UNMAKING HISTORY-AS-FICTION:

Decoupling the Two Incompatible Principles of Language in Hayden White's Linguistic Turn, 1970s–2000s

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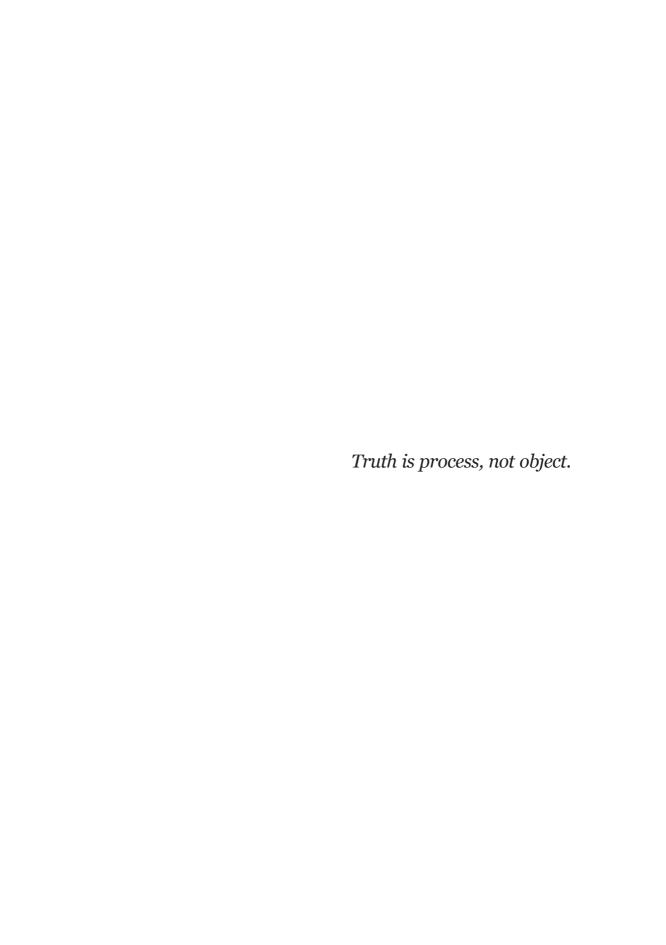Aarhus, Denmark

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Truth is process, not object.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the deeply hidden metaphysical presuppositions from traditional philosophy of language that are built into the theoretical construct "history-as-fiction." This construct is Hayden White's main contribution to the linguistic turn in the study of history writing, or historiography, and is framed here from roughly the early 1970s to the early 2000s. History-as-fiction posits the *figural* (tropic) nature of historical consciousness, described in terms of the master tropes of rhetoric, including metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. This figural analysis, which White developed on the basis of Giambattista Vico's tropological theory of language, hypothesizes the unconscious linguistic strategies as structuring elements in historians' writings. White is unaware, however, that *tropology* "unmakes" history-as-fiction by sidelining the very framework it was meant to fulfill.

Classical literary theory, which White employed as his framework in developing his tropological analysis, emerged from the powerfully influential structural linguistics developed by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure very early in the twentieth century. Moreover, Saussure's key *principle of language* is the arbitrariness of the binary linguistic sign (i.e., the random pairing of the sensory sound-image of a word with its meaning). This binary arbitrariness was the ancient cornerstone upon which Saussure constructed the science of modern linguistics as a system of linguistic value. Saussure constructed his system by separating the static language system (*la langue*) from the living, changing, spoken language in everyday use (*la parole*). My argument in this thesis is that structuralism and poststructuralism both depend on language *as a system of values.*

The strategy this thesis pursues is to separate White's figural, tropological (Vichian) analysis from his (post)structuralist (Saussurean) framework, within which he analyzed history-as-fiction. From my methodological standpoint of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE), I examine tropology and (post)structuralism within their own philosophical contexts and logics, which reveals a hidden tension between these two approaches. White, however, does not recognize the separate and incompatible principles of language implicit in these two lines of theory; rather, he unproblematically combines them in his work on historical discourse.

The two principles of language underpinning each theoretical strand of White's construct is what provokes the tension that I explore at the core of history-as-fiction in its "unmaking." These principles are: 1.) (Vico's) "contingency" of human language necessarily dependent on a human body moving and acting in the world; and 2.) (Saussure's) "arbitrariness" of the binary linguistic sign. The first encompasses

a contingent, enactive embodied principle of language. The second is a dualist, disembodied principle of language.

A decisive element of my argumentation is that Vico's conception of metaphorical (poetic) language runs closely parallel with my methodological approach of AE. *Autopoietic* enaction departs from the traditional (and familiar) separation between substance and form. Traditional (reductive) philosophical analysis discovers the *properties of components,* as if all philosophy were only concerned with the examination of nonliving matter. By contrast, enaction discovers the (synthesizing) *relations between components* of living structures that are dynamic in essence.

The key feature of AE in living structure is that it does not "represent," but rather directly enacts, or brings forth, the world it experiences. In this sense, "reality" does not pre-exist but is constantly co-created with the organism in its ongoing response to the environment through its lived experience; this is the essence of *autopoiesis,* the dynamic process of living from moment to moment. In this sense metaphorical language is living, and "eventful." Vico was the first to emphasize this connection between lived experience and language in his deeply held conviction that metaphorical language enacts or brings forth the social world, where (metaphorical) words *are* embodied deeds.

Whereas Vico understood the *embodied* nature of metaphorical language, Saussure, following Aristotle, did not. Moreover, Saussure's ignorance of the metaphorical nature of language did not prevent him from using metaphor for his theorizing. Saussure's principle of "arbitrariness" cleared the way for his telling choice of (static, nonliving) metaphor for the language system itself: "coins as units of value in a currency system."

The potential for AE to eventually move beyond the representationalist, (post) structuralist system of thought is, however, also built into White's construct. White has facilitated the (re)focus on the tropological nature of language as Vico struggled to understand it. It was White, after all, who first recognized the value in examining the role of tropology, which makes him the key, transitional figure in the application of AE to historiography.

What White could not know, however, was that this *figural* element would burst the boundaries of the very (post)structuralist frame that tropology was meant to complement and enlarge. This transition from the (post)structuralist frame to the nature of embodied language has profound implications for historiographical research. Historians as embodied sense-makers of past lived experience *can communicate* aspects of what they understand, both in terms of what is familiar and what is different about that past. Going forward, metaphorical analysis on an embodied basis can provide the "new tools of thought" needed to move historiography beyond the linguistic turn.

TIIVISTELMÄ (Abstract in Finnish)

Tässä väitöstutkimuksessa tarkastellaan käsitystä "historiasta fiktiona" (*"history-as-fiction"*) teoreettisena konstruktiona ja erityisesti tuohon käsitykseen sisäänrakentuneita, perinteisestä kielifilosofiasta peräisin olevia metafyysisiä piilo-oletuksia. Kyseinen historiakäsitys on Hayden Whiten keskeisin kontribuutio historiankirjoituksen eli historiografian lingvistiseen käänteeseen, joka rajataan tässä ulottuvaksi 1970-luvun alusta 2000-luvun alkuun. Ajatus historiasta fiktiona perustuu oletukseen historiallisen tietoisuuden *figuratiivisuudesta* (tropologisuudesta), jota kuvaavat retoriikan perustroopit eli metafora, metonymia, synekdokee ja ironia. Figuratiivisessa analyysissään White nojaa Giambattista Vicon tropologiseen kieliteoriaan ja olettaa alitajuisten kielellisten strategioiden konstruoivan historiankirjoitusta. Whitelta on jäänyt kuitenkin huomaamatta, että *tropologia* vie pohjan historia fiktiona -konstruktiolta ja ajaa samalla itse teoriasuuntauksen ohi, jota tropologian oli tarkoitus täydentää.

Tropologisen analyysinsä viitekehyksenä White käyttää (klassista) kirjallisuusteoriaa, joka puolestaan perustuu kielitieteilijä Ferdinand de Saussuren 1900-luvun alussa kehittämään vaikutusvaltaiseen strukturalistiseen kieliteoriaan. Saussuren keskeinen *kielellinen periaate* on binaarisen eli kaksijakoisen kielellisen merkin arbitraarisuus (toisin sanoen sanan äänikuvan yhteys sanan merkitykseen on sattumanvarainen). Ajatus merkin binaarisuudesta ja arbitraarisuudesta juontuu antiikin kielikäsityksestä, josta Saussure kehitti modernin kielitieteen ajatuksen kielestä kielellisten arvojen järjestelmänä: Saussure erotti staattisen kielijärjestelmän (*langue*) sekä elävän ja muuttuvan, puhutun kielen (*parole*) käsitteellisesti toisistaan. Tutkimukseni yksi väittämistä on, että sekä strukturalismi että jälkistrukturalismi nojaavat ajatukseen kielestä *kielellisten arvojen järjestelmänä*.

Väitöstutkimuksen strategiana on erottaa Whiten figuratiivinen, tropologinen (vicolainen) teoria (jälki)strukturalistisesta (saussurelaisesta) viitekehyksestä, jossa White analysoi historiaa fiktiona. Metodologisena tarkastelunäkökulmana Whiten ajatteluun käytän *autopoieettista* enaktiivista ruumiillisuuden käsitettä (*autopoietic enactive embodiment*, AE). Kun tropologiaa ja (jälki)strukturalismia tarkastellaan teoriasuuntausten omissa filosofisissa konteksteissaan kyseisestä ruumiillisuuden näkökulmasta, niiden välillä ilmenee jännite: ne perustuvat erilaisiin, yhteensopimattomiin kielikäsityksiin. White ei kiinnitä huomiota näiden implisiittisten kielellisten periaatteiden väliseen ristiriitaan, vaan yhdistää teoriat näennäisen ongelmattomasti analyysissään historiankirjoituksesta diskurssina.

Tutkimukseni päähuomio kohdistuu Whiten historia fiktiona -konstruktioon sisältyviin kahteen erilaiseen kielelliseen periaatteeseen ja niiden aiheuttamaan

jännitteeseen, joka purkaa koko konstruktion. Nämä kielelliset periaatteet ovat: 1.) (Vicon ajatus) ihmiskielen "kontingentista luonteesta" ja sidoksisuudesta maailmassa liikkuvan ja toimivan ihmisen ruumiiseen sekä 2.) (Saussuren ajatus) binaarisen kielellisen merkin "arbitraarisuudesta". Ensimmäinen on kontingentti, (enaktiivinen) ruumiillinen käsitys kielestä, toinen dualistinen, ruumiillisuudesta irrallinen kielikäsitys.

Argumentaationi keskeisenä elementtinä esitän Vicon käsityksen metaforisesta (poeettisesta) kielestä olevan hyvin samansuuntainen AE:hen perustuvan metodologisen lähestymistapani kanssa. *Autopoieettinen* merkityksiä luova toiminta eli enaktivismi hylkää perinteisen (ja tutun) ajatuksen sisällön ja muodon erosta. Perinteisessä (reduktiivisessa) filosofisessa analyysissa pyritään selvittämään *komponenttien ominaisuuksia,* ikään kuin kaiken filosofian tarkoitus olisi elottomien asioiden tarkastelu. Enaktivismi selvittää sen sijaan elollisten olioiden *komponenttien välisiä* (kokonaisuuksia muodostavia) *suhteita*, jotka ovat olemukseltaan dynaamisia.

Olennainen ajatus elollisen olion autopoieettisessa enaktivismissa on se, ettei se luo maailmasta "representaatioita", vaan luo pikemminkin kokemaansa maailmaa. Tässä suhteessa "todellisuutta" ei ole olemassa ihmiselle sellaisenaan, vaan ihminen elollisena oliona osallistuu todellisuuden luomiseen eletyn kokemuksen kautta vuorovaikutuksessa ympäristönsä kanssa; tämä on autopoieesin ydin, hetkestä toiseen elämisen dynaaminen prosessi. Tässä mielessä metaforinen kieli on elävää ja "tapahtuvaa". Vico korosti ensimmäisenä tätä eletyn kokemuksen ja kielen yhteyttä vankkumattomassa näkemyksessään, jonka mukaan metaforinen kieli luo sosiaalisen maailman, jossa (metaforiset) sanat *ovat* ruumiillisia tekoja.

Vico siis ymmärsi metaforisen kielen *ruumiillisuuden,* toisin kuin Aristoteleen perinteeseen nojaava Saussure. Vaikka Saussure siten sivuuttikin kielen metaforisen luonteen, se ei estänyt häntä kuvaamasta kielijärjestelmäänsä metaforalla. Merkin "arbitraarisuuden" periaate mahdollisti paljon kertovan (staattisen ja elottoman) metaforavalinnan: "kolikoista ja niiden suhteellisista arvoista muodostuva valuuttajärjestelmä."

Whiten ajatteluun on näin kuitenkin yhtä lailla sisäänrakennettuna enaktiivisen ruumiillisuuden tarjoama mahdollisuus päästä eteenpäin representationalistisesta, (jälki)strukturalistisesta ajattelusta. Onhan White suunnannut huomion (uudelleen) kielen tropologiseen luonteeseen siinä merkityksessä, kuin Vico pyrki sen ymmärtämään. Siten Whitella on ollut avainrooli myös siinä, että historiografiassa on alettu kiinnostua autopoieettisen enaktivismin soveltamisesta.

White ei voinut kuitenkaan ennakoida historiografiaan lisäämänsä *figuratiivisen* elementin kaikkea vaikutusta eli sitä, että täydentämisen ja laajentamisen sijaan tropologia johtaisi (jälki)strukturalistisen viitekehyksen rajojen purkautumiseen. Siirtymisellä (jälki)strukturalistisesta viitekehyksestä ruumiilliseen kielikäsitykseen on perustavia seurauksia historiografiselle tutkimukselle. Kun historioitsijat

ymmärretään ruumiillisiksi, eletyistä menneisyyden kokemuksista merkityksiä luoviksi toimijoiksi, heidän ymmärretään myös *voivan kommunikoida* jotakin ymmärtämästään: niin siitä, mikä menneisyydessä on tuttua, kuin siitä, mikä siinä on erilaista. Tulevaisuutta ajatellen metaforinen, ruumiillisuuteen perustuva analyysi voi tarjota niitä kaivattuja "uusia ajattelun välineitä", joilla historiografia voi siirtyä lingvistisestä käänteestä eteenpäin.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis engages the *autopoietic* and *enactive* nature (and theory) of embodiment (AE) as applied to history writing, and specifically to Hayden White's treatment of it. In the mid-1970s, when I was a teen, I sensed that something like what I've now learned about embodiment must play some deeply hidden role in the way humans interact and communicate with one another in everyday life. But it wasn't what I was being taught. By the mid- to late 1990s I started coming across some books that began connecting my own dots. Books by cognitive neuroscientists of emotion, such as Antonio Damasio, revolutionized the study of what makes humans "rational" creatures in the first place. In fact, these books on our emotional nature deeply impressed me. Another stunning find for me was the work of the Austrian physicist and philosopher Fritjof Capra, whose book *The Web of Life,* which I read when it was published in 1996, fully captured my imagination; I hoped that I could someday use Capra's work in my main area of interest, historical theory. Since 2000, the books have only multiplied, ultimately giving me courage to move forward with the attempt to make sense of these ideas, as sketched out and presented in this thesis.

What quickly became evident from the beginning of my project, however, was that my methodological standpoint of "embodiment" was itself not a settled concept easily defined or understood in its own circles of embodied cognitive science, let alone in historical theory, where the term embodiment is rarely used as a keyword. At most, even in the philosophical literature, embodiment was understood as a kind of supplement to a "methodological individualist" approach. This approach, however, leaves out of the picture *how* such social practices circle back to constitute individual human activities, in an ecosystem of mutual, co-creation. As such, to my growing concern, the term embodiment itself desperately needed some explication within the context of my project.

In efforts to bring embodiment to the forefront of my work, I switched topics in 2012 from my case study in Holocaust historiography (where the topic itself distracted from my embodied standpoint) and took on board, instead, a critical analysis of American historiographer Hayden White's theoretical construct "history-as-fiction." At the outset, I originally thought White's construct might be closer to embodiment than turned out to be the case, given that he championed the work of the Italian thinker Giambattista Vico. I pressed on to test this hypothesis, but it completely collapsed in the face of reading White's essays, one after the other – as read from my embodied position of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE). I was frankly surprised at what I found; I can honestly say that I did not foresee the way this work would turn out. In other words, the results are not a confirmation of my

biases. I was just searching for the source of the dissonance I'd always sensed in White's essays.

But I've always admired White's powerful and passionate effort to pierce historians' (but not only historians') complacency in what they are doing. I indeed share his urgent (ethical) need to shake awake the sleeping dogs where they lie; I also agree, in principle, with Kalle Pihlainen in the notion that many are still *asleep*. Now at the beginning of 2017, I believe that this work is even more urgently needed, as many people struggle to confront the mainstreaming of "alternative facts" that a (*static*) system of relative values apparently validates and permits. Indeed, a "static" system of absolute values permits all facts, even alternative ones, with their own tolerated place at the table of alternative interpretations. I reject such a "static" system and argue against it on every page of this thesis, but not in terms of the positivist "science" that White has always rejected. There is yet another way to discuss these important, urgent issues.

As White has always said/written, and in this he is correct: what is going on with language – out of one's awareness – is *constitutive* of narrative production in general, even for historical writing. White, in this sense, is the transitional figure for historical theory in the twentieth century, and I intend to move with what I believe is best about what he investigated (Vico) and probe this further with the tools at my disposal. These tools are, in any case, new tools – ones White never had access to – and they give me a different standpoint from which to argue the case of language. This standpoint is rooted in the life sciences (biology and chemistry), and these give me a tool that White is, in some sense, already familiar with through his engagement with Vico.

Impressed by the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, at least early in his career, White well understood the power of the distinction between "what is living and what is dead" in theoretical investigation; in following the trail of Vico, this thesis allows me to take this Crocean distinction yet further. For me now, through the work of Fritjof Capra, the focal point of my investigation becomes the distinction between structures that are first: *static and dynamic.* The second dimension of my investigation is whether these structures are: *living* or *nonliving* (i.e., never having lived at all, *disembodied,* and so not even "dead") that can be found at the core of White's history-as-fiction. These two levels address what is embodied (living) and what is disembodied (nonliving), which lies at the core of what I offer in this work, and nothing will be understood, if this point is not acknowledged.

Many people have played different roles in bearing with me as I've worked my winding way through this difficult project over too many years. Indeed, despite the solitary nature of reading and writing, doctoral studies, as such, are intensely social, as few researchers can actually afford to be islands unto themselves, due to the very "systemic" nature of work within an institution like a university. Beginning my doctoral studies at the University of Helsinki in 2006 under Finnish economic and

social historian Professor Matti Peltonen, I have enjoyed the supervision of one of Finland's most experienced (and patient) theoreticians of history and *microhistory*. His unflagging support, guidance (incisive questions), and interest in this project over all these years kept me going. Moreover, after Matti's retirement from the department in 2016, I am indebted to Professor Antti Häkkinen for stepping in to see this project through to the final defense stage.

My second advisor since 2004, Finnish narrative theorist Kalle Pihlainen, hosted two courses in Turku, Finland in 2011 and 2013 (at Åbo Academy University) that were pivotal for the development and direction of my work – even if our views steadily diverged in consequence of these courses, as I caught sight of the path I needed to follow. I would also like to thank the two pre-examiners of my thesis, historical theorist Ewa Domańska and historian Wulf Kansteiner for their insightful comments, suggestions, and critiques of this work in its first submitted version. In this respect, it was a pleasure for me to read their reports, including Kalle's final critique of my thesis. I did my very best to address all their concerns in the final, revised text presented here.

Another set of academics in Finland, who have been very important for my development over the decades, include first and foremost the psychohistorian Professor Juha Siltala, whose supportive supervision of my Master's thesis in the late 1990s gave me courage to continue with my research. Four other significant people, who sent me on my way with equally encouraging support, include the historians Matti Klinge, Rainer Knapas, and Derek Fewster, the latter of whom is also an archaeologist, who taught a course from autumn 1995 to spring 1996. This course introduced me to Marshall Berman's book, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air,* which I embraced with my whole heart. Finally, the artist and media theorist Lily Díaz-Kommonen encouraged me to develop a workshop that I taught to a group of her students in the early 2000s. This workshop held the seeds that this thesis has developed further. I thank each of you for your encouragement!

Aside from my supervisors and support in Finland, a very profound debt of gratitude goes out to my dear friend, Berkeley-based Vichian philosopher Sandra Rudnick Luft. I contacted her out of the blue in early 2014 to help me with Vico, whom I do not master. As she read through (and critiqued) the different drafts of my thesis, she taught me to think more about how to better employ the *embodied* vocabulary with more sensitivity and nuance. Furthermore, her willingness to disagree with me so gently and graciously was hugely productive for me, as we gradually realized where she stands on these issues (way out ahead of me). We may not see eye-to-eye on the necessity to distinguish language in the embodied way that I have done here, but we remain friends. More so, she remains a great mentor, whom I cherish.

I would also like to thank the following scholars who, at different points along the way, answered my (emergency) call for help at critical moments in the writing of this

me her office in July 2015, as I finished the initial draft! With deep gratitude, I finally mention my dear friends Camille Buttingsrud in Copenhagen, Denmark, Alla Choifer in Gothenburg, Sweden, Anne Dykers in Maryland, USA, and Tiina Holopainen in Turku, Finland. In their wonderful company I have discussed embodiment from the standpoints of their own areas of expertise: art and culture, psychology, embodied psychotherapy, and translation, respectively.

Closer to home, I register a huge debt of thanks to both economic historian Christopher Lloyd and fellow *autopoietic* enactive embodied (AE) thinker Rūta Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz, whose interest and regular discussions in Helsinki during the course of 2016 have allowed me to catch my breath and unwind, as this project moved to its final phases. I would have survived even without your generous and lively, wonderful inputs Chris and Rūta, but I survived with so much more dignity and grace than would otherwise have been possible. Thank you both from the bottom of my heart.

Finally, I will mention four dear friends, immensely strong women, who did not live to see me complete this project: Kathleen (Kay) Ahonen, Barbara Fagerman, Pearl Lönnfors, and Liana Wuttig. Moreover, right up until her sudden, untimely passing exactly one year ago, Kay Ahonen had taken on the task of revising multiple drafts of my thesis, in an effort to help me unpack my intuitions in more clearly expressed language. Her tough-minded reading of my work always challenged my leaky, convoluted thinking. Thus, to the extent that my present efforts succeed to any degree, I attribute this to her resolute mentorship of my writing. I will always cherish her friendship.

Thanking my immediate family, including the encouragement and unwavering support of my mother Lauralee O'Brien Jackson and my father Douglas Hirte, is a more sensitive issue, of course. For their love and support of my stubborn, endless efforts over a decade, I sincerely thank them and my husband Peter, son Johann Michael (John), and daughter Anne Elizabeth (Annie) for not giving up on me, when they were all quite tired of this project. Focused work for too long with a growing family – very far away from one's family of origin – takes its toll on everyone and pushes hard against all the boundaries of any (healthy) family life. In my case, animated discussions on wildly different topics with John, compulsive games of double solitaire with Annie, and all those history-of-science documentaries you found for us to watch together, Peter, helped keep me going in the face of uphill battles on many fronts, including those against myself. In other words, John, Annie, and Peter you stuck with me, encouraged me, and made sure that I remained grounded in ongoing, everyday embodied experience.

Espoo, Finland, 31 March 2017

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE FINDING THAT CAME AS A SURPRISE

The fiction of history (henceforth history-as-fiction) is a theoretical construct employed by American narrative theorist Hayden White (b. 1928), who pioneered and remains the pivotal, leading figure in what is termed the "linguistic turn" in the study of history writing, or historiography. History-as-fiction, roughly framed in this study from the early 1970s to the early 2000s, posits the *figural* nature of historical consciousness as expressed in historians' writings (i.e., the rhetorical, linguistic strategies as structuring elements in historians' narratives). This figural element White derives, moreover, from *tropology* as developed by Neapolitan rhetorician Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) in his writings that theorize the major tropes of rhetoric (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony), which are commonly understood as *figures of speech*.[1]

White's aim, at least until the 1980s (before the general impact of poststructuralism on the Anglo-American scene), was to contribute specifically to the study of historical discourse in terms of the "tropological nature of structuralist thought" (White 1985, 260, n. 3). The theoretical framework within which White employs the Vichian tropes throughout the period under study here is classical structuralist and poststructuralist, hereafter "(post)structuralist literary theory," specifically in terms of the negative, differential language system *as a system of values* – of which more below. In the following, my strategy is to separate, that is to "decouple," the strands of theory (tropological and post-/structuralist) that White combined in his general "semiotic" approach to history writing. My goal is to examine (post)structuralism within its

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[1] Vico made his career as professor of rhetoric in Naples, Italy, where he was mostly an obscure figure during his own lifetime. Later during the nineteenth century, he became known especially in Germany for his work *New Science* (Third Edition, It. 1744; Eng. 1948, 1968, 1984). This work focused on the study and theory of the tropes of rhetoric and the way these served, in turn, in a recurring, *tropical* theory of history, on his telling. Literary theorist Kenneth Burke termed these the "Four Master Tropes," a term I use throughout this thesis (on Burke's role, see, White 1985, 80, n. 42). Moreover, I specifically follow Sandra Rudnick Luft's (2003) presentation of Vico's theory of metaphorical language, as opposed to his theory of *history,* which she and I (and also White) leave aside in our respective works.

own context from my methodological approach, which I describe only briefly below, and in more detail in Chapter 2.

The main question that guided me throughout this process of research is not evident to everyone. Narrative theorists themselves would not, for instance, even ask the question I pose here. Not only would it be irrelevant to them, it would go against the very grain of their own argumentation for history-as-fiction. For me, from the beginning, however, the question was always: "What is the inexplicable *tension* at the core of history-as-fiction?"[2]

When I began this work, I did not understand what was producing this tension, and because narrative theorists would never ask such a question, not even White himself understands that there is such a deeply embedded problem – let alone that there is an impossible tension at the heart of his construct. This is what makes the work of analysis here possible: the separation and breakdown (analysis) of White's construct into its constituent parts, rather than a *synthesizing* overview of the relationship between its component parts. One can only break down and examine, in this way, what is already dead or nonliving in the first place. Just to be very clear, my work in this thesis is that of an autopsy of the linguistic turn, as characterized *from* the standpoint of living structures. An autopsy ultimately demands more analysis (reduction) than it does synthesis (relation), which is why it may appear that my critique is itself delivered in a heavily binary form, "pitching dead against living structures."[3] Indeed, until now, these "dead" (nonliving) structures are all we really "know" about in Western philosophy, which is why I must begin from them – and from White, who struggles as hard as Vico did to escape them.

White ultimately, however, takes for granted and combines two, incompatible *principles of language* that are hidden within the layers of the theories constituting history-as-fiction. I understand these two principles as manifestations of two completely different approaches to language *tout court*. Moreover, I tease apart and separate (decouple) these two main strands of theory that White combines – tropological and (post)structuralist – in order to examine the underlying, incompatible principles from my methodological position of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE), which I elaborate on in more detail in Chapter 2. Quite simply, if the principles were not incompatible, there would be no need for the reductive analysis applied in their separation.

Briefly, it suffices to say here that AE was inspired by the work of the Chilean neurobiologists Humberto Maturana (b. 1928) and Francisco J. Varela (1946–2001). Together with their colleagues, they introduced the biology of cognition, that is, of

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2   This question likewise motivated Dorothy Anne Dykers's (1984) analysis, for instance, in her critique of White's *Metahistory* for her Master's thesis at Georgetown University (personal communication, January 1, 2017).

3   More can be said about the binary form of my critique, but this must suffice, at least for now, in answer to observations offered by Wulf Kansteiner (personal communication).

transferring the concept of *autopoiesis,* or self-organization theory, from cybernetics to biology during the 1960s and throughout the 1970s (Maturana & Varela 1980). In employing AE as my methodological tool, and applying it in my critique of history-as-fiction, my contribution to theory, as it happens, is thereby twofold. There is an explanatory "gap" in historical theory that AE can help to fill in a shift to embodiment; however, the "enactivism" (AE) that I support is itself still under lively debate and formation. My work here is therefore meant to fill a general, twofold "gap in research," meant not only to contribute to the discussion on the nature of historiography (i.e., the nature and study of history writing) during the linguistic turn, but also to contribute to the contemporary debate on the nature of embodiment in AE as well (e.g., Torrance 2005; Gallagher 2011; Maiese 2011; Martiny 2011; De Jesus 2016; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016).

My contribution to AE is in suggesting ways that philosopher Fritjof Capra's (1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) work can meet some of the criticisms that AE now confronts (e.g., De Jesus 2016; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016). Capra both interprets and develops Maturana and Varela's *autopoietic* framework and embraces cognitive linguistics, which Maturana originally initiated (see, e.g., Capra 1996). Moreover, Capra (2003) also embraces the work of cognitive linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson (1999, 2003) – as I emphatically do as well – which enables me to comment on the ongoing debate in AE in terms of language. I do this by bringing to the table principles of embodiment that Capra discusses, and which I place, for purposes of clarification, within the frame of what economic historian Christopher Lloyd (1993) calls *dynamic* methodological "structurism" (on this term, see the discussion in Chapter 2). This particular configuration is designed to address some of the criticism that AE continues to face (esp. in, e.g., Gallagher 2011; Martiny 2011; De Jesus 2016; see Chapter 2).

The reason for the twofold nature of my contribution to two different theoretical discussions, moreover, comes down to the case of language as presented here. In fact, the AE debate does not discuss language as an important element of human (embodied) communication, nor what this could mean for the ongoing development of AE itself; likewise, the (post)structuralist historical theory of the linguistic turn offers only an abstract and disembodied (traditional) version of language in the discussion related to historical *discourse.* Capra's discussion of embodiment as a living process, together with his embrace of Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) is the vehicle of my twofold contribution. Further, I place this living, dynamic process within the promising *dynamic* structurist framework that Lloyd's (1993) work already provides. The case of language helps to clarify all the tools I deploy here.

Indeed, the two principles of language that White combined within history-as-fiction as "the *tropological* nature of *structuralist* thought" (White 1985, 260, n. 3) were of no major concern to him, because (for him) embodiment was not at

the center of his focus; there was never any theoretical path between embodiment and historical discourse during the heyday of the linguistic turn. Indeed, research into embodiment in terms of cognitive linguistics had only really just begun in the 1970s. Thus, as far as White is concerned, perhaps even now, embodiment and historical discourse remain worlds apart. But, even in the case that he was never concerned with the nature of language at the heart of the theories he combined,[4] it is only logical that the framing theory actually enforces the priority of one principle of language over the other.

In other words, even if one's focus lies on *discourse,* the core principle of language around which this discourse is constructed will inevitably be a principle of language that White embraces, even if he is not at all aware of, or concerned with such a principle; it enters as a stowaway in history-as-fiction. Ironically, this is the very argument White uses in the case of historians' ignorance of the philosophical dimension that manifests itself within the historians' texts (e.g., White 1985). Their *language* points implicitly to this hidden dimension that he theorizes using his (post)structuralist standpoint, just as his own *language* points implicitly to the hidden dimension that I theorize here using my dynamic, embodied standpoint.

On my analytical cutting table, it became evident that these two very different principles of language could not reside together on equal footing within history-as-fiction. So, it made sense to me that White must have employed one principle and discarded or muffled the other. As it turns out, once I had isolated White's default "choice" of linguistic principle (arbitrariness, see below), I could show that this choice (ultimately) firmly tethers historical theory of the linguistic turn to the Western tradition of metaphysics it sought to escape (cf. Lorenz 1998; Ankersmit 2009). Furthermore, once I understood this point (against the grain of my initial intuition of White as a "Vichian thinker"), it opened up and began to account for the tension I originally sensed. This hidden tension in history-as-fiction consists in the two opposing principles of language that White's construct employs for different purposes: (1) the (Saussurean) arbitrariness of the sign at the core of structuralism; and (2) the (Vichian) contingent, embodied tropes at the core of tropology. Both "arbitrariness" and "necessary contingency" are principles of language in structuralism and tropology, respectively. But only one (arbitrariness) is operative *as* a taken-for-granted principle of language at the heart of the (post)structuralist theory that served as White's framework in his work on historical discourse.

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4   This is an important point, and I thank Ewa Domańska for this observation (personal communication). As I hope to show, however, the underlying *principle of language* comes automatically embedded within the framework White employs – or, "freely chooses." He risked a lot in this choice, which became trickier as the 1980s progressed, as I argue below.

In short, because White embraced the classical, (post)structuralist literary theory as his framing theory, he did not address or deflect what was already embedded in this framework. If it was White's intention to apply the tropes to the structuralist frame, in order to alleviate the methodologically holist and relativist nature of this frame, he failed to achieve this aim; rather, he merely brought the two principles into a relation of impossible tension with one another within history-as-fiction. Through these opposing principles at work within his construct, White thus unwittingly created a paradox. Metaphorically speaking, White's theoretical construct is revealed in this study to be an injured bird permanently grounded by a broken wing; when it tries to fly with its good (Vichian) wing, the broken (Saussurean) wing prevents it from taking flight and soaring.

This finding surprised me as much as anyone. From the outset, I had honestly expected my research to vindicate White's attention to the *figural* nature of historians' writings, much as Robert Doran (2010, 2013) defends White as a Vichian thinker today. I was convinced, as I set out to write, that the tropological elements that White champions in his work would ultimately overcome the (post)structuralist theoretical elements in which he happened to frame them. But, as I dug deeper into his essays, written over the course of four decades, this is not what I found. What I expected would have been much easier to handle than the complex situation at hand. It turns out that unpacking the "fiction" of history is difficult. It is easily like juggling many objects at once: there might be one object in each hand, but there is always at least one of these objects up in the air at any given moment, which made this analysis both hard to handle and difficult to easily present clearly.

Broadly in what follows in this introduction, I characterize the main issues by way of the metaphor of "juggling at least three balls in the air at once." The chapters in which I discuss these issues in more depth will not be introduced here chronologically, as they appear in the thesis. Rather, the compression of the whole argument here must be handled thematically, in order to contextualize them for an interested reader.

The first of these issues (in Section 1.2) in this juggling act is the question: What is fiction? The second issue (in Section 1.3) involves understanding the vital difference between the two principles of language, in terms of the linguistic *freedom* that is guaranteed by the arbitrariness of the sign. The third issue (in Section 1.4) deals with that proverbial third ball in the air, the "problem of knowledge" and the hidden way this third issue weighs into the discussion on history-as-fiction; as it turns out, this latter issue, the problem of knowledge, constitutes the main undercurrent of this thesis, driving it from beginning to end – for both history-as-fiction and my methodological approach, AE. The way I open up this issue in the thesis is to show (outlined in Section 1.5 below) the power of *nonliving* metaphors in traditional (and, therefore by default, also Saussurean) philosophy of language.

As it turns out, the key to my discussion of the two principles of language in history-as-fiction is a yet deeper distinction that can be applied to Western philosophy as a whole (e.g., Capra 1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014). This is the distinction between what is *living* (embodied) and *nonliving* (disembodied) at the heart, not just of historical discourse, but also higher up within the Saussurean (tradition-oriented) linguistic science, and finally implicated in the Western philosophical tradition at its source.

The difference between what is living and nonliving has to do with *motion,* movement. What is living moves under its own power by its own volition (even if driven to do so by its own needs), and what is nonliving remains *unmoving,* or static and fixed, so long as nothing moves it from the outside. In traditional philosophy, as Chapter 6 outlines, knowledge is always *disembodied,* that is, nonliving (eternal, fixed).

One of the major problems I encountered in studying history-as-fiction is that "knowledge" is simply deflected in White's discussion. That is, he takes for granted that his literary-theoretical standpoint already solves the problem of knowledge for historical theory, so that he can fully focus on the theme of "historical discourse." The (post)structuralist theory that White uses as his departure point for history-as-fiction, however, has not solved the problem of knowledge definitively. For one thing, (post)structuralist theory did not become "postmetaphysical" after (Derrida's) deconstruction, because the nature of language that underpins poststructuralism (deconstruction) remains disembodied (dualist), which is the predicate upon which metaphysics operates in the first place. The traditional principle of *mimesis* in deconstruction merely substitutes *mimesis* of the "same" for a *mimesis* of "difference," which changes the focus of *mimesis*, but does not change the nature of traditional *mimesis,* dependent as it is on "representation." This shift from structuralism to poststructuralism may mark a major shift of approach within classical literary theory itself, but it does not depart from the (Saussurean) language system as a disembodied, negative, differential *system of linguistic values*. In other words, merely changing the focus of *mimesis* does not, ultimately, move far enough away from representation or the nature of language as a disembodied conception at its core, as I argue in Chapter 3.

In the following, I address these three above issues that this thesis juggles with. Moreover, the conclusion I draw from my methodological standpoint is that the classical literary theory, which White embraced, presupposed the traditional principle notion of the *arbitrariness* of language, to which he remains committed, as I found, throughout the entire period under study; that is, from the early 1970s into the early 2000s. As it turns out, this arbitrary principle of language positioned White firmly within the circle of light and "knowledge" that Western metaphysics (ocularcentrism) created (e.g., Levin 1999). This sets the stage for the "unmaking" of history-as-fiction, when an *autopoietic,* enactive-embodied understanding of

language is applied with Vico's eighteenth-century metaphor theory, or tropology, in its sights (following esp., e.g., Capra 2003; Modell 2003; cf. Taylor 2016).

1.2   WHAT IS FICTION?

White's linguistic turn in historical theory first took shape in its structuralist-inspired form in the early to mid-1960s, as set out in Chapter 3. By the early 1970s, White appeared to be a committed structuralist in the vein of Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Roman Jakobson, among others (see Paul 2011). In 1973, White published his masterful, now classic *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (hereafter, White 1975). In the 1980s, Jacques Derrida's poststructuralism hit the Anglo-American scene with the gradual translations of his three-part critique of structuralism via phenomenology throughout the 1970s, as outlined in Chapter 3. The consequence for history-as-fiction in the light of poststructuralism was to dampen the overt structuralist thrust of White's framework, which thereafter absorbed what it could in acknowledgement of Derrida's theoretical contribution (esp., e.g., Domańska, ed. 1998; Rogne 2009). I nevertheless argue that White retained the firmly structuralist principle of *arbitrariness* (of which more below) that upheld his work throughout the period under study here.

In the 1990s, there was something of a backlash against history-as-fiction among historians, who struggled with the implications, for example, of *fictive* accounts of the genocide of the European Jews, as notably expressed by Holocaust historian Saul Friedländer (ed., 1992; Ginzburg 1992b). Towards the early 2000s, historical theory maintained its leading status on course with a typically Whitean exploration of history as narrative prose *writing*. But, it did so without ever finally being able to escape the controversy that the debate with the Holocaust historians had opened up.

In the negative, differential system of language championed by (post)structuralist literary theory, there is ultimately no grounding whatsoever for this *fictive* language. In essence, fictive writing always comprises a free-floating, autonomous "discourse" that can be said to cultivate the absolute collapse between "fact" and "value." Facts exist, no doubt; things really do happen in the world. But, when a writer takes on the task of elaborating (or narrating in relation to) such facts, the very act of writing interpolates those very facts into a "second-order" language or narrative with an inevitable "values" filter that simply cannot be "switched off." From the standpoint of writing, (post)structuralist theory employs the now negative *mimesis* of difference, in which propositional sentences occupy distinct, unique positions (infinite values) within the negative system of (absolutely) relative linguistic value.

Indeed, it cannot be denied that historian's narratives are expressed *as* writing, that is, *figurally*, like in any novel, or memoir, or news article, or anything else that appears in written form; it is language in written form as an alternate to spoken

language. There can be no successful argument against it. But *how do we experience* language? In other words, is language (especially writing) distinct from human experience in the way that (post)structuralist theory and Whitean history-as-fiction say it is?

I am not arguing that, because histories are written (like novels are written), this makes histories more like novels: i.e., *fictive*. I am arguing, rather, that because language is necessarily contingent on the human body moving and acting in an environment, both novels and histories are understood as language in embodied terms, as lived (phenomenological) experience, not in linguistic, fictive terms. For one thing, this latter "fictiveness" is a purely traditional linguistic argument. (Post) structuralists believe that language is a purely mental, disembodied construct in line with ancient theories of language, as I outline in Chapter 4. Many practicing historians, who disagree with the Whitean schema, may simply admit the nature of history writing as written narrative, but ultimately leave it at this and move on without further examination (as, e.g., Helo 2016 does). Rather than trying to pinpoint how history-as-fiction offends – by meeting White on his own ground and opening up the deep layers of White's construct – they simply elect to ignore the discussion altogether and move on.[5]

The difficulty with history-as-fiction, at least until now, is that White's argument for the (Vichian) tropological dimension of language is difficult to refute, insofar as histories are written texts. But, once one enters through this tropological door of written, figural language, the easy part ends and the difficult part begins. On the other side of this tropological door, one enters the household (framework) of traditional Western language philosophy and its ancient vocabulary, thereby enabling its many presuppositions to slip through unseen – like stowaways.

So, what does White mean by the "fiction" of history? First and foremost, it means that White examines the figural nature of historians' writings *within* his literary-theoretical framework. This then, in turn, means that fiction is *language* in the terms and outlook understood by the classical literary theory that shaped White intellectually (see Domańska, ed. 1998; see also Paul 2011). White's goal to develop the tropological dimension of structuralist thought meant primarily that fiction is the use of *figural* language (i.e., metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony), as merely rhetorical language, following Nietzsche. This function of fiction as *figures of speech* lies in the legacy and tradition of rhetoric since Aristotle, which Chapter 4 summarizes. But, White's examination does not go deeper than language *as language*, because he continues to adhere to the (dualist) structuralist principle of *arbitrariness* that supports his theorizing at least into the early 2000s (and perhaps beyond, as White 2013 implies). Arbitrariness is the key stumbling

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5   In Chapter 2, I briefly discuss some of the directions that current historical theory has engaged beyond the linguistic turn.

block that White has not been able to bypass, in the sense that this arbitrariness is the seed for the entire Saussurean system of language as a system of negative, differential relative value, which informs the disembodied nature of structuralism and poststructuralism alike.

Indeed, had White examined historians' writings within the (anti-rationalist) framework of Vico's contingent (embodied) principle of language, rather than arbitrariness, White would – of necessity – have come to quite radically different conclusions, just as Vico scholar Sandra Rudnick Luft (1999, 2003) has done. Indeed, Luft – with her radically embedded and embodied starting point in Vico's (embodied) metaphorical theory of language – has arrived far beyond White and considerably beyond the limited frame that this thesis encompasses. In this sense, Luft's work on Vico must remain a rather distant goal, in my view, until "philosophy" can catch up with her.

This is because frameworks, like White's, serve as over-arching tools or models that guide where one's attention is to be invested. Embodiment as the framework of this thesis naturally guides my attention to certain aspects of White's essays, and not to others, for example. But, pointing out the incommensurability between White's Saussurean arbitrariness of language and Vico's contingency of language on bodies *acting in the world* in the creation of culture is not the same as bridging the distance between them; my efforts merely attempt to point out the paradoxical tension that White's oversight has created for the theory of history-as-fiction.

The key to my reading of White was this: recognizing the *incompatibility* between the two principles of language, which are: (1) Giambattista Vico's principle of the necessary contingency of (metaphorical) language on the moving, acting human in the world; and (2) Ferdinand de Saussure's principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign, dictating the necessary "independence" of the sensory sound-image of the word from the concept or meaning of that same word. The first is an *embodied* principle of language that I do my best to elaborate in Chapter 6; the second is a *disembodied* principle of language, as outlined in Chapters 4–5.[6] The implication here is simply that, even if White himself does not look to Saussure directly as a guide for his work, White's embrace of (post)structuralism already predisposes him to a "preference" for the arbitrariness of language, due to the genetic relation that arbitrariness bears within the larger framework of systemic value that Saussure

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6   In these chapters (4–5), I outline the source of these ideas in the work of Saussure (1857–1913), professor in the University of Geneva, Switzerland, who founded modern scientific linguistics. He launched what is here called "classical (Francophone) literary theory," which has taken many forms followed by many of White's own sources (on White's structuralism, see Chapter 3). Saussure termed this new discipline "semiology," the study of linguistic sign systems. After his unexpected early death, Saussure's colleagues collected and edited the notes of students who had attended three successive courses of Saussure's university lectures. The resulting text was published in 1916 as *Cours de linguistique générale* (*Course in General Linguistics,* Eng. 1959, 1986, 2011). As John E. Joseph's (2012) masterful biography of Saussure outlines, it is the arbitrariness of the sign, among other essential characteristics, that underpins *the legacy of all forms of structuralism in the twentieth century* (642–644). See also: Thomas Pavel (2001); Chapter 3.

designed, formulated on the basis of his metaphor from theoretical economics, described in Chapter 5. In brief, the nature of essential arbitrariness transfers to the system of linguistic value through the *metaphor* Saussure used to model his system as both negative and differential. This preference for structuralism, in turn, blinded White to the nature of the necessary contingency of language on the body in-the-world as an embodied *principle of language,* which his disembodied structuralist framework suppressed. This suppression of the nature of the tropes as a cognitive tool in human language-use on the basis of our ongoing, lived experience in the world subsequently created the impossible tension this study highlights.

On the structuralist formula that White inherited from those thinkers that influenced him in his syncretic approach to language in historical theory, the arbitrariness of the binary sign was a necessary first principle. The sign was both binary (e.g., signifier/signified) and arbitrary, insofar as each of its sides was fully independent of the other. That is, there was no reason why spoken words would take any particular "sound-image" (signifier), when paired with a "concept" (signified), its meaning. In short, the sound of the word (its physical dimension, or percept) and its meaning (its psychological dimension, or concept) is not connected in any way at the very hub of Saussure's system of linguistic science, which is historical (conventional), not dependent on or associated with the body. The free association of each of the two sides of the sign (signifier/signified) has nothing to do with the operational movement of the human body in the world and, according to Saussure, this disembodied character of the sign is absolute.[7]

Moreover, this is what it means to call the linguistic sign "binary." The sign has two distinct sides: of sound (percept, or signifier) and meaning (concept, or signified). Saussure understood this binary nature of the sign to be fundamental, making it axiomatic in establishing his synchronic system of language (*la langue*). This standpoint is due to Saussure's acceptance of Aristotle's teaching on the conventionality of language, which is also why I characterize this adherence to traditional notions in such detail in Chapters 4–5. Conventional, rule-based language, as Aristotle had it, does not arise from the human body in any way; this is because Aristotle characterized perception to be the same for all men. Following Aristotle on language, then, Saussure insisted that the conventional rules of language are habitual, "historical" (not embodied).

Evidence against this ancient philosophical tradition of the arbitrariness of human language has been mounting for decades. Most recently, Damián E. Blasi and his colleages (2016) have convincingly demonstrated that language – individual

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7   Saussure (2011) asserts that "[b]ecause the sign is arbitrary, it follows no law other than that of tradition, and because it is based on tradition, it is arbitrary" (74). Saussure insisted that other human institutions (such as customs, laws, etc.) depended upon "the natural relations of things" (74). But human language, unlike these other human institutions, is "radically powerless" in consequence of the arbitrary nature of the sign, *and independent of the body* (75–76).

words of any language – is contingent on the living body ("gestures of the tongue," e.g., Capra 2003) not merely in French, English, or German, but across *two-thirds* of the world's 6000 human languages. The significance of this study by Blasi et al. (2016) appears as the third epigraph to Chapter 5. In other words, the social, living body coupled to its environment is very much actively involved in producing the so-called "sound-images" that Saussure thought to be absolutely independent and arbitrarily coupled to a concept or meaning.

This misunderstanding concerning the nature of language is the very core around which Saussure constructed his system of linguistic value; a construct that continues to underpin (post)structuralism, whether one adheres to arbitrariness or not. In other words, take away the disembodied *system* of negative, differential language *as a fixed and static system of values*, and what is left of postmodern literary theory? In fact, remove this fixed system, and also the "absolute relativity of all values" must vanish along with it.[8] What I propose to do instead, is to fill this gap, at least for now, as a beginning, with *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE).

In parallel with (but unconnected to) Vichian tropology, and unconnected to the hermeneutical emphasis of Luft's (1999, 2003) work on Vico, the framework of AE that I follow in this thesis relies on the necessary contingency (dependence) of human language on the living, moving body in the world. AE follows the French phenomenological tradition of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) serving as an initial inspiration. In addition to Merleau-Ponty, however, is also the ancillary impact of the American pragmatist philosopher and psychologist William James (1842–1910), among others who were eventually acknowledged along the way, including phenomenologist Hans Jonas (1903–1993) (see, e.g., Weber & Varela 2002). In cognitive linguistics, language is contingent on the body, also because spoken language has piggy-backed the very neural (sensorimotor) pathways that guide, or enable our various movements, especially hand movements, that are intimately connected to speech and overlap, to a great extent, the same brain regions (e.g., Arbib 2008; Gentilucci, Volta & Gianelli 2008; Ratcliffe 2013; Vainio et al. 2014, 2015; Komeilipoor et al. 2016; Tiainen et al. 2016). This research demonstrates the complex interrelation between the body moving in space and the role of hand gestures for spoken language, which the arbitrariness (and hence rigid relativity) of language denies.[9]

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8   This particular implication of my study cannot be addressed here, since my focus must remain on the incompatible two principles of language at the core of history-as-fiction in White's linguistic turn.

9   There is a large literature on the role of manual gesture in human language. The interested reader is referred to the following, e.g., André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993; orig. pub. Fr. 1964); David McNeill, *Hand and Mind: What Gestures Reveal about Thought* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), and *Gesture and Thought* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Raymond Tallis, *The Hand: A Philosophical Inquiry into Human* Being (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2003); Adam Kendon, *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 2004); Zdravko Radman, ed., *The Hand, an Organ of the Mind: What the Manual Tells the Mental* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).

This relationship between speech and specifically grasp/grip, moreover, has been deepened in recent decades through the discovery of the mirror neuron system (MNS), first in experiments with monkeys during the mid-1990s at the University of Parma Group in Italy (on this, see Modell 2003, chapter 10). The Parma Group initially discovered the MNS for action, hand gestures, such as grasp/grip and precise finger movements – now confirmed in humans not only for gestural actions, but also for the mirror neuron systems for emotion, touch, and pain as well (see, e.g., Spaulding 2013; cf. Meyer et al. 2011; see also Bourke 2014), suggesting that our experience in the world is not as "subjective" and isolated as Western philosophy has led us to believe over the last millennia. The existence of the MNSs for action, emotion, touch, and pain may yet have interesting implications for "embodied" language research in the future development of these theories, as neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese and cognitive linguist George Lakoff's (2005) collaboration already suggests.

Indeed, consider the following sequence: if one *watches* another person picking something up with their fingertips; and the mirror neurons (using fMRI scans on humans) for manual action fire for both the watcher and the one doing the action as well (as if he (or she) had picked something up with his (or her) *own fingers*); and this is reproduced among the other mirror neuron systems for emotion, touch, and pain; then, there are interesting implications for similar effects across these multi-modal MNSs for *reading* detailed accounts of them as well.[10] In the field of cognitive linguistics, which Maturana (and Varela) pioneered, language is embodied, comprehended in the context of lived situations with other persons in everyday life, for the purpose of (attempted) mutual understanding (i.e., communication).

Lakoff and Johnson (1999, 2003; M. Johnson 2007) have, moreover, anticipated these developments in their groundbreaking work on conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), which has primed them for their embrace of developments in the mirror neuron systems (MNS) in humans. As discussed in Gallese and Lakoff (2005), the existence of MNSs in humans potentially underpins the CMT Lakoff and Johnson have been developing for decades already (cf. Modell 2003, 184–192). In what follows, I address the second issue in this juggling act: understanding the vital difference between the two principles of language; that is, understanding how (White's) linguistic freedom is guaranteed by the arbitrariness of the sign. In tropology, there is no such freedom, by contrast, because necessary contingency of language on the body excludes it.

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10   For a brief introduction to this recent phenomenon of the last two decades, see also, e.g., Jeannerod et al. 1995; Rizzolatti & Arbib 1998. Taking this to the logical next level would be to research the connection of the multi-modal mirror neuron systems in response not merely to *watching* present-moment action, emotion, touch, and pain, in others, but also the response to *reading* detailed accounts describing these multiple modes in texts. This next level of research into reading is still in its beginning stages, but it looks very promising thus far (e.g., Chersi et al. 2010).

1.3   GUARANTEEING LINGUISTIC FREEDOM

In Chapters 3, 5, and 8, I examine the clues from White's own comments and writings that have remained consistent throughout the decades concerning his firm embrace of the (ultimately Saussurean) structuralist principle of the *arbitrariness* of language. It is important to distinguish between these two principles of language (the one arbitrary, the other contingent), because they ultimately concern the third ball that is always in the air in this juggling act: that is, "knowledge" (in Section 1.4). Classical literary theory declares knowledge null and void, along with "truth" and "objectivity" – positivist metaphysical beliefs, one and all, in the utter collapse of the fact/value dichotomy (e.g., Putnam 2002). In taking for granted that the literary theory he subscribes to has *already* sufficiently dealt with "the problem of knowledge," White confidently proceeds to replace positivist "knowledge" with "fiction" (figural language). In doing so, however, White deeply shares with Saussure what turns out to be a common need for linguistic *freedom,* which the arbitrariness of language was meant to enable and underwrite for Saussure's synchronic system of *la langue.*[11]

To summarize, I am convinced that White affirms Saussure's legacy on the (disembodied, static) system of language, not because White specifically champions Saussure – as narrative theorist Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth does quite explicitly (outlined in Chapter 5) – but rather primarily due to his own belief in human *freedom,* which grounds his ethical stance, as discussed in Chapter 3. This conviction concerning freedom is reflected in the range of thinkers who have impressed White over the decades. It is well known, for example, that French Existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre has played a distinctive role in White's thought from the beginning (e.g., Paul 2011). Two nineteenth-century philosophers of language, Friedrich Nietzsche and Benedetto Croce, helped prime White's attention for his theoretical stance vis-à-vis freedom that he continues to occupy today. White's stance on freedom, in fact, informs his claim of the very possibility to choose one's past, in order to change one's future: to free oneself from the "burden of history" (White 1966).

What should be clear from this study is that once White chooses the framework harboring the disembodied, relativist principle of language (arbitrariness), it is also clear that he never wavers from this "choice" throughout the linguistic turn. That is, White *does not* adopt Vico's own embodied principle of the necessary contingency of (metaphorical) language, which is wholly dependent on a living, moving body that enacts the socio-cultural world, as Luft (2003) shows to be the case (*pace* Nietzsche

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11   It may also be so that White inherits a penchant for linguistic freedom from nineteenth-century historicism, but I do not examine historicism in this thesis, which must wait for later work.

1989). To be clear, what I am not denying is that White adopts the *tropic* nature of language and applies it to historical consciousness in his contribution to the study of historical discourse. He does this, but *he does so within the framework of classical literary theory,* as Chapter 8 argues. What White does not do is to take the tropes so far as to employ Vico's principle of embodied contingency *as his framework.* Indeed, Chapter 5 builds the case that this distinction between the two principles of language is crucial for the nature of fiction that is promoted in White's work on historiography.

The main reason that White cannot adopt Vico's principle of contingency is because the (post)structuralist framework, which is dependent on the key attribute of disembodied language, excludes this possibility. Vico's key insight had been that the ancient humans, who invented language, were embodied "poets." On this scenario, Vico insisted that their words were the very *deeds* they used to enact or construct their (human) socio-cultural worlds, as I sketch out in Chapter 6 and elaborate in accordance with my (extended) understanding of the general nature of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) in Chapter 7. On this reading, these two principles of language are thus mutually exclusive, i.e., incommensurable.

At this point, one might ask: So, where does the "problem of knowledge" fit in and why has it not yet been solved, if (post)structuralism did not solve it? My answer to this is that "fiction" is just another version of (disembodied) language that is equally as empty of real "life" as the metaphysical, positivist, version of (scientific) history that White accuses historians of writing (and rejects outright throughout the duration of the linguistic turn). To understand how "fiction" remains metaphysical, I outline briefly in Chapter 3 that classical literary theory, for White, was primarily a structuralist theory, not primarily a poststructuralist one.

Indeed, White acknowledges Derrida, but continues to admire and value the work of Barthes, Lévi-Strauss, and Jakobson to this day (e.g., White 2013). More recently, for instance, his structuralist view of language is presupposed within his current Oakeshottean stance, which juxtaposes the "historical past" and the "practical past" (e.g., White 2010b, 2012, 2014b; see also Paul 2011). In the mid-2000s, this position looked new, but it actually originates from the 1930s during Oakeshott's heyday as a philosopher and political theorist (cf. O'Sullivan 2003; Minogue 2004). Thus even now, White's position is basically the same in its core, argued from a slightly different stance.

What I continually emphasize in this thesis is that history writing as a positivist "science" (history-as-science) and history writing as discursive "fiction" (history-as-fiction) are both rooted in disembodied (nonliving) metaphysics. By contrast, Vico's tropology embraced the *necessary contingency of language* as an embodied (living) principle: human persons speaking, *moving,* and *enacting* the social world to which they were/are *coupled* through perception, memory, and imagination. This

distinction between what is disembodied (nonliving) and what is embodied (living) distinguishes between two different categories that cannot be mixed.

This is why I must dismiss, as irrelevant, objections to language as an embodied phenomenon by those opponents, who like to argue on the basis of traditional (nonliving) philosophy; this conflates principles from different categories, where I distinguish them. In short, objections to what is embodied argued on the basis of traditional disembodied philosophy merely facilitates the continued confusions (conflation of different categories of phenomena) that currently prevail along the borderlands of traditional Greek philosophy and embodied cognitive linguistics, not to mention *autopoietic* enactive embodiment from which cognitive linguistics arose in the first place.

Furthermore, by adhering to the basic structuralist system of language with attention to "writing" rather than to "speech," the latter of which Saussure had insisted on, Derrida's "poststructuralism" never became truly "post"-structuralist, nor really even "post"-modern (i.e., post-metaphysical). Another way of saying this is that the way poststructuralism re-interprets structuralism only *appears* to side-step mind-body dualism. But it does not escape dualism at all, insofar as there is not yet any "body" involved in language production and generation.[12] In short, postmodern theory is still a disembodied approach in Western philosophy, and as such is not "post"-modern (i.e., *after* modernity). Postmodern theory, on such terms, is in fact just another strand of modernist metaphysics that covers its own tracks by denying "knowledge." But, denying knowledge and replacing it with "fiction" is not enough; one must move beyond this surface denial and probe deeper still.

This thesis therefore enters through the door of White's tropology, but stubbornly resists and challenges the (metaphysical) stowaways in the domain of historical "discourse." White's adherence to the principle of arbitrariness, moreover, is the key presupposition on language at the heart of his history-as-fiction. The next step is thus to understand how "fiction" remains connected to metaphysics, insofar as it is a version of language that is as empty of life as the metaphorical models out of which it emerges.

In other words, metaphors are the experiential templates (in their domains of origin) that dictate (entail) certain, characteristic behaviors and/or responses that all metaphors-as-models impose on their target domains (e.g., also Taylor 2016). And because White is, from the outset, still committed to the principle of linguistic freedom at the heart of structuralist linguistics (even now in his Oakeshottean

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12   Jack Reynolds (2004) goes so far as to state, for instance, that trying to "embody" Derrida against the grain of his own theorizing is dishonest and departs from the spirit of his project. Nevertheless, this is the caveat Reynolds offers before continuing to argue, if tentatively and after the fact, on the relationship between Derrida and the father of embodiment in the twentieth century, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. This attempt is similar to what it might have been like for me to argue (against the grain of his own theorizing) that White is Vichian, rather than to try to "hear" White's own preference for classical literary theory and what this might mean.

phase) – i.e., *arbitrariness* – he does not realize that his own construct is as "lifeless" and as incommensurable with real human life as the positivist "scientific" history writing that he condemns.

White's treatment of historians' writings serves as a potent reminder that, in historical theory, no attention is yet paid to the way metaphors serve as models from a source domain of nonliving objects and how this is imposed on the target domain to which the model is subsequently applied. This is the Achilles heel of the literary theory White directly champions during the linguistic turn, which I elaborate in detail in Chapter 8. It is precisely here, moreover that the problem of knowledge comes into the picture – the proverbial third ball in the juggling act this thesis performs.

1.4   THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

What, then, are the consequences for knowledge, when the nature of language is actually embodied (contingent in Vico's sense, following Luft 2003) rather than arbitrary and disembodied (in Aristotle's and Saussure's sense)? That is to say, what does it mean for historical theory that language actually operates on the basis of the (unconscious) metaphorical transference of everyday experience? In the embodied paradigm, it means that "knowing" has become a *process of understanding;* the term "knowledge" does not utterly vanish, but its character is redefined: i.e., as a *sense-making operation* that the body, coupled to the world, is a full partner in generating. This is so, even if this process of knowing is never complete and absolute due to its nature as cyclical, operating on the basis of biochemical feedback loops. What is illegitimate is the "absolute (metaphysical, fixed) knowledge" that our ancient philosophical inheritance promotes. Throwing away "knowledge," as a term however, does not eliminate our animate ability to navigate in the world in relationships with others, despite the current trend in denying that knowledge can exist at all; or that truth and objectivity cannot exist at all. In the condition of postmodernity knowledge (truth, & objectivity) has merely been replaced with an absolutely relative *language* that has no center or ground (e.g., Salmon 2017). There is no role for sense-making in such a system of thought.

In emphasizing Vico's role, as Luft (2003) interprets Vichian metaphor theory, I indicate reasons why Vico's insight into the nature of language has remained so inaccessible to a wide swath of Western philosophers of language – that is, to ordinary language philosophy, to analytic philosophy of language, to Chomskyan linguistics (see Chapter 3). Even the surprising originality of Stanley Cavell falls short of embodied thinking, because ordinary language philosophy ignorantly embraced the tradition of disembodied dualism on the nature of language. The late (vs. early) Wittgenstein is, of course, a more complex figure in this regard (see, e.g.,

Harris 1990; esp. Hutto, forthcoming).[13] In short, without an understanding of the *embodied* nature of language (as emerging from our coordinated bodily movements in space), the tradition of metaphysics, and its vocabulary, simply overpowers the discussion. This is why even now in historical theory there is a general failure among theorists to notice how metaphorical transference actually *grounds* our everyday embodied understanding; historical theory remains unaware of embodiment, so it is not possible to understand, in turn, the role metaphorical transference plays in grounding it. This is true, despite the attention now given to the work of Vico since the 1960s, which is perhaps complicated by the indirect way that White championed Vico in his own work.

White's treatment of historians' writings serves as a potent reminder that, in historical theory, no attention is yet paid to the way metaphors serve as models from a source domain of nonliving objects and how this is imposed on the target domain to which the model is subsequently applied. This is the Achilles heel of the literary theory White directly champions in the linguistic turn as the framework within which historians' writings are analyzed; I specifically highlight this element in Chapter 8. It is precisely here, moreover, that the problem of knowledge comes into the story.

As Chapter 6 elaborates, for the Greeks, knowledge was *disembodied* and eternal (never-having-lived, i.e., nonliving). At the core of this eternal knowledge, SEEING is KNOWLEDGE in one of the most familiar and pervasive conceptual metaphors employed in ancient Greek philosophy (which is what Lakoff & Johnson 1999 and M. Johnson 2007 elaborate at length, respectively). This template, or conceptual metaphor, serves as the core of Western philosophy's vision-based paradigm termed "ocularcentrism," the research on which both Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault provided their greatest insights (e.g., Levin 1999; Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz, forthcoming). Indeed, moving toward a theory of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment in language for historical theory is not possible without understanding the hidden constraints that bind us in our ignorance of the embodied nature of language. As philosopher Mark Johnson notes:

> *All* theories are based on metaphors, because all our abstract concepts are metaphorically defined. Understanding the constitutive metaphors allows us to grasp the logic and entailments of the theory. [...] I have argued that the biggest single reason that most traditional and contemporary philosophy cannot

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13   The degree to which Wittgenstein is or is not an embodied thinker with respect to language is naturally beyond the scope of this work. It bears mentioning in this context, however, that the only thinker who comes even close to the embodied nature of language theorized by Vico in the eighteenth-century is language as theorized by Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803); White gives a fair overview of Herder in *Metahistory* (1975, 74–80). Unfortunately, Herder was not at the focus of White's interests. For more on Herder as a counter-Enlightenment figure, see Isaiah Berlin (2000); see also Iain McGilchrist (2009), 113, 119, 370–372; Charles Taylor (2016).

recognize the pervasive, *theory-constituting role of metaphor in philosophy* is the failure of philosophers to acknowledge the existence of deep, systematic conceptual metaphor *and its grounding in embodied meaning*. They cannot recognize it, because to do so would require a fairly substantial revision of some of the founding assumptions of their philosophies. It would require them to abandon some of their founding metaphorical conceptions *in favor of other metaphors*. (2007, 204, 205; emphasis added)

Until it can be realized that these basic, "conceptual metaphors" (or embodied "templates" as Taylor 2016 prefers) are grounded *in embodied meaning,* it is difficult to accept the "theory-constituting role of metaphor." I understand the difficulty many philosophers find themselves in. This realization requires more than a leap of faith; it requires something much harder: a change of mind.

If one denies the role of the body in (metaphorical) language, one easily misses the importance of conceptual metaphors embedded as templates for thinking, speaking, and writing, as Lakoff and Johnson emphasize. Thus, when denying the (Vichian) "necessary contingency" between our moving bodies in the world and language, it is likewise difficult to understand the "problem of knowledge" as an uncompleted task. White takes for granted that (post)structuralism has already solved this problem; but in overlooking (or denying) the embodied nature of language, the problem of knowledge cannot be solved. It is merely obscured by what Ermarth (2011) terms the "condition of [linguistic] discursivity."

Knowledge, however, remains a "problem" in a disembodied, dualistic framework in which language remains separate from the body speaking and communicating "meaning" metaphorically on the basis of actual lived experience. For poststructuralism, as for structuralism, "knowledge" persists as a problem, because language remains a disembodied entity in these theories. Disembodied (arbitrary) language is hugely misleading, however. The metaphysics of language separates the perceptual sound of the word (its physicality) from a disembodied concept (its purported ideality, what it means). This is wrong from an embodied framework, because from such a view, language is something that merely happens *in* the theater of the body, but is not produced or generated *by* the body as its context of origin.

In other words, what undermines history-as-fiction in this thesis as a valid, legitimate theory for the base-line examination of historians' writings is the hidden, theory-constituting role of (nonliving) metaphor, which is embedded in the (post)structuralist literary theory that White employs as his framing methodology. My argument is that, when theorists are unaware of (1) the role that the body plays in language as a template, they cannot possibly be aware of the importance of (2) the constituting role of conceptual metaphor, such as SEEING is KNOWLEDGE. White himself specifically dismisses the legitimacy of conceptual metaphor theory

in Lakoff and Johnson's work. This means, finally, that, if White is unaware of the role of embodiment in language, and denies conceptual metaphor, he cannot notice (3) the role that "nonliving" metaphors play as misleading models within history-as-fiction.

The guiding metaphor in the source domain, deeply embedded in White's framework, transfers (nonliving) attributes to the (living) target domain of human language, and ultimately in turn to historians' narratives. The paradoxical consequences of this transfer are such that: what is *nonliving* is functionally transferred to what is *living*. This is so in the sense that White retains the *arbitrary* (Saussurean, structuralist) principle of language at the core of classical literary theory in his analysis of historians' narratives. If White had abandoned the arbitrary principle of language, the character of the metaphorical transfer in his work would have utterly altered his work from what it became and remains today. However, throughout the linguistic turn White kept this principle in place; he did so with the (false) belief that the (absolute) freedom of language would provide a relatively straightforward escape from the "burden of history." Sadly, however, this burden remains. Embodied beings cannot "choose" their past in this way; it is embodied and is transmitted from generation to generation. Instead, we must painstakingly work through our past(s) (cf. Modell 2003; LaCapra 2001, 2016).

The principle of *arbitrariness* derives from Greek metaphysics, but Saussure took this principle and modernized it. Ultimately, this means that Saussure is Aristotelian, but Aristotle is not Saussurean (Harris 2003). In simple terms, this means that Saussure's science of language is *conventional*, but Aristotle's philosophy of language is not *systemic* (negative, differential). Further, because White does not grasp the significance of language as necessarily contingent on the body in the world, where meaning is generated from the experiences that our bodily experiences afford us in the world (i.e., Vico's metaphor theory of language elaborated by Luft 2003), White remains unaware that the (metaphorical) transfer of nonliving attributes moves from the source domain to the target domain. Such an awareness would require that he accepts the embodied nature of language from the outset, but he does not.

This transfer of attributes is a one-way street, which moves nonliving attributes into the domain of what is living. White is wrong about historians' narratives, not because narrative is not prose writing; it most definitely is. White is wrong about narrative, because *fictive* history emerges from the very same metaphysical taproot of eternal, idealist knowledge that spawned (positivist) "scientific" history in the first place. In unequivocally rejecting the fallacy of history-as-science, White does not yet grasp how this same taproot sustains history-as-fiction.

White correctly objects to a positivist orientation toward history as a "science," even as Frank Ankersmit now returns to it via "experience." Indeed, the positivists were inclined toward the *nonliving* sciences for their models. The nonliving, material sciences, particularly physics, were long considered the "mature" model for the other

disciplines, even for the human and social sciences. Without paying any attention to the embodied nature of experience, it is easy to return to embedded metaphorical models, that is, without noticing that they transfer their nonliving attributes onto whatever lies in the target domain.

Not even White's former ally Ankersmit apparently notices this, which I briefly address in Chapter 2. White is correct to reject: (1) that the past cannot be (fully) "known"; (2) that there is only *one* truth at the reduced core of any event; or (3) that historians could completely discard their emotions in their (historical) judgments, as they "objectively" process written documents for their distilled and final "truth." Here, I fully agree with White. History-as-science would be tantamount to the "view from nowhere," something that Thomas Nagel (1986) rightfully repudiates as well. Such a nonliving view from nowhere is not possible for living organisms in the way they make sense of the world.

Absolute attributes do not belong to humans as part of the *life* sciences. Absolute attributes are, rather, transferred from the source domain of (material) "science" onto the target domain of living systems. These attributes from the material sciences are valued for their characteristics such as "certainty" and "dependability," even *"predictability,"* and are then eagerly employed as models in various human domains as well, even the social sciences. But such models are category mistakes and are applied without understanding their misleading consequences.

Such metaphysical (disembodied) presuppositions continue to permeate assumptions in social sciences and historical theory alike. In this respect, too, White's critique of historiography is spot-on: historical studies will never be "scientific" (certain, predictable) in the sense that studies in Newtonian physics are "scientific." But, historical "science" and linguistic "science" must both make way for another approach to language beyond both the nonliving sciences *and* metaphysics.

Vico had grasped already in the mid-eighteenth century that metaphorical language arises out of our everyday lived experience in and with the world. Luft (2003; cf. Modell 2003) further elaborates Vico's grasp of embodiment as the very basis of his metaphor theory of language, which is why I employ her work in this thesis, as opposed to other Vico scholars. A further bonus is that Luft is both aware of White's work and was inspired by it. In addition, as I understand the situation, contemporary cognitive linguistics runs parallel to, but was developed independently of, Vico's theory of language.

Moreover, cognitive linguistics does not make the mistake that White's former colleague Frank Ankersmit now makes, in failing to distinguish between (1) a (standard, transcendental) cognitive science of the nonliving, and (2) an (embodied) cognitive science of the living.[14] In the final section of this Introduction, below, I

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14   In Chapter 2, I distinguish in more detail the fault lines running between standard cognitive science and the embodied cognitive linguistics that I embrace in this thesis by way of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment.

briefly discuss the power of nonliving metaphors and the role they play, not just in traditional philosophy, but also in Saussure's influential science of linguistics that served as a master template for the many structuralisms and the systemic core of poststructuralism that has stimulated the study of discourse in the twentieth century – even historical discourse.

1.5   THE POWER OF NONLIVING METAPHOR IN HISTORY-AS-FICTION

White has no systematic "philosophy" of language or historiography in the sense that he merely experimented with theories he inherited (e.g., White 1983; see Chapter 3). The confusion between what is living and nonliving therefore lingers on in the aftermath of the linguistic turn. At the heart of history-as-fiction lies a *tension* between what is (embodied) living and (disembodied) nonliving. The postmodern position on language, moreover, is unaware of its own Achilles heel (that it remains disembodied & dualist with respect to language).

From my embodied standpoint, White appears to *reject* professional history writing, due to its embrace of overt *nonliving* metaphors for knowledge promoted already by Aristotle, and Plato before him twenty-four centuries ago. These nonliving, conceptual metaphors at the basis of their philosophizing (highlighted in Chapter 6) made sight/vision (such as SEEING is KNOWLEDGE) the ocularcentric core of their own theorizing (Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Levin, ed. 1999; Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz, forthcoming). This vocabulary from metaphysics is what many historians today continue to use without understanding the nonliving principle of language that such vocabulary implies, when they speak/write about it in the way that they do.

What is little guessed today is that "postmodern" theory, especially for Derrida, as for White (following Nietzsche), language continues its career (as with Aristotle) as a disembodied entity *with no grounding whatsoever,* apart from nominal agreement on the meaning of words. Thus for Derrida (as for White) there is no embodied template on the basis of which language develops and is understood metaphorically in the communicational situations of everyday life (e.g., Cooper 2008; C. Johnson 2008; Attridge 1989, 2015). It is this disembodied (nonliving) legacy that remains at the center of White's history-as-fiction, because classical literary theory is the (still-metaphysical) frame with which he analyzes historical discourse during the linguistic turn.

White justifies this arrangement by calling structuralism and poststructuralism distinct but "complementary" systems of thought.[15] In the absence of a coherent new

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15   The quotation in White's interview with Erlend Rogne (2009) reveals this, when he says: "I think structuralism ultimately is critical of highly structured societies. It tries to explain how social systems are possible, and

direction, however, the continued employment of potent *nonliving metaphors* as the model of language simply upholds the syncretic (post)structuralist theory that underpins the linguistic turn in the analysis of historical "discourse."[16] This is why I found it necessary to address Saussure in such detail in this thesis. Let there be no mistake: this study concerns the nature of the *two incompatible principles of language* that White employed in his project, which he mistakenly characterized as the tropological *nature* of structuralist thought. I dwell extensively on Saussure's role in White's theorizing, because this role looms large behind the scenes of White's framework, as I demonstrate, especially in Chapters 5 and 8. In fact, Saussure, the father of structuralism, looms large behind the scenes of *most* work on "discourse" in the twentieth century, let alone historical discourse (cf. Taylor 2016).

The (*nonliving*) metaphor that Saussure (2011) employed as a model for his system of linguistic value was this: "coins as units of value in a currency system" (118). In Chapter 5, I sketch out how Saussure adopted this metaphor after acquiring his own "master key" from his sources in nineteenth-century theoretical economics (then termed "political economy"). Briefly, the metaphorical transfer that Saussure imagined was *from* a source domain of "coins as units of value in a currency system" *to* his own target domain of words as (binary) units of value in the social institution of language. This transference (from the nonliving domain of theoretical economics, or "science" to the living domain of dynamic, embodied language) results in the "absolutely relative" relation of human words within a fixed (static) system of negative, differential *value* at equilibrium (at rest; *unmoving,* unchanging).

To unpack what Saussure did with his model a bit more, the above *metaphor* gave him a correlative framework for thinking about the problems of the language system that he was working on. He needed a model to *think* with in his struggles to improve on Aristotle's ancient sign theory. Following his sources in the theoretical economics (political economy) of his day, Saussure's master key was to grasp the structural attributes of political economy's two (binary) orders of "labor" and "wages" as two (binary) orders of "value" that were inextricable in the social system. He realized a relationship to the work he was doing in linguistics and projected this *dual relation of value* onto what he understood in similar terms as the two orders

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how they function, but always behind it was the question of how social systems change. And that's what poststructuralism dealt with: how does noise in the system build to the point where it explodes the system itself? That's what Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Lacan are all about. *Poststructuralism is a necessary supplement, or complement, to structuralism.* And it played itself out over a period of about thirty years, like all systems do" (66; emphasis added).

16   It is not the case that my emphasis on AE – as underpinning the *nature* of human language – has no implications for White's explorations into "historical discourse," as Ewa Domańska has commented (personal communication). Indeed, the line from *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (as set out in Chapter 2) to historical discourse, as White elaborated and defended it, is a direct one by way of the embodied *nature* of metaphorical transference, as I show in my revision of Chapter 5; once this is understood (accepted), the argument for (disembodied) historical "discourse" underpinning history-as-fiction, collapses.

of the "signifier" and the "signified" as two (binary) orders of inextricable linguistic "value" in the social institution of language (Saussure 2011, 79).

The correlative functions of value in the "science" of political economy and the "science" of linguistics that Saussure was trying to develop was his master key that led him to his metaphor. Indeed, the (binary) *orders* of labor and wages in the social system were correlative (equal) to the (binary) *orders* of signifiers and signifieds in the (conventional) social institution of language. Both, in his view, ultimately concerned the core issue of "value" at the most abstract (or deepest) level.

Once he grasped this key, Saussure went further with the idea by bringing to bear this binary relation of "values" onto (Whitney's) metaphors of *synchrony* and *diachrony*. This move to bring the two metaphors into relation with one another allowed Saussure to fully *metaphorize* his first principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign. The metaphor he chose for this transference of value from the principle of binary arbitrariness of the sign to the system as a whole was this: coins as units of value *in a currency system.* In short, words were the "coins" *as units of value* and the language system was the "currency system," within which meanings operated as values negatively and differentially. With this he was able to set up the *synchronic* dimension of *la langue* as the distinct (and disembodied) *bridge* that *essentially* unites the arbitrary and binary sets of percepts (signifiers) and concepts (signifieds) that make up the diachronic dimension of conventional language. With this model, the static, negative and differential nature of the language system *embodied* the arbitrariness of the binary sign scaled up to *the system as a whole.*

To emphasize this important point once more, it was not that Saussure "appreciated" arbitrariness when he designed the system and wished others to appreciate it too; rather, he *designed* the arbitrariness of the binary sign as the very "nature" of his system from the inside out. He did this, because the synchronic dimension of language was what he perceived as absolutely *essential* in the study of language as a (conventional) social institution (see Joseph 2012). The diachronic dimension (on the vertical axis) of "spoken" living language use and change over time, moreover, was *not* essential to the study of language, in Saussure's view, because this diachronic dimension was what he believed to constitute what was *accidental* to language (its historical dimension). This is why Saussure rejected the comparative linguistics of his day. He thought that they had missed the very point of the study of language in their focus on the historical dimension of language.

White draws upon and uses Saussure's structuralist *frame* in his work on historical discourse. He invokes, moreover, the way Saussure's system separates language from life, because it is correlative to the Minkian dictum that *stories are not lived but told.* But, Saussure's arbitrariness is inescapable, because he built it into the system from the start. The key point of Chapter 5 is therefore to show that Saussure actively searched for a way to embody and embed the arbitrariness of the

binary sign as the very essence of the systemic model of language that he taught to his students in Geneva at the turn of the twentieth century.

From this (nonliving) framework of linguistic value at equilibrium (at rest, static), White's *figural* realism fully participates in the hidden metaphorical transfer promoted by the nonliving metaphors of traditional philosophy and philosophy of language – even Saussure's arbitrariness of the binary sign. But, not only White; indeed, most work in analytic philosophy of language throughout the twentieth century does not escape this binary arbitrariness of language, including "post"-structuralism. I sketch out the background for this first in Chapter 4 to discuss how sign theory traditionally evolved into "linguistic philosophy"; I then draw on this background for the arguments in Chapter 5 in my analysis of the history-literature debate.

To fully grasp what it means to apply nonliving metaphors to living systems is to grasp the extent to which White has embraced the metaphysical tradition that treats language as a (mind/body) dualist phenomenon; a phenomenon that happens "in the theater" of the body, but does not arise out *of* the body in response to everyday lived experience in the tradition of phenomenology from the mid-twentieth century onwards. Moreover, the legacy of metaphysics that Saussure embraced and systematized as synchronic, scientific linguistics cannot, by definition, connect to past lived experience. How indeed could mere (disembodied) language "connect" to the past (cf. Attridge 1989)? More to the point, how could inert words on a page connect anyone to the past *life* it discusses? This lack of connection is the primary argument that underlies the *fictive* (*figural, tropic*) nature of history *writing* in White's many essays. For (post)structuralism, as for White, language is not life; "stories are not lived but told", as Louis O. Mink (1987, 60) influentially put it. As postmodern literary theory has it, language is not "connected" to life and, therefore, this language cannot repeat past life in the present, no matter how hard we try. It's just gone.

Moreover, if – following Nietzsche – metaphor is to be understood as mere rhetoric (the primary trope of which, for him, is metaphor in the rhetorical sense of a "figure of speech"), then language cannot lead us into the experience of the world, but only away from it, as Nietzsche (e.g., 1989, 248) fervently insisted (on this, cf. Ginzburg 1999). On such a view, the world then becomes the mere appearances that rhetoric provides from infinite, relative points of view, expressed in rhetorical, primarily metaphorical language. White refers to this (Nietzschean) phenomenon as *figural realism*. The tropes are here at work within the (disembodied) structuralist frame, participating independently in the *arbitrary* system of language that disconnects language from the world – the ultimate separation of words and deeds, contrary to what Vico believed and wrote on the nature of language.

So, the question is, Does language actually lack connection to the *movement* of life in the way Nietzsche believed? Was he right? If this is so, then how is it that,

if metaphor is mere linguistic rhetoric, the *emotions* (i.e., in the form of ideology) enter into the linguistic picture in the first place? By this, I wish to ask how the bodily emotions can be *separated* from the linguistic impact that ideological writings actually have. Where does one place the authorial emotions that manifest as ideological positions, if language is "disembodied"? In other words, how do words "reach up off the page" and grab people's feelings?

White (and Nietzsche) rightly argues that ideology interferes with history at the level of the historian's text. But this actually implies that an emotional disposition of the historian, as embedded in one's system of values, can become embedded in text. How is that? Historians write their narratives from a certain standpoint, just as any theorist or novelist does. Indeed, if one could set aside their emotional nature, then speaking and writing could possibly be *purely* "objective" in the positivist sense. But no living person can completely "set aside" their emotions in this manner. That is, unless they are born with a diminished tendency for expressing emotion (as in psychopathology) or, as neurophysiologist of emotion Antonio Damasio (2005) shows, in cases of certain kinds of brain damage that interferes with emotional control and expression.

It is here that "ideology" appears as a stand-in for the *emotional nature* of all human communication, even theory. These are, of course, one's own "values" at work in the text, where values are rooted in one's emotional commitments, in turn, which are products of the initial shaping that both nature and nurture afford. It is here, in the context of one's acquired values (emotion-fused attitudes), that the term (embodied) imagination becomes critical.

Human imagination is a creative skill *of* the lived body, an emergent skill that synthesizes perception and memory, *through our emotions* as these filter our metaphoric processes (e.g., Modell 2003; McGilchrist 2009). Such processes are unconscious in their generation of meaning tied directly to individual lived experiences of the world. The past *can* be imagined through language, because metaphorical words evoke our individual, emotional-laden, embedded and embodied experiences through time in real places (*pace* Nietzsche 1989). Our values, in other words, are embedded in and embodied by the particular *metaphors we instinctively choose* to use in our arguments and explanations, as the theory of conceptual metaphor also predicts.[17]

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17 The application of metaphorical transference as an embodied cognitive instrument in both the reading and writing of historical texts is what, I believe, underpins the writings of psychologist and historical theorist Eelco Runia, whose work is currently captured by the term "Presence" in history-theoretical circles (e.g., Runia 2006, 2014). Furthermore, the doctoral thesis of Rūta Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz (forthcoming) treats this application of conceptual metaphor theory (i.e., Lakoff & Johnson 1999) specifically to school-history textbooks and interviews of their Lithuanian and Polish authors in detailed metaphorical analysis, thereby extending both my theoretical approach to historical narratives, while further reinforcing and elaborating what I believe to be the background of Runia's work as well.

The question this prompts is whether White's "imagination" is embodied in the way characterized above. His framework, as argued, is disembodied along the traditional lines of classic literary theory, so the imagination he deploys is thereby restricted to the unconscious use of tropes in historical narratives as *discourse* (i.e., as mere disembodied language; cf. White 1975). In other words, his use of imagination falls short of an embodied process, because "language," for him, is disembodied; because the tropes are wed to a disembodied system, they are absorbed into its system as its own tools. Such a process enables metaphorical transference operating as the underlying contingent process generating meaning within (embodied) human communication, as the work of Rūta Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz (forthcoming) sets forth as applied to historical narratives.[18]

When the imagination is separated from embodied life, it is likewise separated from *past (embodied) life*. The linguistic turn has been arguing for decades on the basis of a tropic imagination that is, however, disconnected from past life *as figural* realism (i.e., mere language à la Nietzsche). The shoe, however, is on the other foot. History writing, from the various emotionally driven directions of value from which it originates, can be meaningful to readers (i.e., emotionally moving) *in the very same way that novels can be emotionally moving to readers.* Historians' prose *can* evoke and can communicate real human experience(s) and predicaments, including deeply felt emotion(s) about the plight of those living before us, who went through things we did not have to experience ourselves (e.g., Friedländer 2007). In fact, we cannot even avoid the relation to past (embodied) life in language, despite what postmodern historical theory argues. Reading about the (historical) past can bring us to tears in the present; in other words, we are indeed moved by the past. How does it *move* us in this way?

