look)* also points to writing as a timeless process of dissemination which results in the emergence of the multiple as pure, unique repetitions.

The last tercet is the transposition of the theme of sleep into that of death which is actually a reasserting of sleep by sketching the absence of death. Death, posed not as the metaphysical universal, comprising the phase of the beyond, the phase of resurrection, but *her* death, (*ihr Tod*), (line 12) at the extreme point of singularity. As Volker Durr puts it, the unique death (*her or his own death*) of every man, woman and child, as ‘the closure of every singular life’ is what concerns Rilke.⁶¹ The question ‘*Wo ist [...]?*’, (Where is [...])? substituting for the metaphysical question ‘*Was ist [...]?*’ (analogous to the question ‘*wie hast du [...]?*’, in the first tercet) which would generally be assumed by the signifying discourse concerned with defining the essence of death, testifies to another attempt by Rilke to liberate language from signification.

The question ‘*Wo ist ihr Tod?*’, (*Where is her death?*) does not tackle the essence of death, but points to its displacement, its absence, and as such, should be viewed as a transposition of language from the field of semantics into that of syntax. The application of the Present Indefinite in respect of Eurydice’s death which is a mythological event of the past, demythologizes the Orphic narrative in order to state the absence of death or pose death as absence or void. Moreover, as the only phrase of the sonnet in which the Present Indefinite is used, it stresses the significance of the void or of the abyss, substantiated through poetic language.

The second interrogative sentence, (lines 12-13), clearly asserts the repositing of the poetic language beyond representation as a pure simulacrum. The application of the nouns *Motiv* and *Lied*, (*motif* and *song*) together with the verb *erfinden* (*to invent*) de-contextualizes the central discourse, transposing the text into a theatricality where nothing counts but the performance, and where the play

⁶¹ Volker Durr, ‘Rainer Maria Rilke: The Poet’s Trajectory’, p. 109.

of masks, lacking any trace of representation, is but a simulacrum of the Orphic myth.

The negative form in '*erfinden noch*' as the *not inventing* of *this same* motive (*dies Motiv*), displaces the traditional *topos* of invention, presupposing its application to the motive of the sameness into that of disposition, of the unique invention of the other, or of what Derrida defines as 'the singular structure of an event that seems to produce itself [...] *by the fact of speaking of itself*'.⁶² This disposition of relating of sameness to *the Other* frees the poetic language from the urge of representing nothing but the Same (the same motif of death in the Orphic myth) and re-poses it as the repetition of the uniqueness, the recurrence of the different.

The last question of the sonnet, '*Wo sinkt sie hin aus mir?*' (Where does she sink away from me?), sketches the theme of erasure and disappearance or the ceaseless recurrence of the *nontheme*, as the remarking of itself of the 'very thing that has no meaning':⁶³ whether it is the erasure of the *I*, the impuissance of the poetic word to give shape to the void and speak of nothing but itself, or maybe it is the designation of an impossible invention, of the impossibility of inventing the other, 'which is never inventable and will never have awaited for [...] invention'.⁶⁴ '*Ein Mädchen fast*': is it a meta-language already, pointing to nothing but itself or an impossible invention as a unique configuration which disposes and deconstructs the same *motif* so as to allow space for the *other* in the indefiniteness of the ellipsis.

⁶² Jacques Derrida, 'Psyche: Invention of the Other', in *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 317.

⁶³ Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans., and with an introduction by Barbara Johnson, (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 259.

⁶⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'Psyche: Invention of the Other', p. 343.

2.2.3 The Poetic Language as Being

Sonnets to Orpheus I, 3

by R. M. Rilke

translated by H. Landman

A god can do it. How do you expect
a man to squeeze on through the lyre
and follow?
His mind is torn. Where heartways
intersect,
you won't find any temple to Apollo.

True singing, as you teach it, isn't
wanting,
not wooing anything that can be won;
no, Singing's Being. For the god, not
daunting.
But when *are* we? And when will *he*
then turn

into our being all the Earth and Stars?
It *isn't* that you love, child, even if
the voice exploded from your mouth -
begin

forgetting, that you sang. That
disappears.

To sing in truth is quite a different
breath.

A breath of void. A gust in the god. A
wind.

Ein Gott vermags. Wie aber, sag mir,
soll
ein Mann ihm folgen durch die schmale
Leier?
Sein Sinn ist Zwiespalt. An der
Kreuzung zweier
Herzwege steht kein Tempel für Apoll.

Gesang, wie du ihn lehrst, ist nicht
Begehrt,
nicht Werbung um ein endlich noch
Erreichtes;
Gesang ist Dasein. Für den Gott ein
Leichtes.
Wann aber *sind* wir? Und wann wendet
er

an unser Sein die Erde und die Sterne?
Dies *ist* nicht, Jüngling, daß du liebst,
wenn auch
die Stimme dann den Mund dir aufstößt,
- lerne

vergessen, daß du aufsangst. Das
verrinnt.

In Wahrheit singen, ist ein anderer Hauch.
Ein Hauch um nichts. Ein Wehn im Gott.
Ein Wind.

The third Sonnet is primarily a manifestation of the new poetic language of repetition which has been coined in the two preceding Sonnets. Here, the destruction of the *same* myth aiming at the thinking of the pure event of language on the basis of its definite trace as a pure signifier without signified or signification is stressed. The Present Indefinite predominating throughout the sonnet as opposed to the Past Indefinite of the preceding sonnets indicates that the fulcrum is transposed from the

coinage into the manifestation of the new poetic language, for the sake of which the entire process of the deconstruction of the metaphysical universal of the Same, comprising the deconstruction of all the representational discourses — mythological, ontological, or subjective — is accomplished.

The structural organization of the sonnet is classical: starting with the poetic allusions to its central tropes with further development into their logical assemblage in the end. The central trope of the true poetic singing as deferral alluded to throughout the language of the entire sonnet, is distinctly condensed only at the end of the sonnet through the sentences:⁶⁵ 'Ein Hauch um nichts. Ein Wehn im Gott. Ein Wind', (A breath of void. A gust in the god. A wind.). Here, the definition of the new poetic language in the form of a conclusion expressed through brief, clearly stated sentences and reinforced by their fragmentation via the falling intonation of a full stop, brings about a concord between content and form, usually typical of prose or philosophical discourse. This unprecedented concord is opposed to the rest of the sonnet rooted in the non-coincidence or even schism between sense and rhythm expressed through the enjambment, i.e. the detachment of the last sentence from the body which it logically belongs to. This is also the case when the sentence which is grammatically defined as a unity of sense and intonation is split into two parts, each belonging to a different body: *Und wann wendet er*, (line 8, second quatrain)/ *an unser Sein die Erde und die Sterne?*, (line 9, first tercet), (And when will *he* then/ turn into our being all the Earth and Stars?, Landman's translation); *lerne*, (line 11, first tercet) / *vergessen, dass du aufsangst* (line 12, second tercet), (begin/ forgetting, that you sang, Landman's translation). In both cases, the enjambment brings about a tension between the last, rhyming word of the preceding line and the first one on the next line.

To use Belmore's words characterizing Rilke's use of the technique of enjambment, contrary to its traditional use of knitting the lines of the verse without a break, here the 'rhyming word is [...] suspended for a moment before the reader dips down upon the next one, artificially separated from it by the beginning of the line'.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See a detailed account of the *end of the poem* in: Giorgio Agamben, *The End of the Poem: Studies in Poetics*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 109-115.

⁶⁶ Herbert William Belmore, *Rilke's Craftsmanship: An Analysis of His Poetic Style*, p. 75.

The enjambment creates the effect of major schism between sense and rhythm, alluding to the introduction of a new poetic language of fragmentation and difference intersecting the discourse of the Same. Its opposition to the concordance of the end of the poem also testifies to the transposition of the fulcrum of the sonnet from deconstruction into reconstruction, from the deconstruction of the Same discourse of representation into the reconstruction of the poetic language as pure repetition. The elliptical form and the final *diminuendo* (the decreasing number of words) in the final line 14 reinforce the minimalist approach applied in the reconstruction of the new poetic language.

