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Notes on Benjamin and Intimacy

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Abstract It speaks in God, in translation, in violence, apparently everywhere and in everything. There is, however, somewhere that language does not speak, or in which it speaks without speaking, but only implies—that is the realm of intimacy, where we imply that which we cannot say, but about which we also cannot remain silent. The question then becomes: Can we tolerate the suspension of language implied by intimation? And by intimacy?

Keywords: Benjamin, implication, intimacy, language, suspension.

> Die Sprache spricht. Sie befolgt zuerst und eigentlich das Wesende des Sprechens: das Sagen. Die Sprache spricht, indem sie sagt, d.h. zeigt...Die Sprache spricht, indem sie als die Zeige, in alle Gegenden des Anwesens reichend, aus ihnen jeweils Anwesendes erscheinen und verscheinen läßt. Demgemäß hören wir auf die Sprache in der Weise, daß wir uns ihre Sage sagen lassen...es gibt kein Geschehen oder Ding weder in der belebten noch in der unbelebten Natur, das nicht in gewisser Weise an der Sprache teilhätte, denn es ist jedem wesentlich, seinen geistigen Inhalt mitzuteilen (HEIDEGGER 1959, 243).
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> Die Sprache allein spricht (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1, 144).

Twenty years before Heidegger, Benjamin writes: "language alone speaks." Indeed, in every word and deed, war and peace, thought and thing, in the original or in translation, if we speak (our mind or another's), that which we mean (or not) comes to presence in language—and so language determines *a priori* that which can be said or done, imagined or thought, meant or not. And Benjamin offers at least three examples for ways in which language shows itself as speaking: in God, in translation, in violence.

But is there a way of speaking in which language does not speak? Or a way of speaking in which language does not simply not speak, nor remain silent? So rather another or third way, one in which what we mean (or not) does not come to presence, although nor does it merely remain absent? Then not speech, nor silence, neither our word nor that of God or the gods, neither an original language nor a translation — so an action for which we can neither take responsibility nor proclaim our innocence — but one in which we intimate. So let us call it: intimation. And then intimacy would

be how we intimate. But the intimations of intimacy, that which is intimate about intimating — is this not that which language can neither bring to presence nor leave out in absence, but only imply? And can we understand the intimacy of implication? The intimacy of that which neither speaks nor remains silent?

1. Language Speaks

And yet for Benjamin, everything speaks. Every human being communicates, as does our poetry and music, our institutions of justice and law, our ideas and our creations. Every being expresses itself in a language—although language is not simply linguistic, not merely a function of the tongue and vocal cords, nor of sound and marks, speech and writing "there is no event or thing in either animate or inanimate nature that does not in some way participate in language, for it is in the essence of each to share its spiritual content" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 140-141). And language means: expression of spirit, of the content or substance or essence of spirit.

Essence however, is not simply expressed *through* language (as if it were some kind of matter that could take on a form of mediation without being mediated); rather it is mediated by the language in which expression happens. Each language (English, for example) limits that which can be expressed *through* it—so that *in* English, that which is expressed, is not simply a pure thought, but far more that which English allows. A given language determines *a priori* that which is given *through it* as that which can be given *in it*. The claim then, to some kind of pure spiritual content or matter outside or prior to, distinct-from or other-than language, shows itself to be fiction. Thus language (or the linguistic essence of a thing) is necessarily implied by the spiritual essence of a thing, linguistics generally insists on separating them—for although spiritual and linguistic essence are not identical, they are one (as the two senses, *Doppelsinn*, of word and reason are both expressed by *logos*).

Language then shares not simply a human thought or feeling; but along with the linguistic essence of things, it expresses its own essence. As Benjamin writes: "*All language communicates itself*" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 142). The language of a lamp, for example, does not just communicate the lamp's essence, but the lamp-language, the appearance or expression, the representation or self-showing of the lamp. And in language, all things essentially show themselves as always already linguistic language constitutes the very possibility of expression and the capacity for communication, for showing and self-showing, for sharing itself as itself or as another. Thus language always also expresses itself, and unmediated expression would be a contradiction—the mediation of language immediately communicates language itself; and if language cannot be limited by anything else (nothing outside language), then it is limitless, universal, infinite (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 143).

If the linguistic essence of things then, is language, and if we humans are things (of any sort), then "the linguistic essence of humans is their language" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 143). Humans however (unlike things), speak in words; so we show our essence in naming other things. There are non-human languages (animal languages, lamp languages)—but only one naming-language, that is, human-language. We do not however, communicate our essence *by* means of names, *by* speaking of factual things to other humans; but rather *in* names, *in* that which is not a means but an end

in itself, *in* that which has no object and no addressee: for "*in naming, the spiritual essence of humans communicates itself to God*" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 144).