What is at stake here is to understand what language *does*. In other words, what underlying principle animates "language" and makes it our most important tool in understanding both ourselves and others in the present *and in the past?* This principle is the contingency of language, necessarily dependent on a human being's lived experience in the world through the bodily skills of perception, memory, and imagination that couple humans with the world around them. On such a principle of contingency, one cannot *deny* that language connects us to and communicates past *life,* both what is familiar and what is not familiar to us (e.g., *pace* Froeyman 2012).

If language participates in our human coupling apparatuses that connect us to, rather than disconnect us from, the world of movement and emotion, then language

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18   Such a basis, moreover, provides the backdrop for future discussions on the *nonliving context for both* the (positivist) fact/value dichotomy and the (postmodern) fact/value collapse. Neither alternative has yet taken into consideration the implications AE has for the fact/value debate in general. I claim that this present approach to embodiment fully changes the "nonliving" bases upon which both the (static) absolute relativity of all values is argued in postmodern terms, let alone the terms on which the (mutually exclusive) fact/value dichotomy in positivism is argued. This discussion, however, necessarily lies outside the scope of the present thesis.

can *viscerally* connect us to the life of the past when we read about it, as we actually experience *in the act of reading* (cf. Iser 1978). This can happen in terms of an *embodied* realism that is actively supported by our sensorimotor systems, among others, by virtue of our living, *autopoietic* network. This new realm of research takes us well beyond both positivist and so-called "postmodern" metaphysics that we have only just begun to explore (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Gallese & Lakoff 2005; M. Johnson 2007; Lakoff 2012; cf. Hari & Kujala 2009, Meyer et al. 2011; etc.).

Novels and historical narratives alike are thus equally capable modes of writing that communicate to us, more or less, about the world we live in with others. Both modes necessarily depend on our lived experiences in the world for their comprehension, whether a narrative describes things that really happened in the past, or whether it originates merely in a fiction writer's (embodied) imagination. In either case, language communicates *felt emotion,* not just in the situation of speaking/writing, but in the situation of reading about (deeply moving) things that could have happened, or really did happen, even beyond the boundaries of our own lives – including the deeper past (cf. D. Carr 2014). In other words, reading is a valid form of lived experience as well, when it relates to the lived experience of others communicated through writing, which Chapter 9 addresses (to the limited extent allowed in the present context of this thesis).

In sum, if we could not use language to reflect on and understand our plight in this life, we could not work through past hardships, individually or collectively – with their deeply associated feelings, memories, and imagination for a better future. By contrast, White's linguistic approach promoted the profound *freedom* that a disembodied and arbitrary language has to offer. If language were disembodied in the way it has been characterized, it would offer an *immediate* exit from past hardship or trauma, because language and emotion would *not interfere* with one another. On such grounds, the freedom to choose one's past would thereby offer the freedom to shake off past hardship and trauma as easily as shaking off the powdery snow from a winter coat.

And while White's orientation towards freedom is no doubt grounded in his ethical stance for a better world, the solution to "choose" one's past is fatally misleading for embodied humans. Indeed, only profound amnesia and Alzheimer's disease offer humans the (embodied) freedom from the remembered past that the linguistic turn advocates. In this sense, freedom from the past offers a false hope – a utopia that can never be within normal human reach, apart from the profound physical disabilities that rob us of our humanity.

It is rather embodied language – also historians' narratives – that permit us to *learn about* other people in various contexts of life, both present and past. The embodied, emergent skill of language offers a profoundly powerful *learning* tool of the imagination enabled, in turn, by (normal) perception and memory, coupled to the world of immediate things and persons. In addition, such skills also enable

us to grasp things and persons beyond the present moment, or outside the context of real life altogether.

In such a context, "unmaking" history-as-fiction involves uncoupling White's framework of classical literary theory from the tropological insights he was the first to bring to the table. In the four decades of work on the "fiction" of history, White's essential talking point must ultimately return historical theory back to "language," not as separate from life, but rather as a co-creative process of knowing through living in the flow of (*a posteriori,* that is, after) experience. In other words, Mink was essentially mistaken; stories are not only told, but also thoroughly *lived* – and in ways he could never have imagined, because the recent research was not available to him then. Knowing *as* sense-making in the world is the ongoing, never-finished context in which *words are deeds*. Word *as* deed (i.e., word as "enactive" metaphor) is a phenomenon that only a contingent, embodied language makes possible, as Luft and White both argue Vico was the first to grasp.

CHAPTER TWO

2 PROBLEMATIZING HISTORY-AS-FICTION

The first and most important line of inquiry in this study is to analyze (i.e., dissect and disassemble the individual components making up) Hayden White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction, as he elaborated the different aspects of what he describes as the "content of the form" within key essays, and essay collections, appearing roughly between the early 1970s and the early to mid-2000s. In opening up and problematizing the hidden, unexamined core of White's construct, my strategy in the coming sections of this chapter is threefold. First, in Section 2.1 and its subsections, I provide an overview of the contemporary situation and the different directions in which theory is now in the process of moving (splintering) in the wake of a backlash to linguistic-turn theory. This backlash is being played out, moreover, not just in historiography, but on the background of a general reorientation in cultural criticism, which I present as the "gap in research" that my intervention is meant to address in terms of a distinction between living and nonliving structure, manifested in the life and material sciences, respectively.

Second, in Section 2.2 and its subsections, I contextualize my embodied methodological approach within the larger, social-science framework of Christopher Lloyd's (1993) "social ontology of structurism."[19] Moreover, in using the term

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19   Although at first somewhat confusing, Lloyd's (1993) "structurist" approach is to be carefully distinguished from the Francophone "structur(al)ist" approach that Ferdinand de Saussure engendered, the latter of which I attribute to White and his followers. Moreover, the "structur(ation)ist" approach of sociologist Anthony Giddens (1986), shares many common features with Lloyd's approach, but which Lloyd extends and develops beyond structur(ation)ism (see also Wallerstein 2001). All these terms point to their *systemic* nature, surely, but Saussure's (early) structur(al)ist approach adopted static metaphors as a model for the linguistic system that, in turn, fixed the pattern of relationships to accommodate a rigid, relativistic system of "systemic value." The point of these (similar) terms is their relationship to "structure," of course. But the more important point is to emphasize their implications for *motion* or movement beyond *static* structure. Lloyd intends his term to be understood broadly within a line of socio-historical thought that entails motion within structures as fluid, changing systems, like actual *ecosystems*, rather than the static, idealist phenomena that Saussure treated. For instance, culture (like language) changes over time. But the concept "structure" is not descriptive enough – in the wake of Greek metaphysics – to express the phenomenon of continuity and change over time that any culture embodies. Lloyd therefore uses the term "structurist" to capture the ongoing transformation of processes *in motion* from the micro-level of activity of individuals to the macro-level of activity on the group or social level – and back again: a moving, flowing, changing, *"structurist,"* (eco)systemic phenomenon,

"ontology," I bracket out any technical attribution of the term that Lloyd might mean by it. I use it only in a nontechnical sense, following Luft (2003), who well notes that "[t]he term 'ontological' is inappropriate outside the context of Greek metaphysics" (xv, n. 14). Furthermore, by placing my methodology of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) within the larger frame of dynamic, ecological structurism, I am able to critique and extend Lloyd by way of Fritjof Capra's (1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) synthesis of pattern, process, and structure – a synthesis that I refer to throughout this thesis as "living" structure, whose key notion is the *process* of (*autopoietic* enactive) embodiment (AE). In choosing Capra's work, I am likewise able to critique and extend AE as currently discussed (e.g., Weber & Varela 2002; Thompson 2004; Torrance 2006; Gallagher 2011; Martiny 2011; Maiese 2011; De Jesus 2016; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016; Hutto et al., forthcoming). The point of this strategy is to challenge the static, *early structur(al)ist* construal of language that Saussure conceived in terms of "systemic-value" – a conception of language that White and his followers continue to hold in their own (post)structuralist, disembodied positions (e.g., Jenkins 1999, 2003, 2004a,b, 2008a,b; Ermarth 2004, 2011; Munslow 2007, 2012, 2015; Southgate 2009, 2011, 2015; Pihlainen 2013, 2015).

Third, in Section 2.3 and its subsections, I present the theoretical design that attempts to lay bare the inherent tension between the two principles of language that lie at the heart of history-as-fiction: (1) the (Saussurean) principle of the "arbitrariness" of the sign; and (2) the (Vichian) principle of the necessary "contingency" of language on actual human bodies in the world (in terms of the bodily skills of perception, memory, and imagination that couple us to our environment with others). In order to access and open up this inherent tension to analysis, I propose a "thought experiment" that divides history-as-fiction into its separate debates for closer examination: (i) "history-literature" and (ii) "fact-fiction," each of which anchor White's arguments during the linguistic turn, and which Whitean theorists continue to use in defending history-as-fiction into the present.

This exercise is necessary, insofar as Saussure ([i] the history-literature debate) and Vico ([ii] the fact-fiction debate) have radically different approaches to the *nature of language* hidden at their cores, and so are misused (in combination) to underwrite and support history-as-fiction. In order to grasp the differences between these approaches, one must return to the arguments that each of these thinkers makes separately, that is, *independently* of which parts of these theories White adopted into his own theorizing. Saussure, for example, follows in the Aristotelian

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whose flowing structure does not relate to, nor accommodates the relativity of Saussure's fixed system *at equilibrium*. These closely related terms are not optimal, as I realize. But until the (systemic, living) phenomena underlying them is better understood, such terminology clearly attests to the ongoing struggle to come to grips with something very *unfamiliar:* flowing, emergent structure(s); that is, *living* structure. Much more on this follows below.

tradition of ancient sign theory, adhering in turn to a disembodied approach to language, following the arbitrariness of the sign (Chapters 4 & 5). Vico, however, provides ample material in his line of thinking that breaks with this traditional approach to language; this is so, especially in the light of his self-description as an "anti-rationalist" and an "anti-Cartesian." Setting out the lines of thought leading to a completely new path, Vico philosopher Sandra Rudnick Luft (1993, 1994, 1996, 1999, 2003) interprets Vico's discovery that the first "gentile" men were creative poets, whose words-as-deeds created the concrete socio-cultural world through their "embodied," hermeneutic sense-making through language (addressed in Chapters 6 & 7).

Luft's stance on the integral ("hermeneutic") interaction between the body, language, and the material culture in the production of a "real" social realm is one that is shared in large part, I believe, by Lloyd's (1993) structurist social ontology (ecology), despite some of the metaphysical trappings his outlook still champions (at least in the 1993 edition of his work). Moreover, after making the methodological adjustments proposed in Section 2.2, I believe that Lloyd's social ontology of structurism speaks to the "alchemical" hermeneutic processes that Luft uses as a metaphor in her interpretation of Vico's discovery of the poetic nature of the first men. In synthesizing these views (Lloyd, Capra, and Luft's), I claim that both Luft's and Lloyd's work will have found new energy and direction in the concept of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) as the *key process* in the dynamic, changing structure of *living* organisms that is *emergent* in nature.

The key, in my view, to comprehending the role of embodiment in historiography is a matter of comprehending the distinction between living and nonliving *dynamic* structure (biology & chemistry), as opposed to nonliving, *static* structure (physics & Greek metaphysics) (e.g., Capra 1996, 2003; Modell 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014). In what follows, I briefly outline the current state of historiography and the ongoing backlash to theory that it characterizes. It is within this splintered context that I identify the "gap in research" that my embodied intervention is meant to address – one, moreover, that both supports and extends Lloyd's (1993) structurist methodology that provides an already established and promising frame, within which my extended AE approach can be comprehended and appreciated among historians and theorists alike. It is this approach, moreover, that enables me to set out my strategy for analyzing the component parts of White's history-as-fiction in Section 2.3, below.

2.1 THE GAP IN RESEARCH

There is an ongoing backlash against theory currently being played out, and not merely on the general level of cultural criticism (e.g., Berman 1983; Harvey 1990;

Eagleton 2004; Boghossian 2007; cf. Winters 2014). More to the point, the linguistic turn in historiography is waning, but without a good alternative waiting in the wings to replace it, or to unite it theoretically (e.g., Spiegel, ed. 2005; Birns 2010; Hunt 2014). Instead, scholars have begun to strike out in different directions, unaware of any commitments they may harbor to (static, nonliving) metaphors or even overtly to Greek metaphysics, for that matter. In the recent literature, one can find discussion in various areas of concern, for example: the "practice turn" (e.g., Schatzki, Cetina & Savigny, eds. 2001; Schatzki 2002; Rouse 2007; Polyakov 2012); "post-positivism," or toward a renewal of the "sociology of knowledge" (e.g., Zammito 2004, 2007, respectively); toward the concept of "presence" (e.g., Runia 2006; Kleinberg 2013; Ghosh & Kleinberg, eds. 2013); or "post-narrativism" (e.g., Kuukkanen 2013, 2015). In other quarters, there is the overt longing for a return to ordinary, "real things" in a world that might now be described as "post-humanist" (e.g., Domańska 2006, 2010).

Clearly, the theoretical ground is continuing to shift as theorists attempt to recalibrate their positions after the final failure of (Francophone) structuralism – and the (overly narrow) poststructuralist challenge of deconstruction that largely sidelined it beginning in the late 1960s (on this, see Chapter 3). In looking back over twentieth-century historiography, the general move is one that had *long ago* begun to depart from old-style nineteenth-century scientism ("positivism") in historiography on several fronts (e.g., Bloch 1953; Becker 1960; Fischer 1970; Collingwood 1976, 1994; Mandelbaum 1977; Dovring 1984; E. Carr 2001; cf. Peltonen 1999, 2001, 2012; Ginzburg 1983, 1992a, 1999, 2012), however disjointedly. Some of the classic historiographers, such as *Annales* historian Marc Bloch (1953) in France, Carl Becker (1960) in the USA, and Robin George Collingwood (1976) in the UK, offer far more complex analyses than White's insistence that all historians are "positivist" may lead one to believe (e.g., White 2005b, 2012).

Given the new impetus for a fresh start after the linguistic turn, however, the question remains as to how (or even if) these newly emerging theoretical discussions, mentioned in the previous paragraph, are related to one another. More to the point is the question concerning the ways they might relate to the older discussions by historiographers of the early to mid-twentieth century, mentioned directly above. Resolving the differences among all these divergent threads is no easy task. In fact, the task is a very complex one, especially when resolving basic theoretical issues concerning what remains inherently *unfamiliar*.

From my perspective of embodiment, there is a major, Copernican paradigm shift that historians and theorists alike seem to be gravitating toward in their work. It is the general shift from modernist (Cartesian-Newtonian) "mechanism" to a "systemic"

(ecological) holism.[20] Along these lines, David Gary Shaw (2002) has insisted on the "resurgence of natural science" rendering "suspect the hard boundaries among the disciplines" (2). He argues, moreover, that the emergence of natural science

> challenges the hegemony of the linguistic approach, which prevails among some historians and literati, with the insistence that their world is more than just Saussure's totalizing linguistics alone: plants, bodies, and genes; patterns, models, and evolving systems are jostling symbols from pre-eminence. Integration and new interdisciplinary links are the way to investigate the world of ecology and evolution opening up to historians and other social scientists. [...] It is possible that historians will face a choice: either to continue their specialized and somewhat insular ways; or to answer the call of [William] McNeill and others to join the larger ecological project, not only through the world history movement [...], but through a revised evolutionary framework. We are in one of those heady periods when common reading and common talk productively link natural science to the social sciences and the humanities. (Shaw 2002, 2)

I would add and supplement Shaw's observation here to emphasize that what he describes is not merely "natural" sciences, but the *life* sciences, as I specify in this thesis, when he identifies "plants, bodies, and genes" with their characteristic "patterns, models, and evolving systems." In the case of White and his adherents, however, their focus remains that of Saussure's early form of (static, nonliving) system (e.g., Jenkins 2008b, 2010; Ermarth 2011). Until now, this shift has only been partially realized, due to the traditional reflex toward reduction and dualism in decoupling "pattern" from "process" (cf. Lloyd 1993; Capra 1996, 2003), which decouples the "living" nature of cognition in its two dimensions. Traditional dualism, which is inherent in many of the contemporary departures from the linguistic turn, enables the latent metaphysics embedded in modernity that I argue disqualifies the linguistic turn in the first place.[21] This is why many contemporary departures

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20   Cf. early hints of this shift in Cassirer 1950, 1955; Gardner 1987; see also Fuller 2013. In brief, the appropriate metaphorical models for this new paradigm of systemic, ecological holism (and its key process of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment) should be the life sciences, not the hard material sciences.

21   There is a literal mountain of literature on various definitions of modernity, or modernism, which Ermarth's (2011) work also addresses from her own perspective. There is no space in this study, however, to distinguish among them in the kind of detail to do them all justice here. Briefly however, Paul Ricoeur (2004) gives a very good overview of the definitions that distinguish modern times from ancient times in the origin of the term in its temporal sense, among others (305–314). A broad definition that I work with, on the basis of the Cartesian-Newtonian (mechanist) paradigm of modernity (whether in an overtly mechanistic approach or in a systemic approach, as in Saussure's "systemic value,"), is the way "modernity" in all its guises *decouples* substance and form, pattern and process as described by Capra & Luisi (2014). In this latter sense, see also Berman (1983); Toulmin (1990); and McGilchrist (2009, 389–427). For the differences between modernity and literary modernism, which are two very different concepts, see White 1966 and White's comments in Domańska, ed. 1998, 13–38, esp. 26–27. I will address this in more detail in Chapters 4–5.

from the linguistic turn are not necessarily better than what preceded it, and why the critique I offer here is needed.

2.1.1   PARADIGM SHIFT TO DYNAMIC, ECOLOGICAL FORM

Indeed, while the humanities have remained vague as to the nature of the changes being addressed on the level of this paradigm shift, it is the social sciences that look to the larger dynamic and integrated framework in which to situate humans as social beings (e.g., Lloyd 1993; Wallerstein 2001; Mouzelis 2008; cf. Siskin 2016). And even then, the term *embodiment* in all these contexts is not problematized or placed within the context of *the shift* from static, nonliving mechanism/system to dynamic, living (ecological) system, where I examine it (cf. Pomper & Shaw, eds. 2002; Smail 2008). It is the context of an *all-inclusive* "ecological holism" (as opposed to an exclusionist "methodological holism" that denies agency on the individual level) that one is better able, for example, to understand the role of embodiment in terms of the nature of "living" structure.[22]

Moreover, AE as a philosophical position has recently taken its place in the mainstream of cognitive science and philosophical discussions (e.g., Torrance 2005; Martiny 2011; Maiese 2011; Hutto & Myin 2013; Wilson & Foglia 2015; De Jesus 2016; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016; cf. Maturana & Varela 1980, 1998; Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1993; Weber & Varela 2002; Thompson 2004). In the light of these contemporary discussions, the term "cognition" can no longer be restricted to operations within the human skull alone (as exemplified in, e.g., Maturana & Varela 1980, 1998; Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1993; Capra 1996, 2003; Lakoff & Johnson 1999; M. Johnson 2007; Noë 2009, 2013; Hutto & Myin 2013; Capra & Luisi 2014; cf. esp. Martiny 2011). Cognition is now being explored, rather, as a much broader concept that is extended to the *process* of life itself (*autopoiesis*), which I am here identifying with *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE). (On this identification, see also below in Section 2.2 and its subsections.)

In this light, there is an immediate need to sketch out the larger background and context within which to understand embodiment as belonging to another order of "structure" altogether; this is necessary to understand how and *where* embodiment relates in discussions from philosophy to social-science history. In other words, the wide-open gap in current research to which I am contributing in this thesis, concerns the shift to a "systemic" understanding that has so far failed to grasp the

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22   An exciting trend is the growing number of historians that have begun writing on different aspects of cognitive neuroscience, *autopoiesis,* and/or conceptual metaphor theory – approaches that imply embodiment on some level of their theorizing, even if not yet overtly explicit or descriptive (e.g., Gaddis 2002; Rosenwein 2002, 2007; Runia 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010; Seigel 2005; Smail 2008; Reddy 2009; Fulbrook & Rublack 2010; Plamper 2010; Scheer 2012; Hunt 2014; Bourke 2014; cf. Pomper & Shaw, eds. 2002).

role of *embodiment,* which has mostly been discussed on the terms dictated by traditional (disembodied) philosophical vocabulary; unfortunately, even the current discussions within AE have been entangled in the persistent vocabulary of dualism (as, esp., De Jesus 2016 points out; cf. Torrance 2005; Martiny 2011; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016). In this context of embodiment as the key activity constituting living structure, humans as interdependent social beings, who are structurally coupled to a real environment, also shape this environment and one another *inter*actively (cf. Lewontin 1993, 63; cf. D. Shaw 2002). This view is opposed to the traditional Greek philosophical idea of individual humans as metaphysical *sub*jectivities, disconnected from and existing beyond nature (see Chapter 6; cf. Rimé 2009).

In placing the emphasis on our "god-like" immaterial (disembodied) mental transcendence beyond the material world, Western academic research in philosophy, social science, and historical theory (in its (post)structuralist guises) overlook the role of embodiment, because it is not understood in its broadest sense as a *process* that unites pattern and (biological, living) structure. Indeed, for most, the body is merely the physical *locus* of the workings of metaphysical transcendence, much like "mental programs" running on the "wetware" of the brain (a *de facto* Cartesian mind-body dualism along contemporary lines; cf. Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, 1999). By contrast to such a dualist, machine-model version of human mentality, embodiment is, rather, what it means *to be alive*. Being alive cannot happen without *having a (living) body,* something that Sebastjan Vörös and Peter Gaitsch (2016, 14) distinguish in German between, on the one hand, *Leib* (the *lived* body) and, on the other hand, *Körper* (the objectified body), the latter of which is the object of much philosophical discussion concerning embodiment straight through Foucault. Distinguishing between these bodies allows me to focus on *Leib* as a living pattern of organization that persists over time through biochemical processes – acting through human perception, memory, and imagination. Especially where language is concerned, having a living body to orient oneself in accordance with everyday experience *within contingent language* implies more than many theorists have assumed. In what follows, I dwell on the example of living and nonliving *dissipative* structure, in order to exemplify the nature of language in its connection to living systems, as opposed to the static, disembodied system where it is currently still situated.

2.1.2   DISSIPATIVE STRUCTURE, BOTH LIVING AND NONLIVING

Most bluntly, *nonliving,* static models and *living,* dynamic models, respectively, each have their own built-in set of entailments that operate from the metaphorical source to their target domains (e.g., Lakoff 1993; Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 2003; M. Johnson 2007; cf. Bennett & Hacker 2003; see also Rosenwein 2002, 2007; Bourke 2014). However, not all *nonliving* metaphorical models are ruled completely out of

the picture. For instance, it may come as a surprise that, to a limited degree, living organisms, such as human beings, can be successfully *compared, metaphorically,* to whirlpools, flames, and airplane wake vortices (see Figure 2.1 below), which are all dissipative structures operating *far from equilibrium,* like living organisms as well.

Figure 2.1. Wake Vortex Study at Wallops Island Flight Facility, VA, USA. Turbulent air flow created at the wingtips of an airplane in flight is made visible by red-colored smoke. Because such vortices ("dissipative" systems, as described below) are invisible to the naked eye, and can be fatal to airplanes that inadvertently fly into such turbulence, this phenomenon is studied in order to avoid such wake-vortex conditions at busy airports. NASA Langley Research Center (NASA-LaRC), Edited by Fir0002. Image in the Public Domain.

A "dissipative" structure is a physical system structurally coupled to the environment that features emergent properties, insofar as it is a chemical system that is *structurally open* to the environment, exchanging matter and energy with that environment. Waste (energy) is a byproduct of its functioning (therefore "dissipative"). Another way to put this is that such a system is "emergent," insofar as *order emerges* in precise, determinable, nonlinear, and mathematically measurable ways. The chemist Ilya Prigogine (1917–2003), who studied these complex systems operating far from equilibrium, invented the term "dissipative structures" prior to parallel findings for "bifurcating structures" described mathematically in chaos theory, from which they should be distinguished here (see Capra 1996, Part Four).

In brief, and most simply, the wake vortex in Figure 2.1 is a dissipative structure created by the energy generated through the motion of the airplane's wingtip whipping through the air at speed; this dissipative structure, or system, exists as long as the pattern of turbulence continues. The turbulence is *embodied by the continued* exchange of matter and energy within the wake vortex system, which the red smoke of the image in Figure 2.1 reveals. Once this matter–energy exchange has fully run its course, however, this embodiment of the system's pattern of organization *as* the wake vortex dissipates, much as a living organism eventually dies when its life has run its course. The scattering and subsequent disappearance of the red smoke into the surrounding air is the manifestation of this "dissipation."

If there is a definition of embodiment, by the way, it is not what embodiment *is,* but rather what embodiment *does:* as a process, "embodiment" actuates the ongoing (metabolic/chemical process) that sustains the pattern of organization (biological/chemical form) through time; that is, the pattern of organization is simultaneously the manifestation of the ongoing metabolic/chemical process. These are two dimensions of one phenomenon, embodiment (as pattern and as process) in the manifestation of dynamic (living) structure. In this sense, embodiment is not a "thing," an object to be examined or analyzed in its essential properties, but an emergent, two-dimensional *process;* embodiment is the ongoing *relationship* between its component parts in both living and nonliving dynamical (dissipative) systems, dependent on an exchange of matter and energy structurally open to the environment.

The phenomena of wake vortices are a temporary occurrence of emergence, in which the whole (the vortex) is more than (other than) the component parts that make it up (the air, the airplane taking off, the wing whipping through the air at speed, etc.). The fact that this vortex is *invisible* to the eye makes it very dangerous for other airplanes taking off behind one another at airports. In other words, it is invisible but very, very real.

Dissipative structures in *nonliving* chemical reactions, like wake vortices, and in *living* forms, such as human beings, both combine "the stability of structure with the fluidity of change. *Like* whirlpools, [living organisms also] depend on a constant flow of matter through them; like flames, they transform the materials on which they feed to maintain their activities and to grow; but *unlike* whirlpools or flames, living structures also develop, reproduce, and evolve" (Capra 1996, 177; emphasis added). (For more detail, see Section 2.2.2.) What is common to both living and nonliving dissipative structure is that they are both structurally open to the environment, both structurally coupled to what shows up in the world, which triggers their structural response, but does not direct it (cf. Weber & Varela 2002; De Jesus 2016). In other words, dissipative structure emerges according to contingent conditions in the world that trigger it into being, but remains unpredictable after this initial triggering, like hurricanes or tornadoes are unpredictable after they form.

Complex systems, like this, operate far from equilibrium and are *not reductive* processes, in the way that a flower opening its petals toward the sun is decidedly not a "reductive" process. The life sciences in this vein (including the underlying chemical – metabolic – processes that sustain all life) do not generate the rigid "positivism" that the material sciences metaphorically transferred onto the other sciences. AE is the underlying process or principle in the emergence of all life, even cognition. As an emergent principle of life itself, cognition is, in practice, incommensurate with the "arbitrary" principle of language at the heart of (disembodied) analytic philosophy of language, the latter of which is metaphorically modeled on the material, *nonliving* sciences that produced positivism.

Emergent cognition belongs to the life sciences, which studies the relationships between component parts in *living processes*. The hard sciences, by contrast, study *nonliving* matter by reducing to their smallest elements the individual component parts. This is what is meant by the difference between *synthesis* and *analysis*, respectively. For example, even the early alchemists were interested in emergence, insofar they pursued the synthesis of components, as opposed to their analysis: alchemists mixed (added together, synthesized) component parts in their goal to create something completely new beyond the components themselves.

When I talk about the life sciences and "emergent" phenomena, this is metaphorically parallel with what Luft (2003) characterizes as "alchemical processes" (ix–xv) in her own work from her hermeneutic standpoint; from my standpoint, hermeneutics is an earlier philosophical stance not yet wed to any interdisciplinary life-scientific understanding of the biological processes (bodily skills) that underpin the practice of *hermeneutics* (i.e., "interpretation theory" in the widest sense that humans practice it beyond mere text interpretation). "Alchemy" was the precursor to chemistry as a process that aimed to "transmute" the component parts (either material or spiritual) into an emergent whole that was always more than the sum of those component parts. I claim and try to show here that AE escapes metaphysics for many of the reasons that Luft's metaphor of "alchemy" escapes simple reduction in her own study, since chemistry itself (as part of the life sciences) is the science that emerged from the work of the earlier alchemists in the first place. This is the reason why "alchemy" and "chemistry" can be metaphorically parallel: one (alchemy) is an earlier version of the other (chemistry) and so they share similar attributes.

2.1.3   WHEN METAPHORICAL MODELS ARE MISUSED

Like the wake vortex whipping around off an airplane's wingtip, language is invisible to the physical eye; that is, we do not observe our language, we just use it. We navigate our social worlds with it, whether we are speaking or writing, but especially in everyday speech. As a phenomenon in the world, like the wake vortex, language

too is very real, with very real-world consequences – if declarations of war are anything to go by. Unlike the *temporary* nature of the event of a wake vortex, language produced by a living host is an ongoing, enduring, complex phenomenon that interacts with other language-users for as long as the hosts continue to live and speak over course of their lives. In other words, language that has emerged from and is a component part of a living, dynamic system is, at the very least, a coordinating dynamical system, not a static one.[23]

Furthermore, lived experience in a body is the very stuff of language, which has emerged and evolved out of the sensorimotor pathways of physical (hand) gestures ("grasp" and "grip"; more on this below). People with similar experiences of the same times and places can "speak" with one another in the rapid transference of these lived experiences in "metaphorical" language, which underlies and grounds the so-called "hermeneutic" practice of interpretation through unconscious metaphorical templates that cognitive linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson refer to as "conceptual metaphors," whose meanings originate in the body through lived, everyday experience (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999a).

The idea of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson 2003) derives from the nature of metaphorical *transfer* from a metaphorical source domain to its target domain. The source domain is the "conceptual" domain, whose structural attributes (or characteristics) are subsequently mapped onto the target domain in an attempt to explain (or characterize) it. In the conceptual metaphor that ARGUMENT is WAR, for example, the vocabulary in the source domain of WAR is used to "structure" the nature of ARGUMENT, insofar as "we don't just *talk* about arguments in terms of war. We can actually win or lose arguments. We see the person we are arguing with as an opponent. We attack his positions and we defend our own" (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, 4). This "structural" model of war in the source domain (winning or losing, attacking and defending) maps these very *attributes* onto the target domain structurally. The model (conceptual metaphor) is used to clarify what lies in the target domain; "argument" is thus transformed, in this way, and

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23   There is, however, one traditional move that has it both ways; that is, to consider something *in motion* and *at rest* simultaneously: Zeno of Elea's paradox of the arrow. Zeno is said to have addressed the "problem of the arrow" as follows: "How is it possible that a flying arrow moves?" He famously solved this riddle by posing it as a paradox thus: the arrow would, at each interval of time, occupy a place equal to itself. In this way, at each of those intervals, the arrow would be at rest; "and since, at every single moment, the flying arrow occupies a space equal to itself, it must always be at rest. Thus the arrow is both moving and at rest" (in Lilla 1994, 38). I argue, however, that while Zeno's paradox may exemplify the analytic method *par excellence* of the Western philosophical tradition, this separation of an object's pattern of movement from its process in time is illegitimate for dynamical, living systems. Without both pattern and process – and the *relationship between* component parts over time – *dynamical* systems, both living and nonliving, as such, could not even exist. In other words, Zeno's paradox is dependent on the analytical move to reduce down and to separate component parts in things that depend upon their relationship among them to even exist. On the logic of Zeno's paradox, one might also claim that travelers both *travel* and *do not travel,* equally. This argument for simultaneous movement and stasis would collapse in reality, however, if the traveler arrives home again carrying one of the new pandemic diseases.

understood *in terms of* the (structural) attributes of "war." This, by the way, is the very nature of "debate" from casual to professional, and this conceptual metaphor *structures* the very rules of debate as well. In short, the mapping of *attributes* from a source (conceptual) domain to a target domain is the very stuff of everyday conversation, if not the very heart of political debate (see also, e.g. Gibbs 2011, 2013; Gibbs & Santa Cruz 2012).

As I argue in a sustained way in Chapters 5–8, metaphors – due to the structural transfer of attributes from the conceptual model (in the source domain) to the target domain – have real consequences; this effect stands, moreover, when metaphorical models are *misused*. And like the wake vortex, this metaphorical usage operates invisibly and out of immediate awareness, unless there is something like "red smoke" to expose it. Crucially, the misuse of metaphor in the structural application of attributes in the source domain happens as quickly and as invisibly as the application of attributes in contexts of normal communication. Finally, the misuse of metaphor has real-world consequences that cannot be undone, but which can be analyzed after the fact, in the manner of an autopsy.

As a long-standing example of misused metaphor, one of the most pervasive models for the human mind and memory in history is the *nonliving machine* (cf. Becker 1960; Rossi 1970; Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986; Mayr 1989; Dear 1998; Shapin & Lawrence 1998; Draaisma 2000; Boden 2006; Deliano 2013; Gantt & Williams 2014). The hugely complex and emergent human "mind," however, is not like *nonliving* machinery that we humans have made and use in our everyday experience; we are still a long way from sentient machines, despite the ones that can now defeat chess and go masters. This metaphor of the mind-as-machine is so familiar and pervasive, however, that it remains firmly embedded throughout Western philosophy and its related disciplines as a static, nonliving model for the mind (esp., e.g., McGilchrist 2009, 97–98; Mayr 1989; Dear 1998; Draaisma 2000; cf. Deliano 2013). In such an analogy, the emergent properties of the living human mind are passed over in exchange for the mechanistic/systemic behavior of a pile of metal with integrated circuits (cf. Harris 2008). Living, feeling human beings are so much more complex and interesting than the technology and nonliving machines *we have made* and compare ourselves to, metaphorically.

One such long-standing misuse of metaphor in Western language philosophy (and semiotics) is that by which something living, something moving and *dynamic* (like language *as* linguistic *signs*) is compared to *coins* as (static) units of value in a (relativistic) currency system *at equilibrium;* Saussure chose his core metaphor-model (in the source domain) from theoretical economics in the 1890s (see Chapter 5). Life and living language, however, do not exist at a state of equilibrium. Saussure's metaphorical source (coins) and target (words) domains do not share core structural attributes, as do the (living and nonliving) dissipative structures mentioned above. In fact, the only way to make this work is to apply the move of Zeno's paradox

of the arrow,[24] in which something that is moving (language) is divided into its simultaneously moving and static parts, as Saussure did on two axes: diachrony and synchrony, respectively.

To anticipate Chapter 7, metaphors are effective, when the point is to compare between things *sharing* similar attributes, like chemistry and its antecedent, alchemy. Metaphors are not effective, or even coherent models, however, when one compares between things that do not, in principle, *share at least some the same structural attributes* (cf. McGilchrist 2009, 97; for a roughly comparable argument for different reasons, see also Bennett & Hacker 2003). In short, models go awry when the source and target domains belong to different structural systems (i.e., nonliving static and nonliving/living dynamic, respectively).

This is especially the case, when whole theories are built up on the core of one or another of these (*nonliving*) starting points, as Saussure's (2011) static theory of synchronic *la langue* exemplifies; stasis is what gives the negative, differential system of *meaning* its power in his system. The distinction between (disembodied) metaphysical and (embodied) living structure therefore is the main blind-spot and gap this thesis highlights and addresses on its most elementary level by examining the role of embodiment as the key *process* of life (following Capra 1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014; cf. Maturana & Varela 1980, 1998; Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1993).

To emphasize the point, the gap under scrutiny here is not essentially one of "structure" versus "anti-structure," as suggested, for instance, by Ewa Domańska (2009, 341). Although I do understand the impulse for such a move "after structuralism," the problem is actually one of different *kinds* of structure: nonliving/ static and nonliving & living/dynamic (i.e., meta/physical and bio/chemical, respectively), and the consequences of mixing them metaphorically, or combining them unproblematically without understanding their crucial differences or the unfortunate, real-world consequences they actually generate (e.g., M. Johnson 2007; McGilchrist 2009; cf. Bennett & Hacker 2003).

In sum, my contribution to research in historical theory is simultaneously my contribution to social-science theory by demonstrating how AE enables the examination of the complex, human social system in terms of a "holist, living ecology," following (and synthesizing) Varela, Capra, Lakoff, Johnson, and others in acknowledging the relationships that exist between them. This examination is essential, if social science will eventually abandon its *familiar* metaphorical models and presuppositions derived from the static, nonliving and idealist realm of transcendental Greek philosophy and (meta)physics. Embodiment, as an integral operation or *movement* beyond traditional discussions in philosophy: (1) manifests itself as *autopoiesis* (the process of life); (2) belongs to a definition of living structure

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24   Zeno's paradox is mentioned above in footnote 23.

and cognition beyond Greek metaphysics; and, thus, (3) already stands beyond the need that Lloyd (1993) claims for "the possibility of a correspondence *truth* relation between theory and evidence," as he sees it (49; italics added). Indeed, it is time to look elsewhere, and I believe that Lloyd can easily part with the correspondence theory of truth, as traditionally posed.

After all, as Lloyd (1993) suggests, "it may turn out that the history of social structures is in fact law-governed in a way similar to [...] *the history of a complex eco-system"* (26; emphasis added). I fully agree, insofar as complex ecosystems are dynamical, nonlinear systems operating far from equilibrium and are, therefore, emergent systems of life following the principle of cognition in its widest sense as defended by AE. Moreover, systemic ecological holism is still largely unfamiliar today, although – thanks to White's project conducted in a Vichian idiom within Saussure's early (dualist, static) systemic theory – there is a framework of basic vocabulary that theorists have begun to use. The revolutionary shift that has been taking place over the past roughly 150 years in philosophy (since Nietzsche) is indeed "after modernity" in the sense that I discuss in Chapter 5. That is, what we are now witnessing is indeed the passing of the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm of "mechanism" in Western thought. This "systemic" revolution *after mechanism* is, however, even more demanding than Ermarth (2011) believes. As Mark Johnson (2007) recognizes:

> If you acknowledge conceptual metaphor, then you have to give up literalism.
> If you give up literalism, you must abandon objectivist theories of knowledge.
> If you reject objectivist metaphysics and epistemology, you must abandon the classical correspondence theory of truth. Eventually, you will have to rethink even your most basic conception of what cognition consists in. (205; emphasis added)

If Vico's principle of linguistic contingency is true (real), then what Johnson states above also follows. In the next section, I sketch out how Lloyd (1993) can easily abandon his dependence on the classical correspondence theory of truth. As Johnson states above, it requires rethinking the most basic conception of what cognition consists in. As I show in what follows, cognition is not a process inside the human skull, but a general process that is simultaneously the dynamic principle of life that AE already acknowledges.

2.2 COUPLING LLOYD'S "METHODOLOGICAL STRUCTURISM" TO AE

The larger framework within which *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) can best be applied and understood in the context of social-science history is within

Christopher Lloyd's (1993) methodological structurist social ontology.[25] From my standpoint, structurism is poised for synthesizing its dynamic social "ecological" system with the (ecologically holist) understanding of living structure (*autopoiesis*), thereby permanently departing from any last traces of dependency on the Western metaphysics that Lloyd falls back on, in order to ground his system.[26] This new way of conceiving cognition (AE) has been worked out over the last half of the twentieth century and well into the twenty-first as well (e.g., Maturana & Varela 1980,1998; Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1993; Weber & Varela 2002; Gallagher 2011; Maiese 2011; Martiny 2011; Hutto & Myin 2013; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016; De Jesus 2016; Hutto et al. forthcoming).

Until now, many of those who roughly follow this shift toward the new paradigm, however, are unaware of, or even reject, those others, who are also forging new ground in this area of enactive embodiment.[27] The work of bringing people to the same table of mutual recognition and understanding is, therefore, apposite, since there is plenty of room for the work of synthesis for those essentially on the same team, regarding these huge and important issues. Confirming my own inclusion of Lakoff and Johnson in this general move toward ecological holism are Fritjof Capra (2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) and Arnold H. Modell (2003).[28] A handful of (social) historians have already begun responding to this rapidly developing social (neuro)scientific framework as well (e.g., Gaddis 2002; Pomper & Shaw, eds. 2002; Smail 2008; Reddy 2009; Fulbrook & Rublack 2010; Plamper 2010; Bourke 2014).

Autopoietic enactive embodiment is an ongoing *Copernican shift* in the sense that a new understanding of (dynamic) living structure is a move away from the early-modern paradigm of Cartesian-Newtonian *mechanism* (with its focus on methodological reduction), modeled on physics. The new paradigm is one of systemic (ecological) holism, modeled instead on the (bio-chemical) life sciences that have embraced the role of dynamic complex systems, nonlinearity, and unpredictable outcomes as opposed to the material sciences and their linear, predictable outcomes. The context of such a shift lies in what Lloyd (1993) outlines in terms of a growing

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25   By "ontology," I do not refer to it in its technical Greek, metaphysical sense, even if Lloyd does (cf. Luft 2003, xv, n. 14). For my caveat concerning the terms structurism, structur(ation)ism, and Francophone structur(al)ism, see footnote 19 above.

26   Broken down into its etymological parts, *auto* means 'self,' "and refers to the autonomy of self-organizing systems; and *poiesis*—which shares the same Greek root as the word 'poetry'—means 'making.' So, *autopoiesis* means 'self-making'" (Capra 1996, 97). *Autopoiesis* in this sense is an emergent phenomenon (cf. Maturana & Varela 1980, 1998).

27   On some of these fault lines within embodied cognition, see, esp. Kristian Moltke Martiny's (2011) incisive review of Lawrence Shapiro's *Embodied Cognition*. See also Gallagher 2011; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016. I also did a small survey of my own among some of my sources; I asked some of the authors of books I use in my research, whether these authors had read the other authors I use (in personal conversations over the years in Copenhagen and in Helsinki). Given the realities of academia today in the Internet Age, it should not be surprising that many of the key authors I have read have not had time, in turn, to read each other.

28   I sincerely thank Sirkka Knuuttila for bringing Modell to my attention. I discovered Capra's embrace of Lakoff and Johnson after I was already pursuing it myself.

theoretical *discontinuity* between the hard sciences (as "mature" sciences) and the social sciences (as "immature" sciences) (23–27).[29]

In the light of these developments, however, White (1999a) has continued to maintain throughout the linguistic turn that: *"Historical studies have never had a Copernican revolution* similar to that which founded the physical sciences," to which he adds: "It is only the prestige of the physical sciences themselves [...] that inspires the effort to apply their principles of description, analysis, and explanation to history" (10; emphasis added). The revolution that White denies, however, has been long in coming in the convergence from different directions over the course of the twentieth century, and it deserves to be considered in terms that, for the most part, both Capra (1996, 2003) and Lloyd (1993) defend, in my view. Their visions are dynamic and complex, and it is Capra that sets the pace for terminology appropriate to the task.

At the very least, these developments provide the potential for a very different analysis of language from that of the (post)structuralist variety, which White appears to continue to support (e.g., White 2010b, 2012, 2013, 2014b; cf. Kuukkanen 2013; Peltonen 2015). In what follows in the subsections below, I present the discussion of the approach that frames the broader context of the variety of embodiment that this thesis contributes to and hopefully works to expand, AE. That is, what follows contributes to the unfolding *revolution* that White claims has not yet occurred. Like a tidal bore in its power, AE is now poised to reverse the natural direction of flow against the river current of ancient, traditional philosophy.

2.2.1 IN SEARCH OF *AUTOPOIETIC* ENACTIVE EMBODIMENT (AE)

According to philosopher Fritjof Capra (1996) the systemic approach "emerged simultaneously in several disciplines during the first half of the twentieth century, especially during the 1920s," and was pioneered in *biology* with "the view of living organisms as integrated wholes" (17). I address this paradigm shift toward embodiment in terms of the systemic approach offered in what follows, in order to provide a *structurist* context for AE. It is only in such a context that the sense-making capacities, which Luft's (1999, 2003) work on Vico highlights, can even take place. This work to "reframe" the body coupled to and acting in the world is necessary, insofar as the term "embodiment" is not yet even understood as the key concept of the *living* order of structure, if it is accepted at all.

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29   Lloyd (1993) relates that "[t]he French Enlightenment [...] witnessed many attempts to establish sciences of the mind and human nature on supposed Newtonian, mechanistic principles" (23; see also Cassirer 1950, 1955; Fuller 2013). For more on the Newtonian mechanistic approach to social theory, see Capra and Luisi (2014, 19–59); Dear (1998); see also Hacking (2002, 87–98). For literature that elaborates on the machine model of the mind, see Mayr 1989; Draaisma 2000; Boden 2006; cf. Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986.

In philosophy, Theodore R. Schatzki (2001) is well aware of the problem of defining embodiment and discusses the lack of agreement on a definition or understanding of it among the disciplines. In his introduction to *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory,* he can affirm that, fundamentally, "[p]ractice theorists who highlight embodiment typically believe [...] that bodies and activities are 'constituted' within practices" (2; cf. Hoy 1999; Schatzki 2002; Rouse 2007; Reddy 2009; Polyakov 2012). As a baseline, this does not offer much; for example, what precisely does the term "constituted" mean in such a text? More to the point: *how* are bodies and activities "constituted" within practices? These are just metaphors, not explanations. *What* is entailed in such a process of constitution? For one thing, when the discussion is not aware that the discussion itself is carried out in the traditional idiom of Western philosophical analytics, it quickly hits up against terminological walls, which are difficult to negotiate around or over. In other words, it is difficult to carry on a discussion that does not yet have its own vocabulary.

In his introduction to the special issue on "enactive experience," Steve Torrance (2005, 357) notes that, at the time that Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch published their groundbreaking *The Embodied Mind* in 1991 (i.e., Varela et al. 1993), traditional "cognitive science has had virtually nothing to say about what it means to be human in everyday, lived situations" (in Varela et al. 1993, xv). In the early 1990s, traditional, standard cognitive science was still very much about studying cognition in terms of what goes on inside the human skull in computational terms (as based on a mental, representational theory of mind). This was so, despite the groundbreaking work on cognition as a "principle of life" that Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1980, 1998) had been working on in earlier decades.

As Torrance (2005, 357) reports, however, by the mid-2000s, the attention of the cognitive-science community had extended to include, among other issues, those of consciousness, emotion, and even dynamic embodied interaction with the world.[30] While the work of Varela et al. (1993) has played no small role in the expansion of issues that have begun to include "lived experience" in contemporary cognitive science, Varela et al. (1993) merely began this important conversation. One of the main problems, according to critics (e.g., Gallagher 2011; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016; De Jesus 2016), is that AE was a project, as mentioned above, that was still searching for its own idiom.

This is evident when, on the very first page of Varela et al. (1993), they state: "We hold with [Maurice] Merleau-Ponty that Western scientific culture requires that we see our bodies both as physical structures and as lived, experiential structures— in short, *as both 'outer' and 'inner,'* biological and phenomenological" (xv; italics

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30   I refer to this interaction throughout this thesis, following Capra (1996), as the "coupling" of the body with the world through what Vico had already referred to as the bodily skills of perception, memory, and imagination.

added). Indeed, the discussion is focused on biological and phenomenal "structure," as I believe continues to be a crucial emphasis.[31] But, this terminology above, that is: both '*outer*' and '*inner*' is also "dyadic" in traditional philosophic terms, and has thus continued to bedevil this new enactive approach in search of its own vocabulary (see also, e.g., Hutto & Myin 2013). These two terms, outer and inner, unfortunately reproduce the traditional dualism of the Western tradition that enactive embodiment has attempted to breach and go beyond.

In the meantime, AE has struggled with these distinctions that I will discuss here, briefly, in terms of both Kristian Moltke Martiny's (2011) review of Lawrence Shapiro's 2011 book *Embodied Cognition,* and Paulo De Jesus's (2016) critique of AE. The first point that needs to be emphasized is that embodied cognition is being worked on from both sides of the cognitive-science continuum; that is, it is being worked on by both tradition-minded (standard) cognitive scientists, on the one hand, and phenomenologically oriented embodied cognitive scientists, on the other hand. This has also resulted in many confusions and the conflation of issues that should be separated.

The former (tradition-minded) group adheres to the computational models of mind that have driven cognitive science for decades in following the metaphysics that Varela et al. (1993, 7) wish to depart from. The latter, phenomenologically oriented approach to (*autopoietic*) embodied cognitive science, however, looks to the way enactive, "lived experience" alters the picture beyond a reliance on (mental) "representation" in their work, as Hutto et al. (forthcoming) emphasize and argue. So, here, mental *representation* (in the *mimetic* traditional of metaphysics) plays an important role in my argument for distinguishing between standard cognitive scientists working on "embodiment" and those I look to, who not only repudiate mental representation, but look to the body as the source of meaning through lived experience.[32] Engaging with these "territorial battles" over enactivism on the separate roles of cognition and the body in the definition of embodiment is crucial.

Indeed, at the conclusion of his book on embodied cognition, Shapiro remains skeptical of enactive theory. He is skeptical, precisely because he remains true to "mental computationalism"; that is, he favors information processing models of mind and cognition, which allow him to completely bypass phenomenology in his assessment of embodied cognition. But, skepticism of enactive theory on the basis of a mental, computational view to cognitive science is similar to the view of a

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31   Indeed, for the discussion on how the enactivist paradigm has grown and developed along these lines, see Torrance (2005) and the special issue he introduces (see also, e.g., Noë 2009, 2013; Hutto & Myin 2013; Wilson & Foglia 2015; Vörös & Gaitsch 2016).

32   Paulo De Jesus (2016) points out, for instance, that Andy Clark comprehends a "special role for the body, insofar as "brains must be embodied and embedded," but Clark insists that brains are nonetheless "computational and representational devices" (37). Clark belongs to What De Jesus categorizes as the *mechanist* approach to embodiment.

Ptolemaic astronomer, who remains skeptical of the new Copernican system on the basis of the traditional Ptolemaic principles, to which he remains committed. Shapiro might as well say that he rejects the new Copernican system, because its principles depart from the Ptolemaic ones he is most familiar with and follows. In other words, this is "classic" behavior at the leading edge of a major paradigm shift (cf. Feyerabend 1993, esp. 135–146). As Martiny (2011) notes:

> I consider it a failure that Shapiro does not stress the part that a whole tradition, namely phenomenology, plays in embodied cognition. With its emphasis on embodiment, the phenomenological tradition has been one of the main motivating forces behind this embodied trend in cognitive sciences. (301)

In other words, Shapiro passes over as *irrelevant* the phenomenon of emotion-laden lived experience as playing a constitutive role in shaping mind and cognition (Martiny 2011, 304; cf. Plamper 2010; Scheer 2012), because he favors the familiar ancient metaphor of the mind-as-machine, even if he remains unaware of the metaphor at the center of his commitment to traditional cognitivism (see, e.g., Gardner 1989). For these computation-minded cognitive scientists, *language,* among other things, continues to stand out as "representation-hungry problems" (Martiny 2011, 299), in an apparent adherence to the principle of arbitrariness of the sign. So the test case of language holds here; standard cognitive scientists bypass the embodied nature of language; by contrast, they insist on the representational nature of language as a reason to keep cognitive science under the standard, computational models, in turn dependent on representation, in a vicious circle.

   As De Jesus (2016) points out, there are two key principles (summarized below) that distinguish AE from what are now referred to as the 4E approaches (embodied, embedded, enactive, extended). These 4E approaches encompass different forms (or trajectories) of embodiment – from the traditional computationalists, dependent on representationalism (i.e., conservative *mechanism*), to those who refute computationalism – in what De Jesus (2016) refers to as the *phenomenal* approach to embodiment, AE (38). The central distinction for the AE approach, moreover, is that the mechanistic (functionalist approaches) are more concerned with accounts of cognition per se, and are less concerned with the role of the body. For the phenomenological AE approach, humans are sense-making agents, whose adaptive biological autonomy (their sensorimotor coupling with the world through perception, memory, and imagination) generates inherently *meaningful* experiences of the world to the agents themselves, which is what underlies the active creation of the social world, as Luft (2003) shows in her unique approach to Vico's metaphor theory of language.

   Thus, to summarize, the two key principles that depart from the mechanistic 4E approach to embodiment involves the nature of cognitive systems that "are (i)

constituted through adaptive biological autonomy and, as a consequence, (ii) are sense-making agents whose engagements with the world are inherently meaningful for the agent itself. These two ideas provide the foundations for the AE conception of the body" (De Jesus 2016, 38). In short, what connects AE to these other 4E approaches is the *intimate role that cognition* plays in embodiment; indeed so. What is different from these other approaches is the far more developed *account of the body* that AE offers, where these other approaches defer only to cognition. For AE, the body is the "source of meaning" that these other approaches overlook with their attention turned toward their (limited) version of cognition.

The central problem for computational cognitivism, from the standpoint of AE, is that the posited *symbolic* representations "mean nothing to the system to which they belong, but they only mean something to an outside observer of the system" (De Jesus 2016, 39). *Meaning* is here not intrinsic to the organism itself. The same is true for the non-computational/non-representational "mechanistic" approach (e.g., Chemero's "radical embodied cognition thesis"), where meaning plays no intrinsic role for, say, robots picking up empty cans, while roaming through a landscape. Meaning is here only ascribed from the outside, not intrinsic to it.

As De Jesus (2016) remarks, "[i]n order to understand the emergence of intrinsic meaning one needs to begin with an appropriate account of the body" (39). This is because – as also Mark Johnson has emphasized for decades – "the body is the ultimate *source* of significance" (ibid.; cf. M. Johnson 1997, 1999, 2007; Modell 2003; M. Johnson & Rohrer 2007). Crucially, for De Jesus (2016) and his account of AE, the way to understand how the body becomes a source of signification, one must first understand what "adaptive autonomy" is (39). This is where Fritjof Capra's (1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) work on Maturana and Varela is apposite and where my contribution to AE in this thesis begins.

As De Jesus (2016) states, "[a]ccording to AE, living systems are a special sub-class of self-organizing dynamic systems, which are autonomous, or operationally closed, and adaptive" (39). Capra has much more to say in this regard, not only following Maturana and Varela, but also following Gregory Bateson (1904–1980) and the celebrated chemist Ilya Prigogine (1917–2003). In what follows I intend to expand on what De Jesus, Vörös, Gaitsch, Gallagher, Martiny, and many others see as the significant contribution that the AE approach to embodiment offers; that is, beyond the need to remain anchored to traditional metaphysics.

I offer especially Capra's (1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) and Modell's (2003) observations in this vein, in support of an embodied approach to language, in contributing to the claims of AE beyond standard cognitive science and its vocabulary. Moreover, I put forward these arguments as the context for an interpretation of (metaphorical) language (e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 2003; Gallese and Lakoff 2005; M. Johnson 2007; M. Johnson and Rohrer 2007; Lakoff 2012) that begins to enlarge on the biological detail that Vico (according to Luft 1999, 2003) caught sight

of in the broadest of terms nearly three hundred years ago. Vico's work remains even now, with all our modern tools, slightly ahead, and beyond our theoretical grasp. But, this gap is rapidly closing with the shift towards theories of living structure.

2.2.2   CAPRA'S "SYSTEMIC" SYNTHESIS: EMBODIMENT, STRUCTURAL COUPLING, AND LANGUAGE

Practices and the constituting actions and activities within and beyond bodies – even emotions (Scheer 2012; cf. Damasio 1999, 2005; Kövecses 2003; Wetherell 2012, 2013) – clearly shape bodies themselves, but also the specific environments that humans occupy, shape, and in turn are shaped by, through time in a cyclical, "ecological" pattern of dynamic movement and change (e.g., Lloyd 1993; Benson 2001; M. Johnson 2007; McGilchrist 2009). As a beginning for the idea of the body as a *living* structure, Capra (2003) describes a path mid-way between (beyond) philosophical "subjectivism" and "objectivism" that is taken as a commonplace in discussions concerned with, for instance, the "subject" and "object" of knowledge at the center of epistemological debates, even in historical theory today.[33]

Varela, Thompson, and Rosch (1993) attempted to move beyond the traditional philosophical dichotomy of inside/outside, that is, on the subjectivity/objectivity divide of experience, and characterize *embodied action* as something that depends upon *having a body* in various contexts of lived experience – whether biological, psychological, or cultural contexts (173). This is so, even while they continued to employ the vocabulary of inside/outside, as noted above (e.g., De Jesus 2016). So, while they take on the language of subjectivity/objectivity, they struggle to actually define the path "between" and beyond it. For them, embodied *action* means that the biological processes inside the body – such as individual sensorimotor capacities for grasping with hands and fingers, or walking across a street – are inseparable from lived experience on the broader scale, ultimately including our capacity to speak and write texts on embodied action.

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33   The reason why Foucault does not appear in my discussion of embodiment here is that, while he was clearly interested in the body and in moving beyond structuralism and poststructuralism (e.g., Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983), he died in 1984 – that is, too early for him to contribute to the philosophical discussion that I address here. Ian Hacking (2002) states, for example, that "Foucault [...] wants to know how [...] subjects themselves are constituted. [...] It is a Foucauldian thesis that every way in which I can think of myself as a person and an agent is something that has been constituted within a web of historical events. Here is one more step in the destruction of Kant: the noumenal self is nothing" (82–83). Foucault's observations are important for his time and place, but his work on embodiment precedes the kind of neurobiological work that Lakoff (2012) describes in embodied cognition and cognitive linguistics, which actually begins to answer some of Foucault's deepest questions and problems, as applied to history. For example, Foucault still employs the vocabulary of "subject" and "object," which the theorists of enactive embodiment attempt to lay aside, as I highlight below.

By contrast to the Greek philosophical tradition, for Varela et al. (1993), there is no "pregiven" outer (objective) world to "recover." Individual perceivers, moving in a local environment, continually guide their own actions, depending on what is happening – as for the individual car driver in heavy traffic in Los Angeles, or the person dodging traffic in an attempt to cross a busy street in downtown London. As Varela et al. (1993) have it, "[s]ince these local situations," such as driving in or walking between car traffic in the above examples, "constantly change as a result of the perceiver's activity, the reference point for understanding perception is no longer a pregiven, perceiver-independent world but rather the sensorimotor structure of the perceiver [...]" (173). This structure of the *actively perceiving person* within changing local situations is in fact a *middle path between* the extremes of recovering either a pregiven "objective" external world (realism), or a pregiven "subjective" internal world (idealism) in the tradition of Western philosophy.

The middle path mentioned above involves what Capra (2003) describes as the "structural coupling" of the living organism with its environment, which I go on to explain in more detail below (cf. De Jesus 2016, 39–41). For Varela et al. (1993), as for Capra (1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014), this middle path does not mean that humans have *direct access* to the "objective" external world, nor that humans are absolutely isolated within a purely "subjective" and *solipsistic internal world* of their own imagining. On this *systemic,* biological view, these two extremes of objectivity and subjectivity can finally be put aside, when it is understood that cognition is not a "thing," not a concept to explore within the ancient tradition of analytic Western philosophy, but an emergent, biological *process* (e.g., Capra 2003, 30; cf. Maturana & Varela 1980, 1998; McGilchrist 2009). As De Jesus (2016) notes, "for AE cognition is the direct result of the system's sense-making activities as it 'enacts' or 'brings forth' its own world of meaning and significance" (40).

To walk this back and see the trajectory of this broader context for cognition, Maturana and Varela (1998) distinguish their view from traditional theories by what they call "walking on the razor's edge" between "the Scylla monster of representationism and the Charybdis whirlpool of solipsism" (133, 134). As they characterize perception, "the nervous system functions from moment to moment as a definite system with operational closure," but not by any means to the extent of "absolute cognitive solitude or solipsism," in which only one's own interior life is all that exists (133, 134). For Maturana and Varela, the way forward beyond this ancient (Greek) debate lies in shifting *the nature of the question* that is posed by placing it within a larger context; that is, to place the question in a context in which pattern and structure are *interdependent* through multiple layers of processes that begin in the body below the conscious level of awareness (cf. Damasio 1999, 2005; Benson 2001; Modell 2003; M. Johnson 2007).

These neurobiological processes of the living organism are ultimately (structurally) coupled with the environment through the bodily senses (perception) by moving,

interacting, and communicating in language with one another (Maturana & Varela 1998, 135–136; cf. Capra 2003, 30–33). It is in this way that the embodied and emergent process that is "mind" (as a *process* and not a "thing") is capable of *bringing forth a world,* as Capra characterizes what living systems *do* (1996, 264–285, 2003, 29–65; cf. De Jesus 2016, 40). In similar terms, Iain McGilchrist (2009) further affirms that the brain is a "structure" that participates in the emergent process of bringing forth the "mind," insofar as "the brain is not just a tool for grappling with the world. It's what brings the world about" (19). Thus, as Capra (2003) interprets Maturana and Varela, "[m]ind and matter no longer appear to belong to two separate categories, but can be seen as representing two complementary aspects of the phenomenon of life – process and structure," respectively (33). In the language of AE, then, "mind" is not a mere projection of the organ of the human brain (a structure); mind ("cognition") is rather what is meant in the broadest context by the process (the structure) of life (*autopoiesis*). As Maturana and Varela (1980) state early on:

> A cognitive system is a system whose organization defines a domain of interactions in which it can act with relevance to the maintenance of itself, and the process of cognition is the actual (inductive) acting or behaving in this domain. *Living systems are cognitive systems, and living as a process is a process of cognition.* This statement is valid for all organisms, with and without a nervous system. (13; original emphasis)

"Cognition" for Maturana and Varela is thus no longer a specific process of human "knowledge" in the idealist sense of Greek metaphysics (on the founding metaphor for the metaphysics of "knowledge," see Chapter 6). The structure of cognition is rather understood as the (circular, ecological, *systemic*) "process of life," that is: *autopoiesis,* self-organization. The structural *attributes* of the self-organizing (emergent) process of life operating far from equilibrium are radically different from the structural attributes in the foregoing Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm of mechanism. What this Copernican shift from mechanism to emergent, ecological holism points to is that cognitive science, according to the Santiago theory of cognition (Maturana & Varela 1980, 1998) is *not* the study of human "rationality" located inside the human skull. It is rather the study of the *process* of life (*autopoiesis*), living structure (cf. Lakoff 2012).

This radical change in thinking is Copernican in the way it shifts ourselves (and human rationality) from the center of the cognitive process, in quite similar fashion to the way the heliocentric theory of Copernicus shifted the earth from its place at the center of the static Ptolemaic universe (see Feyerabend 1993). In fact, the contemporary paradigm shift away from traditional Greek metaphysics has not yet come of age in the social sciences (i.e., not, for instance, in critical realism). This sea

change, however, has already made its way into the mainstream of philosophical debate and is poised to continue to revolutionize also historical theory (Siskin 2016).

From this new *autopoietic* perspective, "structural coupling," replaces the traditional dichotomy between the pregiven "objective," external world (realism) and the pregiven "subjective," internal world (idealism), as De Jesus (2016) and others insist (e.g., M. Johnson 2007; M. Johnson & Rohrer 2007; Gallagher 2011, Maiese 2011). It is, in short, what Lakoff and Johnson (1999) discuss in terms of "embodied realism" (74–129). On this view, structural coupling involves, rather, the living organism's various sensorimotor capacities to couple "to its environment structurally, i.e., through recurrent interactions, each of which triggers structural changes in the system" (Capra 2003, 30).

Moreover, it is important to point out that such a view constitutes neither "methodological holism," nor "methodological individualism," as traditionally understood in mutual rejection of one another (e.g., Lloyd 1993, 17, 42–49; cf. Fodor & Lepore 1992; Zahle & Collin, eds. 2014). Structural coupling on this description is the systemic *feedback loop* between our physical bodies and the actual, real environment within which we move, act, speak, and respond to the events and *conditions* that we encounter and which also shape us in our everyday life with others. That is, the methodological structurism that Lloyd subscribes to is an ecological, dynamic process of mutual inclusion from microcosm to macrocosm and back again.

Moreover, this structural coupling is what enables *learning*. To illustrate this, Capra (2003, 30–33) describes an event in its two versions. There is a world of difference between what happens, for instance, when someone kicks: (i) *a rock* as compared to when someone kicks (ii) *a living dog*. In the first (mechanistic) case, a rock will *react* to the kick in accordance with a linear chain of cause and effect. In consequence, the simple (linear) reaction of the rock is predictable and can be calculated by applying the basic laws of Newtonian mechanics to the trajectory of the rock's path after being kicked. In the second case, kicking a dog, however, is an entirely different kind of event. This event will obviously not result in this same linear process, or trajectory of flight, as applied to the situation of an inert rock. By contrast, the dog will *respond* as a living organism to the kicker in accordance with a nonlinear pattern of organization (Capra 2003, 31).

In other words, a living dog's behavior (after being kicked) cannot be calculated in the same way a nonliving rock's reaction can. The dog will *respond* with "structural changes" according to its own nature and (nonlinear) pattern of organization. The dog's response, dependent as it is on its previous experience, will be *unpredictable*. Any future behavior is dependent on the living animal's capacity for perception, memory, and imagination, to the extent that these bodily skills are possible. In this way, the future behavior of a living organism is dependent on "its own, individual pathway of structural coupling" (Capra 2003, 31).

This is quite in line with De Jesus's (2016) statement that most varieties of enactivism, and central for AE, "is the view that cognition is, at various levels of complexity, an embodied sensorimotor coupling between living organism and environment" (38). Capra's (2003) discussion extends this same argument by describing *how* the structure of the living organism depends upon an *ongoing embodiment* of the organism's pattern of organization between its components. Living structure "is *a record of previous structural changes* and thus of previous interactions" (31; emphasis added). Moreover, for Capra, this perceptual "coupling" with the environment is what enables and facilitates *learning;* indeed, as Capra states:

> As a living organism responds to environmental influences with structural changes, these changes will in turn alter its future behavior. In other words, *a structurally coupled system is a learning system*. Continual structural changes in response to the environment – and consequently continuing adaptation, learning and development – are key characteristics of the behavior of all living beings. (2003, 31; emphasis added)

Another way of saying this is that "all living beings have a history. *Living structure is always a record of prior development"* (31; emphasis added).

I believe that Capra's departure point thereby helps to avoid the criticism directed at AE that it "inadvertently prioritizes human experience, and [...] negates the distinctive nonhuman experiences and cognition of other living organisms," as De Jesus (2016, 45) observes. When a larger conception of "cognition" as the *process of life* is characterized on this higher level, it embraces all life, not just human life. For humans, experiences of, and with, others in the context of socializing practices inevitably shape identities in distinctive ways. But this shaping of life happens not only among humans, as Capra's example of kicking a rock and kicking a dog, above, was meant to clarify. Indeed, larger group practices among living organisms tend to *condition* the individual experiences that feed back into such practices, as Lloyd (1993, 26) has presciently noted above, when he speculates on the nature of "social structures" as following the laws of complex ecosystems – that is, well beyond the anthropocentric and anthropomorphic criticisms now directed at AE. As De Jesus (2016) emphasizes in quoting Hans Jonas, "life can only be known by life" (44).

Furthermore, from the AE standpoint, De Jesus cites the notion that the body

> is understood to be a self-individuating entity that generates and maintains itself through constant engagement with the world. As Kyselo and Di Paolo point out, 'the body can be associated with the living organism as a whole and to its appropriation of non-organic structures and processes as they are integrated into the autonomous self-sustaining network that makes up its identity. It is a

self-individuating, dynamic and precarious unity of organic and non-organic processes that contribute to the conservation of life.' (2016, 40)

This self-individuating, dynamic and precarious unity of life is also constantly shaped in implicit, unnoticed ways on a daily basis, making up its history of experiences, its record of prior development (Capra 2003, 31). Even such small things as imitating facial or hand gestures of loved ones while speaking and interacting with them eventually becomes part of the repertoire of features in the network and development of personal identity.

It should be noted, too, that emotional development plays a key role in socialization. Individual development takes place, whether those intimate gestures and interactions with "loved ones" are done in love and with kindness, or whether such interactions take place in overtly abusive, violent, or unhealthy relationships between children and their primary caregivers (e.g., Winnicott 1991; Gerhardt 2004; Keim 2012). If there is a biological law along these lines, it may be that "structural coupling" between young children and their primary caregivers lays down the *living record of the actual history of those interactions within that relationship.* We are shaped from the beginning of our lives in the ways that a mother's affection (holding/cuddling her baby, or not) contributes to determining the trajectory of growth and learning in a healthy infant and beyond (cf. Winnicott 1991; Gerhardt 2004; Rimé 2009).

As Lakoff and Johnson (1999) also show, this relational experience of structural coupling so early in life *deeply affects language,* both for the individual person, as well as for the type of idioms one can find in the language within which we are socialized (46–49). Lakoff and Johnson indicate how *affection* participates as one of hundreds of basic-level (body-level) concepts, for instance, in the *conflation between* conception and perception in early life: for example, AFFECTION is WARMTH.[34] Here, the separation (dichotomy) between *conception/perception* as posited in traditional philosophy of mind does not hold. It is within this conflated

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34 The conflation, or "cross-domain neural mappings" of (nonsensorimotor) *conception* and (sensorimotor) *perception* as young infants is how the term "conceptual metaphor" arose; conceptual conflation is what gives rise to the metaphorical imagination. Thus bodily (sensorimotor) perception is deeply involved in the way humans construe concepts. As Arnold H. Modell (2003) relates this phenomenon, in following Lakoff and Johnson in his own work, "the source of the imagination [...] is an unconscious metaphoric process," which provides "the link between conscious experience and unconscious memory" (25). The link in this process is *metaphor.* Synesthesia is another example, though much rarer, of the type of "cross-domain neural mapping" as discussed here in the creation of metaphors described by Lakoff and Johnson. French cognitive neuroscientist Stanislas Dehaene (2010) describes synesthesia as a genuine visual illusion in which this "conflation" of neural domains can persist even into adulthood as a permanent feature of these individuals' perception. "In synesthetes, the five senses are no longer separated, but appear to cross-activate each other. One person sees color and motion each time he hears a voice or listens to music. Another sees a halo of color around certain letters or digits" (215). Such "perceptions" would naturally give rise to unusual metaphors or descriptions outside ordinary perception. The novelist Vladimir Nabokov (1899–1977) and the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) were both synesthetes, for instance (e.g., Dehaene 2010, 215). Moreover, Saussure was unusual even among synesthetes for his particular cross-activation of the senses (Joseph 2012, 394).

intermingling between conception and perception that Lakoff and Johnson's "conceptual metaphor theory" arises in the first place. If one is unaware of the deeply embodied (embedded) nature of conception (metaphorical imagination), one can easily disregard a theoretical construct born of our human embodiment from our very first moments of life, as we are given into a mother's warm and waiting arms (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 2003; Modell 2003; Gerhardt 2004; McGilchrist 2009; Bergen 2012).

In the case of normal development, the nonsensorimotor *conception* (affection) and the sensorimotor *perception* (warmth) are at first conflated in an infant's undifferentiated experience of self with its mother. Cross-domain neural mapping (conflation) between conceptual and sensorimotor experience in early life therefore sets the pattern for hundreds of similar body-level, basic metaphors that are both universally understood and that participate in idioms of all kinds, where more complex metaphors are eventually elaborated on the basis of the primary metaphors (i.e., UNDERSTANDING is GRASPING, KNOWLEDGE is SEEING, CATEGORIES are CONTAINERS; see Table 4.1 in Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 50–54; for similar conflation for reading, see, e.g., Dehaene 2010, 216–218; cf. Taylor 2016, 129–160). These cross-domain neural mappings (conflations) between conceptual and sensorimotor experience in early life is the biological basis for linguistic idioms, such as "to smile warmly," even though children can later separate the conceptual and perceptual domains.

Children usually understand, for example (based on further experience and inference) that "affection" is not literally "warmth." However, the *neural circuits* that are imprinted on the nervous system and establish these connections in the first place are not erased, nor do they disappear like deleted files in a machine; the *cross-domain association* to bodily affects, concepts, and percepts persists over the life-span (Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 47; cf. Gerhardt 2004; Capra & Luisi 2014, 270–274). This is another way of understanding what Capra (2003, 31) means by the idea that "living structure is always a record of prior development."

This phenomenon may also raise, for example, further questions as to what effects, if any, one might find in the language of *abused* children, or *abandoned* babies, or children raised from an early age in neglectful orphanages. These are examples of children, who were given *no chance* to experience such normal cross-domain associations in their early lives in the context of "human" socialization. The research suggests that under such unfortunate conditions, these children, indeed, do *not* make these (normal) cross-domain neural mappings associating "affection" with "warmth." In fact, for such children *language* is one of the least of their many developmental problems.[35]

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35   Keim (2012) reports on research of children in the hands of neglectful parents and the behavior of children raised in orphanages. Of the findings reported among children from neglectful orphanages, it appears that love and affection is not only necessary for generating typical, cross-domain neural mappings for our most

A more dramatic (and complex) exception to the one above, is the following case that Maturana and Varela (1998) summarize. Rather than the situation of abused or abandoned children, this describes two children who were socialized outside the human community full stop. The case concerns the situation of two Hindu girls, aged eight and five years, respectively, who were "rescued" from a family of wolves in northern India in 1922. Maturana and Varela (1998) note that at the time they were found, "the girls did not know how to walk on two feet. They moved rapidly about on all fours. Of course, they did not speak and had inexpressive faces" (128). And although the girls were both healthy and showed no signs of mental retardation or malnutrition when they were found, "[t]heir separation from the wolf family caused a profound depression in them and brought them to the brink of death" (129).

The younger girl died shortly after being found. The older girl survived another ten years, but "never learned to speak properly, although she did use a few words" (Maturana & Varela 1998, 129). Those who came to know her well, however, "never felt that she was completely human" (129). The point of mentioning such a case is that our socialization, whether in a human context, or in a wolf pack, constitutes the history of the organism, as Capra (2003) describes above, and so takes us well beyond the human realm – and that of its human language; we are all living organisms, even dogs and wolves.

The socialization process, a learning process through our coupling with our environments as such, apparently also holds for humans raised outside the context of strictly human socialization and language. Indeed, Maturana and Varela (1998) conclude this case by contrasting the real wolf girls with Kipling's imaginary jungle boy Mowgli, who could never have existed in real life. Mowgli already "knew how to talk and behaved like a person from the very first moment he encountered a human environment" (129). This is the manner in which the reality and scope of lived experience is sometimes far greater than we can ever imagine – especially when applying false metaphors as models for such experience, as in the representation theory of mind.

If metaphors arise in imagination from actual (normal) social experience within human communities, as the above exception seems to indicate through its absence, then metaphors will invariably differ in people's unique experiences, even from cultural group to cultural group – and can therefore fail the test of "universality" across cultures (as Bourke 2014 attests). Moreover, this is precisely what human "structural coupling" with the environment would predict and why there are different languages that, likewise, change through time (*pace* Nietzsche 1989; *pace* Ermarth 2011, 37). It is also likely at the root of why the one wolf girl, who survived her "rescue" by her human tribe, never learned more than a handful of words; she had no ongoing

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common idioms. More importantly, love and affection also appears to be vital for mental health and a capacity for *learning* from our earliest years onward (see also Ogden 1990; Gerhardt 2004).

experience (history) of language-learning as coupled with the environment of the wolves, who had accepted her into the pack as one of them. In other words, what was "imprinted" on her nervous system after spending years among the wolves was a very different lived experience; she was not completely "human." How, in such a case, do representational theories of mind and language account for the anomalies in (human) learning seen in the surviving wolf girl?

The general justification for attempting to develop and raise *autopoietic* enactive embodiment within philosophical discussions is already well in keeping with the overall trend to address issues of biology in philosophical and history-theoretical practice of the last century and more (cf. Cassirer 1950, 1955; Fuller 2013). Moreover, empirical discoveries in the life sciences are deeply relevant for the discussion of *perception* beyond the traditional philosophical paradigm as practiced in the analytical philosophy of language (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 440–468; Capra & Luisi 2014, 304–305; see also Chapters 4 & 9). Coming to grips with the nature of embodiment, as AE is in the process of formulating it, is therefore important for historical theory. Indeed, thanks to White's intervention, some of the vocabulary of Vico's tropology is already familiar to arguments and some assumptions in the contemporary discussions in historiography. On the other hand, the underlying workings of embodied metaphor are wholly absent from these same discussions of rhetoric as mere figural language (see, e.g., White 1983, 1985, 1992, 1999, 2000, 2005a, 2006, 2013; cf. Paul 2011; Macfie, ed. 2015). In this sense, the vocabulary, but not the spirit of Vico's embodied metaphor theory of language is already in use.

If indeed White's *intention* to break down dualisms between history and literature and between fact and fiction had ultimately been successful, the present work would not have been necessary.[36] But, White had the wrong tools at his disposal for the work he intended. Or, he had some of the right (Vichian) tools, but he then deployed them in the wrong contexts, because he was ignorant of the consequences of the metaphors at the heart of the theory he used as his framework, as I show in Chapter 8. Metaphors have consequences, and misused metaphors have unfortunate consequences. Moreover, misused metaphors can, as they did in White's work, undermine one's own intentions. White may not have been a "Saussurean" in the strict sense, but he was very much an heir of the conceptual metaphors that determined the static structure of the study of discourse that he brought to the table in historical theory.[37]

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36   I am preceded in similar efforts to critique White's work from different standpoints: cf. Dykers 1984; Lorenz 1998; Ankersmit 2009; Runia 2010. Perhaps in this regard, the incisive Master's thesis of Dorothy Anne Dykers (1984), at 89 pages in length, is the longest and most detailed of these critiques.

37   Ewa Domańska, Wulf Kansteiner, Kalle Pihlainen, and Sandra Rudnick Luft (personal communications) have all pointed out to me that Hayden White is not and never was a "Saussurean." While I agree that White did not follow Saussure in the "strict" sense, I continue to hold that he used the vocabulary of (dualist) structuralism in his argumentation. As a result, this has led to unfortunate consequences for history-as-fiction, as I hope this revised version of the dissertation more clearly elaborates. Structuralism in all its various transformations

Disciplinary boundaries were, of course, sealed off more firmly at the time of the linguistic turn and there is no question that interdisciplinarity between historical theory and the life sciences would have been off the table at the time. Even today, however, disciplinary boundaries are not yet so fluid as to perhaps openly welcome the new understanding of "mind as process" (in which cognition is the process of life, not merely an operation inside the human head). But there is mounting evidence that interdisciplinary research is now permeating the historical and social-science disciplines at an increasing speed, no doubt facilitated by the vast mutual permeability of research in the internet era (e.g., Lloyd 1993; Wallerstein 2001; Gaddis 2002; LaCapra 2001, 2016; Pomper & Shaw, eds. 2002; Rosenwein 2002; Runia 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010; Seigel 2005; Smail 2008; Reddy 2009; Fulbrook & Rublack 2010; Plamper 2010; Scheer 2012; Hunt 2014; Bourke 2014).[38]

In what follows in the next section, I set out the synthesis that Capra (1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) proposes between the process of the living (*autopoiesis*) and "dissipative" structure that extends and integrates an understanding of the self-organizing behavior of living systems that I contribute to AE, and by extension, ultimately, to historical theory.[39] It is this same synthesis that I propose as an extension of Lloyd's (1993) structurist framework beyond the methodological individualism–holism debate (cf. Wallerstein 2001). Furthermore, it is Capra's synthesis that I use in Section 8.3 to analyze White's theoretical construct "history-as-fiction."

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was "Saussurean," in a general sense, insofar as Saussure was the "father of structuralism" (e.g., White 1974). As Saussure's biographer John E. Joseph (2012, 642) points out, the different strands of structuralism all shared a common core of specific traits (see also Chapters 3–5). Because White employed a patchwork of structuralist ideas from various Saussure-inspired structuralist theorists from Lévi-Strauss, to Barthes, to Jakobson, to Greimas, to Lacan, White was indeed "Saussurean" (with a nod in the direction of Derrida and poststructuralism). Foucault was always problematic from the standpoint that he was neither a structuralist, nor a poststructuralist, but he did not quite arrive at anything like the embodiment I try to outline here (see, e.g., Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983; Foucault 1998a,b,c; Hacking 2002).

38 Frank Ankersmit (2013) also makes "A Plea for a Cognitivist Approach to White's Tropology," but this plea is made in the traditional sense that harks back to Greek metaphysics. For his current emphasis on experience, Ankersmit overtly champions a nonliving "physics model" that is excluded from the AE approach I embrace here. From what I have been able to discern, Ankersmit appears to apply tools from an old toolbox of the hard sciences in his current phase, rather than to make a(n AE) cognitivist plea that would then take tropology beyond the traditional philosophical arguments he continues to employ (cf. Lorenz 1998).

39 A dissipative system is one that is thermodynamically open in a stable state far from equilibrium in an environment with which it is *structurally coupled* and exchanges both matter and energy. Historical sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (2001), characterizes dissipative systems as those "that are maintained by the constant dissipation of energy and hence manifest self-organization" (31–32). See also Figure 2.1 above. I continue discussing this *emergent* dissipative system also in what follows below.

2.2.3   AE IS THE SYNTHESIS OF PATTERN, PROCESS, AND STRUCTURE

As Lloyd (1993) notes, "All complex systems that are characterized by evolutionary or historical forces, such as ecosystems, insect and animal societies, have agents for change within them" (94). For Lloyd, this means that people as agents, both individually and collectively, "are agents on behalf of 'social principles' that take the form of pre-existing structures, norms, institutions […], which require actively to be reproduced if they are to survive" (94). This, of course, is completely in keeping with an *autopoietic* network in a living organism, as Capra outlines. The point of contact between Lloyd (and Wallerstein 2001) and Capra (1996, 2003, Capra & Luisi 2014) is Lloyd's (1993) understanding that "the process of intended social reproduction gives rise to gradual and sometimes *sudden transformation* because of the necessity to reproduce the material basis of society *by transforming the environment*" (94, emphasis added; cf. Wallerstein 2001, 229–236; Lewontin 1993, 63).

This "sudden transformation" is an emergent process. That is, given the starting points of components (within patterns of relationship with other components in the system of living organisms), the future state of the system is *unpredictable,* not predictable on a computational basis, such as in physics. As Wallerstein (2001) remarks, "[h]istorical systems are preeminent examples of the nonreversible arrow of time. Yet we purport to analyze this system structurally […]" (233). What is necessary, from my standpoint, is to distinguish between nonliving and *living* structure; *autopoietic* enactive embodiment of historical agents is the decisive, animating "energy" that distinguishes historical systems from inert, static structures of the hard sciences (cf. Sheets-Johnstone 2011).

For Capra (2003), as for Lloyd (1993), human agents "should be conceptualized as beings with collective social structuring power who work upon pre-existing materials and within largely pre-existing patterns and relationships" (94; cf. Porpora 1998; Wallerstein 2001). As Lloyd (1993) puts it, however, "[a] concept of social action is needed that does justice to the socially constructing power of subjective [*sic*] persons and the uneven distribution and effectiveness of their power" (94). It is here that Capra's (2003) synthesis of the concepts of pattern, process, and structure extends Lloyd's search (and inadequate language) for a "concept" within which social action can be understood in this emergent fashion, that is, without reverting either to a social ontology of holism, or to one of individualism – or further grounding it in the language of metaphysics (i.e., "subjective," "objective," etc.; cf. Maturana & Varela 1998, 131–134).

Moreover, while neurobiologists Maturana and Varela had worked on the importance of *pattern* and its vital role in living systems, Capra (1996, 2003) notes that the chemist Ilya Prigogine had focused on the role of *structure* in living and nonliving systems with a commensurate function to that of pattern. Prigogine noticed that certain physical systems "correspond to points of instability at which

the system changes abruptly and *new forms of order suddenly appear* (i.e., through bifurcation).[40] "As Prigogine has shown, such instabilities can occur only in [structurally] *open systems* operating far from equilibrium" (Capra 1996, 137).[41]

The relation in such systems is thus one of complete and essential interdependence between determinism and *unpredictability*. In classical Newtonian physics these latter terms were previously held to be dichotomous (and mutually exclusive), not interdependent. In physics, the relation is always one between determinism and *predictability* – as when Easter can be calculated hundreds of years in advance, or the day and time an eclipse will occur, or when to expect high and low tides. In the new paradigm of living systems, however, the interdependent relation is always between determinism and *unpredictability,* because all living systems are also nonlinear, dynamical systems operating far from equilibrium (cf. Wallerstein 2001, 31–34). This is primarily why physics serves as such a bad source domain for modeling living systems. Indeed, kicking a dog is not *like* kicking a rock for the reasons discussed above.

Structurally open, physical systems (both living and nonliving) – and operating far from equilibrium – correlate with the nonlinear, dynamical systems of chaos theory, in which order, too, emerges out of chaos in mathematically precise, determinable ways. Prigogine had originated a term for these physical systems; he called them "dissipative" structures.[42] Most basically, a dissipative system is thermodynamically open in a stable state far from equilibrium in an environment with which it is *structurally coupled* and exchanges both matter and energy. All living organisms (including human beings) are "dissipative" structures that are also simultaneously *autopoietic* networks. However, *nonliving* dissipative systems (such as weather systems, like hurricanes, tornados, or dynamic structures such as airplane wake vortices, whirlpools, waterfalls, etc.) are dissipative structures, which are *not autopoietic* networks, because they are not living organisms. Nonliving dissipative

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40   Bifurcation is a specific way of discussing "emergence" in the chemistry of living and nonliving physical systems. The point at which bifurcation in a chaotic system occurs "is a threshold of stability at which the dissipative structure may either break down or break through to one of several new states of order" (Capra 1996, 191). Whichever direction the process takes at such a threshold is completely dependent on the system's previous history, even though the precise direction cannot be predicted in advance.

41   If one notes that Saussure had modeled linguistic "systemic value" on the basis of general equilibrium theory (see Petrilli & Ponzio 2005; see Section 5.5.1), then Saussure took a metaphorical model from theoretical economics for the language structure that brought all of its components to the state of *equilibrium* (a static state). Living organisms, however, operate "far from equilibrium," as Prigogine demonstrated. The state of a living organism at general equilibrium is (cold) death. As Petrilli and Ponzio (2005) note, "[w]hen the study of language follows the same path as the study of the marketplace in an ideal state of equilibrium, the result is a static conception of the sign" (viii).

