

***Sottises* and Narration: The *Shandeism* of Thinking;
or, the Poetic Contestation of Thought**

By

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M.A., German Studies, Brown University, 2023

M.A., German Studies, University of Colorado Boulder, 2019

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School of Brown University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of German Studies
2025

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This dissertation by Justin William Harris is accepted in its present form
by the Department of German Studies as satisfying the
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No proper thought belongs solely to itself, and this dissertation can only ever be but a conceived representation of the myriad reflections of that which others have contributed to the development and embodiment of my own thought. Insofar as the memory of others' language becomes sewn inter-discursively within one's own composition—I extend my utmost gratitude for the consignment of their abundance of insight and critical returns towards the bearing of my own thoughts:

My grandparents, for always being with me even when our paths diverged; my grandmother, for inspiring in me a love of music and poetry; my grandfather, for instilling in me the introspective and analytical mind of the mechanic.

My parents, for supporting me through all my passions and follies.

My brother, for teaching me the entanglement of love and adversity.

Bethany, for being my truest counterpart in all things.

Humboldt, Willow, and Camus, for being ready foils to the serious jest of thought.

To every teacher who in no uncertain terms fostered the critical practice of an inter-discursive sharing of ideas and dispositioned approaches. To Dr. Kristina Mendicino for her critical remarks, invitations, mediations, and events, without which the German Department at Brown could not have been the same. To Dr. Gerhard Richter, for ever exposing the critical entanglements and overlooks of thought. To Dr. Thomas Schestag, for his constant hospitality to the opening of insight.

To everyone's visitations and stays with the German Department at Brown.

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INTRODUCTION

In Prelude to the Apprehension of Shandean Thinking: *Sottises* and the Poetics of Relation

Thinking thought usually amounts to withdrawing into a dimensionless place in which the idea of thought alone persists. But thought in reality spaces itself out into the world. It informs the imaginary of peoples, their varied poetics, which it then transforms, meaning, in them its risk becomes realized. (Glissant 1)

In his *Poetics of Relation*, Édouard Glissant challenges the notion that thought “amounts to withdrawing into a dimensionless place,” claiming instead that “thought” is not only embedded in “the world,” but also, and for the same reason, structurally relational (Glissant 1). To think of thought is, as Glissant develops, already to place thought in relation to an act of thinking, and thus to establish distance from the thought of thought, so as to render thought as an object or theme for contemplation. While this distance may be related to the “dimensionless space” that Glissant evokes when he writes that “thought in reality spaces itself out into the world.” But to this observation, one would need to add that this “space” and “world” are, before all else, discursive: it is through a particular use of the word ‘thought’ that Glissant posits thought as an object of “thinking” and provokes further engagement with its worldliness. This use, in turn, is made possible by the lexical and syntactic conventions that precede Glissant’s articulation of the same, which provokes the question concerning the extent to which inherited linguistic forms determine the world in which thought is constituted and questioned. This question will guide the thinking of this dissertation, which will retrace several of the ways in which language and thinking are entangled with one another as well as with linguistic precedents. These ‘entanglements,’ as the word suggests, expose even the clearest of

formulations to be fraught with opacity, whether it be a matter of representative texts from the Enlightenment, or more recent critical literature. Édouard Glissant recognizes, for example, that it is characteristic of language that it seems to be in possession of a “literary dedication to clarity, a mission that has led to its reputation for a pleasing rationality, which is, in fact, the guarantee of a legitimate pleasure to be had in the manipulation of a unity composed of consecutive, noncontradictory, concise statements” (Glissant 113). Indeed, the clear use of language would appear to be the self-evident reason of functional language—especially insofar as “consecutive, noncontradictory, concise statements” appear to lend themselves to the navigation of everyday, transactional activities in addition to the narrative representation of that which is no longer, may never have been, or is not yet present. One may wonder what, precisely, is the “pleasure” that Glissant evokes, and also what unspoken purposes may be involved in the “mission” to which he refers. Already in Glissant’s seemingly transparent and reasonable formulations, an opaque dimension of rational discourse becomes apparent, nor will it be restlessly clarified in his subsequent formulations. His rhetorical performance thus indicates that there is more to what is said, even when each word appears to be recognizable as the equivalent of other, familiar uses of the same term, rendering this equivalence self-contradictory. To the same extent that familiar usage may create the semblance that certain lexical and syntactic forms are independent of semantic ambiguity and historical contingency, the semblance serves an opaque pleasure and unspoken purpose by obfuscating them. “Clarity” and “rationality” emerge in Glissant’s formulations as a cover and a fiction, returning us to the question of the entanglement between inherited language and thought. This question concerns precisely how those “consecutive” and “concise” forms which would seem to support a tradition of “clarity” and “rationality” may be read, thought, and addressed otherwise. Departing from Glissant, this dissertation will present

different approaches to that question, and with a focus upon narrative fictions that are, as such, especially suitable to expose the fiction of linguistic transparency.

Glissant will turn himself to literature as he continues to engage critically with the assumption that language should be dedicated to the furtherance of clear rationality, and that linguistic usage should therefore be assessed by the degree to which it corresponds with prior, given forms. The consequence of this belief are foregrounded, as Glissant develops further:

The “essential” nature of literary language would preexist any of the felicitous or infelicitous accidents of its real, diversified cultural usages [...] Looked at this way, French would represent not just what is common in various ways to the linguistic practice of the populations constituting francophone culture, it would also, in literature, or perhaps even in absolute terms, be what is given in advance. From this it takes no time to reach the conclusion that there is a “right” way to use the language. (Glissant 113-114)

If one adopts this perspective on language, then the limits to which the use of language is subject—even in the fictional forms of literature—could be understood only insofar as its “‘essential’ nature” is pre-supposed to “preexist” its use. This presupposition is readily apparent, as Glissant relates to us, in the French state’s historical attitude regarding the centered and centralizing unity of its language and its constituents. In consideration of this imperial outlook, it would appear that the “right” way to use language would consist solely in its correspondence with a pre-existing determination of forms and their formative significance. It is important to recognize, as Glissant emphasizes in response to this conjecture, that this perspective does not “stand up to examination” (114). That is the case because the “‘essential’ nature” of language that would “preexist” its “diversified cultural usages” is a retroactive abstraction from the latter, and thus itself a fictional construction, albeit one whose endorsement by political powers produces real effects.

An alternative to the imperial fiction that Glissant presents can be found in Martin Heidegger's analysis of Hölderlin in what amounts to his own contemplation of the poetic domain of thought. Relating Heidegger's meditations on poetry to Glissant's "poetics of relation" can, in turn, further elucidate the entanglement of thought, language, and fiction that will be at stake throughout this dissertation, as well as the related entanglement of clarity and opacity. In his approach to Hölderlin, Heidegger lingers upon the grave consequences of a perspective on language that would insist upon an exclusive or absolute prerogative of clarity:

Damit wir das Wort »...dichterisch wohnet der Mensch...« recht hören, müssen wir es bedachtsam dem Gedicht zurückgeben. Darum bedenken wir das Wort. Wir klären die Bedenken, die es sogleich erweckt. Denn sonst fehlt uns die freie Bereitschaft, dem Wort dadurch zu antworten, daß wir ihm folgen. //

»...dichterisch wohnet der Mensch...« Daß Dichter bisweilen dichterisch wohnen, ließe sich zur Not vorstellen. Wie soll jedoch »der Mensch«, diese meint: jeder Mensch und ständig dichterisch wohnen? Bleibt nicht alles Wohnen unverträglich mit dem Dichterischen? [...] Wo aber im heutigen Wohnen noch Raum bleibt für das Dichterische und abgesparte Zeit, vollzieht sich, wenn es hoch kommt, eine Beschäftigung mit dem Schöngestigen, sei dieses geschrieben oder geredet. Die Poesie wird entweder als ein verspieltes Schmähen und Verflattern ins Unwirkliche verleugnet und als Flucht in die Idylle verneint, oder man rechnet die Dichtung zur Literatur. Deren Geltung wird mit dem Maßstab der jeweiligen Aktualität abgeschätzt. Das Aktuelle seinerseits ist durch die Organe der öffentlichen zivilisatorischen Meinungsbildung gemacht und gelenkt. (Heidegger 181)

Against the assessment of poetic language "durch die Organe der öffentlichen zivilisatorischen Meinungsbildung," Heidegger delivers the striking suggestion that the poetic word has not yet even been properly heard [*damit wir das Wort recht hören*]. Turned back upon themselves in this way, the reader appears to have no recourse but to give the word back to the poem of its origin [*müssen wir es bedachtsam dem Gedicht zurückgeben*]. In minding the word as it is given in the poem, however, the reader does not return to anything like a preexisting, transparent "nature" of poetic language. One senses instead that—in this movement of return—one's thought tests and frays the limits of the word's understanding *through* its minding of that which the word, itself,

concerns [*darum bedenken wir das Wort*]. In returning the word to the poem with all due concern, the attempt to follow the word [*daß wir ihm folgen*] cannot help, then, but to take the form of a response: as an attempt to clarify or respond to that which the word already concerned, the encounter simultaneously appears to awaken considerations left previously in a state of undisturbed repose [*Wir klären die Bedenken, die es sogleich erweckt*]. What's more, Heidegger is right to point out that there appears to be a constitutive contradiction separating the seemingly incompatible ideas of poetry and habitation [*Bleibt nicht alles Wohnen unverträglich mit dem Dichterischen?*]: where the poetic instills a contingent displacement and unsettling return to the question of a formative irresolution, the idea of habitation instead invokes the sense of settlement [*bleiben*] within well-founded structures. The contradiction of these ideas—insofar as the question of what a word says is concerned—remains poignant especially when one is invited to imagine the implications of inhabiting [*ständig*] the movements that poetic encounters occasion [*Wie soll jeder Mensch und ständig dichterisch wohnen?*]. Indeed, it is the *constancy* [*Ständigkeit*] of an existence in language that is at stake in the contention of a poetic habitation, pushing the reader to consider how the conditions of one's habitation are *constantly* [*ständig*] poetic. These conditions are unlike those which Glissant describes when he claims that the policies and policing of the French state enforce fictive standards of “clarity” and “rationality.” The latter enters into Heidegger's thinking only when he addresses the reactionary contestation that poetic dwelling provokes: in order to assert the certainty of pre-determined meanings, public opinion may reject the very thought of poetic dwelling by reducing the poetic departure from linguistic conventions to a languishing nothingness [*Schmachten und Verflattern*], or to a venture that risks the terms of its exchange in a haphazard gamble [*verspielen*]. Similarly, if poetry is taken for an idealistic flight from reality [*Flucht in die Idylle*], then one likens poetry to a

consumer product whose value would be assessed—but ever mistakenly calculated [*abgeschätzt*]*—in its respective topicality [der jeweiligen Aktualität]. At the same time, untimely readings would be rendered inconsequential insofar as a text would be too heavily construed solely according to a timeliness that is fabricated and linked through the organs of public opinion [der öffentlichen zivilisatorischen Meinungsbildung gemacht und gelenkt]. By placing emphasis upon literary genres (“Idylle”) and fabrications (“Meinungsbildung”), however, Heidegger makes plain that the resistance to poetic dwelling that is pursued in the name of certitude, clarity, or convention is itself fictive and opaque; it differs from the poetic not insofar as it is founded in reality but insofar as it is not thoughtful.*

When Heidegger echoes Hölderlin in saying that we abide in this world poetically [*Dichterisch wohnet der Mensch*], however, these words do not mean that the relationality of our daily lives merely exhausts itself in the fictional games of poetic imagination to the point of depleting its own *sustaining* draw, as if a word itself could draw breath [*schöpfen*]: [*{Das Wort} sagt auch nicht, das Dichterische erschöpfe sich im unwirklichen Spiel der poetischen Einbildungskraft*] (Heidegger 182). Indeed, Heidegger refutes this rejection of the poetic imagination to defend the position that poetry would in fact reveal something essential about the individual’s relation to language and the manner in which the poetics of language are entangled with the formative ideas according to which one abides in inhabiting it. The entanglement is so contingent to the sustenance of its form, in fact, that Heidegger would rhetorically challenge his opposition to try to argue the claim of the incompatibility of habitation and the poetic: “Wer also unter den Nachdenklichen möchte sich dann anmaßen, bedenkenlos und von einer etwas fragwürdigen Höhe herab zu erklären, das Wohnen und das Dichterische seien unverträglich?” (182). Although Heidegger includes those who would promulgate absolute rejection of the poetic

as constituent members of the community of contemplative individuals, he also openly criticizes them insofar as they *unscrupulously* presume [*sich bedenkenlos anmaßen*]¹—in their condescension to clarify matters from a rather questionable height, according to which they presume their own centralizing authority over common forms—that the poetic imagination and the ideas residing in thought would be fundamentally, irreconcilable, unbearable, or unsustainable [*unverträglich*].¹

Concerning the poem's containment of clear information or pre-determined meaning, Glissant similarly recognizes that "Some critical minds, more given to talk than to analysis, proclaim or prophesy the obsolescence of poetry as no longer corresponding to the conditions of contemporary life and somehow outmoded in relation to the violence and haste abundant in modernity" (Glissant 81). The organs of public opinion responsible for this determination, however, would perhaps only risk evaluation insofar as its correspondence with a centralizing root were concerned, and in so doing they in fact put our understanding of linguistic production at risk of being but a predetermined error rather than an accurate correspondence or transferral of essential information.

This foundational fault bears consequences concerning the assumed reading of a textual encounter. As Glissant elaborates, to understand any linguistic form—even a word—according to

¹ The question of authority over the way in which a text may be read, for example, comes to form the oppositional relationship shared by reader and author according to Glissant's explication of the poetics of relation: "The literary text plays the contradictory role of a producer of opacity. Because the writer, entering the dense mass of his writings, renounces an absolute, his poetic intention, full of self-evidence and sublimity. Writing's relation to that absolute is relative; that is, it actually renders it opaque by realizing it in language. The text passes from a dreamed-of transparency to the opacity produced in words. Because the written text opposes anything that might lead a reader to formulate the author's intention differently. At the same time he can only guess at the shape of this intention. The reader goes, or rather tries to go back, from the produced opacity to the transparency that he read into it. Literary textual practice thus represents an opposition between two opacities: the irreducible opacity of the text, even when it is a matter of the most harmless sonnet, and the always evolving opacity of the author or a reader" (Glissant 115).

merely preconceived models contrives with it an impulse to take hold of, grasp, or claim the word's properties for one's own use—as if the word were determined exclusively according to their own sense of its predetermined limits. This thought is echoed in Glissant's observation regarding that which is at stake in the verb 'to understand': "[T]he verb *to understand* in the sense of 'to grasp' [*comprendre*] has a fearsome repressive meaning here" (Glissant 26). He further reveals the fearsome repression of meaning in this regard to be entailed precisely in the move one's comprehension makes: the gesture of language is depicted in its own expression, where it is as if understanding were "the movement of hands that grab their surroundings and bring them back to themselves. A gesture of enclosure if not appropriation" (Glissant 191-192). Such a comprehension of language, insofar as it would hold but a single unifying propriety to be inherent to the use of language, leads in turn—but not necessarily—to a domineering claim of a unifying property that subsumes and encompasses any and all of its manifestations.

