# Language Beyond Poetic Truth[1]

**Kekhrie Yhome**
*Doctoral Candidate*
*Centre for Linguistics, SLL&CS, JNU, New Delhi-110067.*
Email*: kekhrie@yahoo.com*

## Abstract

The genre of poetry is as old as ancient Greek thought. A conflict arises over whether poetry as an art has any representative value. When the ancients look down on poetry as incapable of representing truth, they also denigrate language as incapable of presenting objects. Philosophy, for the ancient Greeks, is therefore the preferred genre for articulating truth. This tradition encapsulates western thoughts until its subversion by Immanuel Kant, who privileged poetry over philosophy. This paper therein surveys post-Kantian developments and foregrounds two contentious directions in contemporary discourse on the thinking of poetry and language.

The aesthetic and expressive allure of poetry and language has not subsided even in recent times. Post-Heidegger, almost all major continental philosophers have tinkered with this age-old question, verging on expository arguments.[2] Here, we are once again reminded of a certain ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy. This unsettling debate refers to the conversation between Plato and Socrates in *The Republic* and, later, Aristotle's response.[3] The quarrel's central concern is over the question of representing truth and, understandably, over what system of thought best expresses truth. Of course, in the end, the Greeks privileged philosophy over poetry. Poetry was frowned upon either as incapable of presenting truth or as misrepresenting truth, thereby directly implicating language (metaphors and rhetoric) as duplicitous. Philosophy, meanwhile, was sanctioned as the sum total of truth. The significance of this ancient quarrel cannot be merely restricted to philosophy vs. poetry *qua* language vs. truth. For the ancients, one recalls, the sense of truth is not relative but an unstable absolute entity: *aletheia*, for the Greeks, is illogical, errant, and untenable, whereas, for the later Romans, *veritas* represents logic, reason, and system. Its first implication includes legitimising a certain mode of inquiry (here, philosophy) in the production of knowledge. In other words, it implies that poetry produces only false knowledge. Second, the warrant given to philosophy qualifies 'reason' as mathematically and naturally inclined. Although truth is not required as a mathematical quantification, there is an unspoken attempt to mathematise language, thought, reason, and thinking, as (and, in) the expression of knowledge.

Inheriting this ancient quarrel, Immanuel Kant initiates a militant approach in the eighteenth-century to end and reverse the privileging of philosophy over poetry. Kant's disenchantment with the Greeks precipitated a twin intervention—to 'expand the mind' by liberating imagination, and 'strengthen the mind' by treating the supersensible as capable of judging nature. Objects, says Kant, must conform to our [knowledge] knowing.[4] In advantaging poetry over philosophy, Kant praises poetry as competent of illustrating both the sublime and the beautiful. Poetry, for Kant, has the highest aesthetic value. In other words, the mind is independently proficient in imagining and

appreciating the "fullness of thought to which no linguistic expression is fully adequate."[5] In short, the experience of the beautiful is external to language and is a pure act of the mind. Here, Kant cleverly maintains knowledge as perpetually divided between the thing-in-itself and appearance. Language is passively disengaged as an appearance (illusion) but is constantly and actively in direct conflict with the real (nature, or the thing-in-itself). Kant's agenda therein aims to liberate poetry from the seductions of rhetoric. In Kant's model, the cognitive faculties of imaginations, ideas, consciousness, aesthetics, etc., are not dependent of/on language.

However, despite Kant's enthusiasm, the attempt to locate knowledge (or truth or language) was misguided by a misinformed psychologism, i.e., a fusion of transcendental idealism and empirical idealism, where the mind is *a priori* to consciousness.[6] Moreover, Kant's faulty notion that 'time cannot be perceived by itself',[7] added to the above discrepancy, substitutes time as perpetual and homogenous[8]. Lastly, given the influential developments of Copernican and Galilean physics, Kant's ambitious contradistinction between metaphysical and mathematical reasoning, which directly imports Newtonian and Leibnizian models, is in itself self-contradictory and untenable. We shall shortly elaborate on these implications.

Georg Hegel, in similar fashion, also embraces poetry, recommending it as "the most universal and widespread teacher of human race."[9] Hegel sees imaginative and artistic possibilities in poetry, which, in turn, is transcendentally and automatically qualified for producing self-knowledge in the individual. Poetry, for Hegel, has the power to truth. On similar lines, Jean-Jacques Rousseau also valorizes poetry by propounding that the first speech of man was in the *figurative* ("only poetry was spoken"),[10] which finds reiterated in the naturalist linguistics of Etienne Condillac and metacritic of Johann Herder, or problematized in

the hybrid linguistics of Wilhelm Humboldt and logical linguistics of Johann Fichte.

Following Kant-Hegel, the new founded priority accorded to poetry over philosophy radically challenges the Greek's mistrust for linguistic matters. The new departure also places the question of language as a foundation to the understanding of art and thought. The search for the place of language in human discourse continues in contemporary thinking and practice. The ancient quarrel is therefore an epic quarrel since it is very much carried over to contemporary debates. Departing references for the major thinkers, however, are quite different from each other, including their positions on language. Hegel's transcendental turn to poetry as the Absolute, for instance, is different from Kant's turn to poetry as the aesthetic ideal. Kant's argument in particular poses an interesting trajectory—the proposition that objects must conform to our knowledge (intuition of objects)—which is rather a conscious rejection of David Hume's proposal that "objects have no discoverable connection together."[11] Kant attempts a radical approach to expose how the subject constructs its own way of knowing—either through philosophical narratives or poetic language. It systematically debunks the Greek notion of art (especially Aristotle's) as a universal self-affirmation (tragic art, for instance, is to formulate a predetermined unity of aesthetics). Kant also smartly appropriates René Descartes' *cogito* and Gottfried Leibniz's *apperception*— by formulating a faux knowledge that an imaginary experiential is equitable to the real experience or self-consciousness. This is Kant's famous aesthetic or synthetic judgment.[12] To summarise in brief, Kant never really offered any clarity on the place of language whereas Hegel's views on language are explicit, although outrageous in many ways.