2. Language Speaks in God

To God? But what is that? God? A name. In fact, God is the name of the essence of the word as name—and here we see the very essence of naming. For with the name of God (the name to which we name), language finds its own essence, the innermost essence of language itself, and the complete unification of spirit, the spirituality of spirit. As Benjamin argues: with the name of God, language as such, *die Sprache schlechthin,* the language of language, *die Sprache der Sprache,* we can communicate our essence in language completely, without residue (and so can name things other than God)—for our language is *"complete both in its universality and in its intensiveness*" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 145). Thus if we are the namer, it is because pure language, *die reine Sprache,* speaks (and speaks us) completely, while constituting our complete essence.

But not just us—for the spiritual essence of things themselves shows itself with their linguistic essence; so that things are mediums of communication, ways in which language speaks (albeit always already in relation to the limit-case of the name of God). In fact, if that which language speaks is never simply the expression of a meaning or a semantic content, *Inhalt*; but it is the name *qua* spiritual essence of language, and its communicability as such, *Mittelbarkeit schlechthin*—then the difference between human-language and thing-language (or other animal languages) lies not just in the power to name, but also in the thickness or density, *Dichte*, of languages (like the degree, *Abstufung*, of existence or essence), and of our names for them: thing-languages are imperfect, dumb, material, denied the formal principle of language (sound); but human language is immaterial, purely spiritual, *rein geistig* (as symbolized by sound). And insofar as language speaks, it reveals the conflict, *Widerstreit*, between that which is expressed-expressible in the name, and the inexpressible-unexpressed—unlike in the religious concept of revelation which "rests solely on man and on the language in him" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 147), and which lacks the inexpressible; and unlike the beautiful in art and poetry which rests on the language of things.

For Benjamin then, it is possible to think the first chapter of Genesis (neither in order to interpret the bible, nor to test the objective truth of its revelations) as a discourse on the nature of language. The bible would be an investigation into the language of the name, into the name of God and the creation of the human-namer (having been given the gift, *Gabe*, of human-language that elevates above nature). Here God creates by naming, by expressing the words "Let there be." But then God also uses language—speaks the (pure medium of the) creative word grounded in the absolute relation of knowledge (spiritual essence)—to name. Thus it is language that creates —for it is only with the pronunciation of the name that creation comes into being, and without language there is no creation whatsoever; but in naming, language assimilates the created *qua* word (creative *logos*) and name (created *onoma*).

In the beginning then: "God made things knowable in their names. Humans however, name them in relation to knowledge" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 148). And in making

us namers, God set language free—for no longer is the word immediately bound to being, the name perfectly identical with essence; no longer is language tied to God as his medium of creation. Rather the freedom of language lies in its power to create for itself. Insofar as we use language then, we are like God (although he creates with the word, we know with the name). Our finite language then (and our names, bound to things), is simply a reflection of the word of God's infinite language—but then the names that we speak cannot be arbitrary signs, conventionally or accidentally related to referents; on the contrary, "the name that humans give to things depends on how language has been communicated to us" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 150). Thus we no longer simply create (as God does) with the word—rather we name in accordance with the essence we receive from language.

But then naming is translation, that is, translation of the nameless into the name, mute into sound, essence into expression, of the word of God into ours. And every language is therefore, translation of every other, with varying densities (thus the translatability, *Übersetzbarkeit*, of languages is established). But with the translation from the language of things into ours, from creative word to cognizing name, something is added: knowledge, *Erkenntnis*, grounded in God (the creator of things). Our task then, *Aufgabe*, is the translation of the unspoken nameless language of things into sounds, the reception of mute-things and signifying-animals into our language of names. But translation remains a task, something to be done, not yet completed, unactualized (perhaps even unactualizable)—hence the multiplicity of languages—for the knowledgeable name falls infinitely short of the unspoken word, just as the unspoken word falls infinitely short of the word of God (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 15).

And it is with the Fall that the task originates. Here, on the one hand, Benjamin identifies a three-fold displacement of language: (1) language becomes a tool or means, expression of meaning or of the passions of the soul, or merely prattle; (2) the purity of names, the "immediacy in the communication of the concrete" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 154)—which formed the *Grundlage* of the spirit of human language—is compromised, and the magic of the judging-word takes over; (3) through abstraction, knowledge supplements words—and not only knowledge, but the judgment of good and evil becomes necessary. But on the other hand, nature (which had been simply mute) takes on its other muteness, *ihre andere Stummheit*, suffers the loss of language and gains its speechlessness, *Sprachlosigkeit*; but a speechlessness that speaks, silently lament, mourns the coming of knowledge, the translation of the unknowable into the known, the transformation of the precise into the over-precise, the name into the over-named, and the subsequent judgment of good and evil (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 155).