Yet the third sonnet, with its abundance of central philosophical tropes of God's creation and man's invention, remains patently representational and testifies to Rilke's quest for a different poetic language which he merely aspires to, but does not fully wield. The representational character of these tropes becomes apparent in the constant application of the verb *sein*, (*to be*), (lines 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13), its ellipsis (line 14) and its corresponding noun *Sein* (Being) in line 9. The distinctly didactic character of the sonnet, which attempts to give definition to the new poetic singing, has given rise to its purely philosophical interpretations. Manfred Engel has generalized this phenomenon as applicable to the entire Sonnets, 'Appelle und Imperative geben ihnen streckenweise geradezu den Charakter einer Lehrdichtung' ('Appeals and imperatives give them here and there quite the character of a didactic poetry') and has spoken about the absolute disastrousness ('schlechterdings desaströs') of interpreting the sentence 'Gesang ist Dasein', (Singing is being) in a merely philosophical way.⁶⁷

The significance of the third sonnet thus lies mainly in reconstructing the new poetic language after having deconstructed the classical discourse of representation. Among the exposition of the central tropes, the one expounding upon God's creation and man's invention is of particular interest. The purely assertive propositions concerning God and the application of the Present Indefinite tense indicating the general truth stated through them ('Ein Gott vermags', [A God can do it]; 'Für den Gott ein Leichtes', [For the God — an easy matter]; 'Ein Wehn im Gott', [A gust in God] in lines 1, 7, 14) create the

⁶⁷ *Rilke Handbuch. Leben-Werk-Wirkung*, ed. by Manfred Engel (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2004), p. 417.

impression of a return to the metaphysical discourse on the plenitude and perfection of the Same. Yet, this impression is totally deceitful, as what is at stake here is on the contrary — the deconstruction of the dominant discourse representing nothing but the plenitude of the Same.

An analysis of the subtle elements rooted in the language of the sonnet will reveal how the patent opposition concerning God's creation and man's invention is reversed to praise man's dynamics of creation rather than God's creative stasis. The interrogative sentence, intensified through the negativity of *aber*, (but) and the first person of the pronoun *mir* (me) immediately following the initial sentence, which asserts the almightiness of god, actually questions the validity of a human invention imitating god's creation, hence the validity of representation.

Human invention beyond representation is placed at a cross-road, substantiated through the nouns *Zwiespalt* and *Kreuzung* and the recurrence of the number *two* in the configurations *Zwiespalt* and *zweier* that allude to its opposition to the divine creation, signified as the One in the classical discourse of metaphysics. The cross-road which human invention faces is the discord between its being an expression of subjective perceptions, indicated through the noun *Herz* in *Herzwege*, and its being an erasure of subjectivity, the impossible shaping of the absence or *nonplace*, (kein Tempel), of pure nothing.

The appearance of the noun *Gott* (God) as the initial word and its recurrence thrice in the sonnet (lines 1, 7, 14) indicate the significance of the trope of divine creation; however its application with the indefinite article *ein* ('Ein Gott', A God) or in inflectional forms ('Für den Gott' and 'im Gott') point to its absence rather than its plenitude, as different from classical metaphysics. In its last application (line 14), the position of the word *Gott* alludes to the word *nichts* of the preceding sentence, (Ein Hauch um nichts. Ein Wehn im Gott. Ein Wind.). The similar syntactical constructions and semantic functions of defining the true singing ('In Wahrheit singen [...] ist [...]') of the two elliptical sentences and the similar positions of the words *Gott* and *nichts* in them raise the thought that these words are interchangeable. What underlies the patently metaphysical discourse of the Same is thus rather the absence of God or its reduction to a nothing, which surpasses being, or, is equated to singing: 'Gesang ist Dasein', (Singing is being, line 7). Richard Cox has discussed

this saying in the context of the two preceding sonnets: ‘The implicit formula of the first two Sonnets is that existence is song. Reversing that eminently reversible formula, the third declares: ‘Gesang is Dasein’[...].’⁶⁸

What the sonnet opts for is a poetic singing, the function of which is not the representation of the Same, but the pure singing as *otherness* (‘ein andrer Hauch’, [another breath], line 13), the impossible utterance of nothing alluded to through the negativity of *nicht*: ‘Dies ist nicht [...]’ and ‘Ein Hauch um nichts’ (This is not [...]; A breath of nothing, lines 10 and 14). The negation is primarily reinforced through the negative sentences: ‘Gesang [...] ist nicht Begehren, / nicht Werbung [...]’, (Singing [...] is not desire, / not wooing [...], lines 5 & 6), that aim to erase the subjectivity of the *I*. The negativity of the dialectical *nicht* is further transformed into a topography substantiated as a tangible *nonplace*, the absent place of the temple, the void pointing to its absence: ‘Herzwege steht kein Tempel für Apoll’, (Where heartways intersect, no temple for Apollo is found; line 4). In this context, Apollo stands for the shaping god, and his absence indicates the impossibility of shaping the void or nothing.

All these above mentioned oppositions between god’s creation and human over the stasis of the divine creation, defined as ‘ein Leichtes’, (easy; in line 7). As Katja Brunkhorst invention are thus designated to prioritize the dynamics of human invention, comprising all its characteristic sufferings, as the impossible invention of the *other* remarks, to Rilke, the poet as the perpetual creator is opposed to God who has stopped creating; the dynamics of creation is opposed to the perfect state of stagnation.⁶⁹

Human invention is viewed in perpetual transformation, in its ability to surpass subjectivity or representation and transgress the opposition between transcendence and immanence in becoming a pure singing analogous to being. The interrogation concerns not the ability to surpass, but merely the quest for this invention: ‘Wann aber sind wir? Und wann wendet er/an unser Sein die Erde und die Sterne?’, (But when are we? And when will he then turn/ into our being the earth and the stars?;

⁶⁸ Richard Cox, *Figures of Transformation: Rilke and the Example of Valéry* (London: Institute of Germanic Studies, University of London, 1979), p. 152.

⁶⁹ See an account of this issue, unifying Rilke and Nietzsche in Katja Brunkhorst, *Verwandt-Verwandelt, Nietzsche’s Presence in Rilke* (München: Iudicium Verlag GmbH, 2006), pp. 137-139.

lines 8, 9) The prioritization of human invention is finalized at the end of the sonnet, in defining true singing through the dynamics of breath: ‘Ein Hauch [...] Ein Wehn [...] Ein Wind’, (A gust [...], a breath [...], a wind [...], line 14).

The quest for a new poetic language as the impossible shaping of the void or nothing is transposed into the dimension of voice/name/silence, where singing is liberated from the Orphic understanding of naming the unnameable in the state of a fullness out of which there springs the Word as voice: ‘Dies ists nicht, Jüngling, daß du liebst, wenn auch/die Stimme dann den Mund dir aufstößt, - lerne/vergessen, daß du aufsangst. Das verrinnt.’, (It is not, young man, that you love, even if the voice exploded from your mouth — learn to forget, that you sang. That disappears; in lines 11-12). The application of the noun *Jüngling* and the intimate character of the pronoun *du* testify to the relatedness of Rilke as a *young* poet to the kind of singing, from which he attempts to liberate poetry. The verb *lieben* and the realistic description (*die Stimme dann den Mund*) of poetry as the expression of feeling create an atmosphere of subjectivity, which the new poetic singing has to leave behind, moving toward *forgetting* and *disappearance*. This new poetic language then deconstructs the *same* Orphic myth of the world-building capacity of the word to assert the pure being of language as nothing and void, to attain the primal silence as the removal of the voice: ‘Ein Hauch um nichts. Ein Wehn im Gott. Ein Wind’.

To summarize: the three initial sonnets are significant for tracing the characteristic trait of the entire cycle which is the deconstruction of the classical metaphysical discourse as the representation of the Same and the coinage of a new poetic language of repetition as the impossible topology of the void or nothing, beyond signification. The close textual analyses of the three sonnets are an attempt to demonstrate how this tendency is realized and to delineate the main traits of the new poetic language. The subsequent sonnets, each in its unique form, are repetitions of the *same* quest for a new poetic language beyond representation. Despite the fact that each of them is a singular event of language and due to the limitations of space only a general approach will be provided toward the rest of the sonnets. We will stress merely those characteristic features of the sonnets which are essential from the scope of this study.

2.2.4 Disclosing the Nonbeing of Language in the Mode of Transgression

The theme of space with its subtlest meanings of *Hauch*, *Wehn*, *Wind* (1,3) has been developed at length throughout the entire cycle of the sonnets and is replaced by new synonyms, such as *Atem*, *Lüfte*, *Räume* in the fourth Sonnet (1,4). In it, the disclosure of language through the topology of *nonplace* as pure nothing is juxtaposed to the weight and substance of the bodies and the gravitational force of the Earth.

