

TRANSLATIONS OF THE IMPLICIT

*Tracing How Language Works beyond Gendlin and Derrida*

by

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# Translations of The Implicit: Tracing How Language Works beyond Gendlin and Derrida

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## **Abstract**

This thesis discusses the explication of the implicit side of language, from the perspective of the self, the social, and text, as situated in the wider context of thinking about language 'beyond post-modernism.' Language is first discussed as an intricacy, an intricate and changing complex of explicit signs and implicit elements and processes. It is shown that the implicit processes, such the speaking of being (Heidegger), focusing (Gendlin), and the interrelatedness of language and culture (Agar), are ruptured by processes like deconstruction (Derrida) and the semiotic breach of the symbolic (Kristeva). Explication brings a part of the implicit to the surface in the form of creativity (Deleuze) and critique, which is also discussed in the examples of play (Gadamer) and care. The transformations involved are illustrated in reflections on writing (Plato), poetry (Trakl), life as an immigrant, and on translation as a philosophical practice.

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# 1 Introduction

'This thesis deals with how language works, or more precisely, how meanings implicit in situations emerge in language, and how linguistic forms bear traces of the process leading to their emergence.' I don't know yet what this sentence means, but I hope to find out. If this project is (in any way) successful it will demonstrate the process it seeks to unravel; if it fails (but by which standards?) it does not necessarily prove the impossibility of such a project: perhaps I'm not yet ready for it; or, perhaps, I missed some vital clues. Regardless, this project is my personal attempt to sort through and bring together some lines of thought about language, experience, and intricacy. As an entree I will offer a number of short introductions, each highlighting various aspects of the project.

## 1.1 Language as ...

Language is intricate. In this thesis we will explore some aspects of this intricacy. In the background are some nagging questions about the multiplicity of languages and the im/possibility of translation. We will combine the reading of certain philosophical texts with reflections on aspects of the multilingual condition. The route we take will be to look at how language works, in the hope of finding a way to think with language about language. 'Thinking with' means that I will sometimes introduce terms without much initial explanation, as I just did with 'intricacy.' The goal of working with the terms is to let clarity emerge in the process. What will emerge are certain, and only certain, elements of the intricacy we usually refer to as 'language.' One way to represent this graphically is to refer to language as '...' With

this device we can defer the determination of language ‘as such.’ Instead, we can let characterizations of language emerge from the process of language itself, as we will see later on. The ‘x as ...’-structure is a way of signaling an intricacy. We don’t know yet what actually happens at the ..., it is not directly visible. Language as ... works in different ways, it has effects at different ‘levels.’ One part of the workings of language is explicit and ‘on the surface,’ another part is implicit and usually hidden. Yet, the parts are not parts, but a whole with ‘non-part parts’ which are simultaneously operative and co-constitutive. Note how we need a different concept of ‘parts’ and ‘wholes.’ We can enter into this intricacy and let new language emerge, since it is clear that ‘non-part parts’ is not precisely what we want to say here, because we want to formulate ‘non-part parts’ in a non-dualistic way. So, how can we develop the language and concepts to talk about this intricacy?

## 1.2 Perspectives on Language

In a first attempt to make sense of language, its connections with the world, and the terms ‘implicit’ and ‘explicit,’ I propose that we look at language from the perspective of the ‘self,’ the ‘social,’ and the ‘text.’

We are able to ‘get things done with words.’ This process involves both an individual and a social side. On the individual side we will look at a theory about the (psychological and otherwise) processes involved in the construction of meaning from implicit knowledge of the world, namely: Gendlin on body-environment interactions. His model can help us understand how language works implicitly in

the intricacy of human life. Since no individual functions alone and in isolation, any useful model should also allow for a discussion of the interactions between the 'self,' others, and the wider world.

Secondly, language use in social interaction is a complex mix of explicit articulation and implicit social and cultural conventions. We will discuss one anthropological approach to the interaction between 'language' and 'culture,' namely Agar on interlanguacultural communication. For him the interconnectedness of language and culture is such that he prefers to speak of languaculture, an intricate interacting, interlaced, interpenetrating network in which linguistic and cultural elements of the communication situation sustain each other, both in 'successful' communication and in 'failure.'

Finally, language has a life of its own in the world of the written text. The dynamics involved in the reading of a written text signal that we are dealing with language in a special mode, requiring a specific treatment. Derrida illustrates how disseminated traces signal that explicitly stated meanings are being reworked. The hermeneutic moves involved unravel, magnify, and illustrate processes which are also at work elsewhere in the domain of language.

Though it is useful to think about these aspects of language as distinct, they are obviously intertwined and serve as each other's context. The process of explication of one intricacy is the emergence of the next complexity, which then can be unfolded



into yet another explicit/implicit interaction, etc. Perhaps we should say that the different sides are folded into, and unfolded from each other.

### 1.3 The Main Question

As we follow the movement of language we will alternate between what is explicit and that which is, for now, implicit. What we can make explicit are three questions which will guide the project. I try to answer the questions:

(1) What is the wider philosophical context for speaking about language as explicit/implicit? (We will look at the shift from questions regarding epistemology to ontology.)

(2) What is the internal structure of 'explication'? (The short answer is that the movement of explication involves an unfolding of the intricacy emerging from a rupture in the infrastructures of language.)

(3) What are some of the external effects of 'explication'? (The short answer: the outworkings of this movement lead to creativity and critique, as will also be demonstrated in texts on 'the bilingual self,' 'the problem of writing', and 'translation as philosophy'.)

### 1.4 Limitations

I need to provide an autobiographical note related to these questions because circumstances shape both my questions and answers. This thesis is an attempt to synthesize some of the things I've discovered and written about (while a student at ICS) with various new insights as they emerge in the process. For the last five years I have

been involved in Bible translation (not as a translator but in various support roles); hence my interest in translation and fundamental questions behind ‘meaning’ and ‘interpretation.’ For me the phenomenon of ‘translation’ is one of the most fruitful points of entry into the worlds of language, meaning, and hermeneutics. I’m interested in questions about ‘the implicit’ because I’m looking for a way to bypass a certain logocentrism<sup>1</sup> in translation theory. The communication theories used in many models for translation give undue priority to what is ‘present,’ to what is explicitly stated, or, if the implicit finally does come into focus, it does so only as far as it can be explicated. Also, attempts to ‘naturalize’ the interpretative process signal unrealistic and naive expectations regarding ‘science.’ Once we come to terms with the fact that language involves an irreducibly complex and intricate interplay of explicit and implicit meanings, we need to develop the vocabulary to talk about the functioning of the implicit in the process of meaning creation.

The questions about the wider context in which I work, questions about the internal structure of language at work, and the question regarding the perceived

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<sup>1</sup> “‘Logocentric’—that which is “centered” on the “Logos” (= speech, logic, reason, the Word of God)—is the term used by Derrida to characterize any signifying system governed by the notion of the self-presence of meaning; i.e. any system structured by a valorization of speech over writing, immediacy over distance, identity over difference, and (self-) presence over all forms of absence, ambiguity, simulation, substitution, or negativity.’ Translators note 1, in: Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 4.

(in)stability of meanings all lead to the conviction that work on translation theory is not yet finished. This is not only a matter of ‘theoretical’ interest. My own bilingual (Dutch/English) and tricultural (The Netherlands/England/Canada) experience make me aware of ways in which these questions also have a deep personal edge (psychological/social/spiritual.) These parameters help move the process forward. Two fellow-immigrants have been of particular importance in my quest: Eugene Gendlin and Jacques Derrida, though I freely mix and cross what I find in their texts with the contributions of others.

### 1.5 Carrying Forward

My recognition of certain difficulties is very European, but my emphasis on situations, practice, action, feedback, transitions, and progressions is very North American.<sup>2</sup>

Philosopher and psychologist Eugene T. Gendlin was born in Vienna, Austria (1928) and immigrated to the United States in 1939. He received his PhD in philosophy from the University of Chicago and taught there between 1963 and 1995. He is also a practising psychotherapist, and was founder and editor of the journal *Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice*. In his work he seeks to directly access lived experience, seen as an open, felt intricacy, rather than a primarily cognitive representation of a closed world. “He proposes a non-dualistic ontology featuring intricate pre-thematic life-interactions, irreducible to static patterns, within a non-arbitrarily ‘responsive’ reality, irreducible to any single account. He develops a radically embodied epistemol-

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<sup>2</sup> Eugene T. Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning: A Philosophical and Psychological Approach to the Subjective* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), xvi.

ogy, [and] explicates many types of relationships between language and experienced intricacy.”<sup>3</sup> A key metaphor for the process of explication is ‘to carry thought forward.’<sup>4</sup> What this means will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters, but it is clear that this ‘philosophy of the implicit’ is particularly relevant for questions concerning the nature and role of a philosophy of language ‘beyond’ Postmodernism.

Gendlin comes into his discussion regarding experiencing and the creation of linguistic meaning by interacting with the wider hermeneutical tradition (e.g. Dilthey, Heidegger), while also interacting with the pragmatist tradition in Chicago, and with Aristotle and Wittgenstein. *Language beyond Postmodernism*, a mayor collection of essays in response to his philosophy, reflects this *anliegen*: most of his respondents come from a Heideggerian / existentialist / phenomenological perspective. In this thesis I want to look at his project from a hermeneutical perspective, mediated through Derrida.

Gendlin lays the groundwork in his PhD thesis, published in 1962 as *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*. His 1997 publication *A Process Model* is a more advanced demonstration of thinking about and with the embodied, implicit process. His article “How Philosophy Cannot Appeal to Experience, and How It Can” pub-

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth A. Behnke, “Gendlin, Eugene T. (1926-),” in *Dictionary of Modern American Philosophers*, ed. John R. Shook (Bristol: Thoemmes Continuum, 2005), 903.

<sup>4</sup> Eugene T. Gendlin, “Thinking beyond Patterns: Body, Language and Situations,” in *The Presence of Feeling in Thought*, ed. B. den Ouden and M. Moen (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 62.

lished in *Language beyond Postmodernism* contains some interaction with explicitly 'post-modern' concerns. A more accessible method for learning how to think with the bodily felt sense is presented in *Focusing*. While Focusing as a technique arose from Gendlin's work in psychology, it employs the same implicit presuppositions as his more explicitly philosophical works. I use a free-flow form of focusing while writing this text, which I'll make explicit at times. A more formal description of the six steps of the focusing process is given in section 3.3.

## 1.6 The Other Grammatology

I try to keep myself at the *limit* of philosophical discourse.<sup>5</sup>

Jacques Derrida was born in Algiers (1930) and moved to France in 1950 where he lived till his death in 2004. He taught at the École Normale Supérieure and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, and lectured widely. His breakthrough as a philosopher came in 1967 when he published three key texts: *Of Grammatology*, *Writing and Difference*, and *Speech and Phenomena*. In later work Derrida reflects on the (Messianic?) 'Other' and wrestles with impossible aporias regarding the gift, hospitality, forgiveness, and mourning.

What became known as 'deconstruction' is an attempt to expose, critique, and undermine certain dualisms inherent in the Western philosophical tradition. One example is the systematic privileging of 'presence' in Plato, which in Derrida's reading leads to a preference for speech (which is seen as more alive and true—thus ensuring

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<sup>5</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 6.

the presence of the intended meaning of the speaker), while writing is dismissed as an after-thought, a mere inscription of prior speech. Derrida suggest that there is an arche-writing, of which 'grammatology' is the science. This arche-writing is not simply the (necessary, but not sufficient) reversal of the reigning dualism, but also includes a move out of the configuration it prescribes. We might be tempted to say that deconstruction involves both an analysis of the implicit and a carrying forward, but I'll argue that things are more complex (more intricate!) than that.

The precise reading of texts, both grand texts of big 't' Tradition and more marginal writings, leads Derrida to the conviction that what happens at the border of inside and outside, literally and metaphorically in the margins of the text, is of crucial hermeneutical importance. At places where the intricacy spills into the open the infrastructures of the implicit are laid bare (even if only barely). While such gestures involve a certain degree of violence, something we need to discuss later, the places where 'it' happens can look as innocent as the 'of' I use in the title of this thesis.

## 1.7 Interaction

While this thesis does not deal specifically with the interaction between Gendlin and Derrida, my use of both authors invites a reflection on their relation. Although Derrida never mentions Gendlin, so far as I know, Gendlin does comment on Derrida at various points. He is both positive and critical about Derrida. For example, Gendlin agrees with Derrida on the need to transcend the subject/object dualism. Gendlin

appreciates that Derrida has cleared the way to talk about how all language is embedded in implicit knowing, but he is also critical because he understands Derrida to be suggesting to stop there, while Gendlin wants to move forward, 'over the edge.' Derrida's 'undecidability' and 'aporia' suggest a 'getting stuck' in a post-modern critique, without a move into a new understanding.<sup>6</sup> I think that this evaluation is based on a misreading of Derrida, but there might be structural reasons for it. If Gendlin and Derrida are in fact working on/toward the same sort of project, they clearly approach it from different angles. Gendlin seems to be interested in accessing the 'content' of the beyond, while Derrida pays more attention to the 'structure' of the beyond (as if they could be placed over against each other like that).

## 1.8 Departures

In chapters 2 - 4 we will explore some of these issues in greater detail. Chapter 2 places the discussion in a wider philosophical context, in four components ('case-studies'), each of which has its own style and focus. The turn from knowledge to being as the most fundamental philosophical question in relation to language (1) is connected with what Gendlin proposes about experiencing (2) and with Derrida's proposals in his rereading of Plato (3). We will also connect this most fundamental question to a discussion of the bilingual situation inspired by Agar (4).

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<sup>6</sup> Eugene T. Gendlin, "How Philosophy Cannot Appeal to Experience, and How It Can," in *Language beyond Postmodernism: Saying and Thinking in Gendlin's Philosophy*, ed. David Michael Levin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 35.

Chapter 3 is the first cross-section through the terrain, in which we will look inside the process of explication. The question whether explication is a continuation of the implicit, or whether a structural discontinuity characterizes the process, is a way into the difference between Gendlin and Derrida, which we will discuss after considering Heidegger's take on language. This discussion will also shed light on the problem of writing, which we approach with Kristeva.

Chapter 4 is the second exploration, in which we see how explication leads to both creativity and critique. The configuration of playfulness and the ethical will help to understand explication as a caring carrying across. An analysis of translation from a Deleuzian angle, together with a personal reflection of writing in translation, will illustrate some of these themes.

Chapter 5 is a mosaic in which we will bring various insights together. We will attempt to formulate a richer, more complex, and intricate understanding of ....



## 2 In Context

The work and our subsequent reading of our main discussion partners Gendlin and Derrida happen in the context of a major shift which took place in twentieth-century Western philosophy. One way of describing this change would be to say that the focus shifted from epistemological questions to ontological concerns; from questioning how we know things to what things are. In this chapter we explore some of the ways in which this shift impacted the understanding of the role of language and the interpretation of experience by looking at language from the three interconnected perspectives of 'self,' 'social,' and 'text.'

### 2.1 Language, Modernity, and Beyond

Language has become a central area of philosophical interest in the twentieth century. Charles Taylor notes that behind this 'modern'<sup>7</sup> pre-occupation with language lurks an 'inarticulate sense of ourselves,' namely that: (1) 'the question of language is somehow strategic for the question of human nature, that man is above all the language animal; and (2) that language is very puzzling, even enigmatic.'<sup>8</sup> The development of linguistics as a science impacted many disciplines outside linguistics proper, e.g., the impact of structuralism in anthropology (Levi-Strauss) and psychology (Lacan), and it certainly had a crucial influence on philosophy. Not only were questions regarding language seen as one of the *problems* of philosophy, but philosophy itself became

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 222.

<sup>8</sup> Taylor, *Human Agency and Language*, 216.

*'linguistic*, in that philosophical understanding is essentially bound up with the understanding of the medium of language.'<sup>9</sup> The foregrounding of language as a medium goes hand-in-hand with a focus on the act and role of interpretation. The point of pointing out this turn toward the hermeneutical is not to set up a false dichotomy between the designative and the expressive sides or dimensions of language.<sup>10</sup> The crux of the question is how explanation is related to ontological understanding. Can meaning be explained as purely designative, so that being able to point to what it designates is enough to explain how a word has meaning? Does the account given about meaning correlate with what is seen as one of the fundamental features of modern science, namely, that it is 'objective'?<sup>11</sup> Or is every expression always already caught up in a web of other expressions? Does meaning function in the play of language, expressing a certain disclosure of the world? Is language fundamentally a whole that needs to be broken down into parts for conclusive analysis, or is expression the power of a subject who makes things manifest? This question is at play in the discussion of the shift from epistemology to ontology.

### 2.1.1 *On Overcoming Epistemology*

The idea that epistemology is the foundational centre of philosophy was tied up

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<sup>9</sup> Taylor, *Human Agency and Language*, 215.

<sup>10</sup> I follow Taylor in this move in which the discussion is not immediately collapsed into a 'analytic' versus 'continental' stalemate.

<sup>11</sup> Taylor, *Human Agency and Language*, 221.

with a rather optimistic ideal regarding the natural sciences in which the sciences produced knowledge and philosophy validated the knowledge claims. This view has become problematic, as Taylor illustrates (using Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*), because epistemology cannot account for the way in which it is supposed to check the credibility of truth claims made by science. Epistemology itself is not the foundational enterprise: more fundamental is an ontological claim about knowledge which rests on implicit notions about science and the nature of human agency—as it functions in connection with certain central 'moral and spiritual ideas' of the modern age.<sup>12</sup>

One of the sources of the modern view of knowledge is the new mechanistic science of the seventeenth century. For Descartes real knowledge is not just the congruence between ideas in the mind and the reality outside (which in itself is already a problematic schema); knowledge also has to be mediated through a reliable method, clear evidence, a certainty which the mind has to generate for itself. Real knowledge requires a reflexive turn in which the thinker orders his thoughts correctly, and based on that operation, arrives at trustworthy knowledge. The subject is seen as disengaged, punctual, and atomistic. The focus on formal operations as a way of achieving clarity and certainty about our thinking leads to what Taylor calls 'the over-determination of the epistemological construal.'<sup>13</sup> In our culture computers (in different

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology," in *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?*, ed. Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 466.

shapes and sizes) are seen as the machines which 'prove' that materialistic science can reach intelligence, and that our human intelligence can ultimately be understood as 'just' formal operations. The continued high expectations surrounding AI (both in the 'real' world and in the fictional worlds of certain movies) reveal how intimate this relation between science and culture is and remains. Heidegger has taken up this point in *The Question Concerning Technology* to argue that the contemporary technological society is in a stance of domination to the world precisely because it relies on a certain 'scientific' way of gaining knowledge about the world. In his analysis of being-in-the-world he shows how we, before we even can be disengaged subjects, are already engaged in coping and interacting with our world, dealing with the things around us, coming to grips with them. Even in our theoretical stance to the world we are always already agents. This undercuts epistemological foundationalism because at the root of our representation(s) of the world is not the rational subject, but an engaged subject. 'We can draw a neat line between my picture of an object and that object, but not between my dealing with the object and that object.'<sup>14</sup> Likewise the punctual notion of the self is challenged: we cannot escape from our background because our agency is embodied, and this body has desires which cannot be grasped or fully controlled. Nor are we atomistic subjects but we belong fundamentally to a speech community.