This enclosing gesture, in order to maintain this claim, opposes any other movement of its comprehensibility, which it thereby excludes as incorrect, subversive, or improper given the 'proper' use of said forms. Such edicts would, as Glissant argues, constrict any use of language ultimately to a disjointed clinging-on to but a skeleton of language:

The pronouncement of decrees in any case (issuing edicts that constrict the future of the language) does not set you free from collective anxieties. Game shows on television, organized in every country equipped to do so, spotlight the destabilization of languages in a spectacular manner. These games are the same everywhere. One must reconstitute words whose letters are either hidden or given in no order. Meaning has little importance, and there have been cases in which contestants have appeared on the shows after having learned whole sections of dictionary. So one disjoins a language, taking into account, in short, only its skeleton (if one can speak of the lexicon as a mere skeleton) to which one clings. (Glissant 100)

In the authoritative claim to be able to issue such decrees, the exclusive right to control the uses proper to language would be determined only according to the dominance of their own model.²

What this amounts to, as Glissant remarks, is but the mastering of a game that concerns itself with nothing but the material form through which words present themselves, but it is in the very exposition of this game's rules that its disjunction with the use of language becomes apparent, even in its most everyday, menial, and mundane use.

The scrupulous thinker thus interjects with contention concerning the extent to which the absolute hegemony presumed in a word's claim corresponds to how one actually approaches the use of language. Insofar as the grasping of the forms one claims to understand appeals to something more than the mere skeleton of its account, the reader is invited to reflect upon the manner of their relationship to language's exchange in common. Heidegger's reading furthers this sense that this commanding impulse of hegemonic language in fact stands opposes, if it does not disenfranchise, the use of language in general:

Der Mensch gebärdet sich, als sei er Bildner und Meister der Sprache, während doch sie die Herrin des Menschen bleibt. Wenn dieses Herrschaftsverhältnis sich umkehrt, dann verfällt der Mensch auf seltsame Machenschaften. Die Sprache wird zum Mittel des Ausdrucks. Als Ausdruck kann die Sprache zum bloßen Druckmittel herabsinken. Daß man auch bei solcher Benutzung der Sprache noch auf die Sorgfalt des Sprechens hält, ist gut. Dies allein hilft uns jedoch nie aus der Verkehrung des wahren Herrschaftsverhältnisses zwischen der Sprache und dem Menschen. Denn eigentlich spricht die Sprache. (Heidegger 184)

As Heidegger confirms, when one merely assumes that the authoritative forms through which language avails itself were to make claims from a place of a predetermined certainty—as evidenced through common modes of expression [*als Ausdruck*—then the forms of linguistic exchange would degenerate [*herabsinken*] to a mere means of conveyance [*Druckmittel*] of this predetermined meaning. At the same time—while looking in the face of this hegemonic

² This dissertation will return to this image of language conceived as but that which is given by a skeleton to which one clings in its reading of Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste et son maître*.

claim—one might also trace the tension of the word’s resistance to this totalizing apprehension. Although Heidegger maintains that it may yet be good, in part, that one may hold themselves to a certain fastidiousness in speaking [*Sorgfalt des Sprechens*], the extent to which language sustains itself in its appeal to an explicitly or self-evidently given purpose conflicts with the reader’s consideration of Heidegger’s own expository view of this claimed purpose: as but a *mere* [*bloß*] means of expression, Heidegger confirms that the constricting bonds of a word does not subsume all that is contingent to an understanding of what language may say in a given instance.

Heidegger’s subsequent declaration confirms this observation in opposition to one’s hegemonic claims over language: “Dies allein hilft uns jedoch nie aus der Verkehrung des wahren Herrschaftsverhältnisses zwischen der Sprache und dem Menschen” (*ibid*). It is not that individuals may exercise the exclusive control over the determination of languages’ essential significance, but rather that it exerts the power of its substantive form over us precisely in its giving of itself to us, while it simultaneously conceals or recedes from a move that would claim to grasp its form as if thereby partaking of its totality. It would appear language would in fact protect itself from the appropriating demands of total comprehension:

Allein der Dichter beschreibt nicht, wenn er Dichter ist, das bloße Erscheinen des Himmels und der Erde. Der Dichter ruft in den Anblicken des Himmels Jenes, was im Sichenthüllen gerade das Sichverbergende erscheinen läßt und zwar: *als* das Sichverbergende. Der Dichter ruft in den vertrauten Erscheinungen das Fremde als jenes, worin das Unsichtbare sich schicket, um das zu bleiben, was es ist: unbekannt. (Heidegger 194).

Indeed, the tenuous grasp with which thought apprehends its object contends with the sense that that which is self-expository [*sich enthüllend*] must inveigle itself [*sich verbergen*] precisely in order to maintain the object of its contemplation as that which it ever remains or amounts to be: namely as an encounter of an anticipatorily unknown otherness. To remain true to itself, the

forms through which language appears to represent its apprehensions must withdraw from their own domain even as they dispatch their own scrutability.

The threat posed by decrees that would favor the manner of confirmatory conveyance would, according to Heidegger, constitute a reversal of our actual relationship with language in its placing us instead as its master according to some graduated or hierarchical authority over it. In tracing a similar thought in another way, Glissant leads us in turn to consider the repercussions of models of rootedness insofar as the idea of propriety infiltrates how the language may be taught or relayed so as to perpetuate this absolute model of authoritative correspondence. The notion of propriety inherent to language, Glissant asserts, determines not only “the idea one has of the language but [also] the idea one forms of its relationship with other languages,” which would then have repercussions concerning how language is analyzed and whether, or how, language may be translated or learned (115). A claim to proper translatability would then require an irreproachable affirmation of the question, as Glissant impels us to consider, whether “translations already allow perceptible correspondences between language systems” (99-100). It would be of ultimate importance, if this notion were true, that language pedagogy adhere precisely and strictly to these proper uses, lest the transparency of linguistic essence be marred—especially given the insertion of uncertainties that may arise in the act of translation—and it would thereby portend that the learning of a language might not be possible at all if for lack of correspondent certainty. The correspondent certainty of terms comes to pose a critical problem in one’s partaking of language, and it is this very problem which permeates the narrative uncertainties and poetic extensions or contradictions of self-same forms that constitute what this dissertation will develop as a nominal *Shandeism* of thinking that the reader may

follow in tracing its impulses through the poetic and narratological works of Sterne, Diderot, Goethe, and Nietzsche.

In what may appear to be but a common dispute over the understanding of a nominal object or idea that would be contained in the matter of its linguistic form lies the beguiling question concerning the manner and extent to which one draws the determination of their claim. Indeed, the very limits detailed in the grasping gesture of understanding come to imperil its own actuation of its apprehensive claim to knowledge. We may find already that an examination of this question of comprehension invites the open consideration of a textual case in point, for which the fictions conceived in the gesture of representation find ground in Laurence Sterne's relation of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*.³ As *Tristram's* uncle Toby strives to tell the story of his presence at the siege of Namur during the Nine Years War—known to *Tristram* under the name “King William's War,” his narration strikes upon an issue of “hot

³ In reading Laurence Sterne's *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (hereafter, *Tristram Shandy*), one may be struck by the persistence with which named characters nominalization in the text is always set in an italic type. In order to sustain the intercursive sense by which this dissertation proposes to approach the mindful handling of nominal figures, this dissertation will maintain the cursivity of Sterne's representative characters in naming them, also, in italics. That is to say: just as in the cursive script each character flows into and affects the contingent shape of those before and after, so too do the dialogic encounters of formative beings constitute a mutual intercourse that causes the understanding of one to appear to be dependent upon the other—if one is able to discern where the one begins and the other leaves off. Within the discursive intercourse of separate approaches, the matter of concern they share in common cannot be wholly understood without a recursive awareness of how the one penetrates and affects the understanding of the other. This dissertation will return to the shared idea of Shandean Thought as it is given different forms and names entirely in stepping through the works of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste et son maître*, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, and a constellation of Nietzsche's texts constituted in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, *Menschliches*, *Allzumenschliches*, and *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. This is not to say that—in allowing these texts to confront one another as if standing on equal terms—one would thereby approach a more proper understanding of one or the other, but rather that through the intercursive opening of the texts respective interruptions, responses, and contradictions, something more may then be said, or some other insight perceived, in one's overlooking being awoken from an otherwise undisturbed slumber.

dispute,” which *Tristram* claims to pertain to the significance of but three words and their contextual take in uncle *Toby*’s description of events:

The issue of which hot dispute, in three words, was this; That the *Dutch* lodged themselves upon the counter-guard,---and that the *English* made themselves masters of the covered way before *St. Nicolas*’ gate, notwithstanding the gallantry of the *French* officers, who exposed themselves upon the glacis sword in hand. (II.i, 67)⁴

Expecting the expediency of a three-word-explanation concerning what exactly constitutes this matter of hot dispute, the reader is confronted instead with a complex representation of the circumstances of just one moment in the midst of a drawn-out dispute, and it is not immediately clear which three words ought then to form the matter of hot dispute upon which *Toby*’s narration has struck. The reader may certainly follow in recognizing the encounter at this phase of three nominal groups whose significance are signaled through the imposition of italics in the text, and therefore make the claim that the matter of hot dispute has much to do with the encounter of these nominal groups—the *Dutch*, the *English*, and the *French*. The reader’s take in this case is met with frustration just as it is with frustration that *Toby*, who we are informed is “generally more eloquent and particular in his account” of the battle, is put instead in a state of perplexity. As Sterne moves *Tristram* to explain, uncle *Toby*’s discomfiture arises not out of the fact that these three clearly delineated nominal groups find themselves in the midst of a heated dispute, but rather that the frustration given rise in his narration is born “out of the almost insurmountable difficulties he found in telling his story intelligibly, and giving such clear ideas of the differences

⁴ Although the page numbers of the edition presented by Ian Campbell Ross are referenced for convenience, this thesis also endeavours to preserve the tradition practiced in Ross’ citation of *Tristram*’s texts, whereby the corresponding volume numbers are indicated in the form of capitalized roman numerals, while the corresponding chapter within said volume is then indicated in the diminutive form. In this way, also, *this* work endeavours to sustain a reminder of the serial publicity from which, indeed, one’s *own* portion of encounters and judgements are constitutively drawn.

and distinctions between the scarp and counterscarp,——the glacis and covered way,——the half-moon and ravelin,——as to make his company fully comprehend where and what he was about” (II.i, 67). As *Tristram* elaborates, these considerations of the intelligibility of semantic differences and distinctions are made in view of an implied responsibility to “speak the truth,” which he admits is a difficult thing, do what one may to oppose misconceptions, and which even the authority of the writer’s measured guarding against the obfuscations of discourse—for any of those involved—is nevertheless “too apt to confound” (*ibid*). Given such risk to the truth as a result of misconceptions and confusion of words inherent even to *Toby’s* giving of an eyewitness account, one might be tempted to assert that it is irresponsible to take upon oneself the task of such a narration.

In telling the story of his wound despite all the misconceptions inherent to and potentiated by his ordering of words, the evident precarity of Toby’s storytelling comes, however, as a surprise to the reader’s sense of his character, and Sterne takes care to represent their objection: “How, in the name of wonder! could your uncle *Toby*, who, it seems, was a military man, and whom you have represented as no fool,----be at the same time such a confused, pudding-headed, muddle-headed fellow” (II.ii, 69). The foolishness of the misrepresentation of his story and being, it would seem, is not bound to *Toby’s* character, but rather to the means by which he is sentenced to represent his story himself. It remains to be ascertained concerning who or what precisely is culpable or responsible for the production of such conditions as to be ripe for misunderstanding, and who is responsible for judging—that is to say, to ascertain who may have the authority to determine the criteria by which this potential obfuscation of truth may be ameliorated if not avoided as if its possibility were overruled—or if rather it ought to somehow be further sustained.

If not by fault of *Toby* himself, Sterne invites us then to consider instead whether there is yet reason to “dive deep enough into the first causes of human ignorance and confusion” (II.i, 69), which *Tristram* represents as being threefold: “Dull organs, dear Sir, in the first place. Secondly, slight and transient impressions made by objects when the said organs are not dull. And, thirdly, a memory like unto a sieve, not able to retain what it has received” (II.ii, 70). Glancing over the organic inadequacies that may be complicit in the apprehension of a thought—as if the latter were required to sustain itself over or despite its crossing over sensation, the slightness or transience of impressions, and the porosity of memory—Sterne points instead towards the cause of “the confusion in uncle *Toby*’s discourse” as the uncertain ground of words themselves: “a fertile source of obscurity it is,---and ever will be,---and that is the unsteady uses of words which have perplexed the clearest and most exalted understandings” (71). Given that we can accept that words themselves may cause their own obfuscation of truth, we may begin to question whether *Toby*’s attempt at an explanation were in fact irresponsible at all, for he was but making use of the tools available for the effort.

Indeed, Sterne reflects through *Tristram* that to deride *Toby* for the folly of his unhelpful words is to miss or to engage in a hypocritical denial of precisely that which one shares with *Toby* concerning any determination of words and their propriety to demonstrate or represent truthful matters. It is worth returning to *Tristram*’s explanation in full:

Gentle critick! When thou hast weight’d all this, and consider’d within thyself how much of thy own knowledge, discourse, and conversation has been pestered and disordered, at one time or another, by this, and this only:—What a pudder and racket in COUNCILS about οὐσία and ὑπόστασις; and in the SCHOOLS of the learned about power and about spirit;—about essences, and about quintessences;—about substances, and about space.—What confusion in greater THEATRES from words of little meaning, and as indeterminate a sense;---when thou considers this, thou wilt not wonder at my uncle *Toby*’s perplexities,—thou wilt drop a tear of pity upon his scarp and his counterscarp;—his glacis and his

covered-way;—his ravelin and his half-moon: ‘Twas not by ideas,—by heaven!
His life was put in jeopardy by words. (II.ii, 71)

In partaking in the capitalization of *Tristram's* thoughts, the reader can formulate an idea of the manner by which thought perpetuates its own errors through communal confirmation: assembling to hold a discourse among its members, the council aims at its conclusion and proclaims their judgment, which is then recapitulated in the channels of informative schooling, to then return again as if by the performance of an original and theatrical reproduction. However, neither state and community councils, nor schools and learned pedagogy, nor the theatric demonstration or performance of professional wordsmiths do away with the precariousness of words' relation to truth—even of the differentiability of the synonymousness of essence and substance that unsettles the formative difference of their representation.⁵ In the formalization of institutions, the determination of what constitutes proper or responsible use of language is left to the judgment of organization and poets even as if its representation were so contentious and misapprehensible as *Toby's* theater of war.