What is at issue here is the rift, the pure tension between the heaviness of the ontology of the primordial word, overloaded with the metaphysical signified of the Same, alluded to through the nouns *Seiligen*, *Heilen* (blessed and whole; 1,4, line 5) or *Anfang* (beginning; 1,4, line 6), and the new poetic language as a mere signifier. The sonnet is based upon this very tension between a propagation of forms into formlessness ('O ihr Zärtlichen, tretet zuweilen / in den Atem', 'O you tender ones, step now and then / into the breath; this and other lines from Sonnet 4 are based upon Landman's translation, 1,4, lines 1-2) and the substantiation of figures within their constraining contours (*die Erde, die Berge, die Meere, die Bäume*, the Earth, the mountains, the seas, the trees; 1,4, lines 10, 11, 12); the metaphysical One, which quivers, united again behind the figures ('hinter euch zittert er, wieder vereint' behind you it quivers, united again; 1,4, line 4) and its splitting in two ('sich teilen'; 1,4, line 3). The poet is likewise placed in the tension between subjectivity ('Bogen der Pfeile und Ziele von Pfeilen / ewiger glänzt euer Lächeln verweint', 'Bows for arrows and arrows' goal, your smile is always stained with tears', 1,4, lines 7 & 8) and memory ('Selbst die als Kinder ihr pflanzet die Bäume', 'The trees that you planted as children', 1,4, line 12). This tension is also represented through the dual figure of the tree, rooted in the earth, but aspiring to heaven, standing for the duality of a responsibility before the Earth of representing nothing but the Same and the quest for disclosing the *nonplace* of language as pure nothing.

The fissure in the classical discourse of representation is reinforced through the disjunction *aber*, appearing twice at the end of the sonnet and pointing toward

the *nonbeing* of language. In the end, the fulcrum of the tension is bent toward language as pure nothing, liberated from any responsibility before the Earth; the freedom of language as *nonplace* is juxtaposed with the freedom of an aspiring tree, rooted in the Earth. Language as pure freedom is represented in the diminuendo from *Lüfte* to *Räume* (from space to the air) and to the final indefiniteness of an ellipsis.

In the fifth sonnet the *nonbeing* of language is disclosed through the mode of transgression ('er überschreitet', 'he transgresses'; 1,5, line 14), which is posed as the matrix of the thought anchored in the utmost limits of language. To indicate this new mode of thought of transgression, which will predominate throughout the 20th century, Rilke accumulates a number of words beginning with the prefix *über*: *übersteigen*, *überleben*, *überschreiten*, and *überstehen*. The mode of transgression arises from the absence of signification, the surmounting of subjectivity, and the dispersion of representation into the language of pure repetition which is placed in the void created by this absence. In the act of transgression, the questioning of the limit substitutes for the representation of the Same, and poetry is transposed into the place where it crosses these limits.

The sonnet begins with the rejection of monument ('Errichtet keinen Denkstein', 'Erect no monument'; 1,5, line 1) as memory and signification in order to trace the line of transgression that causes the existence of difference to appear every year under the guises of blossoming roses ('Laßt die Rose / nur jedes Jahr zu seinen Gunsten blühn', 'Just let the roses blossom / every year for his sake; 1,5, lines 1 & 2). To exempt writing from representation, from erecting monuments in memory of the Same, the sonnet effaces the irreducible singularity of the metaphysical universal of the Same and makes this singularity repeatable innumerable times through multiple guises. The Same signified as Orpheus divides and erases itself, annuls in itself the encrypted singularity, to become understandable through the unique otherness of the multiple: 'O, wie er schwinden muß, daß ihrs begriff!', ('O, in order for us to understand him, he has to pass'; 1,5, line 9).

In this zone of transgression, at the limit disclosing the insurmountable distance between eternity and finitude, being in its immediacy and event,

dissected into a *jedes Jahr* (every year; 1,5, line 2), an *ein für alle Male*, (once and for all; 1,5, line 5) and an *ein paar Tage manchmal*, (a few days longer than ...; 1,5, line 8); between a coming and a going ('Er kommt und geht', 'He comes and goes'; 1,5, line 6), the pure unmediated act of writing becomes manifest. An act of writing, disseminated from the dissipation of the Same and the forgetting of the Same, on the verge of the limitations of the lyre's strings ('Der Leier Gitter zwingt ihm nicht die Hände', 'The lyre's strings do not constrain his hands'; 1,5, line 13) and writing's pure immediacy. Writing in which transgression finds its space, then, emerges as the reforming of the empty form of sameness, from which the recurring multiplicity of repetition arises.

The sonnet is the quest for the inner core of the possibility of the language of writing, arising from the absence of the Same. It is the quest for a language of the limit, of the coincidence and difference between singing and being in the temporality of a *wenn*, ('Ein für alle Male / ists Orpheus, wenn es singt', 'Once and for all, it's Orpheus, when there is song'; 1,5, lines 5 & 6, recurring in lines 7, 10) and the ellipsis of the verb 'to be' through the metamorphoses of this and that: 'Seine Metamorphose / in dem und dem', 'His metamorphoses in this and that'; 1,5, lines 4-5). This language transgresses being and the naming of being ('Wir sollen uns nicht mühen / um andre Namen', 'We should not go for other names'; 1,5, lines 4-5) toward the impossible invention of the other through the scattering of sense and sound ('Wir sollen uns nicht mühen / um andre Namen': the first part of the sentence belonging to the first, the second to the second quartet) and through the dissecting of the unity of the word.

The fifth sonnet is the search for the new poetic language in the act of transgression — substantiated through the recurrence of the prefix 'über' in the words 'überstehen', 'outlive' in 1,5, line 8; 'übertreffen', 'surpass' in 1,5, line 11, and finally 'überschreiten', 'transgress' at the end of the sonnet, 1,5, line 14 — that crosses the limit, causing the Same to appear in 'its unmediated substance', in the very re-composition of its absence, through which, according to Foucault, 'it [the sacred] becomes all the more scintillating'.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, p. 70.

The sixth Sonnet is significant for tracing the extension of the act of transgression upon the limits between the dual domains of here and there, the real and the invisible ('das Unsichtbare'), life and death, initiating from the first lines: 'Ist er ein Hiesiger?' Nein, aus beiden / Reichen erwuchs seine weite Natur', (Is he from here? No, from both domains does his extended nature grew; 1,6, lines 1&2) and ending up with combining in one sentence the apparently contradictory objects of *Gräber* (graves) and *Zimmer* (room; line 13).

The act of transgression is established as the basis for the new poetic singing presented through the formulation *gütliges Bild* (valid image; 1,6, line 12) which appears for the first time as the unfading ('Nichts kann [...] ihm verschlimmern'; 1,6, line 12). The poetic language, then, as the creation of valid, unfading images is the pure act of transgression of the appearances of things and our multiple viewings of them: 'Aber er [...] mische [...] | ihre Erscheinung in alles Geschaute' (But he [...] mingles [...] their appearance in all viewings'; 1,6, lines 7&9). As a result, the real things (*Fingerring, Spange und Krug*, ring, bracelet and pitcher) in their pure relatedness to each other ('sei ihm so wahr wie der klarste Bezug', 'is as real to him as the clearest relatedness; 1,6, line 11) are substantiated. The phenomenon of the pure relatedness is expressed through the word *Bezug* (the poetic version of *Beziehung*), the frequent application of which in Rilke's poetry, testifies to the fact that this phenomenon has been under his constant focus.⁷¹ The phenomenon of the pure relatedness between objects is remarked by Ryan, who argues that Rilke 'came to conceive of artistic form or 'Figur' (figure) as a way of retaining the object in a kind of structural metamorphosis'.⁷²

⁷¹ See for the examples of this application in Herbert William Belmore, *Rilke's Craftsmanship: An Analysis of His Poetic Style*, pp. 154 – 155.

⁷² Judith Ryan, *Rilke, Modernism and Poetic Tradition*, p. 157.