It was at Jena where Hegel developed his most mature and concise description on how language decodes consciousness—as explicated in the *Berlin Enzyklopaedie*, § 457–64, or in the 1820s lectures commentary notes. Prior to Hegel,

three groups predominated the linguistic approach: empirical, metacritical, and philosophical. Modeled on Schelling's 'claim'[13] that language is the Subject-Object paradigmatic, Hegel formulated self-consciousness and language-consciousness (*Identitàsystem*) as a natural mediation between Nature and Spirit. The "inner content" of consciousness (Spirit) "first becomes objective" via *Äusserung* ('ex-pression' or 'externalization'), thereby making language "the first potency of consciousness."[14] The subject's progressive path to Objective Spirit and, ultimately, to the ultimate Absolute Spirit is, similarly, mediated through theoretical Psychology where *Vorstellung* (Idea) reconciles Intuition into Thinking.Only then, thinking is externalized through/as language. In other words, for any "external expression" or communication (whether written or spoken) to take place, *Einbildungskraft* (imagination) directly mediates representational images into types of *Zeichen* (sign). Meaning and intuition are thereafter then fixed and stabilized through *Erinnerung* (recollection) and *Gedächtnis* (memory).[15] Hegel's simplistic and naturalistic explanation of language curiously depends on a theory of language as memory (*Gedächtnis*)—namely, the *Mneomsyne of the ancients*—"through which a people gives itself a *name*," and consciously gather its *gedacht* (place) too, allowing man to step out of "the sheer undifferentiated flow of space and time."[16] "Language," according to Hegel, is therefore "a supra-individual medium, the form of its memory communal."[17] Hegel's *Zeichen* (verbal sign)is merely an "empty placeholder" and, therefore, the temporal act of consciousness is meditated only by appropriation of a spatial-referent, namely the functional aspect of language itself or, properly, "speech."[18]

Whereas, Kant propounds an empirico-realist version on temporality, which locates time as *a priori* to experience. Temporality, here, although differentiated, is internalised as consciousness. Inserted only in the second edition of the *Critique*,

Kant's "Refutation of Idealism" was initially aimed as a rebuttal of George Berkeley's subjective realism, by arguing that a synthetic unity of consciousness is essential prior to any other conceivable forms of self-consciousness.However, Kant's empirical idealism ultimately ends in attacking Descartes as well. Whether a mathematical reason is paramount in situating temporality or not—Kant's empirical thought appears to be motivated by such a subjective logic, where the determination of time is both a transcendental and conscious experience, and can be propelled only by external influence, i.e., matter or a substance of intuition. The "self" in Kant, Couzens Hoy remarks, "is both constrained by time and independent of time."[19] Time therefore has the feature of the perpetual, a "permanence,"[20] but also "nothing abiding" in it, and yet gives cognition to its determinants, and is externally free of the determinable objects. Reiterating Kant's familiar lines, Richard Kearney critiques the "poetic productivity of imagination" as appearing "timeless" since it "precedes the chronology of linear time, prefiguring the future in terms of memory and refiguring the past in terms of anticipation."[21] Kant's bold appropriation of the manifold (i.e., nature, experience, and knowledge) into an autonomous singular agency, representing a unity of one consciousness, also strictly negates the temporal succession, given the analogical diversity of experiences, thereby making it contradictory.[22]In the "Transcendental Deduction," Kant discuses how the unity of consciousness can be forged by unifying two polar concepts: a.) analytic unity of apperception and b.) the synthetic unity of apperception, with the former being dependent of the latter.[23] Kant's concepts of *analysis* and *synthesis* are pertinent to this 'logical turn', if we may term it so, which also herald the development of a critical theory of knowledge or the philosophy of logic and, dominantly, a departure from the Rationalist, who sees "logic" as the sole provider of cognition. Knowledge, then, in Kant's method, is directly based on intuition;where the faculty of intuition is of the

sensible and not of the intellectual. Kant is therefore clear that a theory of knowledge or things can come about only through this sensible intuition and not from intellection, as the rationalists would claim.On the subject's role in the apperception process, Kant, similarly, as Byran Hall points out, involves two acts: "1.) an analytic act via concepts by which apperception *thinks* itself as an object, and 2.) a synthetic act via intuition by which the subject cognizes itself as an object of sense."[24] Charles Parsons confers that although Kant establishes the possibility of mathematics as the necessary conditions of reflective analysis (*ratio congnoscendi* or the order of knowing), in the form of intuition, he was never fully able to reconcile or justify the possibility of experience, with (or, as) a concrete knowledge.[25] The later Kant, observes Hall, exhibits a reversal of his earlier positions: "instead of the synthetic unity of apperception (*dabile*) making possible the analytic unity of apperception(*cogitable*), it seems as if the analytic unity is making possible the synthetic unity."[26]

As mentioned earlier, both Newton and Leibniz impacted the young Kant,which is reflected in the publication of *Thoughts on the True Estimation of Living Forces* (1746), at age twenty. Newton's explanation of the solar system as elements of supernaturalism, which is reiterated by Leibniz's theory of an eternally living and a monadical pre-orderliness of the universal substance, led to the interrogation of matters and dynamics, of nature and mechanics, which eventually resulted in Kant-Laplace Theory (1796). Also, on Cartesian account of nature as a mathematical mechanic, which is supplemented by Leibniz's metaphysical approach to nature through the doctrine of living nature, the young Kant was able to "confidently judged that mathematics worked only for forces arising from external causes" rather than the former's explanation that "only mathematics grasped the living forces of nature."[27] Kant's nature of substance and substance ontology, which was initially grounded as oppositions

to Leibniz's scholastic monadology, were already argued in his *Magister* (equivalent to present day PhD) like *A New Elucidation of the First Principle of Metaphysical Cognition* (1755) or, on a mathematical model, in *Physical Monadolody* (1756). The distinction between mathematical and metaphysical, for Kant, will underline a clear departure from Leibniz and emphasize an outlook based on mathematical physics.[28] The mathematisation of knowledge proper though owes its roots much before Kant.

The varied responses to Kant's thought is a central thread of departure for most thinkers, particularly in continental philosophy. One can safely conclude that the diversity of attentions given to post-Kantian mind-body dualism, consciousness, aesthetics, the universal, thought, experience, knowledge, etc., which gave pre-eminence to modern philosophy on language, concur solely from the conflicts arising between language and poetry. Similarly, starting with the early German Romantics, through German Idealism, German Baroque and French Symbolism, the confrontation on language clearly exposes a crisis of philosophy and, altruistically,engineers a wanderlust attempt to secure an origin of literature through fragmentary thoughts[29] and literary criticisms.[30] The continued reappraisal of an ancient quarrel therein has consequential importance to developments in contemporary thoughts on philosophy, language, literature, etc.