As traced in the critical responses and independent approaches of Heidegger and Glissant, the nature of thought becomes inseparable from the conditions of language, which *includes* their differentiating approaches within a sharing of poetic relations. It thus behooves the critical reader to reflect upon the implications derived insofar as the certainty of thought becomes clearly scrutable in its entanglement with opaque forms of language. If the clear sense of thought's rational and representative claims to arrive at conclusive theses lies within the nature of language, one might however also wonder whether, in doing so, language were also responsible

⁵ As made privy in Ross' critical reading of *Tristram Shandy*, although these Greek terms may be translated into the contentious ideas of essence and substance, their difference in form belies an original synonymousness in the Greek language (551) that conflicts with other senses which would hold the two to be separate or distinctly individuated from one another.

for the insinuation of a lie which counteracts this very pleasing aim. In this way, we can read the assertion of hypothetical claims otherwise to say that, in its representative dedication to clarity, language would lie. Glissant's protest against the absolute claim of clear correspondence in the use of language is clear: "Neither its humanizing function, however (the famous universality of French as the bearer of humanism), nor its concordant predestination to be clear (its pleasurable rationality) stand up to examination" (114). As demonstrated through one's claims to have been able to translate and analyze that which a sensible encounter gives of itself in the appraisals of understanding—as if any encounter were like a text—the absolute clarity of language is not necessarily constitutive of what is appealed to in its substantive matter. If such clarity were inherent or essential to the function of linguistic forms, then the preservation of clarity would *necessarily* be a component of any authorized use of its predetermined forms. Languages however, as Glissant reiterates, do not have a mission in themselves (*ibid*). Rather, this idea of languages' functioning according to a mission of clear rationality is a conclusion consequent to the stubborn holding of that concept—learned by route of this centralizing pedagogical root—which demands that what matters in language would be naught but that which conforms to an ordered and ordering predetermination.

The relation of this idea to the act and legacy of colonization and imperial hegemony and its mission of homogenization according to a correspondence with the centralizing root is not lost in its relation to Glissant's language, but is rather essential to his point. In attentively observing this demand to preserve what is conceived of as the right way to use language, Glissant argues that we are witnessing but the wailing of those who are "anxiously intent on confining themselves to the false transparency of a world they used to run; they do not want to enter into the penetrable opacity of a world in which one exists, or agrees to exist, with and among others,"

which Glissant argues is tantamount to depriving those with whom one enters the relationship of discourse of any cultural identity of their own, in addition to any right to protest or contradict such a domineering demand (114). Glissant's emphasis of the French example is, as he explains, pointed for its historical condition insofar as it is both "a culture that projected onto the world (with the aim of dominating it) and a language that was presented as universal (with the aim of providing legitimacy to the attempt at domination)," which then culminates in imperious thought—always in correspondence with the centralizing root—and whose project of absolute totality is comprised through a selection of a qualitatively exclusionary value which it merely represents as constituting the "Whole" (28). This totality is then sustained through reactionary oppression of conflict within its claimed domain: as Glissant attests, the imperial performance of internal peace and security is the missionary work of bringing about "the true death of Relation" (*ibid*). Relatability, we may surmise, depends in particular upon this essence of difference and its consequential debate—at times admittedly conflicted—over the significance of that which is nevertheless common.

That emphasis upon the mere functional use of language is productive of a false transparency warrants Glissant's cautionary advice that mere samples of language—no matter how exemplary—do not ever constitute the whole import of its apprehension or explication. Nor is a total comprehension ever truthfully grasped. Indeed, if the reverse were true—that the essence of language were rather composed entirely in a predetermined correspondence—then any production of language which did not set out to affirm a totalizing demand would be dismissable as a direct threat to that absolute function. It is therefore worth reflecting upon the significance of literature precisely in view of whether such linguistic production would in fact make the falseness of languages' purported transparency manifest, and thereby disprove the

theory of its essential predetermination. Literature, insofar as it is given in a form of narration or representation that may seem to enclose within itself a rationality of its own consequential significance, may appear as though it could also exemplify and demonstrate the clear correspondence of its form with the predetermined significance of those forms' proper uses. Glissant agrees that, at least in part, literature provides the best delineation of "the image of language, if not its function" (115). Yet, he elaborates thereafter that, as soon as we begin to analyze "how such texts are affected by language learning or translation (these being the two fundamental mechanisms of relational practice), ideas of transparency and opacity quite naturally present themselves as the critical approach" (*ibid*) to any claim of the text's comprehensibility. Glissant's explication of how the literary text paradoxically relates transparency and opacity in its production is worth leaving to its own expression:

Because the writer, entering the dense mass of his writings, renounces an absolute, his poetic intention, full of self-evidence and sublimity. Writing's relation to that absolute is relative; that is, it actually renders it opaque by realizing it in language. The text passes from a dreamed-of transparency to the opacity produced in words.

Because the written text opposes anything that might lead a reader to formulate the author's intention differently. At the same time he can only guess at the shape of this intention, the reader goes, or rather tries to go back, from the produced opacity to the transparency that he read into it. (115)

In taking literature as an exemplary sample of language, learners, teachers, and translators may be tempted to seek a text which would provide a clear image of the language, perhaps selecting the text which appears to have "the least threatening opacity" (Glissant 115). Indeed, Glissant points to the popular selection of Albert Camus' writing for this purpose, although Glissant asserts the contradiction immanent in this goal that Camus' work—as any text—reveals itself to merely give "the appearance of being clear and straightforward" (Glissant 116). Readers of a text, like translators and language learners, are—through their engagement with this literary

practice—entangled “in an opposition between two opacities: the irreducible opacity of the text, even when it is a matter of the most harmless sonnet, and the always evolving opacity of the author or a reader” (Glissant 115). The interpreter is always presented with the opaque comprehensibility of the text at hand, which they may understand with varying degrees of difficulty (*ibid*). That a text may be difficult might be read also as an indication that the difficult text challenges not only the reader’s interpretation of otherness within the text—whether foreign or domestic—but also the reader’s preconceived notions of the significance of their own language.

Texts, insofar as they are taken as representations of the substantive matter of language, are constituted rather in the reproduction of an image entailing all the clarity as well as opacity inherent to the same, and it is poetry which maintains and reminds us of this essential fact concerning our lack of absolute authority over its significance. Heidegger picks up this thought in his own troubling of the images through which language partakes in the secretive measures of the poetic: “Weil das Dichten jenes geheimnisvolle Maß nimmt, nämlich am Angesicht des Himmels, deshalb spricht es in ‘Bildern’. Darum sind die dichterischen Bilder Ein-Bildungen in einem ausgezeichneten Sinne: nicht bloße Phantasien und Illusionen, sondern Ein-Bildungen als erblickbare Einschlüsse des Fremden in den Anblick des Vertrauten” (Heidegger 195). This poetic essence of our relation to language portends, Heidegger argues, that we can but take momentary hold of the secret measure of languages’ substantive matter. Given nominal form, that which is apprehended in thought encapsulates but a glimpse of its revealed otherness that is represented there as an image given to the view of the one who encounters it, who thereby becomes its fleeting confidant.

Language is ever poetic: as it comes to form a relationship to ourselves in the entanglement of one's own relation with otherness, its manifestation only ever gives an inviting signal directed towards the opening of its substantive matter. Heidegger confirms the inconclusive beckoning or flourish of language's poetic formulation in his own contemplation of what occurs when one speaks:

Der Mensch spricht erst und nur, insofern er der Sprache entspricht, indem er auf ihren Zuspruch hört [...] Die Sprache winkt uns zuerst und dann wieder zuletzt das Wesen einer Sache zu. Dies heißt jedoch nie, daß die Sprache in jeder beliebig aufgegriffenen Wortbedeutung uns schon mit dem durchsichtigen Wesen der Sache geradehin und endgültig wie mit einem gebrauchsfertigen Gegenstand beliefert. Das Entsprechen aber, worin der Mensch eigentlich auf den Zuspruch der Sprache hört, ist jenes Sagen, das im Element des Dichtens spricht.
(Heidegger 184)

As Heidegger reminds us, any arbitrary [*beliebig*] grasping of the significance of words is never to portend that language would deliver to us already the clairvoyance of its essence, “geradehin und endgültig wie mit einem gebrauchsfertigen Gegenstand” (*ibid*). As the boundary of the sky and horizon recedes from any attempt to grasp its totality, so too does opacity remain inherent to language regardless of any measure of the text's exemplary value. Indeed, even an excellent or exemplary [*ausgezeichnet*] poetic image of any sense is necessarily only comprehensible as such when that sense is drawn out of [*ausgezeichnet*] its manifestation. Consequently, those who would relate to language must recognize that they are only ever drawing an image out of that which they encounter.

These concerns are echoed in Glissant's introductory remarks, which portend that there may be no given knowledge, but rather that thought participates in—and contributes to—its own becoming of knowledge: “Thought draws the imaginary of the past: a knowledge becoming. One cannot stop it to assess it nor isolate it to transmit it. It is sharing one can never not retain, nor ever, in standing still, boast about” (1). Thought's becoming of knowledge—insofar as it is

subject to the entangled relation of forms—cannot properly stop the motion of its own beckoning in order to isolate the matter of its substance for the purposes of exact, measured assessment and subsequent transmission. Consequently, in recognizing the poetic relationality of language, it behooves us to also recognize that our relation to language is necessarily one of a mobile sharing, about which one can never, “in standing still, boast about,” even though any use of it necessitates, to some degree, a retention of an imagined sense of its essence. The manner in which one comes to and relates to the measuring of significance in language is therefore essential to the relation of language and understanding.

As Heidegger argues, in order to think about the relation of poetry to the essence of language, it is essential that we consider the manner in which the measure of linguistic significance is taken: “Wir müssen auf die Art dieses Nehmens achten, das nicht in einem Zugriff, überhaupt nicht in einem Greifen beruht, sondern in einem Kommen-lassen des Zu-Gemessenen” (193). Heidegger indicates a necessity that our measure of the significance of language not be constituted by a grasping, as of a conquering raid [*Zugriff*], but rather in a welcoming gesture, as of a permitting [*Kommen-lassen*] of attributive ascriptions [*des Zu-Gemessenen*]. It would be of utmost importance to our understanding of the essence of languages’ relation to our encounter with others that we take note that this taking measure of that which is given is only ever, as Heidegger reiterates, one’s own estimation—inherently imprecise. Because the word is ever responsive to a common foundation based upon a shared relation to an other, this estimation can sustain itself only insofar as it is maintained as more than a mere scientific tool to be taken as if it were produced with finalized standards of that which is given in momentarily evident dimensions of space and time, however functional their use may be according to the the explicit purpose of the completion of plans [*die Maß-Nahme*] ist selber das

eigentlich Vermessen, kein bloßes Abmessen mit fertigen Maßstäben zur Verfertigung von Plänen] (Heidegger 196). The taking of a measure in thought's formative representation is itself a proprietary presumption, rather than a mere gauging of matters with ready-made rulers for the fulfillment of preconceived plans of production. That language's essence cannot be fully extricated from its literary and poetic uses portends that we must contemplate the relation of its substantive matter with the manner by which we come to a measured determination of its manifestations.

A similar critique concerning the question of the tenuous risk inherent to our disordering or unsettling of words' significance through the poetic responsiveness of reading is given by Goethe's *Wilhelm*, who speaks through the "*Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer*" of a great malady [*ein großes Übel*] arising in our search for understanding, even in the sciences:

Ein großes Übel in den Wissenschaften, ja überall, entsteht daher, daß Menschen, die kein Ideenvermögen haben, zu theoretisieren sich vermessen, weil sie nicht begreifen, daß noch so vieles Wissen hiezu nicht berechtigt. Sie gehen im Anfange wohl mit einem löblichen Menschenverstand zu Werke, dieser aber hat seine Grenzen, und wenn er sie überschreitet, kommt er in Gefahr, absurd zu werden. Des Menschenverstandes angewiesenes Gebiet und Erbteil ist der Bezirk des Tuns und Handelns. Tätig wird er sich selten verirren; das höhere Denken, Schließen und Urteilen jedoch ist nicht seine Sache. (Goethe 538-539)⁶

In one's presumption [*Vermessenheit*] to theorize concerning the justifiability of judgments pertaining to understanding, one may ultimately step over the bounds of a responsible use of

⁶ The inclusion of these "*Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer*" constitutes a curious addition to the narratological representation of Wilhelm's journeyman years insofar as it is composed in a collection of aphoristic observations, whose connections with each other—as well as their import for the content of the narrative proper—are not explicitly laid out. The reader is, in their encounter of their appendices interposition of thoughts which may or may not be drawn from the various encounters along which the reader's imagination accompanies Wilhelm's own journeys and discussions, invited to draw insight from their untimely interjection to the text. This dissertation will, at times, attempt to relate thoughts contained in this appendix with the arguments it follows in the reading of the narratological representations of Wilhelm's journeyman years, and maintains that this collection of observations is yet importantly contingent to the reading of the text as a whole.

these faculties and thereby fall into absurdity, which might then incite a sense that it would be rather more responsible to limit one's contemplation to the realm of mere activity and transaction [*Tun und Handeln*], lest such irresponsible thinking and judgment lead to errors of what would otherwise be demonstrably valid, and thereby to a confusion of truth. The most foolish thing, as the wanderer's observations had earlier indicated, is that everyone feels compelled to share and comment upon what they believe to have known as if discourse were merely a transactional delivery: "Das Närrischste ist, daß jeder glaubt überliefern zu müssen, was man gewußt zu haben glaubt" (Goethe 826). The relation of that which one believes to have known about the truth of the natural world, Goethe cautions, does not necessarily correspond with its totality, yet it is inherent to our aspirations to true understanding that one may prematurely claim to have a firm grasp of it. In the linguistic determination to justify *what* truth, precisely, is contained in one's understanding, thought is prone to overstep its formative bounds in language, and it is precisely in stepping away, or from out of, its own material that language appears to account for its own directed misapprehension via its representation of truth.