And yet, all of this is just an interpretation of the discourse on language in Genesis—not the story of the genesis of language as such, nor of translation. But if Benjamin were to offer an account of the genesis of language, it might begin with translation, with the translatability embodied in the movement from the (non-acoustic) thing-languages of matter into the nameless-languages of art (sculpture, painting, poetry), into our naming-language, as well as our language of words and communicable signs, knowledge and judgment. For the task is to think the possibility of sharing and communication, the ground of language and translation. And Benjamin's answer is clear: the communality of the communal, sharing of the shared, language as such,

Sprache überhaupt, can only be grasped in terms of the world as such, *Welt überhaupt*, as an undivided whole, *ein ungeschiedenes Ganzes* (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 156). For language flows as an uninterrupted medium through things and spiritual essences, nature and humans and God; and the unity of this movement-of-language, *die Einheit dieser Sprachbewegung,* is the secret answer to the question of the unity of the world (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 157).

3. Language Speaks in Translation

But not just God—for Benjamin, language speaks in translation (although translation is normally assumed to be a means for those who cannot understand the original work). The work however, is not a function of audience or reception. The poetic in poetry (whether the unfathomable and mysterious or not) is not communication of information—rather, poetry begins where information ends, just as the art of architecture starts where its value as shelter finishes. In fact, the mark of a poor poetic translation would be the mere transmission of information; this may seem to serve the reader, but it misses that which is essential, the poetic (which is why the good translator of poetry is often a poet—and translation is, therefore, a mode or form of poetry).

Nevertheless, the law, *Gesetz*, that governs translation lies in the original, that is, in the original's translatability, the *Übersetzbarkeit* that provides the condition of the possibility of its translation. A work is translatable if: (1) an adequate or ideal reader can be found, or (2) the essence of the work allows of translation. The first criterion remains merely contingent; the second can be determined. Certain works are essentially translatable; and the mark of translatability is a determinate meaning or specific sense, *bestimmte Bedeutung*, inherent in the original. The translation is not important to the original, although it is naturally or vitally connected to it—just as a translation issues from the original as its afterlife. Thus the translation transcends the original, lives a life over and beyond its origin—it survives.

But life here, is not to be understood metaphorically—for living means neither simply being ensouled nor embodied, but anything that has a history of its own, a history characterized by purposiveness, a striving towards an end, that is, towards the expression of its essence, *Ausdruck seines Wesens*, the representation of its significance, *Darstellung seiner Bedeutung*. And the purposiveness or end of translation is not the production, but the expression of the *a priori* inner relation of all languages to one another. In other words, purpose is not transmission or representation of meaning—for no translation would be possible if it strove for likeness to the original, *Ähnlichkeit mit dem Original*; rather, in translation the original undergoes a transformation and renewal, *Wandlung und Erneuerung*. Or even further, as alive (i.e., historical), languages and literature are in flux (hence the need for ever new translations), so that even the original cannot remain self-same. Thus translation becomes the act of watching over and assisting in the development of the lives of languages—for the living relations between them are not those of likeness, but of affinity or kinship, *Verwandtschaft*; and the kinship of languages is not realizable by any individual language alone, but only in the totality of languages, that which Benjamin calls: pure language, *reine Sprache*.

And with the concept of pure language, a phenomenology of intentional language first becomes possible: two words may refer to or intend the same object, but the modes of reference or intentionality are different. *Brot* and *pain* have identical objects, but conflicting modes. The difference between words and things means that any individual language, *les langues imparfaites* (Mallarmé), must fail—words can point to things, refer to objects, but they cannot grasp them in their totality because they are essentially other than objects; or the diversity of languages demonstrates that words have meaning, but each falls short. The pure relationship between pure intentional words and their pure object of intentional meaning—a relationship in which the pure sign perfectly or totally matches its pure referent (like fruit and skin) —this is pure language, transcendental language, that is, the condition of the possibility of any language whatsoever. But pure language (the active force of life itself), can only inhabit linguistic creations by submitting to the symbolic form of the work, thereby contaminating or sullying itself with concrete words and objects.

And translation? Translation of meaning or object, and mode? Translation of pure language?