Of interest to us here is a lecture entitled *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, delivered by Martin Heidegger in 1935, which would radically 'rapture' the Platonic-Kantian tradition.[31] "The essence of art is poetry," says Heidegger, which, also, is "the founding of truth."[32] Heidegger reaffirms the figurative proposition that "the original language is the language of poetry"[33] and "the setting-into-work of truth is poetry. Not only the creation of the work is poetic, but… [it is] to bring our own essence itself to take a stand in the truth of beings."[34] After Kant, Heidegger's onto-theological explications will

become the most major litmus test to ground language—using poetry again:

> "Language itself is poetry in the essential sense. …poesy… is the most original form of poetry in the essential sense. Language is not poetry because it is the primal poesy; rather, poesy [take place] in language because language preserves the original essence of poetry."[35]

By re-privileging poetry, Heidegger advocates for an essence of art. Poetry is both the original progenitor and elucidator of truth. Being (or, the Subject, or Truth[36]) is found in the poet's "word," in the poet's language - "poetic thought" is superior to "science."[37] Being is language, or language is the abode of being. Overall, as Heidegger asserts, "language alone brings beings as beings into the open for the first time."[38] Being's relation with language is an issue of experience. Experience is an issue of time. Heidegger's linguistic turn struggled to situate the experience of language. In the process, Heidegger was confounded by the necessity to overcome the anthropocentric triad of western metaphysics, i.e., the order of temporality-being-language,[39] and, also, situate an ontology of poetizing-thinking language, i.e., the order of historicity in philosophizing. Needless to say, unable to arrive at a conclusion, Heidegger will helplessly turn to Hölderlin for an answer:

> "Hölderlin writes poetry about the essence of poetry—but not in the sense of a timelessly valid concept. This essence of poetry belongs to a determinate time. But not in such a way that it merely conforms to this time, as to one which is already in existence. It is that Hölderlin, in the act of establishing the essence of poetry, first determines a new time."[40]

Between language and history, or experience and temporality, therefore, whose relations are also inseparably conjoined, a double genitive reading reveals that it is both infinitely incomplete and rather an "unattainable limit."[41] Maurice Merleau-Ponty,

a student of Heidegger, who attempts to initiate a turn from a logical determination to a phenomenological determination, by demarcating a linguistic shift from mathematical logic, ended by advocating that "language, too, says nothing other than itself."[42] The primacy given to language, minus the subject or meaning, is constitutive and ends with its very own notion—making language-temporality a consequential exercise of aggregating radical unities. With the ontological status of language in destitution, either as representing or presenting experience, there was a conscious glamour in reading poetry as the doubtful rather than reading poetry as the possible. Contemporaneous to or post-Heidegger, we have an entire series of philosophers elucidating a place for language. To cite some instances, "thought's relation with earth," in the words of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, or Hölderlin's "pure speech," or Jacques Derrida's "arche-writing," or Walter Benjamin's "pure language," or Emanuel Levinas' impersonal and anonymous *il y a* (the "there is"), or Giorgio Agamben's "infancy" or "potentiality" (*potenza*) of language, etc. This paper however does not have the required space to elaborate in detail.

With the 'ends of philosophy', or the post-anthropocentric, or the beyond of linguistic unconsciousness, or the 'ethical turn', we noticed that there is a concentrated effort to secularise language—language without the subject, paramount to the 'death of the subject'. Language is non-representational, a destitute, without any "signification" (to employ a Saussurean term), or devoid of any referent to objects. Jean-Luc Nancy—by exteriorising Hegelian dialectics, that the "'language' of thought is indeed the exhaustion of determined signification"—argues that:

> "Thought is not language: it is beyond it, beyond the exteriority of the relation between word and thing. But, at the same time, it is also language: it works like a language… in the play of their differences.

… We must hold that the language of thought is a language, or language itself, just as much as we must hold that it is infinite exhaustion and alteration of language. We must hold to this, not only out of the imperturbable and obstinate seriousness of the philosopher who wants to enunciate the unenunciable, but also because only language, expositing itself of itself as infinite relation and separation, also exposes this being-of-itself-outside-itself-in-the-other that is manifestation. In a sense, language is manifestation: it posits the thing outside of itself… [and yet] manifest nothing."[43]

With the radical developments in twentieth-century—particularly the linguistic thoughts initiated by Swiss Ferdinand de Saussure (followed by Jacques Derrida's critique on western system of representation as 'metaphysics of presence'); the psychoanalytic movement of Sigmund Freud (followed by its integration into language and cultural studies in Jacques Lacan); and the binary-opposition of Karl Marx's dialectical society (followed by a comprehensive study of "ideology" as a transient and symbolic system in Louis Althusser)—the renewed interrogation on the manifest of language is central and consistent to the continuous project of what represents/presents discursive knowledge. In fact, after Kant's celebrated placement of Reason as the inquiry par excellence, the inquisitive energies post-Kant is entirely focused on the problem of knowledge.[44]

Two traditions stand out clearly on the problem of knowledge: a.) the mathematico-calculus logic of language and b.) the thing-in-itself (as opposed to the representative value of language or, variably, art, poetry, music, etc.). Here, one recollects Kant's advocacy for a system based on mathematical knowing (*ratio congnoscendi*). Analytical philosophy is richly founded on this continuity, which requires a full-length examination. Inasmuch, Kant's faulty (if not mathematical) obsession however reiterates an ancient tradition. As early

as the Greeks, we find Philolaus remarking: "Everything which is known to us has a number, for it is not possible either to perceive or to know anything at all without number."[45] Such recapitulation also finds mentioned in Heidegger:

"The mathematical, in the original sense of learning what one already knows, is the fundamental presupposition of all 'academic' work. [...] Therefore, we must now show in what sense the foundation of modern thought and knowledge is essentially mathematical."[46]