By way of the aphoristic assertions in Makarie's Archive, Goethe describes this sentiment regarding the relationship of language to the idea of a truth whose claims language in turn purports to represent: "Verharren wir aber in dem Bestreben: das Falsche, Ungehörige, Unzulängliche, was sich in uns und andern entwickeln oder einschleichen könnte, durch Klarheit und Redlichkeit auf das möglichste zu beseitigen" (Goethe 842).⁷ In its aspiration to truth,

⁷ This dissertation will return to a more in depth discussion of the contextual significance of Makarie's archive, and the residence in which it is housed, in its reading of the poetics of thought's relation. It may suffice here, in advance, to give a brief explication of the contextual significance concerning this portion of Goethe's representation of Wilhelm's journeyman years. Like "Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer," "Aus Makaries Archiv" constitutes an extra-contextual appendix to the main narrative insofar as there is, again, no explicit ordering of its components with those points in the text where the author would insist the reader draw their attention. Rather, through the exposition of the text itself, the reader may understand that—to a certain extent—this selection of aphorisms represents the thoughts which Wilhelm himself takes

language lends itself not only to the settling of archival nests, but also to its own displacement of the falsehoods, improprieties, and shortcomings that would otherwise come to constitute the entirety of what it grasps through its own representative form. In this way, the formative representation of thought adheres to a drive towards both clarity and probity.

Given that any authoritative figure—acting as if they were justified in their parsing of language—depends also upon another’s use of the same, one can recapitulate the question concerning the right by which a single authority lays claim to the determination of what is proper to a word. In recognition of the exclusions of conceivable or definitive alternatives contingent to writing, reading, and translation, it is indeed the prerogative of the critical reader to consider whether the encounter of an authoritative determination were rather a performance of misaligned conclusivity. In this way, the reader is invited to open the thought contained in the text beyond the form through which it would present the point of its conclusion or determination as if it were in fact immediately straightforward.

It is worth noting that—as Wilhelm engages with his wandering mandate—his pursuit of the wisdom of authorities encounters a preponderance of custodians and trustees. In seeking the figure we come to know only later as Makarie, Wilhelm is *from the outset* bidden to seek out the domain’s authority, for whom he is given only the mystic appellations of his letter of

introduction, which reads, “an den Obern, oder die Dreie” (77, 380). Indicating already that there

note of and transcribes through his time spent accessing this archive’s open collection. Wilhelm’s approach and entrance into the archive is also worth noting—for Wilhelm does not make the acquaintance of Makarie herself upon arrival, but is hosted rather by her younger relations and dependents. What’s more, the pass which provides Wilhelm and his son free travel across the land makes no mention by explicit name to whom Wilhelm ought present himself, directing him rather to the mystic address born upon his letter of introduction, “an den Obern, oder die Dreie” (380). Of these authorities and their domain, Wilhelm hears tell to great lengths even before his own arrival: “Sie schlugen den Weg ein nach jenen ausgedehnten Gütern des großen Landbesitzers, von dessen Reichtum und Sonderbarkeiten man ihnen so viel erzählt hatte” (277), and the reader accompanies Wilhelm on a long journey leading towards the form of their ever-departing yet beckoning encounter.

is no single authority to be found even within this domain, but—at best—a contention thereof, Wilhelm is further hampered by the transience of these authorities within their own realm [*der bald in einer, bald in der andern Abteilung seine Residenz hat*] (77), as it becomes evident that the authority which he seeks is known to avail themselves of no single residence [*von dessen Aufenthalt man keine Rechenschaft geben konnte*] (77, 380). Wilhelm's subsequent meeting with the lord of one of the domain's castles—named 'the uncle' of Hersilie and Juliette [*Der Oheim*]*—demonstrates yet further characteristics of the wanderer's account of authority. As Wilhelm seeks to follow the latest word of the uncle's presence—catching Oheim as he conducts his daily affairs in the open field—Wilhelm bears witness to the tendency of this authoritative figure to depart the domain of their residence as abruptly as their arrival:*

Sie sehen hier abermals die Wirkung der Eigenheiten unsers trefflichen Oheims [...] Selten erscheint er an unserm Tische, und besetzt den Stuhl nur augenblicklich, der für ihn leer steht. Seine Feldküche führt er mit sich umher, speist gewöhnlich allein, andere mögen für sich sorgen. Wenn er aber einmal Frühstück, Nachtsch oder sonst Erfrischung anbietet, dann versammeln sich alle zerstreuten Angehörigen, genießen das Bescherte, wie Sie gesehen haben (304).

That authorities consistently seem to occupy the seats set out for them only momentarily (at best)—yet are sure to grace their attendants with the fruits of engagement—renders the question of the distribution of authority, in its absence or its stead, all the more pointed.

It is precisely with regards to this question—concerning the authority and extent to which a thought's apprehension may speak to contextual matters at hand—that the reader may turn to Goethe's *Wilhelm* as Wilhelm and his son are welcomed and given a tour of the castle inhabited by Makarie and her various relations:

Der Diener war gewohnt die Fremden zu unterhalten, und manches im Hause vorzuzeigen; so auch führte er unsern Freund in eine Galerie, worin bloß Porträte aufgehängt und gestellt waren, alles Personen, die im achtzehnten Jahrhundert gewirkt hatten, eine große und herrliche Gesellschaft; Gemälde so wie Büsten, wo möglich, von vortrefflichen Meistern. Sie finden, sagte der Kustode, in dem

ganzen Schloß kein Bild, das, auch nur von ferne, auf Religion, Überlieferung, Mythologie, Legende oder Fabel hindeutete; unser Herr will, daß die Einbildungskraft nur gefördert werde, um sich das Wahre zu vergegenwärtigen. Wir fabeln so genug, pflegt er zu sagen, als daß wir diese gefährliche Eigenschaft unsers Geistes durch äußere reizende Mittel noch steigern sollten. (Goethe 297-298)

While being made familiar with the castle environs, a task with which the guiding servant was evidently quite familiar, the servant leads Wilhelm into a gallery of portraits—comprised by paintings as well as sculpted busts—of individuals who, the custodian illustrates, were persons of great import during the Eighteenth Century. On reflection of the significance of these masters, the custodian emphasizes the peculiarity of the constituting quality of the included representations, declaring that nowhere in the castle would Wilhelm find an image which would bode reference [*hindeuten*] to religion, lore [*Überlieferung*], mythology, legends, or fables, even when viewed from afar or in an abstract manner, precisely so that one's imagination [*Einbildungskraft*] would be incited or encouraged [*gefördert*], at the behest of the lord of the castle, only insofar as to summon, present, or visualize [*vergegenwärtigen*] that which corresponds to apparent truth. The explanation for this selection, the custodian takes care to justify in lieu of his master, is seemingly due to the fact that one is so prone otherwise to tell stories [*fabeln*], that this dangerous quality of our spirit should be improved upon or counteracted [*steigern*] by means of outwardly provocative and tantalizing material. In this declaration, the custodial servants reflect their lord's belief that it would be improper to the formative intent of its thought, in consideration of the preservation of truth, to produce representations of anything other than that which can be understood at face value.

In order to refute the imperial demand for uniform clarity and its contingent threat to the relationality of language's formative bearing, it falls upon empire's objectors—and, indeed, upon their use of language itself—to advocate for, preserve, and carefully maintain the open precarity

ever risked in the apprehension of common affairs. Indeed, such a contentious quality appears to be inherent to language: where language resists such gestures of totalized self-absolution that would use language against itself, it affects the literary impulses of one's speech towards renunciation, obfuscation, and dissolution of manifestations of heterogeneity which are the conducive drivers of relationality. Under the conditions of imperial decree of linguistic propriety, poetic thought calls for alarm: "Beneath the fantasy of domination," Glissant recounts, poetic thought seeks "the really livable world" (28). The world in which it is possible to live, even for those who would deny as much, is inconsistent with the assertion of a static, predetermined essence of language that would foreclose the mere possibility of an encounter with otherness.

In seeking to explain how a direct correspondence of language or the given clarity of its essential meaning is in fact contrary to the essence of the really livable world, it is worth returning to Glissant's contrast of poetics and the mechanical systems of computers. Reiterating his position, albeit perhaps chaotically, that "The notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root," and in spanning this thought directly, as from one bank to another, to his assertion that such a principle of rhizomatic thought constitutes the essence of the "Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other" (Glissant 11), Glissant emphasizes the necessity of this encounter with otherness for the maintenance of the substantive matter of language's bearing of conversable encounters.

Declarative judgments and claims, however, do not immediately provide room for the insistence of questions and speculative suggestion in their appellant claim to an outward appearance of natural justification. As the invocation of a disillusioning hypothesis that would trouble a text's correspondence with that which may nevertheless be true according to its

inherent or consequential significance, the poetics of relation is critical in its opening of the difference presented in alternative takes. Even the natural world, Sterne has *Tristram* argue, is comprised by significant factors which would remain hidden if considered only according to the truth of their superficial presentation:

But mark, madam, we live amongst riddles and mysteries—the most obvious things, which come in our way, have dark sides, which the quickest sight cannot penetrate into; and even the clearest and most exalted understandings amongst us find ourselves puzzled and at a loss in almost every cranny of nature’s works; so that this, like a thousand other things, falls out for us in a way, which tho’ we cannot reason upon it,—yet we find the good of it, may it please your reverences and your worships—and that’s enough for us. (Sterne IV.xvii, 233)

Since even understandings derived, no matter how directly, from outward provocation may miss or fail to penetrate to the depths of their mysteries, one must wonder whether holding exclusively to such apparent criteria for judgment were in fact not entirely proper to the word’s idea.

Whereas poetic production invites, desires, and even depends upon the contributive interpretation of the other insofar as “the poet’s truth is also the desired truth of the other,” the truths inherent to a system of computation are remarkable insofar as they enclose themselves within the supposed sufficiency of their own logic (Glissant 82). Even more telling of the concerns inherent to the imperial demand for certain correspondence of meaning is Glissant’s emphasis that “every conclusion reached by such a system has been inscribed in the original data, whereas poetics open onto unpredictable and unheard of things” (Glissant 82). It would appear that an insightfully clear grasping, comprehension, or understanding of a text depends upon the possibility, inherent in the opacity of language, that the reader may give a clarity back to it which could not have been predicted or coded in its given form.

If we were instead to reject the value of such poetic insight in favor only of the assured predetermination of given clarity, Glissant concludes, we in fact risk “turning in circles within a

code, whose fragile first stirrings [the imperialistic reader] stubbornly insists on legitimizing, to establish the illusion that it is scientific” (119). Consequently, the imperialistic declaration that it is only through a commitment to the self-evidence of meaning in the use of language—that its significance may be maintained, as if it were a science conducted with all the requisite precision of measurement—turns its demand for incontestable correspondence into the performative maintenance of an illusion: “this generalizing edict that summarized the world as something obvious and transparent, claiming for it one presupposed sense and one destiny” (Glissant 20) is itself, therefore, that which poses the greatest risk to any potential clarity of understanding of its sense.

If it were however still improper or foolish to expound upon or respond to the significance of words insofar as it leads the speaker to the point of telling fictional stories, then it would also be irresponsible to consent outright to the judgment of terms and their outward significance without asking these essential questions concerning the validity of their determination. By comparing what one does think with what one might think regarding the same subject when taken according to another approach, it is as if one’s thoughts could approach a more critically nuanced conception. It is for this reason that Sterne also has *Tristram* describe the lamentable manner in which *Tristram*’s mother would never “refuse her assent and consent to any proposition [*Tristram*’s] father laid before her, merely because she did not understand it, or had no ideas to the principal word or term of art, upon which the tenet or proposition rolled” (Sterne IX.xi, 502). It might appear that in refusing to trouble herself with the questioning of the significance of any term—insofar as she rather opts to consent to her godfathers’ and godmothers’ grounded assurance of their principled certainty—that she exhibits a rather proper use of these terms insofar as she never threatens these essential justifications. Correspondingly,

her unquestioning acceptance does not seem to prevent her from being able to reply to or use such a word when required; however, as *Tristram* informs us, her lack of critical engagement “was an eternal source of misery to [*Tristram’s*] father, and broke the neck, at the first setting out, of more good dialogues between them, than could have done the most petulant contradiction” (Sterne IX.xi, 502). In light of this critique, the outright acceptance of any significance of terms simply according to a straightforward determination of some adjudicating or pedagogical authority becomes more a glaring fault and detriment to social engagement, and the common object of thinking in general, than a use of language which would maintain the differences to be fostered and appreciated in this communal exchange.

This critique of reading troubles any assumption that the obscurity of meaning is in fact something to be avoided at all costs whatsoever. Since the obscurity of meaning is perhaps unavoidable in any linguistic exchange, then it behooves the users of language to contemplate whether there may in fact be a purpose or value to such inherent obscurity. To demonstrate this possibility, Sterne invites us to contemplate both extremes: first, that every significant correspondence to truth would be straightforwardly evident in the face of any observation, contemplation, or reading; secondly, the comparison of this possibility with its opposite, whereby all sense of understanding is but the composing of a fiction. Indeed, the former possibility smacks of pollyannaish wishing, as *Tristram* describes with the ironic tone of one who knows this wish to be neither true nor ultimately desirable:

My most zealous wish and fervent prayer in your behalf, and in my own too, in case the thing is not done already for us,—is, that the great gifts and endowments both of wit and judgment, with every thing which usually goes along with them,—such as memory, fancy, genius, eloquence, quick parts, and what not, may this precious moment without stint or measure, let or hindrance, be poured down warm as each of us could bear it,—scum and sediment an’ all; (for I would not have a drop lost) into the several receptacles, cells, cellules, domiciles, dormitories, refectories, and spare places of our brains,—in such sort, that they

might continue to be injected and tunn'd into, according to the true intent and meaning of my wish, until every vessel of them, both great and small, be so replenished, saturated and fill'd up therewith, that no more, would it save a man's life, could possibly be got either in or out. (Sterne III. The Author's Preface, 154)⁸

In consideration of such a universal and non-exclusionary faculty for understanding, one might be tempted to join *Tristram's* preliminary wishing for this reality. At first glance, one would then read *Tristram's* exaltations with reciprocated joy, repeating after him, "Bless us!—what noble work we should make! How should I tickle it off!—and what spirits should I find myself in, to be writing away for such readers!—and you,—just heaven!—with what raptures would you sit and read" (*ibid*). In letting one's thought linger upon the import of *Tristram's* exasperation, however, the reader reflects that this model constitutes in no way the poetic intercurivity of thought we have suggested Sterne to be defending by way of the interposed juxtaposition of his text with the alternative approaches to the poetic questions as posed by Heidegger and Glissant. The reader, then, inquires further of Sterne as to whether *Tristram's* outburst constitutes a true confession concerning whether this model of an absolute and universal faculty for understanding would constitute an accurate representation of its desirability.