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<sup>13</sup> Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology," 470.

<sup>14</sup> Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology," 477.

At this point it is quite clear what 'overcoming epistemology' is for Taylor: it is 'overcoming the distorted anthropological beliefs through a critique and correction of the construal of knowledge that is interwoven with them and has done so much to give them undeserved credit.'<sup>15</sup> We are not to engage in a futile attempt to achieve total reflexive clarity, but rather to be aware of the limits and conditions of our knowing, to overcome the illusion of disengagement and atomic individuality. Taylor suggests that we need to reject moralities which are based only on instrumental reason (utilitarianism) or reductive, atomistic social theories (sociobiology.) But everything is not so simple, as Taylor shows in his discussion of Foucault, who rejects both the concept of the punctual self and the rival notion of a deep, authentic self in favour of a Nietzschean self as a self-making 'work of art.' This self is not in what is seen as the prison of 'being a self' but free from any standards of meaning and constantly inventing its own meaning. Epistemic orders are imposed on the world and thus seen as acts of violence, to be discarded as bogus, not because they have been shown to be incorrect, but just because the aspiration to truth is misguided. Yet, this break with the tradition has an element of continuity with the modern identity in the primacy of the will.<sup>16</sup> 'The Nietzschean position too stands and falls with a certain construal of knowledge: that it is relative to various ultimately imposed "regimes of truth," to

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<sup>15</sup> Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology," 479.

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology," 483.

use Foucault's expression.'<sup>17</sup> In short, relating to the tradition of modernity plays out between continuity and discontinuity.

### 2.1.2 *Modernity: Proper, Hyper-, Post-, and ...*

At this point in the discussion we can explain terms like 'modern,' and its sisters pre-, hyper-, and post-modern. A 'post-modern' approach is not just anything presented as historically or ideologically coming 'after modernity.' Post-modernity is an attempt to correct deeply ingrained 'modern' dualisms, e.g., the subject-object dualism. Once a dualism has been identified a two-step process is used in which [a] the dominant dualism is reversed (metaphorically giving voice to the previously oppressed and excluded) and [b] the whole problematic is somehow reconfigured so that we can move beyond our modernistic understanding of the dualistic situation.<sup>18</sup> Much "post-modern" thought gets stuck in the first phase, resulting in the mirror-image of whatever 'modern' vice is addressed. Such a situation is not post-modern, but rather hyper-modern, because it doesn't move beyond the modern dualism and in a way exacerbates the underlying problem. For example: if the analysis is that 'we' have not treated animals well, we might be tempted to overcompensate for that by advocating the 'rights' of animals. We can analyze this move from the perspective of the distinction between hyper-modern and post-modern. While in the old 'modern'

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<sup>17</sup> Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology," 484.

<sup>18</sup> See for one of the many descriptions of this operation: 'Signature Event Context,' in: Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 21.

paradigm the focus was on the 'human'-side of the human-animal dualism, in the 'hyper-modern' reversed-polarity paradigm the 'animal' comes into focus. Hence the interest in animal 'rights.' While bypassing the question whether animals can be bearers of 'rights' at all, this might be a step in the right direction if it means that 'we' take the well-being of animals into account in new ways. However, it does not represent a clear break with the human/animal dualism itself; in a way it even seems to support it in that it doesn't fundamentally challenge it. What really is at stake in Derrida's post-modern double-movement is that we move beyond the inherited dualisms, regardless of whether we construe that 'beyond' as a 'post-post-' or otherwise.

### 2.1.3 *The Quest for a 'Beyond'*

The quest for a 'beyond,' coupled with the sense that the age of philosophy has ended (or, perhaps, that it should end), is everywhere around us. One collection of essays on the philosophy of Gendlin is titled *Language beyond Postmodernism*. One of the Taylor essays I cited earlier was (re)published in a volume called *After Philosophy: End or Transformation?*, which explores the conviction that modern rationalism has exhausted its possibilities. It also doesn't give a single answer to the 'What's next?' question. While a 'beyond' is possible and imaginable (as asking the 'What's next?' question implies), the nature of the beyond, and its relation to the 'previous,' is not yet clear. That a 'beyond' exists is clear, in fact, Gendlin's 'edge' implies that there is always a beyond, not just 'at the end' of philosophy. And the fact that our thinking,

writing, and speaking are embedded in our ways of being-in-the-world means that a 'beyond' is never a simple clear cut break. By positioning oneself in relation to X, even if prefixed by 'post-,' one mirrors the rejected X. This is why hyper-modern positions are often as violent as the power-plays they seek to replace. The awareness that no simple 'clean break' is adequate is visible in the way in which Derrida turns to Plato to rediscover what philosophy was meant to be: he reads Plato—with whom it all began in a sense—perhaps more as a sparring partner, and without apologies for the radically different re-reading, but Plato is still a starting point. 'I think we have to read them again and again and I feel that, however old I am, I am on the threshold of reading Plato and Aristotle. I love them and I feel I have to start again and again and again. It is a task which is in front of me, before me.'<sup>19</sup> And, when Gendlin seeks to articulate a new way of meaning creation, he emphasizes that it is not in an attempt to deny the value of logic.<sup>20</sup> What both Derrida and Gendlin do show is that a move 'beyond' cannot remain an issue of addressing only the explicitly stated content, but also involves the implicit structures.

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<sup>19</sup> John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>20</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xv.



## 2.2 Thinking Beyond Patterns

Meaning emerges for Gendlin from the implicit structure of the interaction between experiencing and logical concepts. In *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning* he presents his key ideas as follows: Experience is often constructed as a logical scheme that organizes sense perceptions, but there is also a prelogical felt dimension of experience operative as a powerful and ever present factor in the background. This felt experience is not just a vague sense. Neither is it the great existential moment which has to be protected against the deadly, objectifying force of conceptualization. The felt experience can be related to concepts without distortion when we 'investigate prelogical, "preconceptual" experience as it functions *together with* logical symbols' and when we do 'not substitute one for the other.'<sup>21</sup> Gendlin's key claim is that 'meaning is formed in the interaction of experiencing and something that functions symbolically. Feeling without symbolization is blind; symbolization without feeling is empty.'<sup>22</sup> The role of felt experiencing in all our conceptual operations is not an illegitimate "bias." It is a natural and proper function. So Gendlin is looking for a philosophy of the relation between schemes and experiencing in which he wants to avoid two extremes: (a) the idea that meaning lies in logic and that feeling is a chaotic morass to be avoided, and (b) the idea that meaning lies in felt experiencing which logic can only distort. The crucial question is whether we can move beyond

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<sup>21</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, 5.

the dualism of logic versus experience. To clarify the connection we need to deal with two questions: what is experiencing? and how does it take us beyond concepts?

### 2.2.1 *Felt Meaning/Experiencing*

So, what is this felt meaning, or experiencing? Simply put, experiencing is paying attention to our whole embodied selves. Literally something like: "Sit back, relax, and pay attention to your whole 'you.'" Gendlin devised a technique called 'Focusing' to do this in a more systematic way (see section 3.3). It is simple and easily available to anyone, yet hard to 'get.'<sup>23</sup> By using the word "experiencing" (verb rather than noun), Gendlin denotes the concrete, raw, present phenomenon of the ongoing functioning in us of what is usually called experience. Other terms for it might be 'felt meaning' or 'feeling,' but not feeling as in 'emotion,' but as the 'concretely present flow of feeling.' When we direct our attention inward, it is "there." We might have a specific idea, perception, or emotion at the same time, but the concrete feeling, an inward sensing whose nature is broader, is always "there." It is the concrete mass of sense that is "there" for us. It is not at all vague in its being there, though it may be vague in that we do not yet know what it is. But if we try to find the right words for it, we often have a very precise sense of whether the word we find 'fits' with the meaning we experience, or not.

Two things should be noted about 'experiencing.' First its relation with sym-

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<sup>23</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, 11.

bols. We cannot talk about, or pay attention to the concrete, preconceptual experiencing, without the use of symbols. But this process of symbolization also works the other way around: symbols have no meaning without experienced meaning 'in the background.'

We know what we mean by "this" and "that" because we directly feel the meaning. This felt experiencing, not verbalizations, makes up all but a small part of what we think. Concepts are not meanings at all, except in relation to experiencing. Until now we have largely taken concepts at their logical face value. We must reckon with the fact that in actual thinking a concept is not at all only what it logically seems. Thought as it exists in humans (in contrast to a page of symbolic logic) involves many meanings, and these are felt and can give rise to many further concepts and changes in concepts. Concrete (verbal and other) behavior involves connections, relationships, and orders, which are very much more than and different from those of logic.<sup>24</sup>

The second point is that the relation between experiencing and symbols is always changing. 'When symbolized meanings occur in interaction with experiencing, they change. And when one employs symbols to attend to a felt meaning, it changes.'<sup>25</sup> Experienced meaning is always there and always changing. 'It may not always be clearly definable. In fact, when you pay attention you can notice that it is really never just any given definable quality or tone or content. It can always be further differentiated and further aspects of it can be specified.'<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, 13.

### 2.2.2 *Beyond Concepts with Experiencing*

The project of Gendlin is to 'enter into how concepts (logical forms, distinctions, rules, algorithms, computers, categories, patterns, ...) relate to experiencing (situations, events, therapy, metaphoric language, practice, human intricacy, ...).'<sup>27</sup> It should be noticed that 'the experiential side always exceeds the concepts.'<sup>28</sup> Because we are always already in a situation, in an 'implicit experiential context that is more than any formed form,'<sup>29</sup> no logic is ever pure, and no concept ever exhausts the part of the situation it refers to; there is always "more." 'If we enter into how this more functions, we become able to employ it deliberately, and find that many ways of thought open from it which otherwise did not exist.'<sup>30</sup>

Since experiencing and concepts (symbols) are always already implicit in each other, how can we tell them apart, and how can we discern their different roles? Gendlin looks at the points of 'transition from one statement or action to another.'<sup>31</sup> Such moves can be interruptions or changes in what we say or think, or the unfolding of what we are doing at the moment, simply telling what happens next. In such cases we can construct, explicate, the logical connection operative in the background.

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<sup>27</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xi.

<sup>28</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xi.

<sup>29</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xii.

<sup>30</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xii.

<sup>31</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xii.

However, the next step can also emerge from an experiential connection we make because 'it makes sense.' How we experience a situation can silently lead us to make the connection, but we can also 'pause to refer directly to experiencing.'<sup>32</sup> Since such a direct reference is itself a yet another change, it can lead to a further move, and so on. By entering into this experiential-interactional functioning, we can start to distinguish different kinds of further moves, starting with, relative to, but not ultimately bound to, experiencing.

A new philosophy can begin with the recognition that we can assume neither that the world is ordered as a logical or conceptual system, nor that it is arbitrary as if "anything goes." It is a great error to think that something is lost by this recognition. Instead, we discover that we can think with the greater precision and intricacy that is characteristic of situations, experience, practice, action. This is more orderly and precise than the pretended, overarching definitions.<sup>33</sup>

By speaking and thinking with the way in which words exceed their conceptual structure, even while employing that structure, we can enter into the inherent complexity of language in use. Because words elicit effects which are more 'precise and demanding than could follow just from the structure,' we can employ this 'experienced "excess" deliberately in a stronger and more critical thinking.'<sup>34</sup>

### 2.2.3 *Ontological Questions*

Gendlin proposes an ontology in which intricate life-interactions, such as between

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<sup>32</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xiii.

<sup>33</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xvi.

<sup>34</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, xvi.

thinking and experiencing or between body and environment, take center-stage. Because he works with a radically embodied epistemology, he might set up a body/knowledge dualism, but by focusing on the interactions his ontology remains non-dualistic. If we connect this with the previous discussion of attempts to move beyond modern, we could conclude that Gendlin does what he sets out to do, namely to develop a new philosophy in which some of the 'modern' problems are avoided. Yet, his project is not without its own problems. While Gendlin seeks to tease out what the structure of thinking with the implicit is, his goal is still epistemological, and this seems to skew his queries. While we expect no sweeping ontological claims from Gendlin, his focus on the epistemological might be an indicator of a deeper issue. It might be said in his defence, as Kolb does<sup>35</sup> that *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning* was written with logical empiricists in mind as the main discussion partners. Another indicator is the implicit individualistic anthropology, which again might signal a more 'modern' approach. This might also be related to a certain ethical deficit in Gendlin's work; it is not clear what the ethical dimension of language use might be,

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<sup>35</sup> David Kolb, "Filling in the Blanks," in *Language beyond Postmodernism: Saying and Thinking in Gendlin's Philosophy*, ed. David Michael Levin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 75.

or it has at least not yet come to the fore, as Levin notices<sup>36</sup>. At this point we cannot say more, but we will come back to these questions later.

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## 2.3 Contextual Pharmacy

Language has a life of its own in the world of the written text. The dynamics involved in the reading of a written text signal that we are dealing with language in a special mode, requiring a specific treatment. The awareness of the difference between spoken and written language has exercised philosophers from before the beginnings of philosophy proper, as Derrida illustrates in his “Plato’s Pharmacy,” in which Derrida gives us a rereading of the *Phaedrus* and other Platonic texts. Playing on meanings of the word *pharmakon*, which can be translated as medicine, poison, and remedy, he illustrates the internal instability of meanings, truths, and concepts, which we, in the West after Plato, had taken for granted as being stable. However, this idea, a Platonic gift, is the product of a pharmaceutical industry. In it, such classic dualisms as speech/writing, father/son, presence/absence, inside/outside, thinking/feeling, exhibit a deeply in-grained (written into-, carved in-) preference for the first term in each pair and the suppression of the second. This ‘metaphysics of presence,’ however,

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<sup>36</sup> David Michael Levin, “Gendlin’s Use of Language: Historical Connections, Contemporary Implications,” in *Language beyond Postmodernism: Saying and Thinking in Gendlin’s Philosophy*, ed. David Michael Levin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 64.

is not as watertight as it has been presented. In his discussion of the inferior status of writing, and the elevated position of speech, Derrida shows how the text itself gives clues about its inherent instability.

...when it came to writing, Theuth said, "This discipline, my King, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memories: my invention is a recipe (*pharmakon*) for both memory and wisdom." But the King said ...<sup>37</sup>

Plato/Socrates retells an Egyptian myth about the invention of writing in order to critique it. Theuth, one of the old gods, also invented numbers and calculation, geometry and astronomy. Here we see him as he presents his inventions to the King, the god-sun-father, who in turn questions each one of them. In what unfolds, Derrida shows how the question about writing is caught up in a wider field of problems, including translation, father/son, parricide, numbers, life and death, the dissemination of meaning, and the play of signification. Some of the key terms are:

- i. *The double gesture*: Reading and writing operate under the play of difference.<sup>38</sup>

One must then, in a single gesture, but doubled, read and write. And that person would have understood nothing of the game who, at this, would feel himself authorized merely to add on; that is, to add any old thing. He would add nothing: the seam wouldn't hold. Reciprocally, he who through "methodological prudence," "norms of objectivity," or "safeguards of knowledge" would refrain from committing anything of himself, would not read at all. The same foolishness, the same sterility, obtains in the "not serious" as in the "serious." The reading or writing supplement must be rigorously prescribed, but by the necessities of a game, by the logic of

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<sup>37</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 75.

<sup>38</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 63.



play, signs to which the system of all textual powers must be accorded and attuned.<sup>39</sup>

- ii. *The dangerous supplement*: The traces or supplements at work in and through the *pharmakon* operate 'within the order of the pure signifier which no reality, no absolute external reference, no transcendental signified, can come to limit, bound, or control.'<sup>40</sup> The uncontrollable nature of the *pharmakon* makes its (unavoidable) use dangerous.
- iii. *The poisonous remedy*: The remedy against forgetfulness is unacceptable because it causes forgetfulness. The medicine is unacceptable because it also poisons, but there is no escape from the duality, because both meanings are already there from the start.

My own first reading of Derrida's text came at a time when I got involved in a discussion which illustrates some of the processes Derrida describes. The discussion concerns Christian mission organizations who are involved in publishing Bible translations in which the Christian God is not a Father and Jesus Christ not his Son.<sup>41</sup> The reason for doing this is not to gender-neutralize the translation, but to avoid offending the readers, in this case Turkish, who, as Muslims, know and reject

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<sup>39</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 64.

<sup>40</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 89.

<sup>41</sup> More on this debate here: < <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/february/soncrescent.html> >

the gospel that God has a Son. Despite testimonies to the contrary by converts, the translators apparently think that ‘sexual connotations’ present in familial language are not appropriate in relation to God. Thanks to agencies who are eager to safely ‘communicate’ the intended meaning, Turks who pick up the ‘incil-i şerif” will now read about ‘the deputy of God,’ or ‘the proxy of God,’ a God, now known as ‘Our Master in heaven.’<sup>42</sup>

### 2.3.1 *Translation as the Passage into Philosophy*

Derrida remarks that the Greek term *pharmakon* is translated as a drug, recipe, remedy, medicine, and poison. (Let’s forget about the fact that he actually writes this in French, and that we are reading a translation.)