2.2.5 The Invention of the Language of Praising

The significance of the sixth sonnet is also essential in that it introduces the conception of the new poetic language, liberated from representation, in the pure act of praising ('rühme er *Fingerring, Spange und Krug*', 'he praises ring, bracelet and pitcher'; 1,6, line 14).⁷³ The act of praising is anchored in sameness as the wisdom of the Unnameable which is alluded to in the knowledge of the root: 'wer die Wurzeln der Weiden erfuhr' ('who the knowledge of the roots has experienced'; 1,6, line 4). The knowledge of the root will be further propagated (in the subsequent sonnets), giving rise to the multiple figures of various kinds of fruit.

The search for the new poetic language of repetition traced throughout the preceding sonnets seems to end up with the invention of the poetic singing as praising in the seventh sonnet: 'Rühmen, das ists!' ('To praise, that's it!'; 1,7, line 1). The poetics of praising seems to encompass the joy characteristic of a discovery preceded by a long and devastating seeking, full of hesitations, questioning and destruction.

The liberation of language from representation results not in its total erasure or its emergence as pure negativity, but in the assertion of the pure being of language as a unity of voice, *graphé*, and silence. Rilke conceives this unity in the form of a praising which rests no more on the removal of the voice, but in which the distant voice, polished and cleaned from dust, scintillates in a god-like manner: 'Nie versagt ihm die Stimme am Staube, / wenn ihn das göttliche Beispiel ergreift' (The voice from the dust does not fail It / when it seizes the god-like example'; 1,7, lines 5 & 6). This new language of praising, indicating nothing but itself, aspires to the form of divine creation in its quest to encompass the fully given in a single act and to affirm the element of the divine *once-and-for-allness* ('Ein für alle Male'; 1,5 line 5, 1,5) in its every single spatial act.

⁷³ See: Dianna C. Niebylski, *The Poem on the Edge of the Word: The Limits of Language and the Uses of Silence in the Poetry of Mallarmé, Rilke, and Vallejo* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1993) on the poetic speech as the celebration of Being in Rilke's *Die Sonette*, pp. 93-125.

At this point, where language ceases to signify the Same, it is transposed into the dimension of pure repetition, where every single act — as the indication of its absolute uniqueness, the unfolding of otherness and nothingness — is at the same time the assertion of sameness not in the form of the transcendental signified, but in the ever more otherness of the singular event. The language of pure repetition is the dissolution and dispersing of the totality of the Same into the nothingness of silence, out of which the poetic praising as the praising of the very event of language emerges like ore: ‘Ein zum Rühmen Bestellter, / ging er hervor wie das Erz aus des Steins/Schweigen’ (‘One called to profess praise, he emerged like ore from the stone’s silence; 1,7, lines 1 - 3). The phenomenon of silence which is concealed within the stone and needs to be liberated in the form of praising, is stressed by enjambment, i.e. by the cutting of the noun *Schweigen* from the unity of the sentence and its transference into the next line 3. The assertion of poetic singing in the form of the liberation of silence from stone brings forth the image of the poet who reveals the concealed speech or who is, using Görner’s definition, the ‘Bildhauer der Sprache, ein Graveur’.⁷⁴

The image of ‘unendlichen Weins’ (‘endless wines’; 1,7, line 4) creates the association of the free floating language of praising, its overflowing without any barrier of signification or constraint of unspeakable experience. Neither is the freedom of praising limited by having any addressee, such as the glory of past kings or the pure divine light: ‘Nicht in den Grüften der Könige Moder / straft ihm die Rühmung Lügen, oder / daß von den Göttern ein Schatten fällt’ (The mould in the crypt of kings doesn’t expose the lie of his praising, neither that from gods a shadow falls; 1,7, lines 9-11). The new language of praising is beyond the realm of signification and consequently does not signify any signified, be it in the form of history or gods. As a pure act of speech located within the space of transgression, praising is not limited by any constraint of shape or the dialectics of contradictions of light/shadow.

So as to free the overloaded word *praising* (rühmen) from its connotations with human civilization and divine glorification (praising the crypts of dead gods and the absolute divine light), by which it has been weighed down for the long

⁷⁴ Rüdiger Görner, *Rainer Maria Rilke: Im Herzwerk der Sprache*, p. 267.

period of the European Classicism, the first tercet of the sonnet unifies in its apparently homogeneous form the controversial words *Grüften der Könige Moder* (the mould in the crypt of kings), *ein Schatten von den Göttern* (a shadow from gods), and *die Rühmung Lügen* (the lie of his praising; 1,7, lines 9 - 12). The double negation of this discourse of signification is realized through the negative particles *nicht* (1,7, line 9) and *oder* (1,7, line 10) which divide the homogeneity of the discourse, to place in the fracture in-between the *nicht* and the *oder*, the otherness of the *Rühmung Lügen*.

Signification is dispersed into the heterogeneity of the lie of praising which is not susceptible to exposure, as it is the very lie of praising – located within the space of transgression, in the abyss between history and religion, ontology and dialectics, the real and the hyperreal – that counts. It is from within this pure space of transgression that the new poetic language as the lie of praising emerges as pure simulacrum which, having stripped the representation of the real and the imaginary will subsequently be acknowledged by Baudrillard, as leaving space ‘only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences’.⁷⁵

The recurrence of the different forms of the same word *rühmen* (praising) twice in the first line (1,7, line 1), once in combination with *Lügen* (*Rühmung Lügen*; 1,7, line 10) and once at the end of the sonnet as *rühmlichen* (*rühmlichen Früchten*, 1,7, line 14) reinforces the invention of the new poetic language of praising as a pure act of speech, the freedom of which is not weighed down by any constraints of signification; the language of praising as lie, as the pure space of simulacrum. The poet is then one of the remaining messengers who face death and in the experience of the void find the possibility of the pure act of speech: ‘Er ist einer der bleibenden Boten, / der noch weit in die Türen der Toten / Schalen mit rühmlichen Früchten hält’ (‘He’s the lone enduring messenger / who reaches deep into death’s door/offering glorious fruit in bowls’; Landman’s translation, 1,7, lines 12-14). According to Frank Wood, Orpheus, as the poet’s surrogate, is alone capable of crossing the threshold and, by virtue of his adherence to both realms,

⁷⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 2-3.

praising the earth.⁷⁶ Praising is then lodged in the possibility of death as the limit of language and its innermost potentiality which is unfolded in the singularity of repetition, redoubling, and simulacra. Speech as praising is disseminated through the absolute singularity of a multiple variety of praiseworthy fruit (*rühmlichen Früchten*); a phenomenon which constitutes a significant trait of some of the subsequent sonnets.

While defining the poet as one of the messengers ('einer der [...] Boten', 1,7, line 12), the seventh sonnet brings forth the notions of the double, of duplication and of writing which appear among other modes of transgressing the limit of death to open up the space of simulacra. In that pure space of praising, transformed into an already acknowledged and named *Raum der Rühmung* (praise-space; 1,8, line 1) in the eighth Sonnet, the unrehearsed, oblique, and unexpected *Klage* (Lamentation) passes freely: 'plötzlich, schräg und ungeübt' ('But suddenly she, off-balance, unrehearsed' Landman's translation, 1,8, line 12). The recurrence of the umlauts in definitions of Lamentation stresses its destabilizing character and its belonging to the pure praise-space, in which those reopened mouths who already know silence's name come to sing: 'grüß ich, die wiedergeöffneten Munde, / die schon wußten, was schweigen heißt' ('I salute you, the reopened mouths / who already know silence's name', Landman's translation, 1,10, lines 10 – 11). If this is the infinite lament of Orpheus for the loss of Eurydice, then it is characterised by the fact that Orpheus has seen the face of Eurydice, and, in Foucault's words, there shines 'behind Orpheus's laments [...] the glory of having seen, however fleetingly the unattainable face at the very instant it turned away and returned to darkness'.⁷⁷ In this space of transgression, our regained voices are no more constrained by the mediation of breath, but are held with their suspended breath in a constellation in the heavens: 'hält sie doch ein Sternbild unsrer Stimme / in den Himmel, den ihr Hauch nicht trübt' ('holds up a constellation of our song / in the heavens, which her breath does not becloud', Landman's translation, 1,8, lines 13 – 14).

⁷⁶ Frank Wood, *Rainer Maria Rilke: the Ring of Forms* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), p. 193.

⁷⁷ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, p. 162.