The exclamatory joy contained in *Tristram's* outburst, indeed, begins to resonate of hyperbole and—when conjoined with the outpouring of the passage's own superfluous yet non-contradictory interruptions—we join Sterne in giving way to the critical portent of that

⁸ The reader may take note of the displacement of *Tristram's* preface, which Sterne sentences him to place in the midst of the twentieth and twenty-first chapters of *Tristram's* third volume, rather where one would typically expect a preface to a text to arrive for the reader's contemplation. By posing this form of textual representation as if it were outside of the course of the text itself, while it also stages an interruption to the reader's contemplation, Sterne exposes the intercurivity of comprehension: that is to say, it is often only in retrospect and contradictory interposition or critical reflection that it occurs to one how they may represent—even to themselves—that which they would like to say or would have liked to have already said, and indeed the interjection of a prefatory course of thought lends itself to a recursivity that changes how one returns to the already-given, as well as how they then continue to move forward into the re-opening of what still manages to be left out of its own novel conclusion.

which would result if understanding were to be as simple, for every person, as to require that one simply receive that which is given, with no need of, or recourse to, further inquiry after that which might have been obscured:

—but oh!—’tis too much,——I am sick,——I faint away deliciously at the thoughts of it!——’tis more than nature can bear!——lay hold of me,—I am giddy,—I am stone blind,——I’m dying,——I am gone.——Help! Help! Help!——But hold,—I grow something better again, for I am beginning to foresee, when this is over, that as we shall all of us continue to be great wits,—we should never agree amongst ourselves, one day to an end:——there would be so much satire and sarcasm,——scoffing and flouting, with raillying and reparteeing of it,——thrusting and parrying in one corner or another, ——there would be nothing but mischief amongst us. (Sterne III. The Author’s Preface, 154)

The possibility of total understanding shared among all its aspirants, like the souring of *Tristram*’s exaltations, becomes too much to bear, and indeed sickens *Tristram* to the point of fainting, blindness, and death—either of himself or perhaps also of the natural world itself in their mutual inability to bear the rapture of such overwhelming self-evidence. In such a position of shared indifference, there would be no one who could respond to his calls for aid, or with whom to ease the burden of truth’s absolute sharing. Like *Tristram*, we feel compelled to reject this possibility, and thus turn to consider the opposite proposition.

Here, as Sterne guides us, we overcome the deathly despair of the former possibility insofar as we imagine *together* the portent of an opposing reality in which each person’s great wit, and the understanding of truth which it composes, were to be a unique fiction unto its wholly individuated self. In there being thus no condition of agreeability, but rather interminable and mischievous contestation without common object, each sovereign thought would refuse to recognize or acknowledge the other according to a sense of the equality of their terms. In deferring to authority only by way of another’s exclusion, it would appear that the authority of truest understanding would rather subject each thinking being to a contestation of their own

sovereignty over others as if in a zero-sum game of absolute credibility. We may praise or find value in authoritative wisdom of precedential judgments, but as Goethe cautions by way of the wanderer's observations, "[N]ur der Pedant fordert überall Autorität"—only the pedant calls for there to be authority throughout (Goethe 529). A world judged exclusively by the obsequiousness of a singular sense, we may agree, would be just as unsustainable as its opposite.

But then again—Sterne interrupts himself—perhaps there is some merit in the suggestion that each of us possesses *something* of the great wit and judgment of such a world, and the question becomes simply how we participants in this dilemma would reconcile these conflagrating contradictions. Of such a reality, Sterne opines:

But then again, as we should all of us be men of great judgment, we should make up matters as fast as ever they went wrong; and though we should abominate each other, ten times worse than so many devils or devilesses, we should nevertheless, my dear creatures, be all courtesy and kindness,——milk and honey,——’twould be a second land of promise,——a paradise upon earth, if there was such a thing to be had,—so that upon the whole we should have done well enough. (Sterne III. The Author's Preface, 154-155)

As if one could “make up matters as fast as ever they went wrong” in refusing to abandon oneself or all substantive matters to but a singular authority whose thought would encompass the absolute totality of an apodictic understanding, *Tristram* approaches the question of entanglement of beauty and truth in the representative forms of languages. On the one hand, the world of absolute authority would be incapable of sustaining a sense of the beauty of its presentation, for there would be no means by which one could lessen the burden of the truth of the scum and sediment inherent to its constitution. On the other hand—in approaching together the imperfect terms of relation—Sterne insists that there is value in the conflict of critique and the contestation of terms, so long as the responsibility of judging the propriety of any position is

to be shared. It remains for each to contemplate the responsible navigation of such a partitioning of shared responsibility—without guarantee that the effort will find its mark.

Significantly, *Tristram* is similarly met with frustration when he considers how to navigate such a condition of shared responsibility. The necessity of limitations for such a model to function, he observes, constitute also its fundamental challenge:

All I fret and fume at, and what most distresses my invention at present, is how to bring the point itself to bear; for as your worships well know, that of these heavenly emanations of *wit* and *judgment*, which I have so bountifully wished both for your worships and myself,—there is but a certain *quantum* stored up for us all, for the use and behoof of the whole race of mankind; and such small *modicums* of ‘em are only sent forth into this wide world, circulating here and there in one by corner or another,—and in such narrow streams, and at such prodigious intervals from each other, that one would wonder how it holds out, or could be sufficient for the wants and the emergencies of so many great states, and populous empires. (Sterne III. The Author’s Preface, 155)

The natural condition of this project is not only that wit and judgment are partitioned such that no one individual may claim absolute authority over their terms, but also that such values may not be present at every moment when they are most sorely needed if the responsibility with which society conducts its affairs is to be sustained. Sterne’s pressing question, as it is figured in the author’s prefatory remarks, concerns how any society might sustain itself against these laudable and necessary divisions and lacuna of understanding insofar as these allow for the permeation of rash and irresponsible judgments.

The way forward which *Tristram* alights upon is, with all measure of wit and judgment available, to give one’s understanding over to others even if by imperfect and fallible representation, such that its worth may be determined and critiqued not only by the author, but also in their welcoming invitation of responsive contributions to its correspondence with truth by any and all who receive it. In moving to publish his unique wit and judgment, *Tristram*’s preface—which Sterne sentences him to misplace as if it were rather an interjection to the third

volume of autobiographical remarks—insists that he is appealing to the world, indeed abandoning the significance of its forms to the determination of others. His text must then speak for itself as if it were, truly, not merely a fiction of Sterne's imagination:

All I know of the matter is,—when I sat down, my intent was to write a good book; and as far as the tenuity of my understanding would hold out,—a wise eye, and a discreet,—taking care only, as I went along, to put into it all the wit and the judgment (be it more or less) which the great author and bestower of them had thought fit originally to give me,—so that, as your worships see,—'tis just as God pleases. (Sterne III. The Author's Preface, 153)

Within this effort to sustain the social responsibility of his text, it is worth noting that the text involves—if not stresses—the significance of discrete language. The discreteness of the author's discretion in writing deserves, in its own part, further elucidation. "Discreet" can first be read—as it is written—as Sterne's emphasizing assurance that his representative understanding remain unobtrusive. Although this renunciation causes the reader to wonder what, exactly, the author's discreteness in writing would preclude, it is given nowhere directly for the reader to perceive that towards which his representation should not insist itself. The reader might understand the author's discreteness to be a necessity insofar as the author would thereby not intrude against the potentially valid but contradictory understandings which others may bring to bear given a common subject. We may also read this discreet call of language instead as an indication of the praiseworthiness of the reader's discretion in language: Although it might be suggested that the discrete divisibility of language's parts would contravert any aspiration towards a clarity of truth—insofar as the individuating distinction separates a form's given sense from its alternative that would stand across, beyond, or opposite from it. Sterne has shown, for his own part through *Tristram's* representation, how in fact the discreet circumspection against obscurity of meaning serves to caution against the overstepping of the authoritative bounds of representation. Without discreteness, indeed, the representation of understanding risks becoming

obtrusive to its own goal insofar as it would preclude contradictory but potentially valid understandings.

The consequences of the necessity for the constitutive circumspection of discretionary discreteness in representation—if one is to sustain the use of language in pursuing the apprehension of truth and the bearing of its understanding—are evident in discretion’s formative rejection of authoritative domination of signification. To illustrate this point, Sterne bids us to consider that which is apparent in artistic representation, insofar as we sense that it is rather “the insensible, more or less, [that determines] the precise line of beauty in the sentence, as well as in the statue!” (Sterne II.vi, 81). As a result, it seems as though to make use of representation responsibly in this manner contradicts our instinctual desire for responsible representations to correspond precisely with truth: the great author, Sterne argues, shares this principle “in common with painters.—Where an exact copying makes our pictures less striking, we choose the less evil; deeming it even more pardonable to trespass against truth, than beauty” (Sterne II.iv, 74). The truest respect for the necessity of sharing responsibility in the determination of significance, as Sterne confirms, is not comprised in perfectly accurate and complete representation, but is rather shown and developed in the discretion of finding and allowing for the beauty of the uncertain or insensible to partition matters amicably, leaving to the imagination of all those constituent to this shared responsibility its determinative judgment:

WRITING, when properly managed, (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation: As no one, who knows what he is about in good company, would venture to talk all;—so no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding, would presume to think all: The truest respect which you can pay to the reader’s understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself (Sterne II.xi, 87).

That which is most proper in the use of language—in the manner most becoming of its correspondence to our sharing of aspirations—must consist not only in that which the author possesses, but instead also in accordance to that which it shares in common by way of its own contradictions and contributions.

Significantly, this shared responsibility is also recognized through Goethe's depiction of Wilhelm's encounter with Hersilie and her literary society in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*:

Unter manchen andern Gesprächen kamen sie auch auf die Neigung des werten Mannes, überall Inschriften zu belieben. »Meine Schwester,« sagte Hersilie, »weiß sie sämtlich auszulegen, mit dem Kustode versteht sie's um die Wette; ich aber finde, daß man sie all umkehren kann und daß sie alsdann ebenso wahr sind, und vielleicht noch mehr.« »Ich leugne nicht,« versetzte Wilhelm, »es sind Sprüche darunter die sich in sich selbst zu vernichten scheinen; so sah ich zum Beispiel sehr auffallend angeschrieben ›Besitz und Gemeingut;‹ heben sich diese beiden Begriffe nicht auf?« [...] Nach einigen Zwischenreden fuhr Juliette fort weiter aufzuklären wie es gemeint sei: »Jeder suche den Besitz der ihm von der Natur, von dem Schicksal gegönnt ward, zu würdigen, zu erhalten, zu steigern, er greife mit allen seinen Fertigkeiten so weit umhere als er zu reichen fähig ist; immer aber denke er dabei wie er andere daran will teil nehmen lassen: denn nur insofern werden die Vermögenden geschätzt, als andere durch sie genießen.« (Goethe 301)

Amidst their various material and theoretical discussions, Wilhelm's attention is drawn to the apparent inclination and taste of the lord of the castle for collecting inscriptions. Among these, Hersilie observes, are postulations that one can invert without damaging their truth—perhaps even thereby making them all the more true. Wilhelm confirms the paradoxicality of these adages, noting that some of them appear to contradict and undo themselves [*sich selbst zu vernichten scheinen*], and he takes hold of one particular adage which, for the purposes of the argument of responsibility as also in Wilhelm's estimation, makes for a very significant example: "Besitz und Gemeingut" (*ibid*). Juliette, taking her turn in reading the significance of this phrase, illuminates at the same time the import of this self-contradiction: while one ought grab firm hold of every sort of their own proper understanding, it also ought be understood precisely insofar as

it constitutes a sort of medium [*Mittelpunkt*], according to whose proprietary understanding, wit, or judgment one should be able to give itself then in exchange for that against which it may be held in common. In language, one's thought is thus apprehended in being caught between its own sense and the recognition that the means by which the one is definitively identified is brought to term in but the partaking of a catalytic medium. The recursive gesture of return constituted in the partaking of thoughts in pursuit of the apprehension of a common object thus amounts to one's own disposal of what it means to understand the terms of exchange in accordance with their own disposition towards and ability of sharing in this responsibility.

Goethe confirms the issue that is at stake in a word's representative take in one of the apprehensions represented in the appendix of observations made according to the studies of the transient [*Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer*]: "Man sagt: zwischen zwei entgegengesetzten Meinungen liege die Wahrheit mitten inne. Keineswegs! Das Problem liegt dazwischen, das Unschaubare, das ewig tätige Leben in Ruhe gedacht" (539). What concerns thought's formative dependency lies in that which one says, by way of explanation: between two opposing opinions would lie the truth, enmeshed already within and among the means of its mediation. In their objection to this claim's withdrawal of possible recourse to alternatives—that this mode of understanding would preclude—the journeying student of language, embodied here by the wanderer's express observation, rejects this proposition outright as if to say: "no way, by no means!" [*keineswegs!*]¹—but must immediately find recourse of their own from out of their renunciation, while still remaining entangled in the common means of exchange. In its own turn, the reader is thus invited to open their inquiries further by recognizing that the problem at stake in the exchange of equivalent forms is constituted precisely in there being that point of contention that lies between separate approaches to a common object. By way of this medium,

one partakes in a formalized discourse that rather exposes the inscrutable [*das Unschaubare*] remaining yet entangled in thought's approach to truth insofar as thought is ever constituted amidst the eternally active life, while yet being ever conceived as if in stillness. Given that the problem of exchange lies already in its formative catalyst, the most improper and irresponsible use of language, it would seem, is that which would foreclose the ability to respond to its use—whether that response be contradictory or complementary—even as its forms would open to the point of troubling the grounds upon which its determinations are justified and held.