In the last quarter of twentieth-century, the thoughts of Frenchman Derrida became a powerful vector in the human sciences, especially across the Atlantic, thereby radicalising and completing the departure from analytical philosophy. Derrida's early works deals with Edmund Husserl, which is remarkably incisive, apart from the extensive corpus of publications. Derrida's frustration with the system of western thoughts (logocentrism) and the subsequent critique (deconstruction) is premised on two notions: first, an implicating review of the history of the concept of metaphysics,[47] which presupposes an "invariable presence" of essence, existence, substance, subject, etc., across the chronological/historical progression of time; and, second, the substitution of these senses through ideal objects (phonocentricism) as immutably ever-present. Ideal objects, here, include language, truth, living present, being, etc. In other words, the "source of all sense and history,"[48] as Derrida jests, is solely mediated by sense (ideal objects) in the entire western tradition. These ideal objects, or language, for example, are logically constructed as ceaselessly transmitting an ever-present experiences or mediating an immediate consciousness. Being's cognition, intuition, or perception, therein, presupposes that there is an always-available ideal origin from where our understanding of anything (or knowledge) is premised or drawn, which, as Derrida critiques Husserl, is an impossibility. To justify this

impossibility, Derrida's neologism *différance* proposes to rectify a paradoxical conflation of tasking a double delineation, i.e., as in "differ" and "defer," which may be also considered as "neither a *word* nor a *concept*."[49] Language, for Derrida,"is born out of the process of its own degeneration,"[50] by hijacking or substituting the presence its own future origin, i.e., which, impossibly, is "[t]o speak before knowing how to speak."[51] Only in the "concept of *différance*," remarks Derrida in a 1968 interview, "all these metaphysical oppositions (signifier/ signified; sensible/intelligible; writing/speech; parole/ langue; diachrony/synchrony; space/ time; passivity/ activity; etc.)" "…become non-pertinent."[52] Put simply, what Derrida was trying to do was to break the binary oppositions of "linguistic value" in the seminal works of Saussure; or further problematise Husserl's critique of Galileo Galilei's *mathematisation of nature*;[53] or, revert the "dangerous" privileging of speech (*logos*) over writing (*grammé*), as found in the ancient Greeks or finds reiteration in Rousseau's *Confessions*.[54]

On Derrida's exposition on the 'impossible'is a much neglected paradox, which, ironically, is the import of Kurt Gödel's "undecidability" in his Incompleteness Theorem. It is unsettling to note that a justification for Derrida's core philosophical tirade against the mathematico-calculus logic of language in western tradition draws its ultimate reliance from a mathematical equation. Apart from Derrida's radical readings, however, no substantive works exist in both the analytical or continental traditions, which seriously or singularly try to break the preeminence of mathematico-calculative elements in linguistic thoughts or systematic philosophy.

Our second concern is the thing-in-itself. Tom Rockmore pinpoints that,prior to Kant, the Englishman and materialist Thomas Hobbes had already delved into "the thing itself," in terms of body motions in human psychology. Hobbes argues that all *conceptions* "originally" emerged from the actions of 'the thing itself 'and, only from it, "sense" and the "object of sense" is produced. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), John

Locke further advances the debate by involving the nature of language and its philosophical ramifications, i.e., idea is sense-reflex derived and sense is reflex-computed. Locke's position on "things-as-they-are"[55] is more or less blinded by the anti-Platonic stances on rhetoric, which seeks to distinguish "simple" against "complex" ideas. Unfortunately, Locke could not even explain why ideas *should be* simple in the first place. By employing Kant's *a priori* principles, Rockmore interprets the "thing-in-itself" as a possibility of situating a "mind-independent external world."[56] It is pertinent to note here that Salamon Maimon, a contemporary of Kant, severely defends the 'thing-in-itself' and the possibility of the subject transcendentally experiencing the same—which, earlier,Gottlob Schulze, another contemporary, critiques it as an impossible task since it integrates a relation that is not conjunctive but disjunctive, i.e., that the transcendental subject is not an entity in the first place and, second, as Beiser points out, the *noumenon* is but a "formal unity of all representations, the necessary condition of having consciousness at all."[57] Also, stiffly opposed to the pure subjective idealism in Kant's critical philosophy is another contemporary, Friedrich Jacobi, who sees the entire project as a nihilistic journey attempting to ground any objective or independently-existing reality: "Without the thing in itself I cannot enter the Kantian philosophy, and with it I cannot remain."[58]

Kant's thing-in-itself not only had a rough beginning but also attracted a constant of interlocutors over the centuries. Apart from the above-mentioned, almost all major contemporaries of Kant opposed his situating of knowledge and reason through the thing-in-itself. Initiated by Johann Hamann's *Metakritik*,[59] and followed by his student J.G. Herder, and, latter, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel,[60] etc., who all raised doubts about the "thing-in-itself." The most scathing objections, however, is Friedrich Nietzsche, who attacks the absurdity of Kant's thing-in-itself (*noumenon*)[61] as *contradictio in adjecto*, which,

in other words, is an equating of phenomenon (tangible objects) as noumenon (unintelligible objects). For, as Nietzsche puts it, it is not possible to experience the thing-in-itself nor is it comprehensible within the language system.[62] Moreover, the conceptualization of the thing-in-itself as representative of objects (or possibly as objects of experience) is perceived as a contradiction to cognitive processes in humans. In other words, the autonomy of language (as the thing-in-itself claims)simply lacks an explanation onto how the intellect originated, or fails to explain how consciousness of other things emerged, thereby making it a *principium individuationis*—where the law of casualty is shown even before the appearance of the intellect.Nietzsche developed his theory of language directly from Arthur Schopenhauer's reading of Kant's thing-in-itself.[63] Earlier Schopenhauer had rebuffed Kant's logical proofs of the concept of the thing-in-itself through the "will," along with its three predicates, namely, unity (universalism), eternity (timelessness), freedom (causelessness), which,as Nietzsche argues, originates "from the contradiction to the world of representation."[64] In discrediting Schopenhauer's claim for the *will*, or the unity of the will, as the thing-in-itself, as a *phenomenon*, Nietzsche contends that the characteristic markers of language are "completely outside the sphere of knowledge, and which does not remain in accord with the assertion that it is not subject to the most universal form of knowledge, namely, to be object for a subject."[65] Schopenhauer's "thing in itself," Nietzsche remarks, "demands that something, which can never be an object, nevertheless should be thought of objectively: a path which can only lead to an apparent objectivity, in so far as a completely dark and ungraspable."[66] Such radicalization of the thing-in-itself as a fantasy object, as a substitution for the real thing, although on a different note, is seen as a validation in western tradition (i.e., Hegel-Marx-Freud) that constructs the "fetish" as a claim for truth, as Jacques Derrida observes:

"[T]he thing itself…, the origin of presence…, what occupies the center function in a system… If the fetish substitutes itself for the thing itself in its manifest presence, in its truth, there should no longer be any fetish as soon as there is truth, the presentation of the thing itself in its essence. According to this minimal conceptual determination, the fetish is opposed to the presence of the thing itself, to truth, signified truth for which the fetish is a substitute signified… Something—the thing—is no longer itself a substitute; there is the nonsubstitute that is what constructs the concept fetish. If there were no thing, the concept fetish would lose its invariant kernel."[67]