42   "According to Prigogine, dissipative structures are islands of order in a sea of disorder, maintaining and even increasing their order at the expense of greater disorder in their environment. For example, living organisms such as animals take in ordered structures (food) from their environment, use them as resources for their metabolism, and dissipate structures of lower order (waste)" (Capra 1996, 189–190; cf. Capra 2003, 30–33; cf. Wallerstein 2001, 31–34). In short, dissipative systems are *energy consuming* systems (both living and nonliving) operating far from equilibrium.

systems are physical systems operating far from equilibrium for the duration over which the exchange of matter and energy in the system lasts.

On the one hand, dissipative systems are "structurally open" to the environment with which they exchange matter and energy. Living organisms, such as *autopoietic* networks, on the other hand, are "organizationally closed" physical bodies that remain structurally open to the environment, with which they exchange matter and energy (the nutritional food that sustains their metabolic organism as a living structure). In other words, living organisms take food into their "organizationally closed" physical bodies, from which they excrete the waste products upon which their metabolism feeds; hurricanes and tornadoes "feed" off atmospheric conditions that generates them as potentially (huge) destructive storms, or then as small wake vortices off the tips of airplane wings on takeoff (see Figure 2.1 above).

In short, the dissipative system as a *nonliving* phenomenon is open to the matter and energy flowing through it from the environment; but such structures are not living structures. A "form of life" that is structurally open (with which it exchanges matter and energy with the environment) is also one that remains organizationally closed (through the *continual embodiment* of its physical pattern, or form, over a lifespan). Another way of putting this is that an organism's pattern of organization *is embodied in matter,* where *embodiment is the ongoing self-organizing process* of life (Capra 2003, 62). To separate this (dissipative, metabolic) process from its (*autopoietic*) pattern of living (self-)organization results in the death of any living organism, bringing it to the state of thermodynamic equilibrium (Capra 1996, 181). The open process (dissipative structure) and closed pattern (*autopoiesis*) thus constitute the two dimensions of *living structure* that provides a new, "systemic" vocabulary with which to discuss "embodied" human beings within their dynamic, rapidly changing, *unpredictable,* social world(s).

Capra (1996) notes that at the core of Prigogine's theory of dissipative structure "lies the [counterintuitive] coexistence of structure and change" (180). This interdependence of structure and change, moreover, is as counterintuitive as that between determinism and *un*predictability (with which it is related). As Lloyd (1993, 42–43) notes, neither methodological holism, nor methodological individualism can account for *the existence of structure and change simultaneously.* Such interdependencies, moreover, present a huge challenge to habits of thinking in traditional Western philosophy (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Capra 2003, 65–67; Modell 2003; McGilchrist 2009; Capra & Luisi 2014, 304–305; cf. Wallerstein 2001).

For the Greeks, metaphysical static "identity" cannot be explained by default in terms of both continuity *and* change over time; indeed, for ordinary (static) "structure" existing at equilibrium, continuity *and* change is a contradiction in terms. But for living structure, operating far from equilibrium, continuity *and* change over time is not a contradiction at all – but the very condition for life itself, and not

merely for the physical body. A structurally coupled system, it must be remembered, constitutes a learning system. Dogs remember, but rocks do not. Living structure encompasses a historical dimension, as a record of structural interaction, that nonliving structure cannot encompass (Capra 2003, 31).

At the very heart of such a process, Capra (1996) understands Prigogine's living and nonliving dissipative structure as providing the conceptual shift "from determinate *reversible* processes [physics] to indeterminate and *irreversible* ones [life sciences]" (185; emphasis added). In my view, the dissipative structure as a system operating far from equilibrium is a far better *source domain* for the way living language functions – well within the purview of Lloyd's social ontology of structurism as being developed here – than Saussure's metaphorical model of coins as units of value in a currency system (cf. Petrilli & Ponzio 2005, xvii–xviii; Bridel 1997; see also Chapter 7).

In summarizing the juxtaposition between the old (*mechanistic*) and new (*systemic*) paradigms, Capra characterizes the deterministic Cartesian-Newtonian world as being devoid of both history and creativity. By contrast, however, "[i]n the living world of dissipative structures *history plays an important role, the future is uncertain, and this uncertainty is the heart of creativity"* (Capra 1996, 193; emphasis added). Furthermore, in such a process, the outer "objective" world and inner "subjective" worlds converge on the two-dimensional "process of life" through structural coupling; this process of life is *cognition (autopoiesis).*

At the very least, AE is the key activity at the heart of *living* structure (*autopoiesis*) and constitutes a divergence from the traditional conception of "structure" (matter/substance) in Western philosophy. What is hard to grasp in this concept is that the very *operation* of the living system (dissipative structure) is itself the product (process) of its own pattern of *organization* (self-circularity). It is in this sense that "mind" (cognition) is the emergent (*autopoietic*) process of life (Capra 1996, 160). Embodiment, as defined here, is the *key component* in the dynamic process of life, insofar as it participates *as* the active movement of circularity within *autopoiesis* (Capra 1996, 264–285; McGilchrist 2009, 19). In terms of this shift toward comprehending the nature of living, dynamic structure, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) state outright and up front:

> The mind is inherently embodied. Thought is mostly unconscious. Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical. These are the three major findings of [Maturana & Varela's generation of embodied] cognitive science. More than two millennia of a priori philosophical speculation about these aspects of reason are over. Because of these discoveries, philosophy can never be the same again. (3; cf. Modell 2003; McGilchrist 2009; Capra & Luisi 2014, 270–273)

How this systemic understanding of living structure intervenes in the Whitean discussion during the linguistic turn concerns the nature of language at the heart of White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction.

In what follows in the next section, I begin the process of separating (decoupling) the arguments that White deployed in constituting his linguistic-turn position. Specifically, I separate the two debates that are most often argued in its defense: the (i) history-literature debate; and the (ii) fact-fiction debate. The first debate, most simply stated, is that history, like literature, is "written in language"; thus history is primarily *writing*. As such – as writing, as language – this argument is presented in the vocabulary of Saussurean semiology, that is, in *structuralist* terms. The second debate, most simply stated, is that "fact and fiction" have only recently become opposites: that is, fact (what is true) vs. fiction (what is invented, untrue). In the eighteenth century, as White emphasizes, fact and fiction were both on the same side of literary practice, whether of history or of literature (what we would call now call fictional writing).

Before the "disciplining" of history, all writings were considered *fictions* in the linguistic, literary sense, which means that history, on this argument, is also fiction in the Vichian sense of *verum et factum convertuntur* (the convertibility of the true and the made), as White argues. These debates, when summarized are that: (1) history is "language" (in structuralist terms); and that (2) history is literary fiction, or "made" (in tropological terms). When these are then combined, the idea is that historical discourse, like any literary fiction, is "made," created on the basis of characteristic tropes, not found (i.e., emerging directly from the archives). As a linguistic product, history writing is thus not "true" in the positivist sense of the hard sciences (objective knowledge). It is only "true" in the metaphorical sense (relative), linguistically. On the surface, this sounds reasonable, since history writing cannot be modeled on the hard sciences. But, as it turns out, White's argument is caught in a circular loop that does not yet escape the metaphysics that grounds the (positivist) position he rejects.

2.3   UNMAKING HISTORY-AS-FICTION: THE NATURE OF THE SEPARATE DEBATES

In Hayden White's essays during the linguistic turn, his structuralist predisposition is fully integrated with his conviction that history writing can be "heuristically" divided onto Saussure's two axes of *synchrony* and *diachrony*. He makes this division, while simultaneously embracing the nature of (disembodied) language as being essentially (metaphorical) *tropic* (e.g., White 1975, 1976, 1985, 1999, 2005a, 2006, 2012; in Domańska, ed. 1998, 23–30; cf. Luft 2003, esp. 190, n. 223). The nature of human language, according to Vico, however, is necessarily contingent (dependent) on the

bodily skills of perception, memory, and imagination which makes, or brings forth the concrete (social) world (e.g., Vico 1984; Luft 1999, 2003). That is, for Vico, the metaphorical word is already a creative, active deed in the world. On the face of it, the way White conceives of the "structure" and "nature" of writing would not necessarily appear to violate either theory of language (Saussurean or Vichian), which White (1983) combines in complementary fashion, "at least on the level of analytical method" (64).

But in this apparently unproblematic combination of Saussure and Vico lies the unexamined tension at the core of history-as-fiction. This tension consists in the juxtaposition between two principles of language that have lain dormant within this discussion from the beginning. Given the foregoing discussion in Section 2.2, I lay out my strategy in the following subsections in order to unpack my reasons for separating the debates often invoked to reinforce history-as-fiction.

2.3.1   CORE AND FRAME AS KEY ORIENTATIONS UNDERPINNING THIS ANALYSIS

Most simply stated, from my standpoint of AE, there is a continuum that runs from one point to the other; it begins at the hidden core principle and becomes manifest on the level of the larger framework. In other words, the (genetic) logic of the (hidden) core works itself outward to the manifest frame, whose logic it owes to whatever core principle(s) gave rise to it in the first place. I argue that this "genetic" relation between the "core" and its evolved "frame" is just another way of discussing the metaphorical transfer of structural attributes from a *source* domain to its employed *target* domain. The structural attributes of the core principle are transferred, projected, imposed onto the target domain and, for this reason, core and frame belong together, inseparably.

Within a longstanding tradition of writings in (post)structuralism (classical, modern literary theory), however, White saw the nascent relationship between a *tropological core* and the *(post)structuralist framework*. As I read him, he felt this relationship needed more work in order to become more explicit. In fact, this move was not even new, by any means, as he comments on it at length in explanatory footnotes (in, e.g., White 1975, 31–33, n. 13, 1985, 260, n. 3). In other words, he took the implied relationship between tropology and structuralism as one of potential core-to-frame, respectively, and expanded on this relationship. There was indeed a huge amount of material for this particular focus, as he abundantly demonstrates. The problem that I explore in this thesis is that (post)structuralism and tropology do not actually hold a relationship of "core" to "frame" in the way that White anticipated.

The problem that White remained unaware of throughout the linguistic turn (and beyond) was just how stubbornly (post)structuralism retained the embedded attributes of its own core principle: the *arbitrariness of the sign*. In giving rise to

the *manifest frame* that constituted the structuralist theory that White employed in his work, the core attribute of arbitrariness "worked outwards" from an inner principle to the manifest system at large, from which it was inextricable. In other words, the founding theory at its core featured a certain "genetic" logic all its own – a genetic logic it retained, even if this core principle was replaced with another one.

Structurally speaking, the core attribute of (Saussurean) (post)structuralism is a disembodied, *nonliving* logic that is likewise manifested/transferred throughout the framing system. Another synonymous way to understand this process of transfer is the following. The structural attributes in the (metaphorical) source domain (the core principle) are subsequently transferred to the target domain (the system that arises on the basis of such core principle(s)). For (post)structuralism, the principle of arbitrariness was thus non-negotiable. In short, this disembodied principle (arbitrariness) is what essentially gave rise to the system of Saussure's linguistic value, for both structuralism and poststructuralism alike. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth (2011), however, wants to wave away the *principle of arbitrariness* as irrelevant for (post)structuralism, when she says:

> In varying degrees these three ideas [the key features of Saussure's system of linguistic value] have received less attention than Saussure's diagrams (assuming they are his) with their points about the arbitrariness of language, but these three [key features of systemic linguistic value] are more groundbreaking [than arbitrariness]. (36)

In other words, the framework of (post)structuralism is "more groundbreaking" than the core principle, around which this system of linguistic value was conceived and given its distinctive form (in terms of its static, negative, differential nature). Here she discards the very core principle that activated Saussure's system; she calls this principle "less groundbreaking" than the systemic linguistic frame he built up around it. She is also not incorrect that arbitrariness was "less groundbreaking" (indeed, it was ancient). But she was wrong to assume that separating this core from the resulting form of the system Saussure created around it would be a legitimate move. She is certainly not alone in this view, but convergence on a misunderstanding does not legitimize it or make it real. Saussure's biographer John E. Joseph (2012) reports that

> 'the hierarchical place of this truth' of the arbitrary relation between the acoustic image and the concept 'is at the very top. Only bit by bit does one end up recognizing how many different facts are only ramifications, veiled consequences of this truth.' (Saussure in Joseph 2012, 579)

Indeed, Joseph (2012) makes it very clear that "arbitrariness is the core of what is absolutely original in Saussurean thought" (600). He also goes on to say that

> the *connection* between the two domains of values that relate to sound and to concept is what creates each of them, is essential to each of them, and is the locus of the essential arbitrariness of language. None of the parts on its own is original to Saussure. What is distinctly, uniquely, his is the vision of language as the arbitrary yet inseparable interface of these two domains [of sound and concept]. (Joseph 2012, 600)

It would seem, at least from Saussure's point of view, that arbitrariness was central, essential, and that without it, there would be no "ramifications" or "veiled consequences" of this core principle on the level of the systemic frame that Ermarth's (2011) book praises. The fact, however, that language is not really arbitrary, as Saussure claimed it was as the inspiration of language as systemic value, does not, however, allow one to have one's cake and eat it (i.e., to discard the core principle and keep the system intact).

What I mean by this is that, just because language is not necessarily arbitrary in the way Saussure (2011, 75–76) insisted it was, does not justify chopping out and discarding the doubtful core and asserting that the rest is "more groundbreaking."[43] In this case, core and frame are of a piece. In fact, the origin for the claim that words are arbitrarily connected to meanings, according to conventional practice in language communities, goes back to Plato's *Cratylus* (cf. Harris 1996, 2004, 2009). Saussure's (2011, 10) colleague, the American linguist William Dwight Whitney (1827–1894) resuscitated this ancient argument and served as the younger Saussure's confirmation that he was on the right track in his pursuits (cf., Joseph 2012, 579; see also Chapter 4).

Specifically, each principle of language is a latent "core" that gives rise to its own manifest "frame," in the manner of transfer from a source domain to a target domain, as characterized above. If (post)structuralism and tropology each feature core principles of their own, with their own "genetic" ramifications and veiled consequences, then swapping out arbitrariness for tropology within the (post)structuralist frame will be an illegitimate move with unavoidable theoretical

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43　A recent study by Damián E. Blasi et al. (2016) presented an exhaustive statistical analysis of words from more than four thousand of the world's approximately 6,000 languages. Their results finally demonstrate that the independence between sound and meaning does not hold up (cf. McGilchrist 2009, 118–120). Blasi et al. (2016) report that "across languages, sequences of different sounds are used to express similar concepts," thereby leading to their conclusion that such "striking similarities call for a reexamination of the fundamental assumption of the arbitrariness of the sign" (1). In short, word sounds and meanings are necessarily contingent on a body acting in a context, where "gestures of the tongue" converge and arise from the body in conjunction with one's lived experience in the world (cf. Capra 2003). That is to say, language is dependent on the body as Vico anticipated, not independent of the body, as Saussure's "first principle" requires (see also Chapters 5 & 6).

consequences of its own. Indeed, even if the swap is done in ignorance, in the name of a heuristic exercise "on the level of analytical method" (White 1983, 64), it still cannot succeed. Indeed, this is an operation of grafting a dynamic core into a static, nonliving framework. Similarly, if surgeons graft a beating heart into a cadaver, there is nothing that this beating heart can do to resuscitate the dead body within which it has been surgically placed.

In history-as-fiction, the essentially *dualist nature* of the disembodied, arbitrary linguistic sign (as the first principle in the legacy of Saussure's (post) structuralism) meets head-on the non-arbitrary, necessarily *contingent nature* of tropic, metaphorical language, in turn, dependent on the living, experiential body in the world. Getting rid of arbitrariness and replacing it with the tropes does not change the dualist nature of the system from which it arose, however.

The antithetical nature of these two principles make them incommensurable with one another, insofar as they cannot be exchanged in the way history-as-fiction has exchanged them. It is like the grafting of a beating heart into the chest cavity of a corpse. On the one hand, the former, structuralist principle of arbitrariness leads to a systemic framework, whose attributes are *nonliving, static* (negative and differential, operating at "cold" equilibrium). This system is, moreover, unproblematically "methodologically holist" (a view of autonomous system that exists *independently* or in spite of the component parts that exist within, but do not affect, the system's functioning as a whole). This methodologically holist character of the structuralist system easily accounts for the overt separation of the language system (*synchrony*) from the language of every-day use (*diachrony*) in practice. Saussure (2011) discards the latter diachrony for his focus on the former synchrony as the field of scientistic linguistics. On the other hand, the latter tropological principle of language, contingent on the body in the world, unfolds into a systemic framework, whose attributes are *living and dynamic* and, crucially, *ecological* in form that operate on the basis of the circular principle of *autopoiesis* far from equilibrium ("warm"). (See Sections 2.1–2.2 above.)

In sum, as an additional piece of evidence for the incommensurability of these theories (core principles), Saussure's and Vico's departure points not only *do not share* the principle of the arbitrariness of the sign at (post)structuralism's core, but Saussure and Vico also occupy completely different standpoints on the nature of the social realm within which they act. (Post)structuralism supports a (disembodied) dualist social ontology – divided between methodological holism and methodological individualism; whereas, tropology belongs to another order of social ontology altogether: an (*autopoietic*) ecological-holist system (cf. Lloyd 1993, 1996, 2008).

The aim here is to problematize the linguistic-turn construct history-as-fiction, to set up the strategy to "unmake" it, in order to demonstrate the incommensurability of these approaches to language in this study. With this in mind, I further divide history-

as-fiction into the two debates normally used in its support. These are understood by those historical theorists, who depend on them, as the structuralist and tropological dimensions of their argument, respectively, which can be summarized as follows: (i) the history-literature debate argues that everything is language[44] and (ii) the fact-fiction debate argues, in turn, that all such language is fictional.[45] If one agrees with the first argument, it is difficult to extricate oneself from the second, which points back to the first, in a subtly circular argument.

If one considers these two debates as "moves," the first is overtly Saussurean (cf. Ermarth 2011). The second move, however, is more complex in that it first posits an eighteenth-century relation between fact–fiction on one and the same continuum, and then thereafter imposes Vico's *ingenium* (imagination as a form of metaphorical "invention"), as a justification, supplementation, and elaboration of the idea that, after all, everything is language (e.g., White 1985a,b).[46] What is not evident on the surface of these discussions is that both the history-literature and fact-fiction debates reinforce the structuralist position of (disembodied) language with the added veneer of Vico's tropes, which distracts from the nature of the structuralist method White hopes to move forward. In other words, history-as-fiction is essentially a circular argument located wholly within the structuralist domain, even though it appears as an argument that toggles back and forth between a (post)structuralist frame and its tropological, Vichian "core" (the tropological nature of structuralist thought).

In this way, White viewed the division between the history-literature and the fact-fiction debates not as two separate elements of his strategy. Rather, he viewed these approaches as a heuristic strategy in separating the surface of *what* the historians were writing (history-literature) from *how* the historians were writing it (on the deep, figural level of the text in 18th-century literary terms: fact-fiction) (e.g., White 1975a, 1985a). In fact, the tropological argument – within the structuralist frame – allowed for the blurring of these boundaries between the history-literature and fact-fiction debates, where the term "fiction" operates as the key word and bridge term between these respective arguments, that is, after one has already established that "everything is (disembodied) language." For this second debate, fact-fiction,

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44   See, for example, the volume *Tropes for the Past: Hayden White and the History / Literature Debate,* edited by Kuisma Korhonen (2006). This work features essays by a range of literary theorists, including White (2006), all of whom discuss this topic from different points of view.

45   On the fact-fiction debate, see, e.g., White 1985; see the forum on the Fiction of History in *Rethinking History*, introduced by White (2005a): see, e.g., Bachner 2005; Demos 2005; Goodman 2005; H. Shaw 2005; Slotkin 2005. See also Macfie, ed. (2015), with its contributors and their sources.

46   For White, this language is autonomous and disembodied in line with his structuralist framework; he cannot escape the consequences of this starting point. According to Luft (1999), for Vico, however, "*ingenium* was essentially a metaphoric activity" and different from that conceived within the ancient tradition (177). As Luft explains, *ingenium* was akin to invention. But, But, as *ingenium* is interpreted by Vico, it lay beyond the ancient seeing of similarities, as in *mimesis*. In this sense, as Luft understands *ingenium,* Vico's concept (unlike the way White uses Vico) was "originary" and ontological: "a way of seeing that is at one and the same time a corporeal, imagistic, linguistic making [that constitutes] a metaphoric vision" (177).

White notes the historical fact that, before the nineteenth century – previous to the disciplining of history – "fact" was not aligned with "truth" against "fancy"; rather, the relations among these terms were inverted (White 1985a, 123).

In the eighteenth century, the opposed pairs were: "truth and error" and "fact and fiction (fancy)," where history writing was not seen as "truth," but as a form of literary exposition that competed with invented, made-up stories: it was writing *qua* writing (White 1985a, 123). On this interpretation, what is today considered "non-fiction" was, in the eighteenth century, regarded as a form of "fiction" ("fancy") in the Vichian sense of being *imaginatively produced* (*ingenium*). For Vico, however – and this is key to my own argument – imagination was dependent upon the bodily skills of perception and memory in concert with ("coupled to") and wholly dependent on one's own lived experiences in the world (as Luft 1999, 2003 outlines; cf. Modell 2003). White's tropology, however, is not embodied in the Vichian sense that Luft (2003) develops. Thus, I claim, the embodied nature of Vico's tropes remains notably absent from the Whitean discussion throughout the linguistic turn.

Hans Kellner's review of *Metahistory* supports such a claim. Kellner (1980), for instance, illustrates White's strategy of collapsing the distinction between "explanation" and "telling," "in order to assert that the 'telling' is the 'explanation' (rather than its vehicle)"; once this move is complete, "White sets the stage for a rhetoric of historical writing—indeed, for writing of any sort. This rhetoric of historical writing in its deep structure is based upon Vico's tropology, but unlike Vico (and Foucault, and many others implicitly), White uses the 'master tropes' *synchronically* (as a rhetoric) rather than *diachronically* (as a tropo-logic)" (28–29).

Moreover, White's own aim, as he puts it (in Domańska, ed. 1998, 28), was to develop a "science of discourse," as a way to undermine the status quo of historical texts as the unquestioned "objective truth" of any matter in a positivist vein (see Section 8.2). Later on, as he says to Ewa Domańska (2008), White emphatically states:

> I believe that Arthur C. Danto is correct when he says that a fact is a discursive phenomenon. Facts are, in his estimation, 'events under a description.' [...] Facts belong to speech, language and discourse, not to the real world. Things, persons, relationships, and so on are not 'factual,' only statements may or may not be. Which is why Barthes said, 'Fact' is only a linguistic thing.' Statements of fact or professions of factuality can be tested as to their truth contents, accuracy, verisimilitude, and the like; things cannot be so tested. (5–6)

Insofar as "facts" as "fiction" belong to speech, language, and discourse, and "not to the real world," as he says above, the problem that I pose for White's history-as-fiction in this thesis is that White's framework for his analysis of historical discourse on the two levels of the historian's text (its surface and its depth) is Saussure's

"systemic" construct, which is founded on a *static, nonliving conceptual metaphor in its source domain*. Moreover, despite the designation of history-as-*fiction,* Vico's wholly corporeal conception of word-as-deed in creating the *real* social world is not even present in White's (post)structuralist exploration of the nature of historical (disembodied) discourse (see, esp. White 1983). From *Metahistory* onward, White has worked to unseat the "scientistic" use of positivist concepts like truth, objectivity, and knowledge that were embraced by working historians (what he refers to across the board as professional historians' scientistic "positivism," e.g., White 1966, 1974, 2005b, 334–335, and so on).

Using Vico's tropes as styles or modes of thought, White could effectively show the various (unconscious) modes of "historical realism" on the deep level of the text that underpinned their narratives, thereby unseating "truth" and introducing the aesthetics that such "thought styles," or modes, imply. In this way, White could come "from below," so to speak, and attack the concepts of truth, knowledge, and objectivity that many historians still *presupposed* in the status of their writings as "non-fictional" (re)constructions of past (real) events (e.g., White 1975; cf. White 1978, 1980, 1985a, White in Domańska 2008; see also Paul 2011, 2014; cf. Muszynski & Reunamo 2011).

White's ultimate aims, in any case, are of course deeply ethical ones (as Paul 2011 also emphasizes), despite the broad-based linguistic and aesthetic nature of the attack on history as a discipline. The linguistic turn became an effective tool in White's hands for a greater, overall cultural-critical purpose (in Domańska, ed. 1998, 28–29 & *passim*). It must therefore be emphasized that White's ethical concerns remain an important component of his work that I also deeply appreciate and value.

My critique of history-as-fiction therefore aims only at exposing White's (Greek) metaphysical presuppositions, which spoil many of his efforts and taint the ethical thrust of his work. To repeat: I do not contest his urgent ethical concerns. In other words, I share White's cultural-critical intentions, which is why I pursue this project *against* his own arguments; historians after the linguistic turn are now moving in a variety of unguided directions, some of which are quite interesting and exciting. But they move on in ignorance and without trying to understand what went awry within White's theoretical toolbox. This work of prying open White's toolbox, however, is absolutely necessary, if the ethical thrust of his work is to be saved.

Indeed, my supplementary goal in critiquing White is to help shift the "linguistics of history" toward a more effective toolbox (AE) that was not available to him. In my view, White's (post)structuralist "figural realism" is now, more than ever, a stumbling block to his own ethical worries (which are, now in 2017, more relevant than ever), which a dynamic, ecological-holist frame would better serve. In what follows, I lay out my strategy for unmaking history-as-fiction. To accomplish this, I analyze what underlies the dualist, Saussure-inspired claim, in Chapter 5, that "everything is language" in its guise as the "history-literature debate." Moreover, in

Chapter 6, I examine how Vico *goes beyond* the "fact-fiction debate" that is largely conducted in his name, but bypasses the contingency of language on the living body, which was his own "first principle" and starting point.

2.3.2   LAYING OUT THE ANALYTICAL STRATEGY: SEPARATING THE DEBATES

In Chapter 5, I employ Ermarth's (2011) *History in the Discursive Condition: Reconsidering the Tools of Thought.* For Chapter 6, I employ Luft's (2003) *Vico's Uncanny Humanism: Reading the "New Science" between Modern and Postmodern.* Each of these authors acknowledges the importance of White's work in the frame of her own discussion – each one claiming, from her own standpoint, how White is an ally of her arguments. With this in mind, I will analyze Ermarth's Saussurean approach, while I will unpack what Luft has to offer from her embodied (hermeneutic) standpoint on Vico.

For the structuralist, disembodied character of White's history-as-fiction in terms of the history-literature debate, I problematize what Ermarth (2011) terms the "Discursive Condition after modernity." Her discussion to reinstate the "content of the form," moreover, omits Vico entirely, unlike White, who entwines the attributes of his structuralist frame with the tropes of Vico as *figural* realism, making it hard to get at either of these two theoretical strands. Ermarth (2011), for her part, wishes to concentrate wholly on Saussure and omits any pretense of Vichian vocabulary, or the notion of contingent, metaphorical language of any sort; rather, she simply baptizes Saussure's *systemic value* as a "postmodern" system worthy of the twenty-first century. This makes it easier for me to examine White's structuralist theoretical strand in isolation from his Vichian vocabulary.

My strategy in analyzing Ermarth's work is therefore not to lay out her own arguments for the history-literature debate that she defends. Rather, my point is to lay bare the *theoretical consequences* of her support of the idea that "stories are not lived but told," in blatantly Saussurean terms (Mink 1987, 60; see Chapter 3). In her defense of Saussure's systemic value, Ermarth (2011) recommends the reconsideration of Saussure's discursive "tools of thought" by suggesting that it is "*the failure to consider* what Hayden White calls 'the content of the form[,]' [a failure that] is endemic in educational systems […] and persists as long as it remains implicit" (xv; emphasis added). Her intention to make this "content of the form" more "explicit," as she argues, "is to recognize and focus on [Saussure's] *systemic value*" (xv; emphasis added).

Here, Ermarth's ethical concern to highlight the nature of the discursive condition assumes that one must literally return to Saussure's system of *linguistic value* and embrace the *discursivity* of the world (i.e., the argument that "everything is language"). Her one caveat, however, in what is otherwise a wholehearted embrace

of Saussure for "historians" in the twenty-first century is that she sees no need to retain the *arbitrariness* of language that she feels was less "groundbreaking" than the system, which the Genevan linguist created around this core principle. This is a move made necessary by Derrida's devastating structuralist critique from the late 1960s onward, in which he traced the "metaphysics of presence" down through both Husserl's phenomenology and Saussure's structuralism; of the latter, it was the dualist arbitrariness of the sign that absorbed the most criticism in his deliberate shift away from spoken language to the "signs of writing" (see Chapter 3).

By contrast, however, I show in Chapter 5 why this renewed emphasis on discursivity is a failed attempt from the outset, as this arbitrariness cannot be waved away so easily in a return to Saussure's system of linguistic value. I resist her "new tools of thought" and excavate beneath her position, because the arbitrariness that she discards cannot be ignored in the system that she would have historians embrace "after modernity." Indeed, while I do share many of the same (ethical) concerns that bring so many theorists to the barricades, this structuralist approach is not the way forward, that is, if the ethical concerns are real ones.

At the static, nonliving (disembodied) core of Saussure's systemic theoretical construct lies his dualist, first principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign: 1) on the one side, the percept (sound-image, the *signifier*); 2) on the other side, the concept (meaning, the *signified*) on two sides of the same "coin" (*word*). Saussure's entire system drew its inspiration from this essential *binary* principle, as I unpack in Chapter 5. To map precisely this form of arbitrariness onto his system of language, Saussure chose a *metaphor*-as-model from the burgeoning political economy (theoretical economics) of his day. Ermarth, however, overlooks the nature of Saussure's metaphorical mapping, and therefore overlooks the way that this core *arbitrariness*, which she blithely dismisses, is nevertheless functionally mapped onto the entire system that she embraces and praises.

For the Vichian side of the argument, I employ Luft's (2003) embodied interpretation of Vico. In her work, she applies the literature of "postmodern" writings (hermeneutics) and rabbinic hermeneutic texts on the literature of Vico, in order to help "expose the relentlessly *idealist lens through which Vico is read*" (xii; emphasis added). Her goal, alternatively, is to reveal the "voices and practices alien to humanism's subjectivism and epistemic goals, the very struggle to get beyond a dualist [Cartesian] anthropology" (xii). In other words, the struggle on both sides of the debate is largely a problem of vocabulary. From her standpoint, White – among few others – "has a firmer grasp of the originary nature of [Vico's] *poiesis*" (55). Nevertheless, Luft notes that the

> conception of *poiesis* I develop here differs from White's more formal structural view in that I identify poetic language hermeneutically, as violent, eventful, transformative happenings taking place in linguistic and social practices and

physical labor in-the-world. Accordingly, while for White historical development is mandated by the structural nature of the relation among tropes, my hermeneutic view of language assumes a *non-reductive naturalism* in which linguistic 'events,' limited only by natural necessity, are existential responses to emergent human needs and utilities […]. Even so, White is more successful in capturing the poetic, hermeneutic nature of Vico's new science than other rhetorical interpretations. (2003, 55–56; emphasis added)

Clearly, my approach to *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE), as outlined in Section 2.2 above, differs significantly from Luft's hermeneutical approach, as she states it above. Despite these differences, however, Luft's commitment to embodiment as a "non-reductive naturalism" in her hermeneutical interpretation of Vico is indispensable for my work.

To begin with, Luft effectively identifies the nature of the idealist arguments that plague Vico studies (on some of these arguments, cf., Sica 2002). She also identifies a significant gap in the research, which emerges when scholars presuppose from the outset that Vico's final 1744 edition of the *New Science* is commensurate with his earlier writings on an intellectual continuum with Greek metaphysics. For instance, even Lloyd (1993, 11, 141) assumes this continuum, when he argues in terms of the first, 1725, edition of Vico's work, perhaps unaware that the First Edition differs significantly from the final Third Edition published two decades later (on these differences, see also White 1985b, 197).

For Lloyd (1993, 1996, 2008), it is *both the collective and individual agency* that structures the human social world, that is, as an integration and synthesis of the micro and macro levels into an ecological whole (see Section 2.1 above). From his standpoint, he concludes that "realist socio-historical science should be similar to natural science because of the necessity to explain the causal relationships between general and continuous social and cultural structures, psychological propensities, intentions, understandings, choices, and behavior" (205; cf. Pomper & Shaw, eds. 2002). In other words, he emphasizes the ongoing *process* of the continual embodiment of structural organization, as I do. It should be emphasized, however, that Lloyd agrees it is no ordinary natural science, insofar as it is primarily due to the nature of "the agential structuring process that occurs in society that *the natural science model has to be modified*" (Lloyd 1996, 206). (Cf. Capra 1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014.)

The "natural science" *model* for the social sciences has been in transition for quite some time now, as Lloyd (1993) illustrates (cf. Cassirer 1950, 1955; Fuller 2013). Further, as Capra and Luisi (2014, 302) suggest, the shift from the old Cartesian-Newtonian mechanism to the new "systemic" paradigm involves embracing a model that characterizes the "process of life [as] the activity involved in the *continual embodiment* of the system's pattern of organization." In this system, as they note,

the "process perspective is the link between organization and structure" (302). This insight is what informs my exclusive use of Luft's (1999, 2003) hermeneutics-inspired work on Vico.

Luft emphasizes the embodied nature of this metaphorical language *as a core, generative principle* already embedded at the heart of human making – something she emphasizes as "violent, eventful, transformative happenings taking place in linguistic and social practices and physical labor in-the-world" (56). The *living context* of such social practices, made through this physical labor in-the-world, is the human social (ecological) system, which is coupled with and *emergent in the world* (cf. Runia 2006).

In short, I follow the idea of "word-as-*active*-deed," or word-as-physical-labor, in which metaphorical language forges, creates the *human* world of social institutions. This labor in-the-world has, moreover, without a doubt, converted Planet Earth to a place of primarily human habitation – at the expense of the plants and animals we share it with. This space of habitation, moreover, is a "horizontal" space of constant labor that Eelco Runia (2006, 9) has called the "radically contiguous," ongoing *process* of continuity and change, or "continuity and discontinuity." If there is a "human space–time continuum" to be noted here, it is the contingent process of life (*autopoiesis*), which is *pattern* (in space) and *process* (in time) constituting living, dynamic, continuous and discontinuous (i.e., dissipative) *structure.*

Another way to put this is that Luft's work already *begins* at a place that my work in this thesis (using my methodology) struggles to even arrive. This is because Luft does not problematize her starting point of language *embedded in the world of social action as physical labor.* Her hermeneutical standpoint needs no introduction or problematization in this sense; but, it does need further unpacking if one is to understand why her approach to Vico is unique, or why I use her work exclusively. In this way, Luft precedes me as a guide with a "human" (living, dynamic) framework that is still, even now, ahead of its time.

In sum, what my analysis offers, through an examination of Vico's embodied language via metaphor (Luft 1999, 2003), is an (embodied, non-idealist, *non-reductive*) understanding of the Vichian vocabulary that White has employed in his *structuralist* project. Not only this. The very framework within which embodied metaphor operates *does not belong* to the traditional discussion founded on ancient Greek metaphysics (e.g., M. Johnson 2007). A Copernican shift in this respect has been on its way for more than a century, as Lloyd (1993, 44–49) also argues (see also, e.g., Capra 1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014). Ermarth (2011), for her part, also argues that the shift is ongoing, although she attributes it to the influence of Saussure's early "systemic value." It is true that the revolution involves the turn to "system," but the system is *dynamic* (living) structure operating far from equilibrium, not *static* (disembodied) structure operating at "dead" equilibrium, which is where Saussure's linguistic value leaves us (demonstrated in Chapter 5).

I claim, moreover, that it is within this alternative, mature systemic, *ecological* synthesis worked out by Capra (1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) that extends and reconceptualizes Lloyd's (1993) ontological framework of *structurism* within which the principle of cognition as a living process (AE) operates. This interpretation of cognition in its widest sense operates far beyond the mutually exclusive social ontologies of methodological holism and individualism. Until one can get beyond these reductive constraints, respectively, on the nature of the social realm argued in traditional philosophical terms, one cannot understand Vico's departure point (in Luft 1999, 2003).

Indeed, neither of these mutually exclusive versions of methodological holism nor individualism (argued in the vocabulary of metaphysics) can elaborate the nature of *continuity in change*, nor *ongoing change, despite continuity,* nor the phenomenon of *discontinuity,* all of which is what history writing actually researches and probes – through the clues and evidence of the material past that historians find and use in their interpretations *as an embodied process coupled to the non-reductive socio-cultural, material world of things.* From this standpoint, history writing is a social activity par excellence, just as Lloyd (1993) claims (cf., e.g., Ricoeur 1994, 2004; Ginzburg 1983, 1992a, 1999, 2000, 2012). In this context of *continuity and change* (even *discontinuity*), one must look to embodiment (AE) as the key process in the nature of living structure at all scales of life (even social life and language) (e.g., Capra 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014; cf. Luhmann 1990; Mingers 1995; Wallerstein 2001).

Embodiment along these lines is, moreover, a *prerequisite* for understanding the significance of Lakoff and Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999; cf. Modell 2003; McGilchrist 2009). When one does not understand, or refuses to accept the embodied nature of metaphor as a cognitive *tool,* then Johnson's (2007) suggestion that conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) provides "a new set of tools" may not make sense; whereas, "once you understand how [embodied] conceptual metaphors lie at the heart of our abstract conceptualization and reasoning, you acquire *a new set of tools* for analyzing, explaining, and criticizing philosophical theories" (206). Now if – as Ermarth (2011) contends – the (re)consideration of *new tools of thought* is needed, it is high time to abandon the old (Greek) metaphysical toolbox that she employs via Saussure, and to consider instead the Copernican shift that is implied by *autopoietic* enactive embodiment as the key *process* within a social ontology of living, dynamic structure, something Lloyd (1993) terms, I believe, "structurism."

In the next chapter, I set out the nature of White's project as a (Saussurean) structuralist one, just as Ermarth (2011) rightfully emphasizes. Moreover, due to the timing of White's examination of historical discourse in the late 1960s and early 1970s, White's embrace of tropology permitted, for the most part, a masking of his (structuralist) project in a Vichian idiom – something White later termed "figural realism." But, the structuralist nature of the project cannot be ignored, as I will show in the chapters that follow.

In revisiting the example of Zeno's paradox in Chapter 3, I compare the traditional reductive separation of *pattern* and *process* in Zeno's conclusion that the arrow that flies through the air is both moving and at rest, simultaneously. If the vocabulary that one uses is anything to go by, White remained loyal to both the structuralist outlook that he started with, and remained true to the project to elaborate the tropological nature of structuralist thought as set out in the essays he published throughout the linguistic turn in historical theory. Indeed, this implicit relation of tropological "core" to structuralist "frame" was one that had captured his imagination; this passion is, moreover, laid bare in the illuminating pages of White's great book *Metahistory*. Zeno's paradox, however, permeates this work, as well as White's later work in the hidden embrace of the dualist principle at the generative center of the structuralist system that White followed.

CHAPTER THREE

There is the corresponding absurdity and irony for the American participants to discover that what was loudly and bravely announced as an inauguration, the first multidisciplinary symposium to introduce them to the methodological rites of Continental structuralism, would prove by its final day to have been something more like a requiem for the movement. Whether one chooses the wedding garment or the shroud as appropriate to the occasion depends in part [...] on the selectivity and interpretive posture of the reader [...], but it depends just as obviously on the course of subsequent history.

—Richard Macksey, *The Structuralist Controversy*

3   THE HISTORICAL CONTINGENCIES OF WHITE'S LINGUISTIC TURN

Hayden White's history-as-fiction is a unique blend of linguistic-philosophical approaches that he introduced into historiography in the late 1960s and early 1970s on the basis of what he broadly termed (modern) literary theory. In 1973 White published his now classic *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (hereafter, *Metahistory;* White 1975). In this masterful work, White combines different theoretical elements in the construction of a fourfold grid of attributes for his analysis of the historical imagination.[47] *Metahistory* examines four nineteenth-century historians (Michelet, Ranke, Toqueville, and Burckhardt) and four nineteenth-century philosophers of history (Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Croce). White's analysis of nineteenth-century historiography subsequently launched him in the leading role as a theorist of history writing, primarily identified as "prose narrative discourse." In White's (1975) conviction that "thought remains the captive

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[47]   The fourfold grid is produced on the basis of the four main tropes of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, which are brought together for interpretive purposes with three additional modes (of emplotment, argument, and ideological implication; see White 1975, esp. 29), as developed on the basis of the work of Northrop Frye, Stephen C. Pepper, and Karl Mannheim; see White's (1975) Introduction, 1–42 (for definitions of the tropes, esp. 31–38).

of the *linguistic mode* in which it seeks to grasp the outline of objects inhabiting its field of perception" (xi; emphasis added), he states his general aim most clearly as contributing to what he interprets as "the tropological nature of Structuralist thought" (1985, 260, n. 3; profoundly illustrated throughout White 1975a, esp. 31–33, n. 13).

Contrary to the traditional nature of tropology as part of (linguistic) rhetoric, in the context of the present thesis, I am here emphasizing that the nature of tropology must be understood as something much more than merely "linguistic." The tropes – in their essential role as a *cognitive tool* in human understanding and communication – necessarily involve the human body and its skills beyond anything *classical* literary theory could have imagined at the time.[48] Moreover, structuralist thought is explicitly conceived as a disembodied, mental entity that upholds the metaphysical legacy of dualism in the traditional Western philosophy of language (for more on this, see Chapters 4–5). For the purposes of a single text, let alone a mere academic thesis, it is impossible to trace and closely evaluate independently all the theoretical lines of attribution in White's work over four decades.

But there was one colleague and friend with whom White developed history-as-fiction most closely. Philosopher of history Louis O. Mink (1921–1983) was significant for White's project, in the sense that they both pushed up against the boundaries of historical narrative as a "positivist" enterprise. In an essay originally published in 1970, Mink's intuition was not false, when he attends to the manner in which *lived experience* and narrative are inseparable; he quotes Barbara Hardy, for instance, to the effect that:

> More important than the artifices of fiction are *the qualities which narrative shares with the storytelling of lived experience:* "For we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative." (Mink 1987, 59; emphasis added)

From this, Mink goes on to conclude his most famous contribution to this debate, picked up and amplified by White. Indeed, for Mink, it is not merely the *artifices of fiction* that narrative shares with lived experience, but also the *qualities* of that lived experience; this allows him to see that it is *both* the artifices and the qualities of fiction that are shared with lived experience. From this point of view, language goes all the way down the rabbit hole; Mink (1987) is able to conclude: "Stories are not lived but told" (60).

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48   See the Introduction, above, and Chapter 2. For the move toward a "post-classical" literary theory beyond the classical narratology within which White was immersed, see, e.g., Finnish narrative theorist Matti Hyvärinen 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012a,b, 2013.

Mink's key contribution to this discussion, that "stories are only told," not lived, considers backwards (i.e., a *hysteron proteron*), the idea that "the *qualities of narrative* are transferred to art from life" (Mink 1987, 60; emphasis added). For Mink, as for White, therefore, when *stories are not lived* but merely told, the qualities of narrative are, rather, transferred to life *from art* (*figurally*). For White, then, what Mink believed to be a *hysteron proteron* is largely at play in what White sets out to demonstrate in the linguistic turn; that is, to demonstrate the idea that *life* and (figural) *language* are separate and unconnected phenomena.

If one accepts, however, with philosopher Mark Johnson (1997, 1999, 2007), that the aesthetics of human understanding are actually embedded in and emerge from the *lived* life of the body (i.e., *Leib;* on this, see Vörös & Gaitsch 2016; De Jesus; see also Section 2.1), Johnson's premise would turn Mink's (and White's 1978) *hysteron proteron* back on its head. That is to say, stories are not merely told, as Mink and White believe, but emerge from human lived experience, where the source of aesthetic (metaphorical) meaning is derived from the body-in-the-world itself, which is reflected in art that speaks in turn back to human experience, in what is essentially an ecological (circular) process (of *autopoiesis*).

In narrowing my focus down to the bare bones of an outline on this issue, I concentrate on White's stated aim to elaborate historical discourse in terms of the *tropological nature of structuralist thought.* Ultimately, this aim permits me to focus White's work on the two principles of language that lie at the core of each of the theoretical strands that he combines in his efforts to show, with Mink, that the qualities of narrative are transferred to life *from (figural) art.* In short, White's history-as-fiction wishes to show how stories are told (figurally, metaphorically), *not lived.* This, however, overtly denies that language is an embodied phenomenon as described in Chapter 2, above.

For White's adherence to "structuralism," (classical literary theory in general), its features derive largely from the foundational principles set out by Saussure's semiology, which was developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (for details, see Chapter 4). It needs to be clarified that the lines between Saussure's science of linguistics and the structuralism(s) that emerged from it are not strictly linear, nor bi-directional. In other words, just as Saussure drew from Aristotle (but Aristotle cannot be called a Saussurean), so too structuralism(s) drew from Saussure (but Saussure cannot be called a structuralist). On the character of structuralism in its various incarnations throughout the twentieth century, the linguist and Saussure biographer John E. Joseph (2012) points out that:

> The rise to prominence of a generalized 'structuralism' in mid-twentieth-century thought, traced to the influence of the *Course in General Linguistics,* thrust linguistics onto centre stage in the human sciences to a degree unparalleled in modern times. [...] Structuralism was not a term Saussure himself ever used;

he did occasionally use *structure,* but *system* is his usual term of his concept of the self-contained network of values in which everything is connected to everything else. (642)

Moreover, Joseph takes into consideration the host of specifically structuralist thinkers on whom White, for his part, subsequently relied on for his development of history-as-fiction (i.e., Roman Jakobson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Jacques Lacan, with a nod of acknowledgement also to poststructuralist Jacques Derrida; see Rogne 2009; White 2013; cf. Spiegel 2013).[49] Joseph (2012) notes that it was specifically "Barthes's 1964 *Elements of Semiology* [that] was at once a synthesis and codification, and to a certain extent a simplification, of the essence of generalized structuralist principles and methodology" (646). This was true to such an extent that Joseph adds:

> Through Barthes, the Saussurean view that language is one among many systems of signs which are instituted in society, and that a general science of signs should develop, taking linguistics as its pilot discipline, *became common currency and a distinctive characteristic of the broader French structuralism that developed in the wake of Lévi-Strauss.* (2012, 646; emphasis added)

Of the American linguist Noam Chomsky, Joseph comments that Chomsky played a major role in setting the American intellectual scene for the introduction of structuralism. As Joseph (2012) states, "it was Chomsky who brought full-blown structuralism to American linguistics for the first time [in the late 1950s] by undoing a decades-long resistance to it" (648). In refuting the entrenched behaviorism that had previously dominated the intellectual scene directly prior to the arrival of structuralism, Chomsky thus paved the way for the arrival of French structuralist thinkers, particularly Barthes and Lévi-Strauss, who became instrumental for White's work on historical theory during the 1960s (see Paul 2011; cf. Pavel 2001).

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49   White also mentions Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) in passing in his work as well. Peirce was an American logician and philosopher who developed his own science of signs (semeiotic) independently of, though contemporary with, the younger Saussure's (1857–1913) semiology. Peirce's departure point was the English philosopher John Locke (on this see Trabant 2013). Peirce thought that signs permeate all things, if not the entire universe (pansemiotics). He held "that cognition, thought, and even man are semiotic in their essence. Like a sign, a thought refers to other thoughts and to objects of the world so that 'all which is reflected upon has [a] past'" (in Nöth 1995, 41). Peirce reasoned that: every thought is a sign; all of life is a train of thought; and so in consequence every man is a sign. He went on to develop three trichotomies of the sign on the basis of what he termed "Firstness," "Secondness," and "Thirdness." On the complex breakdown of this classification of Peirce's system of signs, see Nöth (1995, 42–47; compare and contrast these views with Thibault 1997). While White mentions Peirce, he does not develop Peircean ideas in his work with the consistency that he does his (post)structuralist forebears. Aside from the fact that Peirce developed a system of signs roughly contemporaneously with Saussure, White does not dwell at length or in a sustained way on the Peircean sign system.

Thus, "structuralism" could be traced back to the original influence of Saussure – even though Saussure never used the term himself. Here, I focus on the semiological principles, of which the "arbitrariness of the binary linguistic sign" was primary among such principles.[50] Moreover, the *arbitrary relation between* the acoustical image of a word (i.e., its sound) and its concept was foundational for Saussure's system of linguistic value, as it was for the structuralists, who adopted and developed Saussure's ideas (Joseph 2012, esp. 579). This arbitrariness, from the sign system to the social system, is also the origin of the *freedom of language* that inspires White's radical claim to be able to "choose" one's past (cf. Paul 2011, 15–34, esp. 31; also see the Introduction, Section 1.3). The theoretical approaches that White mastered and presented in his now classic work *Metahistory* converged on the writing of history mainly from these two quite different – and as I claim in this thesis – *incommensurable* directions, structuralist and tropological.

The problem posed in this chapter comes down to one tricky question that is often overlooked. That is, how is philosophy (historical theory as a synchronic *pattern* of thought) to be done when the framework, within which this philosophy is argued, does not take its own historical contingency, its context (its diachronic *process* over time) into account? Insofar as Hayden White is a (structuralist) thinker and writer of his own time and place, to this extent he is dependent upon the historical contingencies – the historical circumstances and context (*process*) – within which his own work developed.[51]

As it happens, it is always difficult to grasp the implications of events as they are happening and unfolding in real time; this is, after all, one of the points of White's (1999b) essay "The Modernist Event" argues. Moreover, argued from the *figural* point of view, White (1999b) eschews a connection between "reality" (what happened in-the-world) and the "telling" (in figural language) of the event in question (see Chapter 5). It is, indeed, only in hindsight that, in looking back on certain events, one can even begin to understand what *some of the elements* were that were in play at the time. When one argues from an embodied standpoint however, as I do here, there are limitations in the "telling" of what happened in the past, certainly. But, this telling in embodied language is not disconnected from the event in-the-world that it characterizes – i.e., attributes in the telling. At least, it is not disconnected in the way it is when it is argued in terms of *a figural* (linguistic) phenomenon, as in White's account.

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50   Saussure's (2011) binary sign consists of its two sides, the (i) *material* sound image when we say the word, *father,* for instance, and its (ii) *immaterial* "ideas," or the concept of "father" (121). This is, of course, a dualist construction of the sign in terms of its *substance* and *form* decoupled. (See, e.g., Lanigan 1992, 52; see also Section 5.5 and its subsections.)

51   This can be seen most directly in his search for a suitable vocabulary to express what he understands as different historiographical styles in the expression of the modes of figural realism (see Paul 2011, 69–76; Domańska, ed. 1998, 26–28).

Here, I would like to argue, when there is this distinctive separation of language from the body, from which this langauge arises, that there is a characteristic separation between *pattern* and *process* reminiscent of the analytical method that Zeno of Elea brought to bear on his paradox of an *arrow in flight,* mentioned above (esp. Section 2.1.3). Specifically, it is Zeno's characteristic move to separate *pattern* and *process* in order to argue that the arrow is both moving and at rest simultaneously. On the basis of this traditional (analytical) move, one may argue that the moving arrow is at rest. This type of analytical argument is at play when White would insist, with Mink (1987, 42–60), that the *qualities* of narrative are only transferred *from art (figurally)* to life, but not back again (as in the case of *autopoietical* dynamics). The analytical (reductive) move requires the separation of the linguistic pattern (the language system, *synchrony*) from its linguistic process (language practice over time, *diachrony*) (for the detailed elaboration of this argument, see Chapter 5). This involves an unnatural (dualist) separation of our lived experience-in-the-world from our ongoing (embodied, metaphorical) language of everyday life that we employ to communicate our experience(s) in-the-world to others, both spoken and written.

Indeed, philosophical presuppositions may haunt history writing from the inside-out, as White would be the first to admit, but historical contingency, demonstrated by the epigraph to this chapter, haunts philosophical activity from the outside-in, against Zeno's paradox – and that is an uncomfortable circumstance that needs more work, which this chapter addresses. Before tackling this issue head-on in the chapters to come, the first task of this chapter in what follows is to survey the different views historians and theorists defend concerning White's theoretical departure point(s): (Saussurean) structuralism or (Vichian) tropology, respectively. In other words, given the nature of the relation of "core" to "frame" as outlined in the previous chapter (Section 2.3), the question posited here explores: which White, structuralist or tropologist?

3.1   STRUCTURALISM AND/OR TROPOLOGY: WHICH WHITE?

At the outset, it may be asked whether White is really, at heart, a (Saussurean) structuralist or a (Vichian) tropologist – or both equally, or neither, because he is *both.* To be fair, White (in Rogne 2009, 66) freely admits that structuralism was deconstructed as a system of thought by Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) from the late 1960s onward.[52] Structuralism continues to survive regardless, as the

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52   In brief, Derrida is known for his method of "deconstruction" through characteristic, extremely close readings of major philosophers, beginning in the late 1960s. Of concern here is his powerful critique of Saussurean structuralism carried out in his famous trilogy of works published in 1967: *Speech and Phenomena* (Fr.

recent work by Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth (2011) firmly attests.[53] The question as to where White's true loyalties lie (structuralist or tropologist) is apposite, if I am to warrant such a critique and call his work "structuralist." This claim may seem absurd or counterintuitive, because it speaks against the commonly understood anti-modernist thrust of White's ethico-utopian cultural critique. But the modernism/antimodernism debate is still very much argued within the confines of modernity.

According to Paul (2011), "White's thoughts on history and historical scholarship" originate in a central problem of ongoing concern since his work of the 1960s: "how to live a morally responsible life in a thoroughly historical world" (12), which is essentially Nietzschean in character (e.g., Nietzsche 1989, 1997). Of *Metahistory*, Paul argues that if that book was more concerned "with myth and imagination, more than with narrative and discourse," it was "discourse," according to Paul, that answered White's question of "how to relate history and myth, or reason and imagination" (13; see also Section 8.2). Despite White's ongoing movement and changing views over the past five decades, my aim is primarily to track and examine his original and unchanged views that anchor history-as-fiction as a theoretical construct of the linguistic turn in historiography.

If White does not see himself necessarily as "postmodernist" (in Domańska, ed. 1998, 29–27), it would still be fair to claim that there remains a strong degree of formalism (structuralism) from which both his consistent and inconsistent writings flow over the course of his career. I believe this to be the case, because it appears that he *presupposes* (Saussure's) principle of language as being the arbitrariness language, as interpreted through the prism of those structuralists White followed, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes (e.g., White 1974; see Chapters 4 & 5). As he tells Erlend Rogne (2009):

> What structuralism taught me was that the situation is always structured. *And like language, from the beginning it's arbitrarily structured,* or it is structured to the advantage of certain groups in the totality. *The rules themselves are arbitrarily put in place.* They also make communication possible. (66; emphasis added; cf. White in Domańska, ed. 1998, 20)

The way White presents his position here above (in Rogne 2009; cf. White 1974, 1985, 260, n. 3), in fact, can easily be traced back to Aristotle's sign theory (the "givenness of

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1967; Eng. 1973), *Of Grammatology* (Fr. 1967; Eng. 1976, 1998), and *Writing and Difference* (Fr. 1967; Eng. 1978, 2001). Through the combination of these three works, Derrida discovered that Saussure's linguistics suffered the same "metaphysics of presence" that he found at the core of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology (in *Speech and Phenomena*) (on this, see Fuchs 1976; see also Section 3.5, below). Nevertheless, Derrida remains controversial. On the nature of Derrida's contested "close reading" technique, see Foucault 1998a; Harris 2003; cf. Luft 2003.

53   Caroline Bassett (2014, 9) concurs with the view that Derrida's deconstruction has not hampered the afterlife of structuralism.

perception" in understanding language), understood as being *conventional* (subject to the rules of the community of speakers) (cf. Kretzmann 1974). It was posited from Aristotle onwards and remains an entrenched idea even today that *only by way of* these agreed rules ("code") is the "language game" of communication possible (e.g., Harris and Taylor 1997, 33; cf. Harris 2004, 48; White 1974, 764–765).

White's own comments are telling, insofar as they are clearly related to the ancient Aristotelian sign theory that serves as the theoretical core around which the novelties of the Saussurean legacy were theorized and developed (see Chapter 4; see also Sections 5.3–5.4). Moreover, this assumption that conventional sign systems are what enable communication in the first place arises from centuries' old assumptions concerning the "formlessness of thought," which is given form by signs (and signification) alone (Harris 1996, 116). Saussure scholar and linguist Roy Harris takes "the formlessness of thought," moreover, to serve as "one of the foundational assumptions of the Saussurean linguistic theory" (117).

Saussure states that, "[i]n itself, thought is like a swirling cloud, where no shape is intrinsically determinate. No ideas are established in advance, and nothing is distinct, before the introduction of linguistic structure (synchronic *la langue*)" (quoted in Harris 1996, 117; cf. Joseph 2012). This "formlessness of thought" as a traditional view of immaterial "mind" in its relation to language may have been only one of many reasons, however, that Saussure (2011) strictly discounted any role for the body in his theory. In fact, he is openly and emphatically opposed to this non-arbitrary, contingent and embodied view. Saussure maintains that language is expressly *not* derived from the body; signs are "unmotivated" and used according to social convention only (see, e.g., the ancient discussions in Kretzmann 1974 and Allen 2001; cf., however, Blasi et al. 2016; for more, see Chapters 4–5).

Saussure explains that if signs were derived from the body, they would, by default, be non-arbitrary. To emphasize the point, Saussure (2011) states unequivocally:

> *Unlike language,* other human institutions […] are all based in varying degrees on the natural relations of things; all have of necessity adapted the means employed to the ends pursued. Even fashion in dress is not entirely arbitrary; we can deviate only slightly from the conditions dictated by the human body. (75–76; emphasis added)

It is quite clear on Saussure's interpretation of the institution of language that the system of signs exists independently of the conditions dictated by the body; otherwise, his semiology could not have constituted a methodologically *holist* system of thought. This view of the body's complete absence from the structure of human language also prompts Saussure to downplay, for example, the onomatopoeia of language for words such as "splat," "splash," or "sizzle," derived from our interaction with – and imitation of – the sounds in the environment of our direct experience;

Saussure (2011) explains that "for authentic onomatopoeic words (e.g., glug-glug, tick-tock, etc.), not only are they limited in number, but also they are chosen somewhat arbitrarily, for they are only approximate and more or less conventional imitations of certain sounds" (69).

This, however, does not explain the existence of such naturally motivated words in imitating the sounds of our immediate environment, if signs are radically arbitrary, as claimed; onomatopoeia is a good example of what Capra (2003) makes reference to in terms of spoken language as "gesture of the tongue" (51).[54] In different cultures, different "gestures of the tongue" are habituated (embodied) among the group of speakers, as the work of Blasi et al. (2016) demonstrably emphasize. In his critique of Saussure, for example, Derrida (1998) *expressly disagrees* with Saussure on this point of the arbitrariness of the sign (44–73). He also takes issue with Saussure on downplaying onomatopoeia, even though Derrida himself never leaves the Saussurean discussion *in terms of language as a negative, differential system of (written) signs* (see Joseph, Love & Taylor 2001, 198–199; Harris 2003, 171–188).[55] White (1974, 764–765; cf. Paul 2011, 100–101), however, defends the arbitrariness of the sign on the deep structure of language in history-as-fiction, despite Derrida's foregoing poststructuralist critique (White in Domańska, ed. 1998, ed. 32–33; cf. White in Rogne 2009, 66).

By contrast to the structuralist White, there are those, who argue for him as a Vichian tropologist. For example, White's former student Hans Kellner (2013) insists that White always was, and remains, a humanist in the way that he has continued to develop his idea of "figuralism" or "figural fulfillment" across the decades, regardless of his structuralist sympathies (see, e.g., White 1999, 2013; cf. Spiegel 2013, 180–182). Robert Doran (2010, 2013) argues along similar lines to those of Kellner, maintaining that White is, ultimately, a Vichian tropological thinker, not a structuralist (2010, xvii). Finally, Luft (2003), too, considers White to be a Vichian, as when she states: "White himself is not primarily interested in the poetic language of Vico's age of gods but in the tropological character of language determining historical development and structuring the constructed historical

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54 In describing the origin of language in gesture(s), Capra states, "in a sense, sign language and spoken language are both forms of gesture. In [Roger Fouts's] words: 'Sign language uses gesture of the hands; spoken language is gesture of the tongue. The tongue makes precise movements, stopping at specific places around the mouth so that we can produce certain sounds. The hands and fingers stop at precise places around the body to produce signs'" (Fouts in Capra 2003, 51). Cf. Blasi et al. 2016.

55 Luft (2003) locates Derrida's commitment to textualism in a rabbinic thinking that "presents us with a [metonymical] process, not a product" (96). As Luft notes, "for the rabbis *'absence does not equal non-existence';* it is the very condition of existence. Rabbinic hermeneutic 'is a text whose writing is precisely this presence-as-separation'" (Handelman in Luft 2003, 96; original italics). As Luft states, "Drawing out the radical implications of Judaism as the Other of the tradition that systematizes language, knowledge, world, God, Derrida metonymically tropes the absence of *logos* as writing, and writing as Judaic" (2003, 97; cf. Harris 2003, 175–179). In other words, to make of Derrida an "embodied" thinker, one must stretch his own work well beyond the boundaries that he himself worked it (cf. Reynolds 2004).

narratives of the third age, rendering them poetic rather than epistemic" (190, n. 223). What she misses in White's commitment to tropology, however, are the logical consequences of tropology's location *within* White's *structuralist frame*, as when White (1999a) states that "[t]ropology is the unfinished business of modern, and especially semiotic, linguistics" (11, n. 18; see also Section 3.4 below).

Finnish narrative theorist Kalle Pihlainen (2013), interprets White as focused specifically on literary *discourse,* which White then discusses *tropically* (see also, e.g., Kellner 1980; White's interviews in Rogne 2009, 63–75; in Domańska, ed. 1998, 13–38, 2008, 3–21; cf. White 2010b, ix–xi; see Section 8.2–8.3). In this sense, Pihlainen vouches for the larger frame of structuralist theory couched in the vocabulary of Vico's tropes. Historian Gabrielle M. Spiegel (2013) also weighs in on this question reflectively and associates White with structuralism, even though she understands how important the *tropic* nature of language is for him as well; in consequence, she expresses an "ambiguity" in his position that creates a tension at the center of his thesis, when she remarks:

> So where does all this ambiguity leave us in identifying where White belongs as a theorist of historiographical narratives and history? In light of his lifelong embrace of the historical sublime and deeply moral concerns for human freedom, I think I would be tempted to locate him among, or at least alongside, those "eschatological structuralists"—Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Foucault—who, as he wrote, "concentrate on the ways in which structures of consciousness actually conceal the reality of the world." Like them, he, too, I suspect, is prone to take seriously […] that things "exist in order to live in books" and sees historical narrative as that place where the "Flesh is made word." (182)

Naturally there is abundant evidence for every opinion across the spectrum on this matter (see Domańska, ed. 1998, 19–28, esp. 27). On the one hand, White's long-time friend, historian Richard T. Vann (1998) points out concerning White's reception, 1973–1993: "So the question 'Which White?' remains salient in the story of his reception. […] Extracting from him—or imposing upon him—a systematic philosophy of history is impossible […]. His forte is fecundity, *not fixity,* of thought […]" (161; original emphasis; for another positive assessment, see, e.g., Kansteiner 1993). On the other hand, Hans Kellner (2013) draws attention to the fact that "[i]t is important to keep in mind when considering the systematic Hayden White that *there are usually two levels at which the same thing has different consequences*" (164; emphasis added; cf. Kellner 1980, 28–29).

Given this ambivalent situation, at the outset of my study, I initially gave White the benefit of the doubt and embraced both arguments equally, as Kellner (2013) appears to suggest. I then devised a strategy for separating these points of view in White's work and, exposed history-as-fiction to a thought experiment along these

lines. Indeed, because White appears Vichian at times and, at others, he appears structuralist, depending on the point(s) he wishes to make, I divided his theories along these two lines, structuralist and tropological (see Section 2.3).

In fact, *I do not argue that White does not have a deep understanding of Vico's tropology* (as Luft 2003 shows); I am arguing, instead, that in coupling Saussure's structuralism (a disembodied, dualist position on language) and Vico's tropology (an embodied, ecological position on language), White's tropes are overpowered by and put to work within the structuralist framework he imposes on them. It is not that Vico's embodied tropes transform and empower the structuralist frame; it is that the tropes are disempowered and robbed of their natural function. If surgeons would transplant a living, beating heart into a cold corpse, it is not that the heart jump-starts the corpse into life once more; rather, the heart simply stops beating and joins the corpse in death (at equilibrium).

What I found in my analysis is that White's choice has unexpected "systemic" consequences for his theoretical construct history-as-fiction. Moreover, these "systemic" consequences emerge only when this unexamined tension is studied on a deep level. Thus, contrary to what Doran and Luft argue – and fully in keeping with Pihlainen's (2013) and Spiegel's (2013) views of White – his adherence to the structuralist frame elides Vico's embodied tropes altogether and renders history-as-fiction a (post)structuralist construct focused on disembodied and autonomous *figural* "discourse" (see Chapter 8).

Given the definition of embodiment outlined in the preceding chapter as the very heart of "living" (*autopoietic*) structure along two dimensions (of matter and form as dynamic processes), I hope to show something that, in principle, White does not deny. He states emphatically, for example, that Kant is wrong when he says that "the source of all error is metaphor"; what is more, White declares that:

> From Descartes on, metaphor is regarded as error. Metaphor is always regarded as what Ryle called a 'category mistake.' Some mistake in cross-sorting. That is absurd. You would think that anyone who had read any poetry would know that that is not the case. You need metaphorical expression to characterize the most complicated and difficult aspects of your experience in the world. Nothing can be stated in simple declarative sentences without metaphor. There is no such thing as nonmetaphorical language. (White in Domańska, ed. 1998, 24)

Given White's strongly held Vichian conviction that "there is no such thing as nonmetaphorical language," this conviction is somehow simultaneously wedded to White's structuralism, as when he unequivocally replies to Ewa Domańska's question "How do you consider youself?": "I am structuralist. [...] I am formalist and structuralist" (in Domańska, ed. 1998, 27; cf. Paul 2011, 15–34, 100–101). In what follows, I begin an examination as to why this orientation bears within it the

unexamined tension that "unmakes" history-as-fiction from the inside out: White's philosophical dualist inheritance in the analytical decoupling of pattern and process.

3.2 THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

Todd May (2007) is a philosopher who straddles both the analytical and continental traditions of Western philosophy. He admits to his own surprise that "history" might play a role in philosophical activity. In fact, he was startled to discover that history could matter at all to the kind of philosophy he was doing. As he puts it,

> I should have known it earlier, being a scholar of the thought of Michel Foucault. [...] My excuse is that I have always studied analytic philosophy alongside my continental specialization, and succumbed to the temptation of asking of the doctrines I was studying 'Are they right?' without taking into account the important question, 'How did they come about?' (May 2007, 264; cf. Hacking 2002, 1–26)[56]

May stumbled upon a valuable observation concerning the interrelation between history and philosophical thought that proves extremely worthwhile in the present discussion, especially where Vico is concerned, let alone Saussure. Namely, what May notices is the *autonomous status* usually granted to philosophy and passed over in an unproblematic manner. Put another way, the status that is usually granted to philosophy is that of an "eternal" activity in search of (absolute) fixed "truth" that is *immune to history* (May 2007, 264–265). This is reflected in Saussure's synchronic *la langue* that he so confidently separated from diachronic *la parole* in his structural semiology (cf. Chapter 5).

   May (2007) argues that, if "we can no longer take for granted the immunity of philosophy to history," then "[p]hilosophical frameworks and truths become problematic in new ways if we open them up to the empirical, historical world" (265). The logic here is that if the character of philosophical thought undergoes change over time (and it does), so too does every inquiry that carries with it, like a stowaway, its own implicit philosophical commitments. *Every philosophical inquiry* carries such commitments, if indeed all persons harbor any undeclared presuppositions that are then simply taken for granted at the start of any (also historical) inquiry. White (1985a) himself is well aware of what happens when philosophical commitments

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56   Cf. also May (2014), which approaches the way Ian Hacking (2002) pursues "historical ontology." See also the discussion on the relation between philosophy and history in Carlo Ginzburg's (2012) "Just One Witness: The Extermination of the Jews and the Principle of Reality," esp. 170–172.

are hidden from view in the way the philosophical apparatus "serves as a hidden or implicit shaping device" (127). As he states, "[t]hose historians who draw a firm line between history and philosophy of history fail to recognize that every historical discourse contains within it a full-blown, if only implicit, philosophy of history" on the deep level of the text (127).

May's observations also serve a parallel purpose with regard to fleshing out the historical contingencies of White's theoretical standpoint(s), insofar as White himself has apparently accepted the *autonomous status* of Saussure's system of signs as the way language *really* works. This presupposition within his linguistic turn, likewise "serves as a hidden or implicit shaping device" (White 1985a, 127) within the construct history-as-fiction in the form of his conviction that "stories are not lived but told." White has granted the core attribute of arbitrariness, like a stowaway, the status of (a timeless) truth.[57] What is contingently related to this discussion is that White (1974, 1975a; cf. Paul 2011, 100) publicly embraced Saussurean structuralism at the very moment when the English translations of Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist texts of the late 1960s began to be published from the early 1970s onward.

The epigraph to this chapter refers "symbolically," as historian Carlo Ginzburg (1999) puts it (18), to a 1966 symposium in Baltimore, Maryland.[58] This symposium betrays – in hindsight – a complication in the historical fabric of what White clearly considered "new conceptions of language, speech, and textuality," permitting "reformulations of the traditional notions of literality, reference, authorship, audience, and codes" (White 1999a, 25).[59] The quote by Macksey (2007) in the epigraph to this chapter originates from the 40th anniversary edition of the proceedings of the symposium convened by Macksey and Eugenio Donato at Johns Hopkins University, October 18–21, 1966. It was here that Derrida, presented a paper entitled "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences."[60]

The conference was intended by its conveners to introduce the (French) structuralist movement to an American audience, an event "loudly and bravely announced as an inauguration" (Macksey, 2007, x). In fact, it was meant as a *beginning* but concluded as "something more like a *requiem* for the movement" (x). As Macksey also states, "[w]hether one chooses the wedding garment or the

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57   What White (1974) says, in addressing Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology as "arbitrary cultural codes," is that "[t]his arbitrariness is precisely similar to that which prevails in the setting down of the rules for determining what shall pass for proper and improper usage of speech" (768). In comparing what White stated in 1974 with what White explains in his interview with Rogne in 2009, he certainly appears to adhere, even today, to his structuralist belief in the arbitrariness of the semiological sign or, at the very least, to some general principles that he has drawn from it. (See also White in Domańska, ed. 1998, 13–38, esp. 20.)

58   This was also the year that White brought out his well-known article, "The Burden of History" (White 1966).

59   The essay originally appeared a decade earlier in 1989.

60   This essay is the final chapter in *Writing and Difference,* originally published in French in 1967. Derrida is known for his "deconstructive" analyses of Plato, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Freud, as well as some of his own contemporaries, such as Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) and Michel Foucault (1926–1984). (Cf. White's 1985 initial reaction to deconstruction, 261–282, was originally published in 1976.)

shroud as appropriate to the occasion depends in part [...] on the selectivity and interpretive posture of the reader [...], but it depends just as obviously on the course of subsequent history" (x; cf. Salmon 2017). What Macksey seems to suggest, forty-plus years on, is that this beginning-as-end is up for interpretation in the light of its own reception – in hindsight. More to the point, Macksey's comments help to focus the question as to how philosophy is to be done when the framework within which this philosophy is argued does not take its own historical contingency into account. Certainly White could not then (in 1966) have known of the ultimate philosophical impact of the critique then *already* underway. It is only afterwards that such events can be evaluated and assessed, not during them. In this case, White continued to walk the path of a structuralist–tropologist without examining the two (very different) linguistic principles of each of the views he experimentally combined into his theoretical construct history-as-fiction.

3.3 WHITE'S SYNCRETIC MODEL: A TROPOLOGICAL CORE WITHIN ITS STRUCTURALIST FRAME

During the period of the linguistic turn, White's commitment to integrate Vico's tropological theory appeared to be firm, though recently he has taken distance from some of his earliest essays.[61] The problem with structuralism was that White remained a humanist, and structuralism was both a-temporal and uncompromisingly anti-humanist.[62] However, by interweaving (at first) a *scientistic* version of Saussurean structuralist semiology (more on this below) with a theory of the tropes (Vico's tropology) this semiological–tropological coupling gave White the tools he needed for examining historical writing to illuminate what he viewed as the nineteenth-century (Rankean) notion of historical realism presented in (an objectivist, ethically detached) ironic mode (see White 1975, 31–42; cf. Paul 2011, 91–98; 78).

The specific variety of structuralism that White followed is characterized by the literary theorist Thomas G. Pavel (2001), who has divided structuralism into its three major schools: (a) moderate, (b) scientistic, and (c) speculative. Of these three varieties, the (b) scientistic version leaned more heavily on (Saussurean) linguistics

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61   White (2010a) comments in the Preface to a recent collection (ed. Robert Doran) that: "In collecting my earliest essays, [Doran] has, I fear, made public a certain youthful idealism, both philosophical and political, of which time and experience have long since cured me" (ix).

62   If one cannot say that White gave up his existentialist-inspired belief in free choice (the thrust of his humanism), as against the linguistic determinism of the structuralist system, one can also say that White observed patterns that he could not deny, and so he explored them. However, as White's intellectual biographer Herman Paul (2011) emphasizes, White is an 'arch-modernist,' who remains "deeply committed [...] to the cause of liberation from realisms that obstruct the dream of a better life by excluding the utopian from the real" (129). In fact, I take this to be the essence of what White intended to communicate by showcasing the "historical imagination" the way he did with what tools he had available to him at the time.

than the other two. According to Pavel, the scientist version of structuralism remained the dominant one in France of the 1960s, for the reason that "linguistics was the most advanced among the social or human sciences" (Pavel 2001, 4). Thinkers that Pavel includes in this "scientist" category are the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009), literary theorist and semiotician Roland Barthes (1915–1980), and the Paris semiotician A. J. Greimas (1917–1992). This group of thinkers, and those who followed them, such as White, "believed that the linguistics of Saussure, Hjelmslev and Jakobson offered the most advanced methodology conceivable in the human sciences […]" (Pavel 2001, 4).[63]

White's intellectual biographer Herman Paul (2011) writes that, by the late 1960s, White was in search of the kind of sufficiently precise vocabulary that structural linguistics ("modern literary theory") had to offer him (cf. White 1999a, 25). That is, by the late 1960s, White was deliberately searching for an alternative vocabulary with which to discuss the different modes or styles of nineteenth-century realist representation in historiography, but which could not yet be talked about in any codified, disciplinary manner (cf. White in Domańska, ed. 1998, 26, 28). In creating his eclectic fourfold system, the "quadruple tetrad" (Paul 2011, 78), in the Introduction to his *Metahistory,* White conceptualized what is considered the landmark theory in marking the sea change of the linguistic turn.

According to Paul (2011), the following theoreticians influenced the development of the modal elements of White's 'system' in *Metahistory* (White 1975, 1–42): the renowned Canadian literary theorist Northrop Frye (1912–1991); Hungarian-born German sociologist Karl Mannheim (1893–1947); and American philosopher Stephen C. Pepper (1891–1972). For the fourth modal element of the tropes, however, the primary influence was not only Vico and American literary theorist Kenneth Burke (1897–1993), but also Roman Jakobson. White is particularly indebted to Lévi-Strauss for conceptualizing the fourfold system of tropes. This system was meant to enable White

> to show that Ranke did not have a more realistic understanding of history than Hegel, Tocqueville, or Nietzsche. […] Seen in this light, the author's sweeping statements about the 'linguistic ground' of historical thought are perhaps better interpreted as experiments in applying Lévi-Strauss to history than as indicators of a metaphysical position on consciousness or language. White was neither a systematic thinker nor a metaphysically orientated philosopher. 'Language' and 'discourse' entered his vocabulary *only because of their potential in uncovering*

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63   For more detailed entries on the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965), leading semiotician of the Copenhagen School of linguistics, and Russian-American linguist Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), literary theorist and influential pioneer of structural analysis of language (associated with the Prague School of linguistics), see, e.g., Nöth (1995); cf. Harris (2003).

and naming the presuppositions underlying the various claims to realism in historical studies. (Paul 2011, 76; emphasis added)[64]

Of relevance here is the fact that, despite the claim that linguistics was "the most advanced" of theories on offer in the social or human sciences, these structuralist followers of Saussure "spent a considerable amount of energy developing various applications of linguistics in anthropology, semiology and formal narratology, each deciding in his own way to compensate for the inadequacies of the model through *ad hoc* means without ever questioning its fundamental validity" (Pavel 2001, 4; cf. Lanigan 1991). My own critique, however, takes a different route through the subject than the one Pavel takes. This is because the "*ad hoc*" means that White selected for compensating the inadequacies of the Saussurean model was his focus on Vichian tropology, which Pavel does not treat or even mention.

White held that Vico's conception of rhetoric could be seen in two different ways. There was, firstly, the traditional art of rhetoric (where the tropes are just added on features as decorations of language), seen specifically as an art of verbal persuasion. Secondly, as White states, "[i]t was tropology as a basis for *a science of discourse* that I found in Vico" (Domańska, ed. 1998, 28; italics added). This definitely stretched the boundaries of traditional rhetoric by positing the tropes, not as external features of language use, as such, but as *cognitive features* of language production in human consciousness itself (cf. Mink 1987, 42–60; Paul 2011, 114–116). In following Ernst Cassirer rather than Foucault (Paul 2011, 101), White saw language as a structure that mediated "between consciousness ("words") and the world ("things")," but he did not venture to speculate whether language is a product of consciousness, or whether language serves, metaphorically, as a model of how consciousness grasps the world (cf. Modell 2003, 25). And despite not taking a stand on this issue, there are *real theoretical consequences* for the path that he did take.

3.4   THE HIDDEN TENSION BETWEEN STRUCTURALISM AND TROPOLOGY

In antiquity, the Greeks (e.g., Plato and Aristotle) separated the study of matter and form. Zeno's paradox of the arrow is a telling example of this analytical method in action, when applied in an inappropriate context (of movement). In following Saussure on the *synchronic* structure of the language system, White (like Saussure) follows in the footsteps of the Greek metaphysical tradition. In keeping

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64   In a 1993 interview with Ewa Domańska (ed. 1998, 28), White stated quite openly that *Metahistory* was a book of its time and place – that he would do it differently today – and that he was even then (in 1993) still searching for a proper vocabulary to express himself fully.

with these metaphysical presuppositions, Paul (2011, 16, 26) asserts that White's original introduction to Vico in the early 1950s in Rome as a doctoral student came through Carlo Antoni, a disciple of the idealist Italian Vico scholar Benedetto Croce (1866–1952) (on this, see also Ginzburg 2012, 170–175). By the early 1960s, White was a convinced Croce acolyte, which underlay White's original understanding and familiarity with Vico, despite his overt criticism of Croce's idealism by the late 1960s (e.g., White 1975, 386–425, 1976, 1985c, esp. 228). As Paul (2011) states,

> [g]iven White's later interest in historical narratives, one might expect that [White] felt attracted to the early Croce […]. [A]lthough White made some appreciative remarks on these directions in Croce's thought [that history is art, not science, e.g., White 1966, 2000], he singled out three other aspects. What fascinated White in the first place was Croce's emphasis on the complexity of things and the impossibility of fitting reality into a single formula (29; cf. White 1999b; Rogne 2009)

Croce's understanding of reality and the nature of the human self as irreducible, according to Paul (2011), fed into White's ethical concerns, insofar as "Croce considered human nature 'as a problem rather than a datum'" (30). This caught White's acute attention. Human nature could be seen as *not* fixed and *not* settled. On this interpretation, human nature (like language) could be seen as something *without form* "to be realized again and again by human individuals" (30), *arbitrarily.* In the light of White's (ed. with Tagliacozzo 1969, White 1985b,c) familiarity with (Croce's) Vico, it is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that White's anti-reductionism on human nature dovetails and even reinforces his adherence to the idea of arbitrariness (*aka* "freedom" of the linguistic sign) as a path away from methodological holism (cf. esp. White 1974, 1985, 23, n. 1, 260, n. 3; White's comments in Domańska, ed. 1998, 20, and in Rogne 2009, 66). Indeed, it could easily be argued that White has a standing aversion to blatantly idealist philosophy of history (cf. White 1975, 386–425; 1985c; see also Sica 2002).

To take this one step further, however, one might say that Croce's "formless," unconditioned interpretation of human nature converged with White's structuralism on language, thereby confirming an (ethical, aesthetic) interpretation of human nature in terms of "what human beings, each in their unique historical particularities, *want to be,* rather than what they are told to be. […] Not surprisingly, then, *freedom* emerged as a second key term in White's exegesis of Croce" (Paul 2011, 30; italics added). In this way, a "formless," unconditioned freedom to choose one's own values, as opposed to inheriting the values of the past, fused with White's early, youthful readings of the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre (e.g., Ankersmit 2009, esp. 50–51; cf. Kellner 1980, 16–17).

One real theoretical consequence of these choices is the hidden, latent tension created by coupling structuralism and tropology (cf. Dykers 1984; Peltonen 2004). In absorbing his sources, White took his theoretical starting point in structuralism for granted. White did not examine *how* structuralism came about, or what its presuppositions were; he simply took the structuralist framework as a straightforward starting point. His efforts to demonstrate the tropological nature of structuralism went ahead, moreover, despite the shock waves that began to radiate within the Anglo-American philosophical community after Derrida's 1966 presentation at Johns Hopkins University; the impact of the symposium was enough, in any case, to generate English translations of Derrida's works throughout the 1970s.[65]

This tension between these two starting points in language consists in the way Saussure and Vico considered the *nature* of language: for Saussure, who followed largely in the traditional footsteps of Aristotle, the linguistic sign was binary, while the relationship between these inextricable two halves of sound and meaning was "arbitrary" (Saussure 2011, 71–74, 117–118, 131–134; see also Chapters 4–5).[66] For Vico, who was strongly reacting to Cartesian philosophy in the first half of the eighteenth century, the sign was *not* arbitrary at all (e.g., Trabant 2013, 137–140; cf. Luft 1999, 2003). Indeed, for Vico language was not about signs as much as it was about "the embedded, embodied" experience of language in its "enactive" (*poiēsis*) dimension of physical-labor-in-the-world. Luft (1996, 1999, 2003) goes to great lengths to characterize and delineate precisely this "enactive," embedded and embodied nature of Vichian language, in line with her (Hebraic) emphasis on "sound" rather than the traditional philosophical emphasis on "vision" (cf. Fuchs 1976; Levin 1999; see Section 3.5 below).

In short, when one looks at Saussure and Vico carefully, the failures or weaknesses of the one cannot be made to complement the problems and weaknesses of the other, thereby resulting in a unified, coherent and complementary theory, as White (1983) has attempted to bring about in history-as-fiction. Rather, the separate implications of structuralism and tropology, as interpreted in this thesis, attempts to show why the linguistic turn could not ultimately succeed: each of the principles of language at the core of each theory ran in opposite directions, as concerns the embodied nature of language. The inherent tension was always quite evident in the black-and-white

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65   White (1983) takes poststructuralism into account in his project to develop the tropological nature of structuralism. For more on the Baltimore symposium, see Macksey 2007; Salmon 2017; cf. Dosse 1998b, 32–41; Ginzburg 1999, 18–19.

66   To be clear, however, Roy Harris (2003) emphasizes that in the relationship between Aristotle and Saussure, "there is no recognition by Aristotle of anything corresponding to the *image acoustique*. Without that, any assimilation of Aristotelian semiology to Saussure's collapses. [...] Casting Saussure as the linguistic heir of Aristotle is one thing: casting Aristotle as the linguistic forebear of Saussure is another" (174, 175). Saussure's innovations were not Aristotle's (see Chapter 5, esp. Sections 5.3–5.5). What is irrefutable is the legacy of Greek metaphysics; what is new is Saussure's "systemic" approach (cf. Joseph 2012).

reactions on both sides in the debate(s), even if the deeper reasons for this tension were not investigated by any of White's opponents.[67]

Another way to put this is that there are interesting and appealing (Vichian) elements in White's linguistic turn that make sense, even to professional historians such as Georg Iggers. But, these interesting elements are also offered only in combination with rigid, systemic (methodological holist) elements that do not make sense at all to those same historians (e.g., Iggers 2000).[68] This inability of theorists and historians to find any common ground, even after four decades of ongoing debate, goes far in substantiating medievalist Gabrielle M. Spiegel's (2013, 171) recent remarks on the "divergent tendencies" in White's theory of rhetoric and in the "rhetorical ways" that he elaborated it, resulting in "ambiguities" that haunt his legacy after the linguistic turn.

One of the problems in historical theory, on evidence in Iggers's (2000) and White's (2000) exchange, for instance, is that "structuralist" linguistics is a methodological *holistic* theory of language (for definition and critique, see, e.g., Fodor & Lepore 1992; Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 453–462; Harris 2003, 192–193). "Poststructuralism," on the other hand, while it does not leave the semiological realm, is not a methodological holist theory of language. Because Derrida moved the focus from speech to writing, his semiotics features a different theoretical profile more akin to cybernetics (on this, see C. Johnson 2008; cf. Cooper 2008).