Yet, this constellation, standing for the very idea of the totality of the Same is questioned as merely an illusion which is haunted and then subdued by us ('gejagt und dann gebändigt'; 'hunted and then subdued', 1,11, line 5). The eleventh sonnet likewise questions the very idea of totality, the metaphysical truth of the One: 'Und die zwei sind eins. / Aber sind sie's?' ('And the two are one, but are they though?'; 1,11, lines 8 – 9). Here, the totality of the Same is dispersed into divergent multiplicities; the nameless is disseminated into the infinite repetition of names: 'Namenlos schon trennt sie Tisch und Weide' ('The nameless is already divided into table and meadow', 1,11, line 11). The sonnet reconsiders the paradigm of the One which: 'Doch uns freue eine Weile nun, / der Figur zu glauben. Das genügt' ('only delights us to believe the figure for a while', 1,11, lines 13-14). What counts here, is not the constellation or the sum, but the infinite singularity of the stars which come to form not the *same* constellation, but the stars repeating themselves in the divided constellation of the Same.

The theme of the poet facing death to be able to find the possibility of the pure speech of praising, appearing in the seventh sonnet is intensified in the ninth to construct a double realm of transgression, in which the regained voices can flow eternally and mildly, without constraint: 'Erst in dem Doppelbereich / werden die Stimmen / ewig und mild' ('Once in the dual land / the voices will be / eternal and mild', 1,9, lines 12 – 14). The urge to face the void and transgress the limit of death in order to be capable of speech is substantiated through locating speech within the abyss between the oppositions of the praising lyre and the shades (1,9, lines 1 – 4). In this space of transgression language is made an image of itself through its reduplication in the mirror, the reflection of which, however, may often be blurred: 'Mag auch die Spiegung im Teich / oft uns verschwimmen: / Wisse das Bild' ('Though the reflection in the pond / may often waver: / Know it still', Landman's translation, 1,9, lines 9 – 11). What is at stake here, is not the original reflected in the pond, but the transgressing of the original and the copy in the reconstructing of the mirrored structure; not the Same, but the reverberation of its images in the praise-space: 'wisse das Bild' (1,9, line 11).

The twelfth sonnet transposes the issue of the totality of the Same, discussed in the eleventh sonnet, into the outer space of pure relatedness; an issue which was

first raised in the sixth sonnet (der klarste Bezug; line 11, 1,6). The poetic language is accordingly postulated not as the representation of the unifying power of the Same, but as an infinite repetition, exposed through the divided figures of the Same: ‘Heil dem Geist, der uns verbinden mag; / denn wir leben wahrhaft in Figuren’ (‘Hail the spirit able to unite! For we truly live in figures’, 1,12, lines 1-2). The pivot is no longer the unifying presence of the Same, but the spreading forth of language as pure exteriority (‘die leere Ferne’, ‘empty distance’, 1,12, line 8) and as absence in the nonplace of interrelatedness: ‘Ohne unsern wahren Platz zu kennen, / handeln wir aus wirklichem Bezug’ (Without knowing the place of our true location, / we deal with the real relatedness, 1,12 lines 5-6).

Only when language is brought to the edge of the abyss, in the space of transgression, can it face the nothingness of death: either in the silence of the suspended breath or the pure space of praising where words unravel unconstrained both of unspeakability and representation. It appears then as the pure experience of force (‘Musik der Kräfte’, ‘music of forces’, 1,12, line 9) in the fixed expanse or in the pure tension (‘Reine Spannung’, 1,12, line 9) between the univocal spirit (Geist, 1,12, line 1) and the retention of the multiple forms of figures. The birth of language is, therefore, not the result of transformation of seeds into summer, but of dissemination in the pure act of giving: ‘Selbst wenn sich der Bauer sorgt und handelt, / wo die Saat in Sommer sich verwandelt, / reicht er niemals hin. Die Erde *schenkt* (Even if the farmer cares and deals, / where the seeds change into summer, / he never reaches. The earth *gives*.) Language is dislocated from the universal flux of becoming by which the seeds are transformed into summer and relocated into the pure act of giving which splits the circle of becoming in order to assert the simultaneous recurrence of both summer and seeds in their infinite singularity without being confined by the constraints of causality. The language of praising is likewise located outside the subjectivity of the farmer, standing for that of the poet. The displacement of causality and subjectivity leaves space solely for the pure being of language which speaks only of itself in the pure act of dissemination.

2.2.6. The Theatre of Phantasms

The newly coined praising-space of pure relatedness, or the zone of transgression is inhabited by the multiple variety of shapes, figures, colours, and tastes of different species of fruits described in the thirteenth sonnet: ‘Voller Apfel, Birne und Banane, / Stachelbeere’ (‘Plump apple, pear and banana, gooseberry’, 1,13, lines 1-2). The poetic descriptions of the perceptions associated with these fruits (1,13, lines 10-11) and their assemblage in nouns denoting perception: ‘O Erfahrung, Fühlung, Freude’ (‘O experience, feeling, joy’, 1,13, line 14), which appears at the end of the Sonnet, create an entourage of a phenomenology of perception. The fact that the sonnet is concerned not only with the unique mode of existence of the perceived things, but their expression in the thought of the subject, makes us think of a *phenomenology of perception*.⁷⁸ Here is an account of this: ‘Lest es einem Kind vom Angesicht, / wenn es sie erschmeckt’ (‘Read it on the face of a child, who tastes them’, 1,13, lines 4-5). It seems as if the sonnet aims at restoring the encounter between the face of the child and the things which are reflected there, or at uniting the perceiving subject with the thing perceived through the *senses* which are termed *perceptual fields* by Maurice Merleau-Ponty.⁷⁹

According to a phenomenology of perception, the sonnet should also be regarded as a rediscovering of the ways of sublimation, as a transformation of the perceived world into the spoken one: ‘Alles dieses spricht / Tod und Leben in den Mund’ (‘All these speak / Death and life in the mouth’, 1,13, lines 2 – 3). In this context, the spoken word becomes the possession of knowledge taking shape as a result of reconstituting the world through perception which links the body-organism to the world. Yet, is the sonnet really engaged with a phenomenology of perception, i.e. the network of primal significations which, arising from the perception of things, link the body to the world?

The very next sentence following the aforementioned lines, questions the validity of any reference to the phenomenology of perception. Its brief form,

⁷⁸ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. xviii.

⁷⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, ed. by Claude Lefort, trans by. John O’Neill (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 123.

characteristic of a univocal statement in a single stroke sends this entire reference back to history: ‘Dies kommt von weit’ (‘This comes from far away’, 1,13, line 5). What the sonnet is engaged with is instead, the singularity of the event which appears under the density of matter and breaks its engagement to name. The disenchantment from signification gives rise to the pure play of surfaces lacking names: ‘Wird euch langsam namenlos im Munde?’ (Do they grow slowly nameless in the mouth?, 1,13, line 6). The space now freed from word-signifiers (‘Wo sonst Worte waren’, ‘Where usually words were’, 1,13, line 7) and restrictions imposed upon them, is occupied by the simultaneous coexistence of the dispersed multiplicity of fruit-flesh in the immediate play of diversities. The disappearance of names opens up an empty space, a diaphanous opening which makes visible the very clearness and transparency of the clear and transparent fruit (‘klar zu werden, wach und transparent’, 1,13, line 12). The act of disappearance of mediation becomes an operation of allowing the openness to appear.

To open up space for the multiple, it was necessary to divide the Same, to limit its identity through otherness, differences and nonbeing; and coin a language of transgression which is not limited or confined by the constraints of signifying the Same, but allows for the recurrence of the different at the extreme point of its singularity. What does then emerge or flow like a discovery (‘fließen Funde’, 1,13, line 7), astonishingly freed of fruit-flesh (‘aus dem Fruchtfleisch überrascht befreit’, 1,13, line 8,)? Does the emphasis of flesh (Fruchtfleisch) allude to the surface effects, interior phantoms of the Epicureans⁸⁰ that are quickly reabsorbed into other depths by the taste, the mouth (through the words *Mund* recurring twice in 1,13, lines 3 & 5 and *Schmecken* in 1,13, line 11), or the membranes that are detached from the surfaces of objects to form colours or shapes of fleshes? If so, then freed from the fruit-flesh are the phantasms which ‘topologize’ the materiality of the flesh and function at the limit of bodies: ‘against bodies, because they stick to bodies and protrude from them, [...] touch them, cut them, break them into sections, regionalize them, and multiply their surfaces’.⁸¹ Then,

⁸⁰ See on the philosophy of phantasm in Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. by Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); pp. 266 - 279 on the analogies with the Epicureans.