The very poignancy of conceptual understanding lies in its being open to a self-contrariness that may be sustained in the express authority of its original form itself. The reader may also recognize a resounding semblance presented here by the multiplicity of self-same forms that lends itself to a comparison of *Hegel's* take on the totalizing grasp of knowledge as it comes to apprehend the thing it names— as if absolving the question of its conclusivity [*das absolute Wissen*]: “*Das Ding ist Ich; in der Tat ist in diesem unendlichen Urteile das Ding aufgehoben; es ist nichts an sich; es hat nur Bedeutung im Verhältnisse, nur durch Ich und seine Beziehung auf dasselbe [...]* so gilt [dem Ich] das Ding als ein *fürsichseiendes*, es spricht die sinnliche Gewißheit als absolute Wahrheit aus, aber dies *Fürsichsein* selbst als Moment, das nur verschwindet und sein Gegenteil, in das preisgegebene Sein für Anderes übergeht” (Hegel 577). In this dissertation's own pursuant reading of the gravity of thought's dubiety [*Bedenklichkeit*], we will return in the following chapters to a discussion of the burdens placed upon the reading of texts by means of the totalizing gesture of nominal comprehension as its question is further related in the poetic openings of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, and—furthermore—in tracing a Shandean entanglement of nominal thought also through three poignant works of Nietzsche: *Also Sprach Zarathustra*,

Menschliches, Allzumenschliches, and *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*. In exposing—by sequential comparison—thoughts that are shared and awoken through reading not only a continuation of Sterne and Diderot, but also in its rendition that passes through the reading of these together with Goethe and Nietzsche, this dissertation moves to trace the shared contention of the poetic idea of a nominal *Shandeism* of thinking. Our approach bears re-posing the question of the relation of nexts and lasts, of original and novel, or also—in consequence—of the master and their follower. Namely, where the student moves to give shape again to that which their master has already put forward, or where they may otherwise move beyond any bearing entailed by the master's instruction, the novel exposition is put to the differential cognition of an integrated displacement. That is to say, the acolyte's expositional claims of propriety are put to re-evaluation—even as their craft's recitation may be extensively and broadly received.

CHAPTER ONE

Of Nominal Thought and the Shandean account of *Hafen Slawkenbergius*

*When a man gives himself up to the
government of a ruling passion,—or, in
other words, when his Hobby-Horse grows
head-strong,—farewell cool reason and
fair discretion!*
(II.v, 75)

As Laurence Sterne rejoinders himself in the writing of subsequent volumes of *Tristram's* narratological autobiography, it is curious and not without a certain sense of the readers' being made to play their own role in a Shandean joke that *Tristram* would continue to relate to us not only the spirit and humours of his family insofar as these would affect his own sense, but that the reader is also immediately confronted with two confounding frustrations to their anticipation of novel content. First, the reader is invited to approach—again—a nominal apprehension of that which the text would relate by way of that which stands contingent to its titling. If this return to a familiar name under novel circumstances were not enough to engage the reader's wonder, the text's opening continuation is introduced by a reiterative return of previous material. Already in the title pages of each volume and to varying degrees of personal comfort and familiarity, the reader may be cognizant that their own understanding—arising from the entanglement of beings constituted among other formative approaches—is just as subject to Sterne's jestful prodding as is *Tristram's* own attempt to give account to the subject of his life and opinions. Indeed, the reader may be moved to concern themselves with questions of their own understanding and anticipation of the text's heading and to what extent any apprehension of the literary contention one there encounters—even at the outset of the work's voluminous partitioning—may be formally stated: if the text's witness could be born by virtue of its own titling, as if according to

Walter's hypothesis concerning Christian names, so too may another reader just as easily be wont otherwise to dismiss, overlook, or reserve the particularity of this openly encrypted gesture even as it beckons towards the text's public.¹

Withstanding our own potential concerns of that which limits social access to the institutions and opportunities requisite for the study of academic and ecclesiastical languages, each reader of *Tristram Shandy* is yet confronted with their own approach to language and its social contingencies as they themselves arrive at the forefront of every volume's nominal container, as if these framed denominations were to herald or stage a thematic overture to the related volume. As one's own approach at every opening juncture is thus confronted—even prior to setting out—with an unspoken invitation to look beyond and back again on the preliminary account of the forms by which ideas and relations are represented in an appeal to that which flows beyond the moment of their grasping. In other words, the reader may turn again and anew

¹ *Tristram* represents *Walter's* hypothesis concerning Christian names as a cornerstone upon which all of *Walter's* serious thought centers. In *Walter's* character, the reader may thus hold court with a figure who comes to bear a striking resemblance—in his opinions concerning the systematic absolutism of thought's linguistic apprehension—to a resonant concern in Glissant's critique of centralizing uniformity or proposed missions of language that would maintain that, in a name, all that a nominal form could entail or portend in terms of their being would be predetermined: "I mention this, not only as matter of hypothesis or conjecture upon the progress and establishment of my father's many odd opinions,—but as a warning to the learned reader against the indiscreet reception of such guests, who, after a free and undisturbed entrance [*sic*], for some years, into our brains,—at length claim a kind of settlement there,—working sometimes like yeast;—but more generally after the manner of the gentle passion, beginning in jest,—but ending in downright earnest.//Whether this was the case of the singularity of my father's notions,—or that his judgment, at length, became the dupe of his wit;—or how far, in many of his notions, he might, tho' odd, be absolutely right;—the reader, as he comes at them, shall decide. All that I maintain here, is, that in this one, of the influence of Christian names, however it gain'd footing, he was serious;—he was all uniformity;—he was systematical, and, like all systematick reasoners, he would move both heaven and earth, and twist and torture every thing in nature to support his hypothesis. In a word, I repeat it over again;—he was serious [...]" (Sterne I.xix, 45). The seriousness which *Walter* attributes to the predetermination of names' significance comes, furthermore, to constitute an image of the manner by which thought succumbs to a reticence to change the conceptions by which its conclusions are drawn.

to the title page as if going through a novel elaboration. What may or may not amount to the same thing, the nominal form is also sustained or exposed in its further communion with the disparate approaches of others. In sharing with these a confrontation faced in one's own tenuous portion of understanding, the extensive hosting is yet contained and subsumed in the bearing of foundationally differentiating forms and acuties of separate thoughts. Against the proliferation of meaning, the reader may also move to dismiss or otherwise overlook the cryptic signs altogether—approaching the apprehension of forthcoming ideas in turning the page over upon itself as if grasping after the form of their relation in the text that follows.²

The Shandean thinker may approach an understanding of each volume through reflection of the narrator's claims, but they may also bring this reflection to bear in considering each inscription Sterne attributes to each volume, such that the motto accompanies and heads each respective narratological relation. The motto lent to the title page of the third volume reads: “Multitudinis imperitae non formido judicia; meis tamen, rogo, parcant opusculus—in quibus fuit propositi semper, a jocis ad seria, a seriis vicissim ad jocos transire” (III.i, 123). Although

² In a way, the dilemma of approaching an understanding of a text as a whole or by way of one of its parts embodies a practical concern that seems to haunt the scholarship of *Tristram Shandy*. Namely, in approaching the text as if to parse meaning from its formative relation with even its own other parts, one is invariably drawn into a minute hobby-horsical analysis all their own. Or, one must otherwise attempt to stage an argument encompassing the text as a whole, which also leads to a contingent waysiding of the text's own significant particularities. For their own part, Chinmoy Banerjee observes how “Tristram's fundamental problem” is that “every part of his story seems related to every other part and one thing leads him indefinitely to every other thing” (703). This associative flow is, however, not straightforward insofar as successive expansions unsettle the conditions according to which one part has been understood, as recognized by Ali Darbandi: “In other words, the opening of the novel emphasizes the procedure of *conditionality*; all facts, presented in the beginning, refer back to conditions, which *ceaselessly* turn incomprehensible and inaccessible and keep pushing back the narrative further into the past. *Tristram Shandy* does not point to a fixed beginning but reveals the unstable and fluctuating nature of beginnings in general” (246). In his preface to his own dissertation on *Tristram Shandy*, Jesse Long also remarks, “Even the most perceptive critics have tended either to generalize about all nine books [...] or to write shorter articles on single facets of Sterne's many-sided novel” (i).

the shift in language at the outset of these Shandean volumes—as they are moving from English to Greek in the first two volumes and then from English to Latin in these next that follow—might easily be written off as an arbitrary decision made between two different scholarly or otherwise institutional languages. Alternatively, we may also give Sterne more credit to the intention of his thinking if we linger upon the significance of this authoritative move, especially as it begins to open the dialogic inquiry into the properties of language itself. It bears recognizing that an expectation for the common reader to apprehend immediately the significance of a message inscribed in Greek or Latin exceeds reasonable expectations of the abilities of even many thoughtful individuals, yet this is not to say that Sterne’s insistence upon its furtherance is not without its own portent.³ As if by invitation, the curious Shandean may diachronically approach—by way of their encounter with this latinized header—an understanding of the linguistic entanglement of religious life in the days of Martin Luther: knowing no Latin, the common person relies on another in their community to relate to them the significance of the word of God as if these figures were themselves mediating the Holy Spirit, whose language the church has determined to be the exclusive domain of the Latin language.⁴

³ In a self-aware move that recognizes the privilege of access to these formative thoughts, we may compare Sterne’s literary inclusion of historically academic and ecclesiastical languages—regardless of his readers’ grasp of their formative content—to that similar attitude expressed by Alexander Kluge’s inclusion of latin in texts such as his film *Die Patriotin*, of which he remarked, “I do not at all assume that anyone understands that, at least not anyone who interests me as a viewer” (Kaes 111). See also Kluge’s remarks in his text, “On Film and the Public Sphere,” wherein he writes concerning the passive consumption of media, “Understanding a film completely is conceptual imperialism which colonizes its objects. If I have understood everything then something has been emptied out. We must make films that thoroughly oppose such imperialism of consciousness. I encounter something in film which still surprises me and which I can perceive without devouring it” (Kaes 123).

⁴ Readers of critical editions may be blessed with a version of an editors’ translation, which they may pursuantly follow in rendering the text’s motto in an otherwise understandable medium, as we ourselves may also according to Ross’s translation: ““I do not dread the judgements of the ignorant multitude; I ask, however, that they spare my little works in which it was always the design to pass in turn from jests to serious matters and from serious matters to jests”” (557).

Recognizing the resonance of this excluding mission with the imperialization of absolute or predetermined meaning as criticized by Glissant, we may say that Sterne is also, in this gesture, problematizing the proprietary domain of language. It is the question of this translational relation which Sterne invites his readers to investigate further in view of language's complicit role in the formation of one's own understanding, whose question lies at the center of the case Sterne makes manifest in these next volumes.

At this point, however and again, Sterne seeks to expose the *heterogeneity* which recursive use of language affects in its opening of disparate and multitudinous readings, interpretations, explications, or translations of the same recurrent phrase. In this way, the reader is invited—in the repetition of their reading—to adopt a critical return to the role of language in constituting the *Shandeism* of thought's relation: “‘I wish Dr. Slop,’ quoth my uncle Toby (repeating his wish for Dr. Slop a second time, and with a degree of more zeal and earnestness in his manner of wishing, than he had wished it at first)” (III.i, 125). In opening the continuation to the relation of Tristram's biographical opinions, the reader is thus met not only with uncle Toby making use of language's fundamentally quotational practice, but *Tristram* also signals the practical nature with which one easily forgets the extensive borrowing to which language simultaneously lends itself. While *Tristram* takes it upon himself to make it utterly evident that the quotation marks by which the words of his uncle Toby are staged are to indicate not merely that *Tristram* is reproducing a discourse of which he would only afterward hear tell. Rather, the quotation marks themselves belong in this case to uncle Toby, whose utterance *Tristram*

Furthermore, the referential header of this volume—standing prominent as if in dedication to John of Salisbury—carries its own relational import insofar as John's *Policraticus* concerns the “Fivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers.” Reflections on the relation of *Policraticus* to the arguments about language's poetic constitution of social relations, including by way of John's other work *Entheticus*, which stands as a philosophical and satirical poem whose nominal concern would be with the interpenetration of given forms by those constituted beyond themselves, warrant their own further consideration.

reiterates. That is to say, the diacritical indices of quotation emphasize an instance of *Toby* repeating himself just as much as the gesture repeats and recalls Sterne's manifest claim to be able to open a supposedly novel work with the reproduction of material drawn from his own second volume of *Tristram Shandy*.⁵ Simultaneously, one may see that, as in *Toby's* case, one's own use of language may also—however reiterative or quotational—affect a dialectically intercurative sense in and through the forms that are represented. That is to say, it is not only that what is exposed in language is a discrepancy of throughways of reading, but rather that in their disparate encounter and confrontation with one another, each is affected by the others' interjections and responses such that the formative limits of their own thoughts are unsettled. Indeed, in quoting himself, *Toby* also manages to affect an even more zealous and earnest conveyance of his reiterated wishful desire (III.i, 125). In returning to the matter whose contention remains to be related from the heart of these volumes, Sterne allows himself to say again that which concerns the matters which his text had always meant or intended to say before, while also opening the text's apprehension as if to that which the text could not yet properly relate.⁶

⁵ Sterne also includes a footnote to his manuscript at the same juncture, which points the reader towards the chapter and volume where the reader may return to the preliminary context of this reiterated wish: "I wish, quoth my uncle *Toby*, you had seen what prodigious armies we had in *Flanders*" (II.xviii, 115).

⁶ Language lends and avails itself thus to the poetics of a differential return insofar as the intercurative entanglement of other perspectives bring their own interjecting points to bear towards the shared object of contention. : "I fear I must give you an exact account of the road which led to [*Toby's* mistaken apprehension];—or to drop my metaphor, (for there is nothing more dishonest in an historian, then the use of one,)—in order to conceive the probability of this error in my uncle *Toby* aright, I must give you some account of an adventure of *Trim's*, though much against my will. I say much against my will, only because the story, in one sense, is certainly out of its place here; for by right it should come in, either amongst the anecdotes of my uncle *Toby's* amours with widow *Wadman*, in which corporal *Trim* was no mean actor,—or else in the middle of his and my uncle *Toby's* campaigns on the bowling green,—for it will do very well in either place;—but then if I reserve it for either of those parts of my story,—I ruin the story I'm upon,—and if I tell it here—I anticipate matters, and ruin it there [...] I beg and

Through this practiced return, the reader is made aware of the question one may have asked subconsciously of the text, which concerns precisely to whom the language being represented in such a textual repositioning actually belongs. In returning to the header under whose reference the third volume may be collectively subsumed, this question is further problematized in recognizing that the motto given to this volume—although certainly attributable to John of Salisbury—bears *Sterne's* own reflection. This recognition bears import especially insofar as the critical eye notices that Sterne has not only taken John's words, but has also elaborated upon their conclusion (556).⁷ As a result, the case concerning to whom ownership of this motto may properly be attributed is thoroughly confused. Addressing this proprietary subsumption of language, we may follow Sterne's Shandean description of the nature of thought's appropriation of language and its entanglement in the pursuit of truthful understanding—whether of the sublime encounter of being or of the reading of textual matters.