Poststructuralism is methodologically individualist in its exclusion of the holist framework and works in a "fragmented" orientation to meaning (as "trace").[69] When there is, however, no distinction between these two (incommensurable) levels – of methodological holism and methodological individualism – the resulting mishmash in combining these mutually exclusive methodological approaches, unproblematically, does not result in coherent theory of any kind (see my discussion above, Sections 2.1–2.2). Media theorist Caroline Bassett (2014) notes that (post)structuralist theory, inconsistently and incoherently, wavers back and forth between "revisionist forms of structuralist narratology" that are, however, labeled "poststructuralist" (9).

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67   The Marwick (1995) "debate" exemplifies many such missed opportunities; see also White 1995; Kansteiner 1996; Lloyd 1996.

68   Georg Iggers (2000, 376–377) expresses his interest in White's topological theory, as presented in *Metahistory*, but takes exception to a "commonsense" aspect of the implications of White's theory. Iggers notes, for instance, that "[t]hese questions [which we ask a text and those questions ultimately inherent in the text] then lead to authorial intentionality, although of course, the author may not be fully conscious of the implications of his writing. But if we exclude the author's intentionality from the text and refrain from asking questions seeking to probe his/her intentionality, we are forced to take *an absurdist notion of free play which permits the texts to be interpreted in an infinite number of ways*. White concludes his reply with, 'it is the intention of the texts that should interest us, not the intentions of the writer'. But in truth only writers have intentions, no matter how complex and unclear these may be. Texts have no intention although they and the intentions of the writers expressed in them are open to interpretation" (378; italics added; cf. White 1985, 261–282, esp. 261–263).

69   Cf. Derrida 1998, 73; see also Luft 2003, 97; on Derrida's relation to rabbinic hermeneutics, see Luft's discussion, footnote 55, above.

Theorists are confusing methodological holism with methodological individualism, and labeling one as the other, that is, without apparently realizing the conflation of incompatible theoretical content. For many, in denying the intentionality of the authors of a text (such as Saussure), the intentions of the text can be interpreted as complementary in a vaguely "postmodern" sense (White in Rogne 2009, 66; cf. Iggers 2000; White 2000).

One example of what I take to be Spiegel's difficulty with the ambiguities inherent in White's (1999a) theorizing is evident in his essay, "Literary Theory and Historical Writing." In this essay, the *tropological nature of structuralism* appears to be a dimension of literary theory meant to work as a complementary whole. As he states:

> Tropology is the unfinished business of modern, and especially semiotic, linguistics. [...] For Jakobson, Benveniste, Burke, Lausberg, Bloom, de Man, Derrida, [...] Perelman, Todorov, Barthes, and others, it was a primary problem. I began with Vico, went on to Nietzsche [...], thence to Kenneth Burke [...], and from there to the authors mentioned in the preceding sentence[, who] view [tropology] as the basis for a theory of discourse. (White 1999a, 11, n. 18; cf. Domańska, ed. 1998, 20)

White likely hypothesized in this exploration that tropological theory would make up for (complement) any inadequacies that a scientistic interpretation of Saussure[70] had left incomplete or unsatisfactory (especially after Derrida's critique of the structuralist program). In the essay in question, White placed great emphasis on the *nature of language* (even of narrative) as being attributable to the tropes:

> A historical representation can be cast in the mode of a narrative because the tropological nature of language provides that possibility. Therefore, it is absurd to suppose that, because a historical discourse is cast in the mode of narrative, it must be mythical, fictional, substantially imaginary, or otherwise "unrealistic" in what it tells us about the world. [...] If myth, literary fiction, and traditional historiography utilize the narrative mode of discourse, this is because they are all forms of language use. [...] Anyway, does anyone seriously believe that myth and literary fiction do *not* refer to the real world, tell truths about it, and provide useful knowledge of it? (White 1999a, 22; original italics)

Nevertheless, the tropological nature of language remains secondary to the fact that, for White, historical discourse is a special case of discourse in general (see

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70   In the 1960s, White followed Lévi-Strauss and Barthes along their scientistic semiological lines; but, White subsequently moved with Barthes away from this scientistic model, and thereafter away from Barthes (see Paul 2011, 82–108; cf. Domańska, ed. 1998, 30).

Chapter 8). This nested, hierarchical way of conceiving the relationship between structuralism and tropology thus sets up the problematic that concerns the rest of this chapter in Section 3.5 below. Structuralism takes priority in White's work and thinking. Because the genetic principle of language within White's structuralist frame is the arbitrariness of the sign (Joseph 2012; cf. Harris 1987, 20–21; Holdcroft 1991; Thibault 1997), this has theoretical consequences (see Chapter 5). One devastating consequence for White's theory is that, due to the embedded binary nature of the arbitrary principle of language in structuralism, history-as-fiction is just as susceptible to Derrida's late twentieth century critique of the "metaphysics of presence" as structuralism was. In fact, so is poststructuralism, as I show in Chapter 5. As it happens, the key term in Derrida's critique is "perception," which in turn lies at the heart of the linguistic enterprise from Aristotle to Vico, Saussure, and beyond.

3.5   THE "METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE": PHILOSOPHY'S DEEPEST PRESUPPOSITION

One of many remarkable insights, gleaned from his close readings of philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), was Jacques Derrida's observation that the Greek metaphysical tradition was rooted in something he identified as "the metaphysics of presence."[71] It began with the Greeks and ran through Hegel – "the science of Being *qua* Being," the notion of *absolute* presence. What interests Wolfgang Walter Fuchs (1976) on this topic is that

> this great thought moved in a certain direction, along a certain theme – that the metaphysical is the moment of presence; that the metaphysical notion of Being as it is in itself is the notion of absolute presence [...] [which] maintains that entities participate in Being, that they do not exhaust Being and that they do not delimit Being. [...] The notion of Being, in its primordial manifestation is the *exclusion of absence*. (6, 7; emphasis added)

This "exclusion of absence" is the very definition of a universal, all-knowing absolute, that is, ultimate and *ocularcentric* "Truth" (cf. Levin 1999; see Sections 6.1–6.1.2). In German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), as Fuchs writes, the theme of metaphysical presence is "the presence of Spirit to itself, all at once, no longer

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71   Originally discussed in *Speech and Phenomena* (orig. pub. Fr. 1967; Eng. 1973). My discussion in this section is indebted to Wolfgang Walter Fuchs (1976; cf. Levin 1999). For a discussion that delves deeply into the (metaphorical) origins of this concept as a model in Western philosophy, see Section 6.1, especially Subsection 6.1.2.

history, no longer becoming, no longer mediated" (Fuchs 1976, 8). This Spirit, in other words, is pure Truth, and to participate in Being is to participate in Truth in the "paradigm of vision." Thus from Plato in ancient philosophy down through Hegel, *Being is presence*, and "the metaphysical moment that creates philosophy is the direct presence of Being, enduring, timeless, and absolute" (8): philosophy, in other words, could be defined as a metaphysics of presence – a participation in all-seeing Truth.[72]

In parallel discussion along these lines, Jens Brockmeier (2002) notes that Derrida *departed from* the philosophical tradition that made writing an appendage to speech. This traditional focus on the voice, or oral speech in Saussure, taken from Aristotle's "phonocentric" paradigm "is but a consequence of the rejection of writing as a mere secondary representation, an appendage that only has function and meaning in as far as it is a transparent symbol of the spoken word" (25). As Brockmeier (2002) goes on to elaborate, this emphasis on voice (*phone*), or phonocentrism and the metaphysics of immediacy or "presence" "is not just a linguistic project but the symptom of a more fundamental tendency of exclusion and inclusion that relates phonocentrism to logocentrism" (25). I would call it an essential traditional *decoupling* of substance and form, or most simply: body-mind dualism. As he characterizes this logocentrism, Brockmeier relates that

> Logocentrism is the belief that both spoken and written signs are only hints at, and external expressions of, deeper meanings and truths that lie either in the thoughts of men or the minds of Gods. As a consequence, the first and last things are "ethereal" entities such as Logos and the Divine Word, soul and spirit, Hegel's *Geist* (mind/spirit) and Kant's transcendental subject. Viewed in this way, phonocentrism and logocentrism appear to be bound into a moral ontology that privileges the mind over the body, and the spiritual and intelligible over the sensible and material. In sum, the priority of the immaterial voice over writing is interwoven with a complex fabric of philosophical and religious motives. (2002, 25)

German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) challenges this philosophical tradition with his *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781,[73] even though he does not fully escape the tradition he criticizes, by way of synthesizing aspects of the rationalist

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72   The "metaphysics of presence," in its dependence on "all-seeing Truth" is, in turn, dependent on the deeply hidden conceptual metaphor SEEING is KNOWLEDGE, a dependence that I unpack at length in Chapter 6 (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 2003).

73   This philosophical treatise is better-known in its second edition of 1787, after Kant had considered how to account for the problems raised by the critical commentaries on the representationalist approach to epistemology in the first edition.

(Cartesian) and empiricist (Humean) traditions.[74] His synthesis places limits on reason and "declares classical metaphysics as impossible" by arguing that it is not possible *to know things in themselves*, impossible to know *das Ding an sich;* Being thus cannot come into *presence* all at once, unmediated in human reason (Fuchs 1976, 8). In other words, "knowledge of Truth" cannot come to us without being mediated to us *by something*, in this case, by way of empirical, *bodily perceptions of the world around us*. Indeed, for Kant, "all that is really possible is Appearance" (8).[75]

Grounding rational epistemology, however, on a perceptual ontology, in this way, merely reintroduces the metaphysics of presence – banished from the front door of philosophy by Kant – but secretly re-entering through the back way of *a new ontology of perception*. This is so, because the absolute Being of traditional philosophy is now *given through intuitions based on perception*. This is the *new* ontology of perception: the *givenness of Being* is now accomplished through our human nature, via our perceptions of the world. Kant took a step closer to a constructionist version of epistemology, but could not escape metaphysics entirely.

Phenomenology, as the science of appearances (that phenomena appear in our acts of consciousness), is a "new" direction in philosophy beginning in 1900, envisioned by its founder – and Heidegger's teacher – Edmund Husserl (1859–1938).[76] As Stephen Kern (1983) points out, Husserl's aim was to *challenge* the Cartesian idea that "perception takes place in the mind and argued instead that it is a relation between a perceiver and a thing perceived" (7). This new philosophy followed in the footsteps of Kant with the aim, moreover, of devising a philosophy "free of presuppositions." But, Husserl did not succeed in this, as Derrida saw, when Husserl pursued what amounted to a "radical positivism in an epistemological investigation" (Fuchs 1976, 8).[77] Indeed, Kantian empiricism maintained that "the source of all possible experience lies in sensible intuition":

> Objects are *given* to us by means of sensibility, and it alone yields us intuitions; they are thought through the understanding, and from the understanding arises concepts. (Kant in Fuchs 1976, 9; original emphasis)

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74   The rationalist tradition is attributed to the founder of modern epistemology, the French philosopher René Descartes (1596–1650); the empiricist tradition is attributed here to the radical skepticist Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711–1776).

75   For a discussion, see Howard Gardner (1987), esp. Part II, Chapter 4, 49–88. For a masterful exposition of the psychology and epistemology of the Enlightenment, see Ernst Cassirer (1955, 93–133); see also Carl L. Becker (1960).

76   See, however, the recent arguments by Tom Rockmore (2011), who places Kant in direct line to Husserl as the first great phenomenologist. In the light of Fuchs's discussion, Rockmore's observations need not come as such a great surprise, even though Rockmore's thesis requires an argument focused more on the constructivist approach to knowledge – to be found in Kant's second *Critique* – which takes distance from the representationalist approach to epistemology that was emphasized in Kant's first *Critique*.

77   For a thorough background on Husserl's ultimate lack of success in this regard, see Martin Kusch (1989), esp. Part II, 11–134.

According to Fuchs, Kant thought that the way to avoid the fatal flaw in traditional metaphysics was to identify how human bodies belong to nature, through their *faculty of perception*. It is this sensibility for Kant that provides the ultimate "ontological ground of the epistemological operations because it is the locus of the givenness of being" (Fuchs 1976, 9); in this way, the Being of traditional philosophy is no longer absolute, but is rather *given* and *accomplished* through our human capacity for perception: our bodily sensibility. Through our senses we *understand* the world, and from our senses arise our (linguistic) concepts, as Kant had it.

In Husserl's phenomenology, three major themes ran through his work that bound him to the presuppositions of traditional philosophy that he and Kant had tried, but failed, to eradicate. These three themes are summarized by Fuchs (1976), as follows: 1) that *intuition is given by the senses* and constitutes the epistemological foundation of true positivism; 2) that Being constitutes the transcendental sphere; and 3) that Being *gives itself in intuition* and thus constitutes, for Husserl, the epistemological moment. In other words, the "epistemological moment," the "moment of understanding" in Husserl, is the "metaphysical moment," because Being *is given in intuition*. The presupposition hidden from view in this thematic maneuver, masked by a *perceptual* ontology, is precisely the "metaphysics of presence" (Fuchs 1976, 9).[78]

Derrida, who disclosed the "metaphysics of presence" – as masked by a *perceptual* ontology – questioned Ferdinand de Saussure's principle of the "arbitrariness of the sign,' because he rejected Saussure's (2011) notion that *writing be excluded from the study of signs,* as Saussure had specifically posited (cf. Derrida 1998, 44–73; however, see Harris 2003, 179–188, 210–212). Aristotle's paradigm of phonocentrism, inherited by Saussure, assumed a "universal" status; that is, "the claim that there is such a thing as one *universal model of language,* be it theological, transcendental, logical, or biological. For each category, there are longstanding traditions that make the case of universalism" (Brockmeier 2002, 25, emphasis added). Underpinning this universalist theory, Aristotle claimed that *all men perceive language in the same way* (e.g., Kretzmann 1974; Harris 2004, 34–67, esp. 48–49; Harris & Taylor 1997, 20–35, esp. 33–35; see Chapter 4).

In other words, if all of humankind perceives (language) in the same way, knowledge of the meaning of words is *given unproblematically in language*. In consequence, all that allows humans to understand each other's words, when they

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78   Danish phenomenologist Dan Zahavi (2003) has forcefully argued that such a blunt summary of Husserl "must now be regarded as outdated"; nevertheless, Zahavi admits that "despite his best intentions, [Husserl] was unable to free himself from the framework of a classical metaphysics of presence. Husserl never abandoned the conviction that reality and the Other were constituted by a pure (disincarnated and worldless) transcendental subject, and his thinking, consequently, remained foundationalistic, idealistic, and solipsistic. Thus, although Husserl must still be respected as an initiator, his position was irrevocably surpassed by Heidegger, and later phenomenologists, hermeneuticists, deconstructivists, and philosophers of language have distanced themselves from him, with good reason" (141).

speak to each other in different cultures, is the linguistic *conventions* that are honored from one culture to the next (the agreed-upon rules of linguistic meaning in the culture). In this situation, the principle of arbitrariness is Saussure's first principle of language, because it logically belongs to this universal (Aristotelian) model of conventional language, as Saussure correctly understood (for more on this, see Section 5.3).

Kant's *faculty of perception* lent even greater support to Saussure's traditional position on language. This was so to the extent that the givenness of Being transfers to the human sensibility (perception) that provides, from Kant's transcendental view, the ultimate "ontological ground of the epistemological operations"; for Kant, this was due to the faculty of perception as "the locus of the givenness of being" (Fuchs 1976, 9). The connection between Aristotle and Kant on perception is elucidated by Derrida, whose deconstruction of the deepest presupposition of Western metaphysics was then, in turn, brought to bear (by way of phenomenology) on his deconstruction of Saussure's semiology.

In this deconstruction, Aristotle's "givenness of perception" in the understanding of language was a founding principle (cf. Kretzmann 1974; see Section 4.4). This is what Lanigan (1991) identifies, when he states that Saussure's definition of semiology does not "question that the mind/body dualism is assumed throughout" (52), because in ancient sign theory concerned with language, it was unproblematic to study substance and form as separate phenomena, as it still is in philosophy today. This, in the view set out in this thesis, is what blocks an understanding to the nature of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) as the key activity in living structure, as described in Chapter 2.

Derrida's (1973) relatively short *Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (orig. pub., Fr. 1967) is said to be the very core, if brief sketch, of Derrida's outlook on phenomenology as applied to Saussure (so Fuchs 1976, 3). Derrida critiqued Saussure's language system for its participation in the same "givenness of perception" that was also operative in the "metaphysics of presence" in philosophy in general – even in phenomenology. This observation motivates Derrida's rebellion against both Saussure's arbitrariness of the binary sign and of the priority of speech (*la parole*) in semiology, when he concludes:

> It is thus the idea of the sign that must be deconstructed through a meditation upon writing […]. One is necessarily led to this from the moment that the trace affects the totality of the sign in both its faces. That the signified is originarily and essentially […] trace, that it is *always already in the position of the signifier,* is the apparently innocent proposition within which the metaphysics of *the logos,*

of presence and consciousness, must reflect upon writing as its death and its resource. (Derrida 1998, 73; emphasis added)[79]

Derrida's program to deconstruct the Saussurean focus on speech (its phonocentrism in keeping with Aristotle) kept Derrida closely bound to semiology (cf. Harris 2003, 171–188). According to Jack Reynolds (2004), Derrida "is preoccupied with undermining the dichotomous tendencies of the philosophical tradition" (26); he is not interested in the *embodiment* of language. As Reynolds further notes, "Derrida's concerns are philosophical […], they are clearly not phenomenological," because Derrida "assures us that his early work is to be read specifically against Sartre and Merleau-Ponty," nor can Derrida's concerns be said to be ontological (27; cf. Fuchs 1976; Luft 2003, 95–103).

Derrida did not deviate from the close readings that defined his program (on these close readings, see also Foucault 1998a). In other words, within this particular context of his phenomenologically deconstructed semiology, he does not consider embodiment, just as Saussure's structuralism does not accommodate (Vico's) embodied tropology. Indeed, according to Reynolds (2004), it is widely recognized that "there are some considerable difficulties involved in contemplating Derrida in terms of embodiment," which derives most conspicuously "from the simple fact that embodiment is not terrain that he ever explicitly considers in detail" (27).[80] Part of the problem in this respect is that Derrida identified ("the givenness of") perception with the "metaphysical moment." Logocentrism is, moreover, at the heart of ancient Greek dualism. In consequence, rather than separating *bodily perception* from the tradition that employed "intuition" as the vehicle for the metaphysics of presence, Derrida dismissed perception entirely! This brings him to conclude:

> Now I don't know what perception is and I don't believe that anything like perception exists. Perception is precisely a concept, a concept of an intuition or of a given originating from the thing itself, present itself in its meaning, independently from language, from the system of reference. And I believe that perception is interdependent with the concept of origin and of center and consequently whatever strikes at the metaphysics of which I have spoken strikes also at the very concept of perception. I don't believe there is any perception. (Derrida quoted in White 1985, 280)

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79   See Section 4.3, where I discuss John E. Joseph's (2012, 77) point that St. Augustine served as an important bridge between ancient and (medieval) Christian theories of language, handed down through Stoic philosophy. It was the Stoic theory that developed the basis for a (largely "spiritual") distinction that naturally appealed to the medieval Scholastics between the *signifier* and the *signified*. On this distinction, see Derrida 1998, 72–73. Cf. also Ginzburg 1992a, 106–108.

80   Reynolds further admits that "[i]ndeed, contemplating how a notion like embodiment might apply to deconstruction involves something inherently risky—an attempt to demarcate what deconstruction is" (27), against Derrida's explicit wishes and intention.

Without the notion for perception as a bodily skill, textual interpretation could be (absolutely) unlimited, infinite, as Derrida held. This is partly what makes it so difficult to deal with Derrida within the context of this thesis – he is both central for what is happening in it in the deconstruction of structuralism, and yet, ultimately, remains outside of it in his rejection of embodiment (and perception). Indeed, he distinctly avoids a transition to embodiment to the very end (e.g., Reynolds 2004).[81]

In the following chapter, I will sketch out the historical contingencies of Saussure's life and times at the height of the Europe's industrializing revolution of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The circumstances, particularly of his educational background during the 1870s, gave ample opportunity for Saussure to contemplate the reorientation of the study of linguistics along radically different lines than those being explored in his own day. The vital background for this thesis on which this Saussurean reorientation played out, from Aristotle to Kant, and then on through Husserl, concerns the theorizing of *perception,* which is vital if one is to distinguish between Saussure and Vico and their respective, incommensurable approaches to language, as I argue in this thesis.

For the founder of phenomenology (Husserl), *the givenness of Being in intuition* had rescued the transcendental "subject" – whose context Derrida illuminated to be the "metaphysics of presence." Aristotle's approach to the sign by way of the "givenness of perception" in language was the foundation of Saussure's structuralist semiology, underpinning in turn his first principle of the arbitrariness of the sign in his semiology. Saussure's dependence upon the ancient givenness of perception of Aristotle's linguistic philosophy (its *logocentrism*[82]) is what Derrida rejected – leading him to *reject perception* outright (Derrida in White 1985, 280). This leaves Derrida with the textual "trace," which is neither Saussure, nor an embodied view of language (Fuchs 1976; Luft 2003; Reynolds 2004).

While White is not concerned with embodiment, his embrace of tropology supposedly mitigates against the problems on display in the traditional Saussurean structuralism of his forebears in structuralism. Concerning the tropological nature of structuralist thought, for instance (which I elaborate in Chapter 8), White explicitly asserts that it "does not suggest that *everything is language,* speech, discourse, or text [...]. Tropology stresses the *metalinguistic* over the referential function of discourse because *it is concerned more with codes* than with whatever contingent messages can be transmitted by specific uses of them" (White 1999a, 17; emphasis added).

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81   Luft (2003) believes that Derrida is essentially a Jewish rabbinic thinker with a firm commitment to textualism (see her discussion, 95–103).

82   That is, that "both spoken and written signs are only external hints at, and external expressions of, deeper meanings and truths that lie either in the thoughts of men or the minds of Gods" (Brockmeier 2002, 25).

But, White explicitly states that "[i]nsofar as codes are themselves *message-contents in their own right,* tropology expands the notion of message itself and alerts us to the performance, as well as the communicative, aspect of discourse" (17; emphasis added). This defense of tropology in terms of "codes," on the one hand, and "message-contents," on the other, suggests the very distinction that Kellner (1980, 28–29, 2013) draws attention to the way White uses Vico against the Vichian grain. The tropological nature of structuralist thought may expand the notion of message-contents and "alert" us to the *communicative dimension of discourse,* as he has it, but when the Vichian contingency of language on the lived experience of our human body is traded for the notion of autonomous discourse, we are no longer remotely discussing the Vichian tropes according to his principle of necessary contingency.

In distinguishing between the *two levels of the historians work* (its linguistic surface and its tropic depths), I already noted Kellner's (2013) warning above that "when considering the systematic Hayden White [...] there are usually two levels at which the same thing has different consequences (164). But, when these two levels are separated and examined independently, the unintended consequences of the theory of White's history-as-fiction begin to emerge. White holds to structuralism and – independently of the tropic discussion – history-as-fiction is subject to structuralism's hidden presuppositions on its dualist separation of substance and its form in traditional manner (cf. White 1985a, 126–127; cf. Kellner 1980, 28–29). The tropic idiom in which he discusses the matter does not rescue his structurist frame from this consequence.

Thus, despite the tropological idiom he uses in his elaboration of history-as-fiction, White also tacitly relies on the givenness of perception in language as the consequence of his given (Saussurean) framework; indeed, structuralism is the (genetic) byproduct of the principle of arbitrariness used to create the system in the first place. As Saussure biographer John E. Joseph made clear above, "[o]nly bit by bit does one end up recognizing how many different facts are only ramifications, veiled consequences of this truth [of the arbitrariness of the sign]" (Saussure in Joseph 2012, 579).

Indeed Saussure, who inherited the givenness of perception through the traditional philosophy of language that he took from Aristotle, entraps any theorist who follows him through the logical "ramifications" and "veiled consequences" of his static, negative, differential system of linguistic value – even if that theorist denies those veiled consequences. It begins with the ramifications of arbitrary language "conventions" in various cultures, as Ermarth (2011), for example emphasizes (cf. Nietzsche 1989).

Indeed, Ermarth (2011) states that "[i]f language were 'natural' we would all speak the same language; if it is arbitrary, as Saussure claims, then its detachment from nature – its arbitrariness – means that understanding it requires systemic knowledge

[…]" (37). Here, she explicitly attributes "systemic knowledge" to Saussure's system of linguistic value, which she values above "arbitrariness" as "more groundbreaking" (36), as shown above (see Section 2.3.2; see also Chapter 5). These attributes have ramifications and veiled consequences for what Ermarth (2011) observes as "the failure to consider what Hayden White calls 'the content of the form'" (xv). In other words, she deeply implicates White in her overtly Saussurean project, that is, without understanding the consequences.

It is thus indirectly that White's history-as-fiction is anchored to the metaphysics of presence at the core of his structuralist commitments. White may (and he does) overtly argue against some of the structuralist positions with which he disagrees (e.g., White 1999a, 14–19); this is why he adopted tropology to displace these consequences and effects. But the core commitments of history-as-fiction prompt him to embrace the *dualism* inherent in the separation of substance and form in historians' work on the two levels of synchrony and diachrony in his analysis (White 1985a, 126–127). This he does despite what he indicates as being structuralism's *tropological nature;* indeed, this is in no way the Vichian tropology that is contingent on the lived body in the world. In his defense of tropology in his own work, White asserts that, "[a]s a theory of discourse, tropology has much to say about representation but nothing to say about perception" (White 1999a, 17). Indeed, this is symptomatic of his structuralist frame. Insofar as his version of tropology has much to say about disembodied "representation," whatever he thinks he says, or does not say, about perception (i.e., the metaphysics of presence) is merely a veiled consequence of the frame he relies on.

In the following chapter, I will sketch out the historical contingencies of Saussure's life and times at the height of Europe's Second Industrial Revolution of the latter half of the nineteenth century. The circumstances, particularly the context of his educational background during the 1870s, gave ample opportunity for Saussure to contemplate the reorientation of the study of linguistics along radically different lines than those being explored in his own day. The vital background for this thesis, on which this Saussurean reorientation played out – from Aristotle to Kant, and then on through Husserl – concerns the theorizing of *perception*. Indeed, if one is to distinguish between Saussure and Vico and their respective, incommensurable approaches to language, as I argue in this thesis, the focus on perception is central, contrary to Derrida's poststructuralist belief in the interdependence of perception and the metaphysics of presence.

3.6   CONCLUSION

From the late 1960s, the historical contingencies of Hayden White's linguistic turn show that his efforts, from the start, were a risky and controversial venture. During

an era of unexpected twists and turns, White explored Vichian tropology within the framework of structuralism in terms of the classical literary theory of his time and place. His aim was to launch a critique of professional historiography which, however, occurred at the very moment that Jacques Derrida's deconstruction (poststructuralism) appeared on the American cultural scene. White's thought, itself experimental and bold, is characterized by its "fecundity," *not fixity* of thought, making him especially hard to pin down. On the one hand, the linguistic turn emerged during the theoretically and politically explosive moment of the late 1960s and early 1970s when experimentation was "in." On the other hand, it is equally true that White's mind has always been in motion, theoretically speaking, and he continues to change his views in pursuit of his (ethical) aims, even today.

The emergence of Derrida's deconstructionist critique of Saussurean structuralism, by way of phenomenology, was of concern to White, certainly. He had to respond to what amounted to a devastating critique of his methodological orientation and his trusted sources. Residually, White was just enough of a structuralist in the nature of his own thinking to hold firm as the philosophical scene made room for Derrida's theoretical turn toward (a more fully textualist) "poststructural" deconstruction. White himself was also just enough of a voluntarist in pursuit of free choice to reject the methodologically holist thinking that gave no purchase to the choices White felt had to be offered in "choosing one's past."

Thus, structuralism (a static and fixed, holist construct, where choice was not possible) and poststructuralism (the endless cavalcade of infinite choice, culminating only in *aporia*) offered White a rock, on the one hand, and a hard place, on the other. With tropology, White could keep "choice" in play, but he could also keep this choice within some (reasonable) limits; in other words, he intended for history-as-fiction not to dissolve into the *aporia* of an infinite number of choices. It must have seemed the only sensible alternative at the time – and definitely worth the theoretical risk he took. After all, what White was after was to interweave the role of metaphor (*tropic* language) in the manner in which "stories are not lived but told."

Due principally to the timing of White's coupling of tropology and structuralism at the moment of Derrida's critique of structuralism, White emerged mostly unscathed from the Derridean critique. Although, elements of his structuralist frame continued to grate on historians' assessments, which created a stalemate between theorists, on one side, and practitioners, on the other. What Chapter 3 attempts is to open a discussion on how the structuralist–tropological construct history-as-fiction depends to this very day on a structuralist framework burdened with its own hidden ramifications and veiled consequences, despite tropology. The main feature of this frame is that Saussure's system of linguistic value is a *static,* negative, differential construct held in place and made possible by its dualist core (the principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign).

Introducing the tropes to surf along firmly anchored chains of signification within the structuralist frame, White makes the construct history-as-fiction appear to come to life as *figural* realism in the writings of historians. But this is "the tail wagging the dog," when the dog is a nonliving, static, ancient "statue." In other words, structuralism is the traditional, nonliving framework (the stationary, immobile dog), which not even the dynamic tropes (the tail) can quicken to life. History-as-fiction is the legacy of traditional notions of language that have been held for millennia in Western philosophy, as Derrida realized when he discovered the "metaphysics of presence" at the transcendental heart of both Husserlian phenomenology and Saussurean structuralism. As such, Whitean theory – and its main handiwork, history-as-fiction – tacitly participates in a disembodied, idealist model of representational language of ancient heritage, despite the Vichian idiom within which history-as-fiction is cast. The only way that "stories are not lived but told" is when there is an *unnatural* separation between language and life, which the gifted thinker Saussure adopted and transformed from the language philosophy of Aristotle (384–322 BCE).

CHAPTER FOUR

The maelstrom of modern life has been fed from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle [...]. In the twentieth century, *the social processes that bring this maelstrom into being,* and keep it in a state of perpetual becoming, have come to be called "modernization." These world-historical processes have nourished an *amazing variety of visions and ideas that aim to make men and women the subjects as well as the objects of modernization, to give them the power to change the world that is changing them, to make their way through the maelstrom and make it their own.* Over the past century, these visions and values have come to be loosely grouped together under the name of "modernism."

—Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*

4 THE HISTORICAL CONTINGENCIES OF SAUSSURE'S "MODERN" LINGUISTICS

One common thread in Hayden White's work is the theme of "modernity." Indeed, White's (1985, 1990, 1999) three collections of essays are a very good place to turn for his ongoing attacks against the "scientific" processes of modernization unleashed by the huge momentum of technological industrialization affecting ever widening circles of people in the nineteenth century (cf. Berman 1983, 16; in the epigraph to this chapter). There exists a huge and ever-growing literature that distinguishes technological modernization, modernity, and literary modernism, the last of which has inspired White from the beginning. A brief survey of these various modes of "modernism" follows.

Paul Ricoeur (2004, 305–314), for instance, sketches the original *temporal* distinction between "modern" versus "ancient" as one that "extracted from the

present what is worthy of being retained […] namely, the vitality, individuality, and variety of the world" (310). Technological modernism, or the process of modernization and "the march of progress," hailed by its advocates and repudiated as the root of our contemporary *malaise* by a host of others, includes too many sources to be cited here. Iain McGilchrist (2009) provides a handy list of seven features that characterize "progressive" modernity in terms of its: (i) mobility, (ii) extreme pace of change, (iii) the necessity of modes of transportation to keep up with the speed at which things move, (iv) exploitation of the natural world, (v) transformation of agriculture into a business, (vi) urbanization, and finally (vii) the fragmentation of social bonds in communities (390–391). These are the very points, in their negative connotation, that are summarized in Berman's masterful work, originally published in 1982, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*.

For White's position vis-à-vis literary modernism among these definitions and clarifications, he tells Ewa Domańska, (ed. 1998) that his entire intellectual formation is within modernism. By this he means "a specifically Western—or, in Russia, the equivalent will be something like the futurist, or symbolist—cultural movement. In the West, the great [literary] modernist experiments of Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Eliot, Pound, and also a number of people who wrote history, like Spengler and Theodor Lessing" (in Domańska, ed. 1998, 26). The culture of modernism in the vein that White characterizes is well in evidence in Stephen Kern's (1983; cf. Kern 2011) *The Culture of Time and Space*. Finally, Stephen Toulmin's (1990) *Cosmopolis* is critical of modernism from much the same perspective that Berman (1983), McGilchrist (2009), and Capra & Luisi (2014) elaborate, respectively. In these latter critiques of modernity, it is the rationalist, Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm of "mechanism" that is under scrutiny.

White (1966, 115), for his part, cites a long list of intellectuals who express antipathy to the narrow, nineteenth-century conception of a mono-modal (static) historical consciousness in pursuit of objective truth along modernist (i.e., "positivist"[83]) lines: for example (professional) historians promoting (fixed) "truth" as opposed to the type of moving, shifting "reality" that fiction writers explore in their works (e.g., White 1976, 1992, 2005a; in Domańska, ed. 1998, 26–27). The literary modernists of the early twentieth century (writers such as, e.g., Marcel Proust, 1871–1922; Robert Musil, 1880–1942; James Joyce, 1882–1941; Virginia Woolf, 1882–1941; Franz Kafka, 1883–1924; among others) are those who underpin White's own intellectual formation.

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83   Here, I mean positivism in the Enlightenment sense of the search for certainty; that is, the search for final truth, objectivity, and rational knowledge. Toulmin (1990, 5–44) provides a good, general background on the concept of modernity in its Enlightenment undercurrents emerging into the nineteenth century and the extremes to which this search for certainty was taken during the era of logical positivism in the Vienna Circle of the 1920s and 1930s (84–85). (See also, e.g., Janik and Toulmin 1996). (For more on positivism and the influence of philosophy of science as discussed in history, see Dray 1957; Berlin 1959; E. Nagel 1959, 1974; Gardiner 1961; Carl G. Hempel 1974, 2011.)

This singular generation of modernist writers "nourished a variety of visions and ideas that aim to […] give them the power to change the world that is changing them, to make their way through the maelstrom and make it their own," as Berman (1983, 16) states – very much in keeping with the spirit in which White (1966) writes as well. It is the impulse of cultural "modernism," in the progressive Enlightenment sense, that is expressed in the founding and practice of professional, "scientific" history in the early decades of the nineteenth century (cf. Scholz 1995; Grafton 1997; Howard 2000). Whether striving for "truth" or "reality," all these expressions constitute different responses (literary and scientific alike) to the *state of perpetual becoming* that is the process of "modernization" (in, e.g., Berman 1983, 15–36; cf. Harvey 1990). In this sense, modernity and the practice of history writing are intertwined. But this is not all.

My claim in this chapter is that the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) is a modernist, who attempts to make "the maelstrom" his own in Berman's (1983, 16) sense. Thus, just as White can be situated within his own historical context of ideas in time and place – the contingencies and circumstances within which these ideas arose – so too can Saussure be situated with respect to his own historical context of ideas in time and place.[84] Paul J. Thibault (1997) praises Saussurean semiology for its "dissolution of the naturalistic basis of language" so that experience itself might be "brought under the control of *rational argument and conventional procedures*" (190).

In this sense, Thibault is not far off the mark in correctly understanding Saussure's own goals at the time he was working toward a new basis upon which to place the study of language. Saussure's concern to found a "scientific" discipline of linguistics was not unlike the parallel development in the early nineteenth century to found a "scientific" discipline of history, in its own way forged into being from numerous convergences (e.g., Cassirer 1950, Part III, esp. 217–255; Scholz 1995; Grafton 1997; Howard 2000; cf. Löwith 1949). In what follows, I examine some of the historical contingencies in Saussure's own life and environment that contributed to his vision for what a science of signs could or should be like.

4.1 SAUSSURE'S MODERN, NINETEENTH-CENTURY WORLD: 1880–1913

It is pertinent to the development of Saussure's "science of signs" (semiology) that he spent his adult years in the midst of an industrializing (modernizing) surge in Central Europe (on this surge, see, e.g., Kern 1983; Galison 2003; Smil 2005). In fact,

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84   For discussions on Saussure and the core tenets of semiology that were later absorbed into the different schools of structuralism, see Joseph 2012; cf. Harris 1987, 2003; Holdcroft 1991.

Saussure's entire adult life (1875–1913) overlapped exactly with some of the greatest scientific and technological developments of the Second Industrial Revolution. This provides clues to help explain the tone of Thibault's (1997) embrace of Saussure's achievement in transforming language "from being a means for the theoretical contemplation of the world to a technical means for intervening in and acting on it," whereby: "Reason entails the *arbitrary application of rational procedures and axioms* to the global totality of experience under modernity" (190; italics added), a remark quite in keeping with the observations of Berman (1983) in the epigraph to this chapter, if in a very different (positive, supportive) vein.

In terms of these rational procedures and the application of conventions in social life, Peter Galison (2003) details just how "conventions" in both time and place were coming into being in terms, for instance, of standard clock time and accurate maps during Saussure's lifetime and in his immediate environment; the vertiginous move toward standardization was everywhere in evidence – also in Geneva. In Saussure's beloved hometown, for instance, a few years before standard time was established, the Tower of the Island of Geneva

> boasted three [clock faces, abreast of one another] around 1880: a big clock face in the center showed middle *Geneva time* (about 10:13); the face on the left showed *Paris time* for the Paris-based 'Paris-Lyon-Mediterranean' line (9:58); and the right-hand clock boasted *Bern time,* a handsome five minutes in advance of Geneva (10:18). Clock synchronization in Switzerland was public and eminently visible. So, too, was the chaos of uncoordinated time. (Galison 2003, 222; emphasis added)

Improvements in unifying time were important, not least for the Swiss clockmaking industry (e.g., Landes 2000, 248–275). This period saw the literal explosion of invention and industrial creativity across Europe and America, including the harnessing of electricity. This was an era when technological advances were *picking up speed* in many places all at once.[85] In the year that Saussure began secondary school, aged 14 (in 1872), his father, Henri de Saussure (1829–1905), became the acting director of a hydroelectric plant, which was planned to be built near Geneva. It was never completed due to a lack of funds, but Henri was heavily engaged with this project during many years of his son's formal education. The project was planned to harness the Rivers Rhône and Valsérine, in order "to run six energy-producing

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85   For a brief general background on these developments, see J. M. Roberts (1989, 18–58); for a cultural history of this development, 1880–1918, see Stephen Kern (1983); for important inventions of the period, 1867–1914, see Vaclav Smil (2005, on electricity 33–97, on internal combustion engines 99–151). These discoveries and inventions drove a "rational" development that dominated and controlled nature to an extent hitherto unknown in human history. During this period, transportation, communication, and the construction industry were revolutionized; this, in turn, drove urbanization, and put capital in the hands of risk-taking entrepreneurs. (On this development, see also McGilchrist 2009, 352–388, cf. 389–427.)

turbines. In addition, a paper factory and a phosphate works [were planned to] be built to turn the power into profitable production, and a railway link put in place to move the paper and phosphate out" (Joseph 2012, 129).

Furthermore, at the Collège de Genève, where Saussure began his high school studies, the autumn of 1872 saw a new law come into force dividing the boys into two lines of study, "either the 'golden' classical one or else the commercial and industrial one" (Joseph 2012, 131). Commerce, industry, and science were impossible to avoid. As Saussure's studies progressed, his father eventually tried to steer him into the sciences, proper; "Ferdinand thought that, in pushing him toward the sciences, his father was putting family tradition above encouraging him on his own individual path" (Joseph 2012, 183). Thus, he quietly and persistently went about making his own way, eventually proving himself worthy of his linguistic studies. Indeed, there were also several family members, such as his maternal grandfather, paternal uncle, and a great aunt, who all inspired and encouraged his interests in language studies (Joseph 2012, 50–51, 55–56, 174, 176), even if his father did not encourage him on such a path.

It was his (encouraging) paternal uncle, Théodore de Saussure, for example, who published a book in the spring of 1880 voicing his fears on the impact all this (modernizing) change was having on the integrity of the (French) language. Théodore's worries focused on the influx of foreign words, a common concern today as well. Théodore was concerned already then that "[t]he influx is out of control because of recent progress in communications technology, notably the telegraph, and unprecedented movement of people by rail and steamship" (quoted in Joseph 2012, 327). As Théodore had it, these changes created an "inevitable impetus" in the reduction of variation in the (French) language with a demand for overt standardization: "Newspapers, railways, the postal service and the telegraph demand a uniform orthography" that violates the spirit of the French language (quoted in Joseph 2012, 327). It should not, therefore, come as a surprise in such circumstances that Saussure, under the pressure of "progress" on all fronts, would conceptualize his own efforts to forge a new perspective on the study of linguistics as "scientific" in such a light. A further motivation for the scientific spirit of his efforts could easily be seen, under the circumstances, to appease his science-oriented father, who was both a mineralogist and an enthusiastic entomologist (cf. Joseph 2012, 169, 170, 182; see also Section 5.4).

While Saussure was drawn to the study of language, against his father's wishes, he was also eventually drawn toward economic theory as a guide for the development of his semiological model (Saussure 2011, 79–83; 118–119; cf. Petrilli & Ponzio 2005, xvii; Bridel 1997; see Section 5.5.1). Specifically, Saussure was drawn to the concept of "exchange value."[86] Indeed, Saussure's critical eye was attuned, as philosopher David

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86   I expand upon Saussure's economic model for linguistics in Section 5.5.1.

Holdcroft (1991) relates, to try and understand exactly what linguistic units were being studied and what their identity conditions might be. In short, for Saussure, it was not at all clear "in particular what precisely [was] being compared with what" in the so-called comparative linguistics of his day (Holdcroft 1991, 17).

The first question that immediately arises from Saussure's departure from then contemporary research interests and philological practices is, indeed: 1) how did such a departure come about? How did Saussure come to embrace the traditional Aristotelian system of signs, subsequently leading him to reject the comparative linguistics of his own day? Moreover, this being the case, a second question arises: 2) what did Saussure do to improve on this traditional system of signs to make it his own, as bequeathed to the twentieth century "science" of signs and to the proliferation of structuralism(s) that followed? The answer to the first question lies in a historical accident (contingency) of Saussure's own Swiss education, as related by Joseph (2012) below. The answer to the second question is treated in Chapter 5.

4.2 SAUSSURE'S SWISS EDUCATION

If Saussure's most recent biographer, John E. Joseph (2012), is not mistaken, an "accident of history" is responsible for Saussure's confident departure from the contemporary research in the comparative linguistics of his day. Saussure's university preparatory institution, the Gymnase de Genève, employed as its philosophy teacher the director of the Gymnase, Antoine Verchère. Until the early 1870s, Verchère continued to give courses in philosophy, one of which Saussure took during his first year at the Gymnase, 1873–74, when he was nearly 16 years old, and for which his notes of the course survive. It was during this course that a comprehensive survey of philosophy and psychology from ancient to modern times was presented, including a thorough overview of sign theory (Joseph 2012, 143–144).

This claim that Saussure was influenced by teachings in sign theory already at the Gymnase, however, flies in the face of claims to the contrary by historian of linguistics Hans Aarsleff. Indeed, Aarsleff has forcefully argued that French critic and historian Hippolyte Taine (1828–93) must have had a direct influence on Saussure, although Joseph can find no trace of evidence that Saussure ever read anything by Taine (leaving no notes). Nor has Joseph been able to establish from hints in various diary entries, or Saussure's correspondence of the time, that he had ever attended a course on French history that Taine taught at the University of Geneva in 1875, "during Saussure's first two months as a student there" (Joseph 2012, 173).[87]

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87   For disputed claims of similar proportion, see Aarsleff (1981) and his disagreements with Isaiah Berlin (1981) on the purported French antecedents of Vico's work; on this Aarsleff-Berlin exchange, see also Hacking (2002, 121–139, esp. 124–125, 129–130). That Aarsleff argues for the Tainean antecedents of Saussure's work with no evidence whatsoever, except on the basis of "similarity," is less convincing than the evidence that Joseph has assembled in pointing to Saussure's secondary education and beyond.

The question of "influence" can, of course, serve as a slippery slope in any discussion of this nature. But as Joseph (2012) contends:

> The claim that Taine exerted *a unique and universal influence on Saussure's conception of language* is far too strong. Similar claims could be made for dozens of nineteenth-century writers whose ideas show certain affinities to Saussure's. What cannot be determined, *in the absence of any documentation that Saussure read them,* is whether there was an 'influence' from them to him, or whether perhaps both they and he had drunk from the same trough—some common source, or ideas that were 'in the air' at the time. (174; emphasis added)

What Joseph (2012) found in Saussure's lecture notes from the philosophy course given by Verchère at the Gymnase de Genève in 1873–74 would, today, inspire linguists "to identify the author [of the lecture notes] as someone well acquainted with the work of Ferdinand de Saussure" (144). In fact, Verchère was the product of a previous generation of teachers from the early decades of the nineteenth century. But, unlike some of his generation, due to a tangled set of historical circumstances, Verchère remained untouched by the subsequent move away from the ancient semiotic heritage commonly held during his own studies as a young man.[88]

Through the middle decades of the nineteenth century, linguists increasingly came to reject the "old-fashioned," rationalist (mechanistic) form of enquiry that sign theory represented, embracing instead an "organicist" metaphor that grew powerful after Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was first published in 1859. However, Joseph (2012) reports that some linguists then began to worry that the organicist metaphor – that languages were organisms with a life of their own – was being taken too literally, and that many were beginning to forget that it was merely a metaphor. At this point, there were those who thought that "[r]esuscitating sign theory was a way to combat [this metaphor]" (88). This was just when Saussure was embarking on his career in linguistics during the early 1880s in Geneva, after completing his doctorate in Leipzig.

The trend from organicism back to sign theory, which Joseph (2012, 88–89) reports among some of the contemporary linguists of Saussure's day, may have influenced Verchère and his student Saussure of the early 1870s; but there is no evidence of a connection between them. The general ignorance of traditional sign theory among Saussure's colleagues in the 1880s in Geneva, however, helps to explain why his own students attributed sign theory to him alone. Saussure's students did not have the benefit of the philosophical background that he had acquired from his teacher Verchère. As the general trend swung back towards traditional sign

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88 For the particular circumstances that kept Verchère from leaving behind the traditional sign theory and from updating his outlook with the new comparative philology, see Joseph (2012, 144).

theory from organicism, Saussure was ahead of the curve, thus making him appear more original than he actually was.

The role that Verchère played in Saussure's intellectual development is crucial. Saussure was not exposed to the temporary "organicist" break in thinking that most linguists of the mid-to-late nineteenth century had experienced. By the time the "return" to sign theory had once again begun to take hold, Saussure was already securely ensconced in traditional theory through his exposure to the teachings of Verchère and the writings of a few others (e.g., Joseph 2012, 89).

According to Joseph, through his secondary education in Geneva, Saussure had experienced "a living link back to the [eighteenth-century] age of Condillac, and the student notes of his philosophy course *solve the mystery of how* concepts such as that of the linguistic sign made their way from [seventeenth-century] Port-Royal and Condillac to Saussure" (144; emphasis added). Only one major linguist had followed along the traditional lines of the philosophy and psychology of the day, as taught to Saussure by Verchère: the American linguist William Dwight Whitney (1827–1894). In 1876, while Saussure was still at the Gymnase (Joseph 2012, 175), and again in 1894, long after his university career had begun at the University of Geneva, his notes on Whitney's work offered definitive proof of Saussure's long tutelage in sign theory. By 1894, reading Whitney, Saussure was convinced "that language is nothing more than a particular case of the sign" (89).[89]

Sign theory, in any case, has its origins in antiquity. In the following two sections that conclude this chapter, I sketch the outlines of the ancient theory that Saussure leaned on so heavily in designing the system of linguistic value that Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth (2011) posits in her reconsideration of the tools of thought for history in the discursive condition. In Chapter 5, I will continue the work of this chapter to show how Saussure built upon the work of Whitney as confirmation in his efforts to make semiology truly his own. In Section 4.3 below, I briefly describe "inference from signs" and the ancient problem of grounding meaning in language. The two most famous solutions to this problem were, of course, posited first by Plato (c. 428–c.348 BCE) and then by his student, Aristotle (384–322 BCE).

Plato's idealist solution was to fix the meaning of language metaphysically in the eternal Forms, whereas Aristotle, by contrast, chose to fix the meaning of language within the physical realm of the bodily perceptions, which is then sketched out in more detail in Section 4.4. Aristotle's solution was to ground (also written) language in terms of "the same perceptions for all men" (e.g., Kretzmann 1974; Harris 2004, 48). But by doing so, Aristotle necessarily dictated the *arbitrariness of the sign*. Even today, the arbitrariness of the sign remains the dominant conception of how language works, even among historical theorists, despite the ancient theory of perception that

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[89] On the influence he attributes to Whitney in the *Course* itself, see Saussure (2011, 5, 10, 76).

lies at its core. It is thus the arbitrariness of the sign as a principle of Saussurean semiology that bears the clearest legacy of the Aristotelian sign theory from antiquity.

4.3 ANTIQUITY'S LEGACY: SAUSSURE INHERITS THE PROBLEM OF MEANING

The Greeks invented "semiotics," the study of signs, which was however not limited to the signs of language.[90] Originally, the general study of signs beyond language, per se, was developed to meet the needs of medical practitioners ("medical semiotics") for diagnosing illnesses, among other things (see, e.g., Ginzburg 1983, 103–104, 107, 109–111; Allen 2001, 2, 96–97, 229, 234–241; cf. Nöth 1995, 11–14). As philosopher James Allen (2001) highlights the debates between Rationalists and Empiricists on the topic of medical diagnostics in antiquity,

> [...] the Empiricists were not the first physicians to have raised doubts about the effectiveness of rational methods in medicine. Criticisms had been voiced before the emergence in the third century BC of a distinct school of Empirical medicine. The famous attack on hypotheses with which the Hippocratic treatise *De vetere medicina* opens is a conspicuous early example. (96)

Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg (1983) points out, moreover, that there was a "bizarre contiguity" between law and medicine in Mesopotamian forms of knowledge, too, according to which there was "an approach involving analysis of particular *cases*, constructed only through *traces, symptoms, hints"* (90; emphasis added).

Ginzburg discusses this "conjectural paradigm" with its roots in ancient hunters' expertise in following animal tracks on their hunt for food, which – as he points out – are the traces *of movement* (103; emphasis added; see also Section 8.4). Such an outlook permitted intuitive inferences "from apparently insignificant facts, which could be observed, to a complex reality which [...] could not" (1983, 89; cf. Ginzburg 1992a, 1999, 2012; Peltonen 2001, 2012). The focus on "signs" in ancient Greece was necessary, insofar as the nature of evidence (which the conjectural paradigm depended on) could not be discussed using our contemporary term "evidence." In antiquity "sign" was the term used instead. The term evidence was only later introduced as "the quality of being evident," in which sense it came into European languages from Roman orators (Allen 2001, 1). Thus, in antiquity, the term "sign" was used across a broad range of different activities from law "cases" to medical diagnostics to language (see also Nöth 1995).

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90   For more on this, see Nöth (1995) for a distinction between semantics and semiotics (103–106).

The first philosophical inquiry into the signs of language that survives intact from antiquity is Plato's *Cratylus,* which dates from the first half of the fourth century BCE. As Joseph (2012; cf. Turner 2014, 5–7) relates the context of this ancient text, it takes the form of a debate among three of Plato's teachers, Cratylus, Hermogenes, and Socrates on the topic of the "correctness of words" (74). The discussion among these three teachers concerns the Sophists' division between *physis* "nature" and *nomos* "convention." Cratylus and Hermogenes hold different views, and Socrates is asked to arbitrate between them. For his part, Cratylus holds that "a word is correct only if naturally connected to its meaning," while Hermogenes thinks that "any word can designate anything just as any other" (74). When Socrates chimes in on this debate, he gives voice to what we now identify as Plato's point of view "that the things we perceive in the world around us are not really "real," in the sense that *they are not permanent but in flux*" (74; emphasis added). In Joseph's (2012) account of the Platonic view, things in the world "are not the wholes we perceive but conglomerations of atoms, and *are not perceived in the same way* by all of us" (74; emphasis added).

Plato's view is interesting, insofar as the "perceptions of men" are *not* held to be the same, a view that Aristotle is later said to hold. But, because Plato held both the nature of things and the perceptions of men to be in constant flux, he is forced to ground a stable meaning of words in something other than this transient world. Plato's idealist solution was to invoke the eternal Forms that fix the meaning of words in what is otherwise a world in constant motion undergoing ceaseless change. Saussure scholar and linguist Roy Harris (2004) poses Plato's problem thus:

> How can we be sure that the linguistic code incorporates any fixed meaning at all? Plato's answer is his theory of the eternal Forms. He postulates that (at least some) words get their meanings by 'standing for' or 'representing' the subject they depict. Both words and pictures are 'signs.' (48)

A simple example would be the meaning of the word *table.* The actual table comprises only its function, which means only that it has a particular shape and a flat top that is supported by legs. This *function* is what Plato refers to as the *idea* of a table, its *ideal form.* And it is this ideal form that constitutes the "true" and unchanging reality: "Any individual table is merely an attempt to realize that ideal form in transient matter" (Joseph 2012, 74). From this starting point, for Plato, knowledge itself is grounded in these (metaphysical) *ideas,* since "knowledge" must be about permanent and unchanging things as well. And it is just here, according to Derrida, that the "metaphysics of presence" was planted as a seed into the heart of Western

philosophy at its very inception, persisting over millennia, in one way or another, into the twentieth century.[91]

Joseph (2012) says of the dialogue in Cratylus that the two reasons that words exist is to discriminate among *things,* that is, "to pick out their true essence that belongs to them alone, and to teach, that is, to transmit that knowledge from the few who can perceive it directly to the many who cannot" (75). The art of mimesis thus involves the accurate perception of *the thing's true essence,* which is "to capture and reproduce some part of the essence of things" (75). The great representationalist theory of language was thereby juggled into place as *mimesis* and has remained relevant ever after (cf. Melberg 1995; see also Auerbach 2003).

Aristotle was of the opinion, by contrast with Plato, that language and the meanings of words "involves the body at many levels, including articulation, feelings, appetites, *and perception through the bodily senses*" (Joseph 2012, 76; emphasis added). What Aristotle argued, according to Joseph, was that the voice is "the conventional sign of the passions of the mind" in a bid to address how language actually "really" works, as opposed to how it ideally should work in the Platonic schema (76). As Harris (2004) formulates the issue, the "fundamental problem [for Aristotle], clearly, is the same as it was for Plato: do we know what we are talking about?" (48). Aristotle, however, goes to the other extreme in his own interpretation of the treatment of sound and meaning and applies the idea of social "convention," as opposed to a metaphysical solution to fix the meanings of words (Joseph 2012, 76; cf. Kretzmann 1974).

While Plato thought that things in the world "are not the wholes we perceive but conglomerations of atoms, and *are not perceived in the same way by all of us,*" Aristotle saw things in the light of his own project to develop syllogistic logic, a logic that establishes some universal features in the reasoning process for the sake of sound argumentation (on this, see Allen 2001, 20–40). For Aristotle, because spoken sounds are symbols of "affections in the soul," written marks must then be the symbols of spoken sounds. As Aristotle asserts in *De interpretatione,* "just as written marks are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of – affections of the soul – *are the same for all;* and what these affections are likenesses of – actual things – *are also the same*" (Aristotle quoted in Kretzmann 1974, 4). In other words, as commonly interpreted, Aristotle posits that perceptions of actual things in the world are the same for everyone. Harris (2004) explains that this, in turn,

> forces [Aristotle] to treat words as mere tokens (*symbola*) of affections of the soul. So different languages are just different sets of vocal tokens for exactly the

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91   See Section 3.5. Cf. Hacking (2002, 87–98).

same mental entities (i.e. 'affections' of the human soul). On this view, *there is no philosophical problem about communication:* we can carry on without worrying about whether we know what we are talking about. We know what we are talking about because […] there is no discrepancy between human beings as to *what* they are talking about or *how* (i.e. by means of *symbola* covering exactly the same range of meanings). (48; original italics)

According to Winfried Nöth (1995), a *symbol* is a "sign without either similarity or contiguity, but only with a conventional link between its signifier and its denotata, and with an intentional class for its designatum […]" (108). But, Harris (2003) provides a historical dimension that deepens Nöth's brief definition; *symbolon,* according to Harris,

> was the term applied [in Aristotle's day] to the *token shared between two parties to a contract as proof of their agreement.* Each kept one half of a deliberately broken potsherd, bone or other small object. Aristotle's use of this metaphor to express the relationship between sounds and 'affections of the soul' is striking, and corresponds to nothing in Saussurean technical vocabulary. Saussure's *symbole* has long since lost any of the associations with trading practice that would have been familiar to Aristotle's audience. (174; emphasis added)

Notwithstanding Aristotle's solution to the problem of fixing the meaning of language in antiquity, there remained one nagging question that even his solution could not fully answer: "how is it possible for different languages to exist?" (Joseph 2012, 74). Socrates evades the question, Plato cannot answer it, and Aristotle, likewise, has no immediate reply, although his affinity toward the actual physical body allows him a reasonably coherent solution, given the immediate philosophical needs. According to Harris and Taylor (1997), Aristotle maintained, in brief,

> (i) that the world is the same for all its inhabitants, (ii) that the 'mental representation' of the world is the same for all its inhabitants, but (iii) that language is not the same for all *because* it is conventional, and different communities have different conventions" (33; original italics).

The case for a "fixed code" of conventional usage apparently solves the immediate problem in antiquity. But not always. It too is only a stop-gap measure, an effective *deus ex machina* (god from a machine) brought in to help resolve the tension of the immediate problem that language presents its philosophers. Indeed, Harris and Taylor (1997) also mention that Aristotle acknowledged the use of *metaphor* to make words comprehensible "*even when [words] are not used in their conventional meanings*" (32; original italics). Metaphor filled the gap where Aristotle's schema still

did not cover all the contingencies of language use. If the same-perception-for-all would have been absolutely true even among women, children, and slaves (on behalf of whom the male philosophers of antiquity plainly did not speak), there might have been no need for spoken language beyond various primitive deictic utterances or physical gestures in our communicational exchanges with one another. This is clearly not the case, however. The tropes of language (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, among others) often effectively intercede to directly mediate (not "represent") what speakers want to say or (or perhaps less often) write, when our different experiences and different perceptions of what we experience are negotiated in language (cf. White in Domańska, ed. 1998, 24).

Aristotle's approach to language as a system of signs has had great staying power over millennia, partly due to the historical dominance of Christianity in Europe from the fourth century CE onwards. The Stoic interpretation of language, drawing from Aristotle, "held that languages embody no logical structure of their own, but are highly variable, being themselves part of the *logos,* the principle of reason that underlies and organizes the entire universe" (Joseph 2012, 76). The emphasis on language as a system of signs in Stoic thinking had the further advantage that a "signifying function" allowed drawing "an implicit analogy between language and other kinds of signs that people interpret and generate" (76).[92]

The Stoic theory of language carried over into the Latin tradition of the West, greatly appealing to the burgeoning Christian tradition, at the center of which stood the Christian doctrine of the "Word," Greek *logos,* Latin *Verbum* (e.g., Joseph 2012, 77). St. Augustine served as an important bridge between ancient and (medieval) Christian theories of language, because for him "signification through language was central to understanding human nature in relation to God" (77). Stoic theory developed the basis for a (largely "spiritual") distinction that naturally appealed to the medieval Scholastics: the distinction between the *signifier* and the *signified*. This distinction was especially true where the latter (*signified*) concept was also referred to as the *lekton,* the "sayable." The term was, of course, ambiguous and left much to interpretation for later generations. However, according to Joseph (2012), what was not ambiguous at all was that "the *lekton* [in Stoic philosophy] is understood as something *incorporeal*, and not to be confused with *things in the world*—what in modern terms are called *the 'referents' of words*" (77; emphasis added).

The staying power of *lekton* (the *signified*) raises an important issue with respect to the modern traditions of research on language along the two lines of the analytic and continental traditions in Western philosophy.[93] Namely, the staying power of

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92 This is specifically defended by Saussure (2011, 68), which inspires Ermarth (2011, 38–39) in writing her treatise on the 'discursive condition' after modernity.

93 For the influence of both the "general grammar" of Port Royal (of 1660) and John Locke's (1632–1704) legacy for the Enlightenment, see, e.g., Joseph 2012, 80–82; Harris and Taylor 1997, 126–154; and Seigel 2005, 88–110. For the contributions of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) in the Enlightenment discussion, see also Cassirer (1950, 47–53), Seigel (2005, 74–83), and Roinila (2007).

an "incorporeal" element such as *lekton* suggests a historically cohesive, contiguous development in the philosophy of language along its various pathways since late antiquity. This "incorporeal" element plays an important role in what François Dosse (1998b) identifies as the distinction between the analytic and continental traditions of philosophy in the twentieth century. According to Dosse, the analytical tradition is an Austro-German inheritance that goes back to Gottlob Frege (1848–1925), while the continental tradition is traced back to Saussure.

Dosse (1998b) notes that "Frege popularized the distinction between meaning and reference, between the meaning of an expression, which is a certain way of accounting for the reference, and the object to which the expression refers" (41). Saussure, however, "ignored the issue of reference in order to raise the question of the scientificity of linguistics" (41).[94] The Fregean tradition of analytic philosophy has focused on distinguishing the two levels of meaning and reference, but "without losing sight of the problem of reference" (41). By basing itself on Saussure, the continental tradition eventually broadened its position beyond linguistics proper; unconcerned with the problem of reference, per se, structuralism could argue forcefully that "language referred to nothing other than itself" (41). What the Fregean (analytic) and Saussurean (continental) lines of descent seem to have bequeathed to their heirs in each of these traditions appears to be the choice between Fregean "positivism," on the one hand, and the heritage of a Stoic-Scholastic, "pre-Fregean" approach (Saussure), on the other.

4.4   PERCEPTION'S PROBLEMATIC ROLE IN LANGUAGE

Saussure's semiology (2011, 68–69) dictated a traditional principle going back to Aristotle – that linguistic signs are *arbitrary:* concepts or ideas in the mind are independent of the signs/words in the languages they constitute (e.g., Kretzmann 1974; cf. Harris & Taylor 1997, 20–35; Harris 2003, 192–193, 2004, 47–49). On this view of language, there is no "naturally contingent" connection between the

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94   However, it should be noted that the editors of the most recent edition of Saussure's (2011) *Course* insist that he did not abandon or "ignore" reference in the way Dosse claims. In their Introduction, Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy (2011) state that the remarkable thing about Saussure was how he "reconceived reference" *as signification rather than as mimesis*. It was *mimesis,* after all, that traditionally introduced the idea that "word and thing, subject and object, self and world" are all separate. Meisel and Saussy (2011) argue that "Saussure requires a reimagination of these categories and a makeover of the way we think" (xvi; emphasis added). They further argue that structuralism "faded" precisely when (and because) it tried to make "a problem in poetics" into a systematic, programmatic semiology (xvi–xvii). I cannot address this issue, except to say that the "signification," which they argue Saussure developed in place of *mimesis,* is as disembodied as the *mimesis* they say signification replaced. "Reimagining" Saussure along the lines that Meisel and Saussy (2011) suggest merely brings Saussure into focus in the way that Ermarth (2011) has done; in this way I do deal indirectly with this issue in Chapter 5.

concepts in the mind and the (material, acoustic) signs for them.[95] Aristotle's *De interpretatione* (16a3–8) made its way down through the centuries by way of Latin interpreters and commentators and is nowadays acknowledged as "the most influential text in the history of semantics" (Kretzmann 1974, 3). On the traditional view, in conceiving a material world (*res*), the mind contributes "mental contents" (*conceptus*) through a cognitive process of *perception* "that functions *identically* in all people. The concepts the mind creates," in other words, are independent of the language we speak (Trabant 2013, 14; cf. Harris 2004, 43–50; emphasis added). On this view, there is an inherent dualism operating between mind and body. As Aristotle says:

> Now spoken sounds are symbols of affections in the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds. And just as written marks are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of – affections of the soul – are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of – actual things – are also the same. (Aristotle (16a3–8) in Kretzmann 1974, 3–4)

This Aristotelian principle of perception ("affections of the soul") of external objects operating *identically* in all men, however, is not merely ancient; this principle is also a manifestly false conception of the operations of perception in human beings; perception is not "given by Being" along the lines the ancients understood it, metaphysically.[96] Harris (2009a) writes that Aristotle based his semantics "on the assumption that the world is the same for all observers (*De Interpretatione* 16a)" and adds that such a strategy "is one way of dealing with the problem of perception, i.e., by not allowing it to arise" (155). The problem of perception in the context of language is a tacit one, insofar as, following Aristotle's theory of perception:

> [W]ords and their meanings are themselves related by cause and effect. The spoken or written word acts as an external stimulus which 'triggers' – as Saussure would later put it – a meaning in the mind of the appropriately habituated hearer/reader. Thus a word has the same meaning for two individuals insofar

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95   Roy Harris is right to warn readers not to try and force Aristotle's (historically contingent) terminology into Saussure's particular framework, however. Such a move would be anachronistic in the sense that, according to Harris (2003), "there is no recognition by Aristotle of anything corresponding to [Saussure's] *image acoustique*" (174), which Saussure apparently gleaned from his reading of nineteenth-century psychologist Victor Egger (Joseph 2012, 89, 288–291). The "acoustic image" is thus part of a unique fusion that Saussure contributed to sign theory. It would thus be fair to conclude with Harris (2003) that Saussure was an heir of traditional sign theory, but this does not mean that Aristotle was the linguistic "forebear" of Saussurean sign theory in all respects (175).

96   On the "metaphysics of presence" that this gives rise to, see also Section 3.5 in Chapter 3.

as its oral or visual form *causes the same effect in the minds of both*. (Harris 2009a, 160; emphasis added)

According to the understanding commonly attributed to Aristotle, to speak any word should *guarantee* that the hearer would understand exactly what was spoken, in an act that guarantees the "stability of a name" (Harris & Taylor 1997, 23; cf. Kretzmann 1974, 3). Saussure's (2011, 11) illustration of this process is given as the "speaking circuit" between persons A and B in dialogue (see Figure 4.1 below).

Figure 4.1. Saussure's speaking-circuit between two people, A and B. (From *Course in General Linguistics*, by Ferdinand de Saussure, translated by Wade Baskin, edited by Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy, p. 11. Copyright © 2011 Columbia University Press. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.)

The illustration includes dotted lines between two male heads in profile, suggesting the hypothetical (and unproblematic) connection between them with arrows along the dotted lines, apparently indicating the reciprocal function of this circuit from the mouth of A to the ear and brain of B, and back again to A's ear and brain, in identical fashion (Saussure 2011, 11). Saussure apparently reproduces the "representational" (Aristotelian) sense that perception is said to ground meaning (see Harris 2004, Chpt. 2, esp. 47–49).[97] Norman Kretzmann's (1974) essay is intended to clarify some of the finer points that have (mistakenly, according to him) led to the commonly accepted conclusions of Aristotle's passage (16a3–8) for the legacy of semantics in modern linguistics. In fact, however, ordinary people going about their everyday affairs, with little contact outside their own circles (of experience), may hold exactly this presupposed, "commonsense" view that Aristotle is said to hold on how language works, as apparently characterized by Saussure's speaking-circuit above in Figure 4.1.

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97   See, however, Kretzmann's (1974) full argument, which provides a more subtle reading of this famous passage by Aristotle (16a3–8) than is commonly done; his argument is that the passage is concerned with establishing convention over and against Plato's Forms, rather than being concerned purely with semantics. The background of the ancient study of signs that Allen (2001) provides is illuminating in connection with Kretzmann's analysis. See also Meisel and Saussy's (2011, xv–xlviii) Introduction. (See also Section 4.3, above.)

I would argue that this folk-psychological view of the speaking-circuit is similar to claiming, by analogy, a (pre-Copernican) commonsense perception that the sun rises above a stationary earthly horizon each morning. That is, the folk-psychological view of cosmology lacked the sophisticated Copernican understanding of the nature and position of the earth as a spinning orb that also simultaneously encircles the sun (cf. Feyerabend 1993; Scharf 2015). Without additional information for their inductive inferences, pre-Copernicans (Ptolemaic astronomers) took the *effects* they could "see" (comprehend) from their limited standpoints and concluded, indeed, *reasoned* that the earth was stationary, fixed, as Paul Feyerabend's (1993) compelling book argues. Indeed, they concluded that it was the cosmos itself that (encircled and) moved around a static and passive earth.

In this sense, Saussure was no mere pre-Copernican. He was a very gifted "Ptolemaic" philosopher of language. This is because the line-drawing in Figure 4.1, above, also perfectly illustrates what Saussure understands when he separates language onto its "binary planes" of *signifier* and *signified* in illustrating his principle of "the arbitrariness of the binary sign" – which I go on to analyze in detail in Chapter 5. When one glances at the line-drawing, it is easy to miss his innovative definition made visible in the dotted lines with their helpful arrows, and so on.

What those lines show, as I argue in Chapter 5, is the *binary* nature of the relationship between the sound-image (the *signifier*), spoken from the mouth of person A to the ear and brain of person B, where the *connection* to the concept or meaning (the *signified*) is made, and then this process is repeated by the speaking of person B, and so on, in a circuit. Joseph (2012) emphasizes that it is the "*connection* between the two domains of values," of percept (acoustic-image, *signifier*) and concept (meaning, *signified*), which "creates each of them, is essential to each of them, and *is the locus of the essential arbitrariness of language*" (600; emphasis added; see Chapter 5).

To return to my analogy, above, as Copernicans we nowadays understand that the circumstances of our planet in the solar system are the other way around: *the earth moves,* and even for ordinary educated persons Planet Earth is no longer the center of the universe. Likewise, human speakers and listeners are not passive, static receptacles of information in the way that the speaking-circuit characterizes this (binary) process: *the human being is in (e)motion,* and the isolated "subject" no longer defines the self (e.g., Damasio 1999, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Benson 2001; Gerhardt 2004; M. Johnson 2007; Rimé 2009; Hari & Kujala 2009).[98] As

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above, so below; but this latter revolutionary idea (that humans are not passive receptacles of information) has barely begun to sink in.

The situation today regarding the study of human perception is analogous to the "pre-Copernican" conceptions of a passive and static earth. Aristotle's semantics, based on a purely "subjective" understanding of perception, has held sway for over two millennia and remains at the core of Saussure's innovative *system of linguistic value,* as founded on his principle of the arbitrariness of the *binary* sign. Harris (1996) points out that, because the traditional theory of communication depends on signs, it must therefore also depend on resemblance and convention. In the light of such a theory, however, various additional theses have attached themselves, to the effect that: (i) "thought" is intrinsically formless; (ii) signs provide this form; (iii) anything that is perceptible provides such a form (by way of signs); and (iv) that perception is therefore a matter of interpreting signs (111). When "perception is the same for all," as Aristotle is interpreted to claim, then the interpretation of signs is a rather straightforward matter, as represented in Figure 4.1, above. Harris (1996) further notes that "[b]oth the doctrine that anything perceptible can be a sign and the doctrine that all knowledge of the external world depends on the interpretation of signs reappear undiluted in twentieth-century semiology" (116).

What is more, for the past forty years a version of structuralism has featured prominently as an important component of the linguistic turn in historical theory. In Section 5.3, I investigate the nature of Saussure's innovations, particularly with respect to Whitney's ideas of synchrony and diachrony, which Saussure developed further. Because Saussure subsequently transformed Whitney's ideas into something new, Saussure was made to appear unique and independent of antecedents. Ermarth (2011) understood Saussure to be unique and based her entire treatise on this assumption. Thus in Chapter 5, I employ Ermarth's arguments as the frame for the chapter as a whole, insofar as she considers Saussure the origin of a new dispensation "after modernity," which she terms the "Discursive Condition."

She champions Saussure, that is, without fully realizing the degree to which Saussure carried on an ancient tradition of sign theory, which he had indeed transformed (cf. Harris 2003, 175). Saussure's synchronic axis of the language system (*la langue*), which he developed in terms of "systemic value" is, in Ermarth's view, a powerful *new* way to consider language that serves as "new tools of thought" in the discursive dispensation after modernity (cf. Meisel & Saussy 2011). I see her argument, however, as having overlooked the historical contingencies of Saussure's philosophical starting points and the nature of the arbitrariness of the binary sign that served as the fruitful core of his linguistic *system*. In short, Saussure's way of theorizing language is not "after" modernity at all; it is itself a fully *modernist* transformation of the ancient theory of language that Paul J. Thibault (1997) celebrates in the first epigraph to the next chapter. It is therefore within the context

of Ermarth's misunderstanding that I analyze and highlight Saussure's thoroughly modernist innovations in Chapter 5.

4.5   CONCLUSION

Just as Chapter 3 attempted to situate Hayden White within his own time and place – within the historical contingencies of his linguistic turn – so too Chapter 4 investigated the historical contingencies of Saussure's life and times as the context within and the background against which he developed his unique construal of the ancient study of signs. Saussure lived during the height of Europe's Second Industrial Revolution, 1870–1914, which personally touched the de Saussure family of Geneva deeply. Saussure was the eldest son in an ambitious family eager to retain hold of its reputation of accomplishment within the closed world of Geneva's aristocratic "upper town." To this end, Saussure's father Henri never ceased pushing his son into more strictly scientific pursuits. Against his father's wishes, however, Saussure quietly moved forward, embracing his own inclinations toward literary and linguistic pursuits. Indeed, the times in which he lived bore an incessant drive toward science and its technological progress, which was everywhere visible: at home, at school, and everywhere present in the changes to the material culture and society at large within which he lived.

Germane to this development were the particular circumstances of Saussure's secondary education such that, unusual for the teaching curriculum of the time, exposed Saussure to ancient Aristotelian sign theory. These unusual circumstances primed Saussure for rejecting the comparative linguistics of his day. At the core of the ancient sign theory that Saussure was familiar with was Aristotle's influential intervention in semantics, by which he dictated the "same perception for all men." Signs were only arbitrarily connected to concepts, insofar as there was no *naturally contingent relation* between concepts of the mind and the signs used to invoke them in speech.

The problem in philosophy of language from ancient times was to ground the *meaning* of these spoken (or written) words which, to be effective, required the additional guarantee that language was a social "convention." This final theoretical piece was put into place in order to answer the question: "why are there different languages?" Moreover, Aristotle succeeded, where Socrates and Plato had failed to answer this question. To address the problem, Aristotle theorized that: the world is the same for everyone; the perception of the world is the same for everyone; but, language is not the same for everyone, because it is conventional (historical in nature only). On this reasoning, different communities speak different languages and for no other reason.

The trouble with Aristotle's solution is that, even after these theoretical steps were taken to ensure the meaning of words in the community of speakers, occasions still arose requiring the *additional* use of metaphor (and other *tropes*) for the comprehension of meaning. In short, the theoretical design of "how language really works" was not full-proof in antiquity. Saussure's own intervention and innovations on ancient sign theory were creative and productive. But, the problem remains: "do we *know* what we are talking about?" Even Saussure's model is not full-proof. When conventions or "fixed codes" fail – even today – it is still metaphor (the tropes) that rescues meaning, just as it did in antiquity. Indeed, what this shows is that the tension between the conventionality of language and tropic language is ancient in origin and is not resolved definitively even today. The point of this chapter was to show how Aristotle's theory of perception continues to serve as the nucleus, around which Saussure's unique fusion of elements was shaped and molded in the courses he taught at the University of Geneva before his early death in 1913.

CHAPTER FIVE

Modernity seeks to replace pre-modern faith and certainty with the categories of Reason and History. In this scenario, *Reason entails the arbitrary application of rational procedures and axioms to the global totality of experience under modernity*. The modernist project endeavours to bring experience under the control of rational argument and conventional procedures. This implies a historical mission founded on the principles of technique, work and the development of the forces of production. *The dissolution of the naturalistic basis of language may be related to the global experience of reality under modernism*. In the modernist project, the metaphysical foundations of pre-modernity are called into question. Reality is seen as flux, change, process and radical uncertainty, without secure foundations. *Saussure's social-semiological metatheory is a paradigmatic example of the modernist scientific project.*

—Paul J. Thibault, *Rereading Saussure*

Another constant agenda [in this book] is to unpack the complexity and near-miraculousness of even the most ordinary uses of semiological systems as defined by Saussure […]; if you think you have "done" Saussure, look again.

—Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *History in the Discursive Condition: Reconsidering the Tools of Thought*

The independence between sound and meaning is believed to be a crucial property of language: across languages, sequences of different sounds are used to express similar concepts (e.g., Russian "ptitsa," Swahili "ndege," and Japanese "tori" all mean "bird"). However, a careful statistical examination of words from nearly two-thirds of the world's languages reveals that unrelated languages very often use (or avoid) the same sounds for specific referents. For instance, words for tongue tend to have l or u, "round" often appears with r, and "small" with i. These striking similarities call for a reexamination of the fundamental assumption of the arbitrariness of the sign.

—Damián E. Blasi et al. "Sound–Meaning Association Biases Evidenced Across Thousands of Languages"

5 THE (BINARY) ARBITRARINESS OF THE STATIC SYSTEM OF LINGUISTIC VALUE

My aim in this fifth chapter is ultimately to discuss and unpack the *metaphorical* model at the heart of Saussure's system of linguistic value that he developed on the pattern of his core principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign. Saussure's system, moreover, inspires Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth (2011) to praise the artist and the

> informed theorist back at least as far as Aristotle [...] interested in "the content of the form" [...]. Saussure claimed that linguistic value is "purely differential," that is, language values are only intelligible systemically and negatively, not positively or in isolation from systemic relationships. (36)

As Saussure's biographer John E. Joseph (2012) clarifies, Saussure himself did not use the term "structuralism" in reference to his construct of linguistic value; his own term was "system" for the systemic way his design performed in practice, just as Ermarth discerns in the quotation above. Furthermore, if "the content of the form" is best revealed in Saussure's language system, as she believes – one that yields "purely differential" values that are only intelligible *systemically and negatively* – then it is all the more necessary for me to excavate down into the (arbitrary) core of such a system. This is necessary, because Hayden White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction is, likewise, built on the frame of this same system, despite the *tropes* he employed to surf Saussure's static chains of signification (see Chapter 8). It is in this sense that White's history-as-fiction is both more and less than what it appears to be, for the simple reason that Saussure, too, is both more and less than what he appears to be (see also Chapters 3–4).

In this chapter, I examine Ermarth's (2011) bold move to "*re*consider" the Saussurean tools of thought for "history in the discursive condition." She asserts that Saussure's systemic value must be considered as the appropriate "frame" within which, once again, to build the discussion on history writing in the "Discursive Condition" *after modernity*. In the introduction to her book, she praises the "complexity and near-miraculousness" of Saussure's system and she challenges her readers: "if you think you have 'done' Saussure, look again" (xvi; in the second epigraph above). This challenge to "look again" at what Saussure's semiology has to offer is what she means by "reconsidering the (Saussurean systemic) tools of thought" in the subtitle of her book. These tools are those she would now recommend in a newly revised version of the Saussurean system (i.e., this time without linguistic

arbitrariness) in her contribution to the history-literature debate, offered on behalf of history-as-fiction for the twenty-first century.

One theoretical move that Ermarth makes, which interests me in the context of my own aims for this chapter, is Ermarth's move to brush aside the consequences of Jacques Derrida's structuralist critique of the "metaphysics of presence," launched fifty years ago.[99] What interests me particularly is that she writes *as if* this major blow to (Saussurean) structuralism had never happened at all. Or is it that, after all, Derrida had not moved far enough away from Saussure's system to warrant a full break from the resulting systemic value? Or, is it perhaps that, once the "principle of the arbitrariness of language" is brushed aside as illegitimate, the metaphysics of presence simply no longer applies to the rest of the *negative, differential system of linguistic value* that Saussure created?

Whatever Ermarth (2011) thinks of Derrida's earlier critique of her subject matter, she obviously does not think it relevant enough to dissuade her efforts. For instance, she mentions Derrida only in passing in her text as a theorist among others, "who [has] been especially influential in theorizing the 'postmodern'" (32; cf. xiii). But, she does not mention the deconstruction of structuralism at all, nor any implications it might hold for the theoretical grounding of her discussion.

What this chapter takes up and analyzes on a deep level is precisely Ermarth's Saussurean reclamation project. That is, I am skeptical and resist the idea here that Saussure provides "*new* tools of thought" in a *discursive condition after modernity*. From Ermarth's standpoint, Saussure's system of linguistic value takes on an urgent relevance as a kind of "postmodern" (post)structuralism after "positivism," so as to reassert the arguments of the history-literature debate in overtly systemic-structuralist terms – as if deconstruction is somehow no longer a problem, but merely part of the Greater-Postmodernism that she, too, is likewise offering in her treatise. Ermarth (2011), in fact, sidesteps the sticky point of arbitrariness by simply declaring the framing system of Saussure's linguistic value as "more groundbreaking" (36). In other words, she separates arbitrariness from her discussion and moves forward without it. But this is certainly problematic – especially from the innovative standpoint of Saussure's systemic accomplishment – whether she is aware of it or not.

The key issue from my embodied (AE) standpoint is to analyze Ermarth's move in the light of Saussure's own regard for the *principle of the arbitrariness of language* (see Sections 4.3–4.4 in Chapter 4). In other words, I wish to show why Ermarth cannot ignore the principle of arbitrariness that Derrida problematized and deconstructed fifty years ago (and why it remains problematic for poststructuralism also today). This analysis also aims to suggest ways in which Derrida's project of

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99   For a summary of Derrida's critique, see Section 3.5 in Chapter 3.

"poststructuralism" was never really "post"-structuralist, nor even "post"-modern! This is because, like White and Ermarth, Derrida did not ever fully abandon the static, nonliving system of disembodied linguistic value upon which his further theorizing of poststructuralism depended.

Saussure follows Aristotle, but Saussure's purpose was to improve on and develop the ancient language philosophy that he inherited from Aristotle – and to make it uniquely his own, which is certainly what he did. What is new in Saussure's arbitrariness is his specific way of formulating it: the linguistic sign is *binary,* that is, both material and immaterial. The sides are united in the (positive) linguistic sign by way of its arbitrary percept, or sound-image (the *signifier*), which is bound to an arbitrary (psychological) concept, or idea (the *signified*). This is a dualist principle, certainly, insofar as it separates body (the physical percept) and mind (the psychological concept, meaning), but this was a traditional philosophical argument that he accepted without a problem. Moreover, this *binary* principle of percept and concept is openly illustrated in the line-drawing in Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4, when this "connection" in Saussure's speaking-circuit is pointed out.

As Joseph (2012) emphasizes the point, it is this "*connection* between the two domains of values," of percept and concept, which "creates each of them, is essential to each of them, and is the locus of the essential arbitrariness of language" (600). Saussure himself established this arbitrariness "at the very top. Only bit by bit does one end up recognizing how many different facts are only ramifications, veiled consequences of this truth" (Saussure in Joseph 2012, 579). Moreover, as a dualist construct, it is emphatically *disembodied* (Saussure 2011, 75–76). After this union of what he considers to be the arbitrary traits of percept and concept, this (Saussurean) *word*/sign is then fixed in (Aristotelian) conventional usage by social rules of use.

Whereas human institutions, customs, laws, and so on, are predicated on some aspect of non-arbitrary relation between the human body and things in the world (i.e., their relation of contingency), Saussure (2011) declares that "[l]anguage is *limited by nothing* in the choice of means, for apparently *nothing would prevent the association of any idea* whatsoever *with just any sequence of sounds*" (76; emphasis added). Here, he explicitly presents the *binary* principle of arbitrary language as non-contingent on the body and its physical movement and actions in the world.

Arbitrariness is absolute on his telling. However, Saussure's emphatic separation of percept (sound-image) and concept (idea, meaning) is no longer credible, in the light of the stunning research results of Damián E. Blasi et al. (2016; see the third epigraph to this chapter, above). After an extensive statistical examination of almost two-thirds of the world's 6000 languages, they conclude that there is *in fact* a relation of contingency between language and the human body, *pace* Saussure. Moreover, this massive experiment conducted by Blasi et al. was warranted by the promising results of many similar, earlier findings for individual languages that defied the

"fundamental assumption of the arbitrariness of the sign"[100] In short, extensive research now shows that *language* actually does arise from the *body* interacting with others in the context of everyday life in the world (cf. Hari & Kujala 2009; Rimé 2009). Metaphorical transfer is its main (embodied) ongoing, active tool; to communicate, we *map* from the structures of our lived experience in the world with others using the metaphors that help others understand what we are talking about.

Saussure's adherence to linguistic arbitrariness reveals his faithfulness to Aristotle, but his form of arbitrariness of the *binary* sign is not Aristotelian – it is original to Saussure, and Saussure knew just how essential it was for his system of linguistic value; one cannot simply brush away this *binary* conception of arbitrariness from the resulting negative, differential *system* that embodies this principle. In short, this binary principle fully inhabits the system *metaphorically* (from its source domain to its target domain) through Saussure's chosen model of the metaphor of "coins as units of value in a currency system" (118–120), which I show in my analysis below.

Nevertheless, Ermarth (2011) blithely discounts the importance of arbitrariness *tout court*. She rather embraces the framing *system of linguist value* as "more groundbreaking" than the principle that gave rise to this system in the first place (36). The reason Ermarth's separation of arbitrariness from the system as a whole is important for the argumentation of this thesis is that her *dismissal* of an embodied element characterizes the very problem at issue throughout. This is because even a "static system" is a pattern of organization of some kind.