⁸¹ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, p. 346 – 347.

what matters is solely the theatre of phantasms, of difference, of pure signifiers, masks without signification, of simulacra, of repetition; a theatre beyond representation that is ‘multiplied, polyscenic, simultaneous, [...] where we encounter [...] the dance of masks, the cries of bodies, and the gesturing of hands and fingers’.⁸² Is however the theatre of phantasms mute (*namenlos*, 1,13, line 6) or does the sonnet bring forth a new kind of mouth-centred praising-space as a result of a liberation from signification and phonocentrism? The mouth is rather the locus of the pure cry, the *Geröhr* (1,1, line 9), alluded to in the very first sonnet, where the genesis of the new praising-language as the repetition of the otherness of thought extends itself.

The sentence ‘Wagt zu sagen, was ihr Apfel nennt’ (‘Dare to say, what you call *apple*’, 1,13, line 9) and the following four lines (1,13, lines 10 - 14) which describe the taste of the apple passing through the mouth after the uttering of the word *apple*, remind of Zeno’s words: ‘If you say cart, a cart passes through your mouth’.⁸³ The mouth is then the locus where the depths of phantasms are articulated and where nothing other than the simple succession of phonemes counts. The phonemes are detached from meaning in order to form the free-floating space of praise, of the immediacy of flesh detached from signification. The mouth is then the place where the double-meaning (*doppeldeutig*) of the space of transgression opens itself up: at the limit between *hiesig* (here) and *riesig* (immense), (as an interplay of rhythmic identities and semantic differences, 1,13, lines 13&14). It is essential to recall Foucault’s words on this account, linking the locus of the mouth to the genesis of language: ‘Through this open mouth, through this alimentary voice, the genesis of language, the formation of meaning, and the flash of thought extend their divergent series’.⁸⁴

In the fourteenth Sonnet the theatre of phantasms is extended to encompass not only the figures of fruit, but also the singular events of the flower and the vine-leaf (*Blume, Weinblatt*, 1,14, line 1) which no longer represent the seasons, but repeat their very singularity beyond signification. The totality of the notion of

⁸² Ibid, p. 348.

⁸³ See on this and more passages on the mouth in Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pp. 183 – 233 and Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II p. 354.

⁸⁴ Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, p. 354.

season is dissipated by the singularity of each thing, the clear contours of which breach them from the totality of the season. Each of them speaks of its own *different* voice which, entering into resonance with each other and the language of the seasons, does not dissolve into it, but sings of its own divergent otherness: ‘Sie sprechen nicht die Sprache nur des Jahres’ (‘They don’t just speak the speech of the seasons’, 1,14, line 2).

What is at stake here, is the role that these phantasm-events play in the theatre of phantasms (‘Was wissen wir von ihrem Teil an dem?; ‘What do we know about their part in it?’, 1,14, line 6). The question remains open: does thought invent these singular masks miming themselves and, hence the entire theatre, or is thought itself formed out of these phantasm-events it thinks through (this opposition is demonstrated through the equivocal roles of lord and slave in 1,14, lines 10 – 14)? Sonnet fourteen reminds of the poetic genius which produces brute repetitions on the basis of a more secret repetition, by pointing to the thing halfway between brute force and kisses (‘dies Zwischending aus stummer Kraft und Küssen’, 1,14, line 14).⁸⁵

The theatre of phantasms as the recurrence of the singularity of masks, liberated from representation and as the theatre of pure difference freed from the domination of identity is fully manifested through the dancing of the orange in the fifteenth Sonnet (‘Tanzt die Orange’, ‘Dance the orange’, 1,15, line 5). The dancing rhythm is built through the dissected fragments, the recurrence of elliptical, exclamatory marks, and repetitions that fill the space of the sonnet. Here, the new poetic language of praising emerges as a synaesthesia, encompassing the combination of taste, fragrance, colour, music, and dance within the contours of the thing.

What remains after the liberation from the name, is pure joy, the absurdity of combination emerging in the intense *once-for-allness* of the single chance. The poetic language which has realized the impossibility of pointing at a smell (‘Wer zeigt mit Fingern auf einen Geruch?’, ‘Who can point their finger at a smell?’, 1,16, line 5,), is no longer limited by the constraints of naming and pointing. It rather has to endure the decentring of the Same and accept the parts which are gaining more importance

⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 364.

than the whole in the sixteenth Sonnet: ‘Sieh, nun heißt es zusammen ertragen/ Stückwerk und Teile, als sei es das Ganze’ (‘Look, now we together must endure / bits and parts, as if they are the whole’, 1,16, lines 9 – 10).

2.2.7 The Dismemberment of the Same

Since sonnets from 17 – 25 are not relevant to the purpose of our study, we will pass to the last (1, 26) Sonnet, which is not merely the end of the first cycle, but also the beginning of the second. Yet, in what follows we will merely present a general outline of the second cycle, given that the entire pattern of the second cycle is the unfolding of the new poetic language as repetition, designated throughout the first cycle. The second cycle will be viewed as a propagation of the multiple fragments constituting the poetic language of repetition outlined in the first cycle.

The notion of the end which is also a beginning, delineated in the last sonnet of the first cycle, is paralleled with the end of Orpheus’s mundane existence when he was murdered by the maenads to give beginning to song. The entire development of the poetic language from cry, as a pure expression of emotions (‘ihr Geschrei’, 1,26, line 3), to its transposition into the musical sequence (‘hast [...] übertönt mit Ordnung’, line 3, 1,26); from the subsequent destruction of the musical sequence to its structuring as play (‘aus den Zerstörenden stieg dein erbaundes Spiel’, ‘from out the destroyers rose uplifting playing’, Landman’s translation, 1,26, line 4) is outlined in the first quatrain. The last sonnet stresses the notion of the poetic language of repetition, unfolded in the first sonnet and anchored in the liberation of sameness from representation in order to return it to its original status of the ungraspable. The last phrase of the first tercet ‘Dort singst du noch jetzt’ (‘Even now you still sing there’, 1,26, line 11), the otherness of which is stressed through its structure (constituting one of the two sentences into which the unity of line 11 is split) and tense (The Present Indefinite as opposed to the prevailing past tense) alludes to the key phrase

‘*Orpheus singt*’ (1,1, line 2) of the opening sonnet. It realizes the same function as the abovementioned line of the first sonnet, i.e. the opposition of the poetic singing as a pure signifier to the discourse of representation.

The last tercet is a prelude to the second cycle as the manifestation of the poetic language of repetition that comes into being only due to the dismemberment of the totality of the Same: ‘Nur weil dich reißend zuletzt die Feindschaft verteilte, / sind wir die Hörenden jetzt und ein Mund der Natur’ (‘Only because dismembering hatred dispersed you/are we hearers to-day and a mouth which else Nature would lack’, 1, 26, lines 13 – 14).⁸⁶ The dismemberment of the whole amounts to a different poetic language as the manifestation of what Derrida nicknames as the ‘unnameable movement of *difference-itself*, [...] *trace*, *reserve*, or *différance*’.⁸⁷

The second cycle will be viewed as the trace of the absent God (‘Du unendliche Spur!’, ‘You infinite trace!’, 1,26, line 12) or as writing beyond the identity of the god. It will be traced as *Weltraum* (world-space, 2,1, line 3) or a renaming of the poetic space of transgression, as a coincidence of interior and exterior through the breath (‘Wie viele von diesen Stellen der Räume waren schon / innen in mir’, ‘How many of these spots of spaces were inside me already’, 2,1, lines 9 & 10) or, to use Blanchot’s words, as Rilke’s notion of openness.⁸⁸ The act of transgression destructs the ontology of the Sacred Word that was in the beginning (‘Du, einmal glatte Rinde, Rundung und Blatt’, ‘You, once smooth-skinned roundness and leaf’, 2,1, lines 13 & 14), in order to assert the already personified weightlessness of the poetic word of Rilke (‘meiner Worte’, ‘my words’, 2,1, line 14), disseminated in the multiple reflections of the mirror-space. For Rilke this is the space of nothing, of silence, of speech devoid of speakers: ‘Fische sind stumm [...], [...] | Aber ist nicht am Ende ein Ort, wo man das, was der Fische/Sprache ware, *ohne* sie spricht?’ (‘Fish are speechless [...] | But isn’t there at last a place in which one speaks the fish’s language, *without* fish?’, Landman’s translation, 2,20, lines 12 – 14).