...the malleable unity of this concept, or rather its rules and the strange logic that links it with its signifier, has been dispersed, masked, obliterated, and rendered almost unreadable not only by the imprudence or empiricism of the translators, but first and foremost by the redoubtable, irreducible difficulty of translation. It is a difficulty inherent in its very principle, situated less in the passage from one language to another, from one philosophical language to another, than already, as we shall see, in the tradition between Greek and Greek; a violent difficulty in the transference of a nonphilosopheme into a philosopheme. *With this problem of translation we will thus be dealing with nothing less than the problem of the very passage into philosophy.* (emphasis added)<sup>43</sup>

Translation is difficult, translation is treason. Derrida connects the difficulty of translation with the ‘passage into philosophy.’ Which philosophy? The Platonic / Greek / Western philosophy, also known as ‘metaphysics of presence.’ It involves

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<sup>42</sup> Available at: < <http://www.allahinhazinesi.net/AnaSayfa/Media/Matta.pdf> >

<sup>43</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 71-72.

a privileging, an erasure, which ‘cancels out the resources of ambiguity and makes difficult, if not impossible, an understanding of the context.’<sup>44</sup> The passage into philosophy is the yielding to what holds sway over us, a yielding to the suggestive power of speech, elevated at the expense of writing. Speech which, because its ‘producer’ is close at hand, is seen as having a clarity, as the transparent communicator of a truth (only one) to which we have direct access, thus securely singular and safeguarded from the corrosive play of differance. This is what makes clear why translation “after Plato” is difficult: because ‘we’ take a ‘speech-attitude’ toward a written text. We force a written text to speak a different kind of language, not its mother -tongue, ‘so to speak.’<sup>45</sup> Thus we come to speak of ‘a translation for a Muslim audience.’ The same unquestioned tendency to see a speech situation as the most original explains why nobody notices that the current standard for Scripture translation rests on a speech-based communication theory (Relevance Theory). And in a drive for ‘faithfulness’ and ‘clear’ communication we betray the text by closing down its dissemination.

### 2.3.2 *Death in the Family*

Language is a family business. ‘This scene has never been read for what it is, for what is at once sheltered and exposed in its metaphors: its family metaphors. It is

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<sup>44</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 97.

<sup>45</sup> Note the pharmaceutical properties of language *of the heart* in relation to ‘mother,’ at the scene of parricide.

all about fathers, and sons, about bastards unaided by any public assistance, about glorious, legitimate sons, about inheritance, sperm, sterility. Nothing is said of the mother, but this will not be held against us.<sup>46</sup> Fathers and sons are caught up in the play between subject and king, death and life, writing and speech.<sup>47</sup>

In distinguishing himself from his opposite, Thoth also imitates it, becomes its sign and representative, obeys it and conforms to it, replaces it, by violence if need be. He is thus the father's other, the father, and the subversive movement of replacement. The god of writing is thus at once his father, his son, and himself. He cannot be assigned a fixed spot in the play of differences. ...This god of resurrection is less interested in life or death than in death as a repetition of life and life as a rehearsal of death, in the awakening of life and in the recommencement of death. This is what *numbers*, of which he is also the inventor and patron, mean.<sup>48</sup>

The death of the Father has been played out in different ways. Both the Jewish murder of the Son, and the Islamic denial of the existence of the Son, can be analyzed as patricide by proxy. Today, Christian Bible translators, under the sway of a certain philosophy, commit the same patricide, this time through a cover-up of real or perceived sexual connotations. Tragi-ironically, they prove what Muslims knew all along: the Christian scriptures are corrupted. (It goes without saying that their own, god-written, and thus untranslatable, scriptures do not escape from the same play.)

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<sup>46</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 143.

<sup>47</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 92-93.

<sup>48</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, 93.

The problems with the Turkish translation have been blamed on a misguided missiology, on a will to produce results, and on neo-colonial in-sensitivities. I blame it also on ignorance concerning the pharmaceutical properties of writing. — This means: Because writing and translation ‘after Plato’ happen under the play of the *pharmakon*, the text is not as straightforward as a speech-based communication model suggests. Because language plays out in the familial business of the father and son, of generation and death, the proposed remedy against offending one religious community, is also a poisoning of what is a most fundamental familial configuration, that of the Trinity.<sup>49</sup>

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## 2.4 Being in Inter-Cultural Context

Language use in social interaction is a mix of explicit articulation and implicit social and cultural conventions. Drawing on his personal experience of living a life in translation (as an American in Austria among other places), the anthropologist Michael Agar explores the processes involved in second language learning.<sup>50</sup>

In his *Language Shock* Agar notices a tendency to draw a circle around ‘lan-

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<sup>49</sup> See for a discussion of translation and Christian theology also: Jacques Derrida, “What Is a “Relevant” Translation?,” trans. Lawrence Venuti, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Winter, 2001): 174-200.

<sup>50</sup> This section is based on a part of a paper I wrote for the course “Theories of Language and Interpretation,” ICS, Fall 2010.

guage' and reduce it to grammar and vocabulary. This understanding of language 'in isolation' goes back to the dichotomy introduced in linguistics by Ferdinand De Saussure when he distinguishes between 'langue' and 'parole.' Langue (language) is a clear inventory of symbols with a system that ties them together. Parole (speech) deals with what people do when they're actually using a language. Culture can be seen as the context for ordinary language use. "Culture erases the circle around language that people usually draw. You can master grammar and the dictionary, but without culture you won't communicate. With culture, you can communicate with rocky grammar and a limited vocabulary."<sup>51</sup> In order to signify the interconnectedness of language and culture, Agar introduces the word 'languaculture' to remind his readers of this obvious but often implicit relation. To explore the dynamics between language and culture in greater detail, Agar introduces several concepts: etic/emic, similarities/differences, rich points, and frames.

#### 2.4.1 *Etic/Emic*

The terms emic and etic were coined by the linguist Ken Pike and later applied in the field of anthropology.<sup>52</sup> The terms are based on the relationship between the concepts phonemic and phonetic, used in the study of speech sounds. Phonetics is universal, it deals with all possible sounds we can potentially make given the physiology of the

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<sup>51</sup> Michael Agar, *Language Shock: Understanding the Culture of Conversation* (New York: William Morrow, 1994), 29.

<sup>52</sup> See for an introduction: < [www.sil.org/~headlandt/ee-intro.htm](http://www.sil.org/~headlandt/ee-intro.htm) >

human articulatory apparatus. Phonemics is particular, it deals with that particular subsection of sounds that are used within one particular language. In ethnography, the anthropological discipline dealing with the description of behaviour of different people-groups, the terms etic and emic are used to describe two different approaches to the project. It can be described as a debate about the pros and cons of an outsider perspective versus the pros and cons of an insider perspective. Transferring this to the situation of translation between two languacultures, we might say that the move from one emic to another emic goes through the wider context of the etic. 'Etic is never the whole story but always part of every story.'<sup>53</sup> The etic is the universal background against which the particularities of the translation play out. The emic sides of the particular languacultures involved in the translation provide the contextual constraints around the space of translation possibilities.

#### 2.4.2 *Similarities/Differences*

The relation between language and the world is a much debated issue both among linguists and anthropologists. For some, language is a transparent looking-glass which opens the world to us; for others, like Sapir and Whorf, language works the other way around. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that language also shapes the world rather than simply reflecting it.<sup>54</sup> Language shapes consciousness, ways of seeing,

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<sup>53</sup> Michael Agar, "Making Sense of One Other for Another: Ethnography as Translation," *Language and Communication*, Volume 31, Issue 1 (January 2011): 38–47.

<sup>54</sup> See for a discussion of the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis: Chris Swoyer, "Relativism," *The Stanford*

acting, thinking, feeling. In a strict interpretation this leads to linguistic determinism: language is a prison with no hope of parole,<sup>55</sup> humans are inescapably bound to the language in which they grew up, and bilingualism and translation are impossible. A less strict and more realistic interpretation is linguistic relativity, which sees culture as the parole from the Whorfian prison.<sup>56</sup> The question for anthropologists is to figure out what the points of connection are between language and culture and between two symbolic systems, languacultures. The differences can be connected in terms of similarities. An illustration of this can be found in the colour studies by Berlin and Kay who asked people to identify colours on a colour spectrum, using their own language.<sup>57</sup> All humans have the same types of eyes, but different languages provide different ways of organizing colours, either splitting different shades or lumping them together. The result is that some languacultures have more (and/or different) colour terms than others. In this study human similarity (the colour spectrum) made it possible to study differences (various colour vocabularies.) "The foreground of

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*Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://Plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/relativism/supplement2.html>>.

<sup>55</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 67.

<sup>56</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 68.

<sup>57</sup> See for further discussion: Eric M. Rubenstein, "Color," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, URL = <<http://www.iep.utm.edu/color/>>.



differences is organized against the background of similarities."<sup>58</sup> Any languaculture is much richer than any similarity can handle. This means both that the existence of difference is fundamental to languaculture as such and that real engagement with another languaculture involves a move beyond patterns of similarity into 'rich points' of difference.

### 2.4.3 *Rich Points*

Experience shows that despite a certain amount of linguistic relativity, we are able to cross languacultural divides. Bilingualism and translation are difficult, but not impossible. When two languacultures come into contact, various points of contact emerge. The most revealing points are the places with the biggest difference between the languacultures in question, like a problematic piece of language tied into a far-reaching network of associations and situations of use. Metaphors are one example of playful language use which doesn't necessarily translate well into another language. Jokes are another example because they often dance on the edge of a taboo. Meaning (understanding of another languaculture) is created at such places, regardless of whether one falls into the gap or manages to carry on. Agar uses the term "rich points" (with connotations: tasty, thick, wealthy) to refer to such contact situations. We could call them places with 'a thick intricacy,' or perhaps 'the place of (too) much implicit.' Yet, they leave us 'in a hole,' lost for words, nowhere in an

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<sup>58</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 72.

*unheimlich* now and here. Rich points encountered in a languaculture are relative to the languaculture brought to them. My personal experience of moving from Dutch into English involves different rich points from what someone would experience moving from English into Dutch languaculture. The culture-side of languaculture makes the rich points understandable, explains the differences by hooking them to a common human denominator, to a shared background of being human.<sup>59</sup> A coherent account of differences, a grand narrative of great *différance* is constructed (though always partial and preliminary), as part of the transition process between two languacultures.

#### 2.4.4 *Frame or Play*

Agar uses the concept of "frame" to describe this construction of culture ('creation of culture' being shorthand for 'grappling with rich points in the transition between languacultures.')

"Frames are not the same as culture, they are a metaphor for it. Frames are like a systematic poem about culture."<sup>60</sup> Agar takes the concept of 'frame' from the discipline of Artificial Intelligence in which 'frames' are used to describe how, e.g., a robot must be programmed to move independently through a room: it has to develop a concept of objects to avoid—like chairs and tables; it has to be able to recognize the door and it has to know what to do when something unexpected

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<sup>59</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 124.

<sup>60</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 138.

happens (e.g., when the robot trips over a cat.) The meanings a frame organizes are expectations about a situation, not certainties.<sup>61</sup> Frames are not static, but they grow in a dynamic process which involves both top-down and bottom-up movements.<sup>62</sup>

Culture is something you create, something you invent to fill in the differences between you and them. It's something you manufacture in your conscious mind. It's an intellectual object. It doesn't just include intellect, though. It includes emotions. And it isn't logically pretty. It includes contradictions and ambiguities.<sup>63</sup>

This account of culture creation based on frames is not without problems. Echoing what Heidegger noted (see section 2.1.2), I am concerned about the technological nature of the metaphor. Agar does carefully specify that his frame is like 'a poem about culture,' thus indicating some room for a creative opening of the concept 'frame.' Yet, the reference to the background of 'frame' in AI shows that the technological en-framing is operative in the concept. The main problem with it is that much of our knowledge remains unconscious, implicit, and embodied. The iceberg of our knowledge obviously also includes an intellectual tip and emotions of which we are aware, but the absence of the unconscious and the implicit in this account is telling. As humans we know precisely how to walk through a room, avoid obstacles, and walk out of the door again. We can do this precisely not because we consciously manufacture a frame, but because we live always already in this world.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 134.

<sup>62</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 135.

<sup>63</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 138.

The amount of anthropological reflection on his experience probably skews Agar's assessment of how much of this frame building is conscious, though it does fit a certain tendency in Western thought, the tendency towards prioritizing conscious intentionality.

An alternative metaphor for the creation of culture might be 'play,' as it has been used by Gadamer. Play has two sides: the rules of the game and the side of the game being played. Play comes to its own in the being played of the game itself, in which the players are caught up. The players experience the two sides as the conscious (knowing the rules of the game) and the unconscious (being caught up in the game.) Gadamer goes so far as to state that play (as in being played) has the primacy over the consciousness of the player.<sup>65</sup> The playground can be seen as the context within which the players learn to read their world. Learning to play a game can be a good metaphor for the process of mapping a new languaculture. It has the side of figuring out what the rules are through conscious reflection on the experience of differences between various languacultures. But learning really happens in becoming part of the game itself as it is played out. An experienced player knows precisely how to hit a ball (or play a note) even though it seems impossible to articulate how it is done. Likewise an experienced traveller between languacultures knows how

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<sup>64</sup> See for this debate: Hubert L. Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1993).

<sup>65</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 103.

to play the 'languaculture game' even though much of the experience/competence involved is not readily available for conscious reflection. This does not mean that it cannot be accessed, but it does point to the fact that this game is more complex and intricate than the use of 'frame' suggests. The dynamic, creative, and fluid nature of 'play' captures the process of coming home in a new languaculture better than the technological metaphor employed by Agar. Yet, this particular account of play based on Gadamer has some important limitations. In chapter 4 I propose a different account, based on Derrida.

#### *2.4.5 Immigrants as Inter-Contextual Travellers*

Even on a 'simple' walk through a city like Toronto the wide variety of languacultures is immediately evident. Even though the overall number of languages keeps going down, we take for granted that in a post-modern globalization 'hot spot' like Toronto, the number of different languacultures one typically encounters still rises, even though the process also involves a certain confusion in which boundaries become less clear. Each 'iteration' of the experience of a 'new' languaculture turns out to be different. While some people (like tourists) live through this from an outside perspective, for others (like immigrants) the experience of living through "rich points" becomes an inseparable part of their identity. As an immigrant in Canada myself, I was aware of that context. Because I had been in the UK for three years before moving to Toronto, the new frames/games that I'm producing deal mostly with cultural issues, rather than with language acquisition issues. At the same time I'm

always aware of my bilingual situation and sometimes feel that I'm lingua-culturally 'at sea', at home between lands. This 'in between' works in different directions so that even one's 'mother tongue' can become strange, as I noticed when I read Derrida, whom I had read only in English translation, for the first time in Dutch.

On the last pages of his book Agar discusses the "immigrant sensibility," 'a sensibility based on the fact the no-one deals with the simple world that they grew up in any more.'<sup>66</sup> One other way of describing it is to say that the immigrant lives in a third culture. Usually the home culture of an immigrant is seen as the first culture and the new context as the second culture. The place where the immigrant really lives is a third culture, a place in which nobody grew up but which emerges through the process of playing the languaculture game. This third culture is not a quotation of the new culture in opposition to the first culture. Rather it should be seen as the result of iterations of different games/frames. This happens in the context of a (never completely saturated) synthesis of several languacultures at once. Being placed into a new context results in a certain breach in the overall structure of life, it results in losses and gains, it makes vulnerable and empowers (which makes the life of an immigrant, the 'vocational stranger,' both exciting and dangerous.)

In *Circumfession*<sup>67</sup> Derrida wrote about his own experience as an North-African

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<sup>66</sup> Agar, *Language Shock*, 245.

<sup>67</sup> Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Jew living in France, not feeling quite at home in any of his languacultures. It could be that this sensitivity is one of the factors behind his focus on difference and diversity and his foregrounding of context. It seems to me that at least a part of both the intensity and the mis-communication in the exchange between Derrida and Searle can be traced back to an incompatibility between Searle's monolingual cultural background and Derrida's bilingual immigrant sensitivity. It is striking that speech act theory sees language in a very restrained way: the language use it can account for has to be 'normal', 'ordinary,' and 'serious'; it is unambiguous and controlled. In a way it represents and reflects the values of a white, English languaculture of power and control in which the African-Jewish-French Derrida could not feel safe. It also represents a philosophical outlook which seems to exclude what is seen as different and ambiguous. It seems to me that Derrida's multilingual immigrant sensitivity also comes into play when we consider the ease (seemingly at least) with which he connects something 'simple,' like writing, with a most fundamental questioning of Western philosophy and his persistent exposure of speech act theory as extra-ordinarily 'simple.' The bilingual awareness might also help explain why the need for this rupture is felt more deeply by continental Europeans than by (some) Anglo-Americans.

### 3 Infrastructures

In this chapter we will think about how language, seen as an intricate situation, can be explicated. In order to understand the process of explication we need to think about language as happening / having effects / working in four layers.<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that the numbers imply no hierarchy (this does not mean that no such hierarchy exists, but I don't know yet whether and what it is.) Once we have the layer model in place we can take a new look at some structural systemic issues.

#### 3.1 Layers: I-IV - Surface and Deep Structure

Language has a 'surface' layer. No matter what happens 'elsewhere' or 'deep inside,' at a certain point we articulate words and sentences, and at a certain point others can read or hear what we write or say. The surface is the interface with the 'outside' world, both inter-subjectively and referentially. At this point we don't know yet whether 'inside' and 'outside' are the best terms, but given our Western philosophical heritage they tend to suggest themselves to us.<sup>69</sup> The same tendency leads to the suggestion that 'under' the surface layer we have a 'deep structure.'<sup>70</sup> Yet, that same tendency, elsewhere identified as logocentrism (see p. 5), leads many to ignore and suppress the deep structure of the (inner) workings of the language. This leads to reading /

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<sup>68</sup> The number of layers proposed here just seemed to make sense, and is not related for Heidegger's 'four-fold.'

<sup>69</sup> In Chapter 4 we will discuss on alternative configuration suggested by Deleuze and Guattari.

<sup>70</sup> When I call the 'non-surface' a 'deep structure' I'm not suggesting anything like a Chomskyan 'deep structure' of generative linguistics.



interpretation / translation models which limit themselves (mostly) to the surface layer, at the expense of the deep structure. If we say that hermeneutics involves also an interaction with the deep structure, rather than a simple 'reading' of the text, we could say that the surface is the lens through which or the mirror in which we 'read' / interpret the underlying hermeneutic processes. Finally, to make a connection with the process of symbolization as suggested by Gendlin, we can start with the idea that explication involves bringing part of the intricacy to the surface layer.

In the deep structure we can discern three layers. All these layers are in different ways 'at play' in the unfolding of the explicit. These layers are not separate and disjunct layers like geological strata, but one mixed set of interactions. Yet we can discern the layers by tuning into the different frequencies or bandwidths at which their respective activities are transmitted. The layers are like the different voices in a polyphonic piece of music. We can experience the music as a whole, but also tune in to the different voices. Even less obviously measurable is the difference in colour or character we can notice between, for example, the string-section and the wood-winds. The three layers are provisionally called 'layer II', 'layer III,' and 'layer IV.'

