

## LOCAL ANTHROPOGENIES - LINGUISTICS

### LOGICS OF TEN INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

## 3. GERMAN AND THE FORGE

*Durch alle Töne tönet / Im bunten Erdentraum / Ein leiser Ton gezogen / Für den der heimlich lauschet.* Schlegel, quoted by Schumann

### 3A. The language

German words are not simple integral parts of the sentence, like in French, or simple musical whiffs, as very often in the English 'phrase'. They are caverns filled with treasures or explosives, or better still, blocks of elementary energy that are so condensed and so burrowed that they almost erupt. They are 'heimlich', meaning that they belong to the 'Heim', to a domicile that is simultaneously a secret, a retreat from beneath. They must be listened to attentively, 'lauschen', in a manner that is also 'heimlich', from top to bottom, in excavation. We must therefore expect that the linguistic device should favour insistences, and in this aim delaying and almost jolting fragmentations.

#### 3A1. Phonosemics

Delaying begin with phonation. Double or triple consonants are frequent: 'erst', 'Herbst'; the same goes for successive simple implosion or explosion consonants known as affricative: 'Pferd', 'Kampf', 'Strumpf', or Goethe's famous rhyme: 'Gipfeln', 'Wipfeln'. Much more, the double vowels of Germanic languages are often of the type äi, oi, and are still sounded by the following consonant confirming the down-going faraway resonance: 'ein', 'Rhein', 'Freud', 'Freund', 'Feuer'. The latter is joined by the puffed diction of some consonants, but also the 'Knacklaut', brief glottal jamming before the phonetic emission. Then, like in French, and at the opposite of English, syllables have approximately the same length and are pronounced firmly. Without this, they would lose their internal reversals and jolts.

### 3A2. Morphology and semantics

Morphologically, substantives, adjectives and articles decline according to the multiple cases, like in Russian, and not residually like with English, which adds to their weight. Sometimes, their radical sensibly varies, 'mutter' (mother) 'mütter' (mothers), which confers them an internal echo. 'Die Mütter! Mütter! 's klingt so wunderbar', exclaims Goethe in the second *Faust*, coming back to it in his *Entretiens avec Eckermann*. On the other hand, the roots are meant to be so rich that, for example, 'erkenn' (knowing) may appear in the verb 'erkennen', in the substantive verb 'das Erkennen', in three verbal substantive with subtle nuances: 'Erkenntnis', 'Erkennung', 'Erkenntlichkeit'. However, there is not morphological coquetry there, no obsession with the verbal class, like in French, because the adjective and the adverb are not differentiated; we have encountered 'heimlich' for one and for the other. The major issue is the semic depth.

Moreover, such heavy words are still compound between them. Especially the millions of generated compound words propose themselves as identified knots of monemes (significant units). The components are not founded there, but cohabit in tensions that are made more vivid that they remain intact. Particularly, the adjunction of endings generally preserves radicals: '-keit' adds on to 'Ewig', and '-heit' to 'Gott' without altering them. In such a way that 'Ewigkeit' is heard like 'Eternal-ity', and 'Gott-heit' as 'God-ity', whereas in French the words 'éternité' and 'divinité' or even 'deité', have a relation to their theme that is much more evasive. The verbal chemistry or alchemy that is then produced is sometimes innocent, such as in 'Zahnreinigungs-mittel', a way of cleaning one's teeth, to say 'toothpaste'. But it also often creates detonating mixtures, both semically and affectively. Let us come back to 'Heim', whose derivatives fill several columns in dictionaries. It gives 'Heimat' (country of birth), which is already charged. But it also gives the compounds 'Heimatkunde', 'Heimathafen', 'Heimatsdorf', 'Heimatland', which are even more charged. By adding the possessive 'mein', the affective density of 'mein Heimatland' becomes huge.