If the 'thing-in-itself' is not language but one which also inevitably provokes/demands the movement of thought, the politely paradoxical and "anaphoric" answer (of neither refusing to answer) by Bartleby in Herman Melville's play comes to mind: "I would prefer not to prefer not to"—which both Gilles Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben seriously employed to develop their perspectives on language.[68] The thing-in-itself is neither nihilistic nor affirmative. The thing is the sign, the *langue* (as Saussure defines), language, and concept (which is not necessarily Wittgensteinian). Deleuze locates in Alfred Jarry what Martin Heidegger had earlier failed to overcome: "the sign neither designates nor signifies… but shows the thing."[69] An interesting scrutiny here is Deleuze's quantificational equation for the sign-thing-language axis: the "limit of language is the Thing in its muteness—vision. The thing is the limit of language, as the sign is the language of the thing… the $n^{th}$ power of language."[70] On the other hand, Agamben challenges the "Idea of the thing" as the "thing itself," thereby rekindling the relation of the "sign" and the "thing" in the locale of a "pure dwelling"— of the "thing" in "language" *per se*.[71] Referring to Mathieu Lindon's observation, Deleuze notes that Bartleby, or The Formula, is "devastating," the basis

of "indiscernibility or indetermination,"[72] where the "formula 'disconnect' words and things, words and actions, but also speech and words—it severs language from all reference, in accordance with Bartleby's absolute vocation, to be *a man without reference*, someone who appears suddenly and then disappears, without reference to himself or anything else."[73] Reason, then, for Bartleby, is "dashed" because it "rests on a *logic of presupposition*" and, instead, he invents "a new logic, *a logic of preference*, which is enough to undermine the presupposition of language as a whole."[74] Likewise, for Agamben too, the *Bartleby,the Scrivener*, or, "The Formula," again, is a "potentiality," is the "extreme figure of the Nothing from which all creation derives; and a the same time, he constitutes the most implacable vindication of this Nothing."[75]

Both Agamben and Deleuze decimate language through the substance and form of truth in the thing-in-itself. For Kant, the thing-in-itself embodies a blind trust for the *a priori* truth, as opposed to Nietzsche's instinctive theory on the origin of language, where the "deepest philosophical knowledge lies already prepared in language."[76] While Kant took refuge in the transcendental metaphysics of noumenon, Nietzsche turned to metaphors by subtracting any metaphysics—with both, ironically, seeking the comforts of "intuition" to justify their explanations of language. Where Kant emphasized that "representations are embedded in a transcendental aesthetics of space and time," as Christiana Emden differentiates, Nietzsche took a step further and "considers concepts to be largely rhetorical, embedded in the predispositions of human physiology."[77] Nietzsche, the intuitive philosopher, does not agree that metaphysical truth is capable of establishing or understanding an objective world. Like Kant, Nietzsche, too, rejects metaphysics as privileging consciousness, in order to "tranquilize itself against more disturbing unconscious processes."[78] Kant, however, rejects the essence of consciousness in any metaphysical concepts by insisting that the "empirical individual judgments of real possibility require sensible conditions in addition to logical intelligibility and non-contradictoriness."[79]

Kant and Nietzsche's notion of subjectivity are therein important in the development of what language is, as a consciousness, either as an epistemological or ontological question. In it, the trajectory of consciousness is placed over the question of who is the subject. For Kant, *intuition* is the mediating medium of consciousness, which realizes concepts that are *a priori*, through transcendental logic and, therein, promulgates mathematics to not only access consciousness but also define its principles. For Nietzsche, the raw medium is *instinct*, which intuitively arrests metaphors (which, to stress, are not concepts, but are likeable to "unconscious language") through genealogy and, therefore, negates any mathematical reason. In the end Nietzsche, the philosopher artist, along with Stéphane Mallarme, sarcastically toyed with the superior relevance of the poetic over the mathematico-philosophic:

> "The artist does not gaze upon 'ideas': he feels pleasure in numerical ratios. All pleasure [depends upon] proportion; displeasure upon disproportion. Concepts constructed according to numbers. Perceptions which exhibit good numerical ratios are beautiful. The man of science *calculates* the numbers of the laws of nature; the artist *gazes* at them. In the one case, conformity to law; in the other, beauty. What the artist gazes upon is something entirely superficial; it is no 'idea'! The most delicate shell surrounding beautiful numbers."[80]

By the time of the Enlightenment or immediately following, the obsession on language was on its origin. Thereon the intentionality of language eventually emerged as the greatest question, and finding strong resurgence in Jean-Paul Sartre as late as in the post-War period. Sartre relevance in language and literature drastically eroded (to the point where his thoughts are no longer

seen as expedient anymore), particularly with the clamour of continental thoughts in literature vis-à-vis as a philosophical or literary practice. Here, it is prudent to mention in this regard the juridical and political purges that followed the War, following what should be the status of language and the commitment of literatures, as pointed in the monumental work of Philip Watts.[81] The twentieth-century also saw two towering figures in philosophy, Husserl and Heidegger, failing to think beyond the lived-experiences or realities of language, resorting to the very question of language as the final problem of their unresolved corpuses. In purging the intentional (form and content), thinkers like Maurice Blanchot positions *language* as "*the life that endures death and maintains itself in it*"[82] and "Literature is language turning into ambiguity."[83] Again, if language is the catacomb of life that *reveals nothing* in Blanchot, a staunch interlocutor like Derrida will liken the *secret of literature* as *the secret itself.* The secret of literature remains in "the infinite power to keep undecidable and forever sealed the secret of what it says."[84] There is an exceeding agreement today, to quote Agamben, that "the limits of language are to be found not outside language, in the direction of its referent, but in an experience of language as such, in its pure self-reference."[85] The consensus seems to apply to what Roland Barthes earlier describes it as the "unreal reality of language,"

which brings to task the unavoidable turnabout on the "the very consciousness of the unreality of language."[86] The conflicts between language and truth in contemporary terms therefore appear to be put to rest. The label of "exhausted literature" aptly describes the post-modern lifelessness, worldlessness, timelessness, worklessness, powerlessness, and wordlessness of language and literature.[87] Language, or even the poetic, meantime, which is a *caesura*, to employ Friedrich Hölderlin term for the "pure word," lives and dies in itself, in its pure self-referent. Such is the anarchic character of language, one that does not present or represent anything or any experiences. Language, given its instability to inform a living meaning, however must continue as it "implicates our own existence: the nature of human being."[88] Finally, as Geoffrey Hale highlights: "Language cannot account for its own rule"—

"[Language] is simply never reducible to or generalizable as universalization alone. Language must remain silent about the only thing of which it would continually speak; it must remain silent about the secret rule of its comprehensibility. Language itself, in every act of speech, communicates nothing other than its own fundamental incomprehensibility. Every language, that is, calls Abraham to mind. For this reason, then, there must be interpretation."[89]

### Endnotes

[1] I would like to thank Michael Heneise for his comments on this paper.