### 3.2 Layers: II - the Speaking of Language

In chapter 2.1 we saw how Taylor writes about the designative and the expressive sides of language.<sup>71</sup> While there is no one-to-one relation between those two sides and the analysis of surface/deep-structure, it is clear that some layers reveal more of

the expressive side of language. Layer II reveals language as world disclosure. The role of the attuned person is to be passive and let being speak. Heidegger developed the idea that being itself speaks in and through language, and he suggests we need to recognize the “speaking of the eón” in every word, every conjunction of words, and ‘particularly in those junctures of language which are not specifically put in words.’<sup>72</sup> This concealed speaking has to be opened up in thinking. In order to understand this thinking we need to understand language, and for Heidegger it is specifically in ‘poetic’ language that ‘the unconcealedness of being’<sup>73</sup> gets its articulation. While all language has a poetic dimension (potentially), it is in particular in certain poems that Heidegger finds the voice that he wants to hear. Poetic language projects a world; authentic language brings the way things are into the light. Authentic language is connected with authentic human being, or ‘dwelling’ – which in turn is contrasted with being in the grips of an inauthentic, “framed” (or technological) attitude towards the world that characterizes our twenty-first century just as much as Heidegger’s twentieth. The power of poetry comes from its ‘being in tune’ with being and the articulation of its melody in language: the poet stops to listen and to hear the call of being. In this way the poet ‘measures’ being as it is played out between what

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<sup>71</sup> This section is based on a part of a paper I wrote for the course “Religion, Life, and Society,” ICS, Fall 2010.

<sup>72</sup> Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 233.

<sup>73</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 72.

Heidegger calls 'the fourfold' of earth and sky, of mortals and the divine. In this perspective 'thinking' is a rethinking in the space of/for dwelling, or to put it in another way: the remembering, recalling, gathering together of the unfolding of actual life itself.

### 3.2.1 *Heidegger on Language*

Language distinguishes human beings from plants and animals. Yet, what is language? Since Heidegger is not interested in a universal idea about language, he rather wants to let language speak for itself. Language speaks, or, 'language is language.'<sup>74</sup> Does this tautology get us anywhere? No, but according to Heidegger that is precisely what we want: 'to get to just where we are already.'<sup>75</sup> Still, the sentence 'language is language' leaves us hovering over an abyss, with no ground to stand on.<sup>76</sup> What does it mean to speak? Traditionally speech is seen as expression, the externalization of something internal. Speech is seen as the activity of human beings, rather than something which language itself does. Others, referring to the Prologue of the Gospel of John, stress the divine origin of language. While such, and other, characterizations of language are valid, they miss 'the oldest natural cast of language.'<sup>77</sup> Though they are antique, they won't bring us back to language as language. This is

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<sup>74</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 188.

<sup>75</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 188.

<sup>76</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 189.

<sup>77</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 191.

one of the points where Heidegger is explicit about the fact that he wants to go back behind the whole tradition of Western philosophy to a more primal understanding of being, in this case of the being of language. To hear language speak we cannot listen to a random collection of speech sounds: we have to listen to language ‘spoken purely,’ to the language of a poem. The poem in question is *A Winter Evening* by Georg Trakl.<sup>78</sup>

Window with falling snow is arrayed,  
 Long tolls the vesper bell,  
 The house is provided well,  
 The table is for many laid.

Wandering ones, more than a few,  
 Come to the door on darksome courses.  
 Golden blooms the tree of graces  
 Drawing up the earth’s cool dew.

Wanderer quietly steps within;  
 Pain has turned the threshold to stone.  
 There lie, in limpid brightness shown,  
 Upon the table bread and wine.

In a ‘traditional’ analysis of this poem we might say that this poem describes a winter evening with, in the first stanza, snowfall, the ringing of the vesper bell and a prepared meal inside the warm house. In contrast, in the second stanza, many wander outside in the dark, but they come to the door. In the third stanza the wanderer crosses the threshold and the table becomes an altar in a house of God.

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<sup>78</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 192.

But what if, as Heidegger claims, language is not an expression or activity of the human being, of the poet, what if we listen to the speaking of language?

In the first stanza the elements are called forth. The snowfall and the (long) vesper bell (who doesn't notice that during snowfall everything lasts longer?) are called into being together with house and table. In the poem (written in the past and read in the present) the elements are called 'here into presence, there into absence'<sup>79</sup> in a double presence/absence. Human beings are called to be by the elements: snow brings them under the sky, the vesper bell before the divine, and 'house and table join mortals to the earth.'<sup>80</sup> The fourfold of earth and sky, of mortal and divine is the world in which the things are gathered. In being named, things are called into their 'thinging,' their way of being. In 'thinging' they unfold the world, they give birth, carry, gesture the world. At this point Heidegger's insightful/creative use of the Old High German 'beran' (to bear) counts as a good example of the sort of 'archaeology' involved and necessary for letting language speak.

The wanderers of the second stanza come to the door. They have not already arrived, they are by no means 'arrive.' Rather, they are the real mortals since they wander on 'darksome courses' 'toward death,' which is the 'supreme concealedness of Being.'<sup>81</sup> The second part of the second stanza speaks about the tree which is

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<sup>79</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 196.

<sup>80</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 197.

<sup>81</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 198.

rooted in the earth and reaches toward heaven, blooming. The fruit it bears falls free, gratis, in the hands of human beings in a gracious meeting of the fourfold (earth and sky, mortals, and divinities.)<sup>82</sup>

The first stanza of the poem bids the things to come which, thinging, bear world. The second stanza bids that world to come which, worlding, grants things. The third stanza bids the middle for world and things to come: the carrying out of the intimacy.<sup>83</sup>

The world and the things penetrate each other, they are inter-connected. In the 'inter,' the crossing-point, the in-between they are both intimately together and divided.<sup>84</sup> The difference which connects them is a division. Or rather, the dimension of world and thing, which measures out, allots, opens up, calls both world and thing into itself and toward each other.<sup>85</sup> The third stanza calls the wanderer to come 'within.' Then:

Pain has turned the threshold to stone.

'The threshold bears the between.'<sup>86</sup> In this middle, inside and outside meet, but more than that: the threshold carries both and has to be hard and unmovable as stone. Pain turned the threshold to stone. Pain reveals a rift, a tearing apart but in its rending it also draws everything together. It might be useful to think

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<sup>82</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 199.

<sup>83</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 200-201.

<sup>84</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 199.

<sup>85</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 200.

<sup>86</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 201.

about how a painful wound calls for attention, how it focuses the presence of the whole body to one point. The pain of the threshold is the joining of the rift of the difference. It is the 'gathering middle, in whose intimacy the bearing of things and the granting of world pervade one another.'<sup>87</sup> Visible from the threshold, in 'limpid (clear) brightness,' are bread and wine. 'The fruits of heaven and earth, gifts from the divinities to mortals.'<sup>88</sup> In fourfoldness things and world are in the middle of their intimacy. They are. Gathered in 'the onefold of the pain of intimacy' world and thing are in the 'stillness' of being.<sup>89</sup> This is where for Heidegger 'language speaks.'<sup>90</sup> The stillness carries out, bears, endures world and things into presence.<sup>91</sup> The speech of language is the speaking of language itself, but the speech of the mortals is also a calling that names, a bidding forth out of the onefold of the threshold. (As an aside, it is instructive to recall how, when Adam names the animals, he is able to come up with a fitting name or characterization of each animal. 'Naming' and 'coming forth' are interrelated.) For Heidegger the pure bidding makes speech a poem. Poetry is pure speech, not a higher mode of everyday language. Rather, everyday language is a forgotten poem. And the opposite of poetry is not prose because 'pure prose

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<sup>87</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 202.

<sup>88</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 203.

<sup>89</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 204.

<sup>90</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 203.

<sup>91</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 205.

is never “prosaic” but rather poetic—and thus rare.<sup>92</sup> Human speech takes place in the speaking of language. Human speaking is characterized by listening to the speaking of language, a response unfolding through ‘receptive listening,’<sup>93</sup> through the ‘twofold way’ of receiving and replying. And again: ‘man speaks in that he responds to language.’<sup>94</sup> Though it might not look like it, Heidegger claims that he is not so much interested in coming up with a new view of language, but rather he wants to challenge his readers to ‘learn to live in the speaking of language.’<sup>95</sup>

### 3.2.2 *Overcoming Metaphysics?*

Heidegger is to be commended for identifying and trying to break with the tendency to theorize about the nature of things in an abstract and theoretical way. But is he able, to use the proper philosophical terms for this project, to overcome metaphysics? We saw how he heeds the call of phenomenology and turns his attention to the things themselves. His attentiveness to the earthly side of reality is clear in the way in which he exegetes the poem, and this side of his thinking is attractive and useful. I hear in it the call to listen to how language speaks in new ways.

Still, the question remains whether Heidegger is able to ‘overcome metaphysics’? It has been noted by some commentators<sup>96</sup> that for Heidegger ‘Being’

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<sup>92</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 205.

<sup>93</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 206.

<sup>94</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 207.

<sup>95</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 207.



speaks only Greek (and if that is not sufficient: German). Derrida comments in his “The Ends of Man”: ‘if Heidegger has radically deconstructed the domination of metaphysics by the present, he has done so in order to lead us to think the presence of the present. But the thinking of this presence can only metaphorize, by means of a profound necessity from which one cannot simply decide to escape, the language that it deconstructs.’<sup>97</sup> By focusing on being ‘here’ and ‘now’, in the presence, Heidegger leads us to a metaphorical and thus metaphysical being in language. This means that he does not escape from a one-sidedness which characterizes much of Western philosophy.

As Caputo suggests, this one-sidedness is not just a philosophical choice (as if philosophy is ever ‘just philosophy’) but it has dangerous ethical/political consequences, as the biography of Heidegger shows in his being on the wrong side of justice during World War Two. If this connection indeed exists, the exclusion of the ‘other’ (which is inherent in this thinking) needs to be challenged by heeding the call for justice to come. The biblical prophets can serve as an example. It is not accidental that some of their starkest calls are among the most powerful, evocative and ‘poetic’ language of the Scriptures. The prophets speak ‘pure’ language, when they call to care for the weak and vulnerable, for those who cannot assert their pure presence, and in whom we can see—precisely for that reason—the face of God. The,

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<sup>96</sup> See for example: John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993.

<sup>97</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986), 131.

metaphorically speaking, 'Jewish' voice of 'the Other' gives a different perspective on the problem of being and the problem of metaphysics. Looking backwards we can trace how the history of the West has emerged in the rift between the two languages, the two 'calls.' In that place we are an oxymoron, a 'jewgreek' or a 'greekjew.' Looking toward the future, we need to challenge the Greek Heidegger with Jews like Derrida and Levinas.

### *3.2.3 Before/Beyond the Fourfold*

What we can learn from Heidegger's discussion of 'the fourfold' is the need to think at a profound level about 'things' and the 'world.' Heidegger portrays the gathering of the fourfold of earth and sky, mortals and divinities as the old and 'authentic' mode of being. But, whatever fittingness and evocative power this image has, did this fourfold ever exist? It is not unusual for older/other civilisations to have a basic set of 4-7 elements from which reality is constructed. A classic (Greek!) example is the use of the basic elements of water and fire, earth and air. If we compare this set with Heidegger's fourfold, a difference appears. (Let's assume for the time being that air and sky are the same.) He replaces water and fire with mortals and divinities. At this point the fourfold no longer represents the basic elements from which reality appears in a bottom-up way or direction. By introducing mortals and the divine in the list, Heidegger takes earth and sky up in a larger whole, as if at a 'higher level of conception.' The 'old' fourfold of the elements names diverse parts, while Heidegger's new "ancient" fourfold names wholes, a move which frames

our perspective on 'thing' and 'world' almost toward an outsider point of view. Despite the fact that we are called 'toward' the things as they themselves just are, the all-encompassing nature of the perspective (including the divine) pulls us back into a wide-angle perspective in which we clearly see all the actors involved. We might call this a universalizing tendency, a place where 'the metaphysics of presence' creeps back into Heidegger's thought.

It may be that the Heideggerian fourfold has no relation with the classic elements. However, their function as the fold in which being is, remains suggestive and forces us to look again at the 'old' fourfold. The elements left out by Heidegger are 'water' and 'fire.' In the Heideggerian account we find 'language as language' if we trace its path through the intersection of heaven and earth, and—in this case—of water and fire. I suggest that 'water' and 'fire' are biblical marks of the coming of Word and Spirit. The twofold of Word/Spirit is the threshold which bears/carries, joins/divides things and world. I connect the Word/Spirit with water and fire, because these elements figure at a number of crucial 'beginnings' in the Scriptures. The elements water and fire occur in the two baptisms referred to in the Gospel of Luke 3:16 where John the Baptist declares: 'I baptize you with *water*. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and *fire*.' Here we see the mark of water and fire, signifying the coming of Word and Spirit; here connected with the start of the earthly ministry of Jesus. The originary world-bearing of/by Word/Spirit is

implicitly suggested by Heidegger when he refers to one classic point of connection between God, language, and world, namely the Prologue of the Gospel of John, in which ‘in the beginning the Word was with God.’<sup>98</sup> In the original beginning in Genesis 1, which clearly echoes in the background of John 1, the speaking into being of sky and earth is also connected with the Spirit, the breath of life, creating / forming / shaping, ‘hovering over the abyss’ (Gen 1:2). A similar elementary relation between language (Word) and the element of fire (Spirit) is reported in Acts 2, where at the feast of Pentecost the mysterious manifestation of multiple languages is marked by flames of fire (Acts 2:22,26). I don’t have time and space to develop this theme fully, but this is sufficient to suggest an important configuration of Word/Spirit and the elements of the fourfold. This short meditation suggests a theological re-reading of the Heideggerean schema from which we can conclude that we can hear the speaking of language in the twofold of Word/Spirit. I realize that I cannot answer the important question why Heidegger replaced water/fire with mortals/divinities; that would take us outside this thesis.

### 3.3 Layers: III - Active Focusing

Layer III is interaction with language in the bandwidth of ‘Focusing’ and ‘Thinking At the Edge.’<sup>99</sup> It is a ‘going out,’ a ‘going after’ to hear the “situation” speak in language. Like Layer II it works from a position of attunement, but unlike Layer II it is not

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<sup>98</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 190.

<sup>99</sup> A general introduction and background material available at: < <http://www.focusing.org> >

passive. The Gendlinean “situation” of intricacy is an instance of Being-in-the-world requiring a gentle reflective-active engagement in which the ‘listener’ is not silent, but reflects back what is spoken from the intricacy. In this process new ‘things’ emerge, new meaning is discovered-constructed. The process can happen inter-subjectively, but also intrapersonally, as I illustrate in chapter 4, where I apply it to the translation of the term ‘intricacy.’

### 3.3.1 *Focusing as a Practice*

The best way to understand focusing as a practice is to actually try it out. What follows is an excerpt from *Focusing* that describes the six steps of the focusing process.

The inner act of focusing can be broken down into six main sub-acts or movements. As you gain more practice, you won't need to think of these as six separate parts of the process. To think of them as separate movements makes the process seem more mechanical than it is – or will be, for you, later. I have subdivided the process in this way because I've learned from years of experimenting that this is one of the effective ways to teach focusing to people who have never tried it before.

Think of this as only the basics. As you progress and learn more about focusing you will add to these basic instructions, clarify them, approach them from other angles. Eventually – perhaps not the first time you go through it – you will have the experience of something shifting inside.

So here are the focusing instructions in brief form, manual style. If you want to try them out, do so easily, gently. If you find difficulty in one step or another, don't push too hard, just move on to the next one. You can always come back.

#### **Clearing a space**

What I will ask you to do will be silent, just to yourself. Take a moment just to relax . . . All right – now, inside you, I would like you to pay attention inwardly, in your body, perhaps in your stomach or chest. Now see what comes there when you

ask, "How is my life going? What is the main thing for me right now?" Sense within your body. Let the answers come slowly from this sensing. When some concern comes, DO NOT GO INSIDE IT. Stand back, say "Yes, that's there. I can feel that, there." Let there be a little space between you and that. Then ask what else you feel. Wait again, and sense. Usually there are several things.

### **Felt Sense**

From among what came, select one personal problem to focus on. DO NOT GO INSIDE IT. Stand back from it. Of course, there are many parts to that one thing you are thinking about – too many to think of each one alone. But you can feel all of these things together. Pay attention there where you usually feel things, and in there you can get a sense of what all of the problem feels like. Let yourself feel the unclear sense of all of that.

### **Handle**

What is the quality of this unclear felt sense? Let a word, a phrase, or an image come up from the felt sense itself. It might be a quality-word, like tight, sticky, scary, stuck, heavy, jumpy or a phrase, or an image. Stay with the quality of the felt sense till something fits it just right.

### **Resonating**

Go back and forth between the felt sense and the word (phrase, or image). Check how they resonate with each other. See if there is a little bodily signal that lets you know there is a fit. To do it, you have to have the felt sense there again, as well as the word. Let the felt sense change, if it does, and also the word or picture, until they feel just right in capturing the quality of the felt sense.

### **Asking**

Now ask: what is it, about this whole problem, that makes this quality (which you have just named or pictured)? Make sure the quality is sensed again, freshly, vividly (not just remembered from before). When it is here again, tap it, touch it, be with it, asking, "What makes the whole problem so \_\_\_\_\_?" Or you ask, "What is in this sense?"

If you get a quick answer without a shift in the felt sense, just let that kind of answer go by. Return your attention to your body and freshly find the felt sense again. Then ask it again.

Be with the felt sense till something comes along with a shift, a slight “give” or release.

### **Receiving**

Receive whatever comes with a shift in a friendly way. Stay with it a while, even if it is only a slight release. Whatever comes, this is only one shift; there will be others. You will probably continue after a little while, but stay here for a few moments.

If during these instructions somewhere you have spent a little while sensing and touching an unclear holistic body sense of this problem, then you have focused. It doesn’t matter whether the body-shift came or not. It comes on its own. We don’t control that.<sup>100</sup>

In my experience, using a focusing-type of approach (either in the more formal six-step sense, or in a more free-flowing mode) does indeed help to bring implicitly known meanings to articulation. During the writing of this thesis I have used this approach quite often, as I indicate at a few places. Even though I am by no means a proficient focusing practitioner I do consider focusing to be one of the valuable ‘tools’ at my disposal in my philosophical writing.