More or less detachable prefixes express (and therefore trigger) physical and psychic movements, like in English and all Germanic languages. But here, depending of the resonance in depth, the movements evoked are applied to already-intense monemes, which are moreover themselves and more complex than they are in English. Coupled to 'heben' (lifting), the 'Auf' of the famous Hegelian 'Aufhebung' evokes an uprising, a kidnapping, a suspension, an elevation, a substitution, an assumption, the relay, etc. Freud's 'Verneinung' and Kafka's 'Verwandlung' are more than a denegation and a metamorphosis. 'Er-' also signals operations that are both active and passive, such as the lived experience ('Er-leben, 'Er-fahren'), recognition ('Er-kennen') and in particular education ('Er-ziehen'), whose Latin and French designation only signals that it is a question of taking the child (ducere) out of something (ex). According to the same logic of the language, 'Ur-' confers the concept that it prefixes a character that is both original and reduplicative: 'ugeschichte', 'Urgrund'. It can even double in an ultimate echo to the bottom, and our first parents are 'Ur-ur-eltern'.

### 3A3. Syntax

In the syntax, the inversion of the subject and the verb, and especially the rejection of the verb to the end of the subordinate, thereby also the sometimes long wait for the decision of the verb (are we going to say that all that precedes is affirmed or denied, constructed or destroyed?), reinforce the structuring nesting, the tier in depth, the approximatively catastrophic availability to events or reversals in suspension. The place of the determiner is sometimes before, sometimes after the determinatum, giving way to logical weighting: 'Die Menschengestalt', but also *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* with Fichte. It allows, in the first phase of Kafka's *Verwandlung*, the terrible and comical iambic suite: 'Er lag/ auf sei/nem pan/zerar/tig har/ten Rücken' in which henceforth consists Gregor Samsa, transformed in his bed into an enormous, chitinous vermin, 'zu einem ungeheueren Ungeziefer verwandelt'. (We note how much the metamorphosis, which makes soluble in India, contracts here).

The declension into multiple cases not only intensifies the word but also, through the supple functions that it implicates, allows unifying the sentence according to the Indo-European structure, while filling it with forces in tension. Nietzsche interrogates: 'Wohin kam die Träne meinem Auge?' towards what (wohin) has come (kam) the tear (Träne) for my eye (meinem Auge, dative). There are two movements there, where the translation; 'what have become the tears of my eyes', saves 'Wohin kam', but not the dative 'meinem Auge', which has become a simple determinative of 'Träne', whereas it is a tangential relation. The structure of some German phrases is reminiscent of the tectonic of terrestrial plates, where elements are sometimes adjoined adrift, sometimes frontally, provoking terrible upheavals and collapses. Assuredly, these syntactic collusions suppose the already noted density of the monemes. From the 'femaleness' of 'Weib', 'Mann und Weib und Weib und Mann', in their sound chiasm, which is monematic and syntactic, appraises the Mozart of the *Flute*, 'reichen an die Gottheit an', confine intimately (an... an) to divinity, to 'God-ity'. We shall agree that, in the structure of French, despite the chiasm, the same deification of the couple does not take place.

### 3A4. The writing

Until yesterday, gothic script reflected in German texts this swarming germinating, these reversals onto oneself; and the daily newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, which eloquently qualifies itself of 'Zeitung für Deutschland', still uses it for a few front-page titles. Moreover, even in the current written form, substantives and substantivized verbs are still capitalized, comforting their monematic weight. With its capital alone, 'das Deyen', in one of Heidegger's texts, weighs heavier than 'the thought', and even more so than 'le penser', in its French translation. Articulating these successive concentrations and frictions, the punctuation is powerful, even congesting. Like the comma separating canonically the main clause from the direct object clause. Or still the semi-colon of the Nietzschean cry: 'Ein Ungestilltes, Unstillbares ist in mir; das will laut werden'.

It is probably the verb 'klingen' – the heavy, faraway, double impure, archaic 'tolling' of the bell – that best marks the astonishment that is both happy and frightened of the German speaker faced with the mysteries of this sound, this semantic, this abyssal syntax. We have

already encountered it with Goethe: 's klingt so wunderbarlich. It was already there with Mozart: 'Das klinget so herrlich, das klinget so schön'. The *Magic Flute*, or rather enchanting, *Die Zauberflöte*, which founded German opera, exhausting its possibilities, insists Wagner, is in the end the German language itself.