On the one hand, as a provisional way of coming to terms not only with the original failure of a language to express its meaning or referent, its object or *vouloir-dire*, translation would just as much have to deal with the differences or strangeness, *Fremdheit*, between languages in conflict over those meanings and modes; or rather, translation would strive for the pure language in relation to which each language falls short—for the translation supplements the original's intention with another, thereby attempting to reconcile its conflict with the multiplicity of languages, and bring it closer to pure language. On the other hand, translation of an original would be no translation at all—on the contrary, the original translation of an original (and perhaps even every translation) is itself ironically an original. And at this moment the economy of original and translation comes to an end—for all permutations have been exhausted: original-original, translated-original, original-translation (and the translation of a translation would only be the translation of an original, yet another translated original or original translation).

The task of the translator then, is an original task, a task essentially distinct from that of the poet, but just as original: the ironic task of producing an original translation. And this means: seeking the intention of the original, an intention essentially unexpressed and inexpressible in the original language, and awakening the echo of this original in another language. The originality of translation is not just that of the poet: while the latter takes meaning as their intentional object, the former takes language as a whole as their object. So the task of the translator is the integration of many tongues into one—or rather, the production of original translation based on the recognition that individual languages are grounded in pure language. Ironically, once again, the traditional economy is inverted: translation is derived from the original, but the original is written in a language dependent upon pure language, that is, that language of languages that translation takes as its object—and the original is only possible on the basis of translation from pure language.

The traditional conception of translation then, the faithful reproduction of meaning, is no longer possible—if it ever were—for the sense of the original is not limited to the meaning of the words. And if language is not a mechanical tool used by the poet

to express themselves, it is because meaning is far more determined by each language: humans do not speak; language speaks (HEIDEGGER 1959: 243). No wonder then that literal translations, like those produced by computers, are not only syntactically incomprehensible, but fail even with respect to the reproduction of meaning—and the slavish fidelity to form produces nonsense. So if the task of the translator has nothing to do with literalness, but rather seeks to incorporate the original's mode, its other or complement, another, a supplemental version of the same intention to speak pure language what appears in translation is not the original language, but pure language. For this reason Benjamin follows Pannwitz:

> Our translations, even the best ones, proceed from a wrong premise. They want to turn Hindi, Greek, English into German instead of turning German into Hindi, Greek, English. They have a far greater reverence for the usage of their own language than for the spirit of the foreign works…The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the arbitrary state of his own language, instead of allowing it to be violently moved by the foreign language (BENJAMIN 1991, IV.1: 20).

There is however a stop, an end or ground; not infinite regress, but an *ultima ratio*: pure language of holy scripture text in which truth is identical with expression, meaning with mode—and this is unconditionally translatable. Translations of scripture are only called for because of the plurality of languages, but the pure language of the Lord can be read between the lines "the interlinear-version of the Scriptures is the prototype or ideal of all translation" (BENJAMIN 1991, IV.1, 21).

And yet, the extent to which this stop or ground must be taken ironically—especially in the light of Benjamin's argument with regards to translation—seems open to question. For Holy Scripture is supposed to serve as a stop, supposed to maintain its absolute purity and originality—but is this original not always already impure, non-original, a translation, and vice versa?

4. Language Speaks in Violence

Indeed,the 'stop' of the Holy Scripture is questionable, being both pure and impure, original and non-original—but then so too is language. And this shows itself in the language spoken not just in God, or translation violence. Thus, it is in the "Critique of Violence," or movement towards a critique of violence (for this is not yet the critique of violence), that Benjamin exhibits the language of violence in four ways: natural, positive, mythic, godly.

First, the language of natural violence is the way in which natural law constitutes itself as legal: violent means are justified in the name of (just or unjust) ends. Here, the law is not the will of the sovereign, state or individual at a given point in history—for an unjust law is no law at all; on the contrary, it is (for example in Aristotle) doing justice to the Good by submitting to the law of the equal, treating like cases in like fashion and different cases differently—for both corrective and distributive justice seek the equal in their own way, and a private justice or personal law would be unjust. In other words, not human beings (which are not to be trusted), but some natural criterion should be the law of the law, that which makes a law legal and gives

it force. And natural violence is legal insofar as it speaks the language of appropriate ends (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 180).