### *3.3.2 Listening in Twofold*

The difference between II and III is a difference in the relative activity of the person attuned to the situation. To use an example: someone at ground control sees a ‘blip’ on the radar screen. It is clear that an aircraft approaches the airport, but that is all the ‘blip’ says of itself. The ‘blip’ merely reflects the surface of the aircraft. An aircraft has a transponder on board, a special radio which transmits a code which is picked up by ground control. Once the code is picked up, key indicators like aircraft type, flight

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<sup>100</sup> This excerpt from *Focusing*, chapter 4, as downloaded from: < <http://www.focusing.org/sixsteps.html> >

number, operator code, etc. appear on the radar screen. This is a layer II situation in which the operator doesn't need to do much, except to listen to / watch the incoming information. 'Hearing Being speak' is something like picking up / deciphering the transponder code of language. The ground control operator can also use the voice radio channel to contact the pilot. The operator can 'interview' the pilot and, listening carefully to the answers coming back, can get to know different aspects of the aircraft, the flight, or the passengers. Certainly, if the focus is to get more information from the side of the pilot, the situation resembles a layer III activity like Focusing. Notice that the ground operator is taking a more active role. What was implicit (only known in the cockpit) is made explicit at the prompting of the ground control operator. The focusing-parallel to this is the handle-resonate-ask-receive feedback loop. Also, whatever sort of "interview" the operator conducts, the knowledge gained is true (provided the pilot is honest), no matter which direction the pilot wanders off to. The emerging and evolving interview situation is open to whatever comes.

### 3.4 Layers: IV - Ruptured Unfolding

Explication involves an unfolding of what is implicit (folded). Layer IV is a deeper layer (notice a certain order slipping in) in which a "rupture" occurs in the fabric of language. This layer is operative underneath the conscious interactive processes of the participants in layer II and III. In order to get more clarity about this disruptive process, I will suggest two ideas which seem to correlate with it: 'the transgression



of the thetic' (as proposed by Julia Kristeva) and Plato on the 'khôra' (as discussed by Jacques Derrida.) This section will finish with a discussion of the act of writing.

### 3.4.1 *Double Reading of the Khôra*

During a roundtable conversation at Villanova University in 1994 Derrida remarked that he was 'on the threshold of reading Plato and Aristotle.'<sup>101</sup> Yet, his readings and re-readings of Plato are prime examples of the deconstructive double readings he is known for. What is 'double' about his readings is that, after a detailed, respectful, scholarly reading of the text, Derrida turns his attention to the tensions and the contradictions in the text to upset the traditional reading. This upsetting second reading is not a disrespectful discrediting of Plato: as 'a sign of love and respect for Plato, I have to analyze the functioning and disfunctioning of his work.'<sup>102</sup> The deconstructive double-reading is not a method or strategy applied from the outside, but deconstruction is a process which is always already at work on the inside. The question is whether the reader notices it. One of the Platonic themes whose deconstructive workings went unnoticed for a long time is the *khôra* in the *Timaeus*. Reason for Derrida to pay special attention. Derrida proposes a distinction between the 'philosophy' of Plato and the 'text' of Plato. The 'philosophy' of Plato is the dominant reading, an abstraction and simplification of a text which is a heterogeneous complex. While Platonism

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<sup>101</sup> John D. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>102</sup> Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 9.

is certainly one of the 'effects' of the text, it has silenced other readings of the text. A certain logocentrism, a privileging of the logic of the arguments, has caused a lopsided misreading of the Platonic text that tames the transgressive tendencies. Yet, in the middle of the *Timaeus* Plato introduces the 'khôra.'

*Khôra* is just there: "there is" '(il y a) khôra', and this meant in the most minimalistic sense. This "there is" must not be confused with any generosity; it is not to be taken to mean that it "gives" anything, as in the German "there is/' es gibt.'" It is nothing kindly and generous, and does not "give" or provide a place, which is the trap that Heidegger falls into when he finds a "giving" in this 'es gibt' which puts thinking-as-thanking in its debt. Nor is it properly receiving, since it is unaffected by that by which it is filled. It is not even absolutely passive inasmuch as both active and passive operations take place in it.<sup>103</sup> 'Khôra' is a singularity, indifferent to determination. As a non-place place it is 'the very spacing of de-construction.'<sup>104</sup> As such it seamlessly fits in differential workings of language identified by Derrida, if that were possible. And, 'if *differance* is what deconstruction is all about, in a nutshell, then "*khôra* is its surname."<sup>105</sup>

It is not quite clear what the *khôra* is. It doesn't quite fit in the Platonic world, in the dualism of the intelligible upper world of the forms and the sensi-

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<sup>103</sup> Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 94-5.

<sup>104</sup> Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 97.

<sup>105</sup> Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 96.

ble shadow-world down here. It is not perceptible by the senses but only by the mind, but it is not an intelligible object of the mind like the forms. It is 'not a legitimate son of reason but is apprehended by a spurious or corrupted logos, a hybrid of bastard reasoning.'<sup>106</sup> Khôra is neither intelligible being nor sensible becoming, but a little like both, the subject matter of neither a true logos nor a good mythos.'<sup>107</sup> The word *khôra* means 'place' or 'area,' but this *khôra* is a 'gap,' an enigmatic 'between-space,' or perhaps an abysmal 'void.' By locating the discussion of this *khôra* in the middle of the *Timaeus*, itself a survey of the whole kosmos, the text seems to suggest that right under the philosophically structured order some aporetic non-place is operative. Suggesting the operations of *khôra* at this place indicates that in order to account for the systemic transgressions of the structured order 'philosophy must invoke a forgotten preorigin which is structurally lost to philosophy's memory.'<sup>108</sup> The *khôra* is not intelligible or sensible, but participates in both in some way. It is a maternal receptacle in which the form generates the sensible, again as in a Platonic family scene.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 84.

<sup>107</sup> Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 84.

<sup>108</sup> Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 92.

<sup>109</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 171.

### 3.4.2 *Transgression of the Symbolic System*

The maternal *khôra* is a theme also picked up by Kristeva in her account of the revolutionary potential of poetic language. In her psychoanalytic rereading of the structure of language and interpretation she proposes the terms ‘symbolic’ and ‘semiotic’ to explain that language is both a system and a transgression of system. The “symbolic” refers to the realm of meaning, judgement, representation within a sign system. The “semiotic” refers to the embodied instinctual drives affecting the symbolic dialectically. Like the *khôra* the semiotic is prior to the symbolic. In the early development of the young child the semiotic drives become ordered and emerge, eventually, in a symbolic representation, recognizable as language. In Kristeva’s account the emergence of language points to a break in the signifying process, establishing the (self)identification of the subject and its objects, a rupture between the ego and the world. This ‘thetic phase’<sup>110</sup> also inaugurates the boundary between the semiotic and the symbolic. However, meaning-constitution can be disrupted, and these disruptions are important elements in her account of the revolutionary potential of poetic language.

BREACHING THE THETIC: MIMESIS: While literary signification implies denotative signification (which leads to knowledge of a real object), it tends toward another direction, through the process of mimesis. Mimesis is the construction of an object not according to truth, but to ‘verisimilitude’, the appearance of being real. In this

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<sup>110</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 43.

process the subject of enunciation does not suppress the semiotic *khôra*, but raises it to the status of signifier. Mimesis partakes of the symbolic order, but in poetic language it also transgresses grammatical rules. The symbolic is subverted in two ways: in its ability to denotate and in its function as possessor of meaning. Poetic mimesis dissolves/breaks the thetic function of positing the subject. Poetic language 'puts the subject in process/on trail' by disrupting the thetic function.

Mimesis ... is a transgression of the thetic when truth is no longer a reference to an object that is identifiable outside of language; it refers instead to an object that can be constructed through the semiotic network but is nevertheless posited in the symbolic and is, from then on, always verisimilar.<sup>111</sup>

Mimesis and poetical language 'prevent the thetic from becoming theological,' by which Kristeva means: they 'prevent the imposition of the thetic from hiding the semiotic process that produces it, and they bar it from inducing the subject, reified as a transcendental ego, to function solely within the systems of science and monotheistic religion.'<sup>112</sup> (Certain forms of) science and theology repress the production, the process-side of the thetic, while mimesis pluralizes denotation and poetic language undermines meaning. How? Freud's unconscious processes of 'displacement' (in structural linguistics translated into: metonymy) and 'condensation' (metaphor) account partly for this movement, but Kristeva adds a third process: 'the passage from one sign system to another.' It is a combination of displacement and condensation, but also involves an altering of the thetic position. It might involve the same

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<sup>111</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 58.

<sup>112</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 58-9.

signifying material (e.g. when a narrative becomes a text) or it may be borrowed from different sources (e.g. when an event is captured in a written text.) This is usually called ‘inter-textuality,’ but given Kristeva’s stress on the process-side, she uses the word ‘transposition.’ At this point another Freudian concept is introduced: representability. If transposition is the general ability of the signifying processes to move between sign systems, representability is the particular articulation of the semiotic and the thetic for a sign system. Mimesis and poetic language go through the thetic’s truth (signification and denotation) to tell the ‘truth’ about it.<sup>113</sup> At this point poetic language enters the social and ideological debate. By unfolding the unicity of the thetic (the precondition for meaning and signification), they challenge what Kristeva calls ‘theologization’ and set in motion what ‘dogma’ represses. ‘And thus, its complexity unfolded by its practices, the signifying process joins social revolution.’<sup>114</sup> I don’t want to evaluate the Freudian and Marxist narratives at work in Kristeva’s presentation, but simply to illustrate how a notion of ‘rupture’ emerges in her text.

### 3.4.3 *Rupture in Language and Writing*

Earlier we saw how the dis-ruptive workings at/of the *khôra* can hardly be grasped, they resist inscription. Perhaps using the Layer analogy can help us understand the

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<sup>113</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 60.

<sup>114</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 61.

interaction between explicit and implicit in writing and the functioning of the *khôra*.<sup>115</sup>

The “I” (as interacting Body/Environment) is in this case the site of intricate meaning. Writing involves a double movement between the “I” and the emerging text. The first movement is an (expressive) explication in which the “I” puts pen to paper (or fingers on the keyboard) to ‘speak.’ The second movement is a (reflective) explication in which the “I” interprets what has emerged, to ‘listen’ to what is sometimes an unexpected surprise, but to what is often not quite what it should be. It is not unusual for authors to speak about ‘the flow’ of writing. Likewise, when ‘it’ doesn’t happen we say that we were not in the right ‘mood’ for writing. As the writer gets down into the situation the relation from self to other (the paper/screen) to self becomes a third which carries the flow forward. The source of this flow is the rupture identified in Layer IV. The flow speaks to whatever is implicit in the intricacy of the situation, but the background ‘noise’ is, perhaps, the speaking of the world, as in layer II. Writing can be seen as a listening/attending to the speaking of the implicit and the world. Writing involves a reading of the speaking of the implicit.

Yet, ‘writing as explication’ does not always work; sometimes we get stuck, the flow stops, we have a writer’s block. I suggest a few ways of looking at this phenomenon.

\* At various points during the process of writing this thesis I got stuck in a

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<sup>115</sup> Parts of this section are inspired by an unpublished paper by Tom McCormick, “On Writing.”

phase were I was not able to 'get a handle' on the material. The task of writing about X felt like an overwhelming vastly complex impossibility. Attempts to 'get a handle' using 'brute force' (e.g. forcing myself to write x words in y minutes) failed, and I had to put the project away for a while. In *Circumfession* Derrida placed this motto: 'As soon as it is fixed by writing, the concept is cooked.'<sup>116</sup> If writing is used as a tool to fix, to come to grips with and to get control over, the concept, the subject matter, gets cooked. Is perhaps the grasping for concepts, which is inherent in our writing, a violent grasping of the graspable? (Latin 'concept' is 'grip.') If this is the case, 'getting a handle' can easily denigrate into 'getting stuck.' Once you are in an attitude of control toward the concept, you lose the attunement to the intricacy, to what else is being said. (Similarly, writing in the context of the academic institution comes with certain expectations. Such expectations can trigger a certain kind of auto/self immunization, and block the ability and freedom to work on the project.)

\* The other reasons for my writer's blocks are variations on the theme of 'the death of the author.' For example, writing in a foreign language puts a strain on the fluidity of the process. Not being at home in my own language, I was struggling to find a voice in my foreign language. Not being at home in the language I was writing in, I feared mis-speaking. Yet, a deeper issue surfaced through this situation, namely, coming to grips with the inherent impossibility to express, the impossibility of a clean

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<sup>116</sup> Bennington and Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, v.



transfer of an intricate idea once it has been set afloat in the sea of signification. A text might end up in a radically different context in which it yields new meaning(s). This is the crux of the concept of iterability: a text can be repeated, but each 'repetition' is different. What is true for the receiver is also true for the sender: the (future) disappearance of the author does not hinder the functioning of the text in being read, rewritten or quoted. In a way writing presupposes the death of the author: the possibility of transcending time through writing cuts the author off from the present. Affirming this idea as an intellectual idea is one thing; living through what it means existentially is something I still haven't figured out. The anxiety experienced in 'writer's block' is undoubtedly related to this mode of being 'under erasure.' The external side of this trial can be characterized as an 'indifference' which forces the author to defer the task of writing by doing different/other things (including producing countless iterations of the first sentence.) The internal structure does at least contain a strong sense of fear. This includes a fear that what comes out on paper is not a repetition of the idea that the author has in mind. Hiding under this concern about a precise communication of the intentions of the author are more fundamental anxieties, like the fear of loss, of letting go, of going out of control, in short, the fear of a metaphorical 'death of the author.' However, the delay involved in this process is also needed and fruitful. I could not have given birth to the various parts of this thesis, save at the very last moment. In chapter 4 I want to connect this theme with living and writing in translation.

## 3.5 Structural Transactions

### 3.5.1 *Key Terms Revisited*

With the layer-model proposed in sections 1-4 we can re-think and reformulate key terms such as intricacy, implicit, explication. Language is ‘intricate,’ which means that it is more complex than any given concepts of it suggest. Things are in process, and process generates a structure. The process of explication of the intricacy leads to more understanding of the intricacy, and to more intricacy. Language as an ‘intricacy’ is a configuration of Layers I-IV. We saw that Layer I is the visible<sup>117</sup> side of language. Layers II-IV are invisible. Layer I is explicit; what is implicit in it, is an effect of Layers II-IV. Explication is a movement in the intricacy in which a part of the implicit becomes explicit. If intricacy is taken as being enfolded, en-veloped, then explication (ex-plicare) is the de-velop-ment or unfolding of a part of the intricacy. This unfolding is always partial; a part of the implicit (e.g., a felt meaning) always remains unsymbolized. Notice also how explication functions as ‘iterability’: it is a repetitious and always differing process.<sup>118</sup> Explication in the intricacy (Layers I-IV) leads to a new intricacy. The movement of explication-cycles serves to displace and re-inscribe the configuration of intricacy. Is the configuration of explicit-implicit a

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<sup>117</sup> Inserting ‘audible’ here would complicate this account needlessly.

<sup>118</sup> Iterability is one of Derrida’s infrastructural terms, used here as a placeholder for other similar operations like deconstruction, dissemination, or the thetic breach of semiotic/symbolic.

‘simple’ one-to-one relation in which all that is implicit can be made explicit? No, while *anything* implicit can be made explicit (in principle), explicating *everything* is impossible in principle. The reverse relation is also problematic: if implicit leads to explicit, does this mean that all explicit meanings originate in some sort of implicit? Excluding the discussion of a developing and language-learning child for a moment, I would say that new explicit meaning can emerge from outside what is implicit in a situation. ‘The implicit’ is not a signifying system with the unavoidable infinite play of significations—because no master-signifier can ground the process. To limit the size of the implicit somewhat we should perhaps differentiate within the implicit between what is relevant in the immediate environment, and those things beyond. However, even the reduced implicit is still inhabited by innumerable uncountable elements. While the whole world is in a way presupposed in the implicit, we can conceive of counting only those elements from that world which actually play a role in the formative process. Yet they can’t be—if only because we can’t know them all. Apart from that, counting requires explication, but each explicative step changes the intricacy itself, thus triggering a recount.

### 3.5.2 *(Dis)Continuity and Systemic Chance*

We can also look at explication from the perspective of the relation between prior and next. The result of an explication is a new meaning. At this point a clear difference between Gendlin and Derrida emerges. For Gendlin the ‘origin’ of a new meaning is in the known: as part of an intricacy it is already experientially ‘known,’ it is

implied and only awaits explication. Gendlin calls this “carrying forward,” his favourite metaphor. However, the use of this metaphor suggests that he prioritizes the unity and continuity between the current (implicit) situation and a ‘new,’ emerging (explicit) meaning. That the new meaning is known (it is implied and ‘only’ awaits explication) does not mean that it is not new in its explicated form. Yet, the unity between the current situation and the new, emerging meaning seems to privilege continuity. In Gendlin’s model a metaphor is a coming together of two diverse but in-itself-known entities that generates a new meaning in the space between known and unknown. ‘Known’ and ‘unknown’ are here measured against the limit of ‘logical’-versus-‘other than logical.’ This suggests that there is no radical break, disruption, reversal of the reigning paradigm.

Sometimes it looks almost as if Gendlin formulates his insights in terms that resemble the Derridean notion of ‘iterability’ as as non-identical repetition. Discussing the ‘felt sense,’ he claims that it becomes repeatable when we refer to it as a “this” so that it ‘can return tomorrow and be the “same” feeling and thus mean itself in many senses.’<sup>119</sup> Discussing metaphors, Gendlin states that ‘one does not create exactly the same new meaning each time the metaphor occurs, that is, each time the symbols are applied to this not fully differentiated mass of experience. For this reason, for example, one can read a poem many times and obtain different meanings.’<sup>120</sup> Yet, though

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<sup>119</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, 97.

<sup>120</sup> Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, 116.

the 'many senses' and 'different meanings' are both quantitatively and qualitatively many and different, nothing suggests a deep structural 'differance'-like necessity for this process.

While Gendlin's proposal is much more sophisticated (intricate) than many 'hyper-modern' solutions, it is not clear whether Gendlin can steer clear of such a position (see section 2.1.2 for a discussion of hyper-modern versus post-modern.) Perhaps we can call Gendlin a monist, someone who sees the world as a whole, in which unity and continuity are ultimate. In that case Derrida would be something like a dualist who sees disruption and dis-continuity as fundamental processes. Many of the terms he uses to disassemble the infrastructure of texts hint at this: differance, the 'to-come,' and his focus on chance, rupture, and gaps. This focus on dis-continuity also leads to a different emphasis when it comes to the description of the process operative underneath the meaning creation.