To keep the *pattern* of organization (the system), but then to separate it from its very *process* of instantiation (the first principle of binary arbitrariness) makes as much sense as the analytic move to separate the pattern of movement of an arrow in flight from its process of movement in time (for Zeno's paradox, see Chapter 2 above, Section 2.1.3). In other words, it is absolutely basic to understand when to apply the method of *analysis,* and when to recognize the work of *synthesis*. Ermarth here confuses these methodological approaches. Indeed, to anticipate Chapter 8, beneath and beyond White's Vichian vocabulary in history-as-fiction is the structuralist frame that Ermarth here defends in White's name in terms of "the content of the form" (above; cf. White 1990).

Saussure himself, however, was very well aware of the essential importance and power of the *binary nature* of the arbitrariness of the sign, as *a principle,* within the system of language that he created *from* it (e.g., Joseph 2012, 579, 600). In short, this arbitrary principle literally permeates every aspect of Saussure's static system of linguistic value. He accomplished this remarkable feat, moreover, through

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100   For Finnish results, see, e.g., Vainio et al. 2014, 2015; Komeilipoor et al. 2016; Tiainen et al. 2016; for the role of manual gesture and the sensorimotor system in communication, see, e.g., Arbib 2008; Gentilucci, Volta & Gianelli 2008; Ratcliffe 2013; see also my Introduction above.

the metaphorical mapping of its structural attributes (from his nonliving source to his living target domain of language); Saussure fully realized that there would be no escape from "the veiled consequences" of this metaphorical mapping. Indeed, he struggled for decades to find the right (metaphorical) vehicle for his insights.

This chapter thus illustrates *how* one does not escape Saussure's handiwork, and why it is impossible to just wave away arbitrariness, as Ermarth does – or mask it with Vichian vocabulary, as White does, when he introduces the tropes to surf the (structural) system's static chains of signification (on this, see Chapter 8; cf. Clippinger 2003). As philosopher Mark Johnson observes,

> it is the metaphors that make it possible for the theories to make sense of our experience. *All* theories are based on metaphors, because all our abstract concepts are metaphorically defined. *Understanding the constitutive metaphors* allows us to grasp the logic and entailments of the theory. […] [Indeed,] once you understand how conceptual metaphors lie at the heart of our abstract conceptualization and reasoning, you acquire *a new set of tools* for analyzing, explaining, and criticizing philosophical theories. (2007, 204, 206; emphasis added)

In what follows, I approach both the analysis of Saussure's static, nonliving system of linguistic value, and Ermarth's reclamation of it, by focusing on her *appeal to art,* beyond the "purposes" of disciplinary history, in the discursive condition after modernity (Ermarth 2011, 104). This appeal to art, moreover, is an emphatic argument in support of the idea that "stories are *not lived* but told" (Mink 1987, 60; emphasis added; see also Chapter 3). This Minkian "insight" underpins Ermarth's "history in the discursive condition." I undercut this idea by showing that Saussure's specific goal was to create a disembodied "science" of *modern* linguistics, much as Paul J. Thibault (1997) celebrates (in the first epigraph to this chapter, above). Moreover, Saussure accomplished his brilliant systemic feat in his choice of *constitutive metaphor* that underpins his entire construct, as Johnson (2007) suggests above. As my analysis in this chapter will show, however, Saussure's "science" is precisely the same positivist "science" that Ermarth argues against history and historians, especially in Sections 5.3–5.4 below.

In other words, the linguistic case that Ermarth argues for reclaiming the "discursive tools of thought," in support of history-as-literature, depends on the presupposition that language and life are connected only in the (disembodied) way that the linguistic signs themselves are binarily connected: as two (dualist) orders of different phenomena, in the tradition of ancient metaphysics that is exemplified by Zeno's paradox of the arrow (on this, see also Chapter 3).

In this sense, the static (nonliving, binary) system of linguistic value upholds the idea that stories are *not lived* but told; this Minkian idea separating "stories" from

their context of "lived experience" precisely exemplifies the separation of a *pattern* of organization from the very *process* that embodies this organization over time (a dynamic system). In other words, it is the disembodied nature of her project as a *binary relation that separates language and life* that makes Saussure's parallel, scientific linguistics appear so relevant for "reconsidering" it. But, as I will show with my "embodied set of tools" that recognizes the significance of "constituting metaphors" (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Capra 2003; Modell 2003; M. Johnson 2007; McGilchrist 2009), I can demonstrate that Saussure's "science" of linguistics relies on the very same disembodied elements as the "positivist" version of science that Ermarth (and White) rejects in the writings of professional historians.

5.1   STORIES ARE NOT LIVED BUT TOLD

The underlying logic of the history-literature debate that I analyze here is Ermarth's assumption that history writing is *language,* like literature is language and, as *language,* history writing was experimentally studied beginning in the 1960s with the tools of what is now characterized as "classical narratology."[101] This "classical" narratological theory that White inherited through his structuralist predecessors supports, as necessary, the principle of the arbitrariness of the *binary* linguistic sign, as I show below. This (dualist) theoretical construct posits the mutual independence of the material sound-image (signifier, or percept) aspect of the sign and the meaning (signified, or concept) aspect that generates the arbitrariness in random pairings of a word with an arbitrarily chosen meaning. Arbitrariness is essential, because "the arbitrariness of language radically separates it from all other [social] institutions" and entails the "freedom of establishing just any relationship between phonetic substance and ideas," as Saussure (2011, 76) emphasizes.

   If language, however, is necessarily contingent on the body acting in the world, that is, embedded and *embodied* along Vichian lines (following Luft 2003 in Chapters 6 & 7; but, see also Blasi et al. 2016 in the third epigraph to this chapter), Saussure's arbitrary principle underpinning the system of *la langue* cannot be taken for granted, in turn, underpinning most "postmodern" theorizing. At the very least, there is an essential tension created between a *disembodied*, arbitrary principle of language (Saussure's) and one that is *necessarily contingent on the human body* in the world (Vico's). These opposed principles of language cannot even complement one

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101   The classical study of narrative along "postmodern" lines on the basis of "structural semiotics" (narratology; see, e.g., Bal 1997, 2013; Munslow 2007) came of age in the decades after the Second World War, and dominated literary theory especially in the early 1960s, which influenced White's linguistic turn toward the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s; White's work peaked in the 1980s, just as Derrida's deconstructionist texts were being absorbed into Anglo-American scholarship. By the 1990s, White's work began to shift somewhat (see the Introduction & Chapter 3). For literature on the apparent general backlash to "theory," see, e.g., Harvey 1990; Eagleton 2004; Birns 2010; Winters 2014; cf. Toews 1987; Domańska 1998; Spiegel, ed. 2005.

another, because there is no mutually "common ground" for either of them to stand on (see also Chapter 9). The combination of these two utterly opposed *principles* of language within the same theoretical construct can only result in a paradox.

Ermarth's (2011) intention is to *reassert* a (post)structuralist (generally "postmodernist") frame, specifically tailored for historians, *again,* after the linguistic turn – in the spirit of Louis O. Mink's (1987) observation that "[s]tories are not lived but told" (60). She asserts this, when (near the end of her book) in the practical applications of history in the discursive condition, she raises a series of questions concerning historical purpose meant to justify and reinforce her reconsideration of Saussure's (systemic) tools of thought. As Ermarth (2011) puts it:

> What is the *purpose* of writing history? To contribute to a scientific or quasi-scientific representation of objective reality? To elicit from the "past" lessons for "the" present and future (and you'll show me where that has worked)? To unearth "facts"? To confirm that the world is one? To astonish experts? To guide a nation? To do justice to the complexity of experience? To mark the invisible systems influencing practice? (104)

These awkward questions of historians' purposes are meant to juxtapose her (post) structuralist, "discursive solution" with history's purported earlier model in the material "sciences." This (metaphorical) hard-science model mapped from its source domain (from Newtonian physics) the structurally static, linear attributes of certainty, truth, and objectivity onto history as a positivist "science." Some historians continue to speak in such terms, and (after the linguistic turn), others are simply reverting to some forms of it (e.g., Helo 2016). But, Ermarth (2011) confidently implies that her awkward questions of historians' scientific purposes "restore the problem of qualitative value" that she addresses in her work (104). In other words, because physics and the material sciences can no longer reasonably serve as a "model" for the discipline of history, she proffers the view, instead, that "[t]he Discursive Condition calls for new purposes, new purposes require new methods, and new methods can be found in all kinds of unlikely sources, *often in the work of artists* […]" (104; see Section 5.2 below).

Here, by emphasizing the work of artists, Ermarth echoes the earlier idea by Mink (1987, 59–60), developed further by White in history-as-fiction, that the *qualities of narrative* are transferred *from art* to life, where language and life have no common natural link in history-as-fiction, much in the way that Saussure's binary halves of the linguistic sign are randomly, arbitrarily connected, but not contingent on the body (i.e., dualist). In other words, language and life are inextricable, but only on the basis of convention and historical usage alone, just as the linguistic sign (percept & concept) is inextricable, but arbitrarily combined and conventional in nature.

In Saussure, the transfer of the qualities of narrative from art to life are arbitrary, not "natural" in the way they would be for Vico's contingent (metaphorical) language both embedded and embodied as physical-labor-in-the world (Luft 1999, 2003; see Chapter 6). This separation between language and life is the underpinning assumption that gives such power to the idea that stories are told, not lived. It is a message, moreover, that has sunk so deeply into the Anglo-American psyche, that we are now practically helpless in the age of "alternative facts," where the art of language actually trumps life (reality).[102]

How did this happen? I argue in Chapter 4 that it was the (Aristotelian) folk-psychological view that "perception is the same for all men," which led to the common (traditional) understanding that language is merely conventional, historical (see Section 4.4). This argument, moreover, is analogous to a (pre-Copernican) commonsense perception that the sun rises above a stationary earthly horizon each morning. We have since come to understand, however, that the earth is not stationary and fixed in the firmament, as the Ptolemaic astronomers once theorized. They merely took the *effects* they could "see" (comprehend) and concluded that the cosmos encircled and moved around a static and passive earth. We are now on the verge, however, of an analogous revelation of the nature of human being; the human psyche is not an isolated, "subjective" phenomenon "at rest" within a solipsistic universe of the self. Furthermore, language plays a key role in what Finnish neuroscientists Riitta Hari and Miiamaaria V. Kujala (2009) call an essential "two-person neuroscience" (454). But, on the way to such a conception of the self, the role of embodiment and, specifically, *embodied* language needs more work.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Saussure was no ordinary "Ptolemaic" philosopher of language. He was a gifted thinker, who developed his *system* of linguistic value around an essential core of arbitrariness. Ermarth (2011), however, blithely discounts the importance of this arbitrariness, when she embraces the framing *system of linguistic value* as "more groundbreaking" (36). Saussure, however, cannot be so easily deflected in this way. For he purposely placed arbitrariness "at the very top," allowing him to construct his system in such a way that "[o]nly bit by bit does one end up recognizing how many different facts are only ramifications, veiled consequences of this truth" (Saussure in Joseph 2012, 579). Saussure, the "Ptolemaic" philosopher of language built his "beautiful system" of negative, differential value from a *metaphor* ideally suited to his purposes. This metaphor, in fact, was born with the emergence of "political economy" that provided Saussure his master key in its separation from economic history at the end of the nineteenth century.

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102 In a recent article, Marc Fisher (2017) observes that, "[a]s president, Trump has continued to make statements that are factually incorrect or are based on opinions he heard on TV. It is a pattern he followed throughout his business career. 'I play to people's fantasies,' he wrote in his first book, *The Art of the Deal*. 'People want to believe that something is the biggest and the greatest and the most spectacular. I call it truthful hyperbole. It's an innocent form of exaggeration — and a very effective form of promotion'" (paragr. 14).

Saussure (2011) here discerns a parallel development in the two "sciences" of economics and linguistics, when,

> in contrast to the other sciences, political economy and economic history constitute two clearly separated disciplines [i.e., a "duality"] within a single science [...]. Proceeding as they have, economists are—without being well aware of it—obeying an inner necessity. A similar necessity obliges us to divide linguistics into two parts, each with its own principle. Here as in political economy we are confronted with the notion of *value;* both sciences are concerned with *a system for equating things of different orders*—labor and wages in one[,] and a signified and signifier in the other. (79; original emphasis)

It appears that Ermarth has overlooked this passage. Modern theoretical economics (political economy) is the analogy that serves as Saussure's own master key to his *system* of linguistic value (for Vico's master key, see Chapter 6). It is the key idea that bore fruit in *his choice of metaphor* that he later selected to carry, to embed and embody this notion of *value* on two different levels: "labor and wages" on one level, and the "signified and signifier [o]n the other," as noted above. Guided by this *key idea* in the way that *political economy* and *economic history* bifurcated from one another, Saussure was intrigued by the way the science of linguistics he was trying to formulate correlated with this emerging "political economy" in terms of the two orders of *value* featured in the "arbitrariness of the binary sign."

With his eye firmly focused on the dualistic nature of the linguistic sign, he chose his metaphor well, which then became "both cause and effect of the relationship" in the system as a whole, as Iain McGilchrist (2009, 97) recognizes in the *nature* of metaphorical transfer. To restate this, Saussure's *language system* (*la langue*) in the target domain takes its "structural attributes" from the characteristic features of his metaphor "coins as units of value *in a currency system*" in the source domain. Saussure equates (*metaphorizes*) the (binary) orders of "labor and wages," on the one hand, with the (binary orders) of "signified and signifier," on the other hand (Saussure 2011, 79).

In other words, Saussure's system of the arbitrariness of the *binary* sign is *embodied in* his system of linguistic value through the *constituting metaphor* he chose. There is therefore no escape from the ramifications and "veiled consequences" of this arbitrariness, *even if you purport to set it aside and move on without it.* As Derrida does. As White does. As Ermarth does. You cannot *separate* arbitrariness from the system that embodies its binary attributes that are simply built into it from the beginning. This is why Saussure's system of *la langue* is *static* (because it is binary). This is why the system is *negative and differential* (because it is static). The system does not move. It is utterly beautiful, but it is nonliving.

The two orders of economic value (labor and wages) constitute the (brilliant) source domain from which Saussure's metaphor of coins as units of value in a currency system is taken. This constituting metaphor thereby enables Saussure to *embed* the character of the arbitrary, binary sign (signified and signifier) in the system as a whole in terms of its negative, differential value – the very features that poststructuralism *continued using* in shifting from Saussure's focus on speech to Derrida's preferred focus on writing.

It is a myth that stories are not lived but told; it is a myth, moreover, that is promoted by a "modernity" that traditionally separates the pattern of dynamic organization from its process of (instantiating) physical activity over time, as if philosophers were theorizing nonliving things, rather than human systems (of language, among other moving, changing things). In this sense, Zeno's ancient paradox of the arrow is a misplaced *analytical* intervention on the nature of a *moving* object that, on the basis of his method, he concludes must be both moving and at rest, simultaneously. One must either make a leap of faith and accept this result, or one must wonder what has gone wrong in the *analysis*. The answer: Zeno's method of *analysis* is mistakenly applied to a moving object, when some other method was needed.

In what follows, I sketch out the core around which Ermarth builds her arguments that separates modernity into its two parts: "pre-Saussure" and "post-Saussure." In this sketch, it is Saussure's systemic value that constitutes the new tools of thought "after" what she describes as "modernity." As I show in the sections that follow, however, what Ermarth is actually describing is the shift to a "systemic" modernity that (not only Western) technology has made possible (see, e.g., Hacker's 2015 review; Siskin 2016; see also Capra & Luisi 2014).

In claiming history for the discursive condition after modernity, I argue that Ermarth (2011) substitutes one lifeless, two-dimensional metaphor (perspectival technology) for a lifeless systemic metaphor (Einstein's measurement between different inertial systems of reference). She does this without comprehending that, in following the disembodied, nonliving structural attributes of the one, she is merely moving from one linearly conceived (disembodied) modernity to its systemic, nonliving successor. In this move, moreover, she does not realize the extent to which "Saussure's social-semiological metatheory is a paradigmatic example of the modernist scientific project," that Thibault (1997, 190) so enthusiastically welcomes.

5.2   FROM OLD TO "NEW" TOOLS OF THOUGHT: ERMARTH'S DISCURSIVE CONDITION

Ermarth (2011) sketches out a theoretical shift from the "modern condition," which she eschews, to what she welcomes as the "discursive condition" after Saussure.

Her chronological envelope for modernity predates many historians' descriptions of its beginnings (i.e., in the Enlightenment) by several centuries (11–25). She argues for the historical origin of the modernist period in the "tools of thought" made available to the West through the development of the "perspectival technology" first developed by artists and architects during the Renaissance over the course of the fifteenth century in Italy. This "realist perspective convention" produced, according to her, the formal condition "in which all possible viewpoints agree […]. This constituted a 'rationalization of sight' that was […] the most important event of the Renaissance" (12).

According to Ermarth (2011), the Italian "Renaissance marks a major shift in human consciousness about the description of nature and about experience in the physical world" (11). She cites the work of visual artists and architects, including Michelangelo, Brunelleschi, and Raphael, as those who explored the powers and possibilities of "a new set of mental tools that made it possible to objectify the world" (12). In her view these artists set in motion "a revolution in consciousness" that represents nothing short of "a tectonic cultural shift" that introduced two premises: (i) the uniformity of nature, and (ii) the neutrality, homogeneity, and infinity of time and space (12).

The cultural shift that this new perspectival technology in the visual arts brought about, as Ermarth (2011) tells it, is one "that changed the entire *method* of understanding and produced new tools of thought. The *invention of neutrality,* and its corresponding 'objectivity,' however, was not a classical inheritance; it was Renaissance Europe's creation alone" (17; emphasis added).[103] Ermarth is of course correct to say that, with the introduction of the perspectival technology in Renaissance-era art, paintings gained a depth and reality never seen before; the "new tools" enabled a new way to interact in the physical world of artistic production. The perspectival technology created a three-dimensional space that ushered in what she identifies as "modern" tools of thought: the *neutral space* within which to move and view objective reality *realistically.*

On Ermarth's (2011) view, this perspectival understanding of *space in the visual arts,* over the course of centuries, gave way to (i.e., read: "metaphorically transferred") the perspectival understanding of *time in narrativity* (8). Along these lines, she suggests that history writing before the neutralization of time was conceived of in terms of ancient "typological patterns" that repeated themselves in

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103   Ermarth here asserts that modernity (the perspective of neutrality, or objectivity) was born with the invention of perspectival technology during the Renaissance. For Luft (2003), likewise, Western humanism (modernity) emerged during the Renaissance, involving a process of transference in equating the "'divine art' of the *geometrician* and the human art in the physical sciences" at the very cusp of the early modern age (27; emphasis added). Thus while there are similarities, Luft identifies the *metaphorical and embodied* origins of the development going all the way back to late antiquity. (See Section 6.1.2; compare these arguments with McGilchrist 2009, who gives different reasons for this same type of development; cf. Southgate's 2011 positive review of McGilchrist's *historical* thesis.)

terms of "typological figurations." This is quite similar, in fact, to what White (2013) now describes in terms of "History as Fulfillment" (cf. White 2005b, 334). On this view, moreover, it was "discontinuity" that marked the *conditions of perception* in the medieval world of both art and narrative (Ermarth 2011, 8). Discontinuous time and space are said to comprise the perceptual conditions underlying the two-dimensional surface images of paintings, much like the typological thinking in narrative that gives rise to the kind of figural fulfillment White (2013) describes.

The "pre-modern" *perceptual conditions* of time and space, then, are assumed to underlie the perceptual discontinuity responsible for the baffling nature of the uncoordinated, discrete episodes of action in medieval narratives, such as *Morte d'Arthur* or the *Song of Roland* (Ermarth 2011, 8). The medieval narratives, on this view, resemble the discontinuous spaces of medieval art. It is only much later, as Ermarth argues, that the perspectival technology that transformed art at the beginning of the modern era also came to transform the tools of thought with respect to neutralized and objectified time, and hence narrative. On her reading, "the *time of modernity is neutral* not 'linear.' Linearity is not a feature of time. [...] 'Linear' is just a feature of narrative as it goes from one thing to the next"; time is neutral (Ermarth 2011, 25; emphasis added).

New tools of thought are needed now once again, as Ermarth reasons, due to the endemic "failure to consider what Hayden White calls 'the content of the form,'" which remains implicit, in her view, unless one recognizes and focuses on Saussure's "systemic value" (xv). But by unproblematically posing "systemic value" to such an end, Ermarth does not recognize her presupposition that Saussure had mastered the linguistic problem addressed by Aristotle: Do people *know what they are talking about?* (Harris 2004, 48; see Sections 4.3–4.4).

Ermarth takes for granted the ancient tradition that posed a fixed code of language (linguistic "convention") as a *deus ex machina* brought on board by Aristotle to explain why different human languages exist. In line with Aristotle (and also Nietzsche) Ermarth (2011) is satisfied that "there is no link with nature, no referential anchor [...]. *If language were 'natural' we would all speak the same language;* if it is arbitrary, as Saussure claims, then its detachment from nature – its arbitrariness – means that understanding it requires systemic knowledge [...]" (37; emphasis added).[104] According to linguists Roy Harris and Talbot J. Taylor (1997), Aristotle maintained, in brief,

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104 White seems to agree with such a conclusion. As he told Erlend Rogne (2009) in an interview: "What structuralism taught me was that the situation is always structured. *And like language, from the beginning it's arbitrarily structured,* or it is structured to the advantage of certain groups in the totality. The rules themselves are arbitrarily put in place. They also make communication possible. (2009, 66; italics added).

(i) that the world is the same for all its inhabitants, (ii) that the 'mental representation' of the world is the same for all its inhabitants, but (iii) that language is not the same for all *because* it is conventional, and different communities have different conventions" (33; original italics; cf. Kretzmann 1974).

By unproblematically embracing Saussure's systemic value, and by leaving out Derrida's critique of Saussurean phonocentrism in her analysis, Ermarth overlooks the perceptual ontology that remains at the very core of Saussure's system (i.e., perception is assumed to be the same for all in the comprehension of language).[105] In Section 3.5, I briefly discussed Fuchs's (1976) argument that the Kantian critique of pure reason had banished a blatantly metaphysical (Cartesian) epistemology.

As Derrida argues, however, a *new ontology of perception* was reintroduced. The "absolute Being" of traditional philosophy was reintroduced as *given through intuitions based on perception*. In this way, Derrida argued that even Kant had overlooked how the *givenness of Being* is now accomplished through human nature by way of our (metaphysical) "perceptions" of the world. This Derridean critique of the "metaphysics of presence" through our perceptions does nothing, however, to change the traditional reception of Aristotelian sign theory, as it was received by Saussure.

Indeed, "[m]issing from Saussure's is the notion that the senses play any role at all in confirming or authenticating the true value of the sign" (Harris 1996, 118). In other words, Derrida's outright rejection of perception (quoted in White 1985, 280) does no harm to (Derrida's) development of the signs of writing (see Chapter 9). Indeed, Saussure was an idealist, who took for granted the mind-matter dualism as a precondition for his system of signs (Lanigan 1990, 52). In other words, insofar as the *givenness of Being,* after Kant, is transferred to operating through the intuitions, it is still metaphysics that guarantees the meaning of words within the language system: *we can know through our intuitions, based on perceptions, what we are talking about.* Ultimately it is the arbitrariness of the binary sign that serves as the rational *epistemological guarantee* that grounds Saussure's "systemic value." The American linguist William Dwight Whitney (1827–1894) confirmed Saussure in this direction; Saussure even mentions Whitney by name in the *Cours de linguistique générale* (Fr. 1916; *Course in General Linguistics,* Eng. 1959, 1983, 2011*;* hereafter *Course*) as an important influence, as I show below.

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105   See Section 3.5; see also Fuchs 1976; Brockmeier 2002.

5.3   WHITNEY'S ROLE IN SAUSSURE'S INNOVATIONS ON ANCIENT SIGN THEORY

It appears that Saussure's background and education is unknown to many Saussure scholars, justifying the sections in Chapter 4 that sketch out how Saussure came to focus on ancient sign theory the way he did. For instance, philosopher David Holdcroft (1991) expresses surprise that Saussure would posit

> a striking reversal of the intellectual perspective in which he had grown up, since [Saussure] claims that the primary study [of language] is a descriptive one of the state of the language at a given time, a *synchronic* study, rather than a study of the changes undergone by a language through time, a *diachronic* study. (17)

Joseph's (2012) detailed biography of Saussure's life and unusual secondary education, however, sheds a good deal of light on how Saussure came to adopt the synchronic study of language that so surprises Holdcroft in the quote above (see Chapter 4). There was nothing particularly unusual among the concepts Saussure put forward, since most were known already. Indeed, sign theory was of ancient origin. But it was not taught to linguists in Saussure's own day. It was, rather, taught to philosophers.

Thus, on the basis of Saussure's (accidental) education in sign theory, which Joseph (2012) elaborates – some of it for the first time – Saussure was bound to notice those, who shared in what he had learned and believed to be true. Whitney was one of Saussure's most important nineteenth-century precursors and confirmations in this respect.[106] Joseph (2012) has examined the notes that Saussure took in 1876, while reading Georg Curtius's *Principles of Greek Etymology*. These notes attest to the fact that Saussure came across Curtius's praise of Whitney as being both a "distinguished" and competent linguist (Curtius in Joseph 2012, 176).

It is also recorded that Saussure and Whitney met, if briefly, once.[107] Whitney had read Saussure's *Mémoire,* the notes of which he had then offered to share with the young Saussure. It is not known if Saussure ever acquired the notes that Whitney had offered him, however. What Joseph implies by this meeting is that this personal contact with Whitney helped to reinforce the connection between their (already similar) outlooks, which Whitney personally acknowledged in their meeting. Indeed, what Saussure shared with the older, established American linguist was the belief in the fundamental arbitrariness of language, which was based on

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106   See James Turner (2014, 247–251, esp. 248) for Whitney's own antecedents.

107   Joseph (2012, 254) reports that the two men met by coincidence in Berlin on Friday, March 28, 1879, at the home of Heinrich Zimmer, a mutual academic acquaintance.

the idea of linguistic "convention" as historical in nature, and nothing more (or less).[108] At stake in the matter at the time was the difference in outlook between language as a "physical" (biological) science, as against language as a "historical" (conventional) one. As *Whitney* writes:

> [E]ach word [...] was learned by every person who employs it from some other person who had employed it before him. He adopted it as the sign of a certain idea, because it was already in use by others as such. Inner and essential connection between idea and word, whereby the mind which conceives the one at once apprehends and produces the other, there is none, in any language upon earth. *Every existing form of human speech is a body of arbitrary and conventional signs for thought, handed down by tradition from one generation to another* [...]. (Whitney quoted in Joseph 2012, 255; emphasis added)

What Saussure ultimately shared with Whitney, then, was the "functionalist view" of (historical) language as a "social institution" *for the purpose of bridging the essential duality between sounds and concepts.* That is, it was the social institution of language that bridged the two orders (binary dimensions) of language, its sound-image (percept) and its meaning (concept), which were not otherwise connected. According to Saussure, what language did not do was to institute a particular "set of sounds," nor did it institute a particular "set of concepts."

If language was arbitrary, as Saussure believed, then the *relation between sounds and concepts* led linguists to study what was ultimately *accidental* to it, rather than what was *essential:* that is, the (essential) institutional role of language (*la langue*) "exists *to align* whatever sets of sounds and concepts happen to exist at a given point in time" (Joseph 2012, 411; emphasis added). The study of *la langue,* then, isolated and studied what was essential about language as a social institution. Arbitrary, conventional language needed a *bridge* to align the binary aspects of language (percepts & concepts) for the social institution of language to exist in the first place. This alignment ("bridge") was the *synchronic* (essential) study of language over the *diachronic* (accidental) approach.[109]

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108   In contrasting the various views of language at the time, Saussure supported Whitney's position: "'Language is a human *institution,'* to which Saussure further commented that this fact "shifted the axis of linguistics" (Saussure in Joseph 2012, 411; original italics). In the *Course,* Saussure (2011) did not agree with Whitney on all points, but he did emphasize that "on the essential point the American linguist is right: language is a convention, and the nature of the sign that is agreed upon does not matter"; it is the social convention of language that gives unity to individual speech and not the other way around (10).

109   In AE (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2 and subsections) there is no need for an artificial "bridge" between what is perceptual (physical) and conceptual (psychological), that is, "to align" them, because these areas of the brain in infants and young children experience what Lakoff and Johnson refer to as "cross-domain neural mapping" (conflation) in their early experience of the world with their primary care-giver, *which remains for one's entire life.* Concepts are thus *already embodied* on this interpretation, this is how "conceptual metaphor theory" originally got its name (see, e.g., Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 46–54; for a similar argument

As historian James Turner (2014) relates this development, Whitney thought that all words "get their meanings from past usages," but knowing the history of a word "in no way affects how a person uses it" (248). In his ongoing arguments against the other great (German) linguist of the day at Oxford (i.e., Max Müller, 1823–1900), Whitney thought one need not follow historical linguistics "into the labyrinth of Sanskrit roots"; in his view, the "diachronic approach distracted from accurate analysis of actual linguistic usage. For the latter purpose, a synchronic method sufficed" (248).

Müller believed, by contrast, that language was "directly bound up with the *formulation* of thought" for which he had a dictum: "No thought without language, no language without thought," which meant, for him – along the Romanticist lines of the day – that language belongs most fully to the great thinkers of the past (Joseph 2012, 256; cf. James 1880). For the empiricist Whitney, on the other hand, language did not belong to the thinkers of the past, but was fully democratic in the sense that it was about communication and so it could belong equally (and thus democratically) to anyone who could communicate (Joseph 2012, 256).

According to Turner (2014), Whitney had acquired an education in geological fieldwork as a young man, working alongside his renowned geologist older brother Josiah (after whom Mt. Whitney in California, USA is named), who exposed the later linguist William to the idea of "uniformitarian geology." Whitney later came to metaphorically compare languages to (*static,* nonliving) geological formations; insofar as

> [t]o understand *why* the earth is as it is, you needed to uncover the slow workings of geological change over time [diachrony]. But the earth is as it is, and you do not need to know its geological history to farm it, mine it, sail its seas, or climb Mount Whitney [synchrony]. (Turner 2014, 250; original italics)

It was through his personal exposure to and understanding of uniformitarian geology that Whitney was able to "see" language in this metaphorical light, despite the fact that he was one of the most distinguished Sanskritists in the comparativist practices of the day. Just as in the earth science of geology, Whitney was able to distill "timeless" generalizations from the decades of diachronic research in human language by historically oriented scholars similar to himself. In this way, "[w]ithout his clearly intending it [and without systematizing his observations

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that applies to *reading,* see Dehaene 2010, 216–218). If this "conflation" did not happen, for instance, there *would not be* the phenomenon of synesthesia (see footnote 34 above); ironically, Saussure himself had a rare form of synesthesia, even among the (already rare) synesthetes (Joseph 2012, 394). In other words, for AE, the "bridge" that Saussure sought out to connect the "set of particular sounds" with a "set of particular concepts" is *already an embodied one.* I briefly show the implications this has for White's history-as-fiction in Section 5.5.2 below.

further], the diachronic and synchronic in Whitney's linguistics became linked" (Turner 2014, 250).

The distinctive move made by Whitney was to characterize linguistics as a theoretical "science," "drawing on comparative philology but [seeing linguistics as] distinct from it" (Turner 2014, 250). Saussure noted in 1894 (the year Whitney died and the year Saussure coined the term *sémiologie*[110] for his work) that "Whitney's works [...] deduce from the results of comparative grammar a higher and general view of language," which enabled (Saussure) to see metaphorically that linguistic elements were the product of a history that could be ignored when their components were analyzed (Saussure in Turner 2014, 250). The key innovative thrust of Saussure's work over that of Whitney's, then, was the effort to *systematize* the innovations that these various sources offered him. In his own lectures, Saussure

> did not always cite the historical precedents for the ideas he was putting forward. [...] Even if precedents can be found for nearly every element of his general linguistics, this does not change the fact that *his synthesis of them produced a model for understanding language as original and influential as any ever devised.* (Joseph 2012, 70–71; emphasis added)

The static, nonliving model for synchrony and diachrony that Saussure took away from his reading of Whitney was based on a *geological metaphor* from earth science. Saussure's repeated insistence on the non-materiality of language therefore meant that "*language is a form [a pattern] and not a substance,*" which drove his interest in its social (holist, systemic) aspect (Saussure 2011, 122; original italics). From the outset, Saussure regarded language as "double sided." That is, language was both a socially shared and an individual phenomenon, but it was tough to imagine the proper bridging mechanism in this social system of language. In what follows, I characterize the nature of Saussure's (scientific) task, as he interpreted it, in his effort locate the essential study of language, the bridging mechanism of *la langue*.

5.4   SEMIOLOGY AS A "SCIENCE" OF SIGNS

In his introduction to the *Course in General Linguistics,* Saussure opens with a historical prologue that emphasizes semiology as constituting a science. As he puts it, this "science" of semiology "has been developed around the facts of language passed through three stages before finding its true and unique object" (Saussure 2011, 1).[111]

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110   E.g., in Harris (1987, 26).

111   Joseph (2012, 72) states that these three historical phases include: (1) ancient Greek grammar; (2) classical philology with Greek precursors that extended into the nineteenth century; and (3) comparative grammar

Arguing against "organicism" (the metaphor that language was an organism with a life of its own[112]), Holdcroft (1991) suggests that Saussure meant by this "unique object" not a species of natural object (organic life) but, rather, "in this fourth and final stage that linguistics had found its true object [...] as a *social* product" (9; emphasis added; cf. Harris 1987). Saussure intended to rescue the study of language, following in Whitney's footsteps, as a *scientific* discipline from this latest phase of historical and philological practice in comparative grammar. In order to fulfill such a task, however, he strictly defined its boundaries. The disciplinary aims of Saussure's linguistics, included these three principles:

(a) to describe and trace the history of all observable languages [...];

(b) to determine the forces that are permanently and universally at work in all languages, and to deduce the *general laws* to which *all specific historical phenomena can be reduced;* and

(c) to delimit and define itself. (Saussure 2011, 6; emphasis added)

The first task (a) of the new science, as Harris (1987, 12) asserts, is something traditional philologists would certainly have recognized, insofar as it involved describing and recording all known languages, tracing histories of language families, and finally attempting to reconstruct the parent languages of those families. Harris (1987, 12) further asserts, however, that the second task (b) "radically departs" from the first, insofar as (b) involves determining forces of operation that are "permanently and universally at work in all languages" (6). This claim is then made to warrant the second one "to deduce the *general laws* to which 'all' specific historical phenomena can thereby be reduced" (6).

Harris comments that the nature of Saussure's concept of "science" is thus "given away" by the second task (b). As Harris (1987) puts it, "[t]he hidden premiss seems to be that sciences simply are endeavours to bring together and interrelate under a few general laws or principles as many disparate facts as possible pertaining to one subject" (196). It thus appears to Harris that Saussure never considered that "such an endeavor makes better sense in some subjects than in others," for example, that *linguistics would need a different type of justification* "than, say, [...] physics" (1987, 196). Harris goes on to elaborate the fact that Saussure's second aim (b) of the new "science" of linguistics could never be accomplished by processes of cataloguing

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that stemmed from a paper, originally presented in 1786, asserting a grammatical resemblance between European root words and Sanskrit, the ancient language of India. For his own part, Saussure (mistakenly, as it turns out) attributes a "new" line of linguistic theory to have emerged around 1870 (Whitney and others) that forms the basis of his own synthesis. See Section 4.4 for reasons why Saussure's synthesis was actually rooted in ancient antecedents going back to Aristotle.

112   Joseph (2012) mentions that Darwin's ideas were strong after the middle of the nineteenth century and that languages were being treated as metaphors of "organisms with a life of their own detached from those of their speakers. [...] In time, a few linguists came to think that the organic metaphor had become so powerful, particularly in the wake of Darwin, that people were forgetting it was a metaphor at all" (88).

and classification, as mentioned in (a). With the third aim, (c) the "delimiting" and "defining" of linguistics itself (Saussure 2011, 6), the extent to which Saussure is offering a science of linguistics is made plainly evident.

As Harris (1987) explains, Saussure's three aims of semiology (a), (b), and (c) are derived by "applying to the study of linguistic phenomena a general paradigm from the philosophy of science":

> For any science *S,* it falls to that science to describe the phenomena within its domain. Second, it falls to that science to explain the same phenomena as particular instances of the general laws of *S.* Third, the way *S* accomplishes these twin objectives defines *S* as a science. (12)

Harris (1987) observes in this context, moreover, that in applying a paradigm from the philosophy of science, Saussure was merely applying "a paradigm *dictated by the cultural context of the historical Saussure's day and age*" (12; emphasis added).[113] What is more, Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin (1996) implicate Saussure in the Enlightenment context of language philosophy, when they state that "between 1800 and 1920, the problem of defining the essential scope and limits of *reason*" became a double problem "of defining the essential scope and limits of representation" and, subsequently, of defining those same parameters also for language (121, original emphasis; cf. Benjamin 2007a,b).

In what follows, I will show that Saussure's semiology is just another moment within modernity itself in its disembodied, rationalist form – dependent as it is on Saussure's static, nonliving *metaphor* at its core as a model for human language. In this sense, Ermarth presents not new, but rather "old" tools of thought; old tools that are, so to speak, simply retooled to look new – taken from the new language of theoretical economics and applied to the new science of linguistics. In what follows, I sketch Ermarth's (2011) endorsement of Saussure's metaphor employing "coins" as units of value in a currency system as the model for "words" in a system of negative, differential linguistic value.

5.5   ERMARTH ON SAUSSURE'S "SYSTEMIC VALUE"

When Ermarth (2011) looks solely to Saussure for the future of history in the discursive condition, she does not move, as she claims to do, *beyond* the disembodied abstraction that fuels what she characterizes (above in Section 5.2) as the modernist metaphysics of neutrality, objectivity, and truth. Instead, Ermarth's paradigm "shift"

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113   See Section 5.5.1, below; French economist Léon Walras played a decisive role in Saussure's choice of model for his synchronic linguistics (e.g., Petrilli & Ponzio 2005, xvii).

merely provides another version of the metaphysics that she would reject. To return to Saussure's systemic value with enthusiasm is to fully (re)embrace Descartes's mind-body dualism (cf. Lanigan 1991, 52). Indeed, Joseph (2012) notes that also "Descartes took for granted the arbitrariness of the connection between words and their meanings," (81), just like Saussure. This position is, after all, one of ancient origins.

Furthermore, Ermarth (2011) compares Saussure's systemic value with Einsteinian relativity, noting that the relativity of measurements between autonomous inertial systems and Saussure's systemic linguistic value are "cognate," or commensurate (32–34). In taking Saussure for her own master key, she embraces (Einsteinian) physics as her metaphor of choice for history in the discursive condition. This replicates, in parallel fashion, Saussure's own inspiration and master key for his choice of metaphor at the core of systemic value in linguistics: political economy, as theoretical economics was then called (Saussure 2011, 79–81, 111–122; see also Section 5.5.1 below). It makes sense that Ermarth would recognize such an unlikely relationship between the role of "measurement," as between the independent inertial systems of Einstein's theory of special relativity, and that of negative, differential "value" in Saussure's linguistics, where words have value, *like coins as units of value in a currency system,* differentially. When Saussure (2011) distinguishes between substance and form in his system, this entails that:

> Signs function, then, not through their intrinsic value but through their [static] relative position. In addition, it is impossible for sound alone, a material element, to belong to language. It is only a secondary thing, substance to be put to use. All our *conventional values* have the characteristic of not being confused with the tangible element which supports them. For instance, *it is not the metal in a piece of money that fixes its value.* A coin nominally worth five [Swiss] francs may contain less than half its worth in silver. Its value will vary according to the amount stamped upon it and according to its use inside or outside a political boundary. This is even more true of the linguistic signifier, which is not phonic but *incorporeal*—constituted not by its material substance but by the *differences* that separate its sound image from all others. (118–119; emphasis added)

Saussure's predecessor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, linguist Michel Bréal (1832–1915), had explicitly (metaphorically) linked the notion of linguistic value with the economic concept of exchange. "Bréal said that we treat words as bankers do securities, 'as if they were the coin itself, because they know that at a given moment they could exchange them for the coin'" (Bréal quoted in Harris 1987, 121).[114] What

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114   Harris (1996, 117) also notes that metaphors assimilating words to currency has a long lineage that dates back as far as the Roman rhetor Quintilian (c. 35– c. 100 CE). (In this vein, cf. Ginzburg 1999, 65–66.)

Harris (1987) attempts to clarify in Saussure's usage of Bréal's currency metaphor is that this comparison to economics cannot work, unless one is

> prepared to ignore the difference between *coins as the objects* actually exchanged in commercial transactions and *coins as units* in a system of currency: in other words, precisely the distinction which corresponds in the linguistic case to that between items of *parole* and items of *langue.* (121; emphasis added)

As Harris has it, the very distinction between *la parole* and *la langue* is what is ultimately at issue in the use of the currency metaphor. The distinction arises in the two senses in which the metaphor can be understood in terms of (i) coins as actual material objects made of silver or other metal (substance, or *la parole*) and (ii) coins as units of value in a system of currency (form, or *la langue*). This very distinction between diachrony and synchrony was confirmed, in turn, by Whitney's own (*static,* nonliving) metaphor of languages from uniformitarian geology, with which he was familiar through training in geology as a young man (see Section 5.3 above; see also Turner 2014).

Whitney's metaphor for language was the earth itself. On the one hand, understanding *why* the earth is the way it is requires an understanding of the gradual geological changes over time (*diachrony*). On the other hand, "to farm it, mine it, sail its seas, or climb Mount Whitney," one need not concern oneself with the earth's history at all (*synchrony*) (Turner 2014, 250). But, when using a metaphor as a model, as McGilchrist (2009) argues, what we compare a thing with will limit those aspects that we can *pay attention to,* and those aspects that we do not. In other words, "[t]he model we choose to use to understand something determines what we find" (97). But more so than this, the metaphor we *choose* as a model transfers the structural attributes in the source domain to those in the target domain (cf. M. Johnson 2007, 204–205). Another way of putting this is that, in such a transfer, the target domain will *embody* the structural attributes of the source domain. It is this transfer of attributes that transforms what is "dynamic," moving and changing, to something "nonliving," fixed and static.

What I am saying is that Saussure metaphorically imbued, *embodied* "the arbitrariness of the binary sign" as the manifest nature of his static, disembodied, negative, differential system of language – which is why no one – not Derrida, not White, and certainly not Ermarth – can escape the "veiled consequences" of what Saussure himself considered to be primary, "at the very top." In what follows, I investigate more into the background of the role of political economy of Saussure's day that he explicitly links in the *Course* to his choice of metaphor in the development of *la langue.*

5.5.1   THE "MASTER KEY" OF POLITICAL ECONOMY: LÉON WALRAS[115]

In Chapter III, Part I, of the *Course,* Saussure (2011) sets out his particular interest in political economy as a model for his new science of linguistics (79–100, esp. 79). In fact, there are only hints as to whom Saussure might be referring to, for unlike his specific naming of Whitney as an influence, Saussure named no one economist in particular (e.g., 79–90). Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio (2005), however, indicate that the "model of sign in [Saussurean] semiology […] follows a template similar to that of 'marginalistic' economics" (xvii).[116] According to Petrilli and Ponzio (2005), Italian philosopher and semiotician Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1921–1985) clearly demonstrates that the "Saussurean sign model is heavily influenced by the marginalistic theory of economic value as developed by the [Swiss] School of Lausanne" (xvii; see also Bridel 1997).[117]

The proponents of the Lausanne School, Léon Walras (1834–1910) and his follower Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), contributed to what is termed "marginal utility theory." As a method of microeconomics, this theory shifted the focus from the classic (which also includes the historical materialist Marxian) labor theory of value to market fluctuation in terms – not of labor – but of a more fine-grained individual ("subjective") choice in the consumption of goods and services.[118] The contribution to microeconomics of the Lausanne School began after 1870, the date

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115   I thank Professor Matti Peltonen for discussing important aspects of this section with me and for mentioning Léon Walras as a possible source for Saussure's discussion of nineteenth-century political economy. The term "theoretical economics" was not in general circulation until after 1900; it thus follows that Saussure would have used the older term for the field: political economy (see Niehans 1990). For more, see also below.

116   Marginalist economics was the shift (by several thinkers simultaneously in Switzerland, England, and Austria) toward the role of *microeconomics,* in which individual decision-making provided the factors (behavior) needed for understanding how (free) market prices interact with and balance the economic supply and demand for goods and services. On this micro-level view, "the decision making [role] of households, entrepreneurs, and firms" became the focus of an attempt to apply abstract metrics to market behavior in order to quantify it (Niehans 1990, 160). Jürg Niehans (1990) summarizes this influential development as the microeconomic need to study and "constrain" the optimization of individual decision-making in the behavior of prices for goods and services; the tool of choice for this optimization was *high-level mathematics* (160–161). In Switzerland the Lausanne School, in England William Stanley Jevons (1835–1882) and Alfred Marshall (1842–1924), and in Austria Carl Menger (1840–1921), all brought the mathematical tools to economics that made it a highly theoretical endeavor. In the end, however, the marginal theory of value did not so much *replace* classical economic theory as extend it theoretically and divide it, as Saussure (2011) notes, onto "two completely divergent paths. […] Here, in contrast to the other sciences, *political economy* and *economic history* constitute two clearly separated disciplines within a single science; the works that have recently appeared on these subjects point up the distinction" (79; emphasis added).

117   In firmly identifying the School of Lausanne as the source of Saussure's model for political economy, Petrilli and Ponzio (2005) specifically indicate Rossi-Landi (1983, 1975). He mentions the marginalistic economists by name, including Walras, in Rossi-Landi 1983, p. 20. Inclined toward historical materialism and phenomenology, Rossi-Landi's more synoptic reworking of Saussure's semiology was influenced by both Karl Marx and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Rossi-Landi rejected Saussure's idealism (ontological dualism) and embraced, rather, a more tool-oriented, materialist approach to "language as work" (Petrilli & Ponzio 2005, 247; for more on Rossi-Landi, see *idem,* 232–297).

118   For a detailed treatment of marginal utility theory – with its antecedents in J. S. Mill and others – see Niehans (1990).

when Walras first secured his professorship, after which he "succeeded for the first time in constructing a circular flow model" for his mathematically complex general equilibrium theory of money (Niehans 1990, 161; see, e.g., Walras 2014).

Important contributions to the marginalist field were coming out just around this very time in England and Austria. The Englishman William Stanley Jevons (1835–1882) led the way in the 1860s. Pareto continued developing Walras's contributions of the 1870s–1890s in the Lausanne professorship that he inherited from Walras, helping to establish Walras as an important economic theoretician. Swiss economist Jürg Niehans (1990) outlines the "marginalist century" – within which the Lausanne School holds a secure place for its contributions – as one spanning roughly from 1830 to 1930. Saussure fits well into this time frame, as he was born just down the road in Geneva in 1857 and came of age in 1878; Saussure also died well within this time frame, in 1913. Thus by the time Saussure delivered his University of Geneva lectures (1907–11), serving as the basis of the *Course,* the work of Walras (who died in 1910) was by then well known, at least within Saussure's native Switzerland (e.g., Niehans 1990, 208–209, see also below).[119]

Niehans (1990) credits Walras's greatest contribution to economic theory in terms of the "explicit integration of individual optimization into the circular flow system" (207). Saussure would have found Walras's "systemic" theoretical contribution to be of interest, because it ran roughly parallel to his own theoretical problems in linguistics. The holist "integration" of individual parts within the whole "circular flow" (i.e., of the economic system) is significant for Saussure, because his particular linguistic problems and interests concerned precisely the part-whole relation between individual speech (*la parole*) and the circular flow of language as a whole (*la langue*) in quite similar terms. Walras's writings are, moreover, lively and relatively clear for even non-economists to read, that is, despite his challenging mathematical analyses.

It was during the 1870s that Walras mapped out all his principle contributions, publishing his major works in Saussure's native French between 1874 and 1896, the

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119   Of particular note during the period of Walras's active professional years as a professor in Lausanne (1870–1892), the marginalist utility theory came under attack in a controversy of the 1880s in Germany, known as the *Methodenstreit,* or debate concerning method. Economic historian Christopher Lloyd (1993) characterizes this late nineteenth-century debate as primarily between the German historical economists and "the deductivist and abstract character of Carl Menger's [Austrian] marginalist economics" (14). The debate subsequently spread also to England, where it ultimately brought into being the modern "discipline" of economic history (15). As Lloyd (1993) puts it, this division between theoretical and historical dimensions of economics "was based on a fundamental disagreement over philosophy and methodology, an abstract versus historical split which, from the perspective of the late twentieth century, seems to have been more harmful in the long run to economics than to economic history" (15). Of interest in the context of this thesis, moreover, is Lloyd's (1993) astute observation that "[t]he weakness of economic explanation springs partly from its lack of interest in social institutions, its lack of historical specificity, and *a misguided attempt by some economists to construct a positive science of society on the perceived model of physics"* (15; emphasis added; likewise, cf. Wallerstein 2001). In fact, as I have already argued above, in Section 5.4, in following the theoretical economics of his day, Saussure outlined the construction of an abstract versus historical *science* of linguistics, encouraged by the physics models to be found, e.g., in Walras's work.

latter date of which marked the publication of the third edition of his *Elements of Theoretical Economics: Or the Theory of Social Wealth* (Niehans 1990, 207–209; henceforth, *Elements*). Niehans relates that, by his retirement in 1892, Walras was not only well known in his home country of Switzerland, but also abroad (1990, 209). On this basis it would be fair to speculate that Saussure could have become aware of Walras's work no later than the mid-1890s. Indeed, the third edition of *Elements* was published just after Saussure had coined his term "semiology" (in 1894) as the name of his science of linguistics – at a time when he was actively seeking ways to characterize the *synchronic* and *diachronic* axes systematically (on this chronology, see Joseph 2012).

In fact, it is possible to identify a degree of parallel thinking between parts of Saussure's (2011) *Course* and Walras's (2014) *Elements*. Of course, if the (originally) French-language *Elements* had been familiar to (French-speaking) Saussure, the parallels between them would be understandable, given Saussure's (2011) own allusion to "works that have recently appeared" in political economy (79). Saussure opens his *Course* with the three disciplinary aims of linguistics (2011, 6; see above Section 5.4); compare this to Walras's (2014) recommendations:

> The first thing to be done at the beginning of a course or treatise on economics is to define the science, its object, divisions, nature, and limits. [...] We lack a definition of economics. Of all the definitions that have been proposed, not one has met with the general definitive acceptance that is the sign of truths acquired by science. (3)

What strikes Saussure (2011) most clearly about the relationship between theoretical economics and linguistics is that they both share a *duality* that is "forcing" a wedge between the theoretical and historical aspects of both the disciplines of economics and linguistics (79). Further, Walras (2014) notes a duality of "substance and form" (xiii), where "the theory of property and the theory of taxation [...] are in reality only the two halves of the theory of the distribution of wealth among people in human society, considered *first in isolation as individuals* and then *collectively as the State*" (9; italics added). What Saussure (2011) takes away from his source(s) in political economy, as found in his section on linguistic value (111–122), is that "everywhere and always there is the same complex equilibrium of terms that mutually condition each other. Putting it another way, *language is a form and not a substance*" (122; original emphasis), which appears to directly echo Walras's own words in *Elements* (2014, xiii). Saussure (2011) explains the relationship between economic theory and linguistics, which deserves quotation in full:

> The political history of states is unfolded solely in time, but a historian depicting a particular period does not work apart from history. Conversely, the science of

political institutions is essentially descriptive, but if the need arises it can easily deal with a historical question without disturbing its unity.

> On the contrary, *that duality is already forcing itself upon the economic sciences.* Here, in contrast to the other sciences, political economy and economic history constitute two clearly separated disciplines within a single science; *the works that have recently appeared on these subjects point up the distinction.* Proceeding as they have, economists are—without being aware of it—obeying an inner necessity. A similar necessity obliges us to divide linguistics into two parts, each with its own principle. Here as in political economy we are confronted with the notion of *value;* both sciences [political economy and linguistics] are concerned with *a system for equating things of different orders—labor and wages in one and a signified and signifier in the other.* (79; italics added)

When Saussure refers to political economy and linguistics as "sciences," as he does above, where "both sciences are concerned with a system for equating things of different orders," he may very well be referring to Walras's (2014) distinction between "substance and form" (xiii), which occupy two different orders: the *isolated order of the individual* (labor) and the *collective order of the money economy* (wages). For Saussure, this distinction corresponded to the distinction he was trying to express between that of the signifier and the signified. These two orders of the individual acting (the realm of practice) and the systems that circulated collectively (by way of "the laws of science") continually occupied and challenged Walras, just as they challenged and haunted Saussure.

In following Whitney, Saussure realizes a theoretical affinity to Walras and the new discipline of political economy (today called theoretical economics). In both Whitney and Walras, there is the clear division between an abstract, theoretical (immaterial) realm and a (material) historical dimension; in dividing these separate realms, Saussure is able to refine and isolate his concepts to those of "evolutionary diachrony" and the static realm of "synchrony." Going beyond Whitney, Saussure *systematized the relations* between these two different orders. Where for Whitney the difference between *diachrony* and *synchrony* was merely metaphorical (from his exposure to the idea of uniformitarian geology), for Saussure, this difference was essential, axiomatic and which he raised to the level of his science of linguistics as the master key he was searching for.

With this key connection to Walras, as both a confirmation of Whitney and as the background for the metaphor he chose for developing semiology further, Saussure's linguistics came to share many of the same characteristics that Walras identifies in his theoretical approach to economics. And here there should be no misunderstanding of his aims: Walras's grand design was "to create a social and economic science comparable to the *natural sciences"* (Niehans 1990, 208); this is

clearly and emphatically stated. Saussure's goal, for his part, was to create a "science" of signs no less law-abiding and systematic than the science Walras envisioned for economics. Indeed, for economics, in Walras's (2014) view, once the facts of science have been established, they "can throw light on several arts; an art can draw upon the information furnished by several sciences" (11). This idea would also resonate with Saussure (2011), as when he states:

> Signs that are wholly arbitrary realize better than the others the ideal of the semiological process; that is why language [...] is the most characteristic; in this sense *linguistics can become the master-pattern for all branches of semiology* although language is only one particular semiological system. (68; emphasis added)

The economists of Walras's generation believed that economics was both a moral and natural science, that is to say, both art and science, properly speaking. But, the distinction between them was not clearly delineated. Walras (2014) was concerned to differentiate between these, as when he distinguishes between practice and theory (e.g., 5, 9, 11). Although Walras is critical on some points, he quotes the political economist of the previous generation, Charles Coquelin (1802–1852), with approval when Coquelin claimed that:

> An art (he says) consists...of a series of precepts or rules to be followed; a science consists of knowledge of certain phenomena or relationships observed or revealed.... An art advises, prescribes, directs; science observes, describes, explains. When an astronomer observes and describes the course of the stars, he is practicing science; but when, after making his observations, he deduces from them rules of application to navigation, he is practicing an art.... Thus, to observe and describe real phenomena is science; to lay down precepts, prescribe rules, that is art. (Coquelin quoted in Walras 2014, 12; original ellipses)

For Walras (2014), making this distinction between art and science was actually a distinction, first, between art and ethics, and thereafter distinguished from science. The key to these distinctions, in his view, was to first sketch out a general philosophy of science "in order to arrive at the particular philosophy of economics" (15). Saussure followed suit (as Section 5.4 shows); Saussure defines the science of linguistics in the same way that Walras defines the science of economics. Indeed, as Walras (2014) observes:

> A truth long ago made clear by the Platonic philosophy is that *science does not study bodies but the facts of which bodies are the theater*. Bodies are temporary; facts endure. Facts, their relations and their laws, are the subject of all scientific

study. Moreover, sciences can differ because of their subject matter, or the facts they study. Thus, *in order to differentiate the sciences, we must differentiate the facts.* (15; emphasis added)

What Saussure (2011) appears to have extrapolated from such advice in the "differentiation of the facts," as applied to language, is that they are enduring, whereas "bodies" are merely the theater of such (linguistic) facts. He therefore makes it clear that the body has nothing to do with his construal of language (75–76). His task, in this light, would be to "organize the facts of language" by way of their independent "scientific study." Saussure (2011) asks: "But what is language [*langue*]? It is not to be confused with human speech [*langage*], of which it is only a definite part, though certainly an essential one" (9; original brackets).

The language system (*la langue*) is seen to be both "a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty" (Saussure 2011, 9). Saussure works here to identify the facts in a roughly similar way – in his treatment of (individual) labor and (collective) wages (2011, 79) – as he would have found in Walras (2014, 3). The model of theoretical economics, in Harris's (1987, 122–123) view, however, foists distinctive problems upon linguistics. There is no denying, however, that such a model facilitated a leap of the imagination that allowed Saussure (2011) to envision language as "a self-contained whole and [as] a principle of classification" (9), *wholly separate from* – though providing the very possibility for – *the faculty of speech.*

5.5.2   HISTORY-AS-FICTION AS THE "UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF STRUCTURALIST THOUGHT"

Roy Harris (1987) affirms that Saussure's (2011) Chapter IV on "Linguistic Value" (111–122) "is without doubt the most important of the chapters on synchronic linguistics; and hence, arguably, the most important single chapter in the whole of the *Cours*" (Harris 1987, 118). Ermarth definitely concurs with Harris; she attributes *new tools of thought* after modernity to Saussure's *synchronic systemic value.* In the Preface of her work, she admonishes the reader, "if you think you have 'done' Saussure, look again" (Ermarth 2011, xvi). She brings an exclusive focus on Saussure's systemic value, in order to revisit and emphasize White's "content of the form" (synchronic *la langue*) (xv). But, she does so without the Vichian tropes that White depends on to rescue him from the consequences of structuralism in its original Saussurean, semiological form.

For her part, Ermarth (2011) too thinks that, by side-stepping arbitrariness, she escapes the consequences that White wishes to distance himself from. She thinks

that Derrida cleared the way to (re)embrace the structuralism – *sans* arbitrariness – that (Derrida himself) merely amended somewhat in his focus on writing. She emphasizes the new dispensation that Saussure has inaugurated, when she states that "*language* understood in Saussure's terms, occupies the same foundational place in the Discursive Condition as *neutrality* holds in the Modern Condition" (Ermarth 2011, 34; emphasis added). In other words, the "old" mental tools that *neutrality* offered in the modern condition, on her view, is now replaced by the "new" mental tools that *language* now offers in the discursive condition.

Ermarth (2011) narrows Saussure's "groundbreaking" ideas (36) down to three: (i) that "systemic values of language systems operate differentially"; (ii) "that everything is language"; and (iii) that "there is a permanent gap between the linguistic system (*langue*) on the one hand and, on the other hand, any particular specification of such a system (*parole*)" (Ermarth 2011, 35–36). To emphasize her grasp of these key features of systemic value, Saussure (2011) notes that "*[a]rbitrary* and *differential* are two correlative qualities [...]. Signs function, then, not through their intrinsic value but through their relative position" (118; original italics). Roy Harris notes, however, that *if language were not arbitrary, it could not function differentially in the first place.*[120] Harris (1987) clarifies what is meant by "systemic" value, insofar as

> it is of the essence of Saussurean structuralism that *valuer* derives not from the sign itself, but *from the place which the sign occupies in the total system.* It is indeed *the system of values which determines the signs,* and not the signs which come together to form a system. (122; italics added)

In this sense, Harris comes very close to the embodied interpretation of Saussure that I am offering here. As Harris has it, signs do not constitute the system (as a *substance,* in the way that coins are *made of metal*); it is rather that signs occupy certain *positions* within the (static) system (its form, its pattern) that is of the essence (cf. Harris 1987, 118–119). Put differently, the "form" of the system is constituted by *the positions that the extant signs occupy* at any given time. It is the negative difference among the individual signs that ultimately determines the value of the system as a whole, dictated by Saussure's *metaphor* of choice: coins as *units of value in* a currency system. The key idea of Saussure's system is the way "the *value* of coins depends on exchange" (Harris 1996, 118; emphasis added). In this observation, Harris neatly describes the manner in which Saussure built in the arbitrariness of the binary sign through his choice of metaphor.

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120   Harris (1987) analyzes Saussure's position as entailing the unquestioned acceptance of three related principles that, one without any one of the other two principles, would not even *be* Saussurean linguistics (20–21; for a book-length exposition of this claim, see also Harris 2003).

Ermarth's (2011, 36–41) summary of Saussure's systemic value can now be applied to White (1999a) as he interprets history-as-fiction. Historians' writings (language) and historical events (things in the world) operate analogously along the lines of the separation between Saussure's *langue* and *parole;* that is, between the *synchronic* language system and the *diachronic* use of language in the world through time. These constitute two orders: the order of language, on the one hand, and the order of life, on the other hand. For White, as for Ermarth, stories are not lived but told, so there is the further separation in the analysis of historians' writings between the *surface* level of the narratives (in terms of grammatical sentences) and the deep level of these writings, as they are said to function tropically in terms of figural language.

White (1999a) therefore discusses "facts" and "events" as being binaries (because they are *figural* and *real,* respectively). This is parallel to the permanent gap between language and life, as my summary of Ermarth's own points above sketch out. My experiment in analyzing Ermarth is made specifically in terms of separating from a discussion of Saussure's "structuralism" any consideration of the (Vichian) *tropological* function that White attributes to it. Furthermore, this operation is performed in keeping with Saussure's (2011, 68) suggestion that linguistics can serve as the "master-pattern" for all systems of human practice and meaning, as in the practice of history – a suggestion that Ermarth (2011, 38–39) takes literally.

Historical narratives in the synchronic mode, first of all, would abide by Ermarth's (2011, 36–38) first point, insofar as (i) systemic value operates differentially. Historians' narratives, on such a finding will then occupy absolutely relative positions, vis-à-vis other narratives in the synchronic system of historical narratives, in terms of their *relative interpretations* of the events they discuss (where these narratives now function metaphorically on the model of (a) coins as units of value in a currency system, or the model of (b) different inertial systems of reference and their unique measurements). In such a synchronic system of *exchange values,* there are no referential anchors outside the system of signs that constitute their formal relationship, analyzed on the model of *la langue.*

As an example of how this works in White's thinking, take, in this context, White's (2005b) noted exchange with A. Dirk Moses (2005) in the pages of *History and Theory.* White's remarkable reply to Moses's comment that history-as-fiction does not appear "to guard the historical integrity of the Holocaust's facticity," as Moses (2005, 316) put the issue, summarizes the above points well.[121] Keeping in mind that White's reply is from 2005, and not from 1975, White does in the quotation

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121   In the Introduction, Section 1.2, I mention the debate with the Holocaust historians that opened up after 1990, following a noteworthy conference in Los Angeles in April of that year, hosted by the Holocaust historian Saul Friedländer (ed. 1992). It was this debate, moreover, that precipitated a shift in White's work in terms of how to handle the implications of the *fictive* historical accounts of the Holocaust of the European Jews at the hands of the Nazis during the Second World War.

below what he has done *consistently* throughout the tenure of the linguistic turn, marking him as the structuralist this thesis makes efforts to demonstrate.

That is to say, White understands "facts" as strictly discursive phenomena; secondly, he rebukes all historians for their "positivist science" outlook, as if there is no alternative to what historians think they are doing. His reply to Moses below encapsulates the idea argued here that "stories are not lived but told," that writing a "historical" text, even about what happened in the concentration camps (as opposed to writing a novel about it), does not get one closer to the "real" event than as "a figure of an event" with its own meaning:

> As for the failure of my notion of historiography to "guard the historical integrity of the Holocaust's facticity" (316), I have said on other occasions, and I wish to repeat it now, that professional historians are threatened by the revisionists, not because they offer another *interpretation* of the Holocaust, but because they reveal the factitiousness of professional historiography's claims to be able to deal "scientifically" with such events. The revisionists play the scientific game that professional historians pretend to play; they insist on proof of a scientific and objective kind of the use to which the crematoria were put. Historians who try to meet them on these grounds give the revisionists too much honor; they treat them as if they were engaged in the same enterprise as themselves, instead of treating them with the contempt and derision they deserve. The idea that the Holocaust never happened is simply absurd. We have more than enough evidence to compel belief in its occurrence. The problem that the occurrence of the Holocaust raises is, I said before, what is the significance, its meaning, its relevance to us, today, tomorrow, for the next generation? But I have to say that Moses' way of formulating the issue confuses me: "the *historical* integrity" of the Holocaust's "facticity"? As far as I am concerned, the Holocaust is a synthetic concept or a figure of an event, the occurrence of which could hardly be doubted but the meaning or the significance of which, for European, American, Jewish, and Near Eastern history is an open question, begging to be treated under as many different modes of meaning-production as possible. (White 2005b, 337; original emphasis)

Here above, White dichotomizes between *discursive* facts (language) and *real* events happening in the world (life); they are certainly "connected," as when he insists that "The idea that the Holocaust never happened is simply absurd. *We have more than enough evidence* to compel belief in its occurrence." It is just that, for White, *discursive* facts is all that is left of that particular past, and there is no access to it but the discursive remainders of that past. It is, however, as if such a past were not equally dependent on an actual, *lived presence* within the participants and handed down to their children and grandchildren who embodied those lived experiences;

in other words, it is as if the past would not be embodied in a real, emotional way (cf. Runia 2007a). White's passionate, ethical stance shines through especially here, for instance, when he challenges the many participants in the Holocaust discussion to treat the meaning and significance of this event "under as many different modes of meaning-production as possible."

But, it is difficult to address this hot-button issue with the strictly structuralist tools that White has at his disposal. His method separates form (*la langue*) and substance (*la parole*) (cf. Harris 1987, 118–119). When making this (dichotomous) distinction between what is language (facts) and what is real (events), White is therefore completely in line with the second point that Ermarth (2011, 38–40) makes above, that (ii) *everything is language*. What is "real" is simply inaccessible (cf. Rogne 2009). This is so, moreover, to the extent that "stories are not lived but told" (e.g., Mink 1987). White draws on the disembodied, immaterial *synchronic* nature of historical texts as *language* in his dichotomy between what is *figural* and what is *real* (i.e., figural in *both* the spoken and written dimensions of language).

White above and elsewhere argues for a strictly enforced dichotomy between figural "facts" and real "events" in accordance with the principle that *figural realism* is all that is available to historians, as he does in his reply to Moses, in the above quotation. Figural realism aligns quite well, however (despite claims to the contrary) with Ermarth's (2011) second Saussurean principle, above, that (ii) "everything is language." White (1999a), for his part, insists that he is *not arguing* according to such a principle *in his tropological mode*. Because he posits the *tropological nature* of structuralist thought, he asserts that history-as-fiction cannot be held to account for the Saussurean dichotomous logic that (White's) arguments imply. As I have argued in Section 3.3 above, however, White has substituted the core *principle* of Saussure's framework with the core *principle* of Vico's tropology. But one does not accomplish this so easily, as I have shown above. To accommodate the frame is take onboard the arbitrariness of the binary sign as a stowaway.

By investigating the metaphor at the heart of Saussure's system of linguistic value, I can show that White actively argues for the *dichotomy between figural facts and real events* within the framework of (Saussurean structuralist) language ("synchrony" & "diachrony"). When this is the case, then the addition of tropology cannot save history-as-fiction from the "ramifications" and "veiled consequences" of the (binary) structural logic of White's own essays: i.e., that everything is language, and that this language is relative in a static, unforgivingly absolute (holist) sense. This outlook, in fact, opens wide the pathway for "revisionist" historians to offer their "alternative facts" for those who are interested in hearing them. And there are many people nowadays hungry for such alternative narratives, as events in the real world have now revealed in 2016 and 2017.

In short, White cannot mitigate all these effects of his structuralist argumentation by claiming the *tropological nature* of structuralist thought, because one cannot

swap the core principle of Saussure's system out and replace it with another one. Clearly Ermarth (2011) embraces the radical consequences of Saussure's systemic value for "the content of the form" that she attributes to White. These consequences include the *static, fixed relativity of differential value* and that *everything is language:* two things that White overtly denies (1999a, 17). This is evident, for example, when White (1999a) states that "there is no such thing as raw facts but only events under different descriptions" (18). And yet, White asserts on the previous page in his clarification and defense of history-as-fiction that "there is nothing *in tropological theory* implying linguistic determinism or relativism. […] *It does not suggest that everything is language, speech, discourse, or text* […]" (17; emphasis added).

In tropological theory *there is nothing* to imply linguistic determinism or relativism, just as he says. But, in formulating history-as-fiction as the tropological nature *of structuralist thought,* he does state that "[t]ropology is the unfinished business of modern, and especially semiotic, linguistics" (1999a, 11, n. 18). It may be the unfinished business of modern literary theory (classical narratology), but Ermarth is quite correct in emphasizing that the Saussurean system that inspired structuralism recognizes that *everything is language, speech, discourse,* and so on, *pace* White.

As I assert above, White cannot escape from the embodied "ramifications" and "veiled consequences" of Saussure's brilliant system of linguistic value. Moreover, because there is no escape from the arbitrariness of the binary sign that Derrida recognized fifty years ago, there is likewise no escape from the "metaphysics of presence" that Saussure embedded in his system of linguistic value as its most deeply hidden stowaway. Indeed, in carrying on theorizing in the vein of this disembodied system in terms of writing, not even Derrida's poststructuralism escapes from this gifted "Ptolemaic" philosopher of language, Ferdinand de Saussure.

5.5.3   GREEK METAPHYSICS SUPPLANTED BY COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

Without its arbitrary core principle, Saussure's entire methodologically holist system collapses. Ermarth's (2011) third observation of Saussure's systemic value, that (iii) there is a permanent gap that exists between *la langue* and *la parole,* is a traditional and familiar philosophical move to analytically separate substance and form by way of separating a pattern from its process, particularly of *movement.* This separation between pattern and process is a necessary move, moreover, for what White achieves in the dichotomy of discursive "facts" and actual "events" in the above example quotation (i.e., White 2005b). It is a move that is well grounded in Greek metaphysics, as Zeno's paradox highlights.

Saussure's model builds on Whitney's idea, which is this: there is *nothing to connect* the arbitrarily paired percept (the signifier) and concept (the signified), *except the rule-governed, social institution of (conventional) language.* To study the language system (i.e., *la langue*) is what is *essential* for Saussure's science of linguistics as *the study of the bridging feature* that acts to connect the arbitrary set of signifiers (percepts, sound-images) and the arbitrary set of signifieds (concepts, meanings) in the negative, differential system of language (see Section 5.3. above; see Ermarth 2011, 38).

In the structuralist view of the historians' texts, as White (1999a) argues, "factuality becomes a matter of the *descriptive protocols used to transform events into facts.* Figurative descriptions of real events are not less factual than literalist descriptions [...]. Tropological theory implies that we must not confuse facts with events" (18). When White distinguishes figural facts and real events in this way, he is marking off the boundary between what *language* is and what *reality* is, but he denies the consequences for what is clearly a structuralist argument, by invoking tropological theory. White does exactly the same as Saussure, however, in separating the language "system" from language "use" in the real world, but he thinks he escapes the "veiled consequences" of structuralism by invoking tropology. I argue, however, that this gives him nothing more than a (Saussurean) framing "system" in a (Vichian) "vocabulary" that he uses to nominally escape the inescapable.

Moreover, White separates figural facts from real events, *as if* language (spoken or written) is not already an emergent phenomenon of our embodied interaction with the world (see also Chapter 9 on the literacy episteme). In his structuralist comprehension of the language system, White favors classical literary theory (narratology) over the more recent research into language since the 1970s. "Cognitive" science is gradually growing out of its Greek model; this traditional language philosophy was formulated over two thousand years ago in the work of (especially) Aristotle.

But research into (cognitive) linguistics since the early 1970s has accumulated a mass of evidence using modern experimental tools, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), among others, that show the degree to which language is *actually* a phenomenon dependent on a body moving and acting in the world with others (e.g., Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1993; Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Gallese & Lakoff 2005; M. Johnson 2007; M. Johnson & Rohrer 2007; Arbib 2008; Gentilucci, Volta & Gianelli 2008; Hari & Kujala 2009; Lakoff 2012; Ratcliffe 2013; Vainio et al. 2014, 2015; Blasi et al. 2016; Komeilipoor et al. 2016; Tiainen et al. 2016). In other words, it is *not* a "mental" phenomenon (independent of perception and other bodily skills), that is primarily conventional – as Aristotle taught.

Rather, contemporary cognitive linguistics now understands language to be an emergent, *embodied* phenomenon that operates through metaphor (Lakoff 1993; M. Johnson 1997, 1999; Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 2003; Capra 2003; Modell 2003;

Gallese & Lakoff 2005; Pecher & Zwaan, eds. 2005; M. Johnson 2007; Johnson & Rohrer 2007; Gibbs 2011, 2013; Gibbs & Santa Cruz 2012; Bergen 2012; Lakoff 2012, and so on; see Chapter 2). This means that language is actually dependent on our structural coupling (*lived* experience in and) with the *real* world, from which metaphorical language originally evolved, as Vico (1984) was the first to describe (cf. Luft 1999, 2003; Modell 2003). This different understanding of language has immense implications for the linguistic turn in historical theory.

As Lakoff and Johnson and others have shown, cross-domain neural mappings of *percept and concept* in the brain regions of healthy, well-cared for infants and young children give rise to idiomatic phrases, such as "a warm smile," expressions that arise out of these early experiences of cross-domain neural mappings between these regions (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 47–54, 2003; cf. similar results in Dehaene 2010, 216–218). Synesthetes, such as Saussure himself (see Joseph 2012), could not even exist, for instance, if this cross-domain neural mapping of percept and concept did not happen *in reality.* This coupling with the *real environment* through the bodily perceptions is what grounds embodied "conceptual metaphor" in the first place (see Sections 2.1–2.2 above). This embodied dimension of language has huge implications for the Whitean structuralist context. *Conceptual metaphor is the already embodied bridge* that pre-empts the Saussurean need to establish the synchronic system of language *as a disembodied bridge to unite the (conventional) social institution of language* (see Section 5.3 above).

Put another way, when language is *embodied,* there is *no need for a bridging* element, such as the synchronic system of language, as Saussure posited. He needed the bridging element in order to emphasize what is essential for the system: what makes it a *conventional,* historically defined social institution in the first place. It thus follows that, when language is embodied, the traditional Greek (Aristotelian) model that posited the "conventionality of language" over two millennia ago as a universal fact of language *has been surpassed* in the work of the last decades through research in cognitive linguistics based on the *life* sciences.

This is so, even if traditional Greek ideas about language continue to retain their currency and remain embedded among many thinkers working still today. In historical theory, White's predominance as a thinker of unique originality and standing continues to *inhibit* the absorption of new findings that now sideline old notions from classical narratology (modern literary theory) that served as White's intellectual formation (cf. White in Domańska, ed. 1998, 26–27). These new avenues of research in the nature of human language and its application to literature as well as to historical theory need to become more widely known and assessed beyond my efforts in this thesis.

In sum, in characterizing historians' writings narratologically in the classical vein, White is drawing genetically on William Dwight Whitney's original *metaphor* of the synchronic-diachronic distinction, drawn from uniformitarian geology; this is

a *static,* nonliving metaphor. Saussure took Whitney's metaphor and systematized it, imaginatively operationalized through *his own metaphor* of "coins as (relative) units of value in a currency system" with its two orders of value: labor and wages. For the sake of theory (for the science of signs) Saussure "fudged" the actual complexity of language in systematizing it on the pattern of his static models, because "systemic value" could not operate without this fudging (dismissing as irrelevant the onomatopoeia of a large number of words, as Derrida noted); even Ermarth (2011) questions arbitrariness (36), without realizing its necessity and essential nature for the system she presents as "more groundbreaking" (36).[122]

In the next chapter I follow the lead of Sandra Rudnick Luft (1999, 2003), where I briefly sketch out the legacy of conditioned, disembodied knowing in ancient Greek metaphysics, as she interprets Vico's discovery nearly three hundred years ago. In addressing the Vichian dimension of the fact-fiction debate in Chapter 6, I will show that Plato's *metaphor* of the "Divine Architect" as the familiar model of Western metaphysics is what deeply haunts not merely White's legacy, but the entire tradition from the inside out, just as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) have, by now, long argued.

5.6   CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to unpack Hayden White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction in terms of the claim, on behalf of the *history-literature debate,* that history is *language* in the same way that literature is language. By using the work of Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth's (2011) *History in the Discursive Condition*, I have shown, through my isolated focus on her claims for "the content of the form," what deeply orientates White's construct. That is, I have shown that White's outlook on historians' language is language according to the principle at the core of Saussure semiology: the arbitrariness of the binary sign; it is, moreover, the principle at the core of modern literary theory (classical narratology) in general. Finally, the metaphorical analysis in this chapter shows that the body of so-called "postmodern" literary theory is still largely defined by the disembodied metaphysics that it purports to escape with the embrace of Saussure's "systemic" approach to language.

I have argued above that the character of arbitrariness (of the binary linguistic sign) is essential on the level of White's dualist separation of the (linguistic, figural) fact from the (real) event, because *arbitrariness* (in the relationship between the binaries of sound-image and the meaning or concept) is the necessary condition underpinning the static (negative and differential) nature of systemic value *as a*

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122   In this connection, see also Harris 1987.

system, synchronically and diachronically defined. Saussure's metaphor of "coins as units of value in a currency system" is the "constituting metaphor" that *embodies,* carries, and transfers the binary attributes of Saussure's presupposition as the first and core principle underpinning the *system of linguistic value* as a whole.

Saussure chose this metaphor on the basis of his recognition of his master key from theoretical economics – that is, the idea of *two orders of value* (labor and wages). This insight from political economy allowed him to understand how linguistics correlated in exactly the same way in terms of the (binary) structural attributes of linguistic value (percept/signifier and concept/signified). Saussure had agonized for decades over the way to transfer the Aristotelian truth of arbitrariness in a way that could effectively account for the nature of language as a *social institution,* strictly historically defined (following Whitney). His metaphor did the job of transferring this arbitrariness to the entire system of linguistic value as a whole.

Moreover, what, for Whitney, had been a loose metaphor of "synchrony and diachrony" (gleaned from his exposure to uniformitarian geology) became, for Saussure, the necessary *tools* that embodied and carried the binary structure of his entire system. Systematizing Whitney's own metaphor allowed Saussure to isolate what is *essential* to language (its synchronic dimension as the very *bridging* element in the social institution of language), as opposed to what was merely *accidental* to it (its historical, diachronic dimension).

If White embraces the dichotomy between synchrony and diachrony in his study of historians' narratives (and he does, as I show in Chapter 8), then he has *already* embraced the "ramifications" of Saussure's principle of the arbitrariness of the binary linguistic sign. Indeed, one cannot separate the arbitrariness that was built in, from the beginning, into the framework of this system as a whole. It is much clearer to comprehend this systemic dependence and its entailments as a *system,* moreover, as Ermarth (2011) helpfully outlines in her work *without* the mention of tropology.

Ermarth's claim is that, over the last century, a "discursive shift" in consciousness has been taking place, whose original author she holds to be Saussure from the beginning of the twentieth century. She proposes that, from the position of "systemic value," there is no longer any universal, *neutral,* infinite space and time "in" which actual events occur. On her view, where *neutrality* stood in the modern condition, *language* now stands in the discursive condition.

In this new discursive paradigm of the "relativity of measurement," time itself becomes an attribute of the events under examination. She applies her metaphor of Einstein's relativistic physics, in order to make Saussure's achievement seem "groundbreaking" in its shift toward the new paradigm of "systemic" value, along the lines of physics. As she explains, each event, each person with her or his own unique experience is "contained" within separate inertial *systems of value* (solipsisticly), in which each (isolated) inertial system has a different reference point from any other (where there is *no common ground from which to measure*). In

her employment of the *metaphor* of relativistic physics as her model, the absolute relativity of values (measurements) between inertial systems *replaces* the plural values of real (embodied) persons in relation to one another in a real environment of continuity and change over the time of one's *life*. The metaphor Ermarth chooses to correlate Saussure's system of linguistic value (i.e., Einstein's Special Relativity Theory) excludes embodied "life" from the system of values that she champions.

My analysis, moreover, reveals that Ermarth has overlooked important clues to the actual historical contingencies of Saussure's science-oriented philosophy of language, modeled on theoretical economics (political economy) and physics, which makes Saussure's systemic value – in its strongly methodologically holist form – highly unsuitable for a dynamical system like human beings and embodied language, the premier tool of "human" vis-à-vis merely animal life. White himself recognized some of these dehumanizing disadvantages when he sought to mitigate structuralism's (anti-human) effects through his adoption of (Vico's) tropology.

In following the basic outlines of Saussure's structuralist framework, however, the disembodied logic of "the content of the form" (strongly methodologically holist in nature) becomes *inescapable,* when its structural attributes are transferred *metaphorically* from its source domain of "science" to its target domain of (human) language. By adhering to Saussure's (binary) system of linguistic value, Ermarth and White both take on board the hidden logic of the system's disembodied, binary underpinnings in the separation of substance and form (pattern & process) in the long tradition of analytical Western philosophy, which is well exemplified by Zeno's paradox of the arrow.

In what follows, the focus of the next chapter moves from Saussure to the second theoretical inspiration in White's linguistic-turn experiment in formulating history-as-fiction: Giambattista Vico's tropology. The etymological studies that Vico produced reveal the metaphorical model of the ancient Greek foundations for certainty, objectivity, truth, and knowledge. Luft's (2003) hermeneutic interpretation of Vico will serve as the tool of exploration and analysis in the next chapter that uncovers the metaphors at the heart of ancient philosophy, assisting me in illustrating the need in philosophy, as well as in historical theory, to *change metaphors* for the models of living structure – embodied, living human persons. This emphasis is in keeping with my theoretical aim to highlight Mark Johnson's point that contemporary Western philosophy is actually founded on (inappropriate, nonliving) metaphors that play a "theory-constituting" role in these philosophies.

CHAPTER SIX

Stories are not lived but told.

—Louis O. Mink, "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension"

The eighteenth century [featured a] crucial opposition [...] between "truth" and "error," rather than between fact and fancy, with it being understood that many kinds of truth, even in history, could be presented to the reader only by means of fictional techniques of representation. [...] Truth was not equated with fact, but with a combination of fact and the conceptual matrix within which it was appropriately located in the discourse. [...] In the early nineteenth century, however, it became conventional, at least among historians, to identify truth with fact and to regard fiction as the opposite of truth, hence as a hindrance to the understanding of reality rather than as a way of apprehending it. History came to be set over against fiction, and especially the novel, as the representation of the "actual" to the representation of the "possible" or only "imaginable."

—Hayden White, "The Fictions of Factual Representation"

6   VICO BEYOND THE METAPHORS AT THE CORE OF GREEK METAPHYSICS

The second debate usually employed in defense of Hayden White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction is the "fact-fiction debate." Many elements in this second debate, by contrast with the "history-literature debate," as analyzed in Chapter 5, employ aspects of Giambattista Vico's (1668–1744) theory of the tropes (tropology). White overtly uses Vichian terminology in this aspect of history-as-fiction in his term *figural realism*. But, what is missed in this second debate is that the Vichian principle of language (as contingent on the body in the world of physical action and cultural creation) is bracketed away from its tropological context within Vico's philosophy of poetic language. That is, the tropes are taken out of the context, within which Vico developed them, and are placed, instead, within Ferdinand de

Saussure's (1857–1913) philosophy of language as "systemic value" in the tradition of (classical) modern literary theory (see, e.g., Domańska, ed. 1998, 27; cf. White 1974, 1985, 1990, 1999; Rogne 2009; Paul 2011).

In other words, when the tropes are removed from their own context of necessary contingency and are combined, instead, with the (static, nonliving) structuralist framework, these dynamic Vichian tropes no longer operate *according to Vico's stunningly original principle of language*. Vico's tropes are held captive to merely surf the static chains of signification within Saussure's system of linguistic value. Vico's principle was uncovered after an arduous intellectual effort that lasted decades of his life. His intention in these efforts was to move beyond Cartesian dualism and the rationalistic philosophy that it gave rise to; Vico adamantly rejected this (disembodied) rationalism. In treating Sandra Rudnick Luft's (1999, 2003) interpretation of Vico's principle of language in this chapter, my purpose is to show that even in his so-called Vichian dimension, White remains a classical formalist and structuralist in its traditional (and metaphysical) formulation. In consequence, history-as-fiction also retains the stowaway of the binary (and arbitrary) nature of the framework that he used (see Chapter 5). This is because structuralism invokes the legacy of metaphysics through the *metaphors* that Western philosophy continues to endorse and uphold, even today. This metaphysical tradition is upheld and invoked, moreover, through the vocabulary of these ancient models that enter the language as "metaphorical" stowaways.

In the discussion of "fact" and "fiction," in the epigraph to this chapter, White (1985a) reports that during the eighteenth century, fact was not originally equated with truth against fancy, or fiction. Three hundred years ago, truth was rather seen to oppose error, and history writing at that time was acknowledged as a craft that was as much *a literary* – and specifically rhetorical – exercise as a "*representation* of real events in the historical discourse" (1985a, 123; original italics). These terms 'fact–truth' vs. 'fiction–error' were, according to White, a nineteenth century development that was eventually cemented into conventional usage that he has long wished to reverse (e.g., White 1966, 1978, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1999, 2005a,b, 2006, 2010b, 2012, 2013, 2014; cf. Hughes 1964).[123]

Furthermore, White has been interested in Vico, since the 1950s, as an eighteenth-century thinker, who spent most of his adult life writing with an anti-

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123   White, however, is certainly not alone in questioning "fact" in this way. Already in 1935, Ludwik Fleck (1981) published the German edition of *The Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (orig. pub. Eng. 1979), which drew attention to the ambiguous nature of facts in their various contexts. In his Foreword to the English edition of Fleck's work, Thomas S. Kuhn addresses the question as to whether Fleck influenced his own (Kuhn's) thinking in the early 1960s when writing his own famous book of 1962 on scientific paradigm change. Kuhn replies that in his reading of Fleck, he "responded primarily to what had already been very much on [his] mind [in the early 1950s]: changes in the gestalts in which nature presented itself, and the resulting difficulties in rendering 'fact' independent of 'point of view'" (ix). Thus discussion concerning the nature of facts was well under way, especially through Kuhn's work, by the time White addressed the issue in historiography.