⁸⁶ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, trans. by Howard A. Landman, p. 84.

⁸⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 93.

⁸⁸ See on Rilke’s notion of openness expressed through the notion of *Weltinnenraum* invoked in the ‘9th Elegy’, in Maurice Blanchot, *L’Espace littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), p. 137.

The new poetic word is formed by virtue via the operation of transgression, stressed through the preposition *über* (2,6, line 13). It is the transgression of name and memory toward the indefiniteness of guessing concealed in the ellipsis: ‘Dennoch, wir wissen ihn nicht zu nennen, wir raten’, (‘Still we don’t know what it is named, we guess’, 2,6, line 12). It is a transgression toward the Unsayable: *am Unsäglichen* (2,13, line 12).⁸⁹ Transgression is, therefore, conceived as an operation of unsayable summation (‘den unsäglichen Summen’, 2,13, line 13), the account of which remains uncountable (‘zähle dich jubelnd hinzu und vernichte die Zahl’, ‘count yourself in joyously and cancel out the count’, 2,13, line 14). In the form of an overwintering (‘überwinternd’, 2,13, line 4), transgression encompasses the domains of death and ascendance (‘Sei immer tot in Eurydike —, singender steige’, ‘Be always dead in Eurydice — rise up singing’, 2, 13, line 5), being and non-being (‘Sei — und wisse zugleich des Nicht-Seins Bedingung’, ‘Be — but still know non-being’s conditions’, Landman’s translation, 2,13, line 9). The space of transgression is propagated through the innermost vibration of the poem, analogous to Mallarmé’s words which define the poem as ‘the enlarging of space by vibrations up to the infinite’.⁹⁰ This idea is expressed in Sonnet 13 through the line ‘den unendlichen Grund deiner innigen Schwingung’ (‘the infinite foundation of your innermost vibration’, 2,13, line 10) and the image of the shattering of a ringing glass: ‘ein klingendes Glas, das sich ihm Klang schon zerschlug’ (‘a ringing glass, that in sounding swiftly shatters’, Landman’s translations, 2,13, line 8).

The issue of sameness manifested in the poetic language of repetition in various guises remains under the constant focus of Rilke throughout the second cycle. It appears now and then as the mouth which speaks inexhaustible Oneness and Pureness: ‘du Mund [...] der unerschöpflich Eines, Reines’ (2,15, lines 1 & 2), or as the place grown whole: ‘ist der Gott die Stelle, welche heilt’, 2,16, line 2). This is, however, an already different conception of sameness which is displaced from the homogenous discourse of representation into the counter-

⁸⁹ See: Marielle Jane Sutherland, *Images of Absence: Death and the Language of Concealment in the Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke* (Berlin: Weidler Buchverlag, 2006), p. 118 on the transformation of the language of death into the poetry of the unsayable.

⁹⁰ Stéphane Mallarmé, ‘Tributal Bonhomet, Oeuvres’, (Mercure, t. III, p. 118) cited in Georges Poulet *The Metamorphoses of the Circle*, trans. Carley Dawson and Elliot Coleman in collaboration with the author (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), p. 298.

balance, created through the rhythmical recurrence of the poetic word of repetition (Gegengewicht, / in dem ich mich rhythmisch ereigne', 'Counterbalance, / wherein I rhythmically recur', 2,1, lines 3 & 4). Sameness is henceforth displaced from the totality of the whole into the singularity of the fragment: 'Einzige Welle, deren | allmähliches Meer ich bin', ('A single wave, whose gradual sea I am', 2,1, lines 5 & 6). The very metaphysical truth of the totality of the Same is being questioned: 'Was war wirklich im All?' ('What was real in the All?', 2,8, line 11): a questioning which amounts to the assertion of *nothing*: 'Nichts' (2,8, line 12), or to the recurrence of the throws: 'Nur die Bälle' ('Only the balls', 2,8, line 12). Rilke's image of the throw of a ball into cosmic space is juxtaposed with Mallarmé's throw of dice by Walter Strauss who stresses the difference of *le hasard* (the chance) in Mallarmé and the operation of transgression in Rilke.⁹¹

The Rilkean conception of poetry is accordingly anchored no longer in the representation of the Same by virtue of the other, but in the transgression of the opposition between them in the mirror-space. The mirror-space no longer points to the contradiction between the Same and *the other*, but is itself the showing of the reflection or the mirror in its own being: 'Spiegel: noch nie hat man wissend beschrieben, / was ihr in euerem Wesen seid' ('Mirror: no man has known how to describe what your own being was', 2,3, lines 1 & 2). The mirror thus marks the spacing of reflection ('Ihr, wie mit lauter Löchern von Sieben / erfüllten Zwischenräume der Zeit', 'You, filled with nothing but holes of sieves like interstices of time', Landman's translation, 2,3, lines 3 & 4), or the poetic space of invention as the relation of the *same* to the *other* (the relation of Orpheus to Narcissus, 2,3, line 14). It marks the space of mirror effects, doubles, simulacra, and phantasms, substantiating through the shape of the animal that was not real, but grew pure because it was loved: 'Zwar war es nicht. Doch weil sie's liebten, ward / ein reines Tier.' ('Of course, it wasn't *real*. But it grew pure / because they loved it', 2,4, Landman's translation, lines 5 & 6).

In the poetic space of invention, language divides and reproduces itself in the virtual space of the mirror. By 'creating a vertical system of mirrors, self

⁹¹ Walter Strauss, A, *Descent and Return* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 202.

images, analogies', it becomes its own mirror and transgresses 'the limit of death through its reduplication in a mirror',⁹² pierced by the sixteen-pointers of the chandelier ('Und der Lüster geht wie ein Sachzehn-Ender / durch eure Unbetretbarkeit', 'But chandeliers / pierce you like sixteen-point antlers', Landman's translation, 2,3, lines 7 & 8). Language, liberated from representation, emerges in the second cycle as the transgression of the opposition between being and nonbeing, being and becoming, saying and speaking, or, to use Alan Keele's words, as the 'final, paradoxical chiasmus' and the capturing of the 'quintessence of the god Orpheus'.⁹³ In this pure space of celebration, the past and future are contracted within the only present point of the pure event, which is the only justification of the singular, innocent being of language. Moreover, the entire creation is reduced to the pure being of the event of the language of celebration: 'zu der stillen Erde sag: Ich rinne. / Zu dem raschen Wasser sprich: Ich bin.' ('to the still earth say: I flow. / To the rushing water speak: I am', 2,29, lines 13-14). In Georges Poulet's words, 'the entire creation has *gone into seclusions* so that in its stead and in its place the rose might be created'.⁹⁴

In summary, Rilke's *Die Sonette an Orpheus* should be viewed as an example of a transposition of sameness from the philosophical discourse into the poetic language. This transposition becomes possible by liberating language from representation and by the coinage of a new poetic language of repetition, located in the pure space of transgression. Starting with the dismemberment of the totality of the Same, this language of otherness and void becomes eventually transformed into the poetic language of celebration, in which sameness scintillates in its full splendour. In the course of this transformation, language is rendered light and transparent by a force, which is said to lift the words up and thus counteract 'their associative heaviness', resulting in a 'happy serenity quite unknown to Rilke's earlier productions'.⁹⁵

⁹² Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*, II, p. 100 & pp. 92 – 93.

⁹³ Alan Keele, 'Rilke's Sonette An Orpheus', in *A Companion to the works of Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. by Erika A. Metzger and Michael M. Metzger (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2001), p. 217.

⁹⁴ Georges Poulet, *The Metamorphoses of the Circle*, p. 340.

⁹⁵ Herbert William Belmore, *Rilke's Craftsmanship: An Analysis of his Poetic Style*, p. 214.

Conclusion

The inquiry into the incessant postulations of the issue of sameness throughout the history of Continental philosophy has demonstrated both its enduring significance and the impossibility of providing a definitive representation, formula or theory of the Same. These postulations have also displayed the relevance of the issue of sameness for the validation of art, particularly in the field of philosophical poetics, and in the poetic texts.