Given the configuration the Layers I-IV we can say that at the source of an explication is a rupture. Derrida's key terms (such as 'differance,' the to-come, dissemination, iterability) suggest that a certain dis-continuity is always unavoidable, it is a given. Following another Derridean insight, we can suggest that explication involves a movement coming from the other side of the edge between known/unknown (though the Other is, paradoxically, always already also part of self.) Finally, it should be noted that explication as deconstruction of the infrastructure of a text

involves a certain kind of violence. This seems unavoidable, and we should disarm its dangerous denial by owning up to it.

The difference between Layers III and IV also illuminates what Lawlor refers to as a 'barely visible difference' between Ricoeur and Derrida.<sup>121</sup> Ricoeur, with his focus on imagination and the mimesis-cycle, remains in the relative safety of layer III (like Gendlin). Derrida takes more risks and is certain that chance will disrupt the ongoing process regardless, hence his fascination for the uncontrollable *khôra*. This difference in attitude also explains why Gendlin with his non-dualistic (= in his case: monistic) continuity fits in III, while Derrida with an (almost trinitarian) dis/continuity is attuned to layer IV. My own proposal seeks to integrate a 'rupture' in the fabric of language as intricacy.

### 3.5.3 *Another Image*

I suggest another metaphor: the bow of the ship ruptures the water surface, the moving ship leaves a patterns of waves/ripples behind. But, no ripples without rupture. The rupturing of the water surface is a focal point for Derrida, while the patterns of waves/ripples behind the ship are of interest to Gendlin. We could say that the rupture is not only the source of explications, but an unavoidable given with the intricate movement of language. If I were in Heideggerean mode I would perhaps

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<sup>121</sup> Leonard Lawlor, *Imagination and Chance: The Difference between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida*. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 3.

claim that every speech act is already an unfolding out of the rupture of being and that explication (Gendlin) and deconstruction (Derrida) are further explications of that initial step, which is the speaking of language itself (Layer II). We could also project the cycle of intricacy and rupture onto the hermeneutic circle as a movement between parts and wholes: Intricacy implies a whole since ‘we are always already in the midst of a situation’ (according to Gendlin). Rupture implies parts since the ‘whole is always already divided’ (according to Derrida).

(Randwijk, September 19, 2012) Yesterday I watched a ship on the river near my home, and I noticed two details which I don’t know how to integrate, yet. A ship always pushes a little mountain of water before it, in front of the bow, as if it sends a shock-wave in front of it. A messenger of the coming rupture, perhaps? I don’t know. I also noticed something new: on the side of the ship you can see a small area, directly behind the water-mountain, where the water level is actually lower than average, as if water is sucked away by the mountain—like the temporal blinding effect of the sheer presence of the rupture and its immediate effects. Again, I don’t know, but it seems to be relevant.

#### *3.5.4 A Postscript*

(Getafe, September 26, 2012) While the layer model proposed here has its value, I don’t like the way in which it seems to suggest some sort of succession, or hierarchy of the layers. I therefore propose an updated version in section 5.2.

## 4 Outworkings

Explication, which we have discussed as the process of a ruptured ‘carrying forward,’ leads to certain outward effects. In this chapter we look at two such effects, namely creativity and critique. We will look at them mainly in the context of translation. As we explore different aspects of translation we will also use some suggestions of Deleuze and Guattari for doing philosophy otherwise.<sup>122</sup> In section 1 we will explore the role of creativity in the (re)construction of philosophy suggested by Deleuze and Guattari, and as a model for Gendlin. In section 2 we revisit the notion of play, which we connect with critique and care. In section 3 we discuss both reading and writing ‘in translation’ as a nomadic activity.

### 4.1 Creative (Re)Construction as Philosophy

In chapter 2 we tried to locate the work of Gendlin and Derrida in the wider context of the general shift from ‘modern’ to ‘post-modern’ understandings of the workings of language. Deleuze and his co-author Guattari can be located on the post-modern side of the spectrum, which will become clear as we explicate their ideas at different levels of scale, ranging from large scale questions regarding Western philosophy to the level of the reading and translating a text. We start with a few of their key metaphors so that we can think with them.

#### 4.1.1 *Trees, Mushrooms, Bodies, Organs, and Creative Mediation*

One of the key metaphors in Deleuze and Guattari is the pair ‘arborescent’ (tree-like)

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<sup>122</sup> The ‘Deleuzian’ sections of this chapter are based on a paper I wrote for the course “Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics,” Knox College (at the University of Toronto), Fall 2011.



and 'rhizome' (mushroom-ish.) They claim that the Western philosophical tradition can be represented as a tree-like structure.<sup>123</sup> In this model the focus is on knowledge which is unified in one, coherent, and rational system. The tree (which is suspended in mid-air since Deleuze and Guattari do not discuss 'the ground' in this model) has a root system (metaphysics), one trunk (physics), and many branches (the sciences.) All knowledge claims are governed by the familiar oppositional logic of subject versus object, identity versus diversity, original versus copy, speech versus writing, and so on.

Deleuze and Guattari suggest an alternative structure, that of the 'rhizome,' a fungus or something mushroom-like.<sup>124</sup> A rhizome has neither centre nor periphery and lacks central control. Its roots connect underground with others forming larger networks. The internet is a good example of a rhizomatic network: it grows through the connection of new networks and servers (either real or virtual servers), it moves dynamically into new geographical areas but also into new network protocols (e.g., new 'strata' - like web services for the mobile phone), and it renews itself without any central coordination though software updates and hardware replacements. Rhizomatic structures privilege multiplicity and spatial organization. Connections between the multiple, heterogeneous parts become the prime elements

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<sup>123</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 5.

<sup>124</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 6.

through which things can be engaged. Connections between the different parts make multiplicities that form not a unity but an assemblage, a set of different, non-totalized, elements.<sup>125</sup>

According to Deleuze and Guattari these models are scalable from the abstract level of 'the Western tradition' to particular artifacts like texts. The arborescent dimension of the text are meaning stabilizing factors such as authorial intent and social context of production. It highlights the course of the founding sense event, as it happened in history. However, the text, as part of a rhizomatic network, can never completely be controlled or restricted, it is open in principle and changeable.<sup>126</sup> This leads to a reassembling of the event, in which we go with the flow of the event by going through all its singular components. 'Even if nothing changes, everything changes and we change, in the event.'<sup>127</sup>

A text can be disconnected and reconnected differently. This textual interactivity becomes particularly clear in translated texts, which are active and connected with other texts and (cultural) activities. The basic orientations toward texts mirror the distinction between arborescent organization with its focus on interpretation and

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<sup>125</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 4.

<sup>126</sup> Bradley H. McLean, *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*(Course reader) (Knox College, Toronto, 2011), 284.

<sup>127</sup> Michael Levan, "Aesthetics of Encounter: Variations on Translation in Deleuze," *International Journal of Translation*, Volume 19, no 2 (2007) 62.

rhizomatic organization oriented toward experiment. “[T]o think is to experiment, but experimentation is always that which is in the process of coming about – the new, remarkable, and interesting that replace the appearance of truth and are more demanding than it is.”<sup>128</sup> A translation model prioritizing a ‘certain,’ limiting understanding of fidelity will seek to trace the original text, while a more ‘experimental’ translation will try to map the intensities of the assemblage to let a new transformation emerge. (We will discuss whether and how to evaluate transformations later.)

Another neologism employed by Deleuze and Guattari is the metaphor of a ‘body without organs’ or BwO. A BwO has in fact organs, but it is referred to as being ‘without’ because the organs in isolation are less important than the interconnections among the organs and the connections with the external environment. These connections are so-called ‘intensities’ which flow between the surfaces. This flow of intensity is dynamic, it increases and decreases over time, it gets ruptured and reflows. Another term for flows of intensity is ‘lines of flight’ (*fuite* in French: escape, flight, leakage, swift passages, vanishing point).<sup>129</sup>

The opposite of a BwO is an ‘organism.’ If a BwO looks like a rhizome, an organism would look like a tree. An organism is a BwO which is territorialized or overcoded by the cultural powers of signification. The term ‘territorialize’ and its

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<sup>128</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 111, quoted in Levan, “Aesthetics of Encounter,” 62.

<sup>129</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, xvi.

siblings 'de-territorialize' and 're-territorialize' belong to a geographic metaphor for the process through which BwO becomes encapsulated in its environment.<sup>130</sup> This process leads to the loss of rhizomatic character and the emergence of an organism. The process of overcoding can also be reversed, in 'de-territorialization.' But, since this is a rhizomatic process, it can always come to a new re-territorialization. In the case of a text we could say that the interpreter is positioned in an in-between state between pure organism and pure BwO, which Deleuze calls 'schizo.'<sup>131</sup>

A BwO is an entity with an inherent multiplicity; it is without fixed unity and organization, it is an open system of intersecting multiplicities. The surface of a BwO has multiple, shifting relations with others, e.g., between a text and other structures in the rhizomatic network. Such connections are on the surface because the internals, the 'deep meaning' of a BwO, are less interesting than its surface connections. This strong anti-representational stance also means that there is no privileged perspective or inherent (metaphysical) privileging of certain perspectives. No text, whether translated or not, has a fixed status in a predetermined hierarchy. If there is any metaphysics at work at all, it would be that of an anti-genealogy. Sense-events in which meaning is created and discovered seem to 'just' happen. They are not directly caused, but rather, triggered by authors and interpreters whose activities of connection, dis-, and re-connection are quasi-causes. These activities form a series

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<sup>130</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 4.

<sup>131</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 150.

of events by playing on the structural difference in/of the rhizomatic network. A text is a becoming-text, a work in progress: several heterogeneous texts co-exist as rhizome. Textual transformations, such as interpretation and translation, do not focus on the origin and the move away from origin, but rather on making interrelations, connections between constantly changing variables. The search for an 'origin' is superfluous, because no text exists except in translation, and every reading is always already a translation.<sup>132</sup>

While we focus on texts, it is important not to forget that for Deleuze and Guattari semiotic systems are not typically or principally linguistic; they are cultural, literary, political, intermingled, implicated, and diverse. Semiotics is 'only one regime of signs among others, and not the most important one.'<sup>133</sup> As always, semiotic systems are concrete and mixed; none is privileged and no general structure or universal code can account for all of them. Understanding the creative process involved requires what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'return to pragmatics.'<sup>134</sup> Creative mediators are a key component in the actual production of connections in an rhizomatic series.

Creation's all about mediators. Without them nothing happens.  
They can be people – for a philosopher, artists or scientists; for

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<sup>132</sup> Janine Hopkinson, "Deterritorialising Translation Studies: Notes on Deleuze and Guattari's 'Mille Plateaux'." *www.post-scriptum.org*, No 3 (2003), 11.

<sup>133</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 111.

<sup>134</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 111.

a scientist, philosophers or artists – but things too, even plants or animals. (...) Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators. It's a series. If you're not in some series, even a completely imaginary one, you're lost. I need my mediators to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own.<sup>135</sup>

The strong focus on the creativity of all mediators also eliminates the fiction of an author as autonomous creator, because all creation requires a form of mediation.<sup>136</sup>

#### 4.1.2 *The Poet as Mediator*

The mediation performed by a poet involves a creative-disruptive movement. Kristeva shows this in her account of the creative semiotic/symbolic system, which always includes the transgression of the same system. Derrida makes a similar point by way of his account of the differential infrastructures. The focus of Deleuze on creative-disruptive movement is a similar example of what we called earlier 'a ruptured carrying-forward.' A noticeable parallel between Deleuze and Gendlin is the emphasis on movement and on process as key characteristics of their respective projects. Yet the difference is also clear: the movements Deleuze and Guattari propose are 'wild'; their uncontrollable creative dis- and re-connections seem to indicate ruptured infrastructures of the sort proposed by Derrida and Kristeva. In contrast, Gendlin's poet-a character he uses regularly as an illustration of the process of explication–searches

<sup>135</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 125, quoted in Levan, "Aesthetics of Encounter," 53.

<sup>136</sup> Levan, "Aesthetics of Encounter," 53.

for words in a way much more in line with what we expect, knowing that Gendlin works in a field of continuity.

Consider the silence of a poet with an unfinished poem: The already written lines want something more, but what? The poet may be only stuck and confused, no mysterious call for thought at all. Just trying this line and that; many lines come. Some seem good. The poet listens carefully into each, rejects, and reads the written lines again—and again. The poet re-reads the written lines. The poem goes on there, where the lines end. Suddenly, or perhaps all along, the poet hears (senses, knows, reads ...) what these already written lines need, want, demand, imply ... Now the poet's hand rotates in the air. The gesture says *that*. Now the lines that come try to say, but do not say—*that*. The blank still hangs there, still implying something *more precise*. This blank seems to lack words, but no. The blank is very verbal; it knows the language well enough to understand—and reject—all the lines that come. The blank is not a bit pre-verbal; it knows what must be said, and that the lines which came don't say that. The blank is vague, but it is also more precise than what was ever said before—in the history of the world. But in another way, of course the blank is said—by the lines leading up to it. The poet can have (get, feel, keep ...) this blank only by re-reading and listening to the written lines—over and over. They say what is further to be said.<sup>137</sup>

The process of the poet is not entirely without disruption. The period of waiting, the 'in between' creates a temporal discontinuity, but when it comes to the words which have to come, they come from what has been written already.

This explanation of explication as creativity might help us to come to terms with the fundamental difference in orientation between the approaches of Deleuze and Guattari, and Gendlin. One of the places where this plays out is in the relation to time. 'Carrying forward' is a process that is never finished, one might say that

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<sup>137</sup> Kolb, "Filling in the Blanks," 65-66.

final explication is deferred. But it is not open; the edge where the explication happens, the intricacy marked with '...', has a past which holds sway over it. The poet can revisit '(get, feel, keep ...)' this blank only by re-reading and listening to the written lines—over and over. They say what is further to be said.' What is carried forward, what will be said, has—in a sense—already been said. This seems to turn 'carrying forward' into an archaeology in the future tense, rather than into an openness toward a futural O/other 'to come.' The rhizomatic poetic mediator of Deleuze and Guattari is open to a future in a more radical way, because its process has no strings attached. Even if there is an implicit and implying past (and isn't there always?), and even though there is always a teleology projected ahead, future assemblages can always wipe out implied territorializations; the Deleuzian mediator seems to have no teleology. Whether this can actually be realized, whether a complete escape from all teleology is really possible, remains a question. Perhaps we can say that the mediator remains 'schizo,' in the in-between state between pure organism and pure BwO.

Gendlin might object that his model can handle the unexpected just as well, because if something unexpected, something not implied, happens, we can still say that from the moment of its appearance we are dealing with an intricate situation, requiring further explication. But the question here is not whether the model can deal with the radically unexpected, but whether creativity is always already totally implicated in its own past, or whether it is open in a way that always avoids final



closure. When Gendlin has the chance to give an account of how creative explication works, he doesn't go there; instead the poet has to 're-read and listen to the written lines—over and over. They say what is further to be said.' Yet, 'over and over' also signifies that even this account does not escape from the play of differing repetition which Derrida calls 'iterability.' In the repetitious rereading something will, perhaps, repeat itself differently and derail the master narrative of 'written lines' which 'say what is further to be said.'

## 4.2 Play, Critique, and Care

The 'wild' forces at work in Deleuze and Guattari are also visible in play, but to appreciate that we need to revisit the account of play we discussed in section 2.4. We do this through a discussion of the interaction between Gadamer and Derrida, which will help us to discuss the necessity of critique and give a proposal for careful play.

### 4.2.1 *Play Revisited*

For Gadamer, play comes to its own in the being played of the game itself, in which the players are caught up. The players experience the two sides of play as the conscious (knowing the rules of the game) and the unconscious (being caught up in the game.) Gadamer goes so far as to state that play (as in being played) has the primacy over the consciousness of the player.<sup>138</sup> Gadamer suggests a parallel here with the role of tradition in his conception of hermeneutics. Play is a metaphor for the phenomenon

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<sup>138</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 103.

that interpretation involves a being caught up in something greater. In interpretation tradition is at play with us. Gadamer's proposed rehabilitation of authority and tradition builds on his positive evaluation of prejudice. In his dialogue with the Enlightenment Gadamer claims that there is no absolute antithesis between tradition and reason or freedom. Tradition and the authority that it has (or: can have) are often seen as blind submission and obedience to irrational beliefs, but according to Gadamer tradition can be a source of truth.<sup>139</sup> He points out that authority can also mean the acknowledgement of the judgement and insight of someone else, the free choice to believe someone who knows more. The prejudice is focused on the content rather than on the person. Gadamer's account of how education works is based on this same understanding of how within the tradition knowledge is passed on from one generation to the next. He claims that the force of morals is based on tradition; they are freely taken over, but not grounded on reasons. "Tradition has a justification that lies beyond rational grounding."<sup>140</sup>

This point raises questions, such as whether Gadamer's desire to listen to the tradition does not lead to some sort of foundational grounding. Or, as Caputo asks in his reflection on the Gadamer-Derrida encounter, the tradition seems to have or give access to a deep truth to which we have to listen for that reason, so is there some sort of foundation after all?<sup>141</sup> Another question could be: which tradition are we talking

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<sup>139</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 280.

<sup>140</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 282.

about anyway? Are we talking about one or more traditions? or about all historical traditions together? And what happens if traditions tell mutually exclusive 'truths'? The question how we handle conflicting claims to truth, or to its non-existence, is the most fundamental one. Gadamer writes that we need to "remain open to the meaning of the other person or text," that "meanings represent a fluid multiplicity of possibilities," and that the hermeneutical task is "a questioning of things."<sup>142</sup> But do traditions not have the tendency to pre-judge against 'others'? against 'heretics'? Do traditions not often prefer to honour and retell just one version of truth and meaning? Do traditions not tend to exclude multiplicity and silence those who "question things"? This is also the point Derrida makes when he discusses play as a game which is also being played with the tradition itself, so that traditions are at play with themselves, and deconstruction happens. For Derrida tradition is (almost) another word for the 'metaphysics of presence,' which play disrupts, together with the safety and stability presence supposedly provides. Play is played without security because the movement of play is the movement of *supplementarity*.<sup>143</sup> The (dangerous)

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<sup>141</sup> John D. Caputo, "Gadamer's Closet Essentialism: A Derridean Critique," in *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*, ed. Diane P. Michelfelder, Richard E. Palmer (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 258-264.

<sup>142</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 271.

<sup>143</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1978), 365.

supplement is one of Derrida's infrastructural terms we encountered earlier (section 2.3), highlighting the pharmaceutical properties of play.