Cartesian agenda that greatly appeals to White (on this, see, e.g., Paul 2011; cf. Sica 2002). The insight for which Vico is most well known – and which White invokes in the fact-fiction debate – is a Latin formula that I analyze in this chapter. As White (1985b), reports, this formula "asserted the 'convertibility' of the 'true' and the 'fabricated,' or the principle of *verum ipsum factum"* (197).

In integrating this Vichian principle into his work, White's strategy is, first, to adopt the eighteenth-century "fact–fiction" continuum as the template (framework), in terms of "fictional techniques of representation" (White 1985a, 123), that is, *in keeping with* his structuralist focus on narrative discourse (cf. White in Domańska, ed. 1998, 20–21). Then, only secondly, does White argue the fact–fiction continuum in combination with Vico's *verum-factum* principle. Here again, as before, when White placed Vico's tropes within his structuralist framework, White now removes Vico's principle of *verum ipsum factum* from its own context of development to further develop his argument for the eighteenth-century "fact–fiction" continuum (White 1985a, 123). This fact–fiction continuum, however, *already* upholds the separation of language and life that is argued in Chapter 5 in terms of Mink's (1987, 60) idea that "[s]tories are not lived but told" (the first epigraph to this chapter). Thus, White consistently takes Vico's *embodied* elements of language into the context of the *nonliving* structuralist system in the hopes of moving historical theory into the discursive condition after modernity.

By this dual strategy, White can easily highlight the ambiguity of "fiction" in the resultant usage among contemporary writers of history (e.g., White 2000, 2005a,b; cf. Iggers 2000; Moses 2005, 2005a) and compare them with fictional writers, as he does with the autobiographical writings of the Holocaust survivor Primo Levi (e.g., White 2006). By riding piggy-back on Vico's own theory of language in terms of the tropes, White argues (in hybrid fashion) that what is "made" is "true," because it is true for the maker; indeed, "fiction" constituted a "true representation" for authors employing the (fictional) representational techniques of eighteenth-century history writers.

In consequence, White's fact-fiction debate is a structuralist counterpart to the history-literature debate, insofar as it is not really Vichian tropology that leads the discussion, but rather eighteenth-century standards of historical narrative "discourse" with history writing as an acknowledged counterpart to literary writings. On this view, the fact-fiction and the history-literature debates are two sides of the same (structuralist) history-is-language coin.[124]

In what follows, I attend to Luft's (2003)[125] embodied (hermeneutic) interpretation of Vico's tropology in *Vico's Uncanny Humanism: Reading the "New Science"*

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124 For an excellent survey of this controversial area on the borderlands between fact and fiction, see Dorrit Cohn (1999); she takes up the debate with White directly in her Chapter 7, "Signposts of Fictionality" (109–131).

125 While Luft's earlier articles and book chapter (1993, 1994, 1996, 1999) feed into her book of 2003, I will primarily use her book in this chapter for reasons of brevity and simplicity.

between Modern and Postmodern. I adopt her interpretation of Vico for its telling absence of Saussure; in this way, I continue the experiment to separately analyze the debates that comprise White's history-as-fiction. In this chapter, I examine Luft's exposition of the *verum-factum* principle (the convertibility of the true and the made), which derives from the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria's (25 BCE–50 CE) integration of the Greek and Hebrew traditions of metaphysics in late antiquity, which she examines in her work. The purpose of this chapter is to understand what changed in Vico's original interpretation of the *verum-factum* principle as against Philo's conception from late antiquity (taken up in the Western tradition through Christianity) in order to further distinguish it from the use White's makes of it in the fact-fiction debate for history-as-fiction.

Luft (2003) characterizes the *verum-factum* principle as rooted within its original context of Philo as a correspondence of identity (or *homoiousis*) between the "subject" and "object" of knowledge, where "making" is conditioned by "knowing," *a priori.* This conception of absolute "all-knowing," dependent as it is upon a disembodied, rational faculty of mind, is the modern legacy of Philo's syncretism in late antiquity, which Jacques Derrida identified as the "metaphysics of presence" from the late 1960s onward; his main target of deconstruction concerned the *logocentricity* of Western philosophy, which I discuss below (see also Chapter 3).

6.1   THE GREEK LEGACY OF CONDITIONED, DISEMBODIED "KNOWING"

In his now classic work, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature,* C. S. Lewis (1994) characterized the late medieval understanding of man as a "rational animal, and therefore a composite being, partly akin to the angels who are rational but—on the later, scholastic view—not animal, and partly akin to the beasts which are animal but not rational" (152). On this view, man was seen as "the 'little world' or microcosm," which made him a "cross-section of being" (153). Lewis quotes the renowned scholastic (Aristotelian) thinker St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) on distinguishing between *reason* as "Rational Soul" and the lower of two faculties that Rational Soul exercises: *Intellectus* and *Ratio* (Lewis 1994, 156–157).

On Aquinas's model, *intellectus* "approximates most nearly to angelic *intelligentia,*" whereby "intellect (*intelligere*) is the simple (i.e. indivisible, uncompounded) grasp of an intelligible truth, whereas reasoning (*ratiocinari*) is the progression towards an intelligible truth by going from one understood (*intellecto*) point to another" (Aquinas quoted in Lewis 1994, 157). As befitting his "cross-section of being," both divine and animal, man on this Western metaphysical model enjoyed *intellectus* when he could "'just see' a self-evident truth," whereas he is exercising *ratio* when

he moved "step by step to prove a truth which is not self-evident" (Lewis 1994, 157). The former aspect of *intellectus* is characterized as being at (angelic) "rest," while the latter aspect of *ratio* is characterized as being in (animal) "motion"; the difference between these two could, for example, be characterized as "possession and acquisition" (Aquinas in Lewis 1994, 157). Lewis (1994) summarizes this hybrid view of man, situated halfway between heaven and earth, as follows:

> A cognitive life in which all truth can be simply 'seen' would be the life of an *intelligentia,* an angel. A life of unmitigated *ratio* where nothing was simply 'seen' and all had to be proved, would presumably be impossible; for nothing can be proved if nothing is self-evident. (157)

How Western Christendom came to embrace this image of man as rational human "subject" is a construct that built upon pagan roots from Greek antiquity and particularly Platonism (cf. Knorr 1993). What is now commonly regarded as human (mental) "cognition" derives from the Greek Platonic metaphor of God as the "Divine Architect" in a move that, from the very start, excluded "process" from the study of substance and form (the study of *what* things are and *how* they are organized).

Philosopher Mark Johnson (2007, 200) points out that nearly all abstract concepts are seen to be structured around multiple, largely inconsistent conceptual metaphors, and here Plato's "Divine Architect" is just such a case in point. For example, Johnson observes that, if this is true for nearly all abstract concepts, "then philosophical theories are not systems of foundational literal truths about reality, but rather elaborations of particular *complex, intertwining sets of metaphors that support inferences and forms of reasoning"* (200; emphasis added). What is more, psychiatrist Iain McGilchrist (2009) states that "[t]he model we choose to use to understand something determines what we find. […] Thus how we think about our selves and our relationship to the world is already revealed in the metaphors we unconsciously choose to talk about it" (97). In antiquity, as Luft (2003) notes, "[t]he pagan gods were actually thought to be embodied in the forms that were *metaphors* of their powers [...]" (96; emphasis added). Thus, in the case of the Divine Architect, he knows what he makes, because he has designed it and knows its purpose.

It is this ancient tradition and how it came to be syncretized to Hebrew thought through the work of Philo in late antiquity that Luft (2003) concentrates on in her embodied, hermeneutic interpretation of Vico's *New Science*.[126] Luft examines Vico's work against the deep background of Western metaphysics, in order to characterize the strange, uncanny nature of the first humans, as Vico discovered them in the final edition of his work from 1744. Vico drew a distinction between God and man

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126   The first edition of Vico's *New Science* was published in 1725; the definitive edition of the work was published the year of his death, in 1744.

on the basis of the *verum et factum* principle, which serves as the division in his thinking – and a departure point in his thought that Luft fruitfully develops in embodied terms.

Luft's (2003) starting point is that "Hellenic philosophy constituted itself on the postulate of a pre-given rational, orderly cosmos whose eternal and unchangeable nature *insured its correspondence to* human rationality" (16; emphasis added). In other words, "as above, so below" (cf. Lewis 1994). A metaphysical guarantee held in place the correspondence between Ideas in this Rational order and in subjective, intelligible human beings alike (cf. Hetherington 1993, 495–496). Moreover, while the concept of knowledge did gradually change over time, "what did not change was the metaphysical belief insuring the possibility of knowledge, that humans are subjective beings" (Luft 2003, 3).

According to Luft, Vico's firm anti-Cartesian stance in his *New Science* gave him the orientation he needed in order to eventually distance himself from Western metaphysics and its cornerstone of rational epistemology. For the first gentile humans, the postulate of cosmic correspondence between the human and divine did not hold. As Vico (1984) says,

> the first men of the gentile nations, children of nascent mankind, *created things according to their own ideas*. But this creation was infinitely different from that of God. For God, in his purest intelligence, knows things, and, by knowing them, creates them; *but they, in their robust ignorance, did it by virtue of a wholly corporeal imagination*. And because it was quite corporeal, they did it with marvelous sublimity; a sublimity such and so great that it excessively perturbed the very persons who by imagining did the creating, for which they were called "poets," which is Greek for "creators." (§376; emphasis added)[127]

This effort to distance himself from the "common knowledge" of his day enabled Vico to construct a theory of human institutions and culture based upon a theory of language relying *not* on a subjective rationality, but by relying, rather, on the bodily skills of humans acting in their immediate environment(s). As Luft interprets him, Vico's genius lay in *stripping away the epistemological presuppositions of philosophy* in order to *imagine* what creating the human world from scratch with metaphorical language might have been like for the first humans; that is, before the civil institutions of "religion, marriage, asylum, and the first agrarian law" came into being (Vico 1984, §630). As Vico conjectures, "the first language in the first mute times of the nations must have begun with signs, whether gestures or physical

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127   References to Vico's *New Science* are in paragraphs, not in page numbers.

objects, which had natural relations to the ideas [to be expressed]" (1984, §401; original brackets).

More than two and a half centuries after Vico's death, his master key to the *New Science* remains strange. The idea that the first humans were *unconditioned,* "originary" poets, who invented and shaped the human social world of institutions and material culture through the creative power of their metaphorical language remains counterintuitive today as well (e.g., Vico 1984, §§402, 403). It is difficult to conceive of Vico's vision, because it is not familiar to our (idealist) "rational" Western way of thinking and, as Vico well understood, human beings gravitate toward what they are already most familiar with.[128] Vico's vision of the first humans is foreign, because metaphysics is clothed in a powerful set of intertwined metaphors – a veritable network of terms with their familiar interrelations – thereby making Vico's "originary poets" difficult to grasp.

To approach the problem step-wise, the following subsections present the epistemological tradition within which (purposeful) intellectual "knowing" came to dominate practical (productive) "making" from the Greeks onward. Furthermore, according to Luft, it is this tradition that continues to dominate the way Vico's *New Science* is generally interpreted, even today (on this, see esp. Sections 6.1.2 & 6.1.3). Moreover, and contrary to the common epistemological interpretations, Luft develops what she describes as an "alchemical" interpretation (Luft 2003, ix–xv) that draws from and blends elements of both the Hebraic and postmodern traditions (esp. Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844–1900; Martin Heidegger, 1889–1976; and Walter Benjamin, 1892–1940), in order to illuminate what she terms the "uncanny" insight that moved Vico to write his *New Science.*[129]

6.1.1 THE DESIGNER'S BLUEPRINT: PLATO'S METAPHOR OF THE "DIVINE ARCHITECT"

The Greek tradition, as the model from which Western philosophy emerged and evolved, contemplated what was considered to be a pre-given, formal order. "Divine Reason" was present in man, only insofar as man had a rational soul (constituting his subjectivity): "as above, so below." According to Luft (2003), the Greeks thought the rational human soul contained two subcategories of active intellect: "a practical

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128   For Vico, it is an elemental condition and property of human being that "whenever men can form no idea of distant and unknown things, they judge them by what is familiar and at hand" (1984, §122).

129   Luft uses her own sources "as diverse expressions of *poiesis,* the interpretive sense-making of beings-in-the-world that takes place in language, a hermeneutic process *ontologically* creative of a real, though artifactual, human world" (xv). She takes care to note, however, that she does not use the term "ontological" *within the context of Greek metaphysics.* She uses the term, rather, in a "nontechnical sense, as Heidegger does, to emphasize a conception of humans whose sense-making is *not epistemic, nor even subjective,* but the interpretive activity, linguistic and practical, of beings-in-the-world" (xv, n. 14; emphasis added).

intellect concerned with doing (*praxis*) and a productive intellect concerned with fabrication (*poiesis*), activities that took place in a contingent world of change" (17). For Plato's student, Aristotle, the very conception of fabrication (*poiesis*) "was based on an analogy between art and nature"; in this respect, *poiesis* in its concern with art was defined as "a state of capacity to make, *involving a true course of reasoning*" (Aristotle in Luft 2003, 17; emphasis added).

Reasoning was therefore essential even in the context of fabrication or *poiesis* because, both in nature and in art, "making was action for the sake of an end, and *purposeful action was always intelligent*" (Aristotle in Luft 2003, 17; emphasis added). Furthermore, in nature, intelligence existed in the form of final cause whereas, in art, intelligence existed "in *the form of the thing* to be made preexisting in the artist's soul" (Luft 2003, 17; emphasis added). In other words, one could not "make" anything without already "knowing" what its purpose would be, beforehand, as in all products of true craftsmanship. The "form" of the thing, *how it is organized* (as I would call its pattern of organization), preexists in the artist's soul, just as the form of nature itself preexists in the eternal Rational order. In this intimate connection between intelligence (thinking) and making, "the prior existence of a form" (its "blueprint") determined "the *telos* of activity" (17).

Thus for the Greeks, there was essentially no significant difference between art and nature; both were "teleological." Reason – "knowing" – was essential for all creation, whether by the Divine Creator (in nature) or by man (in art). As Luft (2003) observes, "the most significant aspect of Aristotle's conception of *poiesis* was not that the artifactual was inferior to nature because it imitated or completed it, but that *all making,* natural or human, was *purposeful*" (17; emphasis added). That is, all making was purposeful to the extent that such making was *conditioned (teleologically)* by the "formal" intent (knowledge) of its maker.

To illustrate the presupposition of the conditioned nature of making yet more vividly, it was Aristotle's teacher, Plato, who posited the paradigmatic image of "making as a *mimetic process* conditioned by intelligence," whose metaphor Plato designated as "the Divine Architect" in the *Timaeus.* The medievals subsequently inherited this metaphor in terms of "God as *Deus Artifex*" (Luft 2003, 17–18). The productive (creative) acts of this divine "Artificer" were not ontologically significant, because they "merely *reproduced* intelligible Being" (18; italics added), that is, they were merely copies or representations of some metaphysical original (i.e., the principle of *mimesis*). As Luft also notes, and crucial for this context, "[t]he pagan gods were actually thought to be embodied in the forms that were metaphors of their powers […]" (96). As Luft interprets Plato's metaphor:

> Divine making was an intellectual skill of the Artificer, who was a craftsman creating with measure and number, an architect *following a blueprint* constituted by the necessary truths of mathematics. Plato conceptualized the relation between

being and becoming in logical terms, as, for example, the "participation" of copy in exemplar. Production was ultimately *a logical rather than ontological* problem; it was the relation between two sorts of existences, rather than the process by which the lesser came about, which needed explanation. (2003, 18; emphasis added)

In this connection, it is striking that the Greeks should construe a relationship between being and becoming in terms of "skilled craftsmanship." In such crafts, physical materials are used following a *blueprint,* which presupposes a disembodied mind or Reason behind what is made. As Luft (2003) rightly emphasizes above, this analogy of the Artificer sets up a particular relation – one imagined to be "between two sorts of existences, rather than the process by which the lesser came about [...]" (18). In Plato's analogy, material substance and immaterial substance, or form are taken into account separately, but not the "process" by which "the lesser came about," as Luft notes. The process is left entirely outside the analogy of the "made," because it alone is reserved as the functional "cause" within Divine Reason (as the blueprint).

Indeed, the metaphor of the Divine Architect, underpinning Plato's metaphysics well illustrates the generative power of metaphors as models for thinking, as I demonstrated in Chapter 5 and as I try to show also below. The Architect of the *Timeaus* is the Creator-craftsman, who follows a divine "blueprint" that obeys the necessary truths of mathematics, because it is apparent that "something" cannot come into existence *ex nihilo,* that is, from nothing. This metaphor of the Divine Architect, or Artificer, therefore underwrites, from ancient times, the separate consideration of the study of "substance" from that of "form." In the absence of any real-world "process" of generation, production can be defined as: the product of the operation of two (binary) existences (material substance and immaterial form) in terms of their logical rather than their ontological relations. The following example will illustrate the problem that I wish to highlight in this relationship between substance and form.

In ancient debates, substance and form are not interrelated, but quite separate; they are dualist insofar as Plato's Divine Architect uses a metaphysical, already extant "blueprint" (from the eternal Forms) for organizing nature/matter/substance. For the human creator, this very same relationship between substance and form holds as well in terms of art/matter/substance. Below, this relationship between substance and form can be exemplified by a familiar *nonliving*, static object to most any reader: a bicycle. The philosopher Fritjof Capra (1996) explains that a bicycle, to be a bicycle at all, must feature

a number of functional relationships among components known as frame, pedals, handlebars, wheels, chain, sprocket, and so on. [...] In a machine [...]

the parts have been designed, manufactured, and then put together to form a structure with fixed components. [...] In the case of the bicycle, the pattern of organization is *represented by the design sketches* [the "blueprint"], and the link between pattern [form] and structure [substance] is the *in the mind of the designer*. (159–160; italics added)

For the Platonic Artificer, it is the blueprint, or divinely inspired design sketch, that links and organizes the (physical) substance and its pattern of (fixed) component parts, as in the example of the bicycle, above. In this connection, it is important to understand, as Luft (2003) also notes, that the conceptual structure of Greek cosmology is dualist and *static* in nature (88). In the case of the bicycle, its material (and static) components are easily recognized in the form of a purposeful machine, made to measure in accordance with its designer's sketch.[130]

This metaphorical model of knowing and mimetic-making (or representation) has served Western philosophy since ancient times. Indeed, for Aristotle, the paradigm of art (*poiesis*) is "architecture," because "both in nature and art [or craftsmanship] making was action for the sake of an end and purposeful action was always intelligent" (Aristotle in Luft 2003, 17). In other words, for the Greeks, "design sketches" (Ideas, or Form) were necessary for what came into existence, because what existed – what was made, both in nature and art (as craft) – could not come into existence from nothing, *ex nihilo*. This "mimetic" tradition is thus not a supplement to, but rather *a necessary feature of* the legacy of Greek metaphysics down to the early modern age and the Cartesian rationalism that Vico rejected.

Indeed, one of the deepest presuppositions of the scientific method of the early modern era was "the unity of divine knowing and making," insofar as the new scientific method of knowing "common to mathematics and mechanics" emphasized the ability to reconstruct reality through experimentation (Luft 2003, 20). As Luft points out, geometry was "the paradigm of constructed knowledge since the Greeks," but mathematics evolved from "an inventory of ideal relations" to that of "a formal language of relationships," in which "only the doable—at least in principle—is also understandable: *verum et factum convertuntur* [the convertibility of the true and the made]" (Funkenstein in Luft 2003, 20). From here it was a small step to imagine that "all things are artificial, for Nature is the art of God" (Browne in Luft 2003, 20).

By the early seventeenth century, the English philosopher of science Frances Bacon (1561–1626) remarked that "making becomes a causal process structured by the relation of means to ends, a process characterizing not only the making made possible by a science of nature—now characterized as *techne*—but also 'doing' in

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130   I will return to Capra's (1996) relationship between substance and form (in Section 7.3.3 of Chapter 7), where I interpret Luft's concept of the "originary" in terms of a living, dynamic ("self-organizing" or *autopoietic*), structure, which I take to be "emergent" in nature.

the human world" (in Luft 2003, 21). In this sense, as Bacon posits, "the artificial does not differ from the natural in forme [*sic*] or essence, but only in the efficient" (Bacon in Rossi 1970, 138). Thus, in the seventeenth-century a (constructive) theory of knowledge – the practical intellect concerned with doing (*praxis*) – and a productive intellect concerned with fabrication (*poiesis*) were syncretized and became anchored in the *technical* character of knowledge that was foreign even to the ancients (Luft 2003, 21).

The network of related terms was thus a living repository that grew out of the original Platonic metaphor(s) from which the meanings moved and changed over time, indeed, as the *experience* of those who used the terms moved and changed – remaining, however, terms with which Western philosophy remained "familiar." In this way, the *technical* character of art (on the model of the craftsman, both above and below) came into being. Thus the notions of both nature and art were interpreted as being "artificial."

Furthermore, on this basis, making on the predicate of knowing "found expression in a formative metaphor of the [early modern] age, the world as 'machine'" (Luft 2003, 20–21). Otto Mayr (1989) notes, however, that "[t]he expression *machina mundi,* 'the world machine,' was first used by the Roman poet Lucretius (94–55 B.C.)" (39). And Paolo Rossi (1970) relates that "[t]he later, widespread image of God the 'mechanic,' constructor of the perfect clock which is the world, was superimposed on the Platonic image of God the geometer" (143). Indeed, the French scholastic Nicole Oresme (1320–82) was one of the first philosophers known to superimpose the two images, just a few decades after the first clock was invented sometime around 1300. In a treatise from the 1350s, Oresme made an analogy between Plato's divine Architect and the premier automaton of the pre-modern age:

> For if someone should construct a material clock would he not make all the motions and wheels as nearly commensurable as possible? How much more [then] ought we to think [in this way] about that architect who, it is said, has made all things in number, weight, and measure? (Oresme in Mayr 1989, 38; original brackets)

Mayr (1989) further observes that "[t]he notion of the Clockmaker God implied here is noteworthy with regard to *both the ancient traditions upon which it rested and its subsequent influence"* (39; emphasis added). By the eighteenth century, German Enlightenment philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) could project the well-known "image of God as clockmaker [...] intertwined with that of a God who governs minds and the world 'as an engineer manages his machines'" (Leibniz in Rossi 1970, 144; similarly, cf. Dear 1998).

In sum, divine "making" (in nature) served as the template for the Greeks in "making" anything whatsoever; nature and art alike were both (mimetic) "making,"

which was conditioned by knowing, on the model of the already extant "blueprint." In other words, the relation of substance and form in antiquity were separate and separated from the (eternal) process that brought them into being in the first place. It should come as no surprise that a Vichian *alternative* to the Greek mimetic tradition is so difficult to imagine. The vocabulary of ancient epistemology remains deeply embedded in philosophy, then as now.

In fact, even today it is hard to conceive of an alternative, *embodied* view in which (chaotic) matter is not somehow first conditioned or organized by "Ideas," whether in the divine or human "mind." As Luft (2003) perceptibly notes, "[r]ejection of or indifference to that [conditioned] assumption was not possible *within* metaphysics, since it was the cornerstone *of* metaphysics" (18; original italics). This "conditioned" assumption of Being is, furthermore, what Derrida characterized as the "metaphysics of presence" at the heart of Western philosophy (see Section 3.5).[131]

Before moving on to the next section, it is worth noting that much (though not all) mainstream science and neuroscience, for example, continue the (confused) metaphors that perpetuate this "conditioned" assumption of mental "contents" in the "representation" of reality. This is what is usually meant and understood by the term "cognition" in mainstream cognitive science, and this is also why some thinkers, including Luft, reject the term "cognition" out of hand – for its implied connection to reductive science.[132] The term "cognition" derives from ancient, metaphysical "knowing" in Western philosophy and science that Vico, at the very cusp of the modern era, rejected and struggled to overcome in a new type of "science" that captured the *unconditioned* conception of humans "whose sense-making is *not epistemic, nor even subjective,* but the interpretive activity, linguistic and practical, of beings-in-the-world" (Luft 2003, xv, n. 14; emphasis added). Three hundred years later, however, it remains far too easy to misunderstand Vico's philosophy of language in terms of the traditional view of cognition stemming from Greek metaphysics that remains very much alive.

6.1.2   MISUNDERSTANDING VICO'S *VERUM-FACTUM* AS AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE

The epistemological confusion that arises in interpreting Vico's *New Science* of 1744 is, however, partly to blame on his earlier writings that *do* indeed engage with epistemology in more or less traditional fashion. As Luft (2003) argues, it was this earlier engagement with metaphysics that has sent the wrong message to

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131   Luft (2003) notes that "Derrida criticizes Saussure [...] for assuming subjectivity and privileging voice over writing, and stresses the complicity between speech and the metaphysics of presence" (95, n. 89; cf. 96–103).

132   Linguist Roy Harris (2008) is, for example, suspicious of all "cognitive" science for this very reason.

many Vico scholars, who trace a continuous and consistent line of thought from the earlier to the latest writings in the final edition of his *New Science*. This is certainly understandable but, as Luft (2003) makes clear,

> [t]he unquestioned belief that *verum et factum convertuntur* [the convertibility of the true and the made] is an epistemological principle [continues to be] a major source of misconception about Vico, making him complicit in the very nihilistic character of modernism he was the first, and sharpest before Nietzsche, to identify and condemn. (7)

What separates Luft's (2003) approach from nearly all the other approaches to Vico that she examines in her work is the *embodied* distinction she introduces between "making" as a causal process (*conditioned by* "knowing" in the tradition of Greek metaphysics) and "making" as an embodied, hermeneutic experience, where "language assumes *a non-reductive naturalism* in which linguistic 'events,' limited only by natural necessity, are existential responses to emergent human needs and utilities" (56; emphasis added). This latter embodied process she terms "originary," as opposed to the epistemological mode of making that is conditioned by knowing in an idealist (Platonic), disembodied sense.

In one type of interpretation, Luft (2003) cites the philosopher Tom Rockmore as being "right to credit Vico with going beyond epistemology to anthropology, but his anthropology was not that of *subjects* but of *makers*, ontological beings-in-the-world, and no one took *that* way until Nietzsche too rejected the anthropology of the subject and identified humans as artists" (7; original emphasis; cf. Nietzsche 1989). Luft (2003) also states that certain other prominent Vico scholars, for example Isaiah Berlin (2000) and Donald Phillip Verene, have attempted to free Vico from nineteenth-century German idealism. In her view, however, these scholars "retain the conceits that bind them to [idealism]," even as they attempt to "redefine historical 'knowing'"; this is the case, insofar as these new definitions continue to be based on an identity or *homoiousis* between the subject and object of knowledge (39). As such, modern interpreters of Vico's tropology remain blind to his central concern and set their sights "against the cognitive character of epistemology, rather than against epistemology itself" (43).[133] The distinction that Luft here characterizes between the originary and epistemological modes of "making" is done on the basis of *verum-factum* as the secularization of a divine predicate.

In fact, Luft's original contribution to this discussion is that there are *two intertwined divine predicates that sustain the concept of "making,"* the one pagan

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133 See also Luft's (2003) skillful arguments on various epistemological interpretations of Vico's *verum-factum* principle, 24–61. For anyone interested in a more extensive discussion, see her website at http://online.sfsu.edu/~srluft.

(Greek metaphysics), and the other Judaic (the Hebrew Scriptures). And because the latter Hebraic sense was subsumed into the former Greek sense already in late antiquity through the efforts of Philo, they bear distinguishing, in the manner that Vico pursued his task (1984, §§400, 401). Indeed, "making" in each sense (Greek and Hebraic, respectively) is unique, insofar as each system of traits "make" entirely different imaginative patterns of understanding, each in terms of their distinctive consequences, as I hope to show in Chapter 7.

According to Luft and others, the Greek understanding of "making" has historically dominated over the Hebraic, hiding the latter from view. Because this syncretism occurred so early in Western philosophy, it served as the springboard for later scholastic interpretations on down into the Renaissance and beyond into early modernity as well. In other words, the Greek understanding of making conditioned by knowing is deeply rooted in Western philosophy to the exclusion of the older, alien conception of the Hebraic notion of a Creator-God, who creates linguistically *ex nihilo.*

According to Guy G. Stroumsa (2009), the Christianization of the Roman Empire "did not lead to a radical iconoclasm and to the destruction of pagan literature, […] because Christian identity crystalized around the faith in the message of translated Scriptures, hence detached from their original ethnic or cultural tradition" (53). Stroumsa further proposes an apt metaphor to help visualize the syncretism that Luft has been describing. Stroumsa suggests that the Christians succeeded in developing

> a double culture, pivoting around the two totally different literary traditions, but that would together constitute what I propose calling the 'double helix' […]. The Bible and some of the great classical texts of Greco-Latin culture—especially those coming from the Stoic and Platonic traditions, which seemed to suit the Christians […]—together formed the double foundation of Byzantine culture and medieval Latin culture. The Christian hermeneutic revolution, which had already added the New Testament to the Old by postulating that one could not be understood without the other, now proposed applying the same system, *mutatis mutandis,* to the two cultural corpuses of Athens and Jerusalem. […] Christians constituted themselves as a culture by integrating both the culture of Israel and that of Greece. (2009, 53–54)

According to Luft (following Hans Blumenberg), the first-century scholar who syncretized these two approaches, Hebraic and Greek, was Philo of Alexandria. The product of this syncretism was his '*principio gnoseologico,*' "the principle demonstrating *the omniscience of God* as creator and maker of all thing[s] … [and] making as the source and condition of knowing" (Mondolfo quoted in Luft 2003, 26; emphasis added). During the Italian Renaissance, Philo's "gnoseological principle" was taken up and interpreted through the lens of the then-resurgent Neoplatonism of

the era, a principle which was subsequently embraced by several thinkers, including scientists of early modernity like Galileo Galilei (1564–1642).

On the basis of Philo's gnoseological principle, moreover, it was possible to treat "God's universal creation as source and proof of God's omniscience and [identify] human making with the conceptual activities of mathematical construction and physical experiments" (Mondolfo in Luft 2003, 27). As noted in the previous section, the Platonic "Architect" with his divine blueprint was a metaphor of ancient heritage in the West. The traditional interpretation identified man as "made in the image of God," that is, as *imago Dei,* which "enabled him to know a world divinely created"; whereas, the *moderns transferred the predicate of God's creativity onto themselves,* which "made man knower of a world he himself created" (Luft 2003, 19). Thus, the birth of Western humanism during the Renaissance involved *a process of transference* in equating the "'divine art' of the geometrician and human art in the physical sciences" at the very cusp of the early modern age (27).

The problem presented by tracing Vico's *verum-factum* principle back to Philo's gnoseological principle with its "subjectivist conception of making," together with its "idealist conception of knowing," is complex and also misleading. The problem arises, primarily because Vico's *verum-factum* does not belong to the familiar terminological tradition of Western philosophy. As Luft (2003) puts it most succinctly, *verum-factum* is attributed as an epistemological principle on the basis of "the metaphysical assertion that knowledge rests on the substantive *homoiousis* [of the same essence or identity] of thought and object" (27); that is to say, the entire vocabulary of "knowledge," as handed down through the Western tradition, is usually grasped only in terms of the "metaphysics of presence." In sum, the *homoiousis* or identity of thought and object is the foundational assumption of an All-Knowing Being that underwrites both "subjectivity" and "knowledge" in the Western tradition. Thus "[r]ejection of or indifference to that [conditioned] assumption was not possible *within* metaphysics, since it was the cornerstone *of* metaphysics," to reiterate Luft's (2003, 18) important insight.

Indeed, Philo syncretized the Hebraic and Greek conceptions of "making," thereby fusing the Hebraic biblical Creator-God with the "omniscience" of Plato's pagan Timaean Architect, "an event," as Luft (2003) notes, "of Hellenistic syncretism that transformed a scriptural religion into onto-theology [the ontology of God, or a theology of being]" (27). Philo had thus produced, or invented the "All-Knowing" Creator-God that the Christian medieval West had inherited – an *epistemic* conception absent from the Hebrew conception of the God of Genesis and his ("originary") creation of the natural world through language. Indeed, *how* this fusion of conceptions happened in late antiquity is much easier to describe than to wholly understand, when this onto-theology is reduced back down to its two separate "disentwined," decoupled components – constituting two *very different* conceptions for (Hebrew) *davar* and (Greek) *logos,* respectively (cf. Stroumsa 2009, 53–54).

Indeed, when the biblical (Hebraic) Creator-God of Genesis and the pagan (Greek) omniscient Timaean Architect are finally pulled apart and decoupled after being conjoined for the better part of two millennia, what is revealed is an alien, uncanny dimension of "making" that is difficult to grasp, as Luft emphasizes. This is because the difference between the Hebraic and the Greek conceptions is the difference between an *unconditioned* sense-making and a *conditioned* knowing; the former belongs to an embodied, and the latter to a disembodied understanding, respectively.

Distinguishing between these two terms, moreover, involves analysis of the difference between the Hebraic term *davar* (word, deed, thing) and its Greek counterpart, the term *logos* (word, deed) (e.g., Vico 1984, §401). When separated from one another, an originary mode of being reveals itself through *davar*, a poetic mode that Vico finally grasped when writing his *New Science*. Luft (2003) states that

> [i]f the paradigm of divine creativity [that] Vico attributes to his poets is an ontological *poiesis,* the "trues" convertible with the made are not [Greek] epistemic "truths," but the [Hebraic] concretely made true *things* (*cose*) of the human world themselves, and "knowledge" is the reflexive hermeneutic that the "knower" is himself or herself their maker. (10; original emphasis)

In what follows, Luft characterizes how Vico arrived at a new interpretation of the *verum-factum* principle that diverged from the traditional understanding in Philo's contribution to medieval Christianity.

6.1.3   FROM "IMAGE OF GOD" TO *QUASI ALIUS DEUS*, "LIKE ANOTHER GOD"

In fleshing out his version of the *verum-factum* principle (the convertibility of the true and the made), Vico invoked a commonplace term since Philo in late antiquity. Throughout the medieval era, it had been taken for granted in terms of the *conditioned* "making" inherent in the Greek concept of *logos* (divine word, or deed). Ultimately, however, Vico managed to separate the Greek and Hebrew understandings by way of an etymological analysis of *logos:*

> "Logic" comes from *logos,* whose first and proper meaning was *fabula,* fable, carried over into Italian as *favela,* speech. In Greek the fable was also called *mythos,* myth, whence comes the Latin *mutus,* mute. For speech was born in mute times as mental [or sign] language, which Strabo in a golden passage says existed before vocal or articulate [language]; whence *logos* means both word and idea. [...] Thus the first language in the first mute times of the nation must

have begun with signs [...]. For this reason *logos,* or word, meant also deed to the Hebrews and thing to the Greeks [...]. (Vico 1984, §401; ellipses added)

By endorsing the *verum-factum* principle, however, Vico was actually employing it against the grain of traditional usage as he dug deeper into the Greek and Hebrew etymologies.[134] Moreover, as Donatella Di Cesare recognizes, Vico's reference to *logos*, or *verbum,* should be understood "not so much in the Greek sense but rather [...] in the biblical sense" (Di Cesare in Luft 2003, 165).[135] Continuing along these same lines, Luft observes that "[t]he true key to creation in the Bible is *davar,* a word important not only for its semantic content but also for its pragmatic value, a function of the 'peculiar orality of the ancient Hebrew world'" (165). By contrast, *logos*

> was eventually reduced to its logical-linguistic value as a discursive manifestation of rational, abstract thought, [whereas] *davar* means deed united with word and thought, *inseparable from the effect produced in reality.* For this reason the great concern that runs through Western philosophy, "the truth-value of the word and its conformity to the thing," has no ground for the Hebrews, to whom "truth reveals itself ... in conformity with action." (Di Cesare quoted in Luft 2003, 165; emphasis added)

In the Greek sense, *logos* was reduced to a "discursive manifestation of rational, abstract thought." But *davar* could not be reduced to a "logical-linguistic value" in the same way. Instead, *davar* remained "deed united with word and thought, *inseparable from the effect produced in reality,"* a creation of the concrete, real world. Vico gradually developed a distinct vocabulary for (Hebraic) *davar* against the grain of what was commonly invoked and understood in the (Greek) tradition of *logos*. Contrary to the conditioned sense of (teleological) "making" on the blueprint of prior "knowing," Vico insisted (against the early moderns' conception of *imago Dei*) on the *un*knowability of the natural world, conceding that all that human making could possibly yield was a "philological" or "contextual" sense-making of the socio-historical world (Luft 2003, 24). Because humans had not made the natural

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134 Following Donatella Di Cesare, Luft (2003) notes that Vico scholarship has neglected the influence of the "Hebraic tradition" on his work, "and particularly the 'biblical vision' of language on the formulation of *verum-factum"* (165). Sometime after 1725, for example, Vico is known to have sent his manuscript to Signore Giuseppe Athias, head rabbi (from 1733) of the Jewish community in Livorno. Luft reports Di Casare's comment being that "Athias was among the few to display a reverent esteem" for Vico's work and outlook (2003, 165, n. 145).

135 Di Cesare finds it "difficult to believe," for instance, that the biblical model (for the *verum-factum* principle) that Vico chose – divine creation – was not earlier taken into consideration for the way that language (in the Book of Genesis) "is presupposed as the ultimate reality" and where acts of creation "are characterized by the immediate ... nexus of speaking and doing" (Di Cesare quoted in Luft 2003, 165; original ellipsis).

world, they could not "know" it – they had not made it. However, as Luft is careful to note elsewhere,

> the new science as a unity of *philosophy and philology* cannot be merely a synthesis of the two, since both traditions [*viz.* philosophy & philology] are grounded on the familiar conceit [or belief that] Vico's insight enables him to get beyond—the belief in the essentially subjective nature of humans which ensures *homoiousis* [common or corresponding identity] with the knowable. (3; emphasis added)

With the discovery of a new system of root terms buried deeply within the *verum-factum* principle, Vico was overtly *denying* the Greek cosmological principle "as above, so below," and was unpacking an older, hidden system of terms for (the poetic, Hebraic) *davar.* As noted above, the shift is from a Greek paradigm to an originary ontological *poiesis,* where "the concretely made true *things* (*cose*) of the human world" are understood as being made by their makers (Luft 2003, 10). In short, by asserting *verum-factum* as an *un*conditioned "making," *ex nihilo,* Vico was asserting the consequences for the *verum-factum* principle inherent within the Hebraic term *davar* (divine word, deed, and concrete *thing*).

Vico was thus abandoning the *logos* as a "discursive" manifestation of rational thought. His aim, rather, was to capture the lost distinctions among the etymologies that had, over time, inadvertently become repressed. Philo of Alexandria had integrated the system of concepts of the (Platonic) Divine Architect and the (Judaic) Creator-God – and by doing so he had also syncretized the concepts of *logos* and *davar,* absorbing the latter term into the former. In this way, the *un*conditioned nature of the Hebrew Creator-Poet God, who created *ex nihilo* on the divine power of language, vanished into (i.e., was absorbed by) Philo's Greek "gnoseological principle," inherited by the Christian West.

Luft (2003) states that "[i]f there is a model for Vico's divine, poetic creators, it is the poet-God of Hebrew scripture, an 'artisan' whose artifacts are, at one and the same time, both linguistic and concrete" (37). In other words, these artifacts are, at one and the same time, words that perform actual physical-labor-in-the-world. In the Book of Genesis, this is exemplified by such well-known passages, as: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1: 3); likewise: "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so" (Gen. 1: 9).[136] Here "word" is concrete "deed" in the natural world.

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136   All scriptural references are from the King James Version (KJV) of the *Holy Bible.*

Prior to Vico, a reform-minded Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) was one of the few, who considered "the original owner of *verum-factum* [to be] the omnipotent God of the Hebrews [...]" (Luft 2003, 69). This shift toward the Judaic in the comprehension of *verum-factum* subsequently radicalized his conception of the notion of "man as *imago Dei,*" that is, man "made in the image of God." The question arose as to what that "image" is, after all. What is it that God bequeathed man in His image, if word and deed are one action? Luft reports that this shift in viewpoint radically shifts "the substantive difference between original and image, [insofar as the difference between] infinite and finite, disappears [...]" (69).

Because Cusa's radical anthropology is held in check by his theological frame, however, he does not go beyond this observation to the step(s) that Vico later took up in moving this insight to its (radical) conclusion in separating the roles of God and man in what they can "know," respectively. But, Cusa did go so far as to rethink the relationship "of creator to created and the nature of the creative process appropriate to an infinite deity" (70). Indeed, for Cusa, if man is *imago Dei* (made in God's image) then it is not in terms of his circumstances in the world, as created, "but of self-realization," insofar as "[c]reated in the image of God, man is *quasi alius deus,* like another God, and, as such, is a creator: performance of the divine likeness ... *imitates not the world, but the origin of the world"* (Blumenberg in Luft 2003, 71; emphasis added).

Luft interprets Cusa (*pace* Blumenberg, in this case) such that God-likeness became a relation of *accomplishment* as opposed to a *substance* (71); that is, in imitating the origin of the world: word as concrete deed, rather than imitating the world itself (*mimesis*). In other words, with Cusa in the fifteenth century, *imago Dei* became an active function of human creativity. The static, substantive "subject" of "knowledge" becomes, at least in principle, a dynamic, functional "poet" without subjectivity, who creates concretely through the power of words. In the final section of this chapter, I turn to an analysis of White's fact-fiction debate, in the light of the foregoing discussion. The question is, after a deep analysis of Vico's *verum-factum* principle, whether White can ultimately be identified as a Vichian at all. I conclude, in any case, that White cannot be Vichian, and he tells us why himself.

6.2 WHITE'S GREEK INHERITANCE: THE FICTIVE TECHNIQUES OF HISTORICAL *REPRESENTATION*

This subtle, creative (embodied) conception of the *verum-factum* principle as Vico transformed it in his etymological studies regarding *logos* is missed by White, despite Luft's (2003) endorsement of White as one of the few to provide an "alchemical" reading of Vico (xi, n. 4). In adhering to his structuralist framework, White retains the essentially idealist nature of narrative "discourse" as demonstrated in Chapter

5. This is evident when, after criticizing historians for their belief in the "truth" of facts and the "certain knowledge" this guarantees, White goes on to say:

> Novelists might be dealing only with imaginary events whereas historians are dealing with real ones, but the process of fusing events, whether imaginary or real, into a comprehensible totality capable of serving as the *object of a representation* is a poetic process. Here the historians must utilize precisely the same tropological strategies, the same modalities of representing relationships in words, that the poet or novelist uses. (White 1985a, 125; emphasis added)

This is not Vico's embodied theory of the tropes in terms of an understanding that the first gentile humans were poet-creators, as delineated in the previous subsections by Luft (2003). In retaining the concept of "historical representation," as quoted from White's (1985a) "The Fictions of Factual Representation," he retains the *mimetic* (copied, representationalist) creativity of the "Divine Architect" of Plato's *Timaeus,* indicative of traditional Greek metaphysics (cf. Luft 2003, 17–18). In White's evident conflation of concepts, "fact-fiction" and Vico's *verum et factum convertuntur* (the convertibility of the true and the made), White cannot possibly adhere to the creative biblical poetics that Vico discovered in a distinction between the conditioned (disembodied) "knowing" (*logos*) of the Greek tradition and the unconditioned (embodied) poetic "sense-making" (*davar*) of the Hebrew tradition. Thus, White's "poetic process," in the final analysis, is not Vichian, but ultimately remains Greek *mimesis* (for a similar conclusion, see Kuukkanen 2013).

White's fact-fiction debate is overtly modeled on eighteenth-century narrative *discourse* in an alliance that hinges on *the fictionality of all discourse*. This is true for White, whether it is poetry or prose in recognition of "the inevitability of a recourse to fictive techniques in the *representation* of real events in the historical discourse" (White, 1985a, 125; original emphasis). Decisively, White goes on to confirm my very argument in the following:

> On what grounds can such a reactionary position be justified? On what grounds can the assertion that historical discourse shares more than it divides with novelistic discourse be sustained? The first ground is to be found in recent developments in literary theory—especially in the insistence *by modern Structuralist and text critics* on the necessity of dissolving the distinction between prose and poetry in order to identify their shared attributes as forms of linguistic behavior that are as much constitutive of their *objects of representation* as they are reflective of external reality, on the one side, and projective of internal emotional states, on the other. (1985a, 125; emphasis added)

In taking the "modern Structuralist" side in the argument, White annuls his Vichian stance. He may talk about structuralism in Vichian *tropic* terms, but he gives evidence that he adheres to the binary separation of language and life that is characteristic of the entire Greek tradition. It is in this sense that White's writings have retained an undeniably ambiguous patina. This ambiguity has prompted Gabrielle M. Spiegel (2013), for example, to wonder where he stands "in relation to semiotics, and hence to structuralism, not to mention poststructuralism" (172). My answer to Spiegel is that White's history-as-fiction is structuralist, root and branch, while his nod in the direction of poststructuralism would merely carry White's project yet further downstream from an embodied approach.

In the next chapter, I present the main lines of Luft's (2003) interpretation of Vico's uncanny, anti-Cartesian *verum-factum* principle, in her pursuit of the Hebraic lines immanent within Vico's own etymological researches. But, in presenting this interpretation, I do so from my own standpoint of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) as presented in Chapter 2. In short, I refract Luft's insights through my own methodological standpoint.

Indeed, by the third and penultimate edition of the *Second New Science* (of 1744), Vico had realized the "master key" to his critique of Descartes's rationalist epistemology. The *verum-factum* principle thereby became a new basis for "knowing," insofar as the first gentile humans were fully embodied poets without "subjectivity." The new basis for knowing in such a system, however, is no longer certain, or "guaranteed," as was the Greek ambition and confidence. This new basis for knowing was dependent, rather, on human "makers," whose bodily skills of perception, memory, and imagination provided the only truth accessible to them – that provided by the experience of what one has "made" oneself.

After this key understanding, Vico's own interpretation of the *verum-factum* principle emerged in subtly different ways from that which preceded it, even in the various editions of the same work, 1725–44. This made it profoundly difficult for the people of his own time to fully comprehend what he wanted to communicate. In fact, it remains unfamiliar to this day, to which Luft's treatise on Vico's "uncanny" humanism testifies. Nowadays, we have tools that Vico could not even imagine – tools not of etymology, but ones that "see" into the body and techniques and methods that have given rise to ways of understanding the dynamic, embodied nature of language from the perspective of the life sciences, to which I now move in the chapter that follows.

6.3   CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a sketch of Sandra Rudnick Luft's (2003) hermeneutic (embodied) interpretation of Giambattista Vico's (1668–1744) *verum-factum*

principle (the convertibility of the true and the made). Vico's philological researches on *verum-factum* were made, moreover, in the light of his key discovery that the first gentile humans were "originary" poet-creators (without subjectivity); that is, speakers of language who created their immediate social worlds, along *Hebraic* rather than *Greek* lines.

In following his philological analyses on *verum-factum* back to their Greek and Hebrew lines of emergence, respectively, what Vico eventually realized was that the Greek and Hebrew traditions were very different. On the one hand, the Greek tradition posited an eternal "knower," the Divine Architect, who knew from eternity *already in advance* the purposes (and blueprint) of that which he created: *logos*. On the other hand, the Hebrew tradition posited something quite different. Vico realized that the Hebrew tradition offered a direct understanding of the creative power of language itself: spoken word as concretely creative deed, *davar*.

In his fusing of the Greek and Hebrew lines of thought already in late antiquity, Luft shows that the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria had formed the theoretical basis for medieval Christian theology. But, what Philo also did in fusing the attributes of (Greek) *logos* and (Hebraic) *davar* was to create a paradoxical tension in the nature of language within the tradition that became the legacy of Christianity in the medieval West. The nature of this tension is already familiar by now in the preceding chapters of this thesis; the analytic Greek tradition was disembodied, static, and *nonliving* in the separate treatment of word and deed, conditioned by prior knowing and purpose (*telos*). The Hebraic tradition was, however, embodied and *dynamic* in its synthesis of word and deed as an "originary," directly creative act without subjectivity.

This is so important that it bears repeating; language itself in the Hebrew tradition *became the condition* of the convertibility between what was true and what was made, not "prior knowing" and planning as in the Greek tradition. This separation between the ancient traditions, respectively, took Vico nearly two decades of etymological research to accomplish, forming the basis the three editions of the *New Science* (1725, 1730, and 1744). But when he finally achieved it, these efforts freed him from the Cartesian rationalism that he so opposed, even if it alienated him from the thinkers of his own time.

This emphasis on the separation of the Greek and Hebrew traditions of *verum-factum* is important for this discussion, because of the way it changes the third and final edition of what both White and Luft refer to as the *Second New Science* of 1744. Vico's realization of the poetic nature of human communication became coupled (synthesized) with the Hebraic nature of language itself as *concretely* creative in the world. In other words, Vico's model for his discovery that the first humans were poets was the poet-God of Hebrew scripture. Once this is understood – especially in the light of the preceding Chapter 5 and the legacy of Saussure's own metaphorical

choices – it should be clear that what one chooses as one's *model* transfers the structural attributes from the source domain to its target domain.

When White discusses the "fact-fiction" dimension of history-as-fiction, he does so primarily on the basis of a historical precedent in the eighteenth century. His starting point is the nature of history *as a form of literary writing.* In his own exposition of this debate, White notes that during the eighteenth century, "truth" and "error," on the one side, opposed "fact" and "fancy," on the other. As White reports, however, by the early nineteenth century these correlations had curiously changed places and become fixed when, especially, historians correlated "fact" with "truth" and "error" with "fancy." This change reversed the earlier (eighteenth-century) association of these terms in the (then) more *literary* understanding of the writing of history in that age. This, however, is an argument in narrative *discourse* defended in support of White's stated goal to return to a "pre-scientistic" approach to history writing, which he associated with Vico's *verum-factum* principle.

In Luft's presentation of Vico's *verum-factum* principle, however, she highlights the idea that human "knowing" in the Greek tradition is conditioned by prior (*a priori*) "knowing" (of the design or blueprint) according to some predisposed purpose (*telos*). As such, "facts" within such a system of thought are shown to participate in the paradigm of "knowledge" (epistemology), insofar as such facts (of science, history, anthropology, archaeology, etc.) share in the *logos* defined as eternal word, or deed – founding the epistemological principle of Western philosophy. The Greek system of metaphysics thus subtlely underlies, explains, and ultimately guarantees the "rationality" of human beings as sharing in the identity (*homoiousis*) of the subject and object of knowledge. This, moreover, is how the "metaphysics of presence" is carried down through traditional philosophy as Derrida discovered.

According to Luft, however, Vico was ultimately able *to reject* this cosmic correspondence of a common identity shared between human and divine "knowing." This occurred when he discovered the "master key" in his *New Science,* that is, the key realization that the first humans were poets without subjectivity, who created their social institutions and culture with their poetic words *as* physical-deeds-in-the-world. On the strength of this distinction, I can show that White's theoretical underpinnings and vocabulary remain invested in the traditional Greek understanding (*logos*), not in the (embodied) understanding of Vico's etymological discovery of the originary roots of *verum et factum convertuntur* (Hebraic *davar*). On the deepest level, White cannot be truly Vichian; he adheres (in structuralism) to the Greek sign theory that upholds, in turn, the disembodied "knowing" (*logos*) that conditions the convertibility of the true and the made in his theorizing – especially when he appeals to *mimesis* and the representation that Greek metaphysics underwrites. In short, both the history-literature and the fact-fiction debates that are commonly argued in tandem in support of history-as-fiction are *both equally* underpinned by the metaphysical principles in Greek antiquity.

In the chapter that follows, I address the manner in which the *disembodied* thought of traditional Western philosophy – entailing the separation of body and mind, matter and form – can be set aside. Toward this end, I use Luft's fruitful interpretation of Vico's *un*conditioned, originary "making," in order to draw a comparison between Vico's poet-creators and the dynamical systems approach to life in terms of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE). That is, following Vico's lead, it is possible to shift paradigms beyond (Greek) metaphysics – to move toward an emergent naturalism that is not, however, a causal or reductive "materialism." This move, moreover, is the final tool needed to bring my analysis of White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction to a conclusion in Chapter 8.

In bringing Chapter 6 to a close, Vico's work nearly three centuries ago went very far in pointing the way toward embodied language through the tropes of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. Now in the light of research in cognitive linguistics over the past few decades, it is possible to better understand where he might have been pointing, even if he could not fully articulate it at the time himself. Perhaps now, in the light of *embodied* cognitive science, it is possible to compare and converge Vico's key findings with those of AE as I attempt in the next chapter. Indeed, at the heart of Chapter 7 is an effort to elaborate the need to switch *metaphors,* as Mark Johnson recommends, if our theories will acquire the bases that are in line with living structure in its embodied, primarily *dynamic* dimension.

CHAPTER SEVEN

We find that the principle of these origins *both of languages and of letters* lies in the fact that the first gentile peoples, by a demonstrated necessity of nature, were poets who spoke in poetic characters. This discovery, which is the master key of this Science, has cost us the persistent research of almost all our literary life, because with our civilized natures we [moderns] cannot at all imagine and can understand only by great toil the poetic nature of these first men.

—Giambattista Vico, *New Science*

The idea that the past can move us in ways that are at odds with our identity confronts us with the fact that in a very real sense time is not a line but a knot, not a river but a whirlpool, not progression but circulation.

—Eelco Runia, "Can the Past Remember Us?"

7   VICO'S NEW METAPHOR FOR OUR "SYSTEMIC" CONDITION AFTER TECHNOLOGY

The question that this chapter considers is this. How can we survive (disembodied) "modernity," if we completely overlook the *nature of life and language* as an embodied phenomenon? The answer I propose is to realign and bring back into connection the dynamic, living pattern and its embodying processes, which Greek metaphysics had separated and modeled on the metaphor of the eternal, static (disembodied) Divine Architect in antiquity. The misunderstanding that this ancient philosophical metaphor has generated for millennia in the West naturally touches the discipline of history and the tension between practicing historians and historical theorists on the nature of history writing (historiography), as taken up by the (semiotic) linguistic turn in the late 1960s. The tension that this has generated in historical theory, however, is only symptomatic of a far larger socio-cultural problem in the West that Hayden White certainly appreciates and has done his best to address, with the tools at his disposal, for his entire career.

The linguistic turn in historiography, however, did not solve the problem – not for historical theory. The *tension* remains, because the legacy of Greek metaphysics bequeathed (static, disembodied) tools embedded in the very vocabulary we use in trying to escape its effective reach. This ancient legacy holds us captive, due to the familiar ways of understanding and sense-making of the world that the Neapolitan rhetorician Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) deeply understood by the end of his life. To make his way out of the metaphysics of the seventeenth-century Cartesian rationalism that he rejected, Vico had come to understand "that the first gentile peoples […] were poets who spoke in poetic characters," which constituted the crown and master key of his lifelong research in etymology (Vico 1984, §34, in the first epigraph above).[137]

Vico published the first edition of his *New Science* a mere seventy-five years after René Descartes's (1596–1650) death. That is, Vico was quick to understand, as one of the first in the early-modern period, the need to (re)ground human being as an *embodied* being. As a rhetorician, he became a philosopher-historian, whose theory of the tropes (tropology) underpinned a theory of history that was thoroughly tropic in nature. White, for his part, came to employ those tropes very differently in his own work.

My aim in this chapter is to try to connect Vico's embodied *pattern* of understanding with its own *process* in terms of a "metaphor" that we moderns can finally appreciate and embrace – and connect to the condition we have found ourselves in for the last centuries of industrial revolution and technological change. I do this by following Luft's (2003) lead in tracing back how Vico's research into etymology transformed the *verum-factum* principle, only after Vico held his master key firmly in hand. In short, once he saw the (embodied) pattern, he likewise discovered a *metaphor* that embodies and embeds the process he now understood: the new metaphor transfers from its source domain the dynamic structural attributes to its target domain. But to embrace the metaphor, one must already accept the embodied nature of life and language. What Vico's research offers "modern" people for our systemic condition after technology is the metaphor of the (Hebraic) "God of the Whirlwind" that had been elided from metaphysics already in late antiquity.

The new metaphor is urgently needed, because our "postmodern" interlude has brought us to a point seemingly "between paradigms" that postmodern theorists even still today consider to be the "discursive condition after modernity." But as Chapter 5 shows, postmodern theory is still held deeply in thrall to the *pattern* of thinking and vocabulary that gave rise to the disembodied metaphors that separates pattern and process in the first place. These dualist metaphors, from which the vocabulary emerges, returns its speakers to the static, *nonliving* conceptions that

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137   References to Vico's (1984) *New Science* are given in paragraph numbers, not in page numbers.

gave rise to Western philosophy in the first place (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999). In short, postmodern theory has attempted to reject and deny the structural attributes of metaphysics (absolute knowledge, certainty, truth, i.e., the Divine Architect), that is, without understanding that the language embodied and embeds the metaphorical thinking (static, disembodied, nonliving) that continually returns our theorizing to these same disembodied metaphors.

In returning to Vico and, especially to Sandra Rudnick Luft's (2003) secular ("alchemical") interpretation and implications of Vico's work in digging down into the roots of the buried Hebraic theology within Greek metaphysics, we discover that Vico had *already found* the metaphorical model we so badly need now, today, in the ongoing shift to the full-blown "systemic condition" after technology. This ongoing rupture of the last two centuries is what many observers, like Friedrich Nietzsche or Martin Heidegger, have intuited – inspiring generations of thinkers sensitive to the tensions that Vico himself was reacting to in the early eighteenth century.

It is easy to show that thinkers from the mid-eighteenth century onward were beginning to wake up to the false sense of security that metaphysics had attempted to establish in ancient times. Among them, psychologist and historian Eelco Runia has wondered how we can deal with the ways that the past seems to confront us in the present with a sense of time that "is not a line but a knot, not a river but a *whirlpool,* not progression but circulation" (2007b, 1; the second epigraph to the chapter above, emphasis added). According to Marshall Berman, the Genevan philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) astounded his contemporaries with the observation that:

> European society was "at the edge of the abyss," on the verge of the most explosive revolutionary upheavals. [Rousseau] experienced everyday life in that society—especially in Paris, its capital—as a whirlwind, *le tourbillon social.* How was the self to move and live in the whirlwind? (Berman 1983, 17)

In contemporary society now situated in the early decades of the twenty-first century, it is even *more* difficult to deny the *pattern* of life that Rousseau intuits and models on the metaphor of a "whirlwind," or what Runia has described, in turns, as the metaphor of "a knot" and "a *whirlpool,*" with the definite pattern of (ecological?) "circulation" in mind. Berman's book title is a quotation from Karl Marx (1818–1883) in his own mid-nineteenth century observation that *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air,* which Berman then completes with his subtitle: *The Experience of Modernity.* If the *lived* experience of modernity is the "melting away" of all solid, material things into "air," this brings one very close to the image of a whirlwind. In the Age of the Internet, the web-like pattern of "system" that Fritjof Capra (1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) has elaborated, or the ecological holist character of Christopher Lloyd's (1993) "methodological struct*urism*" all speak for a pattern that moves completely

against the grain of the Greek legacy that is our philosophical inheritance, defined by the static, nonliving metaphor of the Divine Architect (see Chapter 6; see also Luft 2003).

Indeed, Rousseau was quite correct in his intuition that European society in his time was "on the verge of the most explosive revolutionary upheavals" (Berman 1983, 17). This eighteenth-century observation must certainly have been even more evident to another Genevan thinker, Ferdinand de Saussure, one hundred years later in his own attempts to create a "science" of linguistics that suited the tenor of the turbulent ("systemic") times he was living through during the Second Industrial (technological) Revolution then well under way (see Chapter 4). Things have not slowed down from Rousseau's time to our own; quite the contrary, in fact. Rousseau wrote something we might all feel today, when he said:

> I'm beginning to feel the drunkenness that this agitated, tumultuous life plunges you into. With such a multitude of objects passing before my eyes, I'm getting dizzy. Of all the things that strike me, there is none that holds my heart, yet all of them together disturb my feelings, so that I forget what I am and who I belong to. (Rousseau in Berman 1983, 18)

This new "systemic" pattern of the world, as David Gary Shaw (2002) notes, now challenges even historians and social scientists alike in a choice: "either to continue their specialized and somewhat insular ways; or to answer the call of [William] McNeill and others *to join the larger ecological project,* not only through the world history movement […], but through a revised evolutionary framework" (2; emphasis added; cf. McNeil 1963; Wallerstein 2001).

This systemic pattern of the world has been emerging since the dawn of Western science – since at least Galileo Galilei's (1564–1642) groundbreaking (pro-Copernican) 1632 treatise *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems* (see, e.g., Siskin 2016). The legacy of Greek metaphysics is what empowered the authority of the Catholic Church to so confidently challenge Galileo's "scientific" findings (see, e.g., Feyerabend 1993). The Ptolemaic worldview that this authority held firm was *static,* fixed, and eternal (nonliving), while the scientific discoveries of those times were already then beginning to upend that authority *and the Ptolemaic worldview that underpinned it.* Along with the science of the Copernican worldview came the systemic pattern that upends the Greek metaphors of human rationality and "knowledge" that have remained in place since late antiquity. To change metaphors is difficult, however, because the systemic webs of our very vocabulary holds this legacy in place, reflecting the former patterns that these metaphors embody and embed, if Hayden White's metahistorical theory is anything to go by.

This, despite the fact that theorists are now desperately grasping around for new (metaphorical) models to work with, if I read our current theoretical crisis correctly

(cf. Berman 1983; Harvey 1990; Eagleton 2004; Boghossian 2007; Winters 2014; see also Mishra 2014). It is a crisis, moreover, that touches historical theory, because it is a *general* crisis, or tension – one between a clear systemic pattern, which Western science unleashed in early modernity, and static metaphors that promise what can never be gained: absolute certainty, knowledge, and truth. Nevertheless, we remain tethered to the vocabulary and concepts invoking the old metaphors that no longer inform the patterns *we actually see around us every day* in terms of dynamic motion, flow, and (ecological) "circulation." These processes defy our belief in (and need for) "stability" and continuity, or the idea that the world is static and can be tamed.

Today this tension between the old expectations (that these traditional metaphors seemingly guarantee) and the need for certainty and "stable" identity appears to threaten democracy itself. Believing there is a path back to "greatness," "independence," stable "identity," the conservative push to return to a fabled moment in the past will fail, because the world does not stop, stand still, nor can the multiple systems interacting with multiple other systems stop interacting or easily detach from one another. Once set in dynamic motion, systems of activities on different levels of the social network generate their own realities that we do not easily escape in the systemic condition after technology.

As long as there is movement, dynamic motion, there will be life – and ongoing change in social institutions as (ecological) systems of activity are continually embodied by the very people, who are embedded in them and enact them. The moment it all stops is the moment of a return to equilibrium. In other words, if we are to survive our own accelerating development and the *changes* that technology brings in its "vortex-like" wake, we must "abandon some of [our] founding metaphorical conceptions in favor of other metaphors" (M. Johnson 2007, 205). In this chapter, I will show how Vico came to uncover the poet-God whose word was creative deed in the world, a God who was simultaneously the God of the Whirlwind. This (dissipative) metaphor of God as a Whirlwind was absorbed into the pagan theology of Greek metaphysics and vanished from sight on the cusp of the rise of Christianity in late antiquity.

In the next sections, I present an *unfamiliar* context of Vico's embodied tropes, on Luft's interpretation, as poetic language. Through this approach, Luft shows how Vico's own illuminating discovery of the original gentile peoples as poet-creators may be illustrated by the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria's (25 BCE–50 CE) syncretic contribution in the forging of the *verum-factum* principle (the principle that what is true is what is *made*). This principle, as it happens, became the cornerstone of onto-theology for medieval Christianity down to our present day. Luft (2003) carefully analyzes the latent Hebraic conception of *verum-factum* in Philo on the background of pagan Greek theology. She shows how the contrasting (Hebraic) term *davar* facilitates and frees Vico's key finding for Luft's secular interpretation of

Vico's poetic ontology, which I examine in terms of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) and *living* structure in this thesis. The connection to be made in this effort is the one, moreover, that Vico already struggled to make with all his intellectual power for decades of his life. That connection is the pattern of our embodiment in language and in life, where embodiment is not a thing to be defined, but an ongoing activity that the dissipative structure of a "whirlwind" perfectly suits as the new metaphorical model in our systemic condition after technology.

7.1   THE SHIFT OF *VERUM-FACTUM* FROM PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA TO VICO

By the Third Edition of the *New Science* (1744), Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) had finally recognized the master key to his critique of René Descartes's (1596–1650) disembodied, rationalist epistemology as the foundation of knowledge. That is, Vico had discovered the key idea that the first gentile humans were fully embodied poets, whose *tropic* metaphorical words performed as physical-labor-in-the-human-world in their creation of *real* social institutions and culture (see the first epigraph to this chapter). Vico's (1984) genius thus lay in *stripping away* the epistemological presuppositions of philosophy to *imagine* what creating the human world from scratch might have been like before the civil institutions of "religion, marriage, asylum, and the first agrarian law" came into being (§630). In other words, Vico's was an *unfamiliar* view of metaphorical "words *as* deeds" in a creative, dynamic, and concrete sense that built the human social world with its civil institutions – without subjectivity, without (mimetic) disembodied *representation*. It was a move that pealed back the layers of pagan Greek theology to the older Hebrew patterns of theology that lay beneath (or within) it.

After this key understanding of the nature of human language, Vico's interpretation of the *verum-factum* principle (the convertibility of the true and the made) began to emerge and shift in subtly different ways from that version of *verum-factum* that had appeared in late antiquity by way of the Philo of Alexandria's hybrid fusion of Greek and Hebrew principles (for Philo's syncretic achievement, see Chapter 6). What I pick up from this in the present chapter, and pay attention to, is Luft's (2003) hermeneutic ("alchemical") interpretation of the (Hebraic) *un*conditioned, originary "sense-making," which Philo had *elided* in his creative fusion of these separate Greek and Hebrew traditions on the nature of language.

That is, I concentrate on the Hebraic elements of Luft's interpretation. I then, in turn, read Luft back through the lens of my methodology of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) as the key activity of *dynamic* (*living*) structure (e.g., Capra 1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014; on this, see Chapter 2). My purpose in presenting Luft's interpretation of Philo's fusion of the (Greek and Hebrew) metaphors of God is to

distinguish between them once more, and then to reject the Greek, while embracing the Hebrew metaphor that emerges from this analytic operation.

This is necessary in the present situation, when historical theory lies on the verge of a new paradigm, where few historians or theorists have any idea where this is leading. As Mark Johnson (2007) has already noted, however, it bears repeating in this context that

> the biggest single reason that most traditional and contemporary philosophy cannot recognize the pervasive, *theory-constituting role of metaphor in philosophy* is the failure of philosophers to acknowledge the existence of deep, systematic conceptual metaphor *and its grounding in embodied meaning*. They cannot recognize it, because to do so would require a fairly substantial revision of some of the founding assumptions of their philosophies. It would require them to abandon some of their founding metaphorical conceptions *in favor of other metaphors*. (2007, 205; emphasis added)

Metaphors have *real* consequences for traditional philosophy, as Johnson implies above; one might say (with Johnson here and Lakoff and Johnson 1999) that the whole tradition of Western philosophy is an *outcome* and consequence of the particular metaphors chosen by philosophers in antiquity. These metaphors fixed a "pattern of thinking/reasoning" in place, a pattern that is now *familiar* in philosophical debate and writings, as Todd May (2007) has noted (see Chapter 3). In other words, we are still in thrall to these ancient Greek metaphors and the mass of (intellectual) materials – *sources* – that these philosophers have produced over the course of two dozen centuries in their respective investigations. We call these patterns of thought "traditional theories," and we rely on them as established arguments, as we do their metaphorical presuppositions, without question. More recently, for example, as exemplified in Chapters 4 and 5, Ferdinand de Saussure's orientation to linguistic "science" is only properly contextualized within his firm adherence to the ancient, Aristotelian philosophy of language rooted in precisely these metaphors of ancient times (see Lakoff & Johnson 1999). But what distinguished Saussure's efforts was his own recognition of the importance of the "systemic" nature of his work. It was others, later on, who termed his work "structuralism."

This traditionally dualist (disembodied) context of language, dependent on (Aristotelian) Greek metaphysics, underpins Saussure's chosen metaphor of "coins as units of value in a currency system." Saussure chose this metaphor as a way to *embody* and deeply embed (scale up) the principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign in his system as a whole. This is because Saussure, in accepting the ancient principle of arbitrariness, accepted it as the "pattern" of language that he intensively sought to implement as its actual dualist "process" within *the system* of linguistic value. Significantly, this legacy of arbitrariness was bequeathed to twentieth-century

linguistics in terms of the classical literary theory that Hayden White inherited from his structuralist predecessors, and subsequently applied in his analyses of historians' professional writings.

In short, when the "pattern" is acknowledged (i.e., the arbitrariness of the sign *as* a binary principle), the chosen metaphor becomes the actual, operative "process" that maps the structural attributes of this pattern from the source domain to the target domain in the transfer. Once this two-fold operation is followed through in the model, the consequences can play themselves out over time and evolve (systemic) "lives" of their own, as is certainly clear in Saussure's case as well. The difference in Vico's situation in the early eighteenth century is that he gradually became very well aware of the way this (metaphorical) process acts directly, without mediation, by contrast to metaphysics. Vico struggled over decades to understand this mechanism, while simultaneously attempting to free himself from the influence of the Western philosophical tradition – to get *outside of it* and escape the Cartesian rationalism that he rejected.

Indeed, we are still in the grip that these powerful ancient (Greek) metaphors have exerted on traditional philosophy, especially through the more recent Cartesian tradition that Vico resisted. Indeed, Vico's moment of insight nearly three hundred years ago has not yet permeated the philosophical scene, to which Luft's (1999, 2003) perceptive, unique work testifies. Despite the fact that George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's work in conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) is *not* informed by Vichian scholarship in any way, they would both share (as I believe to be the case) the conviction on the essential embodiment of human language through metaphor.

As Johnson suggests in the quotation presented above, when one can grasp that (conceptual) metaphor is "grounded in *embodied* meaning," one can begin the work of "abandoning" the metaphors that have held us intellectually captive since late antiquity in the West. That is to say, when one grasps that there is another "pattern" at work, one can begin the work of abandoning the accepted, traditional "process" of mapping that disembodied, nonliving pattern from its source to its target domain through the metaphorical processes that embody and systemically maintain and reproduce it. In this sense, research on embodiment, as (phenomenologically) *lived* experience in the world (*Leib* as opposed to, and/or in addition to *Körper,* see Chapter 2), ultimately presents the new pattern to be adopted, thereby facilitating in understanding Johnson's suggestion that we need to *change metaphors.* We need to recognize the new pattern and map this recognition onto the new "master model" for thinking in the West; indeed as Pankaj Mishra (2014) has written, "The Western Model is Broken." When we come to realize that our traditional philosophical models are both static and nonliving, we can begin to understand why we need "to abandon some of [ancient philosophy's] founding metaphorical conceptions *in favor of other metaphors*" (Johnson 2007, 205).

Changing metaphors in this way, however, does not mean that we thereby discover the *certain* "truth" of the world that ancient philosophers pursued – or that many analytically oriented philosophers continue to pursue today (e.g., Boghossian 2007). That would merely return us to where we started; that is, back to static, nonliving metaphors, because humans cannot grasp "knowledge, truth, and reality" in the manner of the pagan Greek gods of old. We are not *like* the all-knowing, eternal gods of the Greek pantheon; we are living, embodied beings and we make the world that sustains and shapes us, systemically.

Grasping the pattern of our embodied nature, in this way, provides us with "new tools" to work with, even for historians who would potentially embrace such dynamic, embodied thinking (cf. Bourke 2014; see Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz, forthcoming). The caveat for those who would embrace change of this nature is that, while "[w]e can learn what our founding metaphors are and how they work," one must also keep in mind that "[o]ur ability to do this type of analysis is, admittedly, always itself shaped by metaphorical conceptions of which we are hardly ever aware" (M. Johnson 2007, 206). But, what Johnson does emphasize is that "we *can* become aware of those metaphors; we can subject them to critical evaluation; and we can creatively elaborate them in developing new philosophies to help us deal with the problems that confront us in our daily lives" (2007, 206; emphasis added).

In short, Johnson recommends a new pattern of thinking, for which we need new model(s). We need new models to replace the old ones, because: As long as we retain the old metaphors, we retain the *pattern* that is embedded and embodied in the source domain of the metaphor (as a model) transferred, that is, mapped from its source to its target domain. This is why it is important to understand both the urgency and necessity of Johnson's (2007) recommendation.

What AE, as laid out in the methodology section of this thesis, does is to reveal the nature of embodiment *not* as a concept for definition, but as an *active process,* as what embodiment *does.* The elements of what embodiment *does* have already been outlined by Fritjof Capra (e.g., 1996, 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014) as *not* the analytic separation of matter and substance (body and mind) from antiquity, but their synthesis in living organisms. What Capra suggests is that the *relation* between pattern and structure in living organisms is their process of ongoing embodiment. Life is embodied, because *embodiment* is the process of this ongoing life (the ecological process of *autopoiesis*). In this way, living structure is the ongoing pattern of (biological) organization, where embodiment is this "ongoing" process; this is what Humberto Maturana and Francisco J. Varela envisioned as the broad concept of "cognition" in terms of *autopoiesis.*

Living structure is dynamic, moving, breathing, ongoing, until it stops in death and returns to thermodynamic equilibrium. The *pattern of life* as an embodied process of (stable) identity through change (i.e., aging) is the pattern in Western philosophy that needs new metaphor(s). It is the pattern of "circulation," the pattern

of a "whirlpool." As commentators down through the last centuries have noted, *we are living in a "whirlwind"* that is dynamic, systemic, constantly changing – and totally bewildering, when do not understand it as the very nature of life. As Marshal Berman (1983) has already suggested, we need to embrace it, *not resist it.*

To this, I would briefly add that historians, too, *can* become aware of such metaphors, subject them to critical evaluation, and creatively elaborate them in developing new kinds of histories to help us deal with the problems that we humans confront in our daily, lived experience – in the past and in the present as well (see also Chapter 9). In opening ourselves to our embodied natures, it opens new pathways to reconceptualize ways of handling our material past and the manner in which it is always "present" with us as an embodied phenomenon; that is, present in the sense of the relationship between the components of a system that make up its unique history: the embodied history of the system, of a person, of an institution, and so on.

This is how I understand what "Presence" (e.g., Runia 2006) in historical theory essentially offers – to recognize the patterns of the past and examine them as active forces in the present, even though much work still needs to be done to align such views in historical theory. A first step, in any case, in order to understand how "Presence" works, is to acquire *a new set of tools* for analyzing and explaining, and finally, changing metaphors and subjecting these to critical evaluation, as Johnson emphasizes. Recent work by Rūta Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz (forthcoming) is *already* developing these new tools for historians (see Chapter 9).

In embracing Vico's poet-God as a creator-God whose words create the natural world, unmediated; this same creator-God is the Hebraic "God of the Whirlwind," which would serve as the master process of the pattern of language that the poet-God practices. Indeed, the features of the whirlwind are similar to those of the vortex (dissipative structure) featured in Figure 2.1. These are the attributes of emergent, dynamic structure that is at once deterministic and *un*predictable – contrary to the predetermined Platonic purpose, or *telos,* inherent in Greek metaphysics. The next section lays out this point of contact to the metaphor of the God of the Whirlwind and why I pursue this metaphor in detail. Indeed, the point of such an analysis allows me to further critique Saussure's metaphorical model of human language, insofar as his metaphor is *static,* rather than *dynamic,* despite its "systemic" structure.[138]

Saussure's model is static metaphysics, which separates word and deed/action in the dualist Greek tradition of *logos*. In contrast to this decoupling of word and deed, Luft's examination of Vico pursues Philo's Hebraic metaphysics. This alternative metaphysics hinges on the idea that:

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138   For more on this characterization of Saussurean semiology, see Section 5.5 of Chapter 5.

[i]f Vico's conception of the poetic word is, like *davar,* a unity of word, idea, deed, thing, then what is created with the poetic word *is the world of things, a world at one and the same time artifactual and real.* (Luft 2003, 166; original emphasis)

In the next section, I explore the nature of (Hebraic) *davar* and its suitability, together with the Hebraic God of the Whirlwind, as a "master metaphor" to illustrate the embodied methodology and dynamic, ecological, holist framework of this thesis.

7.2   THE NEW METAPHOR COUPLING LIVING STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGICAL "STRUCTURISM"

On the one hand, the poet-God of the Hebrews *creates* the natural world with his language, directly; here the pattern of word-as-deed is creative of that world, *davar* (word, idea, deed, *thing*), where no further mediation or representation is needed. On the other hand, the architect-God of the Greeks is both eternal and "all-knowing" of what he creates, on the pattern of a purposefully created blueprint (*telos*), in which the pattern of word and deed is *logos* (word, idea, deed). The move that is made in moving away from the pattern of the *logos* is moving away from a "pattern" of dualist thought. By accepting the "pattern" of *davar,* the poet-God of the Hebrews makes it possible to abandon a pattern of language as representational (spirit, *logos*), whose metaphor is God-as-Divine-Architect. Once the pattern of thinking in language as being "unmediated creation" in the concretely material sense is accepted, it is much easier to embrace the metaphorical (unmediated) *process* that embodies the structural attributes of this pattern: God-as-the-Whirlwind.

What I, here, term the new "master metaphor" via Vico is an (embodied) metaphor-as-model that symbolizes the paradigmatic shift toward living processes (*autopoiesis*) without (Greek) metaphysics, which needs the subjective dimension for the "spirit" that enables Descartes's mind/body dualism. This new, (Vichian) master metaphor is, moreover, an *emergent* naturalism that is not in any way a causal or reductive materialism. In denying reductivist, idealist epistemology, I wish to emphasize the kind of "circulational" (*autopoietic*) feedback featured in the quotation by the renowned geneticist Richard Lewontin, quoted below, in support of what I understand as Capra's dynamic *ecological* holism that underpins AE.

This ecological holism, moreover, is (in turn) also defended in terms of "methodological structurism," as set out by economic historian Christopher Lloyd (1993), whose *ecological* alternative to methodological holism and individualism I aim to extend in this thesis through AE. In such an ecological holism, it is the process of "embodying" a living structure itself that enables the biological pattern of an organism to exist as living structure over time (both as *dissipative* structure

and as *autopoietic* network simultaneously). As for the individual organism, so too for the ecological system as a whole: embodiment as *a process*, in this way, is *scalable* from the smallest of living things to the entire ecosystems that both sustains them and which they simultaneously create *as* they are sustained within and by it (systemically).

Most simply, the difference between the two "holisms" (methodological and ecological) is that the traditional "methodological holism" (Saussure's system of linguistic value) is both *static and nonliving* as a model for social systems and language and excludes the role of the individual actor in the system, while the latter (ecological) version of holism (Vico's "originary," embodied system) is *dynamic* and cannot exist without the role of the individual actor in the system. There lies a world of difference between the two systems of language, and it begins with the difference between the *static* (exclusive) nature of the former version and the *dynamic* (inclusive) nature of the latter.

Lewontin characterizes perfectly the dynamic (self-organizing) "circularity" (ecology) I am discussing, when I describe AE as the *key process in living structure;* that is, *autopoietic* enactive embodiment *synthesizes* the two orders of pattern and process in the emergence of (living) structure that breaks with the (no longer "subjective") internal processes of the body as these processes *create the conditions for their own existence* in a very real (no longer "objective") world – and back again. As Lewontin (1993) outlines this process,

> [a] living organism at any moment in its life is the unique consequence of a developmental history that results from the interaction of and determination by internal and external forces. The external forces, what we usually think of as *"environment," are themselves partly a consequence of the activities of the organism itself as it produces and consumes the conditions of its own existence. Organisms do not find the world in which they develop. They make it*. Reciprocally, the internal forces are not autonomous, but act in response to the external. (Lewontin 1993, 63; emphasis added)

This real-world, nonreductive (ecological) process that Lewontin summarizes above for living organisms in their ecosystems is what Fritjof Capra (1996, 2003) describes as "structural coupling" of the organism with its environment (cf. McGilchrist 2009, 387). Only living organisms are simultaneously dissipative structures (i.e., structural openness to the environment in the exchange of energy and matter) and *autopoietic* networks (i.e., organizationally closed biological pattern). Following the lead of Humberto Maturana and Francisco J. Varela (1980, 1998) on *autopoiesis*, the chemist Ilya Prigogine on dissipative structure, and anthropologist Gregory Bateson (2000, 2002) on the emergent and ecological nature of mind, Capra

understands this general *process* for living structure as a necessary rejection of (Greek) "representationalism."[139]

Structural coupling, in short, is a "middle way" that extends beyond the extremes of the internal (subjectively idealist) and external (objectively realist) worlds, in much the same way Lloyd (1993) describes his own "third possibility," where structurism is the alternative of choice "to transcend this dichotomy" beyond each of these extremes in the methodological holism–individualism debate (44).[140] The metaphor-as-model for this structural coupling is the "whirlwind." When one understands the nature of embodiment as the interrelation of pattern and (living) structure as "process," one can better appreciate the need to understand the importance of embodying a new pattern of thinking in its own new metaphor that "scales up" and constitutes that pattern of thinking in a model that is "good to *think* with."

As Capra (1996) states, the activity of structural coupling, as the ongoing activity of living structure, "undergoes continual structural changes while preserving its web-like pattern of organization. The components of the network continually produce and transform one another [...]" (Capra 1996, 218). In this sense, AE, as the new pattern of thinking, is not a *thing* that needs definition, but is rather the active ecological *process of living* (*autopoiesis*), which transcends the extremes of subjectivity and objectivity in similar manner to the way that the whirlwind likewise transcends these extremes. The first way this active process of living (*autopoiesis*) exceeds Greek metaphysics is in its eclipsing of the dichotomous worlds of (idealist) subjectivity and (realist) objectivity, mentioned above; secondly, this active process avoids both extremes of the methodological holism–individualism debate – just as Lloyd (1993, 44–45) argues for structurism. It is not one or the other, but the synthesis of both *together,* pattern and (living) structure *through* its ongoing, continual process of embodiment (over time). Such a *process* (of embodiment) is what produces a *systemic,* dynamic, mutually incorporating whole. Compare this "system" to Zeno's paradox of the arrow that is both moving and absolutely at rest, simultaneously. Zeno's paradox is dependent on the dualist pattern of Greek thought that *separates*

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139 In other words, structural coupling avoids the emphasis on either the "pregiven [subjective] inner world (idealism)" or a "pregiven [objective] outer world (realism)" dictated by Greek metaphysics, which takes "representation" as a central notion (Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1993, 172).

140 I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 2. Briefly, however, according to Lloyd (1993, 42–47), *methodological holism* is a closed, "supra-individual" system featuring its own autonomous powers of regulation, independent of the individual actors within it. In such a system (as in Saussure's systemic value of language), individuals passively receive their beliefs (including language) from the whole, *which performs itself through its members, not by the members' activities in constituting such a system* (47). *Methodological individualism,* on the other extreme, does not acknowledge the holist dimension at all, there are only individuals. For methodological individualism, only individual events and human action are "real." On this view, according to Lloyd (1993), "[s]ociety is an aggregate of individuals" and, on such a view, society is not "real" but rather merely instrumental (47). For the two, mutually exclusive sides of this debate, then, each of the sides does not "really" exist for the other. In this sense, methodological holism and methodological individualism are not complementary standpoints, but mutually exclusive ones.

its pattern from its process of ongoing movement, in order to justify the metaphorical model(s) that underlay his own (analytic) pattern of thought.

Structural coupling, in short, describes the ongoing activity of the cycle of life as it *renews* itself through process. Cells die and are renewed, replaced, and die all over again in living structure; this is the pattern of stable identity *through time and change*. This is a continual regeneration of the whole *through* ongoing reconstitution, systemically, over the course of the organism's lifespan. Life is sustained, until this ongoing process of (living structural embodiment and) renewal finally ceases in death (settling back down to equilibrium). In this way, the living organism, despite ongoing (structural) change through time, "maintains its overall identity, or pattern of organization" (Capra 1996, 218).

Lewontin describes this very same concrete, real process, above, in more general terms when he states that "[o]rganisms do not find the world in which they develop. They make it" (Lewontin 1993, 63). This is not merely an "emergent" process involving the processes of the body alone within its organism. These emergent processes of life are creative of the physical conditions of existence on all levels of dynamic (living) structure, as Vico very primitively describes it in his own way in the first half of the eighteenth century. In the terms of AE, what Vico describes is, in short, a *socio-cultural process of real (structural coupling) on all layers of the human ecosystem,* in the creation of civil society, as Vico (1984) grasped this process.

This is why AE, on this reading above, contributes to and extends Lloyd's (1993) "ontology of social structurism," as described in Chapter 2. For this reason, ecological holism's (metaphorical) model must be the whirlwind. Such a model meets the requirements that Lloyd (1993) considers basic, insofar as methodological *structurism* is an approach that synthesizes the perspectives of both "action and structure" (46), in similar fashion to that of Capra. Lloyd (1993) sees "the separate real existence yet mutual interdependence of individuals and institutional structures" with properties that are not a mere "aggregate of the powers and behavior of the individual people who are supposed to constitute them" (46). I suggest that this "separate real existence," yet simultaneously "mutual interdependence of individuals and institutional structures," can best be described in terms of dynamic, living structure (*autopoietic networks*) that "couples" with the (real) world in a concrete manner. It "makes" the world in which the "'environment' [is] partly a consequence of the activities of the organism itself as it produces and consumes the conditions of its own existence" (Lewontin 1993, 63).