Second, the language of positive violence does not take some transcendent (or transcendental, that is universal and ahistorical) law as its goal; rather, it asserts that violence (and the law it enforces) is a product of history. Justice is achieved by the articulation of human norms—for example, the language of case law—and positive violence is the means by which nations (politics and political language) guarantee their ends. Here, the law of the law is still violence, but it is legitimate (or illegitimate) in the light of social forces. Neither natural nor positive law can legitimate violence: "for if positive law is blind to the absoluteness of ends, natural law is equally so to the contingency of means" (BENJAMIN 1991, II.1: 181). On the one hand, the ends of positive law, that is, the justice of human history, is never just, but always only an effect of norms under a set of social determinants—and the criterion of the legality of violence, of the enforcement of law (policing, prosecution, courts, prisons), lies outside the history it regulates. On the other hand, the means of natural law, that is, sanctioned coercion or violence, violates the very justice to which it supposedly aims. The problem then, is that the languages of natural and positive law cannot ground themselves.

Third then, violence speaks the language of myth, of a violence imposed by fate, the law of the gods that crashes down on human heads, legitimates nothing, neither its means nor its ends—for it need not—rather, it serves to manifest the existential difference in force and kind between mortals and immortals. In the language of mythic violence, *to be* means *to be powerful or impotent*; *to be subject to fate, or not*. And if existence precedes essence, then the violence of pure being, insofar as it is constitutive for human and divine beings, is the condition of the possibility of justice and law alike. Thus the language of mythic violence is the means by which the gods manifest their power; it legislates fate based on difference.

But fourth, if God's law seeks to destroy the law of mythic violence, it is in order to legitimate a godly violence in the name of righteousness—for here, being is never pure, but always violent: the language of fate vs. the language of justice, Jerusalem vs. Athens. Existence does not stand higher than a just existence. Life is not worth living at any price, just as death is not to be avoided at all costs. If "an unjust law is not a law," it is because being is a function of essence. In other words, God's violence reproaches mythic violence for reducing being to existence. In truth however, being and violence violate. In *this* way, godly violence is *neither* means nor end, but the mark of being—for to be means to have been violated, violated by violence. If being is spoken in many ways, if humans are, if God is, if their *difference* is *their* difference, then it is because the language of transcendental violence—not mythic violence—differentiates them.

5. The Language of Intimacy

Language speaks then, for Benjamin—it speaks in God, in translation, in violence, everywhere and in every which way. For everything comes to presence in and through language. But what about that which fails to present itself, or represent

itself? What about that which is not spoken? Not simply that about which we remain silent, *schweigen* (WITTGENSTEIN 2011: 111), but what is neither spoken nor not. Is there not a problem with that which can neither necessarily nor possibly come to presence in language? And how would it even be at all?

Perhaps an example may be helpful. Is there somewhere something, or anything (word or deed, thought or thing), that on the one hand, we do not say, cannot say, in anyway whatsoever; but, on the other hand, about which we do not merely fall into silence?

Indeed, there seems to be, perhaps in the most intimate of intimacies, a way of intimating that neither speaks nor remains silent, a way of "speaking" without speaking—let us call it: intimation. And that which is only intimated—that is, not spoken nor translated into the language of speech, the language of language, of what comes to presence in language, or goes out into absence, possibly or necessarily—would be called: intimacy. But if language cannot speak that which is merely intimated, how can we hope to illuminate such a problem?

That which might be intimated is not just something that could be known or understood or thought, so asserted or announced, communicated and heard, and so acted upon; intimacy appears to imply, and so implicate, and not just our intimates. But if intimate words are to be exchanged, or intimacies spoken in anyway whatsoever, it would also seem to implicate the language in which they do so; although this may still not mean that what is intimated by one word or another, or a combination of words, is necessarily that which is being said, nor perhaps that anything is being intimated at all. For intimations could be what does not just bring a given sense to presence, nor simply present a referent in a figurative form, one which expresses and delivers meaning in more palatable fashion, communicates or constitutes the most intimate of intimacies; rather they are perhaps far more the suspension of the necessary laws, the grammar or syntax, of communication or constitution, and of the very possibility of sense-making, whether this causes problems for language or not. And if intimating suspends the norms of language, perhaps even language itself, as well as silence; it might not simply be a question of speaking or signifying, naming or expressing, nor another way of understanding and judging and interpreting (and so truth), nor merely producing or consuming, exchanging or distributing, what is sensed or imagined, known or thought, meant or not, whether conventional or constitutive, in the natural and human sciences or the arts. But insofar as we take up the task of illuminating intimacies, it may be to the way in which intimating cannot present itself (even in language)—nor remain absent—that we would have to turn. And if intimation seeks to illuminate things in the universe thereby, *how* they are, their being and so *what* being means, although perhaps not bringing them to presence; we should probably not be surprised at its universality, which might also mean it is implicated in intuition and intention, as well as their intimations.