From this discussion it is clear how Gadamer and Derrida, while both employing the metaphor of play, use it in a very different way. As one commentator summarized: 'In emphasizing playfulness and artistry, Derrida in a sense complements Gadamer's discussion of "play"—but with a radical difference: instead of integrating play into the understanding of meaning, or aesthetics into hermeneutics, [as Gadamer does, Derrida] presents art as the rock or riff on which intentional hermeneutics founders.'<sup>144</sup> The riff or rupture of Derrida's deconstructive 'play' is the place where the play of and in language has an element of critique. In what ways is deconstructive disruption a critique? The rupture itself is already an implicit critique of the assumed wholeness of the interpretive process. The implied ideal of interpretation as an unproblematic and, potentially, exhaustive presencing (bringing into presence) of the authorial intention is critiqued in Derrida's analysis of logocentrism. As the creative/critical analysis of the *khôra* shows, the effects of the disruptive reading open the textual internals to a critical evaluation. We can make that more precise: for Derrida there is no play without critique, just as there is no language without play. Both creativity and critique are inscribed in the very structure of language itself.

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<sup>144</sup> Fred R. Dallmayr, "Prelude: Hermeneutics and Deconstruction: Gadamer and Derrida in Dialogue," in *Dialogue and Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*, ed. Diane P. Michelfelder, Richard E. Palmer (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 82.

Both creativity and critique play out in language, in which deconstruction is always at play. In this way we can say that the outworkings of explication in creativity and critique are an inseparable double gesture.

#### 4.2.2 *Critique and Gendlin*

I don't have time and space to go into details regarding the ethical and social explications of the critical element in Derrida's take on Gadamer; one example can be found in Caputo's commentary.<sup>145</sup> Yet, from the comments made here, we can articulate two concerns regarding Gendlin's project (which was why we revisited play to begin with). The first point of critique has to do with the fact that for Gendlin the experiencing body is always a body in an environment. As we have seen, his project privileges continuity and downplays discontinuity, and this means that 'the situation' can start to function like tradition does for Gadamer. Because Gendlin sees the situation in which felt, experienced meaning unfolds as a given, he has no way to critique that same situation, at least, he does not take an a-priori critical stance against the situation. With creative explication integrated in the 'traditioning' body/environment situation, as Gadamer's play is integrated in his continualist hermeneutics, the question needs to be asked how Gendlin can critique and disrupt the problematic sides of knowledge as power.

The second point of critique is related. Though Gendlin explicitly states that

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<sup>145</sup> Caputo, "Gadamer's Closet Essentialism," 258-264.

the experiencing body is always in interaction with its environment (in which 'others' play perhaps some role), the real danger is that the process remains individualistic. The focus on the "mediatory" role of the self in explication seems to point to an individualistic anthropology. The lack of an explicit social perspective has been mentioned before, and it compounds the first point of critique. While Gadamer could argue that tradition can at least potentially function as a guardrail, Gendlin doesn't have that option because the social world remains outside the picture. It is not only the case that his model lacks the resources for a critique, it can't even argue for the necessity of a critique. So, while we can easily argue that, on the basis of Gendlin's model, creativity is an explication of an intricacy, one of the points of this chapter is that we need to go somewhere else for the critical movement we want to make.

A third point of critique takes us on the way toward psychology. We noticed that Gendlin's implicit anthropology is individualistic. On a related note we can say that it is also quite optimistic, and perhaps a bit too much so. The tone of Gendlin's writings, both of his philosophical work (e.g. *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*) and his publications aimed at a wider audience (e.g. *Focusing*), is one of optimistic pragmatism. The absence of something like a 'rupture,' and the implicit assumption that the 'new' ways of thinking will be successful, make one wonder about the place of failures in Gendlin's model. Isn't it the case that we cannot always control ourselves, so that we sometimes do end up in inexplicable and inextricable tangles, dead-ends,

and other places of loss, guilt, fear, and grief? I think that Nicholson has this concern in mind when he ends his essay with: '[M]y question to [Gendlin] is whether he can quite bypass the incompleteness, the anxiety, the ignorance and fear, that afflict us in our life and that affect our utterances. Is there not an unruly surge in the soul when it utters or outers itself in the said? Doesn't some unruly surge even put its mark on the intricacy?'<sup>146</sup> While I don't think that Gendlin would answer this question with a 'Well, Graeme, you are neurotic, perhaps you should start *Focusing*,' in Gendlin's model I did not find a real place for the 'unruly surge,' for forces like Kristeva's semiotic. This is not to say that Gendlin is not a good therapist, but it seems to me that his model lacks a certain 'ruggedness.'

#### 4.2.3 *Contact and Care*

In light of our ethical concerns we need to ask how explication can take place in a responsible way. Creative explication needs to create a space for contact. The translation of a text can be seen as the enabling of an encounter. Helping the coming into contact of the two worlds, on both sides of the translation process, resembles providing hospitality to an 'O/other.' The openness to the other, and the willingness to risk an encounter, are the conditions of possibility of all communication. Translation can highlight the ethical and theological dimensions of communication. A

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<sup>146</sup> Graeme Nicholson, "Intricacy: A Metaphysical Idea," in *Language beyond Postmodernism: Saying and Thinking in Gendlin's Philosophy*, ed. David Michael Levin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 299.

theological reflection on the translation of (parts of) the Bible suggests the image of a second Incarnation, providing hospitality to the Word in a different language. But Bible translation also resembles a reenactment of the Emmaus encounter (Luke 24:13-35), in which the Guest becomes Host as the Word comes home in yet another language. In this perspective explication implies a dual 'carrying' and 'being carried' not unlike the active/passive sides of play. In the perspective of hospitality, 'carrying forward' also means a forward-carrying movement of care. This does not only mean that explication needs to be done carefully—that goes without saying—but also that explication is a way of 'taking care of' what emerges from the implicit. Helping what was implicit come into the world, and to fruition, is an example of seeking the flourishing of the other. Explication as care marks the ethical limits as we seek *shalom* for the implicit. Care also resonates in the metaphor of 'carrying a friend.' Finally, if we let the rupture come into play, we should say that a caring carrying forward is also a carrying across.

'Providing hospitality to an other' invites a reflection on the ethics of translation as the ethics of hospitality. Engaging in providing hospitality involves a risk, but this is a positive risk of having unexpected but productive chance encounters. In the performance of translation the translator can 'strike gold' while reassembling the different elements of the text in question. This happens when the translator is in close contact with the materiality of the language. By orienting toward its movement and rhythm a translator can develop a feel of the words in resonance in the space



of contact.<sup>147</sup> Taking 'becoming' as the concept-of-concepts enables Deleuze to focus on the continuity of continuous variation and on the primordially of movement. Becomings are 'lines of flight,' the swift passages which escape from a static situation. Translation can be seen as becoming-contact. The 'becoming-' part of this contact is not only its condition of possibility—without becomings there would not be contact at all—but it is also its risk. Becomings are also goings. A translation always involves a loss, because there is never a complete, one-to-one mapping between languages. A translation can also lead to a critique of host and/or guest. However, translations as rhizomatic events are, in a way, out of the translator's control. Once a translation is released, the translator (just like the author) cannot control what happens with it. The responsibility of the translator as someone involved in a caring forward-carrying movement, plays out mainly in the first stages of the life of a translation: e.g., the translator has to decide whether or not to translate a certain text at all. After that decision, the translator is responsible for innumerable translation choices. Yet, 'being responsible' does not mean that the processes the translator is engaged in are fully transparent. One of the points of this thesis is precisely to show that many textual activities happen beneath the visible surface. 'The task of translation as a becoming is to foster an encounter, to engender the intensities in an event.'<sup>148</sup>

The becoming-character of translations, and of texts in general, raises ques-

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<sup>147</sup> Levan, "Aesthetics of Encounter," 61.

<sup>148</sup> Levan, "Aesthetics of Encounter," 62.

tions about the hermeneutic status of texts and their translations. Borges remarks: 'To assume that every recombination of elements [i.e. the translation] is necessarily inferior to its original form is to assume that draft nine is necessarily inferior to draft H—for there can only be drafts.'<sup>149</sup> Texts remain always work in progress if there are 'only drafts.' We might even say that a text as work-in-progress is never completely finished by its author; it waits to be 'completed' at the next stage, that of translation. This does not mean that an author, or translator, has no responsibility at all, but it does mean that the responsibility is limited, both because it is shared with the interpreter, and because of the deconstructive workings of the text through which the text slips out of the controlling grasp of author and translator. This is relevant in a theological context when we think about the status of the Bible as a collection of translated texts. Even a robust theology of inspiration does not lead to the disapproval of translations as derivative and thus somehow inferior. A translation is different from the Hebrew and Greek texts, but in some way equally 'Word of God' (and for "lay people" who don't read Hebrew and Greek, this is even more so the case.) This conviction is not just a practical consequence of the reality that a text is always already an interpreted text. The translatability of the Word of God is not a mere consequence of its hermeneutic status as a text read by humans. The different ways in which translations are contextualized seems to hint at an inherent

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<sup>149</sup> Jose Luis Borges, *Selected Non-Fictions*, (New York: Penguin, 2000), 69, quoted in Hopkinson, "Deteriorialising Translation Studies"

translatability of Christianity across cultural and linguistic differences, for which the Incarnation is perhaps a model, though this model also suggests certain limits to that same process of contextualization. Further reflection on the contextualization spectrum will be of crucial importance for the evaluation to the Turkish translation example mentioned in section 2.3.

### 4.3 Reading and Writing for Nomads

We look at translation one last time from an interlanguacultural angle with two reflections from a nomadic perspective. First we look at translation as, what Deleuze calls, a ‘nomadic reading,’ and we address the challenge of evaluation in nomadic perspective. We finish with a discussion of the writing of a text in translation as the activity of a vocational stranger.

#### 4.3.1 *Translation and Nomadic Reading*

The focus on the transformational and liberatory potential of a text in translation is made possible by the way in which Deleuze treats a text (or any other entity for that matter) as an open, fluid system. It might be better to see a text as an event of intermingled making and unmaking of assemblages. Translation facilitates what we could call a ‘nomadic reading’ of a text. A nomadic reading mirrors ‘nomadic thought,’ the Deleuzian opposite of analogical thought. In a clear parallel with the arborescent architecture of Western knowledge, analogical thought is marked by the preferred patterns of the dominant culture. Nomadic thought is typically post-modern because it seeks to disrupt the binarisms of modernity. It takes the

end-point of analogical thought to unravel its effects.<sup>150</sup> Analogical thought sees a text as a linear object with a clear (hierarchical) structure, while a nomadic interpretation of a text as rhizomatic assemblage allows for multiple and divergent interactions.

Translation involves a creative performance of territorial activities on the surface of becoming-assemblages. It participates in the movement or flow which is characteristic of becoming-texts in general, but a good translation will also attempt to enter into the particular flow of the specific text under translation. This does not mean that a translator is a slave of the original. This is in fact impossible because the linguistic difference between the source- and target-languages puts difference at the heart of the process. This primary difference is an additional source of meaning creation in the process of translation (the primary source is the meaning creation inherent in reading itself.) While a 'good' translation exploits this process in a creative way, even less 'successful' translations do not escape from this creative process (unless the non-translation is such that no meaning can be generated at all.) Let me make clear that it is beyond me to evaluate the overall translation process here, I simply use terms like 'good' here in relation to the creative-difference *aspect* of translation (e.g., Is the creative element introduced in translation attuned to the particulars of the text in question?). It goes without saying that a good translation also involves an element of critical appreciation and explication. Perhaps we should say that creativity is

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<sup>150</sup> McLean, *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 291.

not without its critical moment, just as critique is not devoid of a creative element. Because creativity does not mean that ‘anything goes,’ it is clear that every creative choice involves a critical process of evaluating and rejecting alternatives. The opinion of the translator comes into play as well, either in an explicit evaluation, or implicitly in the intricacy of the translator-text process. This means that a combination of creativity and critique is always already at work, regardless of whether we explicate those processes as such, or not.

One, maybe unexpected, example of this creative process occurs when people read an old ‘word for word’-style translation like the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. Even though this translation is in fact not always as ‘literal’ as both friends and foes like to suggest, and notwithstanding its literary merits, it is clear that it uses a model for translation which is no longer used today because it unduly prioritizes certain elements of the linguistic form of the original. Does this mean that this is a bad translation, because of its apparent lack of Deleuzian style creativity? It is clear that for (most, or all?) modern readers the English of the KJV presents a communicative challenge. This forces readers to re-translate it as they read. This creative engagement with the translation is enhanced by the differential interplay between ‘strange’ source language forms (Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek) and the differences between old and modern English. The friction caused by the ‘strangeness’ of the language can trigger interpretive creativity that remains dormant when using ‘easier’ translations. We might say that the KJV produces a different

creativity in us as modern readers. The initial creativity of the KJV translators needs to be supplemented by our interpretive creativity, but this can happen quite naturally since we, as modern readers, form a different assemblage with the text of the KJV, if we want to.

To be clear: I'm not arguing that the KJV is the best available translation or that its translation model is unproblematic after all. Rather, I'm suggesting that we can choose to evaluate a different aspect of the translation, namely the performative effect of our reading of the KJV, in a different plane, outside a 'good versus bad translation' debate [which in the case of the KJV is usually shaped by (real and perceived) theological preferences]. I do this by explicating the creative role of the reader similar to Deleuze who sees reading itself as an act of translation, in a way doubling the work of the translator. 'This is a good way to read: all mistranslations are good—always provided that they do not consist in interpretations, but relate to the use of the book, that they multiply its use, that they create yet another language inside its language.'<sup>151</sup> Note that Deleuze does not evaluate the text of a particular translation here (in which case one might wonder whether mis-translations even exist, given that all mistranslations are 'good'). Rather he points to the performative effects of our reading of a translated text: 'this is a good way to *read*.' If it is indeed the case, as I think it is, that every reading is a translation, and also that no reading

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<sup>151</sup> Gilles Deleuze and C. Parnet, *Dialogues* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 5, quoted in Levan, "Aesthetics of Encounter," 56.

ever fully translates a text—because of certain deconstructive processes at work in the text—one might indeed say that every reading involves an element of misreading, of mistranslation. A nomadic reading requires a becoming aware of such processes, or at least an openness to them.

### *4.3.2 Evaluation in Nomadic Perspective*

While I don't think that all (mis)translations are in fact good, it is clear that translation can multiply sense, not only by bringing a text to a greater number of people, but also by multiplying the potential use of what is translated. The multiplication at play here involves both quantitative and qualitative elements. Yet, the question remains whether and how we can evaluate translations in a nomadic perspective.

In an analogical perspective, with its clear directional structure, a translation is seen as a copy, a shadow of the original, mirroring the dichotomy of writer as creator and translator as scribe.<sup>152</sup> From a nomadic perspective it is not strange to claim that the copy, the translation, is potentially 'better,' or richer, than the original. This can happen when the text in translation is taken up in an assemblage in which it can 'escape' from its founding sense event. For example, a piece of Ancient Hebrew poetry was translated into the Latin of the Vulgate as 'Psalm 95,' from where Arvo Pärt explicated it into his musical piece called "Cantate Domino" (which I happened to play at the time of writing). In this example of an inter-media translation the

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<sup>152</sup> Hopkins, "Deterritorialising Translation Studies," 3.

translation process is complexified because the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation cross media boundaries.<sup>153</sup> We notice that in a nomadic perspective the focus shifts from the production of a translated text to the effects produced in the reading or performance. A nomadic reading is not quickly paralysed by concerns about accuracy, or communicability, but opens the reader to experience the text 'as is.' The factual contingency of the translation, including (in particular!) its quirks and wrinkles, is creatively put to work in the process of reading. A nomadic reading defers the (final) evaluation in order to exploit the particularities of a translation. Does this mean that from this perspective only a kind of 'reader response criticism' can be applied to a translation? I suggest three reasons why this is not the case.

(1) One concern might be that the focus on the response of the reader can conceal the text itself. This is not necessarily the case if we keep in mind that, while the nomadic perspective puts the reader in a crucial position, it is in fact the translated text which triggers the response of the reader. The response of the reader requires and assumes an initial call. The particulars of the response elicited by the translation can be used to analyze which specific choices make the translation successful.

(2) A nomadic reading lacks a central authority because it is rhizomatic. Yet, the nomadic side is only a part of the reading process. The actual reading always happens in 'schizo,' in between the two extremes of analogical and nomadic. A

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<sup>153</sup> Hopkinson, "Deterritorialising Translation Studies," 12-14.



purely nomadic reading would cease to mean anything. To use ‘nomadic perspective’ language, we could perhaps say that a nomadic reading forms an assemblage with an analogical system of signification. This means that a nomadic reading is susceptible to deconstruction, and to a critique of what is implicit in it.

(3) Even a purely quantitative multiplication of translations leads to both creativity and critique. The existence of two translations of the same text turns both into each others ‘other.’ The translation choices of one translation are an implicit critique of the choices of the other. An example of this process is a recent review of a new translation of Heidegger’s *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, in which the reviewer notes how the new translation implicitly critiques the older translation.<sup>154</sup> The choices made in the new translation better support a certain interpretation of the text (we could call this the analogical perspective), but the existence of two translations is a prerequisite for having a choice between translations to begin with (the nomadic perspective). Perhaps we could say that translation is an intricacy in which the analogical and nomadic are entangled.

### 4.3.3 *Translation as a Philosophical Practice*

For many of us who, whether we like it or not, work and live in translation, English serves as our *lingua franca*.<sup>155</sup> (And isn’t it curious that we use a term from the previous

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<sup>154</sup> Richard Polt, review of *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, by Martin Heidegger, transl. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Indiana University Press, 2012), *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, July 24, 2012.