[2] For a brief reading list, see Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, (tr.) Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); Giorgio Agamben, *The End of the Poem*, (tr.) Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); William Franke, *Poetry and Apocalypse: Theological Disclosures of*

*Poetic Language* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Alain Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, (tr.) Alberto Toscano (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) and *The Age of the Poets*, (trs.) Bruno Bosteels and Emily Apter (London: Verso, 2014); Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience,* (tr.) Andrea Tarnowski (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999) and *Heidegger and the Politics of Poetry*, (tr.)

Jeff Fort (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Jacques Derrida, *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, (ed.) Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005); Kevin McLaughlin, *Poetic Force: Poetry after Kant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), etc.

3  Plato, *The Republic*, Book 10, esp., 595a–602b and 607b–d and, also, Aristotle's *Poetics*.

4  Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (trs. & eds.) Paul Guyer & Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 110-11.

5  Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, (ed.) Paul Guyer, (trs.) Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [2000] 2002), pp. 203-04.

6  Thus, Kant idiosyncratically defines idealism:
   "Idealism consists in the claim that there are none other than thinking beings; the other things that we believe we perceive in intuition are only representations in thinking beings, to which in fact no object existing outside these beings corresponds."

   Further, on his theory of "transcendental idealism" as different from Descartes' "empirical idealism" or Berkeley's idealism, Kant playfully toyed the idea whether it may be also called as "dreaming idealism," or "visionary idealism," or "critical idealism." Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*, (tr.) Gary Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1997] 2004), p. 40.

7  Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (trs. and eds.) Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, op. cit., p. 299.

8  In an earlier translation of *Critique*, Kant notes:
   "This idea of permanence is not itself derived from external experience, but is an *à priori* necessary condition of all determination of time, consequently also of the internal sense in reference to our own existence, and that through the existence of external things."

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (tr.) J.M.D. Meiklejohn (London: Henry G. Bohn, MDCCCLV), p. 168. Also, refer Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (trs. and eds.) Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, op. cit., pp. 273-74.

9  G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, (tr.) T.M. Knox (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 972.

10  Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages and Writings Related to Music: The Collected Writings of Rousseau Vol. 7*, (tr. & ed.) John T. Scott (Hanover and London: The University Press of New England, 1998), pp. 289-332.

11  David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (ed.) L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, [1888] 1960), p. 103.

12  As Kant notoriously posits his synthetic judgment thesis, modeled on a perceptive/receptive thematic:
   "For in such judging the question does not turn on what nature is, or even on what it is for us in the way of an end, but on how we receive it."

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement* (tr.) James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1952] 2007), p. 177.

13  Daniel Whistler, *Schelling's Theory of Symbolic Language: Forming the System of Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 67.

14  Hegel, quoted, in Jere O'Neill Surber (ed.), *Hegel and Language* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), p. 11.

15 Ibid. pp. 12-13.

16 Martin Donougho, "Hegel's Art of Memory," in Rebecca Comay and John McCumber (eds.), *Endings: Questions of Memory in Hegel and Heidegger*, (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1999), pp. 139-159, esp. p. 143.

17 Ibid., p. 143.

18 As Alexander Kojève remarks:

> "He is conscious of himself, conscious of his human reality and dignity; and it is in this that he is essentially different from animals, which do not go beyond the level of simple Sentiment of self. Man becomes conscious of himself at the moment when—for the 'first' time— he says 'I'. To understand man by understanding his 'origin' is, therefore, to understand the origin of the I revealed by speech."

Alexander Kojève, "In Place of an Introduction," in *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel on the* Phenomenology of Spirit, (ed.) Allan Bloom and (tr.) James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, [1969] 1980), p. 3.

19 David Couzens Hoy, *The Time of Our Lives: A Critical History of Temporality* (Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 2009), p. 7.

20 In *Critique*'s earlier translation, Kant notes:

> "This idea of permanence is not itself derived from external experience, but is an *à priori* necessary condition of all determination of time, consequently also of the internal sense in reference to our own existence, and that through the existence of external things."

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (tr.) J.M.D. Meikle john, op. cit., p. 168.

21 Kearney rates Kant's "transcendental self" or "primordial time" or "imagination"—as all "inextricable allies." He also compares Kant's schemata to Heidegger's temporalization: "no *Sein* without *Dasein*; no time without imagination." *Dasein*, therefore, like imagination, "is the poetics of the possible." Refer Richard Kearney, "Surplus Being: From Kant to Heidegger," in Babette E. Babich (ed.), *From Phenomenology to Thought, Errancy, and Desire: Essays in Honor of William J. Richardson, S.J.* (Dordrecht; Boston; London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), pp. 70-86, esp. pp. 85-86.

22 Obviously the issue of a perpetual temporal succession and the recognition of *a priori* conditions are both two levels of description:

> "[T]ime is the *a priori* sensible condition of the possibility of a continuous progress of that which exists to that which follows it, the understanding, by means of the unity of apperception, is the *a priori* condition of the possibility of a continuous determination of all positions for the appearances in this time, through the series of causes and effects, the former of which inevitably draw the existence of the lat-ter after them and thereby make the empirical cognition of temporal relations (universally) valid for all time, thus objectively valid."

Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (trs. and eds.) Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, op. cit., p. 316.

23 Gary Hatfield has given a very lucid and concise explanation on one of Kant's most important expositions:

> "Analysis rests on the principle of contradiction, which is a logical principle; in a sense, therefore, logic can tell us all that we need to know about how knowledge resting on such analysis is possible. Synthesis, on the other hand, which provides the basis for the perfection of cognition in mathematics and natural

science, has to be treated in a discipline other than logic. That discipline is what Kant eventually came to call *critique*."

See Hatfield's introductory note in Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Logic*, (tr. and ed.) J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. xix-xx.