The intimations of a word then, even if they make problems for natural or conventional concepts of expression, or for the constitution of meaning (and non-meaning, nonsense), would seem to have implications for language, the universe of language, even the universe itself—although if a word intimates anything at all, it presumably illuminates something about us as well. Then intimating would seem to

be a problem for how we are in language. Indeed the suspense of what we intimate might even suspend us thereby. And intimation would perhaps far more illuminate our way of being suspended by language, or at least how we could be intimate with one another in (or even with) the universe, and things therein; just as that which we imply by intimation—even when speaking or listening or not, pointing or indicating, covering or concealing, signifying or signing, presenting or representing what we see or think—might just as well implicate us. And if intuition and intentionality intimate what is neither intuited nor intended, it would probably cause problems for linguistic intimacies, maybe as much as metaphysical intimation.

Regardless, insofar as intimation could be the attempt to illuminate that which assertion or apodeiction fail to present, as well as sight to see or thought to think, which is apparently not simply to say it succeeds— it may be called a problem (KANT 1990: A76/B101). And then words might be problematic, if they intimate something, which is perhaps also a problem for intuition and intention, and so for how we are with others (people and animals, in thought and deed). But then, the attempt to exchange intimacies, would probably not exchange something, at least if exchangeability presupposes presence, if not a present or gift to be exchanged; rather it could be that being intimate with another is a way of being one with them, speaking of what can only be intimated, intuiting what cannot be seen, intending what thought thinks not. This may be why intimacy appears most acute when the other is not completely present to us now, not in front of us, not facing us, although nor simply other—and so not just that which Levinas names the Other, *Autrui*, the other *qua* other, *l'autre en tant qu'autre* (LEVINAS 1971: 67); especially if this other is supposed to be "*present* before the manifestation which only manifests it" (LEVINAS 1971: 61, my emphasis); like the "*presence* in thought of an idea whose *ideatum* overflows the capacity of thought" (LEVINAS 1971: 41, my emphasis) to which we are supposed to be able to bear witness, *témoigner*. Then the most intimate of words would probably tell us nothing about such an other, neither communicate information nor inform communities, neither assert nor apodeict, affirm nor confirm something in particular, speak nor be silent, nor convey feeling or desire, knowledge or understanding. And in being intimate with someone, whether physically or mentally close or not, friends or enemies, lovers or strangers, language may be unable to illuminate the implications of intimacy.

But if what is intimated is that which does not necessarily present itself, this may not mean that it could not be translated into a possibility, a possible intimation of death or immortality, pain or another, nor that the problem of what is being intimated, if anything at all, must or can be resolved. So if words convey information or announce plans, publish results or advertize products, whether needed or wanted, notify or declare, formally or not, recount facts or assert beliefs, they might still intimate that which is not conveyed or announced, published or advertized, recounted or asserted. Or if they necessarily accomplish deeds or bring things to presence, institute or constitute the present age, acknowledge the value of an individual, their rights or responsibilities, or the validity of a nation, make war and peace, bear witness or keep secrets, describe the state of affairs or leave them unnoticed, they could nevertheless be intimating. So that words might be intimative, perhaps especially when they attempt to intimate nothing at all.

And insofar as intimation seems to be a kind of implication, we should probably not be surprised if it is a way in we could be one with another, intimately. Then it might rather far more be a way of implying to others that which cannot be presented, nor remain absent. But then intimacy would seem to be implicated in intimations. And this is why it could begin to illuminate how we are one with others, completely or not, or the claim to appear thereby. So that an intimate word—one suspended between us—might suspend meaning and sense, problematize its presentation, being a problem; as well as the reporting of what sight can see, and the clarification of what thought may think, and maybe us along with it.

But intimacy probably does not just suspend how we speak to others. On the contrary, it seems that we can speak to another, even share intimacies, perhaps far more because we are intimate with them. And then intimacy would not simply mean carving out a space of exclusion or state of exception, a privileged place or place of privilege, nor merely separating ourselves by our use of signs or codes, experiences or promises, private languages or jokes or idioms—rather we might do so in the universe because we are intimate therewith. In this way, the speaking and hearing of intimation maybe even implies a universal intimacy. So that an intimate word would perhaps implicate not just us, but the universe, even if it suspends our way of being in (or with) it.

But if intimating also has implications for our way of being, ontological implications, it will perhaps illuminate itself in language. And here the task might be to consider not only *what* is being intimated, but also *how* so, and how we might intimate thereby, and so be intimate with one another, or others, whether completely or not. In this way, the illumination of intimation seems to be not simply a function of some kind of speaking or non-speaking subject, nor merely an object of investigation that presents itself to the natural or human sciences, or the arts. For if intimating is a way of implying—just as being is often not present in a sentence, which does not mean it is absent—then what is intimated is maybe something implied.[1] And then even insofar as we try to exclude intimations from our way of speaking, whether in public or private, it might not be possible to do so. Indeed it sometimes seems that the least intimate of words intimate the most, just as the more explicit we seek to be, the more implicative we are, or at least not any less. So if sentences in which "being" is not present illuminate how it is implied, those to which intimacy remains foreign would perhaps suggest the language in which we speak it.