*lingua franca* to say so?) For people who were not born in an English speaking environment, this situation is a challenge. We can raise a number of critical questions, e.g., whether this necessarily leads to inequality of access for some, namely, for those who were not born in English speaking countries, or whether it lowers the bar for others, namely, those who were born in the English speaking world and therefore have immediate and seemingly effortless access to so many original works and translations—thus missing out on a part of the struggle with texts and ideas. On the other hand, there are also positive aspects. To use myself as an example: I’m Dutch, and the only foreign language I speak is English. I guess I had a traumatic experience trying to learn French and dropped it as soon as I could, and my German is only marginally better. Sometimes I regret it, but this is the situation and I’ve learned to live with it. It is precisely because of the existence of English as a *lingua franca* that I gained access to non-Dutch philosophers and decided to study philosophy, in Canada. It is because of the globalization of English that I am here today, in Madrid—while I don’t speak a word of Spanish—and yet, we are able to interact and exchange ideas. The existence of a *lingua franca* opens new worlds, but it comes at a price. For example, in The Netherlands there is a lot of pressure on academics to teach and write in English (perhaps more so than here because Dutch doesn’t have as many speakers as Spanish.) This often leads to the loss of the ability to express oneself

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<sup>155</sup> This section is based on a paper I gave at the conference “Thinking about Translation: Philosophy on the Way between Languages” held at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Getafe, September 26, 2012.

at the same level of technical nuance in Dutch as one can in English. I discovered that I couldn't explain my research to Dutch family members simply because I don't have Dutch technical terms for what I need to say. On the other hand, because English is not my native language, I'm acutely aware of the fact that I miss certain opportunities to speak with greater precision, that I lack access to all the expressive power of the language. Sometimes I notice that I'm writing in a sort of lifeless jargon that is not plain wrong—it might in fact do a reasonably good job of conveying an idea—but it is not empowered, not spirited. I would like to work in Dutch, but I don't have the terminology for doing so, and to get a wider hearing I 'need' to work in English anyway. So, as a native speaker of a relatively small European language, I'm drawn into the global *lingua franca*, and as a result of that I'm not quite at home in either of my languages. As an exile in both I have to translate, and re-translate both myself and the texts I'm reading.

While we could ask a number of critical questions about the general situation, in this personal reflection I would like to focus instead on ways in which the multilingual situation can be used in a positive manner to empower the philosopher. Being forced into a bilingual mode of operation, a philosopher who works in a 'foreign' language can fall back on the home language to bypass certain limitations of the *lingua franca*.

#### 4.3.3.1 A double translation

I propose a double translation. I want to illustrate that in a short discussion of two

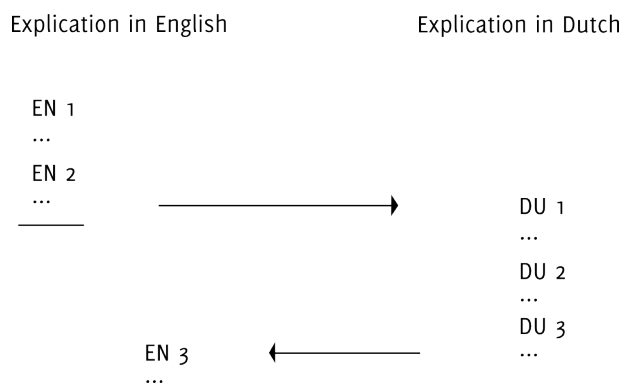
technical terms from Gendlin's philosophy and the challenges I had in translating them into Dutch.

The first term is "intricacy." Intricacy is for Gendlin the complex of experienced and symbolized meaning, the combination of what is explicitly put in words and that which we don't know how to say yet, but about which we have a definite felt sense. The standard example is that of the poet who is trying to find the right last line for the poem and who has to dismiss a number of suggestions which do not quite 'fit,' until the right words are found. At a certain point, while I was working on the definition of the term, I noticed that I became stuck in jargon. At that point I decided to try a Dutch translation of the term "intricacy." Soon I discovered that there is not one single term that I could use. One candidate is "ingewikkeld." This word has the same root as "intricacy," namely as 'something being (en)folded.' However, in Dutch the word "ingewikkeld" has a strong connotation of something being complex at the rational level, as if it is primarily intellectually challenging. This is not the main concern of Gendlin, who uses the word more to indicate that what is intricate has a complex, interwoven, interactive structure. While I was thinking about the Dutch word "ingewikkeld," somehow it occurred to me that the opposite of the rational connotation, which I wanted to avoid, was not that "intricacy" is somehow irrational, but rather that it is "verrassend" and "speels" ('surprising' and 'playful'). After this first step (the move from thinking in English to thinking in Dutch) I did a back-translation. Usually, a back-translation is a way to check whether the translation

is correct, but that is not the intention here. Rather, what I tried to do is to take what I found in Dutch and bring it home, give it a place in the English text I'm writing.

The second phrase is the metaphor "to carry forward." I started with this English description: 'the unfolding of what is implicit through a careful process of paying attention to it.' I knew this was not quite the whole story, but I found it difficult to proceed with it in English. My initial Dutch translation included phrases like (I gloss) [bringing the situation forward], [progress, to improve], [increasing wisdom, insight.] All of these suggestions seem to focus on a 'quantitative' idea of progress, while neglecting the intricacy of the situation. The next suggestion was "oog krijgen voor de complexiteit van de situatie" [to get a sense (eye) of the complexity of the situation], but I dismissed this one because it was not elegant, and it misses the movement aspect. The final Dutch translation suggestions include elements of [to unfold], [to bring to articulation], and [being in transit/on the move]. I consolidated this in the back-translation as "to carry forward means to move from an intricacy into articulation a part of that which was previously implicit." I feel that I'm not there yet, but I can see how the detour into Dutch and back again helped me move forward with this.

To recap: I use a two-step process in which I move thinking forward by detouring through my 'other' language, the language that I'm not using in my current writing. That this 'other' language happens to be my mother-tongue just shows how displaced and entangled I am. With the next step I seek to bring the discoveries



**Figure 1** Thinking in Translation. Explication in English (EN 1 ... EN 2 ...) is blocked. After a transfer to Dutch (DU 1 ... DU 2 ... DU 3 ...) results are back-translated into English (EN 3 ...) Notice the shift in the position of the English process.

home. I try to do a back-translation into English in order to enrich the 'original' text and to consolidate the gains made in the Dutch part of the process. From this point I can try to move forward with the process. It goes without saying that this process can be repeated endlessly. Did the process help me move my thinking forward? This time it did, because I have a clearer understanding, leading to a more precise articulation, of the concept I tried to explicate. Does this process automatically lead to a better translation or conception? No, not if—for example—I'm not attuned properly. But the detour helps to 'slow down,' and it creates a space in which I can open up to different implicit processes. Both the time involved in the translations, and the inherent differences between the languages involved, serve to expose me maximally to input from the implicit processes.

#### 4.3.3.2 Why philosophize in translation?

In answer to the question “why philosophize in translation?” I can think of at least three reasons.

[1] Languages differ, and differences both lead to creativity and require creativity to bridge. It goes without saying that no translation is ever complete and full. In the game of give and take that is part of translation, we are presented with challenges, or rather, opportunities to engage creatively in and with language. Doing that is not without risks, because the playful surprises we encounter can leave us ‘lost for words.’ Going to another language in order to find our words again, is one way of using the creative potential at our disposal.

[2] There is also a pragmatic reason for working in translation: it can help us against getting stuck. We can get restricted to jargon when we write in a foreign language. Moving back and forth to our own language can help us break that cycle. We can also get stuck in a situation in which we know something (experientially, in a deep embodied sense) but in which we don’t know yet how to articulate that. Working in translation can help us carry our thought forward, as the examples I shared show.

[3] Living and working in different languages pushes us out of our comfort zone. As I went through several transition and translation cycles I certainly had the experience of profound discomfort and a sense of loss. But after I mourn about that, I want to utilize the disorientation. The point I want to make is that the zigzagging

between languages of the bilingual philosopher is not something to accidentally 'slip into,' not the inevitable consequence of living in translation, but rather a gift that we can employ deliberately.

By calling translation a Philosophical Practice I'm not only arguing for philosophers to be translators of the foreign language texts they work with. I'm encouraging bilingual philosophers, in particular those who work 'in exile,' to translate into their 'other' language, their mother tongue, perhaps?—and back again, and so carry their work forward. From Derrida's analysis we know that a 'gift' is not without surprises, not without danger even, but I think this one is worth the risk.



## 5 Moving Across

We have to stop the explication of language which we began in the previous chapters, due to constraints of time and size. In this concluding *movement* we will look at various dimensions of language. In three short sections we look back (section 1), we revisit the layer model (section 2), and we look across the edge (section 3).

### 5.1 Looking Back

In chapter 1 we introduced three perspectives on language, namely language from the perspective of the 'self,' the 'social,' and the 'text.' Each one of the perspectives was subsequently discussed in the wider context (chapter 2), as an intricacy in which internal processes are at work (chapter 3), and as the context for concomitant outward processes (chapter 4). In the resulting matrix we find a complexly interrelated web of elements, each illustrating a different aspect of language. The overall process we went through in this thesis illustrates the process of explication as a double movement in which more and more of the implicit is brought to the surface, while the intricacy itself is never exhausted. On one side of the movement we bring a part of the implicit into articulation, and we are able to speak with greater precision about it. But this movement of clarification does not reduce and remove the intricacy of which the emerging concept is a part. The intricacy changes in the process of explication, but it does not disappear; in fact it deepens. As an implicit element is brought to the surface in explication, it pulls other, previously unknown, implicit elements into the 'sphere of influence' of the intricacy. These movements contribute to the shifts in the intricacy as we go through the explication cycle.

Rather than trying to summarize our findings, I want to make a remark about how such a summary itself can be seen as an intricacy. We saw that reading and writing are closely connected in an intricate perspective: 'writing involves the reading of the speaking of the implicit' (section 3.4.3). This choice of words suggests that we can treat writing as a Focusing practice. Yet, we also saw how reading as a nomadic activity reveals a rhizomatic side of the reading/writing complexity. The nomadic mode of being belongs to the language user as a social and intercultural traveller. The reference to the complex of reading/writing belongs to the world of deconstructive hermeneutics. Characterizations like 'rhizome,' 'nomad,' and 'deconstruction' help us to position the topic in the wider philosophical context, as we did in chapter 2. Yet, none of these characterizations exhausts the intricacy of writing as the reading of the speaking of the implicit. In chapter 3 we discussed (part of) the internal structure of 'explication.' We suggested that different proposals (Heidegger on the speaking of being in language, Gendlin on 'focusing,' Derrida on the *khôra*, and Kristeva on the transgression of the symbolic) can be brought together to describe language as a complexity consisting of a 'system and its transgression' in which writing involves reading, and in which the implicit speaks. In chapter 4 we discussed the external effects of 'explication' as the translation from the implicit into creativity and critique. While the discussion of play and of translation as philosophy does not exhaust the topic, it does bring enough material 'into play,' to lead to two suggestions for further research. One is a rethinking of the layer model—already promised in section 3.5.4.

The other suggestion is an element of a research proposal on the edge of philosophical hermeneutics and translation studies.

## 5.2 Layers Revisited

In chapter 3 I introduced a Layer model to map the different implicit processes at work in the intricacy of language. Despite the initial success of the model (it helped bring about a breakthrough in the writing process), I kept having misgivings about the model. Both the division in separate layers and the numbering of the layers seems to imply a specific order or priority, which isn't right. I propose the following reconfiguration.

Let us look at language as one layer; as one three-dimensional space. The whole layer is an intricacy, within which different processes are at work. Looking at it from above we see the 'surface,' the explicit side of language. The thickness of the substrate under the surface can vary; one can imagine that the layer grows thicker as a child learns its mother-tongue. We can also grow a new 'languaculture space' when we learn a new language. The different (trans)formational processes at work in the substrate 'feed' what happens on the surface, like humus feeds the plants growing on it (ignoring for a moment that plants have roots going down through the surface).

What we identified in Layer II, the 'Heideggerian' speaking of being in language, can be seen as a longitudinal movement through the substrate. Perhaps we can say that each languaculture speaks a different ground-tone at this level of con-

ception. In this field we can start to make sense of a puzzling remark someone made at a conference, commenting on what language does to thought, noting that with a certain word “this is German doing the work, rather than Heidegger.”

Layer III described a different movement. This ‘focusing’ movement involves the interaction between implicit and explicit. In our new Layer model we call these vertical transactions, which move an implicit element from the substrate to the surface. This movement then changes the intricacy (the configuration of explicit and implicit), suggesting a movement from the surface down into the substrate. The oscillation follows the explication cycle, constantly mediating and transforming the intricacy.

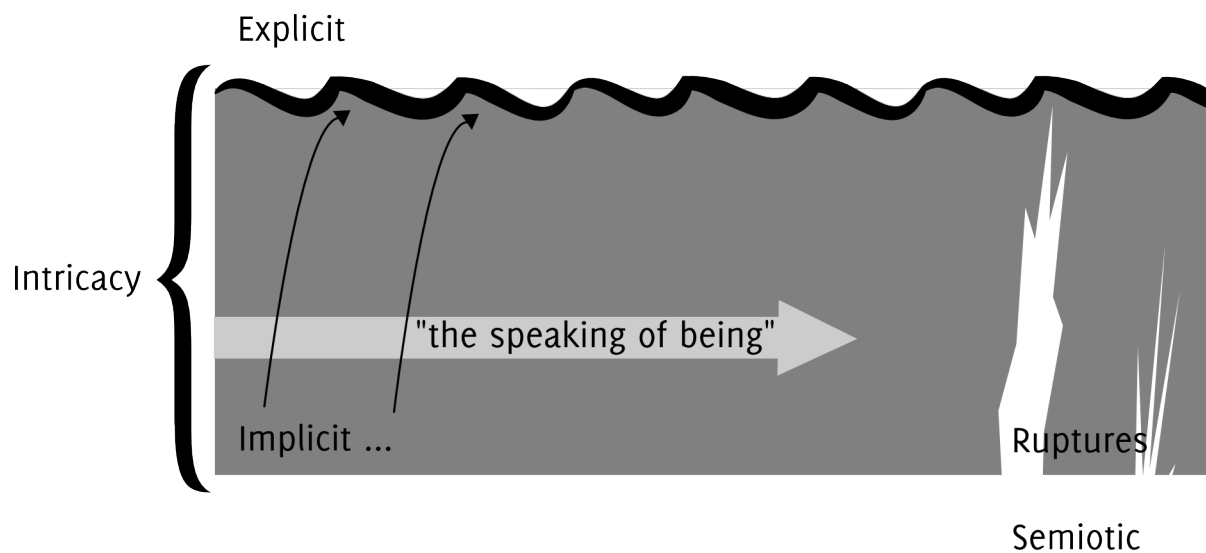
Ruptures in the substrate, initially identified as Layer IV, happen both in language as it emerges in the body/psyche intricacy (Kristeva) and in language as text (Derrida, Deleuze). Ruptures can break, reconfigure, and trigger further movements in the layer. At this point we simply register that ruptures happen, and that they introduce an element of chance into the language equation.

This revised layer model can also help to analyze the ‘gap’ between<sup>156</sup> languages as experienced in (life in) translation. Earlier we saw that our competence and experience in a language can grow. My own competence in Dutch is well developed; we could say it has maximal thickness. We reserve maximum thickness for the (near) mother tongue level. I learned English at a later stage, and I realize

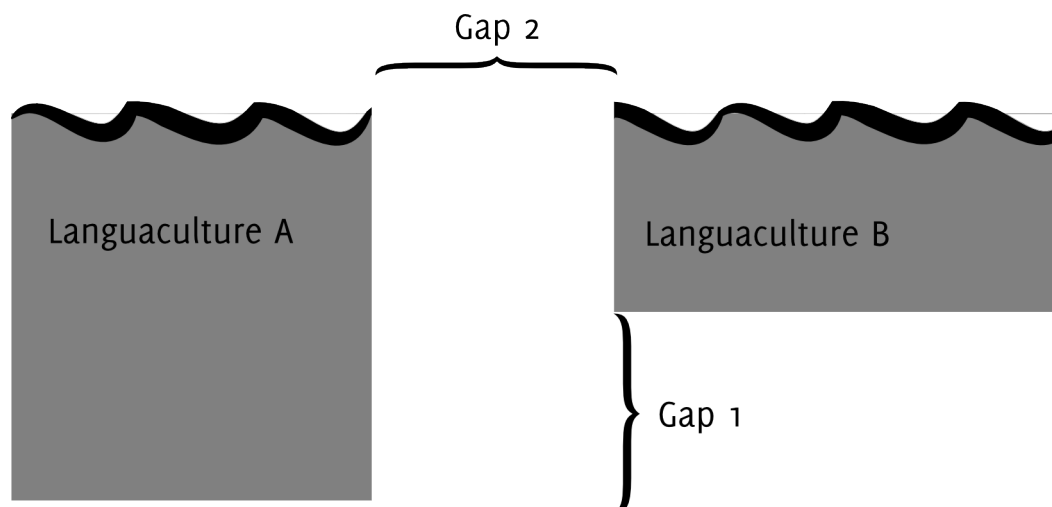
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<sup>156</sup> I realize that the ‘between’ itself also plays its role in the mediation, but I leave that out of the picture, for now.

that my English layer is not as thick and intricate as my Dutch languaculture layer. If we put those layers next to each other, which is what happens in a translation situation, a competence gap becomes evident. However, it seems to me that there is also another gap, which I call the experience gap. Even though my English layer doesn't grow much thicker, it is evident that I gained a lot in terms of experience from living, thinking, and writing in English, and the experience gap between my Dutch and my English layers is shrinking. I suggest that the two gaps we identified are two dimensions of one intricate gap. In translation one has to cross through this double-gap in a process that always leads to certain frictions and mismatches, which Agar identified as 'rich points.'



**Figure 1** An attempt to visualize the horizontal and vertical movements through language as a single layer.



**Figure 2** The double gap between languacultures in translation. Between languaculture A and languaculture B there is a gap 1 (competence gap) and a gap 2 (experience gap.) Both gaps can shrink over time.

### 5.3 Moving Forward, Moving Across

My own thinking about this thesis underwent two clear shifts. The first shift was a conscious choice to move away from setting up a direct confrontation between Gendlin and Derrida. The second shift emerged gradually in the process of writing, in which the theme of translation became more prominent. In the discussion I stumbled upon a fundamental triple resonance between explication, metaphor, and translation.<sup>157</sup> The key metaphor for ‘explication’ in Gendlin is ‘to carry forward,’ which is, as I suggested, a ‘caring carrying across.’ Translation means “to carry across”

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<sup>157</sup> Another resonance are recent developments in thinking about ‘chaos’ and ‘complexity’ in the natural sciences. This ‘new science’ invites a rethinking of linguistics as a science.

or “to bring across.” Likewise, metaphor, literally means “a carrying over,” from *metapherein*, “transfer, carry over.” It seems unavoidable that further explorations of language as a movement of explication should deal with the translation of metaphor. This is no surprise given the fact that a great deal of attention has been given to both ‘translation’ and ‘metaphor’ in twentieth-century philosophical hermeneutics. However, I propose that this process can be enriched by explicit interaction with concerns and models from the perspective of translation studies. This is no one-way interaction, because, as I suggested, the field of Bible translation—to limit myself to one genre—can certainly also profit from interaction with philosophical hermeneutics. This further research could well involve linguistic work in a particular language project, and further analysis of the translation choices such as I discussed in section 2.3. Whether this will happen, and how, awaits further explication...

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