In what follows, I track back through Luft's (2003) presentation of the ancient Hebraic conception of *davar,* in order to separate it from the more familiar *logos,* whose metaphor is God-as-Divine-Architect, a metaphor we need to finally set aside now in the systemic condition after technology. Indeed, we need to embrace new founding metaphors if we are, as Berman (1983) emphasizes, to make sense of

our reality; indeed, he invites us to read what Karl Marx was writing *with our full attention,* and when we do, "strange things begin to happen," as Berman puts it:

> Marx's prose suddenly becomes luminous, incandescent; brilliant images succeed and blend into one another; we are hurtled along with a reckless momentum, a breathless intensity. Marx is not describing but evoking and *enacting* the desperate pace and frantic rhythm that capitalism imparts to every facet of modern life. He makes us feel that we are part of the action, drawn into the stream, hurtled along, out of control, at once dazzled and menaced by the onward rush. After a few pages of this, *we are exhilarated but perplexed;* we find that the solid social formations around us have melted away. (Berman 1983, 91; emphasis added)

We are perplexed, because we have other metaphors that describe our reality to us. We are unprepared for what we do not yet understand, and what Marx described belongs to another pattern of thinking – our systemic condition – whose metaphor is the whirlwind.

7.3   HEBRAIC, UNCONDITIONED, ORIGINARY SENSE-MAKING: *DAVAR*

After decades of work, Vico understood that the key to his *New Science* was "the fact that the first gentile peoples, by a demonstrated necessity of nature, were poets" (Vico 1984, §34). As Luft (2003) notes, Vico in his later work was moving increasingly toward "a positive view of human creativity, coming to believe that the first men were poets who grasped things with their senses [*viz.* bodily skills] and 'combined them in a way reflecting divine creativity'" (164).[141] Indeed, Luft's interpretation of Vico goes beyond the "fiction of mere words" to the "truth of things" in a secularization of Vico's theory of the poet-creators, who created the concrete social world of the first human institutions with their metaphorical words (cf. Vico 1984, §630; see above). This is the place in her interpretation where Luft's embodied conception of language leaves White's use of the tropes behind.

   White, in my estimation, remains trapped within the confines of (post)structuralism and the metaphysics it harbors so very deeply as a stowaway (see Chapters 3, 5 & 8). But Luft (2003) moves on to emphasize that the "true key to

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141   Luft is here quoting Vico scholar Donatella Di Cesare, as Luft herself simultaneously builds upon *and* moves beyond Di Cesare's own sensitive and insightful reading of Vico. Di Cesare stresses the Hebraic component in Vico's work, and particularly the "'biblical vision' of language on the formulation of *verum-factum,* a topic [according to Di Cesare] 'so neglected in Vico studies'" (165). This "biblical vision" is the Word of God that creates the world *ex nihilo* (from nothing) in the Book of Genesis.

creation in the Bible is *davar,* a word important not only for its semantic content but also for its pragmatic value, a function of the 'peculiar orality of the ancient Hebrew world'" (165). Indeed, Luft (2003) attributes to Vico's conception of *poiesis* the "creative potency of the Hebraic God," who is "ontologically creative of a real world of *things"* (166; original emphasis). The implications for such a Vichian departure point are illustrated in the subsections, below.

7.3.1   SECULARIZATION OF A DIVINE THESIS: CREATION *AD INTRA* VS. CREATION *AD EXTRA*

Vico's new approach to the traditional concept of the convertibility of the true and the made (*verum et factum convertuntur*) hinges on what Luft identifies as its latent Hebraic character. The Hebraic dimension of the biblical Creator as a poet-God creates the concrete world of physical nature, *ex nihilo,* through language as the model for the first human "poets." The traditional Greek model of divine truth, by contrast, is both *uncreated and eternal,* and as such is begotten (*ab aeterno ad intra*) where the model for this process is the *logos* (word, deed) generated by the Father God, the Divine Architect, or *Deus Artifex* (as characterized in Section 6.1.1). "Human truth, on the other hand, created in time, converts with the made (*in tempore ad extra facit*)" (Luft 2003, 32). Thus the contrast is one between divine, eternal truth (*ab aeterno ad intra*) and human, temporal truth (*in tempore ad extra*).

Vico believed that *verum-factum* originally emerged as "a criterion of truth in ancient [Greek] pagan theology"; in this theology the world was eternal and, as such, was a place where God's artisanal "making was always from the outside, *ad extra"* (Luft 2003, 33). It was Plato's metaphor of the Divine Architect, fused together with the biblical God of Genesis through Philo of Alexandria's early work of syncretism, however, that intervened in the history of philosophy in late antiquity. Through Philo, the ancient pagan understanding of making from the "outside" (*ad extra*) shifted to the "inside" (*ad intra*).

When the (Platonic) Greek *logos* and the (biblical) Hebraic *davar* converged in this way, a new definition of "creation" was thereby invented and emerged with it. Eternal truth was thereafter *generated* and converted (no longer with the "made," as before), now rather only by way of the "begotten," *ad intra,* from God's uncreated eternal essence. This (generated) creativity from the essence of God was an *internal process within God himself as a subjective* Being (Luft 2003, 33–36). Through Philo, the Divine Architect was transformed (metaphorically) to the eternal Subject of divine knowledge as part of a new terminology of onto-theology (the ontology of God, or theology of Being) that accompanied Christian theology over millennia – and became deeply embedded in Western philosophy. Comparative theologian Guy

G. Stroumsa (2009) concurs, when he proposes calling the two conjoined cultural traditions a "double helix" (53). As he notes:

> From the Cappadocians to John of Damascus in the East, from Augustine and Jerome to Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville in the West, Christian culture was constituted by sliding from biblical hermeneutics to cultural hermeneutics. After the reappropriation of Jewish Scripture, Christianity effected an appropriation of Greco-Roman culture, subordinating *logos* [word, deed] to *pistis* [faith, belief]. (Stroumsa 2009, 54)

In her sophisticated argument with and against several commentators, Luft (2003) shows that Vico had returned to a biblical (Hebraic) hermeneutic of creation *ad extra* – to a conception of biblical creation *ex nihilo* on the power of creative language; that is, *before the syncretic version* of creation was "spiritualized by Platonic, Neoplatonic, Philonic, and Johannine influences" [...] (37, n. 52).[142]

Vico was trying to (re)capture the conditions of the first men as they invented culture with their metaphorical language, and because Judaism arose outside the context of Greek metaphysics, Vico realized by way of *davar* that "Judaism did not conceive of God as a spiritual Being in the ontological sense, as subjective substance or essence, nor creation as the mimetic reproduction of innate ideas, nor 'knowledge' in the Greek sense"; in short, Judaism "did not need the theology of John or of *verbum mentis* [mental word] to counter metaphysics" (Luft 2003, 37, n. 52). As a further clue in Vico's interpretation of the nature of *poiesis,* Luft notes that creation *ex nihilo* (by way of language) in the syncretized sense of the post-Philo outlook "adds nothing: [creation in this syncretized sense] is an 'excessive effect of an infinite inner creation,'" *ad intra* (37, n. 52). It is only outside that Philonic context (of syncretism with the Greek metaphysical tradition) that creation *ex nihilo* has any significance at all.

Luft (2003) argues that it is the Trinitarian (Johannine) model of creation *ad intra* that subsumes and thereby obscures the biblical (Hebraic) model of creation *ex nihilo* (in Genesis) as an "originary" linguistic event, "unconditioned by spiritual or subjective intent or *a priori* order" (35). Decoupling these traditions syncretized by Philo thus allows one to better understand the radical nature of Vico's uncanny path to a wholly embodied conception of language, according to Luft. "Originary" language, on the Hebraic model of the poet-God, did not condition making by

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142 The Johannine interpretation of *logos* to be found in the New Testament, for example, has wielded a powerful influence; the Gospel according to St. John, 1:1–4, famously begins: "In the beginning was the Word [*Logos*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life ; and the life was the light of men" (*Holy Bible,* KJV; original punctuation and spelling). Here the Greek and Hebraic senses of creation are conjoined in the Greek, spiritual sense.

"knowing"; rather, originary language in the mouths of the first men created the human cultural world by way of the coupling features of the bodily skills of perception, memory, and imagination, *ex nihilo,* on the power of metaphorical language *as* concrete action in a real world: in short, words *as* physical-labor-in-the-world. Vico, in this way, side-steps the Platonic paradigm of epistemology, root and branch, and comes away with a master key that "took him beyond subjectivist conceits to an embodied and poetic anthropology," which is conceived in terms of "a knowing convertible with a making as originary as the unconditioned linguistic creativity of the biblical [Hebraic] God" (Luft 2003, 64).[143]

7.3.2   THE ORIGINARY AS "HERMENEUTIC" SENSE-MAKING: WALTER BENJAMIN

Once one puts aside the belief that a human is an immaterially spiritual (subjective) being decoupled from its concrete (objective) environment (cf. Lewontin 1993), it is possible to get beyond Cartesian dualism (Luft 2003, 106). That is, specifically in terms of its "immaterial mentalism," unconnected to a body – or occurring only as a brain-based phenomenon *as* "mental computation" – independent of our ongoing (real) activities in an environment with one another.[144] Taking this a step further, Luft (2003) poses a question that bears considering in such a context: "What would human self-understanding be if the God to whom it likened itself was not a Christianized version of the Divine Architect of the *Timaeus,* but a poet?" (77). If our human self-understanding would be the (hermeneuitic) poet-God, as Luft implies here, the master metaphor of God as the Whirlwind is needed, because the God of the Whirlwind offers the dynamic, emergent structural attributes that this embodied *poiesie* presupposes and implies. Shifting the (philosophical) metaphors in this way perfectly illustrates what Mark Johnson (2007) has to say, when he states that

> philosophical theories are not systems of foundational literal truths about reality, but rather elaborations of particular complex intertwining sets of metaphors that support inferences and forms of reasoning. Humanizing and embodying philosophy in this manner does not devalue it in any way. On the contrary, it

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143   Luft's (2003) argument is considerably more sophisticated than that presented here. For the more detailed version among the major commentators on Vico whom Luft engages, see, e.g., 24–37, 62–65.

144   The linguist and Saussure scholar Roy Harris (2008) is not far from Luft in his opinion that "human beings communicate with one another not by exchanging thoughts but by integrating their many activities. This is not," as Harris is quick to emphasize, "to deny that human beings think," however; indeed, from his integrationist perspective, "languages are not systems for the expression of thoughts: the essential function of words is the contextualized integration of activities" (112; cf. Harris 1996, 1998; Maturana & Varela 1980, 95–99). This is, functionally speaking, word *as* physical-labor-in-the-world in line with Luft's interpretation.

reveals why we have the philosophies we do, explains why and how they can make sense of our experience, and traces out their implications for our lives. (200)

Luft cites the philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) as a thinker who reaches for the nature of human language on just the biblical (Hebraic) pattern that she characterizes, above. Benjamin (2007a), looks to *imago Dei* not in terms of man's substance as a subjective being, but of his function as a being who concretely "creates with language." In this sense, man is *quasi alius deus,* like another God, and as such a (poet-)creator, like God, because man *performs* the divine likeness, not by imitating the world itself, but by imitating the *origin of the world:* language (see also Section 6.1.3 in Chapter 6).

On Benjamin's (2007a) telling, when God created the world in Genesis, "the making *of man* did not take place *through the word:* God spoke—and there was—but this man, who is not created from the word, is now invested with the *gift* of language and is [thereby] *elevated above nature"* (322; emphasis added). In the biblical (Hebraic) account of creation, Benjamin observes that "[l]anguage is therefore both creative and the finished creation, it is word and name" (323). The Bible's account of the creation of man interrupts its previous "rhythm," in Benjamin's view; while God *spoke into existence* every other creature on earth, man was no ordinary creature:

> And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness [...]. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. [...] And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [...]. (Gen. 1: 26–27, 2:7, KJV)

In the creation text that Benjamin considers, God did not "speak" man into existence, as God did for all the rest of creation; rather, he "formed" man and "breathed into his nostrils" the breath of life. As Benjamin observes, "[t]here is a 'special relationship between man and language,' because God did not 'subject [man] to language, but in man God set language, which had served *Him* as medium of creation, free. God rested when he had left his creative power to itself in man'" (Benjamin in Luft 2003, 106–107).

For Benjamin, "because the mental being of man is language itself, he cannot communicate himself *by* it but only *in* it" (2007a, 318; emphasis added). In line with the Hebraic vocabulary of originary language, this "knowledge" "convertible with originary naming [i.e., when God's creation is completed, when things receive their names from man] *is not the conceptual knowledge of the* [Greek] *tradition";* indeed, the Hebraic "model is the creative act in which 'name is creative because it is word, and God's word is cognizant because it is name'" (Benjamin in Luft 2003, 107; emphasis added).

Contrary to the Greek model of knowing, therefore, Benjamin's convergence between eternal "knowing" and originary "making" on the Hebraic model is not knowledge *in an epistemic sense,* but is rather a "self-reflexive knowing" more akin to hermeneutic understanding; it is a form of sense-making that regards "the mental being of man [as] language itself" (Benjamin 2007a, 318; cf. Luft 2003, 106–107). In the section that follows, I return to the discussion of Section 6.1.1, and suggest another way to understand this rather perplexing "self-reflexive knowing," as described by Benjamin above. I will do so now, in what follows, by comparing these recursive descriptions – originarity and self-reflexivity as described by Vico, Benjamin, and reported by Luft – to Capra's (1996) descriptions of the *autopoietic* ("self-organizing") behavior of living and certain biochemical (nonliving, dissipative) systems (e.g., Maturana & Varela 1980; Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1993; Capra 1996; Prigogine 1997; Capra & Luisi 2014).

7.3.3   ORIGINARY SENSE-MAKING AS "SELF-ORGANIZING" (*AUTOPOIESIS*): DISSIPATIVE STRUCTURE

In Section 6.1.1 of Chapter 6, I discuss the character of ancient debates within Greek philosophy on the relation between "nature" and "art," respectively, which distinguish between the separate phenomena of substance and form in terms of the "designer's blueprint." In that scenario, Plato's Divine Architect employed a "blueprint" to orchestrate the interaction of substance and form on the design of the eternal Forms in the creation of the natural world. Likewise, in the case of art, humans as Aristotelian craftsmen already hold "in mind" what they make in terms of their (man-made) works, in accordance with their own purpose (*telos*). Indeed, whether God or man, "making" is conditioned, in this case, by *a priori* subjectivist knowledge in terms of the *purpose* of what was to be made. In Section 6.1.1 above, I exemplified this "conditioned" relationship between substance and form with a physical object familiar to most readers: a bicycle.

In (*nonliving*) machines, the component parts are designed, manufactured, and then assembled "to form a structure with fixed [static] components" *the design of which* lies outside the context of both substance and form (Capra 1996, 159). If the Greek model of *conditioned, disembodied knowing* is founded on the metaphor of the Divine Architect, then the Hebrew model of *unconditioned, originary sense-making* is likewise founded upon its own, uncanny metaphor: the God of the Whirlwind. This latter metaphor vanished, however, when "[i]n Philo the God of the Whirlwind became the Divine Architect of the *Timaeus*" (Luft 2003, 87).

The two models of "knowing" (as exemplified by their metaphors) could not be more different. The (Greek) Divine Architect has always existed and always will, eternally. For the metaphorical Architect, creation is conditioned by *a priori*

"knowing" and purposeful design that lies *outside and beyond the context of substance and form: logos* (word and deed). The (Hebraic) God of the Whirlwind, by contrast, exists as a phenomenon that is not a "thing," but a divine *process.* For the metaphorical Whirlwind, creation is not conditioned at all; it therefore *does not lie outside and beyond the context of substance and form,* but constitutes the process of their very unity, undivided: *davar* (word *as* deed, and concrete thing).

Moreover, the Divine Architect has an identity as a Maker, always present, always with a purpose in mind (*telos*); the significance of the metaphor of the "architect" is that of one who makes, as Being separate from what is made or created. The God of the Whirlwind is emergent in nature, where there is no *telos.* The significance of the metaphor of the "whirlwind" is that of one who makes – not as Being – but as a part of the very process, inseparable from what is made. In short, it is inseparable from the process of interaction with a real material world. This latter description is also the case for *dissipative structure,* which needs immediate clarification, if the uncanniness of Vico's "originary" language on the Hebraic model is to make sense in what follows below.

In the first place, dissipative structure is nothing like a static, physical structure with its pattern of (fixed) components, such as "a bicycle" resting at equilibrium. Once assembled, the bicycle maintains its configuration of relationships (physical structure) among its static components, allowing it to be stored in the shed until the next ride: it will remain a bicycle the whole time, ready to be used, unless it is left in the shed to rust and fall apart. This is not the case with dissipative structure. This structure is a dynamic system that can cease to exist at a moment's notice, like a whirlwind, or like the wake vortex created by an airplane's wingtip on takeoff (see Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). Dissipative structures, coined by Nobel Prize-winning chemist Ilya Prigogine, can be both living and nonliving. Living organisms are dissipative structures that are also *autopoietic* networks. *Nonliving* dissipative systems (e.g., weather events like hurricanes, tornados, or other types of dissipative structures like whirlpools, or wake vortices, etc.) are thermodynamic systems operating far from equilibrium that are not, however, *autopoietic* networks (Capra & Luisi 2014, 303).

Nonliving systems, as shown above, can be very different from one another: they can be *static* like a bicycle and *dynamic* like a whirlwind, or whirlpool. The bicycle is an example of a nonliving machine of physical structure, which is constituted by its stable, *fixed relationships* existing between its contiguous component parts. In other words, the bicycle is a *nonliving, static* system of interrelated parts. Western philosophy's default "structure" is modeled on just such (static) physical systems. This is the type of structure that the Aristotelian "craftsman-model" (metaphor) presupposes: one "knows" in advance the design of the (physical) "thing" one makes, whether in nature or art. By contrast to the type of structure that this Greek model

presupposes, *nonliving* dissipative structures do not have this set of stable, *fixed* relationships between its component parts.

The precursors of *living systems* are to be found in the nonliving structures of *chemistry*. These self-organizing (chemical) systems "also play an essential role in the metabolic functions of living organisms" (Capra 1996, 94; cf. Prigogine 1997, 765–771). Moreover, such nonliving structures do not separate substance and form in the way that is taken for granted in Western philosophy. As Capra & Luisi (2014) note, in traditional Western philosophy, the decoupling of substance and form (and both from *process*) continues as such, "because of the persistent influence of our Cartesian heritage" (303). As Capra (1996) tells it, a certain tension between the study of substance and form has always existed. In studying "substance," the primary question the scientist asks is: "What is it made of?" In studying "form," the primary question is: "What is its pattern?" (80; cf. Capra & Luisi 2014, 4). Capra's (1996) synthesis, on the basis of dynamical systems theory, Maturana and Varela's *autopoiesis,* and other convergent phenomena that he discusses, is "the key to a comprehensive theory of *living systems"* (81; emphasis added; cf. 158; Maturana & Varela 1980, 96–99).

In the study of structure, in order to understand what something is made of, it is weighed and measured. In the study of pattern, in order to understand what its pattern is, it is *mapped* in terms of a configuration of relationships. So, while structure involves *quantities,* pattern involves *qualities,* or attributes. In this way, *systemic properties* are those of patterns (Capra 1996, 80; Capra & Luisi 2014, 4; cf. Siskin 2016). Capra understands the *relationship between* structure and pattern in the dissipative state (whose metaphor I take to be the Hebraic God of the Whirlwind) *as process.* The role of "process," in the Greek model, is played by the Divine Architect as the *subjective knower,* whose *telos* (purpose) conditions making. On the model of the God of the Whirlwind, however, there is no subjectivity to speak of; this is because the "process of knowing" is embodied and present in the process itself, not outside it somewhere else, disembodied from that which is created. This is precisely the nature of the poet-God, who creates physical world, unconditioned, *ex nihilo* – from nothing.

For Capra "[t]he process of life [*autopoiesis*] is the *activity* involved in the continual embodiment of the system's pattern of organization" (159; emphasis added; see Section 2.1). In Capra's synthesis, *autopoiesis* (self-organization) is the pattern of organization of all living systems and thereby constitutes "the defining characteristic of life" in the new scientific understanding of living systems, which I do not separate from the paradigm of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE). "Cognition," characteristically circular in its activity (involving multiple feedback loops), constitutes the creative *process of life,* where "[a]utopoiesis and cognition are just two different aspects of the same phenomenon of life. In the new theory, all living systems are *cognitive* systems, and cognition always implies the existence

of an *autopoietic network*" (1996, 161; cf. 157–162). As Capra (1996) has it, "[l]ike Prigogine's theory of dissipative structures, the theory of *autopoiesis* shows that creativity—the generation of configurations that are constantly new—is the key property of all living systems" (221; italics added). This definition of (enactive) embodiment extends the one being offered, until now, by the proponents of AE (see Chapter 2).

The distinction between a static, physical structure, or a piece of machinery, such as a bicycle (or a computer, for that matter), and a living organism is that a living organism is both a dissipative structure and an *autopoietic network*. Capra (1996) emphasizes that a

> subtle but important point in the definition of autopoiesis is the fact that an autopoietic network is not a set of relations among *static components* (like, for example, the pattern of organization of a crystal), but a set of relations among *processes of production* of components. If these processes stop so does the entire organization [unlike the static pattern of organization of a crystal or a bicycle, or of coins as units of value in a currency system]. In other words, autopoietic networks must *continually regenerate* themselves to maintain their organization. (168; emphasis added; cf. Lloyd 1993)

In such *autopoietic* networks, the pattern of organization must always remain structurally open to matter and energy flowing through it (*as* dissipative systems), in order for its pattern of organization to be sustained *over time*. In the simple example of a wake vortex generated at the tip of an airplane's wing as it takes off the ground (Figure 2.1), for instance, it is relatively easy to demonstrate the "seemingly paradoxical coexistence of [structural] change and [pattern] stability" (Capra 1996, 169). As air flows continuously through the vortex, the characteristic shape of a spiral and its narrowing funnel at the center remain noticeably stable – that is, until the air flow off the airplane's wingtip no longer *embodies* the vortex pattern of organization and the structure begins to dissipate, all made visible by the red smoke pumped into the system to enable one to see a process which is otherwise invisible. As the system dissipates, the red smoke loses its dynamic structure and begins to dissipate into the surrounding air in an arbitrary manner.

Living dissipative structures (from bacteria to plants to animals) are, of course, considerably more complex than this simple wake vortex example. Indeed, the more interaction of greater amounts of matter and energy that flow through these autopoietic, self-organizing systems, the more complex such structures tend to be. But, what both nonliving and living dissipative structures have in common is that both persist so long as the matter and energy is exchanged with the environment. In such a context, I can say that a human being, a person, *is* a slowly revolving

(constantly changing), living "whirlwind" of matter and energy held together over time through the structure of biological organization.

In sum, human beings at different levels of their biological (systemic) "structure" (from visible to invisible) are *autopoietic* networks that are also "dissipative" structures insofar as they are structurally open, thermodynamic systems operating at levels far from equilibrium, like a whirlwind. In such living systems, so long as the process of life (cognition) – maintaining the continual embodiment of their pattern of organization (the physical body) – continues, life is sustained. Furthermore, "identity" in such a system is understood as a *process* in the sense that it does not lose its identity in a simultaneous "coexistence of structure and change" (Capra 1996, 177). Nor is this all. Spoken language, as an embodied production (cf. Blasi et al. 2016, and so on), belongs to the processes of human life on the basis of the meanings we generate by our ongoing social experience with others in the world; in other words, *meaning* does not lie *in* the language, *neither* negatively, *nor* differentially. Rather, meaning is produced within the context of lived, ongoing experience that common metaphorical language communicates between persons, who understand one another's experiential contexts.[145] The 12- to 18-month-old child does not learn language by memorizing lists of abstract words. The child is learning the language in the physical context of lived experience with his or her (primary) care giver. It is the primary, "body-level metaphors" that become the children's first words – the building blocks of their vocabulary (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999a; see Chapter 2).

As a metaphor for the paradigm shift from *static* vision (Greek metaphysics) to *dynamic* touch (the ecological systems view of *life as process*) at the heart of my methodology, the (Hebraic) God of the Whirlwind is therefore a fitting "master metaphor." In the final section of this chapter, I return to Luft's question concerning the shift in (philosophical) metaphor from Platonic Divine Architect to (Hebraic) God of the Whirlwind. Indeed, as M. Johnson (2007) emphasizes, "philosophical theories are not systems of foundational truths about reality, but rather elaborations of particular complex and intertwining sets of metaphors that support inferences and forms of reasoning" (200). If metaphors, even philosophical metaphors, reveal "*why* we have the philosophies we do," such a realization can also help explain "*why* and *how* [such metaphors] can make sense of our experience" (200; emphasis added).

7.4   ORIGINARY SENSE-MAKING IN THE REAL WORLD

To return to Luft's (2003, 77) question, posed above: "What would human self-understanding be if the God to whom it likened itself was not a Christianized

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145   This is briefly outlined in Capra (2003) and by Capra & Luisi (2014, 304–305). See also Lakoff and Johnson 1999; M. Johnson 2007; McGilchrist 2009.

version of the Divine Architect of the *Timaeus,* but a poet?" It was not Vico's faith in an all-knowing God that was in doubt; it was rather the (poetic) nature of the first gentile humans, "the existential condition" of the first primitive men as they invented their human world, that allowed Vico to deny the symmetrical cornerstone of pagan Greek metaphysics: "as above, so below." As Luft (2003) puts it, "[i]t is not Vico's conception of God that changes in that period, but his understanding of the existential condition of the first makers, the extremity of their need, the radical nature of the 'divine creativity' that can fabricate what they need" with word *as* deed (134). When Vico projected this (Hebraic, on Luft's interpretation) poetic image onto the first humans, they were, first of all, without "subjectivity" and utterly different from (an intelligent) God, insofar as they were "robustly ignorant." In this way the first poets created language "by virtue of a wholly corporeal imagination" (Vico 1984, §376). Vico suggests that it is

> beyond our power to enter into the vast imagination of those first men, whose minds were not in the least abstract, refined, or spiritualized, because they were entirely immersed in the senses, buffeted by the passions, buried in the body. […] In this fashion the first theological poets created the first divine fable, the greatest they ever created: that of Jove, king and father of men and gods, in the act of hurling the lightning bolt; an image so popular, disturbing, and instructive that its creators themselves believed in it, and feared, revered, and worshiped it in frightful religions. […] But for the theological poets Jove was no higher than the mountain peaks. The first men, who spoke by signs, naturally believed that lightning bolts and thunderclaps were signs made to them by Jove; whence from *nuo,* to make a sign, came *numen,* the divine will […]. They believed that Jove commanded by signs, that such signs were real words, and that nature was the language of Jove. The science of this language the gentiles universally believed to be *divination,* which by the Greeks was called theology, meaning the science of the language of the gods. (§378–379; emphasis added; cf. Section 4.3)

How Vico understands the process by which *numen* [divine will] was extrapolated from *nuo* [to make a sign] is the process of understanding the *role of the senses.* As Luft (2003) notes, "[i]n Philo the God of the Whirlwind became the Divine Architect of the *Timaeus"* (87): the shift effected is from that of the ancient paradigm of "hearing" [signs] to that of "seeing [the divine will] through the eyes of the soul" (Boman quoted in Luft 2003, 87, n. 65). In this way, "seeing," rather than "hearing" God's voice becomes primary, "because that which God speaks is not words but works [deeds], which the eye discriminates better than the ear" (Jonas in Luft 2003, 87). In this move from the paradigm of "hearing" to that of "seeing," Philo "sacrificed the radically existential, linguistic nature of biblical creativity" (Luft 2003,

88). It took Vico three editions of his *New Science* from 1725 to 1730 to 1744 to completely disentwine the threads that Philo had interwoven.

However, by the Third and final edition of his work, Vico eventually comes to attribute "all human making, including the developmental making of abstract thought and knowledge, to the senses" (Luft 2003, 129). That is, Vico comes to attribute all human making to the body's own skills: the body itself concretely interacting with (and in) the physical world. In Lewontin's (1993) terms, we create the very conditions that we both consume and produce in a (real) social world with others (63), as Vico believes and writes about in his own eighteenth-century idiom.

In closing this argument for the poet-God as the pattern of human language and the God of the Whirlwind as his embodying and embedding metaphor, Vico's discovery – as noted in the opening section of this chapter – has already been anticipated. The epigraph to Chapter 4 is Marshall Berman's assessment, which converges with the one presented here. Berman's metaphor of choice is "maelstrom," which is a large, powerful, and violent *whirlpool*. Moreover, Berman attributes this emergence of the maelstrom to "social processes," which converges with Vico's observations, if the latter would have lived to see us all now:

> The maelstrom of modern life has been fed from many sources: great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power and class struggle [...]. In the twentieth century, *the social processes that bring this maelstrom into being,* and keep it in a state of perpetual becoming, have come to be called "modernization." (Berman 1983, 16; emphasis added)

On my view, this "modernization" is our "systemic condition after technology," and there is no escaping from it any longer anywhere on our planet. But, we have resisted the implications of this world and ourselves as belonging to the whirlwind. "People," Berman (1983) states, "who find themselves in the midst of this maelstrom are apt to feel that they are the first ones, and maybe the only ones, to be going through it" (15). This latter attitude toward life in the rapidly changing world, "has engendered numerous nostalgic myths of pre-modern Paradise Lost" (15), and so it is today in 2017 – the intense desire to return to "lost greatness" on the level of the society as a whole, in America, in Great Britain, in France, and elsewhere. It is too obvious that people's conditioned expectations and their reality are completely out of sync. This creates a huge paradoxical tension. Indeed, the embrace of a founding metaphor in antiquity that has outgrown its usefulness is not just a problem for historical theory; by now it is a problem for the whole world and its systems of dense interconnectivity.

In the following Chapter 8, I will address the distinctions that I have drawn up here (and elsewhere in previous chapters) in a final argument that strikes at the heart of the hidden tension within White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction. Just as Luft investigates the tension in *verum-factum* between Philo and Vico in her derivation of a secular theory of the (Hebraic) poet-creator, I investigate the tension inherent in White's *history-as-fiction* between Vico's and Saussure's diverging principles of language. My analysis, moreover, focuses on the adverse consequences for inappropriately mapping a metaphorical model of static, nonliving structure (in Saussure's theoretical construct) onto the dynamic, living structure of human language.

7.5   CONCLUSION

The question that this chapter considered was how we modern people can survive, when the pattern of our lives in the "maelstrom," as Marshall Berman put it, is at odds with the metaphor at the core of our Western civilization: the Platonic Divine Architect, as outlined in Chapter 6. Nearly three hundred years ago, Vico began unpacking the nature of language as embodied, as a way to get outside the Cartesian (dualist) rationalism that he rejected. In bringing my methodology of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) to bear on Vico's principle of language as *contingent on the body* acting in the world, the two views converge, in the light of recent research in cognitive linguistics.

Moreover, Fritjof Capra's contribution to the methodology of AE, as I see it, is in the synthesis of pattern and (living) structure through the ongoing *process* that continually embodies the pattern of organization over time. This synthesis of pattern and structure through process (*autopoiesis*) in terms of what "embodiment" *does,* as opposed to defining its ontological properties, does away with the need for a "subjective" inside and an "objective" outside. In this way, such a view makes room for what Christopher Lloyd terms "methodological structurism," which features a systemic, ecological dynamic structure in which the part-whole relation is one of synthesis, not separation (analysis), as it is in both methodological holism and methodological individualism. If the synthesis of pattern and structure beyond metaphysics is a *pattern* of thinking that needs its own metaphorical model for the development of new vocabularies and concepts going forward, then Vico's etymological researches clearly point in the direction of "dissipative" structure to serve as such a model in uncovering the God of the Whirlwind.

Furthermore, commentators since the late eighteenth century, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, have hinted at the "whirlwind" or "whirlpool" as metaphors that describes the experience of "modernity." This experience had accelerated and became more obvious to those, like Karl Marx, or Friedrich Nietzsche, closer to

the twentieth century, who experienced the period of industrialization during the nineteenth century as a "maelstrom." It was exactly during this time period that Ferdinand de Saussure was hard at work on finding his "systemic" solution as to how to access what was most essential in the study of language (synchronic *la langue*).

If the *static, nonliving* Greek metaphors at the core of metaphysics have given us our model(s) on how to think about our identity, such model(s) also determine the ways we view our relationship to the past as well. Eelco Runia notes that this relation to the past cannot possibly be what it claims to be; specifically, he wonders *how* our relation to the past can be "at odds with our identity." The answer posed in this chapter is that our "identity" is still rooted in the expectations that the Greek metaphors continue serving up as our model of reality, in turn embedded in the very vocabulary and concepts we use to talk about it. The whirlwind scares us, makes us "dizzy," and when it does, the uncertainty it provokes leads many to take refuge in a safe place, or in a "Paradise Lost," which never existed in the first place. But, the whirlwind is our "home"; resisting it will help no one. Ultimately, we need to embrace it, as Berman (1983) was well aware.

In other words, the idea of a "stable reality" is a myth, founded on conceptual metaphors in antiquity. Mark Johnson's advice is to leave behind the old metaphors and to embrace new ones that better mesh with our lived experience. Twenty-four centuries ago, Greek metaphysics favored the separation of pattern and structure along Zenonian lines, but this static, nonliving pattern of analytical methodology applied to dynamic and living "objects," accompanied by its metaphor of eternal, all-knowing certainty and truth has, by now, far outlived its usefulness in our systemic condition after technology.

The paradoxical tension between our expectations – based on outdated metaphors in antiquity – and our lived experience in the "whirlwind" leads me to embrace both Vico's embodied language and the new metaphorical model that he uncovered. This model of God as a Whirlwind (dissipative structure) is a dynamic *process* that is coupled with the environment that gives rise to it, as the structure itself consumes the energy and matter that shapes it and maintains it. Insofar as its structural attributes can be mapped in their dynamic aspects to living structure (*autopoietic* networks), such a metaphor may help to change our expectations and even our "identity" in the future, as we begin to grasp the nature of our contingent lives coupled to the environment that shapes us; indeed, we are coupled to one another as social selves in time that "is not a line but a knot, not a river but a whirlpool, not progression but circulation," as Runia has intuited.

Moreover, this shift has direct consequences for White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction. Insofar as the structure of language at the heart of his "linguistic turn" adheres to the principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign, embedded in Saussure's system of linguistic value, to this extent White's project continues to share in the structural attributes of the "metaphysics of presence" through the decoupling

of substance and form. In the next chapter, I will critique White's position specifically in terms of his Zenonian analytic method in the breakdown of historians' writings as "discourse" on the structuralist binary axes of synchrony and diachrony.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Saussure's theory of signification argues that meaning is conveyed through a chain of signifiers, which suggests that language – at both the denotative and connotative levels – is tropic. That is, if semantic *meaning is contingent upon a chain of signifiers that relay meaning and value through a system of differences,* then each signifier functions either in a metaphoric (the sign is associational and shares something with another sign) or metonymic (the sign partially suggests another sign) capacity. As the 'trace' of meaning, each sign proposes or suggests meaning but does not wholly fulfill, deliver, or embody meaning, but rather an idea is conveyed through a network of similarities and differences. As such each signifier signifies another signifier (*ad infinitum*) in the same manner in which a trope suggests meaning by gesturing towards a point of comparison [...] or through the substitution of terms or ideas (metonym or synecdoche)[.]

—David Clippinger, "Trope" in *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*

8 THE (BINARY) ARBITRARINESS OF HISTORY-AS-FICTION

Hayden White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction[146] is a complex hybrid, as suggested by the epigraph to this chapter (Clippinger 2003, 407). In various analyses of this construct, moreover, some commentators insist that White is more *tropologist* than structuralist; others see him as being more *structuralist* than tropologist; and still others claim that he is *neither,* because *both,* which suggests that some commentators might imagine a "seamless fusion" between White's theoretical components in the creation of something autonomous and unique, or

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146   The discussion on history-as-fiction is, by now, as large as the linguistic turn is old; many commentators have contributed to it over the years, both for and against (see Chapter 3). For a small taste of White's own take on it, see, e.g., White 1966, 1974, 1975, 1985, 1999, 2000, 2006, 2010b, 2012, 2013, 2014b; cf. Macfie, ed. 2015. For additional references, see those listed in Korhonen, ed. (2006), Paul (2011), Southgate (2009), and Pihlainen (2015). See also *Rethinking History,* 9(2–3) on the fact-fiction debate featured in that issue (e.g., Bachner 2005; Demos 2005; Goodman 2005; E. Shaw 2005; Slotkin 2005; White 2005a; Wilcox 2005).

something vaguely (post)structuralist and, therefore, definitely "postmodern" (see Chapter 3). My main concern in this thesis has been and remains that of tracking, opening up, and making sense of the, as yet unexamined, "common theoretical thread" that runs consistently through the hidden core of White's writings on what he refers to as "conceptual (or synchronic) historical representation" of the last half century (White 1985a, 127).

As I will argue throughout the sections of this chapter on White, his tropology follows in the footsteps of his initial influences in structuralist theory, a list of thinkers that includes Russian-born American linguist Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), French literary theorist and semiotician Roland Barthes (1915–1980), and French structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009), among others (see also Chapter 3). In consequence, history-as-fiction is very much (post)structuralist, or *Whitean,* not Vichian, as I have shown in previous chapters. What the experimental fusion between the two strands of thought in Ferdinand de Saussure's (1857–1913) system of linguistic value and Giambattista Vico's (1668–1744) tropology has produced in White's theoretical construct is a hybrid, but not such that the two principles of language within these strands would hold equal power within the construct, side by side.

White's preference followed his predecessors in placing Vico's tropes within Saussure's "system," serving as the (post)structuralist frame. Or, as mentioned earlier, White's intention was to concentrate on and make explicit the latent role of the tropes as the nature of structuralist thought as "the content of the form." This is indeed in line with much existing work on the relationship between (classical) (post)structuralist literary theory and the tropes, as White (1975a) makes clear and as the quotation by David Clippinger (2003), in the epigraph to this chapter, indicates. In other words, the particular work that White applied to historical discourse was new to historical theory, but established elsewhere.

What this thesis investigates is the tension created in applying this hybrid construct to historians' writings. To get at and unpack this tension involves understanding White's hybrid as harboring two, mutually exclusive principles of language at their cores. Rather than examining the "historical contingencies" of each theory – in order to examine their commensurability – White went to work with the Vichian tropes inside the (post)structuralist frame he then developed for historical discourse.

True complementary fusion between Saussure's system of linguistic value (structuralism) and Vico's tropology is not possible, however. This is due to the lines of theory emerging from two completely different kinds of metaphors as *models* of their operation and function – subject to the contingencies of history – outlined in the preceding chapters. These metaphorical models transfer the structural attributes of their *patterns* from their source domain to their target domains in the models that Saussure and Vico followed, respectively. The structural attributes that are

transferred from the source to a target domain dictate (determine) the unfolding of an inner logic of these theories of language on: (a) how the theory develops, (b) what the constraints are as dictated from the source domain to the target domain, and (c) what it can then do within those particular constraints (e.g., McGilchrist 2009, 97; cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1999; M. Johnson 2007).

In keeping with the previous chapters, then, this can only mean that White's *tropic* language is brought to bear solely within his (post)structuralist frame, not *between* it and (Vichian) tropology (see Chapters 6 & 7). These opposed models of language, moreover, represent two very different kinds of "structure," which I elaborate below in Sections 8.3–.4 (see also Chapter 2). In short, (post)structuralism and tropology are as incommensurable as Greek metaphysics and Hebrew "originary" ontology, as characterized by Sandra Rudnick Luft (2003) in Chapter 6. In fact, what happened to Hebrew theology in antiquity at the hands of the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (25 BCE–50 CE) has happened in parallel fashion to Vichian tropology at the hands of White. Once fused into the new hybrid theory, the latter ideas are gutted for what they can contribute to the former theoretical framework and then vanish from sight.

The key element that renders these core components of White's theoretical construct incommensurable is Saussure's principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign,[147] which underpins his investigation of the synchronic and diachronic aspects of historical representation, as I will show below. In seeking the continuities in White's body of work, I am not interested in how his work shifts and changes over time; I am interested in the core presupposition(s) that ultimately shape, implicitly, his body of work from the inside out in my attention to the details of the historical contingencies of the theories he combined. My strategy in this thesis has thus been and remains, moreover, precisely *not* to pinpoint the inconsistencies of which White's "fecund" essay style of writing is particularly prone (cf. Vann 1998, 161). I am not interested in White's inconsistencies, but rather in his consistencies: his continuities.

In a recent piece, for example, White (2014a) "does not reply" to Chris Lorenz's (1998) criticism of his inconsistencies across the body of his work over the course of his career, rebuffing Lorenz in the following way:

> The difficulty *in criticizing the whole work of any author* lies in its historical nature. I would expect people to change their views, revise or even rewrite their work over a period of 15 years and I myself had a great deal of difficulty with people putting all my work together, and treating it as if it were all produced within the same very short time span. But they do this all the time and then

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147   Saussure's binary sign consists of its two sides, the (i) *material* sound image (the signifier) and its (ii) *immaterial* 'ideas' (the signified). For Saussure, these two sides are two orders of "value" that are arbitrarily combined to form words; for him the body plays no role at all in the resulting combinations (see Chapter 5).

act surprised that they find certain contradictions or inconsistencies. To which my response is: "Yes, I would hope so." I would hope that I changed (slightly) over all those years. (White 2014a, 71)

White replies to a question of Erlend Rogne's (2009) in similar manner: "I always have to remind people that I've been writing for about fifty years, and what I said fifty years ago may not be consistent with what I think now, but that's because I've changed my mind" (68). In the same interview, White cites his modernist interests as inspiration for his willingness to make choices, even to change his mind. White says:

> This kind of turning back upon the self accounts for the third thing that interests me about modernism, namely, irony as the basis for the living of a life that's going to be contradictory no matter what you do, unless you decide to do nothing, in which case that's hardly living, right? (in Rogne 2009, 69–70)

Perhaps White's response is motivated by a need to assert his "authorial intentions," but history-as-fiction in terms of historical discourse, which White has elaborated during the linguistic turn, argues against authorial intentionality; his exchange with Georg Iggers (2000; cf. White 2000) exemplifies this problem well. Iggers (2000) notes, for instance, that

> White concludes his reply [to Iggers] with, *'it is the intention of the texts that should interest us, not the intentions of the writer'*. But in truth only writers have intentions, no matter how complex and unclear these may be. Texts have no intention although they and the intentions of the writers expressed in them are open to interpretation. (378; emphasis added; cf. White 2000)

As a writer, Iggers defends the idea that authors have intentions. In defending his "intentions" against Lorenz, above, White inadvertently argues against his own oft-defended theoretical standpoint – and this as late as 2000. Indeed, I agree that White has shifted his views over time, just as he maintains both above and elsewhere. But such changes, or inconsistencies, only lie on the surface of the text and do not deal with the deeper issues. What is important for me here is what White (2014a, 71) says in parentheses: "I would hope that I changed (slightly) over all those years"; but from what has he deviated? And what has *not* changed in his thinking? What has remained in place over all this time is the configuration of White's frame and its *tropic* contents, its (post)structuralist nature.

In what follows, I briefly outline, in practice, how Saussure's linguistic principle of binary arbitrariness continues to dictate the structural nature of White's so-called Vichian tropology as a vehicle for elaborating his "science of discourse." Moreover, below in Section 8.3, I will demonstrate how the root of the problem goes

back to Saussure's inappropriate metaphorical model from Léon Walras's general equilibrium theory of money in Saussure's creation of system of linguistic value.[148] This model separates the static (synchronic) *pattern* of language as an (immaterial) "system" from the dynamic (diachronic) *process* of actual (physical) communication in daily human interaction, which is a move similar to the one Zeno makes in positing the paradox of the arrow, illustrated in footnote 23, above. Ultimately it is the Saussurean separation of the two axes of *synchrony* and *diachrony* that performs this separation of pattern and process, as I will show, and it is precisely this disjunction between the two axes that disqualifies history-as-fiction as a working hypothesis for the nature of historiography *tout court*. Deep within this system of linguistic value, which (post)structuralism (postmodern literary theory) still uses, lies the arbitrariness of the binary sign at its core. Deeper still, along with this binary arbitrariness, however, is its hidden stowaway: the deepest presupposition of Western philosophy, the metaphysics of presence.

8.1 *TROPICIZING* SAUSSURE'S BINARY SIGN

In the epigraph to this chapter, David Clippinger gives ample evidence for the idea that the tropes have been absorbed by Saussure's theory of signification. Clippinger (2003) states in his article on "Trope" for the *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism* that, in the wake of Saussure's theory of the sign, "the trope has been *reconsidered as more than merely a rhetorical device*. In essence, postmodern discourse regards *all levels of language, referentiality, and meaning as tropic*" (407; emphasis added). Clippinger then gives examples of "postmodern" (i.e., (post)structuralist) philosophers and thinkers, for instance psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, philosopher Jacques Derrida, and semiologist Roland Barthes, who follow in the wake of Saussure's theories with respect to how they "essentially reconfigure the trope [such] *that it remains central to an understanding of the one-to-one correspondence of [Saussure's] signifier and signified*" (407; cf. White 1975, 31–33, n. 13).

In what follows, I sketch out, largely following White's own words, what I take to be his understanding of tropology within the Saussurean framework that he favors. In Section 8.1.1, I show how White's expression of tropology closely dove-tails Clippinger's (2003) "postmodern" understanding given above. In Section 8.1.2, I contrast White's stated position with the embodied Vichian position, which reviews material from the previous Chapter 7 in the build-up to my final critique of history-as-fiction in Sections 8.3–4.

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148   Cf. Petrilli & Ponzio 2005, xvii; Saussure 2011, 79–81, 118–119; see also Chapter 5.

8.1.1 SAUSSUREAN LANGUAGE AS DICHOTOMOUS, REDUCTIVE: WORD DECOUPLED FROM DEED

The *tropicizing* of semiological theory comes very close to (if not pinpoints) how White's modes of historical realism operate as styles of discourse "surfing" the chains of Saussurean signification in the individual "minds" of historians, subsequently materializing as White's "figural" realism (cf. White 1999, 2013). My argument here is that White's understanding of the trope is (post)structuralist in Clippinger's sense, insofar as White retains the Saussurean principle of language in terms of the arbitrariness of the binary (dualist) sign (see Section 5.4). As Clippinger concludes his entry on "Trope," he suggests that

> with the dissolution of "universals" and "metanarratives" and proliferation of specialized discourses, the trope has been reinscribed as absolutely central in a postmodern understanding of language and knowledge. That is, in postmodern discourse, all acts [of] language and knowledge are in fact elaborate tropes. (2003, 407)

White argues a similar case for the tropes; when Clippinger (2003) says that "all acts [of] language and knowledge are in fact elaborate tropes," or yet more succinctly: that "language itself in postmodern discourse has been recognized as merely a trope" (407), White's says, similarly, that "anyone who writes a narrative is fictionalizing" (in Domańska, ed. 1998, 28; cf. White 2012, 131–133). In his 1993 interview with Ewa Domańska (1998), White defines what he was then trying to do as a way

> to work [...] on the development of the notion of tropic as a continuum of logic, dialectic, and poetics. And I would say, instead of rhetoric, tropic—tropics being a theory very much like that of Jakobson. Jakobson's thesis was this: you cannot distinguish between poetic language and nonpoetic language. [...] [I]f the old nineteenth-century, easy distinction between fact and fiction can no longer be maintained, and if we see [i.e., fact–fiction] as a continuum in discourse, then I would ask: What is the "fictional function" in nonfictional discourse, or in discourse that tries to be nonfictional? Because anyone who writes a narrative is fictionalizing. (27–28)

When Vico and Saussure are syncretized in this predominately structuralist manner (in classical narratological terms; see Chapter 5), the contingent, embodied tropes that Vico struggled to describe and distinguish, as characterized by Luft (2003), are transfigured – much in the way that the (Hebraic) poet-God, the God of the Whirlwind, vanished into the pagan Greek *logos* in early antiquity. The syncretism that Philo of Alexandria performed by integrating the Hebraic (biblical) creation and the *logos* of Greek metaphysics resulted in the incorporation of the Hebraic

davar as a dimension of the *logocentric* (Platonic) Divine Architect (see Section 6.1). In this sense, it is the very *tropic,* figural language that White employs that often obscures his deeply structuralist commitments. For instance, Paul (2011) observes:

> One of White's favorite rhetorical strategies, after all, was to show that an author, a tradition, or even an entire scholarly debate was locked within the confines of a single trope (in the mode of metonymy, for example) and then to suggest that other points of view were also available (in the metaphoric and synecdochic modes, for instance). But if White was a tropologist in his heart of hearts, then how to account for the almost complete absence of tropes in *The Content of the Form*? Or how to explain White's interest in "modernist events," "intransitive writing," and the "practical past," none of which can easily be encapsulated in a tropological theory […]? (9)

Paul (2011) goes on to suggest how interpretations of White – when they are focused only on the tropes – run the serious risk of misunderstanding a very basic point: for White, "these rhetorical figures were *never an end in themselves*" but were treated as *instruments* for "performing a specific type of analysis" (9; emphasis added; cf. Kellner 2013, 164; see also Section 3.1). White himself has stated, for instance, that structuralism provided a means and a vocabulary for him to analyze historians' narratives in a radically new and productive way (e.g., in Domańska, ed. 1998, 25–26). In their interview, when Ewa Domańska (ed. 1998) poses the problem of the "double face" of history as being both "scientific" and "artistic," White responds in the following way:

> You are always facing in two directions. But the historians do not know that, because since the nineteenth century they have been taught that they must keep literary effects and poetic effects out of their writing. So what they say is: "You do your research as a scientist, but then, when it comes to writing, it is okay, make it pretty so that people can read it easily; but your writing does not add anything except cosmetics to your truth." And that is wrong. *Any modern linguist knows that the form of the representation is a part of the content itself.* That is why I call my most recent book *The Content of the Form*. (21; emphasis added)

Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio (2005), however, state that "[t]he Saussurean sign model is grounded in a series of dichotomous concepts, and this favours its reformulation in terms of code and message, transmitter and receiver, codification and decodification. […] [This, however,] takes *a reductive approach to signifying and interpreting* processes" (xviii; emphasis added). It would therefore not be "reading between White's lines" here to point out that "always facing in two directions" invokes the dichotomous binarinness embedded in the structuralism

that never leaves his theorizing, even when he takes the side of poetics in an overtly Vichian vocabulary.

Identifying with modern linguists, White invokes Louis O. Mink's (1987) assertion that "[s]tories are not lived but told" (60). This becomes overt, when, for example, White (1992) states unequivocally that "[o]bviously I regard this view of *the relation between historical storytelling* and *historical reality* as mistaken or at best misconceived. *Stories,* like factual statements, *are linguistic entities* and belong to the order of discourse" (37). As I read this, "historical storytelling" is tropological (*tropic,* on the fact–fiction continuum of narrative discourse) and is thus located on the static, linguistic axis of *synchrony.* For White, the "order of discourse" is separated from "historical reality," just as Saussure's axis of *synchrony* (*la langue*) is separated from the semiological axis of *diachrony* (*la parole*).

In his reply to Georg Iggers, for example, White (2000) reveals further clues as to the semiological identity of his tropology when he states:

> In that branch of linguistic, literary, and semiotic theory named tropology, understood as a theory of figuration and discursive emplotment, we have *an instrument for relating the two dimensions of denotative and connotative signification* by which historians endow past events, not only with factuality but with meaning as well. So Iggers is right in his assertion that the tropological theory of discourse – derived from Vico and modern discourse analysts such as Kenneth Burke, Northrop Frye, Barthes, Perelman, Foucault, Greimas, and many others – *remains central to my thought about historiography and its relation to literary and scientific discourse,* on the one side, and *to myth, ideology, and science,* on the other. It is *my commitment to tropology as an instrument for analyzing the various dimensions of historical discourse* [...] that causes differences over such distinctions as those between fact and fiction, description and narrativation, text and context, ideology and science, and so on. (391; emphasis added)

White actually discusses Vico's tropology as a branch of "linguistic, literary, and semiotic theory" deployed by him as "an instrument for relating the two dimensions of *denotative and connotative signification*" that historians use in their histories. I am fairly certain, however, that Sandra Rudnick Luft (2003) would absolutely not discuss Vico's tropology in terms of its subordination to "linguistic, literary, and semiotic theory." In fact, White uses quite the same language as Clippinger (2003) does in the epigraph to this chapter, when Clippinger states that "Saussure's theory of signification argues that meaning is conveyed through a chain of signifiers, which suggests that language – at both the *denotative and connotative levels* – is tropic" (407).

If this were not enough to implicate the (post)structuralist nature of White's tropology, the latter dichotomies that White mentions in this long quotation, above, are distinctions *in (reductive) binary opposition* that cannot arise from his understanding of the "originary" nature of Vichian *poiesis,* as Luft (2003) believes (e.g., 55–56; cf. Petrilli & Ponzio 2005, xviii; Chapter 7). White's tropological instrument of analysis, as he says, is applied to the various dimensions of (historical) *discourse* by separating "fact from fiction," "description from narrativization," "text from context," "ideology from science." It is therefore not a Vichian tropology that remains central to White's analysis, as he reveals to Iggers. If one compares the above statement from White (2000) to a much earlier text published just after his *Metahistory* came out in 1973, one sees an apparently abiding interest that White (1974) continues to have in the binary aspect of Saussure's "system" of *la langue:*

> De Saussure's analysis of language, set forth in his classic *Course of [sic]General Linguistics* (1915) [*sic*], proceeds by a series of binary oppositions *within* a structure that is conceived to be *whole* (or self-enclosed), *self-regulative,* and *self-transformative*—not unlike that *Geist* or spirit which is always associated with world views that are vitalistic or idealistic in their implications. [...] Saussure wanted to consider language as a thing in itself, in much the same way that economists wanted to consider systems of economic exchange as things in themselves, irrespective of local variations in those systems caused by the intrusion of extra-economic factors or considerations. In order to conceive a purely linguistic system, necessary for the development of a science of linguistics, it was necessary to disengage linguistic relationships from the extra-linguistic elements of their contexts, in much the same way that a science of pure mathematics had to be disengaged from applied mathematics [...]. (763; original emphasis).

It is this commitment to the binaries of *la langue* that encourages White (2000) in his belief that "historical discourse thus features a *double representation:* of the object of its interest and of the historian's thought about this object" (392; original emphasis).[149] This is why he insists that historians are facing in two directions at once – without knowing that they do so (in Domańska, ed. 1998, 21). For Vico, however, *mimesis* plays no role in language, which does not "represent" the world in this way at all. It is rather Greek metaphysics that operates under steam of *mimesis* and representation. As Chapters 6 and 7 attempt to show, Vichian poets create the external world of society and culture with their words (metaphors) as deeds, *bypassing representation altogether,* as Luft (2003) emphasizes the point.

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149   It would be interesting to compare this position to his later move to Oakeshott, where he understands a dichotomy between the historical past and the practical past (see White 2014b; cf. Peltonen 2015, in Finnish).

The structure of Greek metaphysics and that of Vico's metaphorical, embodied "transference of meaning" operate by means of two very different ideas of "structure," as I argue (on this see Section 8.3, below).

The "double representation" that historical discourse is said to feature in White's analysis is therefore not about language in Vico's creative, "originary" sense that Luft (2003) outlines. Rather, this double representation is about Saussure's axiomatic separation between the (a-contextual) system of linguistic signs (*synchrony*) and the (contextual) everyday speech in time and communication with others (*diachrony*). In other words, this duality encompasses the necessary disengagement of "linguistic relationships from the extra-linguistic elements of their contexts," as White (1974, 763) above characterizes Saussure's (appealing) formalist approach.

This is why White can claim "facts" and "stories," both as "linguistic entities," for the order of discourse, whereas historical reality is inaccessible, because one can only grasp *linguistically* what one can no longer directly perceive (White 1992, 37). For White, second-hand language – as *mimesis* and representation – is not about "the vast imagination of those first men, whose minds were not in the least abstract, refined, or spiritualized, because they were entirely immersed in the senses, buffeted by the passions, buried in the body" as Vico (1984, §378) characterizes the wholly embodied metaphorical language of the first gentile humans, to whom we are genetically related.

For White, language concerns the order of "discourse" in semiotic terms most generally, where experience in the real world of activities is separated from language, because (for him) both fact and fiction belong to the linguistic dimension and are thereby *inaccessible to human experience,* which continually slips out of the present into the past, like "shades of an infinitely deferred universal" (Clippinger 2003, 407). Language for White remains "linguistic" on the fact–fiction continuum of discourse (the decoupling of word and deed). For Vico, however, metaphor is the embodied *bridge* between percept and concept that actively creates the world through word *as* deed (see Luft 2003; cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999).

8.1.2   VICHIAN LANGUAGE AS EVENTFUL, "VIOLENT": WORD-AS-DEED

What White firmly sidesteps in his narrowly linguistic position is the Vichian dimension of eventful, (emotionally) "violent" language and the *bodily skills* that animate and give rise to language in the first place, to which Luft (2003, 56) firmly adheres in her elaboration of Vico. In other words, it is possible to "remember" the bodily perceptions of yesterday's violent thunder storm; and based on my own emotionally infused, embodied memory of my experiences of yesterday, I can recognize the (similar) emotionally infused, embodied experiences of others of similar events, both yesterday and today, further reinforced by my experience-filled

imagination in *grasping the communications of others about their own experiences* described in (metaphorical) language that I can understand (e.g., Vico 1984; Luft 2003; cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Modell 2003; M. Johnson 2007; McGilchrist 2009). Without the emotional component (e.g., Damasio 1999, 2005), embodied experience of this nature could not even be possible (cf. Benson 2001; Hatzimoysis, ed. 2003; Kövecses 2003; Bergen 2012; Hutto 2012b). This was Vico's intuition nearly three hundred years ago when he discusses the metaphorical invention of Jove by the first men:

> In this fashion the first theological poets created the first divine fable, the greatest they ever created: that of Jove, king and father of men and gods, in the act of hurling the lightning bolt; an image so popular, disturbing, and instructive that its creators themselves believed in it, and feared, revered, and worshiped it in frightful religions. [...] But for the theological poets Jove was no higher than the mountain peaks. The first men, who spoke by signs, naturally believed that lightning bolts and thunderclaps were signs made to them by Jove; whence from *nuo,* to make a sign, came *numen,* the divine will [...]. They believed that Jove commanded by signs, that such signs were real words, and that nature was the language of Jove. (Vico 1984, §379)

This is not language as *mimesis* and representation in the Greek tradition. This is eventful, violent (emotion-infused) metaphorical language that creates – in words *as* deeds – the institution of religion. As Luft (2003) appraises the situation, the first gentile people "were embodied beings *without a subjective essence,* and, thus, wholly incapable of knowledge in the traditional sense" (3; emphasis added). This "sense-making" of which they are capable came to be known as "divination, an interpretive linguistic activity, the reading of the 'language' they found in the sky, which they took to be the language of God" (Luft 2003, 3; for more on this "conjectural" paradigm, see Section 4.3 & Chapter 9).

What White's analysis demonstrates is the dualist and (necessarily) arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign system of Saussure that he has embraced, contrary to the larger, metaphorical nature of Vichian language as *eventful,* where "lightning bolts and thunderclaps were [violent] signs made to [the first primitive men] by Jove" (Vico 1984, §379). What White has missed in his focus on the (post)structuralist approach is that cognitive linguistics (e.g., Lakoff and Johnson's work) of the last decades has gone on to realize the extent to which the *process of mind* (*autopoiesis*) can, indeed, grasp the reality of the world through structural coupling with that world by way of the bodily skills of perception, memory, and imagination – as a metaphorical process that is infused, moreover, with *emotion* (e.g., Capra & Luisi 2014, 270–273; Modell 2003, 14–17; Gallese & Lakoff 2005; Lakoff 2012); memories can be highly emotional, even traumatized, as Modell (2003) specifically discusses.

In other words, we humans today are indeed *genetically related* to these first poets, who create their social worlds with their (metaphorical) words *as* deeds (cf. Luft 2003, 3, 48, 64). Contemporary cognitive science is therefore fast catching up with Vico's metaphorical imagination of the first gentile peoples who were poet-creators of their worlds that in turn shaped them, in ecological-holist fashion (cf. Lewontin 1993; Lloyd 1993). Whereas (post)structuralism, by stark contrast, is cast into deep shadow as an (already) disqualified system of *disembodied,* arbitrary, binary structure that participates in the essential dualism of the metaphysics of presence (see Chapter 5).

This abyssal Saussurean gap, or essential lack of relation between "storytelling" and "reality" that White posits of disembodied language can be further characterized by way of the following comparison between two different views on the interpretation of dreams. First, Freudian psychoanalyst Arnold H. Modell (2003) discusses what he takes to be the generation of meaning from "an unconscious metaphoric process" (23), which Modell attributes to Vico as the first one to understand this process (14–17), and attributes the rediscovery of this Vichian finding to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (25–26; cf. Capra 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014). Second, I compare and examine this mode of dream interpretation in terms of the neo-Freudian structuralist mode of Jacques Lacan, as reported by White (1974).

What I find interesting in the following comparison is the Vichian approach to the interpretation of the dream (Modell 2003), as contrasted to the Lacanian one that White (1974) reports on, the latter of which he appreciates and defends. My point, to repeat, is to show White's continuities over time, despite his shifts, changes, or inconsistencies.

As Modell (2003) tells it, there is a *metaphorical process* at work between our conscious experience and our unconscious memory, which shows up in our dreams:

> Lakoff and Johnson (1999) affirm what has long been known: *the source of the imagination, what makes us uniquely human, is an unconscious metaphoric process.* Unconscious autobiographical memory, the memory of the self and its intentions, is constantly recontextualized, and the link between conscious experience and unconscious memory is provided by metaphor. This suggests that the metaphoric process that we recognize in our dreams is also continuously operative while we are awake. (Modell 2003, 25; original emphasis)

Compare this to what White (1974) says of dreams in the neo-Freudian, structuralist mode:

> Jacques Lacan shifts the emphasis of the analyst from the analysand's dream to the *report of the dream* as the prime datum and suggests that it is not the dream's content, not the elements of the dream report, but the modality of its

encodation that is the significant datum to be analyzed. It is the modality of the language used in fashioning the dream report that betrays the structure of the neurosis occasioning the dream. This modality of the dream report, a purely linguistic phenomenon, reveals the analysand's lived relationship to the world which is the structure of his (or her) neurosis. (767; original italics)

Lacan lifts the "report of the dream" right off the top of the dream experience, like skimming the cream off the top of whole milk – as if there were some natural layer that rises to the surface to "skim off" in terms of "the modality" in which the dream is "encoded." Removing the cream is analogous to capturing this "encodation." This analogy is one, by the way, between a process of human dreaming and a bucket of milk; that is, a dynamic, living being and a static, nonliving thing operating according to the laws of physics (cream rising to the surface of the heavier milk). By contrast, the emphasis in Modell's (2003, 25) approach is the dream's metaphorical *content*, "the *elements* of the dream" that indicate *a transfer of meaning between conscious experience and unconscious memory via metaphor*. Where Lacan sees a separation to "skim away," Modell sees a connection to a larger whole. The contrast with Lacan (White 1974, 767), above, could not be greater. This captures in a nutshell the greater problem between the (Saussurean) structuralist, who decouples living elements from one another, and the (Vichian) tropologist, who connects them in a living *process*.

For Modell, there is no "cream" to "skim off," as in my nonliving analogy above – no separation between the content of the dream and its report. Rather, in Modell's version, dream and report are connected, linked, fused by the unconscious metaphoric process, which is always operative, whether one is awake or asleep. For White, however, there exists a binary opposition between the dream itself (the *event* of a dream) and the *report* of the dream (the *story* of the event), just as in history, where "stories are not lived but told." Lacan's (post)structural Freudianism is just one of many applications of Saussure's system of linguistic value at work, as White sees it, which is why it serves as such a good example for him then in 1974 – and perhaps even now.

Returning to the epigraph of this chapter on the postmodern understanding of "trope," White clearly abides by some form of the definition that Clippinger (2003) offers his readers. I claim this, insofar as the pattern of language that White consistently uses in the 1970s, but also throughout the 1980s, 1990s and into the 2000s (with less of an emphasis on structuralist terms, no doubt), reveals that he understands tropology *in terms of* Saussure's theory of signification by way of his structuralist guides (Jakobson, Barthes, and Lévi-Strauss, and so on). White (2000, 391) separates the denotative from the connotative dimensions of "first-order" (facts) and "second-order stories" (narrative representations) (e.g., Peltonen 2004, 92), revealing White's (binary) tropological "theory of swerve" (e.g., White 1985, 3 &

1999, 10). This theory is essentially Saussurean at heart, not Vichian, since Vico's first gentile humans do not "swerve" from the experiences of reality, but engage directly with such experiences metaphorically (see Chapter 5). As Luft explains, her own and White's respective approaches to Vico differ precisely in the degree to which White employs Vico in a (post)structuralist, rather than a "hermeneutical" mode (e.g., Luft 2003, 190, n. 223).

In the section that follows, my purpose in examining White's tropics of "discourse" is to show yet further that Saussure's *synchronic* dimension of language remains a vital force in all that White continues to argue, even today, "after" the linguistic turn – indeed as Ermarth (2011) clearly recognizes in his work, set out in Chapter 5. It appears that, for White, the tropes continue to preserve an important contiguous relation between (*synchronic*) language and human consciousness. More specifically, he takes the *styles* of historical realism to be operating *out of awareness* in those who construct historical representations, as he demonstrated in *Metahistory.*

8.2 THE *TROPICS* OF (POST)STRUCTURALIST DISCOURSE

At the time White published *Tropics of Discourse* in 1978 (White 1985), he considered the common ground between all "realistic" writing, or logical demonstration, on the one hand, and "pure fiction" (invented) writing, on the other hand, to be the domain of "discourse" by way of its *tropic* function: the *style* of discourse.[150] If one keeps in mind Clippinger's (2003) (post)structuralist definition of "trope," it is possible to see that, in following his structuralist forebears Jakobson, Barthes, Benviniste, and Lévi-Strauss (in, e.g., White 1975, 31–33, n. 13; cf. White 2000, 2013; in Domańska 2008, in Rogne 2009), White developed the tropes in (post)structuralism for the contribution to a "science of discourse" (e.g., White in Domańska, ed. 1998, 28). Below, in his own words, White (1985) discusses how he conceptualizes *trope,* in turn as *style,* that allows him to develop his modes of historical realism:

> The word *tropic* derives from *tropikos, tropos,* which in Classical Greek meant "turn" and in Koinē "way" or "manner." It comes into modern Indo-European language by way of *tropus,* which in Classical Latin meant "metaphor" or "figure of speech" and in Late Latin, especially as applied to music theory, "mood" or

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150 While my discussion here converges on aspects of Carlo Ginzburg's (2012) discussion of White's *Tropics of Discourse,* my discussion in this chapter is defined more broadly than the influence on White of Benedetto Croce (or White's similarities with Giovanni Gentile, for that matter), which Ginzburg demonstrates (170–175). I do not argue against Ginzburg's findings, which simply entail a different focus than the approach I take throughout this thesis. My efforts are rather concentrated on showing the implications of White's adherence to (post)structuralism and its first principle, the arbitrariness of the binary linguistic sign. (For my brief discussion of Croce's influence on White, see Section 3.4)

"measure." All of these meanings, sedimented in the early English word *trope*, capture the force of the concept that modern English intends by the word *style,* a concept that is especially apt for the consideration of that form of verbal composition which, in order to distinguish it from logical demonstration on the one side and from pure fiction on the other, we call by the name *discourse.* (2; original italics)

On this definition, history-as-fiction emerges in its two dimensions or aspects as the history-literature debate, on the one side, and the fact-fiction debate, on the other. Furthermore, history-as-fiction hinged upon the unifying concept of "discourse," as White presents it here. The common ground of "discourse" thereby enables him to consider Saussure's binary system of linguistic value and Vico's tropes within the same theoretical project. Both bodies of theory are, after all, organized around the consideration "that *speech itself* provides the key for interpreting cultural phenomena" (Luft 2003, 55; emphasis added; cf. Saussure 2011); and this is so, even if Saussure and Vico treat "speech" in quite specific and mutually exclusive ways (disembodied and embodied, respectively).

Saussure (2011), on the one hand, considers the first principle of the binary nature of signs to be their "arbitrariness," by which he specifically *discounted and disallowed* the idea that language (speech) has anything to do with "the body" (75–76; see Chapters 4 & 5). On the other hand, Vico (as demonstrated by Luft 1999, 2003; cf. Modell 2003, 14–17) considers language (speech) to be naturally and *necessarily* contingent on the body, specifically enabled by the senses and bodily skills in terms of perception, memory, and imagination – and *only* by way of these bodily skills does the world make sense to us *as* human beings (e.g., T. Nagel 1974; McGilchrist 2009; see Chapter 7).

In combining these approaches, however, White subsumes the Vichian tropic function as a *mode* or style of discourse within the structuralist-formalist program that he has, from the beginning, found congenial to his own formalist style of thinking (e.g., Paul 2011, 20–22). Indeed, White "reinscribes" the trope as "absolutely central" in discourse where, as Clippinger (2003) notes in his entry, "all acts [of] language and knowledge are in fact elaborate tropes" (407). Indeed, according to Clippinger (2003), "language itself in postmodern discourse has been recognized as merely a trope; a chain of substituted signifiers (metonymy) wherein each part alludes to but never fully signifies a whole (synecdoche)" (407). This should leave no lingering doubts as to where White stands on the *structural* nature of the language system in the postmodern, discursive condition. But, to strengthen the connection, White states, to reiterate in part a quotation from the previous section:

I believe that the most profitable approach to the study of historical writing must take its literary aspect more seriously than the vague and undertheorized

notion of 'style' permits. *In that branch of linguistic, literary, and semiotic theory named tropology,* understood as *a theory of figuration and discursive emplotment,* we have an instrument for relating *the two dimensions of denotative and connotative signification* by which historians endow past events, not only with factuality but with meaning as well. (White 2000, 391; emphasis added)

As I read this passage, White clearly subsumes Vico's tropology within the "semiotic," (post)structuralist approach; the result is an understanding of the tropes along the lines of Clippinger's "postmodern" definition in the epigraph to this chapter. Indeed, despite White's apparent synthesis of (post)structuralism and (so-called Vichian) tropology (on the basis of the terminology he uses throughout his work, as here above), the core of his own theoretical approach remains (post)structuralist in character and function (cf. Paul 2011, 15–34).

As he explains in a long endnote in his leading essay to *Figural Realism,* White (1999a) says that he "began with Vico"; but he went far beyond Vico by seeing tropology as "the unfinished business of modern, and especially semiotic, linguistics" (179, n. 18). After reading Vico on tropology, White moved on to Nietzsche, and from there to Kenneth Burke, and on to a list of others, which he says included Roman Jakobson, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, among many others (White 1999a, 179, n. 18). As such, it bears repeating (from Chapter 3) what White's former student Hans Kellner (2013) has to say, insofar as "[i]t is important to keep in mind when considering the systematic Hayden White that *there are usually two levels at which the same thing has different consequences*" (164; emphasis added). If it is true that, for White (1983, 64), the Vichian conception of culture can "*accommodate at least a structural perspective,*" if not a poststructural one, then Kellner's counsel is well worth considering.

My theoretical strategy in this thesis has been to heed Kellner's observation, insofar as White's history-as-fiction is this "same thing" that features on "two separate levels" or dimensions that Kellner calls attention to and which my strategy, I believe, successively unpacks in Chapters 4–7. For this reason, the history-literature debate, characterized in Chapter 5, constitutes the structuralist level, in which there are different consequences for history writing than for the fact-fiction side of the argument that was addressed, if briefly, in Chapter 6. But, as I can show, even the Vichian component that White terms "tropology" operates within and is contingent only upon the (post)structuralist dimension of language – not the Vichian framework as outlined by Luft (1999, 2003), or claimed by Modell (2003) in his embodied interpretation of Vico.

I can show that this is so because, for White, language continues to be "arbitrary in nature" (e.g., White 1974, 1985; in Rogne 2009), not contingent on the body, as it is for Vico. In other words, the tropes are *not embodied* for White in the sense that metaphors are necessarily contingent on our physical bodies in the world, in

communication with others (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999a). On White's view, the tropes are merely the unconscious features of historians' linguistic "figurations" in the *fictions* they write on the fact–fiction continuum with respect to "discourse." As such, these "fictions" are purely linguistic expressions separable from lived experience, just as communication of everyday speech on the axis of *diachrony* is decoupled from that of Saussure's language system on the axis of *synchrony*. In this way, White follows the dictum from Mink that "stories are not lived but told."

Indeed, if the first men were fully embodied poets, as Vico argues, and we humans today are genetically related to those early poets in the way we use language as an integral aspect of our metaphorical imagination, then the consequences for language as a *radically embodied process* along Vichian lines inevitably conflicts with Saussure's construal of language as an idealist, differential system of pure value, as modeled on a currency system – that is, as a disembodied "discursive" system (cf. Ermarth 2011). White came to Vico, because he "needed some way of thinking about how [one] coordinate[s] levels of argument and connections between different parts of the narrative that were not those of logical connections [...]" (28). In this same interview with Domańska (ed. 1998), White tells her:

> [A] narrative is not a large sentence. And grammar can tell you only about sentences, not about discourses. [...] The components of narrative are not propositions only. [...] You can link sentences together by logic, or you can do it by tropologic. Tropology because you need a theory of swerve, of *systematic deviation,* from logical expectation. [...] [Narrative] cannot be governed by strict rules of logical deduction. So *I turned to rhetorical theories because I believed that rhetoric provides a theory of improvisational discourse.* [...] Vico represented two conceptions of rhetoric: you can see rhetoric as the art of persuasion, or you can see rhetoric as the science of discourse. It was tropology as a basis for a science of discourse that I found in Vico. [In thinking about discourse,] I was much inspired by [Roman] Jakobson. [...] So tropics. That is why I called this second book, a collection of essays, *Tropics of Discourse.* (20, 28–29; emphasis added)

On my reading, "discourse" is not a Vichian concept whatsoever. Ian Hacking (2002) remarks that Michel Foucault's

> *The Order of Things* ends by prophesying a new era in which self-conscious discourse is not about Man or the thinking subject but about discourse alone. A good deal of this project remains in what Foucault calls genealogy [...]: "a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of object, and so on, *without having to make reference to a subject*

which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history" (84; emphasis added).

This discourse is disembodied: "without having to make reference to a subject" (cf. Iggers 2000, 378; White 2000). Ultimately then, for White, language is a disembodied and *arbitrarily* constructed system of negative, differential value, like "coins as units of value in a currency system," the latter of which served as Saussure's metaphor from theoretical economics of his time, of which White was clearly well aware (e.g., White 1974, 763; see also Section 5.5.1).

Such a model can be quite important, as White himself argues (e.g., in Domańska 2008, 10). But models can be very misleading as well, as M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker (2003) argue at length in a different context.[151] The (metaphorical) model is what provides the image schema (structural attributes) in the source domain that is then directly transferred to the target domain, *both framing and constraining* the (imaginative) nature and extent of experimentation (e.g., M. Johnson & Rohrer 2007).

In the next section, I apply this difference between Saussure's and Vico's respective principles of language to an analysis of their respective "structures" in terms of my methodological approach of AE (see Chapter 2). Considering Saussure's model of systemic value, it would appear that Saussure has broken away from the *mechanistic-minded* models of modernity that is celebrated by some commentators (e.g., Ermarth 2011; see Chapter 5). But, as linguist Paul J. Thibault (1997) believes, "Saussure's social-semiological metatheory is a *paradigmatic example of the modernist scientific project*" (190; my emphasis). How then to explain this apparent paradox in placing Saussure (simultaneously) beyond the mechanistic models of modernity, "discursively" (so, e.g., Ermarth 2011), while likewise standing at the forefront of the "rational" modernist scientific project (so, e.g., Thibault 1997; cf. Joseph 2012)?

Below I will analyze how Saussure's disembodied system operates in an immaterial realm, where "traces" of meaning are supposedly carried only by and among the "signs" themselves. That is, the systemic pattern of *la langue* is organized

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151   In fact, while Bennett and Hacker (2003, 68–107; hereafter B&H) never mention Humberto Maturana nor Francisco J. Varela – nor any of their followers – B&H do argue that most *mainstream neuroscientists* tend to use inappropriate metaphors about the brain to guide their scientific experiments in the lab, something they call the 'mereological fallacy' (a fallacy in the logic of part/whole relations) in their arguments for the philosophical foundations of neuroscience. They argue that this fallacy is prevalent throughout the neuroscientific literature, a fallacy which inevitably leads to faulty experimental results, because their metaphorical models are wrong. On the problem of models, see also Lloyd (1993, 26). What B&H never mention, however, is the metaphorical nature of philosophical theories *themselves;* in other words, their massive critique of contemporary neuroscience and neuroscientists is not the least bit self-reflexive for the philosophical position from which they argue (as argued for, e.g., by M. Johnson 2007, 204–205; in similar vein, cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Luft 2003, 96; May 2007; in opposing B&H on practical grounds, see, e.g., Keestra & Cowley 2009; Pöyhönen 2014).

in accordance with negative, differential value, on the static model of "coins as units of value in a currency system." There is a profound (Zenonian) paradox at work under the surface of such a system that requires some careful unpacking.

8.3   MODELING COINS AS UNITS OF VALUE: PATTERN AND PROCESS DECOUPLED

As Lakoff and Johnson (2003) have long argued, the source domain is the "conceptual" domain in the metaphorical transfer. The structural attributes (or image schema, in M. Johnson & Rohrer 2007) in the source domain, both frames and *constrains* the imaginative nature of what is *mapped onto* the target domain in the transference (cf. Modell 2003). In the example from Chapter 2, the conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT is WAR uses the source domain of WAR to "structure" the nature of ARGUMENT in the target domain. Moreover, it is not that we just *talk* about or *appreciate* the features of WAR in the transfer; it is that the *very attributes* are "mapped" onto ARGUMENT in the *vocabulary* that is used to discuss it. For instance, one "wins" or "loses" an argument, similar to winning or losing a war. In argument, one faces an "opponent," as in war. In argument we "attack" the other's position and "defend" our own. These are not surface features in the transfer that are added on, or taken away at will; they constitute its structural attributes. As in the source domain, so too in the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson 2003, 4; see Section 2.1.3). On this illustration, ARGUMENT is *embodied by the attributes* of WAR.

This is why the choice of a conceptual metaphor is so important. Once the metaphor-as-model is selected, there is no escape from it, once it is deployed. As Iain McGilchrist (2009) phrases the matter:

> The model we choose to use to understand something determines what we find. If it is the case that our understanding is an *effect* of the metaphors we choose, it is also true that it is a *cause:* our understanding itself guides the choice of metaphor by which we understand it. The chosen metaphor is both cause and effect of the relationship. Thus how we think about ourselves and our relationship to the world is already revealed in the metaphors we unconsciously choose to talk about it. (97; original emphasis)

One is reminded here of what Luft (2003) relates of the pagan Greek gods (in Chapter 6), who "were actually thought to be embodied in the forms [i.e., Plato's Divine Architect] that were *metaphors of their powers*" (96). These ancient metaphors (i.e., in the invention of philosophy itself) served in the creation of such a powerful transcendental, idealist realm of *a priori* "knowledge" and "truth" that their very role *as metaphors* has all but vanished. What remains largely intact, even today,

is the reified (philosophical) forms in terms of familiar lines of thought dispersed throughout our ordinary, everyday ways of thinking and *speaking*. But what is missed is the fact that traditional Western philosophy is *embodied by the attributes* of its own metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1999).

This is what McGilchrist (2009) means when he says, in the above quotation, that "[t]he chosen metaphor is both *cause and effect of the relationship*" (97). This is due, at root, to "how we think about our selves and our relationship to the world [which] is already revealed in the metaphors we unconsciously choose to talk about it" (97). In other words, we choose metaphors that reflect a *familiar* outlook that we (already) hold, based on our lived experience of the world. The Platonic metaphor of the Divine Architect became the model in antiquity for how Western philosophy has shaped the way "we think about our [disembodied] selves and our [equally disembodied] relationship to the world," complete with both a "blueprint" and its *"telos."*

Because White has adopted and taken to heart Saussure's deep structure of the (ancient, Aristotelian) conventionality of the binary sign, it is Saussure's *metaphorical model of coins as units of value in a currency system* that dictates White's persistent and even relentless systemic separation of "speech" (pattern) from the "context" in which it is used (process). Thus for White, *writing* – like speech itself – is forever decoupled from the real world of everyday life within which such writing (and speech) is contextualized.

In what follows below, I elaborate on why the *static* model at the heart of modern literary theory is not an appropriate model for the structure of human language. Living systems must always synthesize both *pattern and process* for living structure to exist in the first place. In this sense, pattern and process cannot be separated in dynamic systems. Furthermore, it is precisely this inappropriate static model that disqualifies White's history-as-fiction in its (post)structuralist incarnation, as White has argued the case for history-as-fiction during the past five decades.

Saussure's master key was to finally grasp the structural attributes of political economy's binary orders of labor and wages, which stood parallel to those of the binary orders of the percept and concept in linguistics.[152] If Aristotle's "conventionality rule" for language held, and Saussure believed that it did, then there had to be a way to "get at" what was most essential in language (its nature *as a system of linguistic value*), as opposed to what was merely accidental to it: its history, as practiced in the comparative linguistics of Saussure's own day. Taking the metaphors synchrony and diachrony as tools to express the system of value on two axes, the metaphor Saussure chose was "coins as units of value in a currency system."

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152   This argument is fleshed out in full in Chapter 5, Sections 5.5 and its subsections.

Analyzing this conceptual metaphor requires bringing the principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign back front and center as the "template" that Saussure wished to "scale up" from *a principle* to the system as a whole. The reason why the "ramifications" of arbitrariness are "baked" deeply into Saussure's system of linguistic value is that the source domain of the metaphor is the "conceptual" domain. The structural attributes (its characteristic traits, its image schema) are "mapped" onto the target domain in the attempt to characterize the one *in* the other. As Saussure (2011) notes, "*[a]rbitrary and differential* are two correlative qualities," where signs "function, then, not through their intrinsic value but through their relative position" (118; original emphasis). The conceptual metaphor can be understood as WORDS in the SYSTEM OF negative, differential LINGUISTIC VALUE are COINS AS UNITS OF relative VALUE IN A CURRENCY SYSTEM. In other words, the system of linguistic value is *embodied by the structural attributes* (correlative qualities) of coins as units of value in a currency system, both negatively and differentially (Saussure 2011, 118–120).

The arbitrariness of the binary sign in the system as a whole was made water tight and, thereby, inescapable. Saussure's "master key" was the binary order of values for labor and wages, on the one hand (political economy), and the signifier and the signified, on the other hand (linguistics). Here, Saussure had *two orders of value* that were physical (labor/signifier), on the one hand, and immaterial (wages/signified), on the other hand. In the static metaphor of "coins as units of value in a currency system," the coins were valued according to their "*place* which the sign occupies in the total [currency] system," as Roy Harris (1987, 122) notes.

Moreover, Harris emphasizes that "[i]t is indeed *the system of values which determines the signs,* and not the signs which come together to form a system" (122; emphasis added). The essential point is that the metaphor that Saussure chose also enabled him to establish linguistic signs as a *system* of value, both negatively and differentially, just as the value of coins were determined, both negatively and differentially, in the currency system. In other words, arbitrariness is not an added-on extra that one can wish away, or set aside, as both White and Ermarth do, as long as one still employs the system *as* a system of linguistic values (on this, see Chapter 5).

Harris understands how essential arbitrariness is for Saussure's negative and differential system. Without arbitrariness, the system could not function *differentially* in the first place. Saussure's biographer John E. Joseph (2012) adds the observation that "the *connection* between the two domains of values that relate to sound [*signifier*] and concept [*signified*] is what creates each of them, is essential to each of them, and is the locus of the essential arbitrariness of language" (600). For Saussure, the language system (synchronic *la langue*) was the "bridge" that mediated the social institution of language as a whole, connecting the arbitrary sets of percepts with their sets of concepts. For Saussure, then, the (static) metaphor

that he chose *structured the attributes* from the source domain of arbitrariness to the target domain of the language system; it scaled up.

From this point of view, there is no escape from this arbitrariness of the binary sign for any (post)structuralist, who continues to adhere to the static (relative) system of linguistic value, as Joseph (2012, 579) discloses. White (1999a) believes, however, that bringing the tropes into the frame of linguistic value will counteract both arbitrariness and relative value, when he defends the idea that "there is nothing in tropological theory implying linguistic determinism or relativism. Tropology is a theory of discourse, not of mind or consciousness" (17). But, by invoking the *system* of linguistic value, one does not evade or elide linguistic determinism or relativism, both are baked into the Saussurean system from the start.

To put it most bluntly, then, language as (relative) arbitrary "signs" do not "speak us" from a historical, conventional standpoint (as, e.g., Ermarth 2011, 43, asserts); rather, living-bodies-in-the-world-with-others *do* (e.g., Blasi et al. 2016; cf. Capra 2003; Modell 2003; Bergen 2012; Capra & Luisi 2014). In consequence, the key Whitean axiom that mandates the absolute separation of events of the real world from the linguistic "stories" we tell about them does not and cannot hold. This separation reproduces the hidden arbitrariness of the binary sign that dictates the separation of life and language, which is a Zenonian move as old as philosophy itself.