The investigation of the fundamental stages of the history of sameness has made obvious that the issue of sameness should primarily be broached in respect of the precarious balance between identity and difference. As such, it encompasses both, the quest for the knowledge of the *same* world that all humans share and that is presupposed by the very notion of universality and the postulation of the absolutely singular differential vis-à-vis this *same* world. The human quest for the discovery that there is something that is identically the *same* for humanity or the assessment of the *same* world, the one in which we all live, is inextricably linked to the assessment of the factor of the different or the *other* within it.

Yet, the insight into the essential traits of the philosophy of sameness has made clear that the entire philosophical discourse is greatly conditioned by the distortion of the precarious balance between identity and difference and the perpetual search for ways to overcome this distortion. In the period of its inception in Ancient Greek philosophy, the issue of sameness was posed in the sense of commencement, as the emergence of the thought of Being. It was first posed as a questioning about beings as *phusis*, i.e. beings as such and as a whole in the primal intactness of being and thinking, where thinking (apprehension, i.e. *noein*) and Being are the *same* (*to auto*). It is with the very oblivion of this intactness—an oblivion which makes Heidegger characterize Being more in its concealment in *Lēthe* than in its revelation in *Alētheia*—that the subsequent stages of the philosophy of sameness are distinguished.¹

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, transl. by D.E. Krell and D.A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 25 – 26.

From this aspect, the first stage in philosophical thought immediately following the oblivion of the intactness of sameness (from Plato to Kant) and the second stage of the return to sameness after the period of digression (German Idealism) are both greatly conditioned by the distortion of the balance of sameness in that they re-postulate it with regard to one dominating factor, that of identity. In so doing, they bring forth the fundamental distinction between the intelligible and the sensible, the original and its copies, according to which the function of the singular differential is reduced to the representation of nothing but the immutable oneness of the preconceived identity of the Same. Yet, while disparaging this period for the distortion of the balance of sameness by either disregarding the absolutely singular differential within sameness or by subordinating it to the dominating principle of identity (the German Idealism), we have also to credit it for representing the most complete knowledge of identity. The acknowledgement of the limits of this postulation should by no means overshadow its quest for an attempt to return to the primal intactness of sameness as an originary unity of being and thinking, *phusis* and *logos*. Moreover, the insight into the best manifestations of this period—the *Monoeidetism* of Plato, the Plotinian overabundant One, the rationally beautiful Cosmos of Leibniz, and the impenetrable depths of the Hegelian *Geist*, among others—reveals the significance of thinking of identity for a genuine understanding of the plenitude of the Same and the assessment of the responsibility for sharing the one world and the one culture identical for all humans.

The third relevant stage in the history of sameness is the postulation of the absolutely singular differential and its intrinsic link to the identical Same or, in other words, the conceptualization of sameness as constituted by the recognition of the otherness of the differential. The thought of difference and otherness is, however, by no means dismissive of that of identity, but on the contrary, the right balance between identity and difference is the sole way to experience the plenitude of sameness. The stage of thinking of pure difference (with Nietzsche onward) has been thus broached within the philosophy of sameness in its relatedness to that of identity in a relationship of conjoining in distinction.

Despite the fact that, as Derrida has remarked, Greek thought had ‘proffered the *epekeina tes ousias*, by welcoming alterity in general into the heart of the logos’,² the long tradition of thinking of pure identity has been misinterpreting the role of singularity and difference within sameness by subordinating them to the dominating concept of identity. The period of thinking of pure difference may thus be defined as a quest to return to the plenitude of sameness not by denying the factor of identity, but by counterbalancing it with that of difference through pointing to the fact that difference has always already been inscribed within sameness.

As has been displayed in the study, this period eventually gains pertinence starting with Nietzsche’s postulation of pure difference. Nietzsche overturns the history of sameness with its limitedness to thinking of pure identity by postulating the will to power as the differential element of force, upon the ground of which pluralism or difference finds its immediate corroboration.³ He denies the dominating idea of the identity of the Same in order to affirm the Eternal Return as the return of the different in the sense of repetition as displayed through the example of the dice throw which affirms both: necessity and chance, chaos and circle, being and becoming, unity and multiplicity, cycle (circular movement) and chaos (mass of force) (*Will to Power*, II, 325). Yet, the affirmation of the different in Nietzsche is not the denial of sameness, but rather the affirmation of its unity in a correlation in which identity does not suppress or abolish difference, and, similarly, difference is not detached from the idea of sameness.

Heidegger continues the tradition of postulating sameness with regard to the right balance between identity and difference. In so doing, he withdraws the issue of sameness from the metaphysical context of universality or abstraction and raises it by virtue of the question of Being. Here sameness is discussed according to the self-veiling essence of Being in the difference between Being and beings and acquires a hold on the given via the finitude of *Dasein* in terms of its fundamental structures of thrownness, of *being-with* and being expropriated by the world in its difference. For Heidegger, thus, ‘the Same is truly the Same only in that which is

² Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 153.

³ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 7.

different'.⁴ As we can see, the *other* or the different in Heidegger is not detached from sameness, but is rather its utmost possibility and is acknowledged in its quintessential oppositional character, in 'the genuine relationship [...] of a uniting that is not a confused mixing but a conjoining in distinction'.⁵

Derrida summarizes the achievements of the stage of thinking of pure difference by pointing to the limits of classical metaphysics and the impossibility of thinking of sameness without considering the factor of the absolutely singular differential. He represents sameness as a potentially meaningful matrix of *différance* that can be experienced in the *jouissance*, in the dynamical openness to new contexts. What Derrida primarily aims at is the showing up, the stressing of the factor of the different which has always already been inscribed within sameness by deconstructing the metaphysical signified of the Same and liberating the forbidden *jouissance* as an experience of freedom in an open de-centered system.

To summarize, with the development that the thought of sameness has undergone by Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida, it has undoubtedly reached its pinnacle: the assessment of sameness by virtue of the right balance between identity and difference. Here, the idea of sameness is not dismissive of difference and singularity, neither is the quest for identity a threat to particularity. Similarly, the postulation of the absolutely singular differential does not affect the validity and pertinence of sameness, but leads to a conception of sameness in which the *same* world that all humans share is the one which is equally open to the other and the different.

The abovementioned assessment of sameness with respect to the right balance between identity and difference has been reached on the basis of the juxtaposition of the three relevant stages in the history of sameness. The present inquiry has also revealed that the significance of this balance is so determinant with Heidegger and Derrida, among others, that, admittedly, it is hard to see why we still need to stress its absolute indispensability. This need, we argue, is conditioned by the subsequent misinterpretation of the conception of difference as the denial of sameness in its genuine sense of a universal openness to the

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, transl. by W. McNeill and J. Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 123.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, p. 125.

challenges of the other and hence, the assertion of a radical otherness deprived of its intrinsic link to universality. The misinterpretation of the conception of difference is one of the reasons for the frequent distortion of the balance of sameness in socio-political contexts and in artistic creations. In times, this distortion takes the form of the thought of pure difference completely detached from sameness, i.e. of the memory and consciousness of the identical world, values, and culture that all humans share. This brings about unsolvable conflicts, ethical issues, and a situation in which the alienated other becomes more important than the plenitude of sameness, thereby becoming discriminatory of universality and hence, of its very own singularity. It also conditions the degradation of aesthetics into transaesthetics (Baudrillardian metaphor) and the prevalence of insignificant art works devoid of the thought of the plenitude of sameness. Another reason for the disbalance of sameness is the misinterpretation of identity as dismissive of singularity and otherness and its domination over the different in a way as to homogenize or root it out as a threat to sameness. This kind of disbalance brings to what Baudrillard calls a police-state globalization, a total control, a terror based on 'law-and-order measures'.⁶ It also puts real art works under the threat of losing their very own singularity, thereby once again becoming discriminatory of universality.

As we can conclude, the assessment of sameness by virtue of the right balance between identity and difference is more than ever valid and pertinent. So, the inquiry into its various postulations aims to stress the absolute indispensability of the right balance, rather than the choice between either of the two essential factors, in a genuine corroboration of sameness. Moreover, it aims to emphasize that the question is how to meet both contradictory exigencies of universalization and differentiation at the same time in a genuine understanding of the conception of sameness. Solely by simultaneously facing these inexorable factors we can experience the true plenitude of sameness for the sake of building a free world not of consumption but of creation.

⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *La violence du Mondial* in *Power Inferno* (Paris: Galilee, 2002), pp. 63-83.

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