And it is maybe unsurprising that philosophy (or at least the history of philosophy as metaphysics, the philosophy of presence, of being *qua* presence, and the philosophy

[1] This is how Keats can write "Truth is beauty, beauty truth." For *being is implied*; it is *an implication*. And *how* being is, is determinative for *that* it is and *what* it is. Then if a thing is, or is not, is present or absent, a word or deed, thought or thing, it is because being is implied. Or if there is something rather than nothing, or nothing rather than something, it is because being is not something or nothing, but an implication. And this is how being can implicate itself in anything whatsoever, in our way of feeling and imagining and thinking, speaking and acting. Hence the fundamental thesis of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is a thesis on implication, on the ontological (or onto-henological) implication for a metaphysics of implication (although one that remains loyal to necessity and possibility—rather than thinking a problematic metaphysics): "being and unity are the same and are of one nature in the sense that they are implied by one another [follow one another, ἀκολουθεῖν] as principle and cause" (ARISTOTLE 1957: 1003b 22-24; HAAS 2014).

of absence, which is merely its other, and so participates in the same economy), somehow manages to think intimation within the context of what speaks in language as a natural or conventional medium of subjective interaction, or as constitutive therefore. In this way, words and sentences, signs and symbols, could be assumed to present or represent objects in the world or experiences in us, necessary or possible meanings or referents, whether real or imaginary, or to be their conditions or conditions of possibility (or impossibility), which is maybe how we can do things therewith, employ them in a perlocutionary or illocutionary fashion. But then intimacy might not be illuminated, much less the way in which implied intimacies could make problems for language, as well as for us.

So maybe we can take a hint from the intimacy of friends or lovers. For we often intimate that which we dare not speak, and so do not hear what is not said—even if I say something like, "I see what you mean," which suggests how intuition and intention, like sight and thought, imply one another. But insofar as intimation is implicated in speaking or writing, indeed any use of language (whether speaking to gods or men, in the original or translation, with or without violence), and thus signifying in anyway whatsoever, it might not simply mean we cannot attempt to illuminate that which is just implied—whether we succeed or not. On the contrary, it seems that intimating even be how we take up the task of illuminating the intimacies of friends and lovers, their way of being, as well as ours, however problematically. Then such intimacy might also somehow illuminate us, and implicate itself in our way of illuminating it. But if being intimate with another is a way of being with them, it may be because it is *how* we are one with them—which is perhaps why intimacy could possibly be translated, for example, into the language of physical or mental proximity or distance, the strengthening of bonds or promises or their violation, trust or betrayal, the giving of gifts or exchanging of presents, or appear as an event with complete or incomplete aspect, so that it happens, once and for all, being over and done, or will do so repeatedly or continually, whether now and forever, so in present time, or there and then, and not now (at least insofar as being intimate, like being, is a verb—so temporal/aspectual).

It might be however, that such an intimacy could give us a clue to another perhaps much more peculiar characteristic of language, and so even illuminate what is not possible—although nor is it simply impossible thereby—but rather problematic. For it seems that one of the most intimate of linguistic tropes may be that of the idiom. And it could be here that our way of being intimate with others is illuminated, even if "an idiom is never pure" (DERRIDA 1992: 62). With regards to Joycean intimation, for example:

> The treatment of this question will be largely over-determined by the Irish idiom which silently and laterally weighs on the entire text. The Irish also have a way of avoiding the *yes* and the *no* in their direct forms. To the question "Are you sick?", they do not reply *yes* or *no*, but the equivalent of an "I am" or "I am not." "Was he sick?" "He was" or "He was not", etc. (DERRIDA 1987: 70, n.1).