Nietzsche's Zarathoustra fully incarnates this double linguistic movement, which first consists of a return or an in-depth pressure (zurücktrekken), then of an explosion (brechen aus), meaning of an eruptive pressure or a deflagrating condensation: 'Ich trinke die Flammen in mich zurück, die aus mir brechen'. Every translation from German is de-compressive, particularly into English, where the second *Faust* is said to be untranslatable. The only languages of comparable density are ancient Greek, and in some ways Sanskrit. Today Russian is too.

### 3B. Cultural consonances

Nietzsche has just spoken of flames (Flammen), and Schlegel-Schumann, in our epigraph, of a dream of the earth (Erdenraum). Indeed, the German language is the language of a world of elements, particularly the four Greek elements: earth, water, air, fire, which here are grasped in their permanent and fundamental conflicts. It is these elements, like 'Anfangsgründe', as founders of (in) the beginning, that are the origin of the forms, that they undo as they engender them, according to the Love and Hate of Empedocles.

Philosophically, these elements are so archaic, so swarming, that they could not be the Cartesian substances, or the English sense data. They are the possible as such, in their terrible games. Research for possible and compossible as such, with Leibniz. Research of the conditions of transcendental possibility, hence of every object as an object, with Kant. Deployment of the possible up to the dialectic engendering of the concrete, with Fichte and Hegel. No Cartesian *Tabula rasa*, but a departure that is always already a field, as the suffocating proliferation of the Husserlian *cogitata*. Initial conjunction of God *and* the Devil so that there is a world, according to Goethe. For the elements are only fecund in their Heraclitean war ('polemos pantôn patêr esti'), in their Hegelian negativity. Besides, the grasping of possibles supposes a double purity (Reinheit): that of pure multiplicity (Mannigfaltigkeit), on the one hand; and on the other, that of two forms a priori of sensitivity, of twelve categories of understanding, of three ideas of pure reason (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*).

Therefore, in the course of the last century, the German language has been the genuine humus of Phenomenology, i.e. of the unveiling of semantic layers in wondering apparition, from the illuminating essence. And at the same time, the humus of Psychoanalysis, understanding of the occult thrusts towards a bottom, then from a bottom: Triebe, Verdrängung, Verneinung, Verschiebung, so many terms designating the movements of German words within the sentence, but also within themselves. So much so that, when we spread out a topic of the conscious, the subconscious, the counter-conscious, the unconscious, or still of the Ich (I), Über-Ich (Over-I), Es (neutral it of 'it rains'), we never know if we are speaking of the human psyche or of phonetics, monematics and the syntax of the German language itself.

Assuredly, the Absolute here should not be that of Descartes' perfect being, or Carroll's Boojum. It is the Encompassing, 'das Umgreifende' that Jaspers speaks of, unless we go back to the Integral of Leibnizian integrals. The internal pressure of the language and of the faith (pecca fortiter and crede fortius) instituted by the psychic torrent represented by Luther was consonant with alchemist, illuminist, Faustian, superhuman (übermenschlich) currents. Goethe exclaims: "Wie fass Ich dich, unendliche Natur?" Therefore, there is not Descartes' substantially individual "Me", but Fichte's indefinitely generating "Ich", or the "I that is a We, the We that is an I" of Hegel, in the restless worrying of the adequacy of the "universal Conscience" and "universal substance".