24 Bryan Wesley Hall, *The Post-Critical Kant: Understanding the Critical Philosophy through the* Opus postumum (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), p. 187.

25 Charles Parsons, "Infinity and Kant's Conception of the 'Possibility of Experience'," in Patricia Kitcher (ed.), *Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason: *Critical Essays* (Lanham; Boulder; New York; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), pp. 45-58.

26 Immanuel Kant, moreover, says:

> "I am conscious of myself (*apperceptio*). I think, i.e., I am to myself an object of the understanding. However, I am also to myself an object of the *senses* and an empirical intuition (*apprehensio*). The thinkable I (*cogitabile*) posits itself as the sensible (*dabile*) and this *a priori* in space and time which are given *a priori* in intuition and are merely forms of appearance."

Kant, quoted, in Bryan Wesley Hall, *The Post-Critical Kant*, op. cit., p. 187.

27 Gary Dorrien, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit: The Idealistic Logic of Modern Theology* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 29.

28 Jürgen Mittelstrass, "Leibniz and Kant on Mathematical and Philosophical Knowledge," in Kathleen Orkuhlik and James Robert Brown (eds.), *The Natural Philosophy of Leibniz* (Dordrecht; Boston; Lancaster; Tokyo: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985), pp. 227-62.

29 Faced with the difficulties in Kant's presentation of "ideas" of theorizing literature as an external and alternate to philosophy, the fragment became the central thematic experiment in German Romanticism. See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, (trs.) Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

30 Alberto Toscano highlights the daring difference between antiquity and modernity over the use of "criticism." Criticism, notes Toscano, "is one of the defining features of modern culture and it does not necessarily have to produce false concepts to guide artistic production… In fact, criticism could produce correct concepts for artistic production, criticism then offers itself a third term, a point of possible synthesis… a possible way to resolve the deadlock between antiquity and modernity; it also proposes the way to establish and aesthetically valid culture." See translator's "Critical Introduction" in Friedrich Schlegel, *On the Study of Greek Poetry*, (tr. & ed.) Stuart Barnett (Albany: State University of New York Press), esp. pp. 7-8. Also, see Andrew Ford, *The Origins of Criticism: Literary Culture and Poetic Theory in Classical Greece* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002).

31 Martin Heidegger's arrival includes his commentary on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, esp. the lectures of Winter Semester, 1936-37. Refer Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume I: The Will to Power as Art,* (tr.) David Farell Krell (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991).

Rapture, here, is the overcoming of metaphysics. Heidegger's "language-thought problematic" is central to the subversive development against foundational thoughts. See James Grant Lovejoy, *Heidegger's Early*

*Ontology and the Deconstruction of Foundations*, Unpublished Dissertation, Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick, 1992.

[32] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, (ed.) David Farrell Krell & (tr.) Albert Hofstadter (New York: HarpersCollins Publishers, [1977] 1993), p. 199.

[33] Martin Heidegger, quoted, in William S. Allen, *Ellipsis: Of Poetry and the Experience of Language After Heidegger, Hölderlin, and Blanchot* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 8.

[34] Ibid., p. 199.

[35] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," op. cit., p. 199.

[36] On the interchangeable usage of these concepts, Derrida argues that the "thinking of the proper man is inseparable from the question or the truth of Being." For a critique on the anthropocentric metaphysics in western tradition, see Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, (tr.) Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 111-135, esp. 124

[37] Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics,* (tr.) Jeff Fort (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. 55.

[38] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," op. cit., p. 198.

[39] "Poetry," situates Heidegger, "is the primitive language of historical people." Martin Heidegger, "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry," (tr.) Douglas Scott, in *Existence and Being* (Chicago; Illinois: Henry Regnery Company, 1949), pp. 291-315, esp. p. 307.

[40] Ibid., p. 213.

[41] Gregg's summation, on reading Blanchot, is based on the comparison that "language and human beings share the same destiny of incompletion" (p. 35). See, particularly, "Language, History, and Their Destinies of Incompletion," in John Gregg, *Maurice Blanchot and the Literature of Transgression* (Princeton & New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 18-34.

[42] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (tr.) Colin Smith (London and New York, [1962] 2002), p. 219.

[43] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, (trs.) Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 39.

[44] Tom Rockmore's description of German Idealism includes Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx. Refer "Hegel, German Idealism, and Antifoundationalism," in Tom Rockmore and Beth J. Singer (eds.), *Antifoundationalism: Old and New* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), pp. 106-126, esp. p. 105-6.

[45] Quoted, in François Lasserre, *The Birth of Mathematics in the Age of Plato* (Larchmont, N.Y.: American Research Council, 1964), p. 20.

[46] Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing?*, (trs.) W.B. Barton, Jr. and Vera Deustsch (South Bend, Indiana: Gateway Editions, Ltd., 1967), p. 76.

[47] Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs,* (tr.) David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973). p. 99.

[48] John P. Leavey, "Preface," Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's* Origin of Geometry*: An Introduction*, (tr.) John P Leavey (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska, 1989), p. 11.

[49] Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, op. cit., p. 130.

[50] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (tr.) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 242.

52 Jacques Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology," *Positions*, (tr.) Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 17-23, p. 29

53 As Galileo Galilei famously sums up in 1623:

> "Philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe ... It is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures. Without such means, it is impossible for us humans to understand a word of it, and to be without them is to wander around in vain through a dark labyrinth."

Galileo Galilei, "The Assayer," (tr.)Stillman Drake, in Stillman Drake (ed.), *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo* (New York: Anchor Books, 1957), pp. 237–8.

54 For the section on Rousseau, see Ch. 2, "…That Dangerous Supplement…," in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, op. cit., pp. 141-64.

55 John Locke's proposal merits full quotation here:

> "[I]f we . . . speak of Things as they are, we must allow, that all the Art of Rhetorick, besides Order and Clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong *Ideas,* move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheat. . . . 'Tis evident how much Men love to deceive, and be deceived, since Rhetorick, that powerful instrument of Error and Deceit, has its established Professors, is publickly taught, and has always been had in great Reputation."

Quoted in Christian J. Emden, *Nietzsche on language, Consciousness, and the Body* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), p. 40.

56 Tom Rockmore, "Fichte, German Idealism and the Thing in Itself," in Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore (eds.), *Fichte, German Idealism, and Early Romanticism*, op. cit., 2010), pp. 9-20, esp. p. 11.

57 Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fitche* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 322.