For Vico, language is the *metaphorical medium of direct communication with others in time and place* through physical-labor-in-the-world. Moreover, according to Luft (2003), because sensations are *in things,* Vico locates human "making" in the (active) bodily senses-in-touch-with-the-world, rather than in (passive) subjectivity. Thus, by the time the final edition of his *New Science* came out in 1744, Vico finally attributed "all human making, including the developmental making of abstract thought and knowledge, to the senses" (Luft 2003, 129; see Chapter 7).

This flies in the face of the general assumption that "all thought is formless," that is, formless without the aid of signs to shape and constitute the very form of thought (e.g., Harris 1996, 116–118; cf. Locke 2008). Indeed, for Saussure, signs themselves (as a necessarily binary, dualist phenomenon) are merely "traces" of meaning that operate (out of conscious awareness) in terms of similarities and differences over and against other terms in the synchronic system of *la langue* (see Section 5.4).

To further underline differences with Vico, Roy Harris supports my line of argumentation (or I his) by noting that the immateriality and disembodied nature of Saussure's sign system denies "the notion that *the senses play any role at all* in confirming or authenticating the true value of the sign" (1996, 118; emphasis added). Whereas, for Vico and for cognitive linguistics, meaning lies *in* embodied lived experience, which is communicated through metaphorical language. In short, meaning is not *in* the "signs" of language, as defined negatively and differentially (e.g., Saussure 2011; cf. White 1974, 1975, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1999, 2000, 2005a,b, and so on). Instead, "meaning" lies in what individual persons attribute

to their own *lived experience* on the basis of and *through the standpoint* of their past (unique) experiences through structural coupling with the world. We humans select ways of expressing this embodied meaning in (metaphorical) language that serves as the link between our waking experiences and our unconscious memory while we sleep (e.g., Modell 2003; cf. Capra 2003).

Indeed, just try communicating something outside other people's experience and imagination to them without metaphor. For instance, try communicating the nature of embodiment, *not* as a thing to be defined conceptually but as an *activity* in two dimensions (pattern and process). It is difficult to communicate things that lie outside of people's lived experience, which does pose a problem for the writing of histories that lie in the deep past – beyond our ability to comprehend their experiences at that time and place. Much effort needs to be spent in bringing unfamiliar ideas across in terms of the things that, for instance, readers *already* understand. The present thesis is its own example of the way that language cannot operate as a mentalistic, direct communication of abstract ideas in the absence of perception and *metaphor*.

And yet, the absence of a role for the senses (perception) in Saussure's system is striking.[153] In fact, this absence is what defines the nature of Saussure's system of linguistic value as a *disembodied* system of signs. Saussure's assertion, furthermore, directly challenges Vico's conviction that "all human making" is attributable to "the senses," as Luft (2003, 129) also emphasizes (cf., Lakoff & Johnson 1999, 50–54). The notion of disembodied signs draws its authority ultimately from the "problem of perception" in Aristotle's theory of signs in antiquity, where Aristotle attempts to solve (differently than Plato did) the burning problem of linguistic epistemology: "do we know what we are talking about?" (Harris 2004, 48).

To solve the problem, Aristotle eliminates the question of perception once and for all by claiming that "we all perceive the world identically [...]. So different languages are just different sets of vocal tokens for exactly the same mental entities (i.e., "affections" of the human soul)" (Harris 2004, 48; Kretzmann 1974) (see also Chapter 4). In following ancient sign theory, as Saussure did, there was thus no "problem of perception" to impede his theorizing along these disembodied, arbitrary lines. Moreover, as Saussure would have read in Léon Walras's (2014) Third Edition of *Elements of Theoretical Economics* in 1896, he would have been encouraged by a "truth long ago made clear by the Platonic philosophy [...] that science does not study bodies but the facts of which bodies are the theater. Bodies are temporary;

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153   And it is all the more striking (even ironic), because Saussure was himself *a synesthete*. And he was no ordinary one, because the cross-domain mapping of his senses mixed in an idiosyncratic way. Saussure's described his condition in terms of associating "colours neither with letters nor with sounds, but with the combination of the two" (Saussure in Joseph 2012, 394). In 1892, Saussure had answered a questionnaire about "coloured hearing" and gave his extraordinary 650-word reply, which the researcher eliciting the information could not even use in the end, because Saussure's synesthesia was *unique* among the 700 responses the researcher had collected among his respondents.

facts endure," (15; on Walras, see Section 5.5.1). Saussure's own great contribution to (ancient) sign theory therefore involved the novel theoretical move to *anchor* meaning in a static, nonliving *system* of negative, differential, relative value, modeled on the static conceptual metaphor of coins as units of value in a currency system. In such a system, as Saussure (2011) theorized, *"[a]rbitrary and differential* are two correlative qualities [...]. Signs function, then, not through their intrinsic value but through their relative position" (118; original emphasis).

No matter how many different ways, moreover, White construes the relationship between his (Saussurean) (post)structuralist literary-theoretical frame and the Vichian tropes that he perceives as the nature of structuralist thought: he cannot not escape the "ramifications" of Saussure's static metaphor at the core of the system White takes as his (post)structuralist departure point for his own work. I have carefully read many of White's texts over the period extending from around the time he published *Metahistory* up until around the time he turned his focus to what he now terms "the practical past," in line with political philosopher Michael Oakeshott (1901–1990). These essays extend roughly across the entire period of the linguistic turn in historical theory.

One could go systematically through each and every essay that Hayden White wrote between January 1, 1965, and January 1, 2006. I could, in theory anyway, examine each one of them, separately and exhaustively, in terms of the way he construes the basic structuralist-tropological relationship across many topics in his elegant essays. Such a thoroughgoing coverage and examination of every single one of White's essays (and every word that appears in them), however, is not necessary for several reasons.[154] When one understands the core principles and basic theoretical set-up that White has taken on board, one need only demonstrate that it is a *consistent* set-up from beginning to end, which I have tried to do here.

In what follows, I wish to emphasize two main methodological points. The first concerns the essentially *systemic* nature of the phenomena under examination in this thesis. The second concerns the *significance* for such a system, when "substance and form" are either (1) decoupled from one another (as they are on Saussure's two axes of *synchrony* and *diachrony*), or (2) coupled back together again (as in Capra's dynamic ecological synthesis). Both (1) and (2) are inherently concerned with the relationship between substance and form. Living structure is what *utterly distinguishes* Capra's embodied ecological system (2) from Saussure's static, disembodied systemic value (1). Capra's "synthesis" is *dynamic* and can be both

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154 The exchange between A. Dirk Moses (2005, 2005a) and White (2005b) serves as a case in point. Moses exhaustively surveyed and absorbed White's arguments in a dense range of essays for his own long review of White. It must have taken Moses many months of work to sort out and absorb all those texts. But, without understanding the underlying principles and historical contingencies of the theoretical position that White occupies, Moses had absolutely no chance to make much of an impression and was easily deflected by White in his six-page rejoinder.

nonliving and living; Saussure's "analysis" is *static,* nonliving and harks back to the rigid, pre-Copernican structure of the fixed stars in the imagination of ancient–medieval cosmological theory: Ptolemy's celestial spheres. If there is a future for historical theory beyond the linguistic turn, the following distinctions are *essential* to comprehend and grasp.

8.4   THE SYSTEMIC DISTINCTION BETWEEN STATIC/NONLIVING & DYNAMIC/NONLIVING, LIVING

To expand the first methodological point above, the nature of Capra's systemic synthesis and the nature of Saussure's systemic value are *both* "systemic" arguments. That is, in both cases, there exists an integral *relationship* between the components (substance) and the pattern of organization (form) of a *dynamic,* living and nonliving "dissipative" structure, *in Capra's synthesis,* and that between the components (substance) and the pattern of organization (form) of a *static,* nonliving "currency system," *in Saussure's synthesis.* Both the dynamic system and the static system, respectively, acknowledge integral *relationships* between the substantive components and their form, or pattern of organization. But this is where the similarities between the two systems end.

In nature, the former (dynamic) dissipative system *continually embodies its pattern of organization as living structure,* so long as there is an ongoing and continual exchange of matter and energy flowing through the system (see Chapters 2 & 7). This dynamic structure is operative in the social system as well (e.g., Capra 2003, 61–82; Capra & Luisi 2014, 304–311; cf. Luhmann 1990; Lloyd 1993; Mingers 1995). Fritjof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi (2014) compare natural systems to social systems, for example, by way of social *autopoiesis.* They note the connection pioneered by German sociologist Niklas Luhmann,

> who […] identif[ies] the social processes of the autopoietic network as processes of communication: "Social systems use communication as their particular mode of autopoietic production. Their elements are communications that are … produced and reproduced by a network of communications and that cannot exist outside such a network." (Luhmann in Capra & Luisi 2014, 307)

A "currency system" is likewise systemic. But this system is *static,* not dynamic. As Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio (2005) emphasize:

> The model of sign in semiology (and also in linguistics, a branch of semiology) follows a template similar to that of 'marginalistic' economics. […] Thus, this sign model is largely the result of applying the *point de vue statique* of 'pure

economics' to the study of language. *When the study of language follows the same path as the study of the marketplace in an ideal state of equilibrium, the result is a static conception of the sign.* In such a context, the sign is caught within a synchronic framework, one dominated by the logic of perfect correspondence between that which is given and that which is received. *In today's global economic system,* this logic of equal exchange regulates all social relationships. (xvii–xviii; emphasis added; cf. White 1974; also see Chapter 7)

The "self-regulative," "self-transformative" nature of the synchronic *system* of signs is what attracted White (1974), when he says of Saussure's system that it "proceeds by a series of binary oppositions *within* a structure that is conceived to be *whole* (or self-enclosed), *self-regulative,* and *self-transformative* [...]." (763).

In the case of coins as units of absolutely relative, systemic value in a currency system, the embodiment of its particular pattern of organization depends upon complex (also theoretical) economic factors in the social system (see, e.g., Bridel 1997; cf. Walras 2014). Saussure clearly struggled to imagine what lay beneath a social structure, like the language system, just as (marginalistic) economists also struggled in their similar efforts to comprehend the nature of the social system through theoretical economics (see Section 5.5.1). The parallel struggle was not lost on Saussure in his own efforts.

Indeed, the parallel nature of the problem in political economy became a "master key" for him in his search for the right model of what became the metaphor for synchronic *la langue*. Political economy (theoretical economics) gave Saussure the template he needed to "think with." The key for him was to finally grasp the structural attributes of political economy's two (binary) orders of "labor" and "wages" as two orders of "value" that were inextricable in the social system in the same way that Saussure imagined the two (binary) orders of percept (the material *signifier*) and concept (the immaterial *signified*) in the social institution of language (Saussure 2011, 79–83, esp. 79). Once he established that his key concept was the correlative functions of "value" in the science of theoretical economics and in the science of linguistics, it brought him to the metaphor he needed to embody the principle of binary arbitrariness in his system of linguistic value as a whole (Saussure 2011, 118–120).

The second methodological point, which follows, is that, in pursuing his "systemic" model for his system of signs, Saussure separated *la langue* (on the synchronic axis) from *la parole* (on the diachronic axis), thereby systematizing the metaphors of synchrony and diachrony that he inherited from his older colleague, American linguist William Dwight Whitney (1827–1894). In this act of (traditional) separation along ancient philosophical lines, Saussure uncoupled the organizational (formal) system of linguistic signs (i.e., the language system's *pattern* on the axis of synchrony) from its continual embodiment in everyday use and communication in

speech (i.e., the language system's *process* on the axis of diachrony). As Saussure (2011) says, "[t]he opposition between the two viewpoints, the synchronic and the diachronic, is absolute and allows no compromise" (83). This move enabled Saussure to finally gain access to the nature of language (its synchronic value), as opposed to what is merely accidental to it (its diachronic history). This system of *la langue* was the essential bridge, as Saussure saw it, between the (social) set of percepts (sound-images) and the (social) set of concepts (meanings) that are embedded jointly in the social institution of conventional language (for more, see Chapter 5).

Given this static, decoupled and *dualist* nature of Saussure's model of human language, one may still wonder why this model of "systemic value" is so problematic. Most briefly, to repeat, it is the way Saussure separated *la langue* from *la parole* on two axes that allowed him to detach the language "pattern" from its own "process" of continual embodiment in everyday speech and communication in a real environment of activities with others. The *process* of continued embodiment is the determining feature of any living organism. To separate the process of life from its pattern of organization in a living *autopoietic* network is much like dissecting a living body; dissection results in that organism's death (chemical equilibrium, *stasis*).

By sundering the process of linguistic communication in time (*diachrony*) from the pattern of the language system (*synchrony*), in the way he did, Saussure discarded the process, in order to focus on what he felt was the essential nature of the language: the static pattern in isolation from what makes language an *autopoietic* entity in the first place (at the very least in Luhmann's 1990 terms). The implication I wish to suggest here is that this study of the language pattern isolated from its process of communication in time – as a *model* of the structure of human language – is not "real," not true; it is a hypothesis built upon ancient theory that turns out not to be the case after all (cf. Petrilli & Ponzio 2005; M. Johnson 2007, 200; McGilchrist 2009, 97).

The legacy of structuralism that White inherited was to imagine, with Saussure, that "meaning" can be attributed to linguistic signs themselves within the language system (separate from their embodied usage in everyday life). One does not overcome the radical relativity inherent in the *synchronic* system, however, by assigning tropes to chains of associations over the top of signifiers and signifieds. Tropicizing binary signs only lends the appearance of putting process back into the pattern; it is not a genuine process, because it does not escape the (static) synchronic dimension.

Indeed, history-as-fiction remains "language," as White continually reminds his readers across decades of his work (e.g., White 1975, 2005b, 2013). Without the actual connection to the processes of communication in an environment with others (i.e., context), the addition of tropes into the *synchronic* linguistic system fails from the outset. As it turns out, then, White is not Vichian in Vico's sense, as I had assumed (and hoped) at the beginning of my research (for similar assumptions, see Luft 2003, 55–56, 190, n. 223). My original design to separate history-as-fiction

into its two aspects of the Saussurean history-literature debate and the Vichian fact-fiction debate showed – to my great surprise – that the so-called Vichian side of the debate is just as "(post)structuralist" as the (post)structuralist history-literature side of the debate. Indeed, White is a structuralist in the vein that Ermarth (2011) understands him, when she states that "[t]he way to make [White's 'content of the form'] explicit is to recognize and focus on [Saussure's] systemic value" (xv).

By developing the tropological nature of structuralist thought in history-as-fiction, White has explored "systemic" linguistic pattern in a sustained and novel way. But in subsuming Vico's tropes into his (post)structuralist frame, White has elaborated a "barren tropology" that, rather than fusing with the *process of life,* has merely surfed along the static chains of disembodied associations that the static synchrony of Saussure's semiology afforded.

If one is to "reconsider the tools of thought" for historians after modernity, these tools *do not lie in* the discursive condition, as Ermarth (2011; cf. Munslow 2015; Pihlainen 2015; Southgate 2009, 2015) and White (2013, 38–39) are all convinced that they do. Rather, reconsidering the tools of thought must be connected to the *process* of lived experience and embodied human life. If anything, the condition of history is *not "discursive,"* it is metaphorical – an entirely different thing altogether. Such an embodied condition will not, however, provide the "dead" certainties of physics. Metaphor, in any case, cannot provide certainty. White (1999a) is well aware of this and emphasizes that: "[a]ll stories are fictions. Which means, of course, that *they can be true only in a metaphorical sense* and in the sense in which a figure of speech can be true. Is this true enough?" (9; emphasis added).

Had he meant this in the embodied, tropological sense in which Modell (2003, 25) recognizes metaphor as the *connection* between our conscious experience and our unconscious memory, then I could have whole-heartedly agreed with White's (1999a, 9) assessment above. But, he does not mean it in Modell's, or Luft's, embodied Vichian sense. White speaks of metaphor in a discursive, rhetorical sense within the order of discourse (as *language*). He is rather invoking Nietzsche, not Vico. White subsumes Vico within an argument in which "historical *discourse* is ultimately a *second-order fiction,* a fiction of a fiction or a fiction of fiction making" (White 1999a, 9; italics added). Ultimately, this bears little relationship to an embodied Vichian language in the *context* in which White understands the tropes best: as unconscious styles of historical narrative representation – where "discourse" and "*second-order* fiction" is necessarily disconnected from real experience in the world (cf. Peltonen 2004, 92).

Moreover, White (1999a) has observed that the historical discipline has never experienced a "Copernican revolution similar to that which founded the physical sciences" (10). But he is wrong. There has been an emerging "Copernican" revolution of "living structure" afoot throughout the twentieth century that has resulted in a dynamic, ecological view of living systems that has finally overcome the seventeenth-

century Cartesian rationalistic dualism that separates body (substance) from mind (form).

As Capra and Luisi (2014) put it, in the 1970s, "a few cognitive scientists recognized that mind and consciousness are not 'things' but cognitive processes, and they took the radical step of identifying these processes of cognition with the very process of life" (273). As a result of this discovery, "mind and body are not separate entities [...], but are two complementary aspects of life – its process and its structure" (273). The Copernican revolution of living structure that AE ultimately offers is a reconceptualization in which Capra's contribution overcomes the inside/outside problem that critics of AE have complained about (e.g., Gallagher 2011; Martiny 2011; De Jesus 2016; see Chapter 2). The point that Capra and Luisi (2014) make is an important one for the future research in AE; that is, the point that living structure is itself "the *activity* involved in the *continual embodiment of the system's pattern of organization"* (302).

In her embodied interpretation of Vico, Luft (2003) argues that, nearly three hundred years ago, Vico theorized the existence of the first gentile peoples as poet-creators of the social institutions that constitute civil societies throughout the world. In her breakdown of Philo of Alexandria's subsumption of the Hebraic God of the Whirlwind (*davar*) into the Platonic Divine Architect (*logos*) in late antiquity, Luft has opened up and freed for philosophical investigation a more appropriate, *dynamic* metaphorical model of the first humans as embodied "poets" and creators of their real social worlds. The (metaphorical) model matters (e.g., M. Johnson 2007, 204–205; see also Chapter 7). Only now in the context of *living* systems does one come to realize the wisdom of such a dynamic model for the structure of the process of life itself – even the structure of *living, human language.*

If there is any *one* basic idea that illuminates much of what is wrong with "modernity," it is this one: we are *dynamic, living* structure, and we confuse ourselves with (metaphorically *model* ourselves on) *static, nonliving* structure. Much follows from this apparently simple observation, which lies mostly outside everyday awareness. To bring this to awareness, the first methodological point this chapter made was that we face an essentially "systemic" reality that presupposes the lived experiences that our living structure affords us. But, armed with the static, disembodied metaphors from Greek antiquity as models of the world, we continue to be stuck in a pre-Copernican world of metaphors and language that casually allow the decoupling of substance and form, as in the confident way that Saussure, following in the ancient footsteps of Zeno of Elea, decoupled the language system from everyday speech in his relative system of arbitrary linguistic value.

Taking these two methodological points forward into the next chapter, I briefly unpack the idea of the (embodied) historian-as-reader of past movement. The idea is that such an approach is what Lakoff and Johnson understand as *embodied realism.* This is a move in the direction of a narrative theory that returns us to

language, not as a disembodied phenomenon that separates language and life, as during the linguistic turn, but as embodied metaphor that permits us the "new tools of thought" that are needed, if we are to make our way through the maelstrom and make it our own, as Marshall Berman has well understood and challenged us in our contemporary systemic condition after technology.

8.5   CONCLUSION

In this final chapter on Hayden White's history-as-fiction, I continued to track and open up what I perceive as the unexamined and hidden "common theoretical thread" that runs *consistently* through the core of White's writings on "conceptual (or synchronic) historical representation." In making explicit the "content of the form" in his approach to historical discourse as history-as-fiction, White has applied Giambattista Vico's theory of the tropes within a (post)structuralist framework. This framework is the legacy of Saussure's *system of linguistic value,* which was adopted by a host of theorists over the course of the twentieth century at the height of White's working life. It provided him "new tools of thought" in the work of prying historians loose from their overt dependence, in some cases, on the "positivism" modeled on material "sciences." This positivism upheld knowledge, objectivity, and truth as absolute values for their own efforts in the representation of the past.

What I outline in this chapter, on the basis of the work of the foregoing chapters, is the following. Insofar as White absorbed Vico's tropes into his (post)structuralist frame, he *concealed* the dynamic principle of language in Vico's embodied *tropic* theory, thereby allowing the static, nonliving principle of language within Saussure's system of linguistic value to prevail, thereby disempowering the tropes in his examination of history-as-fiction in service to (post)structuralist thought. Insofar as *body* and *mind* are decoupled in ancient Greek metaphysics, so too is *word* and *deed* decoupled in Saussure's language system, insofar as it is decoupled from the everyday speech of linguistic practice over time. This traditional (analytic) tendency of Western philosophy is common and familiar and is accepted, even though it goes against the grain of our human experience in time and place and creates a tension between theory and practice. This is so, for instance, as exemplified in White's own relation to himself as "an intentional author," which, of course, he is. All of us who write are "intentional" authors.

The main task of this chapter, in my use of the "new tools" that conceptual metaphor theory offers me, was to show how Saussure's *metaphor* at the core of his system of linguistic value *embodies* the structural attributes of his first principle of language: "the arbitrariness of the binary sign." In embodying the metaphor of "coins as units of value in a currency system" in his synchronic dimension of the language system (*la langue*), Saussure transferred the structural attributes of

a static, disembodied (nonliving) model as the template of the language system, decoupled from the practice of speech across time and change. Key to this transfer is that, for Saussure, "*arbitrary and differential* are two correlative qualities," which express two orders of value (both in theoretical economics and in linguistics) that had a material (labor/signifier) dimension and an immaterial (wages/signified) dimension, which were as *arbitrary* in their union as they were *separate* in their two different orders of value.

What is essential to understand in Saussure's choice of metaphor is that it enabled him to establish linguistic signs as a *system* of value, both negatively and differentially, just as the value of coins were determined, both negatively and differentially, in the currency system. The structural attributes of coins *as units of value* were mapped directly onto words in the language "system," separated at their material-immaterial "hinge" between their two orders of value, the material (diachronic) dimension of *la parole* and the immaterial (synchronic) dimension of *la langue*. The master key Saussure grasped was to map these *two orders of value* from the source domain of coins as units of value in a currency system to the target domain of words as units of value in the language system.

In failing to notice the way in which Saussure's arbitrary principle of language was "baked" into the "cake" of the system of linguistic value, (post)structuralist theorists, like White and many others who follow him, cannot continue theorizing their way out of the arbitrariness of the binary sign, which entraps them. As such, also Jacques Derrida, despite his discovery and condemnation of the "metaphysics of presence," continued to propagate this same static, disembodied system of values as *writing*. In this way (post)structuralism participates in the very structuralist phenomena it denies – together with all the attributes that have long since been discredited as "dualist." The way out of this conundrum is, first, to acknowledge the nature of the *two principles of language* at work in each of the strands of theory that make up history-as-fiction. Once this is acknowledged, then, secondly, one can finally *move* beyond the constraining metaphors of Greek metaphysics, which the *systems* of the world long ago outgrew.

CHAPTER NINE

Truth is process, not object.

—Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary*

9   BEYOND THE LINGUISTIC TURN

In this final chapter of the thesis, I return briefly to Carlo Ginzburg's examination of ancient signs, in order to set the stage for the transition to a brief description of what narrative theory beyond the linguistic turn might look like. Such a project to characterize an alternative, an "embodied narrative theory," of course, runs far outside the scope and boundaries of this particular thesis. But this work on the metaphorical and embodied nature of language, as applied to historical narrative is already coming into being (Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz, forthcoming). In what follows, I address and interpret the embodied nature of Ginzburg's project, coupled here with (and seen through the work of) the cognitive neuroscientist Stanislas Dehaene (2010). Dehaene's work, naturally done completely independently of Ginzburg's, and of course independently of Lithuanian political scientist Rūta Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz's work, sheds illuminating light on Ginzburg's position, and vice versa. This is then followed up by suggesting the manner in which Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz's work may be interwoven into this discussion on the future of narrative theory, if necessarily briefly, in the context of the foregoing chapters.

To recap from Chapter 4, Ginzburg emphasized his understanding of ancient signs (confusingly termed, for today's sensibilities, as "proofs" in Aristotle's *Rhetoric;* see Section 4.3) in the wider sense of *evidence* within a real world of people, places, and activities. More to the point, I emphasize Ginzburg's understanding of signs beyond the narrow characterization of the "science of linguistic signs" sketched out in Saussure's semiology. In short, the proof on offer in Ginzburg's theorizing has no connection with the idea of "absolute" proof. The "conjectural," or speculative paradigm that Ginzburg (1983, 1992a, 96–125) outlines and adheres to – on the basis of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* – considers the wider understanding of signs in a relationship

between rhetoric and proof that harks back to this older evidential (conjectural) paradigm in antiquity, before the word "evidence" even came into use.

The metaphor that Ginzburg builds on in his arguments, moreover, is the human *hunter* tracking his prey in the landscape. In what follows, I examine Ginzburg's model and the way he uses it to demonstrate the (embodied) nature of the relation between rhetoric and proof, even though he does not use the term "embodiment" anywhere in his work in the sense that I deploy it throughout this thesis. On the basis of his arguments, however, I can show how Ginzburg's understanding of rhetoric in its broader conception might help to formulate an embodied realism in and for historiography in future research beyond the linguistic turn, specifically in terms of the metaphor he employs.

To begin with, Ginzburg (1999) is well aware that the idea of combining rhetoric and proof may raise hackles among contemporary theoreticians and historians alike (e.g., Perry Anderson's 2012 review of Ginzburg). But rhetoric in its ancient context, as he argues the case, resonates very well with my claims for the *embodied* nature of human communication in a real environment with which we are structurally coupled as living organisms (for more on this, see Section 2.1.1). What is important, in my view, is that he intuitively grasps the (*embodied*) context of the theory he posits, even though he does not use or theorize the term "embodiment" per se. This is because he chooses a living, metaphorical model that I can easily embrace and interpret in embodied-realist terms, in keeping with Mark Johnson's (2007) insight that "*All* theories are based on metaphors, because all our abstract concepts are metaphorically defined" (204). It is here that Ginzburg describes a phenomenon that leaves behind Greek metaphysics and the analytic tradition of Western language philosophy by embracing a paradigm that the Greek philosophers had suppressed, already in antiquity.

9.1. THE VENATIC (HUNTING) PARADIGM: SIGNS OF PREY IN THE LANDSCAPE

Specifically, Ginzburg focuses on the part–whole relationship emphasized within a more holistic Aristotelian *Rhetoric* that embraces the dimension of proof *as* sign (symptom, clue, trace of something in the past, present, and/or future). On the broader implications for this ancient, holistic rhetoric, Ginzburg (1999) notes that "this once obvious fact, now forgotten, implies an image of the working methods of historians, including our contemporaries, that is much more realistic and complex than the one fashionable today" (1). The metaphorical model that Ginzburg (1992a) selects in delineating the nature of Aristotle's rhetoric is the human "hunter squatting on the ground, studying the tracks of his quarry" (105). As Ginzburg (1992a) observes:

> Man has been a hunter for thousands of years. In the course of countless chases he learned to reconstruct the shapes and movements of his invisible prey from tracks on the ground, broken branches, excrement, tufts of hair, entangled feathers, stagnating odors. He learned to sniff out, record, interpret, and classify such infinitesimal traces as trails of spittle. He learned how to execute complex mental operations with lightning speed, in the depth of the forest or in a prairie with its hidden dangers. (102)

These acts of a conjectural (speculative) paradigm included the interpretation of signs not only of the *past,* as exercised in the venatic (hunting) model, above, but was also eventually applied in the interpretation of signs of the *future,* as in the Mesopotamian divination model. Sandra Rudnick Luft indicates this "divination model" more broadly as "sense-making," and one Vico highlighted as *the poetic essence* of humankind:

> [T]he "first men" were embodied beings without subjective essence, and, thus, wholly incapable of knowledge in the traditional sense. The sense-making of which they were capable was divination, an interpretive linguistic activity, the reading of the "language" they found in the sky, which they took to be the language of God. (Luft 2003, 3)

There were analogies, moreover, between these models (the venatic and the divinatory) with *medical semiotics,* in which "the analysis of specific cases [...] could be reconstructed only through traces, symptoms, and clues" (Ginzburg 1992a, 104; cf. Allen 2001, 2, 96–97, 229, 234–241; see also Nöth 1995, 11–14; see Section 4.3). In this sense, the "language" of signs went well beyond words alone and embraced "signs" of nature and the body (on this broader understanding of the sign and signification, see also Petrilli & Ponzio 2005; Nöth 1995).

An important aspect of the conjectural paradigm, in Ginzburg's (1992a) view, "found its implicit justification in *the denial that reality is transparent"* (105; emphasis added). Moreover, for the Greeks, the groups that participated in "the vast world of conjectural knowledge" included "physicians, historians, politicians, potters, carpenters, sailors, hunters, fishermen, and women" (105). Overshadowing this paradigm – and indeed suppressing it – was the more socially prestigious "model of knowledge developed by Plato" (105). The philosopher's metaphorical model of divine, metaphysical "knowing" trumped the more uncertain (conjectural) model of (what I understand as embodied) knowing-as-sense-making practiced by "physicians, historians, and women," more dependent on the senses. That is, metaphysical "knowledge" defined by the male philosophers of antiquity trumped the ordinary sense-making dependent on the bodily skills of perception, memory,

and imagination (see, e.g., Kretzmann 1974; Harris 2004, 34–67, esp. 47–49; cf. McGilchrist 2009; Hacking 2002).

The Platonic need for the philosophical certainties of absolute truth, objectivity, and knowledge, called for the suppression of uncertain methods, "guesses" and "conjectures" performed by non-philosophers. As Ginzburg (1992a) states, "as with the physician's, historical knowledge is indirect, presumptive, conjectural" (106). With such a "profoundly diachronic" discipline as history, "[w]hen causes cannot be reproduced, there is nothing to do but to deduce them from their effects" (117). By contrast with the phenomena of physics and the hard sciences, this conjectural approach is the only possibility for living beings, whose time and living processes are *irreversible*. It is, moreover, in this sense that "truth" can only be "process, not object," in such a paradigm, as Iain McGilchrist (2009, 154) has it (in the epigraph to this chapter).

Just as ancient hunters relied on their bodily skills and experiences in following animal tracks across the landscape – where the traces of *past movement* in a real environment were vital for survival – so too do clues, evidence serve the inferences (inductive, deductive, and abductive) of investigators in the evidential paradigm that underlies the judicial system. Indeed, as Ginzburg has argued, search for proof of guilt or innocence on the basis of *arguments* delivered in a court of law is similar, but not the same in all respects, to what historians do (e.g., on the characteristic traits of argument in Aristotle's *Rhetoric,* see Ginzburg 1999, 38–40). For White, however, the nature of *argumentation* is puzzling.

In the light of White's preferred framework to separate the *diachronic* and the *synchronic* levels into "narrative historiography" and "conceptual historical representation," respectively (e.g., White 1985a, 126–127), *argument* as such does not quite fit into his *model.* The next sections aim to examine evidence that hopefully opens up this puzzling relationship between argument and narrativizations in history – why it may be puzzling to White, but not to Ginzburg.

9.2   "ARGUMENT" WITHIN THE VENATIC CONJECTURAL PARADIGM

In White's decoupling of *diachrony* and *synchrony,* these parts do not, apparently, account for the problematic nature of argument as a form of speech. It, rather, falls outside his system; therefore he sets it aside. As White (1992, 38, n. 1) states in the context of his article, "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth":

> Historical discourses consist also, obviously, of explanations cast in the form of arguments more or less formalizable. I do not address the issue of the relation between explanations cast in the mode of formal arguments and what I would

call the "explanation-effects" produced by the narrativization of events. It is the felicitous *combination of arguments with narrative representations which accounts for the appeal of a specifically "historical" representation of reality. But the precise nature of the relation between arguments and narrativizations in histories is unclear.* (White in Friedländer, ed. 1992, 340, n. 1 [endnotes]; my emphasis).

The nature of this relation appears to be unclear to White. But for Ginzburg (1999), argument belongs inherently to the construal of history, rhetoric, and proof: that is, outside and beyond (post)structuralist theory. Along Ginzburg's lines, argument belongs within the ancient, evidential conjectural paradigm in seeking out the clues, traces, and threads (i.e., proof) of real-world phenomena on the *diachronic* axis – which is, by default, excluded from White's *synchronic* investigation of the "tropological nature of structuralist thought" (White 1985, 260, n. 3).

For Ginzburg (1992a) "[t]he hunter would have been the first 'to tell a story' because he alone was able to read, in the silent, nearly imperceptible tracks left by his prey, a coherent sequence of events" (103). Strengthening Ginzburg's argument on behalf of his metaphor of the hunter-as-reader of the landscape is Stanislas Dehaene. Dehaene (2010) argues, for example, that ancient cave paintings may well "represent a rudimentary sign language used by hunters to silently indicate the number, nature, and movements of their prey" within "a rich set of nonfigurative shapes: series of dots, parallel lines, checkerboards, abstract curves [...]" (181). Dehaene names Ferdinand de Saussure specifically and concedes a degree of *arbitrariness* in language, insofar as "any string of letters can represent any concept" (113). But for Dehaene, the arbitrariness of the sign would only be relevant in the earliest phases of *the evolution of writing* and completely irrelevant after the acquisition of a spoken language (along these lines, cf. Derrida 1998; see also Brockmeier 2002; Harris 2009b).

Dehaene theorizes the act of reading in the brain on the basis of what he terms the "recycling hypothesis." He claims that the brain organ is "conservative" insofar as it recycles and reuses brain regions and resources in an efficient manner. When regions or resources go unused for their original purpose-built function(s), these become available, instead, for other functions and uses. For instance, blind people's visual cortex shrinks as the auditory cortex grows larger and supplants it. As a result, the hearing of blind people is especially acute, given their larger auditory cortex than that of sighted persons. In other words, when neural resources are finite, the brain has evolved, Dehaene argues, to use those resources very sparingly in what amounts to a very flexible and efficient use of those limited resources. Of concern in this section is Ginzburg's apt metaphor of the "hunter-as-reader of the landscape." Dehaene's theory of reading addresses Ginzburg's metaphor directly and *literally* in what follows.

According to Dehaene (2010), "[a]mong the many precursors of writing also figure *the painted hands* that abound in a number of prehistoric caves" (181; my emphasis). As he interprets these hands, "[c]ertain finger configurations recur with greater frequency and match the distribution of the animal species painted on the same cave walls" (181). On this view, Ginzburg's (1992a) "hunter squatting on the ground, studying the tracks of his quarry" (105) eventually expanded from the individual hunter's actual reading of minute clues in the landscape to representing the painted forms of the (hunted) animals in great caves, together with rudimentary sign language. "[T]he association of an arbitrary hand position to objects or actions" eventually became fixed by painting, thereby underpinning the evolution of alphabetic letters (Dehaene 2010, 181, cf. 182–190).

Furthermore, renowned French archaeologist André Leroi-Gourhan (1911–1986) suggested that "[i]deography in this form [of cave paintings] precedes pictography, and all Paleolithic art is ideographic" (Leroi-Gourhan in Dehaene 2010, 182; cf. Harris 1986, 2000; Brockmeier 2002).[155] The research that Dehaene cites suggests that the very letters of the alphabet have evolved by way of a necessary contingency on the body (fingers). Vico's contention that the first gentile humans were embodied poets, who spoke in metaphorical characters, is thus here extended even to the evolution of writing as being contingent on the body as well.

In view here is Dehaene's (2010) hypothesis as to what the brain region, which is now used for reading (what he calls the "letterbox" area of the brain), was used for *before* humans began to read. Dehaene's recycling hypothesis pins down what he thinks this brain region was originally custom-built to do, in terms of *what* survival-enhancing activity the original letterbox area of the brain evolved to perform. Dehaene's recycling hypothesis is based on the observation that, when regions or resources of the brain go unused for their original purpose-built function(s) (like seeing or hearing), these become available for other functions and uses instead (for related issues, see Smail 2008, 125–130).

Unused neural synapses are routinely pruned away, when not used, and the space is given up for other high-usage brain regions. As a result, the *hearing* of blind people is especially acute, given that their auditory cortex is larger than those of sighted persons (whose visual cortex is in full use). On this argument, the visual cortex of blind persons has been "recycled" in the auditory cortex to help them *hear* more acutely, in order to compensate for their lack of vision. Likewise, along these same (recycling) lines, Dehaene (2010) asks: given the massive cognitive gains for *literate* people, what did this learning to read in the brain displace? "What," in other words "does reading make us lose?" (210).

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155   Leroi-Gourhan influenced Jacques Derrida in his move from Saussure's structuralist emphasis on speech to (Derrida's) poststructuralist emphasis on writing (see, e.g., Derrida 1998, 83–86).

Dehaene (2010) reports that *literacy* drastically changes the physical brain. He mentions brain imaging experiments that clearly demonstrate the profoundly different brain activity in literate and illiterate persons (in this case, women) (208). Surprisingly, these literate and illiterate experimental subjects even respond to the same questions from different sides of their brains (left and right hemispheres, respectively). Moreover, anatomical changes are also observed in literates in the build-up and thickening of the rear part of the corpus callosum, the wide, flat bundle of neural fibers in the mid-brain which links the left and right hemispheres and manages the flow of communication between them (209; cf. McGilchrist 2009). Such a build-up of neural mass might help explain, for example, some of the literates' verbal memory advantage over that of illiterates (memory for words) (Dehaene 2010, 209).

Ginzburg has intuitively pointed to this answer already. It is present in his metaphor of the "hunter-as-reader of the landscape." The Neolithic hunter was illiterate of actual reading skills, even as the contemporary literate historian is now their master. Place the literate historian out on the plains to track prey and he might starve to death, having "lost" all his landscape "reading" abilities. Dehaene is speculating on the back of preliminary experiments, but Ginzburg is purposely using this metaphor as his model. Dehaene (2010) states that

> [y]ears of experience with hunter-gatherers in the Amazon, New Guinea, or the African bush lead anthropologists to marvel at the aborigines' ability to *read* the natural world. They decipher animal tracks with amazing ease. Meticulous inspection of broken branches or faint tracks in the dirt allows them to quickly figure out what animal has been around, its size, the direction in which it went, and a number of other details that will be invaluable for hunting. We are essentially "illiterate" about all these natural signs. It is possible that reading animal tracks is the cortical precursor for reading. [...] The intense selective pressure imposed by millions of years of interaction between predator and prey may have led to a cortical specialization for reading animal tracks. (212; original emphasis)

In the light of Dehaene's hypothesis above, Ginzburg's speculation that hunters would have been the first "to tell a story" appears vastly more relevant (and less speculative than one might have thought). Indeed, combining Vico (1984) and Ginzburg (1983, 1992a, 1999) here, Vico's first gentile poets might have been the first to tell their (metaphor-infused) stories, because only they would have been "able to read, in the silent, nearly imperceptible tracks left by [their] prey, a coherent sequence of events" (Ginzburg 1992a, 103). In the following, Luft refers to an ancient, embodied "divinatory" paradigm that Ginzburg calls "conjectural." As Luft (2003) has it, Vico's master key of the *New Science* permitted him to imagine an "embodied and poetic anthropology," in which

> [i]n effect, [Vico] recovered the ancient paradigm of a creative process that was ontological rather than epistemological, in which the "true" was *thing* rather than *idea* or goal in the mind of a knower, and "knowing" never more than the "divination" of language (64; original emphasis).[156]

Ginzburg's (1992a) intuition follows along a roughly parallel path, when he states that "'[t]o decipher' or 'to read' animal tracks are metaphors. We have tried, however, to take them literally, as the verbal condensation of a historic process which brought us, perhaps over a long span of time, to the invention of writing" (103).

The length of time it must have taken to get from the first verbal metaphors among our human ancestors, as Vico imagines, to the divinatory/conjectural paradigm and on to the invention of writing are beyond perception and memory, of course. There are no traces of the process left to examine. This is the point here, however. Contrary to our contemporary truncated (*tropic* Nietzschean) version of rhetoric, Ginzburg (1999) interprets Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in its larger, more inclusive context that embraces the ancient concept connected to (the hunter's) proof: that is, *as* evidential traces, clues, symptoms, and signs (in terms of both sign as trace or clue, *sēmeion,* and necessary sign or evidence, *tekmērion*) (40; see also Section 4.3). In the context of a hunter's proof, "signs" or inferences are gleaned from "reading" the narrative landscape.[157]

Ginzburg (1999) suggests that Aristotle's original evidential paradigm of rhetoric "implicitly referred to historiography (or to its basic core) in a sense that is still familiar to us," where "the invisible was inferred from the visible, based on discernible traces" (46). This is indeed commensurate with "the hunter squatting on the ground, studying the tracks of his quarry" (Ginzburg 1992a, 105). Summarizing his enquiry into rhetoric, Ginzburg (1999) observes "that in Greece, during the fifth century B.C., rhetoric, history, and proof were closely intertwined," in which case it is Aristotle's sense of rhetoric that comes closest to our contemporary understanding of what historians do, not (Aristotle's) ancient assessment of "history" (47). In fact, as Roy Harris (2004) explicitly notes, Aristotle's theory of history collapses along with his (conventionalist) theory of language (48–49; see also Chapter 4).

The roots of historical method, rather, are tied to (an embodied) rhetoric within the context of an *evidential paradigm* that the Greek metaphysicians bracketed out of their picture, because it did not provide *certain* knowledge. In what follows, I

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156 Luft (2003) uses the terms "ontological" and "epistemological" not in the Greek technical sense, but in a nontechnical sense (e.g., xv, n. 14). She uses these terms to characterize the nature of the differences between these paradigms, i.e., the ancient divinatory and the tradition of Greek metaphysics. I, for my part, interpret her term "ontological" with the term "emergent" in the holist ecological systemic approach (AE) that I champion in this thesis.

157 Lily Díaz-Kommonen first mentioned the "narrative landscape" to me many years ago in conversation. I am not familiar with the context of her own usage, but the term, as such, has remained with me ever since. I thank her for our discussions.

connect Luft's (2003) embodied interpretation of Vico with Ginzburg's conjectural paradigm. According to Ginzburg (1999) *all* parts of the historians' work are rhetorical (46). More to the point, if all parts are rhetorical, and "rhetoric" is actually how we process the world as embodied beings, then Ginzburg's work has always pointed past the idealist models on offer in historiography into the present.

9.3   MORE THAN MERE RHETORIC: EMBODIED METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE

Ginzburg's efforts over the last decades to clarify the nature of the relation between history, rhetoric, and proof long ago began forging the path for historical studies beyond the linguistic turn. It is true, in any case, that Ginzburg never once discusses the term embodiment in his work. But, on the basis of my methodological approach, I claim that he pursues and characterizes this holistic rhetoric in terms of a *dynamic, living* venatic model that confirms the (embodied) path that I believe he has intuitively traveled.

This outlook is possible for Ginzburg, moreover, because – unlike White – he chooses what is dynamic and living in his critical approach to historiography outside the realm of Greek metaphysics. By choosing the (post)structuralist path, White's inherited metaphorical models at the heart of his project, by contrast with Ginzburg, are not only *nonliving,* but also *static* (at equilibrium). This is why White can provisionally bracket out the diachronic dimension and focus wholly on historical discourse as figural realism.

In the first place, unlike White and others, Ginzburg is not seduced by Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844–1900) claim that "[i]f everything in language is a trope, if grammar itself is nothing but the product of figures of speech, [then] the pretense to know the world through language is absurd," as Ginzburg (1999, 15) summarizes Nietzsche's claim.[158] As Ginzburg states, Nietzsche "neglects rhetoric as effective discourse" and embraces, instead, a study of the tropes in terms of an "idealism" in which (following the linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt, 1767–1835) "'language is spirit' *[Die Sprache ist Geist]*" (in Ginzburg 1999, 15). It is the tropes in a fully "idealist" mode that allows Nietzsche to turn Christianity into a mere, arbitrary trope: to

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158   This truncated version of the tropes (metaphor) separated from the older, inclusive rhetoric is precisely what Ginzburg (1999) refers to, when he discusses the superficial nature of contemporary rhetoric, cut off from its roots in the evidential paradigm from which it arose. "In 'Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge' [1873] Nietzsche uses the existence of many languages as evidence of *the abyss that separates words and things:* language cannot give a satisfactory image of reality" (Ginzburg 1999, 12; emphasis added; cf. Nietzsche 1989, 248–249). For Nietzsche, to emphasize the point, metaphors as tropes participate in *Geist,* or spirit, and as such are (idealist) metaphysical entities *that ultimately separate words and things,* rather than joining them, as in Vico's work and in conceptual metaphor theory (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson 1999; cf. Modell 2003; Capra & Luisi 2014). Here Vico and Nietzsche lie on completely opposite ends of the *tropic* spectrum.

reduce it to (arbitrary) language as the basis for his claim underpinning the death of God. As Ginzburg argues:

> The Word that is truth, the Word through which everything that exists has been created, the Word that communicates by means of rhetorical tropes: all of these themes Nietzsche resurrected and overturned in a radically skeptical direction. *If everything in language is a trope,* if grammar itself is nothing but the product of figures of speech, *the pretense to know the world through language is absurd.* To Pilate's question—"What is truth" (John 18:38)—Christ had remained silent. Nietzsche reformulated it, and answered: "A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms…" Nietzsche's opposition to Christianity comes into being here […] in the fragment *"Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge"* [*"On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense" (1873)*] […]. (Nietzsche quoted in Ginzburg 1999, 15; emphasis added)

This *tropic* "Word" of Nietzsche's imagination is not the poet-Creator's Word *as* deed (*davar*). This is Word as Neoplatonist *logos;* Nietzsche's treatment of the tropes is not Vico's embodied tropes (see Chapters 6 & 7). It is, in fact, this very idea of truncated rhetoric along Nietzschean metaphysical lines that is opposed to the embodied (conjectural) proof (signs, symptoms, clues) that Ginzburg supports. Indeed, the (embodied) "proof" that is used in this context is no more "absolute" than absolute symptoms or absolute clues, which strike the ear as oxymoronic and inappropriate at best. In sum, the nature of rhetoric in the former, truncated version of the tropes that Nietzsche theorizes is metaphysical, idealist. The nature of rhetoric in the latter version, which Ginzburg supports, is (enactively) embodied along the lines of Fritjof Capra's extension, which I suggest for AE.

The fruit of Nietzsche's "movable host of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms…," as he puts it, is what underpins his denial of the possibility to ever "know" the world. This linguistification of the world, moreover, is parallel to that which Ermarth (2011) asserts when she states that "[t]he linguistification of the human world is bad news for conventional historians – and most of us are conventional historians – and bad news for conventional historical explanation" (47). But this abandonment of history plays out along the lines already investigated in Chapter 5, as being possible only when language and life are artificially decoupled from one another.

As philosopher Todd May has remarked, excluding either history or philosophy at the expense of the other is an unbalanced approach to both. As May (2007) suggests, "[t]he historical contingency of philosophical thought is also the philosophical contingency of historical thought" (271). When theory (*pattern*) takes precedence over history (*process*) it is not surprising that a "ferocious" value-relativism emerges that is hostile to history – and to which Ginzburg (1999, 2) so strongly objects. It is

ferocious precisely in the sense that language is theorized as being wholly "arbitrary" and rigidly systemic, uncoupled from the very human experience that gives rise to it in the first place.

Once static *value relativism* intervenes between word and deed, there is no saving the world from becoming pure language – just as on Saussure's (2011) axis of synchrony which, on principle and officially, brackets out the diachronic world of time and communication on *scientific* grounds. Instead of embodied understanding and communication in context, historical explanation, realist art, representational politics "must take their places as systems of meaning and value among others, codes among many alternative codes" (Ermarth 2011, 48). If one's intellectual heroes begin with Nietzsche, even he refers to a metaphor of coins, but not in Saussure's systemic-value sense; it is in fact the old metaphor *of metaphor* itself that Nietzsche cites:

> What is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adorned, and after long use seem solid, canonical, and binding to a nation. Truths are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they *are* illusions, worn-out metaphors without sensory impact, coins which have lost their image and now can be used only as metal, and no longer as coins. (1989, 250; original emphasis)

Nietzsche is wrong. Metaphors constitute the embodied link, the very bridging phenomena between conscious experience and unconscious memory that animates the (human) imagination, as Modell (2003, 25) argues (cf. Lakoff & Johnson 1999; Capra 2003; M. Johnson 2007; Bergen 2012; Capra & Luisi 2014). Nietzsche's view of "worn-out metaphors *without sensory impact,* coins which have lost their image" sharply contrasts with the embodied role of metaphor argued by Vico, who believes the *sensory impact* of metaphors to be eventful, even *violent* in their shocking reality (cf. Vico 1984, §379; cf. Luft 2003; see Section 8.1.2). This is why I cannot agree with White (1999a), when he writes, in a Nietzschean vein: "All stories are fictions. Which means, of course, that *they can be true only in a metaphorical sense* and in the sense in which a figure of speech can be true. Is this true enough?" (9; emphasis added). This is clearly Nietzsche's truth, as cited above.

A reply to White, above, might as well come from Ginzburg. At the end of his piece "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm," he comes to the end of his detailed survey of the "connoisseur" or *diagnostician*. In his conclusion, he states:

> In knowledge of this type[,] imponderable elements come into play: instinct, insight, intuition. I have scrupulously refrained up to now from bandying about this dangerous term, *intuition*. But if we really insist on using it, as synonymous with the lightning recapitulation of rational processes, we shall have to distinguish

a *low* from a *high* form of intuition. [...] This "low intuition" is based on the senses (though it skirts them [in tacit manner]) and as such has nothing to do with the suprasensible intuition of various [...] irrationalisms. It can be found throughout the entire world, with no limits of geography, history, ethnicity, sex, or class [...]. It is the property of [...] hunters; of sailors; of women. It binds the human animal closely to other animal species. (Ginzburg 1992a, 125; cf. Polanyi 2009)

This "intuition" he describes above is embodied knowing. It is decidedly not the Kantian ontology of the "givenness of metaphysical Being" through the channel of human intuitions that Derrida identifies as the "metaphysics of presence" (see Section 3.5). This description of "low" intuition is so close to the embodied approach I embrace in this thesis, that I count Ginzburg as an ally. Moreover, his above conclusion can be followed up with a piece of advice that highlights the *uncertain* and *unpredictable* nature of the conjectural, speculative paradigm that he upholds. Ginzburg (1999) warns against any latent or lingering illusions of a positivist nature in the following terms. That is, in evaluating historians' evidence, one should keep in mind that "every point of view on reality, in addition to being intrinsically selective and partial, depends on the power relations that condition, through the possibility of access to the documentation, the general image that a society leaves of itself" (24).

Furthermore, as Ginzburg (1999) interprets Walter Benjamin's urge to "brush history against the grain" [...], one has to learn to read the evidence against the grain, against the intentions of those who had produced it" (24). Only with such an outlook, as Ginzburg (1999) believes, "will it be possible to take into account, against the tendency of the relativists to ignore the one or the other, power relationships as well as what is irreducible to them" (24). Here, if one attends to Ginzburg's message carefully, one can clearly never speak of "absolute" historical proof. Historians construct their arguments in quite the same way any one of us humans construct the world that shapes us. We grapple with what shows up and try to make sense of it – through language, which is metaphorical by its very nature. After all, language is born of the gestures humans first made with their hands, which piggybacked the sensorimotor system for hand movements to become the gestures of the tongue (see Chapter 2).

The proof of ancient rhetoric that Ginzburg writes about is tied to signs, symptoms, clues, traces, "evidence," which needs to be "read" and interpreted intuitively (imaginatively) and with the bodily skills that (embodied) intuition employs. Certainly many historians working today *already* follow in such footsteps, and not because they are explicitly and deliberately following an embodied paradigm. The "presence" of the material past in this definition is no "metaphysics of presence," in other words. Ginzburg's paradigm of the historian-as-reader of the landscape simply makes sense to many historians. Finnish historian and archaeologist Derek

Fewster's (2006) detailed and insightful work on how the Finns fastened their ideas of national identity to their "constructions" of early Finnish history, for instance, easily embodies such a paradigm.

9.4   A NEW SET OF TOOLS BEYOND HISTORY-AS-FICTION

In following my own intuition, I have embraced a "new set of tools." This toolbox permits the evaluation of theories on the basis of analyzing metaphors that theorists use as "models" to set out their arguments. On such a basis, despite the fact that Ginzburg does not explicitly use the language of embodiment, he explicitly embraces the *dynamic, living* metaphor of the hunter-as-reader in and *of* the landscape.

   In line with the Vichian argument followed in this thesis, Ginzburg's new historian-as-reader of the landscape brings together both pattern and process in his or her interpretation of the "evidence." Such historians are readers of past *movement* in terms of real, lived experience. Along these lines, historical research, going forward, needs to follow the lead that such a *synthesis* offers beyond disembodied (post)structuralist theory, which separates language from *life*. The potential reversal the embodied methodology of this thesis suggests, however, can no longer feed the ancient philosophical appetite for certainty.

   Today in the wake of the disintegration of communism in Eastern Europe, for instance, competing interpretations of the past have proliferated. They are in conflict with one another, because different groups pursue their own version of what happened in the past, as if that *one version* were the only (certain) truth possible; that is, to the exclusion of all other standpoints – indeed, to the exclusion of other participants' lived experience of that same past. This exemplifies the static, nonliving relativity of all values that is the legacy of Greek metaphysics. It is also "unyielding" on the pattern of Patriarchy, where the father's word is final and no rebuttal is possible. In the case of the Polish-Lithuanian dispute over the shared past, which political scientist Rūta Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz (forthcoming) studies, the reductivist understanding of "truth" on the part of these competing interpretations urgently requires an embodied approach to the shared past.

   On top of this, and even more worrying than these competing versions of the *real* past, there is now also the mainstreaming of "post-truth" in the West and the phenomenon of "alternative facts" in defense of one's "relative point of view," based on feelings, rather than on any evidence at all. In such a relativist free-for-all, no particular view or fact (evidence) can take precedence – and this is not merely a problem for historians. It is an immense problem for democratic society at large and is a slippery slope for any democracy to tolerate or pursue. In short, there is a surfeit of interpretations by various factions claiming their own truth – without an apparent recourse to *reality* on any front, as in the recent proliferation of "fake

news." Fake histories already exist – and have for a long time – but more of these are certainly waiting in the pipeline, if current trends to fully legitimize them are anything to go by.

Making this situation yet more unbearable is the helplessness of many commentators today, who are used to arguing passionately on behalf of the need to embrace "relative points of view" (i.e., pluralist values) – in trying to make society a more *inclusive* place (for minorities and marginalized groups). The situation as it now stands, at the time of writing this thesis, seems to offer nowhere for such commentators to turn. A purely linguistic, "invented" reality – uncoupled from lived experience – appears to have been authorized its own place at the table of "tolerated opinion." The current situation needs more than ever, I suggest, the embodied standpoint discussed in this thesis. This standpoint understands the complete *interdependence* of language and lived experience, rather than their disjunction and separation, which has now brought Western civilization to a dangerous crossroads (cf. McGilchrist 2009).

Young scholars today, such as Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz, who are prepared to embrace embodiment (AE) and its (re)coupling of *pattern* and *process,* can examine disputes over the shared past and its competing histories with fresh eyes. Using the new tools that embodied conceptual metaphor analysis has to offer, she explores how implicit metaphorical models shape Lithuanian and Polish school-history textbook narratives of the shared past. For the task at hand, the old set of tools in the historian's toolbox is simply inadequate for such a job. More to the point, equally inadequate are the tools of classical literary theory that, today, merely fuel the static, relative viewpoints of alternative facts that feed into, rather than calm in any way, the "identity" disputes connected to these contested histories of the past.

I suggest, moreover, that the very nature of "identity," as tied to the old paradigm of metaphors handed down by Greek metaphysics, remains a large part of the problem. Our Western identities are conceptualized as rigid and *unchanging* on the pattern of the master metaphor of Plato's Divine Architect, which traditional Western philosophy has offered us. In the light of such a legacy, the only recourse (beyond positivism) on offer is what *disembodied* "postmodern" theory has offered over the last half of the twentieth century and into the new millennium. What this leaves for historians to work with is what White (1999a) has suggested in terms of "the fiction of all stories," by which he means "that they can be true only in a metaphorical sense and in the sense in which a figure of speech can be true" (9). While this was revolutionary and provocative fifty years ago, it is no longer enough today in a "post-truth" era.

By contrast to this disjunction between stories and life, as White sees it, Johnson (2007) argues that "once you understand how conceptual metaphors lie at the heart of our abstract conceptualization and reasoning, you acquire a new set of tools for analyzing, explaining, and criticizing [...]" (206). But, it cannot be overlooked

that the very existence of deep, systematic conceptual metaphor is dependent on "its grounding in embodied meaning" (205; cf. Capra 2003; Modell 2003). In other words, conceptual metaphor analysis without its necessary grounding in embodied, lived experience might very well miss its mark; they go together in the very way that a pattern of organization and its process are inseparable in living structure (as *autopoiesis*). To draw, once more, on what May (2007) has realized, this "necessary grounding" is the historical contingency of philosophical thought, which is simultaneously the philosophical contingency of historical thought – in both dimensions of its pattern and process.

When an increasing number of young scholars of history, historical theory, and political science, such as Kazlauskaitė-Gürbüz, can access these new tools that embodied conceptual metaphor theory offers, the implications extend well beyond the identity conflicts of Eastern Europe that she currently studies. For example, by first drawing attention to the way metaphors themselves "shape human understanding of the past," it might be possible, in time, to teach the kind of tolerance inherent in *pluralist* values (as opposed to absolutely relativist values at the core of static systems like Saussure's). Secondly, by drawing attention to the way metaphors "can create or diminish the potential openness to different narratives of experiences," therein lies an as-yet unexplored path to "processes of conflict resolution and reconciliation" in discovering the *common ground* that humans must try to find, if life on this planet is to survive into the future. A good example of such efforts to begin the work of reconciliation over the long term is the work of Israeli and Palestinian historians in coming together to form what they call "bridging narratives" (Pappé & Hilal, eds. 2010).

Ultimately, however, the prerequisite for this move toward embracing embodiment is the urgent need to switch metaphors, which serves as our collective model "to think with" in the production of our vocabularies and concepts (see Chapter 7). The ancient metaphors of the Western tradition have shaped our understanding of who we are and how we think about ourselves – also influencing how we relate to others and the world (e.g., McGilchrist 2009). The result of these familiar models, forged by philosophers in antiquity, has us still believing that our "identities" are rigid and *unchanging*. But these are the wrong models, in that they are derived from *static* and *nonliving* metaphors, derived from the search for certainty in an uncertain and dynamic world. We are dynamic and living beings. As such,

> what we usually think of as "environment," are themselves partly a consequence of the activities of the organism itself as it produces and consumes the conditions of its own existence. Organisms do not find the world in which they develop. They make it. (Lewontin 1993, 63)

In this way, we are also "made" of our own histories: the systemic "structure" of our identities is *continuity in change*, and *ongoing change in continuity.* In short, we need, as Marshall Berman (1983) believed, and as Eelco Runia (2006, 2014) has discerned, to embrace ourselves as living beings *at home in the whirlwind.* The God of the Whirlwind, gleaned from the etymological researches of Vico's life's work (in Luft 2003), is a master metaphor that illustrates the union of language and lived experience as the very *activity* of embodiment (AE). Moreover, I sincerely believe that failing to take this decisive first step (to switch metaphors) renders embodiment difficult to comprehend, and hence elusive. In other words, having a portion of "embodiment" served up on a philosophical plate with traditional "metaphysics" will not make an edible "meal." Mixing these master metaphors from antiquity will only offer up a theoretical wasteland, as two incommensurable principles cannot be combined unproblematically, as the failure of history-as-fiction demonstrates.

Without acknowledging the integral relation of pattern and process for *dynamic life,* those discerning scholars of politics and history, who would take up these new tools of thought, will have little chance in contributing to our collective self-understanding; that is, little chance, if we cannot take even the first step on this journey. Luckily for us, though, *life is a journey.* I am confident that when it is finally understood that embodiment is an *activity* involving the synthesis, rather than the separation of language and life, it will gradually take hold. Happily, for such a long-term project, the evidence being produced by recent research in the life sciences is finally able to present the kind of results that underpin this new unity of life and mind.

9.5   CONCLUSION

In this closing chapter, I briefly examined the work of the microhistorian Carlo Ginzburg, who has argued for decades on the part-whole relation of rhetoric in terms of history–rhetoric–proof. I sketched out the conjectural paradigm, which Ginzburg embraces – a paradigm dependent upon the bodily skills of perception, memory, and imagination that he characterizes as "low intuition," which I in turn interpret as *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE). This paradigm is made even more comprehensible within the context of recent research of the neuroscientist Stanislas Dehaene, whose theory of neural "recycling" illuminates Ginzburg's arguments on the historian-as-reader of the landscape. Furthermore, Dehaene's research sheds new light on the traditions of divination that Sandra Rudnick Luft speaks about in her discussion on Giambattista Vico's ancient "poets" without subjectivity. These first human poets, who invented language, employed their metaphorical linguistic activity as an analogous activity to "reading" the language they found in the sky, for example, which they interpreted to be the language of God.

In general, I recounted Ginzburg's efforts to show the larger, more expansive nature of "proof" in its ancient Aristotelian context, before the invention of the term "evidence." This ancient paradigm of the *evidential* sign, moreover, does not belong to that of (disembodied) systemic value of the kind that Ermarth supports on White's behalf. Nor does it belong to the disembodied tropes as "worn-out" metaphors with no sensory impact that Friedrich Nietzsche isolates from the broader tradition of rhetoric.

Rather, this ancient paradigm that Ginzburg sketches out belongs to the systemic cycle of *life as a process,* in which humans are structurally coupled with the real world. More so, however, I can point to Ginzburg as a thinker who pursues what the new paradigm of embodiment (AE) has to offer. To be effective, though, we need to collectively switch metaphors; that is, to comprehend embodiment in terms of what it *does,* rather than what it *is* on the old ontological model of Greek metaphysics. In other words, we need the metaphor that transfers the structural attributes – at the very least – from a source domain of *dynamic systems* (dissipative structure). Without such a switch, we will struggle to begin changing our vocabulary from the old model (as argued in Chapter 7). This inability, or the refusal, to switch will mean that we will continue to confuse "the metaphysics of presence" with the "presence of the past," unable to distinguish the difference between a static, nonliving phenomenon from a dynamic, living one, respectively.

The new master metaphor of the whirlwind is the systemic context that enables grasping of new vocabulary and concepts suitable for the dynamic, living beings we humans are in the world that shapes us, indeed, even as we "make" it. Finally, grasping the manner in which language and life are wholly *interdependent,* we can come to realize the roots of the unbearable tension that has built up over the last centuries that we have come to call "modernity," for better or for worse. This tension derives from the legacy of our static and nonliving models imposed upon what is essentially dynamic and living: our systemic nature on all levels of life and culture. This tension, moreover, has finally brought the West to a crossroads. Now it is well apparent that the cracks are finally showing up: fake news, alternative facts, and fake histories have reached the realm of toleration now even by the mainstream, if grudgingly. Making room in the system for "alternative facts," in this way, rides on the "postmodern" back of a static relativity of all values – born of static, nonliving metaphysics.

Once it is understood, however, that the interdependence of pattern and process is a principle in the unity of life and mind (*autopoiesis*), we can begin the process of changing metaphors; in addition, we can begin using the vocabulary of *movement* and emergent life. Philosopher Todd May assists in such changes in pointing out the reciprocal workings of philosophical patterns and historical processes. When these are synthesized, rather than separated, the historical contingencies of philosophical

thought are also (simultaneously) the philosophical contingencies of historical thought.

Moreover, this arduous process of change is not up to the humanities or the social sciences on their own. We need the *traces, symptoms, and clues* that the "evidence" of the *life sciences* provides us as well. The disciplines that focus on human socio-cultural life (humanities and social sciences) must definitively decouple from the static, *nonliving* material sciences for their models. In the light of mounting evidence that the life sciences have begun to provide over the last decades, we can begin to grasp the nature of *truth as process, not as object.* As such, we can gradually move on by beginning the necessary journey to leave behind the burden of metaphysics.

CHAPTER TEN

10 CONCLUSIONS: HISTORIAN-AS-READER OF PAST *MOVEMENT*

10.1 INTRODUCTION: THE TWO INCOMPATIBLE PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE

In this thesis, I problematized Hayden White's theoretical construct history-as-fiction, which he developed and defended over the decades from the early 1970s into the mid-2000s, in what is termed the "linguistic turn" in historical theory. White's original and main contribution to the study of history writing, or historiography, is his now-classic analysis of nineteenth-century history and philosophy of history: *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe.* This work, published in 1973, remains the standard, against which all theorizing in historiography is still measured to this day, whether one agrees with it or not.

History-as-fiction was originally developed from the mid- to late 1960s on the basis of classical (dualist) French literary theory (hereafter (post)structuralism) combined with the tropes (of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony). These theoretical tools have served White for nearly half a century in his resistance to what he terms the disciplinary claims of ("scientific," positivist) history. Specifically, White resists, even now, what he interprets as historians' continued claims to *absolute and certain truths* of the past with a high "scientific" regard for objectivity and knowledge, in turn, based on the traditional presuppositions of Greek metaphysics. But, in the particular combination of theoretical strands that White adopted in challenging historiography, I demonstrate that he went to the opposite (equally metaphysical) extreme in his claims for his construct "history-as-fiction."

My aim in this thesis has been to closely examine this construct in terms of two principles of language, which lie embedded at the core of White's construct from the methodological perspective I employ in this thesis, that of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) (more on this below). I approach White's work with AE, in order to open up and analyze what I sense to be an *unexamined tension* lying hidden within and between his two respective theoretical approaches: (post)structuralism and tropology. Once I divided White's approaches between the theoretical strands

that he employs, I also opened up what I perceive to be causing the tension and began to unpack the degree to which these two starting points are incompatible with one another. In fact, it became increasingly clear to me that White is unaware that, at their respective cores, tropology and (post)structuralism harbor two different, incompatible *principles of language*.

The clues that provide an insight into history-as-fiction are inscribed in the weave of White's many essays and especially the published interviews, if one knows what to look for from an AE standpoint. Stated the other way around, if one is *not aware* of the embodied nature of language, and White is certainly unaware of this, then there is no tension to be recognized in his essays – no problem at all. In setting out, however, to make the tropological nature of structuralist thought more explicit through history-as-fiction, White created a theoretical hybrid that harbors a hidden stowaway: the now-discredited "arbitrariness of the binary linguistic sign," a core idea that was – for Genevan linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) – the first principle of language. It was so important for his work, that Saussure spent great efforts to *embed* it into his theoretical construct of the system of linguistic value – a system of language that remains vital for (post)structuralism to this day.

The key to challenging "history-as-fiction" thus consists in being able to distinguish between the two principles of language, which lie at its core, and to demonstrate why these principles are incompatible. Giambattista Vico's (1668–1744) first principle of language is (1) the necessary "contingency of language" on the bodily skills of human perception, memory, and imagination that couple us to the surrounding world; this means that language is necessarily contingent on humans enacting, or bringing forth their socio-cultural world through language, which is an *embodied* principle of language. The core notion of what it means for language to be *embodied* is the interdependence and connection of language and life, not their separation.

Saussure's principle of language, however, is (2) the "arbitrariness of the binary sign," which dictates the necessary *independence* of the sensory sound-image of a word (the percept, or *signifier*), on the one hand, and the concept or meaning of a word (the idea, or *signified*), on the other hand. Saussure separates words at the *hinge* between what is "material" about them (the sound of the word) and what is "immaterial" about them (the idea of the word, its meaning). This is a *disembodied* principle of language, in which the sound (percept) and meaning (concept) are arbitrarily combined, because (for Saussure) language is not dependent on the body in any way. Moreover, Saussure made this *arbitrary nature* of the binary sign his first principle, because he was firmly convinced of the ancient Aristotelian teaching on the conventionality of language; that is, the agreed upon social rules of language are what underlie and permit people of the same language groups to understand each other when they speak.

To summarize to this point, for Vico, language is necessarily contingent on and arises from the body's skills in dealing with the world. But for Saussure, and for the structuralist thought that was to follow, language was conventional and disembodied. By the late 1960s, however, Jacques Derrida (1932–2004) had discovered a fatal flaw lodged at the very heart of Saussure's dualist structuralism.

Derrida showed that the legacy of the "metaphysics of presence" was the deepest presupposition of traditional Greek Western metaphysics that haunted contemporary philosophy as well. In Derrida's major, late-1960s deconstruction of Saussure and his structuralist legacy, Derrida showed that the body-mind dualism presupposed by René Descartes's (1596–1650) "rational" epistemology was lodged in structuralism as a stowaway through the "arbitrariness of the binary (dualist) sign." In other words, the *omnipresence* of Greek "ontological Being" was found to be entrenched in the notion of the *absolute presence* of truth, knowledge, and objectivity in the tradition of epistemology; this tradition was mediated by the inherent dualism of the arbitrariness of language.

According to Derrida, German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) had attempted to banish this mind-body dualism through an overt rejection and ousting of it through the "front door" of philosophy. But Kant had apparently permitted this presence of ontological Being to return through a subtle "back door," which Derrida had uncovered. What he discovered is that, in Kant's efforts to erradicate this metaphysical, absolute presence of ontological Being in his own philosophy, this eternal Being was nevertheless "mediated" through "knowledge of Truth" by the bodily perceptions of the world around us. That is, the metaphysics of presence was mediated through our ordinary *intuitions*. In other words, absolute Being, the "metaphysics of presence" was no longer a direct phenomenon, but rather subtly mediated by way of our ordinary perceptions of the world, thereby *guaranteeing* "knowledge." In short, metaphysical Being – absolute knowledge, truth, and objectivity – was now *given through our intuitions,* based on our everyday perceptions.

But, there was a problem with this assessment. Insofar as Derrida rejected the workings of "intuition," he rejected the role of *perception*. What this means is that he rejected the everyday understanding of the things we come to know through our *experience* of them through the bodily skills that couple us to the physical world. In short, Derrida's (disembodied) assessment runs counter to our (embodied) lived experience in the world.

Moreover, in his textualist turn toward the traces of *writing,* in rejecting Saussure's focus on speech, Derrida came to reject the embodiment of language even more emphatically than Saussure had done. But, and what I show in this thesis, is that Saussure's work was more "cohesive" than even Derrida had noticed in his structuralist deconstruction. Because, for Derrida, embodied language was not an option, there was no way he could see the flaw in his deconstruction of Saussure's

system of linguistic value. Fatally for (post)structuralism, and what I show in this thesis, is that Derrida had not noticed – and did not flag for subsequent (post)structuralists – that Saussure had "scaled up" the arbitrariness of the binary sign to the system of linguistic value as a whole, as I present in Chapter 5.

Saussure had embedded and embodied the very nature of arbitrariness in his system by way of his primary (static, disembodied) metaphor: "coins as units of value in a currency system." Derrida was not concerned with the role of embodiment of language; therefore he could not recognize the way conceptual metaphor underpins philosophical theories. In consequence, Derrida was blind to this core function of metaphor in Saussure's system of linguistic value, which (post)structuralism has carried on using. What no one has realized is that, if language is embodied (and research in the life sciences shows that it is), then conceptual metaphor is an essential cognitive tool used to ground philosophical theories from the outset, just as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue.

10.2 THE MAIN FINDING: THE ARBITRARINESS OF HISTORY-AS-FICTION

This disembodied principle of the arbitrary binary sign is damaging for White's construct, because it means that this "arbitrariness" essentially continues to underlie (post)structuralist theory, in general, which White has employed as the predominating framework for history-as-fiction. His employment of the Vichian tropes, moreover, cannot erase the effects of arbitrariness, because the metaphorical transfer that Saussure employed "scaled up" the arbitrariness as the *structure* of the system of linguistic value that the tropes are said to be "conveyed" within. In other words, (post)structuralist (postmodern) literary theory imagines (especially) the tropes of metaphor and metonymy as surfing along "the chain of signifiers" relaying both meaning and value through a *static* system of *differences* in Saussure's system. As such, insofar as the (binary) system of linguistic value continues to be relevant for White – and it is – to this extent he is entrapped within the original principle of linguistic arbitrariness, which is embedded within Saussure's system in the following way.

In transferring arbitrariness to the system of linguistic value, Saussure's "master key" to his construct was the idea that "arbitrary and differential" are correlative qualities. He noticed that the political economy of his day, and the linguistics he was trying to formulate, shared two basic orders of value. In political economy, there were the two (material and immaterial) orders of value: "labor" and "wages," respectively. In linguistics, there were the two (material and immaterial) orders of value: "signifier" and "signified," respectively. What Saussure noticed in this correlation of the two dimensions, material and immaterial (in both political

economy and linguistics) is that they were both as *arbitrary* in their union, as they were *separate* in their two different orders of value.

From the older American linguist William Dwight Whitney (1827–1894), Saussure had already picked up the metaphors *synchrony* and *diachrony* that helped him visualize the separation of the language system (synchrony) from the everyday experiences of speaking over time (diachrony). To separate what was merely accidental to language (its diachronic aspect), Saussure focused on what was essential to it (its synchronic aspect) in the "bridging" role it played in uniting the (arbitrary) "sets of percepts" and the "sets of concepts" in the social institution of language. Saussure saw this move as the one the marginalist economists of his own day struggled to make on behalf of the social system, in bringing together the two orders of value inherent in "labor" and "wages."

But to help him theorize further how the binary orders of value in the system actually worked – i.e., functioned systemically – Saussure chose the metaphor: "coins as units of value in a currency system." In his efforts to understand *how to implement* the idea that "arbitrary and differential are correlative qualities (attributes)," the metaphor he chose allowed linguistic "signs" (in the target domain) to replace the idea of "coins" in the metaphor's source domain.

Because conceptual metaphor transfers the structural attributes (image schemas) from a *source domain* to those of the *target domain,* Saussure insured that the signs would correlate with arbitrariness by functioning *differentially*. He did not want them to function through their *intrinsic* value (correlative to how much the metal in the coin was worth), but to function through their *relative positions* in the system: *arbitrary* is *differential*. As Saussure then was able to formulate the transfer: WORDS in the SYSTEM OF negative, differential LINGUISTIC VALUE are COINS AS relative UNITS OF VALUE IN A CURRENCY SYSTEM. In this ingenious way, the system of linguistic value is *embodied by the structural attributes* (correlative qualities) of coins as units of value in a currency system. Arbitrariness is permanently "baked" into the system and there is no escape from it, as he himself understood, when he spoke of the "ramifications" of his first principle of the arbitrariness of the binary sign. Saussure knew that, in order for the system to function as he envisioned, language *had* to be arbitrary, not embodied.

The genius of Saussure was his ability to transfer the ancient "metaphysics of presence," which Derrida had recognized and disqualified, into a theoretical construct that looked radically modern, radically new: "systemic." It was so radical that Derrida continued to use Saussure's system of linguistic value in terms of writing, rather than speech; the shift was huge within structuralism and had its own set of ramifications. But the move was not *beyond* structuralism. In fact, the move was not even "postmodern." Even worse, the move away from speech could not escape the metaphysics of presence, so long as one continued to use the system at all. What Saussure had insured by employing the *metaphor* was to make the

arbitrariness of the binary sign *inescapable,* insofar as the structural attributes of the system itself were correlative to arbitrariness: negative and differential in the *static, nonliving* currency system.

10.3 AE: THE KEY TO LIVING, DYNAMIC STRUCTURE (*AUTOPOIESIS*)

Why this makes any difference at all is that language is not arbitrary, as Saussure postulated; it is, rather, embodied. Research in the life sciences is amassing increasing evidence that Vico was right to imagine that language is necessarily contingent on the human body. In other words, human speakers today are genetically related to the first human "poets" without subjectivity – in the way that metaphorical language *is* physical-labor-in-the-world. We need to become more aware of how this works.

By contrast to the Greek philosophical tradition and its reductive, analytic method that *separates substance and form,* the direction of *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) is to *synthesize* the two dimensions of pattern and process for dynamic, living structure. The Western tradition has always separated substance and form, as in the example I use throughout the chapters of the thesis: Zeno of Elea's paradox of the arrow. An arrow moves, but by separating the pattern of its motion from the process of this motion in time, Zeno could conclude that the arrow is both "moving" and "absolutely at rest," simultaneously. This type of Zenonian, analytic reasoning underlies much analytic philosophy even today; that is, traditional philosophy still does not consider whether the analysis is conducted on what is dynamic or living. Just as Zeno's analysis is unsuited for the moving arrow, so too much philosophical analysis is unsuited for dynamic, living systems and the dynamic systems that evolve *with* living systems, such as human language.

For the pioneering, embodied cognitive neurobiologists, Humberto Maturana (b. 1928) and his younger colleague Francisco J. Varela (1946–2001), the way forward beyond the ancient (Greek) debate lies in changing the standpoint from which the old question on cognition is posed; the point is to broaden the context as a process that underlies life in general. This change of standpoint, however, is momentous. It requires a Copernican shift in our standpoint on what life is and how it operates. It also requires a Copernican shift in our standpoint toward what language is and how it operates as well.

For Maturana and Varela, *pattern* and *structure* are *interdependent* through multiple layers of *autopoietic* processes that begin well below the conscious level of awareness. These neurobiological processes of the living organism are ultimately (structurally) coupled with the world through the bodily senses (perception) through moving, interacting, and communicating. For these pioneering thinkers, however,

the structure of cognition that they ultimately describe is valid not only for human beings, but for all living organisms; it *scales up and down* to all forms of *life* in general.

By 1980, they published their findings to a mass audience in English identifying "cognition" as the process of life (*autopoiesis*). What Austrian philosopher Fritjof Capra was able to do by the mid-1990s was to extend and deepen the arguments of Maturana and Varela by focusing on the nature of *process* as the "master key" to the synthesis of dynamic, living structure. Capra contributes to *autopoietic* enactive embodiment (AE) theory in the way that *process embodies* a biological pattern of organization in dynamic living structure over its lifespan. Capra's synthesis thereby keeps the focus broad and does not allow the vocabulary to slip into the traditional usage that familiar Greek metaphysics is so successful at preserving – and restricting to humans alone. What trips up AE theorists discussing "identity" and "subjectivity" are the ancient metaphors and the familiar vocabulary we use to talk about identity and what we imagine as our subjectivity. The synthesis of pattern and process moves us beyond "inside" and "outside."

What Capra notices – and how he can assist in moving us beyond the old metaphors and their vocabulary – is how living structure shares its *attributes* with some nonliving systems that are "dynamic" in nature. Weather systems are prime examples of such "dissipative structures." Weather systems are dynamic in nature and feed on the energy and matter in the environment in which they arise. Such nonliving systems exist, moreover, only as long as the energy and matter that embody their dynamic structures are available for consumption within their systems. The image of the wake vortex in Figure 2.1 illustrates such a dissipative structure (Chapter 2).

Indeed, wake vortices that form off the tip of airplane wings during takeoff, or whirlpools, or whirlwinds are everyday examples of phenomena that consume the dynamic conditions of their own existence. But, as *nonliving* dissipative structures, they do not simultaneously *produce* those conditions. Only living, *autopoietic* networks (which are simultaneously dissipative structures) both *produce and consume* the conditions of their own existence, as the eminent biologist Richard Lewontin emphasizes. Lewontin highlights that living "organisms do not find the world in which they develop. They make it."

These dynamic, living organisms are emergent phenomena that are both organizationally closed (biological) structures and simultaneously structurally open, physical (dissipative) systems that exchange energy and matter with the environment. Such an organism operates far from equilibrium for the length of the organism's lifespan. Herein lies the counterintuitive idea of the *coexistence of structure and change,* which defines living systems. It is counterintuitive, because it "goes against" the traditional Greek idea that "identity" remains the same throughout: it is fixed in place, as if it were nonliving.

The only reason that the idea of the coexistence of *structure and change* sounds strange is because our traditional vocabulary and philosophical frame of thinking makes it sound strange, even as we *experience the opposite in our physical lives* as living organisms. The structures of our living bodies undergo constant change through life – the aging process is a prime example of the everyday commonplace of the reality of the coexistence of identity through change. This leads to the radical idea that, in order to bring our reality into line with our thinking about it, we should let go of these ancient metaphors that dictate ideas that are not in line with our dynamic, living structure.

10.4 BEYOND THE LINGUISTIC TURN

In line with this new understanding of dynamic, living structure, I have embraced a "new set of tools" that conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) offers. Lakoff and Johnson have developed these tools since the time Maturana and Varela's work has been available in English (1980). Here I follow Capra, who brings together the ideas of dynamic, living structure with human language and combines CMT with his own synthesis of Maturana and Varela – as does the psychoanalyst Arnold H. Modell. Moreover, Modell goes even further and connects CMT to Vico's original efforts along these lines nearly three-hundred years ago. In this way, the synthesis I offer is not original to me, but has never been applied to historical theory.

My intuition to follow Capra along these lines, supported by Modell, is structurally correlative to Sandra Rudnick Luft's secular, embodied interpretation of Vico's metaphor theory of language. This is why I used Luft's work exclusively in this thesis. No other Vico scholar that I could discover, has understood the radically enactive and embodied nature of Vico's first human poets without subjectivity, who created their social institutions with words-as-physical-deeds-in-the-world. This corresponds to the union of pattern and process in the extension of AE that I offer with this thesis. Indeed, AE – in its union of pattern and process – scales up from the processes of individual living organisms to the ecological system as a whole, described by Christopher Lloyd in his prescient *The Structures of History*.

Following along the general lines of the foregoing phenomena, history after the linguistic turn needs, eventually, to turn away from the static, nonliving analytic method that has embroiled it in the theoretical discussions of the last five decades. As I have shown, the dictum "stories are not lived but told," which summarizes the basic thrust of linguistic-turn theory most succinctly, is a misconception. This dictum characterizes the separation between language and life. This separation is structurally correlative to the separation, in Saussure's system of linguistic value, between the language system (synchronic *la langue*) and the everyday speech of ordinary people in time (diachronic *la parole*). Within this systemic separation lies

hidden the stowaway of the metaphysics of presence. This ancient Greek thought structures the way we think about the relation between language and life – in turn, based on the ancient metaphors that unpin the separation (duality) of word and deed (*logos*) in antiquity.

What Luft's work assists me in doing, through her analysis of Vico, is to uncover the metaphor of the Hebraic God of the Whirlwind that vanished into the syncretic hybrid created by Philo of Alexandria (25 BCE–50 CE) already in late antiquity. The God of the Whirlwind is structurally correlative to the dissipative structure discussed by Capra and thereby a much better metaphorical fit for the contemporary era we find ourselves in. In fact, the West presently finds itself at a dangerous crossroads. We will continue to employ the old metaphors of our Greek inheritance only at our peril. We need to switch metaphors, as Mark Johnson insists. Without such a switch, we will struggle to reconcile vocabulary that continues to confuse the "metaphysics of presence" with the "presence of the past," unable to distinguish the difference between a static, nonliving phenomenon from a dynamic, living one, respectively.

The new master metaphor that Vico bequeaths us, however, has not gone unnoticed down through the centuries. Sensitive commentators from Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Karl Marx onward have noticed that the pace of life "in the whirlwind" is disconcerting – and it is more so, when we do not even have the vocabulary to understand how we fit into such a schema of the world. By switching metaphors, we can finally grasp how language and life are connected and *wholly* interdependent. In fact, as Marshall Berman has indicated, resisting the whirlwind is at the root of the unbearable tension that has built up over the last centuries of our "systemic condition" after technology. This tension derives from a blindness created in the unconscious reproduction of static, nonliving models imposed upon what is essentially dynamic and living. The metaphors in the source domain of our civilization have transferred their *static, nonliving* structural attributes to the *dynamic, living* systems in the target domain. These traditional models constrain us with vocabulary that has us telling ourselves that our identities are not undergoing constant change, when our identities are really always in flux, like life itself. Contrary to the models of modernity, humans do not live linear or neutral existences.

We are dynamic, living systems. Once it can be acknowledged and accepted that this involves the interdependence of pattern and process in living structure, it will be easier to accept the principle of the unity of life and mind beyond humanity as our standard of measure. Such acceptance will also make it easier for the West to give up the legacy of Greek metaphysics, in order to change metaphors to something more structurally correlative with the dynamic, living systems that we are. Such a switch will also assist in accommodating new vocabularies that belong to the new embodied paradigm.

For instance, the writing of history could then easily accommodate Carlo Ginzburg's dynamic, living metaphor of the historian-as-reader of past *movement* in

the landscape; movement which is simultaneously pattern and process in recognition of the material traces, symptoms, and clues that evidence of human life in the past actually gives us – and which we can understand through the transference that embodied metaphor affords us. This "presence of the past" cannot provide the dead certainties that philosophers since antiquity have pursued, and so it cannot give us an exact "science" of history.

Rather, such a presence of the past can only provide truth in the form of *process, not as object,* as Iain McGilchrist reminds us. That is, we can recognize the truths that our dynamic, living processes reveal to us on the basis of our own lived experiences as human beings in the present. From this embodied, sense-making standpoint, outfitted with the new set of tools of thought that conceptual metaphor theory provides, we may examine and understand the metaphors we live by, in the present and in the past. In this embodied sense, to rephrase Hayden White, all stories are ultimately deeply metaphorical, which means, of course, that they can be true only in an embodied sense and in the sense in which lived experience can be true. Is this true enough?

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