In keeping with the relation of the manner in which the associations of *Toby* and *Walter's* respective hobby-horsical approach to shared circumstances alters their own understanding of interlocutory events, Sterne leads the reader to perceive the differential property of thought's determining faculty. As *Tristram* relates the circumstances of his broken nose, it is yet staged as

beseech you, (in case you will do nothing better for us) that where -ever, in any part of your dominions it so falls out, that three several roads meet in one point, as they have done just here,—that at least you set up a guide-post, in the center of them, in mere charity to direct an uncertain devil, which of the three he is to take" (III.xxiii, 164-165).

⁷ The recognition that Sterne has elaborated upon the conclusion of the final book of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* belongs to Ian Campbell Ross, who transcribes Sterne's referential alteration thusly: "I do not dread the judgements of the ignorant multitude; I ask, however, that they spare my little works in which it was always the design to pass in turn from jests to serious matters and from serious matters to jests" (557). The division of speakers may be indicated at the place where each speaks of their own "little works," and the emphasis on the transition of thought from jest to seriousness and back again can then be safely attributed to Sterne himself. At the same place of departure, John of Salisbury subsequently defends himself as having, in his own work, "at no time detracted from [other courtiers'] books in any way" (230).

if the reader were privy to the same misunderstanding as *Tristram's* uncle *Toby*: “When *Trim* came in and told my father, that Dr. *Slop* was in the kitchen, and busy in making a bridge,—my uncle *Toby*,—the affair of the jack-boots having just then raised a train of military ideas in his brain,—took it instantly for granted that Dr. *Slop* was making a model of the marquis *d’Hôpital’s* bridge” (III.xxvi, 169-170). Demonstrating the intimate contention towards which brothers may be most inclined, *Walter* also receives the meaning of these circumstances as if he were privy to the inner machinations of *Toby’s* “*Savoyard’s* box” or Hurdy-Gurdy mind (III.xxvi, 170). In this moment, *Walter* is ready to lay claim to the superiority of his own understanding over that of *Toby’s*; when at once, *Trim’s* intervention sentences the “laurel” and apotheosis of *Walter’s* divination regarding the significance of the bridgework at their table however to be “torn from his brows and twisted [...] to pieces (III.xxvi, 170). It is not until the following chapter, itself constituting an interruption to the conclusion proposed in this chapter of Dr. *Slop’s* bridgework, that *Trim* is able to share that Dr. *Slop* is fashioning rather “a bridge for master’s nose” on account of—*Susannah* has the truth of it—Dr. *Slop’s* having “with his vile instruments [...] crush’d his nose” (III.xxvii, 170). At this point, the hobby-horse by which Sterne leads us presents a view of the Shandean relation of words and thought as these displace themselves to a prolonged consideration of *Walter’s* nasal hypothesis. As the reader treads along with *Tristram’s* revelations concerning *Walter’s* hypothesis that the measure of a person may be determined by their nose, Sterne spurs the reader rather to question if not spurn proclamations to the measurable significance to be beheld in a nose—that is to say, in questioning the extent to which one may take at face value the objects of thought’s apprehension when given over to one’s own measure.

In what follows, Sterne’s relation of the significance of noses—even as perceived according to the folly of *Walter’s* hypotheses—embodies a self-reflective foray into one’s ability

to define the determinable limits of meaning, even as it concerns the nominal objects with which one trades in discourse. Sterne makes use of *Walter's* hypothesis concerning the determination of one's being as may be held in measuring the conclusions born through one's nose as an inroad to his revelation concerning the sense that an object born within thought's contemplation, in the giving and taking of a measured word, could be defined in terms of its formative bounds (whether its sense may be defined at face value within the bounds of its constitutive form). In a move that would feign certainty of the defining limits of terms, Sterne then moves to demonstrate the counterpoint to the claim he puts forth by way of an amicable challenge to the reader's ability to confine their own sense of the proposition related to them merely, as if merely to the face value of its constitutive form:

Now, before I venture to make use of the word *Nose* a second time,—to avoid all confusion in what will be said upon it, in this interesting part of my story, it may not be amiss to explain my own meaning, and define, with all possible exactness and precision, what I would willingly be understood to mean by the term: being of opinion, that 'tis owing to the negligence and perverseness of writers, in despising this precaution, and to nothing else,—That all the polemical writings in divinity, are not as clear and demonstrative as those upon *a Will o' the Wisp*, or any other sound part of philosophy, and natural pursuit; in order to which, what have you to do, before you set out, unless you intend to go puzzling on to the day of judgment,—— but to give the world a good definition, and stand to it, of the main word you have most occasion for,—changing it, Sir, as you would a guinea, into small coin?—which done,—let the father of confusion puzzle you, if he can; or put a different idea either into your head, or your reader's head, if he knows how. (III.xxxi, 173)

Whether in approaching or withdrawing from the object of shared concern, the issue at stake here is precisely whether two spirited minds, when mutually engaged in common discourse, can take hold of a common measure at the point where, as *Tristram* observes, there are two conflicting motives inherent to the practiced use of language. From the outset, however, the formative relations that constitute language and that language sustains are bound together by a common paradox. In writing or saying anything at all, *Tristram* gives himself over to

language's inherent demand for mutual comprehension: approaching a word in common discourse, one rests and relies upon a certain assurance that the limits to which one's terms are subject are well and preliminarily defined at the outset to the parties' mutual agreement. On the one hand, this nominal assurance would facilitate the practical applicability of language among different speakers or readings; on the other hand, the act of defining even a single term requires the interlocution of others, by which one word becomes transduced into entirely other terms.⁸

Where Sterne moves *Tristram* to assume the certainty of his defined terms, it is precisely this multivalent ambiguity of words with which wordsmiths—Sterne included—work most properly in the direction of the art of their craft. Here, Sterne returns his readers to an example from his own prior Shandean volumes to indicate his point concerning the proprietary tracks of delimited terms:

Here are two senses, cried *Eugenius*, as we walk'd along, pointing with the fore finger of his right hand to the word *Crevice*, in the fifty second page of the second volume of this book of books,—here are two senses,—quoth he.—And here are two roads, replied I, turning short upon him,—a dirty and a clean one,—which shall we take?—The clean,—by all means, replied *Eugenius*. *Eugenius*, said I, stepping before him, and laying my hand upon his breast,—to define—is to distrust.—Thus I triumph'd over *Eugenius*; but I triumph'd over him as I always do, like a fool.—'Tis my comfort however, I am not an obstinate one; therefore/ I define a nose, as follows,—intreating only beforehand, and beseeching my readers, both male and female, of what age, complexion, and condition soever, for the love of God and their own souls, to guard against the temptations and suggestions of the devil, and suffer him by no

⁸ Sterne returns to elaborate upon this point in *Tristram Shandy*'s sixth volume, whose reflection is worth further consideration. Where *Walter* concerns himself with *Tristram*'s education in terms of facilitating the formative propositions that may stem from the conclusion of one's theses and hypotheses, the determinate arrival of these conclusions would rather open the mind further to expansive questions and novel concerns: "*Tristram*, said [*Walter*], shall be made to conjugate every word in the dictionary, backwards and forwards the same way;—every word, *Yorick*, by this means, you see, is converted into a thesis or an hypothesis;—every thesis and hypothesis have an offspring of propositions;—and each proposition has its own consequences and conclusions; every one of which leads the mind on again, into fresh tracks of enquiries and doubtings" (VI.ii, 329)

art or wile to put any other ideas into their minds, than what I put into my definition.—For by the word *Nose*, throughout all this long chapter of noses, and in every other part of my work, where the word *Nose* occurs,—I declare, by that word I mean a Nose, and nothing more, or less. (III.xxxi, 173-174).

In order to give credit to that which the author declares to present to the reader, the reader is invited to accept the self-evidence presented for their determination that, in making use of the word ‘nose,’ *Tristram* would present the evidence of the word’s own tautological equation by which ‘nose’ could mean nothing more or less than its presented form. No sooner has *Tristram* made this declaration, however, than the reader senses that continued use of the term will challenge the sustainability of this claim that the reader will be able to constrain their sense precisely to this tautological definition.

When approaching the question of a word and the terms with which its relation may be born or conveyed, the user of language must account for this constitutive possibility of nominal ambiguity or valency, or, in treading the line of a hedged demarcation, make one’s own fresh use of it even should this border upon an expansive liberation of the terms of discourse. In the context of a word such as ‘crevice,’ as *Tristram* indicates, the reader is presented with their own apprehension of the shared term as well as its signaling intonations. *Tristram*’s response to the imagined critique represented in the figure *Eugenius* indicates Sterne’s attitude concerning the limits of language: namely, to define a word is to demarcate the finitude of essential limits with which a nominal idea may be related. To a given extent, the author who would let these apprehensions remain the proprietary domain of the reader must trust that the reader will avail themselves of the text and thereby know what to make of it in a proper sense, and certainly no author or reader would abide such a pedantic display of distrust in discourse that would demand the potential trajectory of every significant term be so confined. Yet, in this instance, *Tristram*

makes a show of affirming that, in triumphing over *Eugenius* in defence of the free apprehension of terms, he would imperil his own meaning “like a fool” (*ibid*). Indeed, *Tristram*’s meaning is in fact imperiled by his own folly insofar as he declares the giving of a definition or explication of his meaning to be unnecessary, but still steps as if in the next breath to define what he means. Even in the provision of an expressly tautological copulation of terms, the given definition’s very renunciation of its own glancing scrutiny through the contingent relation of terms, provides the with a sense of the terms’ opacity. In their following of a synecdochal relation after this determinative point, the reader then can’t part ways with a sense that *Tristram*’s claim—maintaining as it would the authoritative challenge that any use of the word ‘nose’ in the text may be taken solely in agreement with the givenness of its face value—will in fact be subject to the reader’s reasonable contention.

The relation of nominal forms suggests that a dialectic of understandable meaning is in fact the natural condition of linguistic exchange, and this suggestion is made more pronounced in *Tristram*’s opinion regarding the practiced use of language. As made evident in *Walter* and *Toby*’s mistaking of the bridge Dr. *Slop* is constructing for *Tristram*’s nose, the question which concerns Sterne here lies in view of thought’s tendency to misattribute to its sense of property a fundamental staticity or uniformity that is born as if by a grammatical copula. The performative maintenance of this copula’s tautological equation—secured through its own perpetuating delimitation—is refuted however in the permissive opening of a formative self-contradiction, as in one’s very ability to change the conceptual bearing of one’s mind. The reader is thus invited to bear witness to the conceptual struggle of identity confronted in the prospect of misunderstanding.

Walter's melancholic reception of the tragedy of *Tristram's* crushed nose is apparent in the cry of his outburst and withdrawal to the solitude of his own chambers (III.xxvii, 170), in which he throws himself “prostrate across his bed in the wildest disorder imaginable, but at the same time, in the most lamentable attitude of a man borne down with sorrows, that ever the eye of pity dropp’d a tear for” and there also withdraws even from physical sense of the bed in which he lies as his breath ceases—in its continued heaving—to utter any further word (III.xxix, 171). Although presented here with an opportunity to re-evaluate his hypothesis on the significance of noses, *Walter* instead retreats into a preternatural speechlessness, succumbing to melancholy rather than addressing the dubiousness of his hypothesis. *Walter's* comportment speaking thus, on the one hand to the familiar conviction with which one holds their own opinions, Sterne also hints at the question concerning the dubious potential of Shandean receptions of language’s forms. As the propriety of *Walter's* hypotheses and their practicality are put to the subjects’ contentious claims concerning the given predetermination of one’s convictions, the reader is thus confronted with the plasticity of their own conviction.

It would seem that, in the indelible marks of language according to which one lays their own claims, there lies also a formative multifariousness that lends itself to its forms’ own mindful alteration. It is in bearing *Walter's* withdrawal from this opportunity—as he favors the condition of his melancholic solitude rather than admit that his prior determination may have been at fault—that Sterne moves *Tristram* to praise and ridicule simultaneously the convictions of one’s mind:

It is a singular blessing, that nature has form’d the mind of man with the same happy backwardness and renitency against conviction, which is observed in old dogs,——‘of not learning new tricks.’ What a shuttlecock of a fellow would the greatest philosopher that ever existed, be whisk’d into at once, did he read such books, and observe such facts, and think such thoughts, as would eternally be making him change sides! (III.xxxiii, 176).

Of course, the utility of conviction in speech is evident in a word's claim to its own definite sense, for without a starting certainty from which to start upon a discourse, should one be caught thus indefinitely between senses, one could not even begin to relate one thing or being to another whatsoever.⁹ At once, however, one may also perceive in the same linguistic foundation the backwardness of this expressive drive, which sentences the subject rather to an apprehensive partaking of one's encounters. To comport oneself backwardly or reticently *against* this conviction, however, suggests that the singular blessing of the natural form of one's mind were that one may be rather dubious concerning the words and sentences that they themselves presently adjudicate. Where this definite sense is then presented with the contrary sense of a formed mind's obstinate conviction, as if beholden to the plasticity of mind suggested in *Tristram's* subtle ridiculing of his father *Walter's* enveloping determination of forms, the question language poses of its own thoughtful use sentences one's stances on account of whether, through introspective or dialectical consideration of a subject, one may also alter the formative conditions of these forms' relations.