58 Friedrich Jacobi, quoted, in Tom Rockmore, "Fichte, German Idealism and the Thing in Itself," in Daniel Breazeale and Tom Rockmore (eds.), *Fichte, German Idealism, and Early Romanticism*, op. cit., pp. 9-20, esp. p. 10.

59 Johann Hamann's *metakritik* (1783) directly questions Kant's epistemological philosophy of language:

> "…no deduction is necessary to show that language is the original ancestor in the genealogy of the seven sacred functions of logical premises and conclusions. Not only is the entire possibility of thinking founded in language…, but language is also the center of reason's misunderstanding with itself, in part due to the frequent coincidence of major and minor terms, to its vacuity and abundance of ideal phrases, in part because of the infinite number of verbal figures in respect to syllogistic one."

Quoted, in Karl-Otto Apel, "The Transcendental Conception of Language-Communication and the Idea of First Philosophy…" in Hamann Parret (ed.), *History of Linguistics Thought and Contemporary Linguistics* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), pp. 32-61, esp. p. 44.

Hamann's *Metakritik* purely originates as a response to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and, also, as exemplified in Hamann's letter to Herder of 8 August, 1784: "Reason is Language." See Oswald Bayer, *A*

*Contemporary in Dissent: Johann Georg Hamann as a Radical* E*nlightener*, (trs.) Roy A. Harrisville and Mark C. Mattes (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, [1988] 2012), p. 155.

[60] Hegel reads Kant's "thing-in-itself" as "the product of thinking, and precisely the thinking that has gone to the extreme of pure abstraction, the product of the empty 'I' that makes its own empty self-identity into its ob-ject." Hegel's objection, as a historical perspective, is however, in retrospective standard, more of a disagreement with the then emerging play with a science of logic (Hegel equates the "thing" as an embracement of God or the spirit). See *Encyclopedia Logic (with the* Zusätze), (trs.) T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris (Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1991), p. 87.

[61] Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood have rightly pointed out that "Kant's use of the term *phenomena* is self-evident, but the meaning of *noumena* is not, since it literally means not 'things as they are in- dependently of appearing to us' but something more like 'things as they are understood by pure thought'. Yet Kant appears to deny that the human understanding can comprehend things in the latter way. For this reason, Kant says it is legitimate for us to speak of *noumena* only 'in a negative sense', meaning things as they may be in themselves in- dependently of our representation of them, but not *noumena* 'in a positive sense', which would be things known through pure reason alone. A fundamental point of the *Critique* is to deny that we ever have knowledge of things through pure reason alone, but only by applying the categories to pure or empirical data structured by the forms of intuition." For our purpose here, *noumenon* is used as an equivalent of "thing-in-itself." See "Introduction," in Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (trs. and eds.) Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

[62] Nietzsche says that the "'thing in itself' (which is precisely what the pure truth, apart from its consequences, would be) is likewise something quite incomprehensible to the creator of language and something not in the least worth striving for." Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1870's*, (tr. & ed.) Daniel Breazeale (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1990), p. 81.

[63] Claudia Crawford, *The Beginnings of Nietzsche's Theory of Language* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988).

[64] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Schopenhauer," pp. 226-232. Ibid., esp. p. 228.

[65] Ibid. p. 228.

[66] Ibid. pp. 229-30.

[67] Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, (tr.) John P. Leavey (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 209.

[68] Refer "Bartleby; or, The Formula," in Gilles Deleuze, *Essays: Critical and Clinical*, (trs.) Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 68-90; and Giorgio Agamben's "Bartleby, or On Contingency," in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, (ed. and tr.) Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 243-71.

[69] Gilles Deleuze, *Essays: Critical and Clinical*, op. cit., p. 96.

[70] Ibid. p. 98.

[71] Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, (tr.) Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 76.

[72] It is interesting to note here Badiou's critique on Deleuze's attempt to "conjure the double specter of equivocity and the dialectic… by posing that the two parts of the object, the virtual

and the actual, cannot in fact be thought of as separate." The mathematical expression being the key reading, which is apparently derived from Leibniz's principle of *the indiscernibility of identicals*. See Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, (tr.) Louise Burchill (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 52.

[73] Gilles Deleuze, *Essays: Critical and Clinical*, op. cit., pp. 73-74.

[74] Ibid. p. 73.

[75] Giorgio Agamben's "Bartleby, or On Contingency," in *Potentialities*, op. cit., pp. 253-54.

[76] By this (i.e., Nietzsche's statement that "Language is the product of instinct, as with bees—the anthills, etc."), Edmen interprets it to mean that "the deepest knowledge of philosophy lies already prepared in language before the possibility of conceptuality or reason, and actually determines the eventual shape of these." See Christian J. Emden, Nietzsche on Language, op. cit., pp. 42-43.

[77] Ibid. p. 81.

[78] Alan Bass, *Interpretation and Difference: The Strangeness of Care* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. xi.

[79] "Introduction," in Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, (trs. and eds.) Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[80] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth*, op. cit., p. 53.

[81] Philip Watts, *Allegories of the Purge: How Literature Responded to the Postwar Trials of Writers and Intellectuals in France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[82] Maurice Blanchot, "Literature and the Right to Death," (tr.) Lydia Davis, in *The Work of Fire*, (tr.) Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 300-344, p. 336.

[83] Ibid., p. 341.

[84] Jacques Derrida, *Genesis, Genealogies, Genres, and Genius: The Secrets of the Archive*, (tr.) Beverley Bie Brahic (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 17.

[85] Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History*, *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, (tr.) Liz Heron (London; New York: Verso, 1993), p. 5)

[86] Roland Barthes, "Literature Today" (1961), in *Critical Essays*, (tr.) Richard Howard (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, [1964] 1972), p. 160

[87] Esp. Chapter 1: "Postmodernism or 'The Literature of Exhaustion'," in Bouchra Belgaid, *John Irving and Cultural Mourning* (Lanham; Boulder; New York; Toronto; Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011), pp. 5-50; and Daniel Just, *Literature, Ethics, and Decolonization in Postwar France: The Politics of Disengagement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), esp. concluding chapter, "The Literature of exhaustion, weakness, and blankness," pp. 153-170. Here, Just's observations argued the notions of labour and work—but Belgaid's work (which refers to John Barht's 1967 essay, "Literature of Exhaustion") actually pioneers the study.

[88] William S. Allen, *Ellipsis: Of Poetry and the Experience of Language After Heidegger, Hölderlin, and Blanchot* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 3.

[89] Geoffrey A. Hale, *Kierkegaard and the Ends of Language* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 182.