Then the idiomatic might not simply be a matter of grammar or philology, linguistics or semiotics, psychology or sociology. For idioms presumably imply not merely

what is being said, nor not said: if time is out of joint, or neither here nor there, if there is neither rhyme nor reason, but method in madness, if you have had too much of a good thing, or been led down the primrose path, if we see in the mind's-eye, or suffer a sea-change, it may very well only be because of what is being implied idiomatically. And although it would seem difficult to imagine a purely non-idiomatic language, or one from which idioms could be separated-out, it may not be because we speak the same language, or live in the same country, or read the same books, or see and think the same things; but perhaps because we somehow are intimates—for an idiom, if it is one, not only illuminates how the unity of sign and referent could be problematic, but just as much the way in which others would be implicated thereby. Then being one with others (idiomatic being) in the universe of a language, might suggest ways of illuminating this problem, as well as how we are intimately one with them (intimate being). For the intimacy of an idiom seems to imply not just that we intend to think what should present itself in meaning, but does not; nor try to get an intuition of that which could come to presence in sight or thought, and cannot—but rather that the idiomatic might not only illuminate linguistic intimacy, but ontological intimacy (the implication of being, being *qua* implied) as well (HAAS 2007).

If the idiom however, illuminates the intimacies of language, we should probably not be surprised if it also has implications for sensing and thinking. So the idiomatic intimacy of friends or lovers, could imply how we might see or think the other, in one situation or another, or not. And this is how we pick up on what is being intimated, or clue into what is intended, or get a hint of that which does not simply present itself to intuition. For if we exchange intimacies, or if things can be given in intuition, or intentional object present to us, it is perhaps because we are intimate with each other. And yet, insofar as this is to be taken up, it is presumably by seeking to illuminate how so—but that is the problem of language, of how we can neither speak of what does not present itself, nor be silent about it. And so we perhaps try to intimate when language fails us—which does not mean we succeed, or fail. In this way, intimation might somehow illuminate language, even as we take up the task of illuminating that which is merely implied.

But then not just language, words or sentences, idiomatic or not, but what is neither spoken nor written nor vocalized in some other form, signified in some other way, and thus our intimacy with others. So if I prefer not to speak, or if I write nothing—this is probably not just to say that I am silent, keep my thoughts secret, not saying what I mean to say; nor simply that not speaking speaks, or non-writing is writing. And translating silence into speech, or refusal into assent, negation affirmation, nonsense sense, would presumably be equally unable to begin the task of illuminating implication. For not only might it be misunderstood, falsely interpreted, mean something completely different, or nothing at all, but we could miss out on what is just being implied thereby. Indeed, this suspension of meaning would maybe continue to be problematic, if not incomprehensible, perhaps even if it were translated into a language we know, or learn. Then if I prefer not to respond, not to speak or be heard, not to present myself as a speaker nor have my words understood, my meaning clarified, that might still imply more than had I done so. And even the clearest way of speaking, or not, would apparently have implications which could not

be spoken, which is not to say they are nothing. So a supposedly perfectly clear language (mathematics, logic, concepts, ideas), perhaps like simple silence, might be unable to rid itself of what is implied thereby, even if its subject were implication itself. And if not speaking seems to unfold it more effectively, this could be because it merely presents an example of implication which we prefer not to tolerate (whether it is just as misleading or not).

So the kind of language that makes meaning clear and distinct, claims to be self-evident, translates all variables in terms of their function, holds nothing in reserve, keeps free from jargon, or uncovers the necessary or possible conditions, might still have problems with what is only implied. But this is probably not to suggest simply remaining silent about it, nor deploying silence as a possibility of speaking, signifying, presenting that which I mean to say through the absence of words, or meaning to mean nothing at all. But if the task is to imply—and so neither speak, nor remain silent, neither present that which I have to say, nor present its unpresentability—I could have a problem. And implying may very well continue in such a problematic way, even failing to complete itself, but rather suspended in and by language. Then not only *how*, but also *what* we imply, and *that* we are implying, could be a problem, especially if we are implicated thereby. For implying might illuminate us as much as what is implied, or others as well as how so. And so perhaps nor could implication say that it says something, important or not, true or false. Then we should maybe not be surprised if the suspension of what is implied—and the suspense that often accompanies it—cannot be tolerated by those who say what they mean and mean what they say, or at least try to, or those who would demand the transparent expression of clear and distinct ideas, or perhaps somehow, or for some reason, prefer the explicit (or silence). But this means that suspending it might be the first step for the language of implication, the intimation of what is not said, as well as a way of being intimately one with another, the implication of being intimate, and taking up the task of illuminating the problem therewith.

The task therefore, is to neither speak nor remain silent. Benjamin argues that language speaks in every word and deed, war and peace, thought and thing, in the original or in translation, in God and in violence *tertium dator*—there is a counter-example: intimacy, intimation, being intimate; and the implications thereof, of being implied, implying, so being implicated. And it is perhaps the intimacy of these intimations which can neither be presented nor represented, but remain implied, their sense and meaning suspended that we may have to tolerate, which might very well be the most intimate of intimacies.

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