Simultaneously, before even Psychoanalysis and Phenomenology (c. 1900), should surge and rise in this area of language a century and a half of powerful philosophies of history, of languages, of cultures and civilizations, since Herder, Humboldt (who would not have repulsed to the present considerations) right up to Spengler. In the *Archipelagus*, Hölderlin saw the fundamental ocean (pelagos archè) of the Aegean like a pretemporal old man: "Komm'ich zu dir und grüss'in deiner Stille dich, Alter!" The four powerful monemes of the 'Alter-tums-wissen-schaft', the science of the antiquity, which ended up blossoming in Indo-European comparativism, tolled loudly throughout the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was in Heidelberg that Max Vasmer published the etymological dictionary of the Russian language, which is still accepted as an authority today. To this day, German encyclopedias, which are designed for a 'Fachmann' enjoying the swarming proliferation of the detail, contrast with the English garden (evolutionary) of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and with the French garden of the *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, which conjoins the synthetic vision and the author article.

Beethoven considered music as "a revelation higher than every wisdom and every philosophy". Indeed, the deflagrating structure and fantasy of German were best fulfilled in the 'Allemande', in the thickness of the fugue, in the intensification of the note of the aria, with Bach, intending to approach the divine in the *Goldberg Variations*. In the piercing sound in depth and the faltering ornamentation of Mozart. In the emergence of tonality emerging from the noise, with Beethoven. In the continuous harmonic interval between two hands with the Schumann pieces. In the distant fusion of the origin with Wagner. Everywhere, with this want for variations (*Variationen*), even the transformation (transformation op. 120) that the philosophers called 'dialectic'. The best commentator of Beethoven is probably Hegel, and reciprocally.

Painting should be scaled down, while also working at arousing the elements in conflict or in deflagrating condensations, not without chromo effect, through the contours of Grünewald's Crucified, Altdofer's swarming banners, Cranach's body crooked charms, Dürer's psychic and graphic tensions of the reformers, without mentioning the splatters of early 20<sup>th</sup> century expressionists. It is in this area of language that Actionism had to go furthest, right up to the public auto-castration of Austrian Schwarzkogler, right to the filming of the agony of an American friend of Wim Wenders. Günther Grass's drum is a 'Blechtrommel', a drum made of tin plate, not of skin. Like German terms, the perfume of Süsskind's *Das Parfum* contains every perfume of the world, with all their catastrophes, and it would be trivial (alltäglich, would say Heidegger) to ask oneself whether they would be good or evil.

The density is so great that it leaves no place for the distance of humour. Or to a tepid eroticism. Sexuality is as deflagrating as all the rest: Hannah Schygulla is no Catherine Deneuve. In the theatre, Peter Handke's *Kaspar* exalts the same fright before the infernal dynamic of the language and the world. Television and photographic images are usually frontal, still, of an extreme graphic compactness and very colourful.

In morals, it is the will of maintaining both discipline and roughness, in the Chinese manner. A sweet and sour cuisine, 'sauersüsse'. An opening to every moral possible that makes us think of the Indian indifference and availability since Schopenhauer, albeit with a coefficient of breaking-in. Militant dialectic of society with Marx, militant military dialectic with Engels, cataclysmic conception of ecology with many contemporary Greens. Politically, there is no French centrism, no English symbolic royalty, but, under the flight of the floating black eagle of the Millennium, and alongside the whole Realpolitik, a local policy expressing the vitality of multiple Länder, each being a compact blend of foremost and faraway elements, not devoid of patois and dialects. In contrast with the French urbanistic issues, globalizing, there are urban areas instead of cities.

Must we go further, and see a link between ancient alchemy and the tradition of contemporary chemistry, under the emblematic cross of BAYER? Or should we remark that it is a German speaker, Alfred Wegener, who promoted the idea of the Tectonics of plates and the drifting of continents? The first of these consonances is probably much too loose, and the second much too tight. On the other hand, the theories of the mathematics and logics schools that evoke the names of Leibniz, Riemann, Klein, Dedekind, Cantor, Frege, Hilbert have certainly found a fecund 'Heimat' in this linguistic system.

In the same way, we shall not skim over the triple kinship that we have been made to signal distantly with China and India (the Hakenkreuz is the swastika), and from up close and constantly with pre-Socratic Greece, whose only valid publications and translations are Kranz's. In 1939, he issued a short bilingual anthology, *Vorsokratische Denker*, one of humankind's great books, which he threw like a bottle to the sea just before the Second World War.

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