Amidst the linguistic assertion of claims and definitive descriptions of an object, the very question of understanding is thus held in contention by the idea of property. This is superficially evident insofar as one says, for example, that one holds an opinion or hypothesis. Addressing *Walter's* hobby-horsical belief in the determinable significance of noses, for example, Sterne

⁹ In parody of Plato's *Symposium* and the collective discourse concerning the matter of 'Love', Sterne moves *Toby* in the relation of his affairs to attest to the practicality with which the user of language must first move towards a definition of its object, without hitting upon it in its entirety, in order to begin to say anything whatsoever: "——'Twill come out of itself by and bye.——All I contend for is, that I am not *obliged* to set out with a definition of what love is; and so long as I can go on with my story intelligibly, with the help of the word itself, without any other idea to it, than what I have in common with the rest of the world, why should I differ from it a moment before the time?" (VI.xxxvii, 375).

relates to his readers the proprietary manner of thought's grasping of the objects of its nominal domain. *Tristram*'s representation of the manner by which his father so readily asserts his claims to understanding serves to exemplify Sterne's Shandean point:

Now, my father, as I told you last year, detested all this.—He pick'd up an opinion, Sir, as a man in a state of nature picks up an apple.—It becomes his own,—and if he is a man of spirit, he would lose his life rather than give it up.—/ I am aware, that *Didius* the great civilian, will contest this point; and cry out against me, Whence comes this man's right to this apple? *ex confesso*, he will say,—things were in a state of nature. The apple, as much *Frank's* apple, as *John's*. Pray, Mr. *Shandy*, what patent has he to shew for it? and how did it begin to be his? was it, when he set his heart upon it? or when he gather'd it? or when he chew'd it? or when he roasted it? or when he peel'd? or when he brought it home? or when he digested?—or when he——?——. For 'tis plain, Sir, if the first picking up of the apple, made it not his,——that no subsequent act could. (III.xxxiv, 176)

That it may go unnoticed insofar as such a poetic nature of propertied words should instill itself into the fabric and structure of society in its practical givenness is yet enunciated here by twofold imaginings: first, *Tristram* stages this thought concerning property as a discourse held between two civilians concerned precisely with the state of being by which a common object becomes the property of another, and how this may be confirmed in the codices of ancient law; and second, that such an alchemical process of dialectical digestions and expression applies all the more to the linguistic function of thought's determination and further relation to other thoughts, and otherness itself. The saturation of this conception of property into the form of thought's bearing is given by *Tribonius*' response:

Brother *Didius*, *Tribonius* will say, it is a decreed case [...] That the sweat of a man's brows, and the exsudations [*sic*] of a man's brains, are as much a man's own property, as the breeches upon his backside;——which said exsudations [*sic*], &c, being dropp'd upon the said apple by the labour of finding it, and picking it up; and being moreover indissolubly wasted, and as indissolubly annex'd by the picker up, to the thing pick'd up, carried home, roasted, peel'd, eaten, digested, and so on;——'tis evident that the gatherer of the apple, in so doing, has mix'd up something which was his own, with the apple which was not

his own, by which means he has acquired a property;—or, in other words, the apple is *John's* apple. (III.xxxiv, 177)

It may be said, then, that a certain facet of an object belongs to each participant which is immutably bound to them, rendering impossible the wholesale possession of an object insofar as one is given a naturally common share of non-transferable properties. Through introspection of various associations subsumed under a unifying term as if according to a dialectic metallurgy, one may also thereby alter the conditions of their social relation.¹⁰

In our own contemplation of the definitive properties of linguistic forms which Sterne would have *Tristram* relate to his readers insofar as these would constitute the formative limits of thought's apprehension, it bears remarking upon the difference of *Tristram's* encounter with that of his father. For this purpose, *Tristram* has the forethought—as if of a sage on high authority—to provide the father and son a common object for their disparate approaches. In the latinate accounts of Sterne's fictional archon *Hafen Slawkenbergius*, the equivalence of terms is thus invited to take the stand. On the one hand, *Walter* encounters *Slawkenbergius* as an affirming resource of his own philosophical apprehensions of graspable knowledge in the latter's authoring of an encyclopedic assemblage on the subject of noses. *Walter* thus works to translate primarily *Slawkenbergius's* scientific pursuit of categorical understanding; *Tristram*, on the other hand, would rather incite the reader's interest in the *fictional* tales flowing from the ink through which he traces *Slawkenbergius's* fancy. Owning that these of *Slawkenbergius's* works' escape *Walter's* focus in their seeming “rather playful and sportive, than speculative,” *Tristram* nevertheless maintains that—through the reading of these fictions—one may still become cognizant however that “in general they are to be looked upon by the learned as a detail of so

¹⁰ The association of thought's *Shandeism* as conceived by relation of metallurgical processes will be developed further in this dissertation's reading of Goethe's poetic renditions with which one might open the reading of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*.

many independent facts, all of them turning round somehow or other upon the main hinges of his subject, and collected by him with great fidelity, and added to his work as so many illustrations upon the doctrines of noses” otherwise could (III.xlii, 193). Interestingly, the reader’s attention may be brought to bear witness to the footnote with which Sterne moves *Tristram* to append his own opening translation of *Slawkenbergius*’ fictional work on the subject of noses in the subsequent volume. Although constituting perhaps a mere passing opinion or afterthought, the reader as an inquisitive user of language is struck by *Tristram*’s claim that the Latin of *Slawkenbergius*’ storytelling is not only “much more concise than his philosophic,” but that in its formative bearing it “has more of Latinity in it” (IV.i, 196). The immediate question the reader may ask concerns whether one linguistic form or genre could possibly be *truer* to the precepts of a language than another, and this question furthermore concerns the extent to which linguistic properties may be overlooked, dismissed, or mistaken in one form or another.

In these first next volumes, Sterne thus manifests a case example of the function of the Shandean properties of language as constitutive of thought, precisely insofar as the *dialectic* framing of language is complicit in the formation of thought as also in the production and maintenance of its relations, as if these—being tendered in the tenuous grasping of common difference formed among mutual relations—were the productive spirit of a cognitive *practice*. The case of contention with which Sterne would have *Tristram* convey this matter of Shandean thought involves *Walter*’s obsessive engagement with the fictional work of *Hafen Sklawenbergius*, whose relation *Tristram* prefaces in the third volume by way of describing the “painful” practice of *Walter*’s impure and amateur translation of *Slawkenbergius*’ unassailable prognostication upon noses (III.xli, 189-190). Indeed, the tangential diversion of the third and fourth volumes into the prospects of both *Walter*’s as well as *Tristram*’s respective translations of

the latinate accounts of this archon may be written off as a mere folly or joke played at the expense of the reader—as if its purpose were merely to hyperbolize the absurdity of *Walter's* hypothesis concerning the evident significance of noses. In relating the absurd manner of *Walter's* hobby-horsical work as an example of the way along which thought is led and born, however, Sterne pushes *Tristram* to bear witness to the reader that which concerns the *dialectic* relation of language that would maintain the poetic firmament constituting social relations.

The tenuous certainty of a nominal frame which one would mind would be thus presented for each to determine, bearing all that is contingent to this turning of one's own nose to the matter of a shared or related encounter. Indeed, even as *Tristram* stages the scene in which *Walter* lauds the work of *Slawkenbergius* upon the subject of his pointed fancy, Sterne ensures the reader is aware that what they glean of *Slawkenbergius's* work moves *from Walter* to the page by way of *Tristram's* remediation of *Walter's* translation:

For in the account which *Hafen Slawkenbergius* gives the world of his motives and occasions for writing [...] he informs his reader, that ever since he had arrived at the age of discernment, and was able to sit down coolly, and consider within himself the true state and condition of man, and distinguish the main end and design of his being;—or,——to shorten my translation, for *Slawkenbergius's* book is in *Latin*, and not a little prolix in this passage,——ever since I understood, quoth *Slawkenbergius*, any thing,——or rather *what was what*,——and could perceive that the point of long noses had been too loosely handled by all who had gone before;——have I, *Slawkenbergius*, felt a strong impulse, with a mighty and irresistible call within me, to gird up myself to this undertaking” (III.xli, 184-185)

It is easy to see that *Walter* picks up on *Slawkenbergius's* work precisely because it affirms his own hypothesis of the significance born by one's most superficial prominence, for indeed both observe that their understanding of anything whatsoever may be linked if not equated—by way of formative expression—to the state of one's understanding of noses: namely, that the point of their subject has been handled, according to the terms of their own express take, all too loosely.

Whether the pursuit of understanding any matter can be understood in or under its own definite terms, or according to the comprehensive apprehension of its unitary being, however, is put to question in *Walter's* own elucidation: in speaking to *Slawkenbergius's* inscribed intention concerning the project upon noses, *Walter's* translation becomes not only necessarily shortened by *Walter* himself, but is also then left to be openly elaborated through *Tristram's* own encounter.

Whether one can define the limits of anything whatsoever by its measure lies at the heart of the pursuit shared here by *Walter* and *Slawkenbergius* on the subject of noses, even insofar as this concerns the giving and taking of an embodied sense given in definite terms. Yet the minuteness of a determined expression concerning a subject of inquiry such as the representation of *Walter's* transduction of *Slawkenbergius's* prolix outpouring—for, indeed, *Walter* not only translates *Slawkenbergius's* text, but in his relation of its matter also shortens it into another form entirely—cannot belie the movement or gesture one makes *towards* this totality of apprehension, even when in so doing one would instead withdraw or scatter off, obliquely, from that same subject when striking upon any point of its formative bearing. It is with respect for this bearing of thought that *Tristram* moves to speak openly about the faults consequently left to contention in the pursuance of a just and proper understanding, just as *Tristram's* critique yet gives itself over to a just observation of the qualifying pinnacles of *Slawkenbergius's* work:

And to do justice to *Slawkenbergius*, he has entered the list with a stronger lance, and taken a much larger career in it, than any one man who had ever entered it before him,—and indeed, in many respects, deserves to be *en-nich'd* as a prototype for all writers, of voluminous works at least, to model their books by,—for he has taken in, Sir, the whole subject,—examined every part of it, *dialectically*,—then brought it into full day; dilucidating [*sic*] it with all the light which either the collision of his own natural parts could strike,—or the profoundest knowledge of the sciences had empowered him to cast upon it,—collating, collecting and compiling,—begging, borrowing, and stealing, as he went along, all that had been wrote or wrangled thereupon in the schools and porticos of the learned: so that *Slawkenbergius's* his book may properly be considered, not only as a model,—but as a thorough-stitch'd DIGEST and regular

institute of *noses*; comprehending in it, all that is, or can be needful to be known about them. (III.xxxviii, 185)

It bears recognizing that, even as *Slawkenbergius* may attest to a masterful comprehension on the subject of noses, his bearing of this attested acclaim is the result of his having taken part in a public and journeyed affair as openly contentious as any conducted by dispositioned assailants who step to take their respective turns on approaching the other's lanced points upon the stage of a shared list. Indeed, it is the *dialectic* quality of *Slawkenbergius*' study which holds the most merit according to *Tristram*'s recognition: in a word, study is thus constituted by the collision of verging picks, the dialectic result of its encounter coming between and passing through [*dia*] the *collective* choosing that constitutes this act of reading [*legere*]. In Sterne's intentional mangling of forms, according to which he says 'dilucidate' rather than 'elucidate,' he thereby invites the reader to consider the manner in which one's elucidations amount to a dilution of its matter. Similarly, it would seem that arriving at an understanding of something that is thus commonly mistaken or too loosely understood hinges still upon a subsuming contestation of what has been brought, lent, or misappropriately taken, congealing in this way into a collation of novel forms—expressly rendered there as if yet secreting something of its formative essence through the pressures of knowledge-seeking.

Lest we become too hasty in our reading of the assembling impetus that drives the accumulation of knowledge and one's coming to terms with its relation, we may take pause to consider what the nominal form of this collective drive and its relation to the biological function of digestion entails. In returning and remaining with this passage concerning the formative process of *Slawkenbergius*' masterful understanding, the reader may be struck by the repetition of the common root of the form divergent thought: such masterful understanding, it would seem, is arrived at through the *collision of collected collateral*. The prominent assonance of the

nominal root *Sterne* provides invites the reader to contemplate what is at stake in their mutual foundation: the act or idea born in what ‘*coll*’ would entail. Indeed, in approaching the root of this nominal form, one may attest that what lies between these nominal forms is multivarious. One may find these nominal forms to be rooted in the latin sense of the mountain or hill [*collis*] and the similarly geographic English derivation of these mountains’ valleys, saddles, or dips [*cols*] that one may pass through and over. The validity of this metaphorical comparison, as it is contained in the nominal form, transverses multiple languages, and gives itself further to the conceptual relation of one’s throat [*la gorge, le col*]: insofar as the throat constitutes the passage through one’s neck [*collus*], the root ‘*coll*’ also becomes the conceptual comparison of an imagined gorge. At the same time, one is struck with the resonance of the *collar*, which would bind or define the contours of one’s neck, upon which the mountains of one’s thought turn. Extending further, one may also arrive at an image of the worn, shaped, or natural *columns* upon which the foundational security of thought’s constructs depend and rest, while also giving its formative self to the transitional changes of generations moving through cervical [*collum*] passes, to be born anew from within the confining sac in which one may also come to life [*en caul*]. At its generative root, collective understanding thus becomes subject to an intercurative contention of a shared collection of forms.

It is yet with an almost passing prominence that *Tristram* signals to his readers the form by which a determined judgment or understanding comes to incorporate itself within the collectively-thinking being themselves. Indeed, even as *Sterne* moves *Tristram*’s hand to embolden the type of this formative understanding—in likening it to the biological process by which foreign material would become the DIGEST of the one who has taken this matter into their own being—the straightforward capital of such everyday activity belies the simplicity with

which the reader might otherwise overlook the process that such a process of digestion entails. In lingering upon the phenomenon of digestion, one reminds themselves of the biological fact that digestion's incorporation of foreign material into its own bearing does not make use of the totality of content it takes within itself. What energy or charged thought this digestion fuels and confers is then reborn or transduced rather in a manifestation of a material property withdrawn from one and become that of another—constituting a process the reader may liken to alchemy or metallurgy as they themselves perceive in striking upon the bold emphasis of this natural assimilation of the collateral that one collects in order to pass their thoughts through a text.

The repetition of the linguistic forms that *Tristram* would liken to this digestive process furthermore hints towards this fundamentally alchemical quality of thought's properties. As in the form given to the household *Reader's Digest*, this furthered use of collected materials depends on the subject's re-assembly, by whose effort the otherwise prolix matter may be rendered more readily digestible. In a certain sense the simmering off of the indigestible rest lets that which remains stand as collateral for what becomes expunged in the exchange between readers, and—apart from any dialectic encounter to come between this process—the integrality of collation and collection to the goal of digestion might go unnoticed; in the alliteration of Sterne's Shandean rendition here, however, the reader is invited to contemplate further that which binds the concepts of collection and digestion from within, or beyond, their own formative self-evidence. As shown not only through the figures of *Hafen Slawkenbergius*, *Walter*, and *Tristram*, but also by Sterne's own Shandean presentation, the formative assembly of thought disperses the positional role of a partaking archon, whose authority each momentarily assumes in reading.

As the reader is presented to *Slawkenbergius*' ethos, the reader may for a time inquire what significant import may be born by this expert's very name, should it occur to the reader to sustain or entertain for a time *Walter*'s adamant belief in the determinism of proper names. Should the reader lack their own insights into the frames of the German language from which *Hafen Slawkenbergius*' names derive, they may yet be interested in the critical editor's appended translation. For his part, Ross offers the english equivalent of a pot [*Hafen*], and a "mountain of clinker or excrement" [*Schlakenberg*] (563). Indeed, this sense carries merit insofar as it reminds the reader of the pointed fictionality of the eponymous figure as well as that of the text which is variously represented in these volumes. Additionally, the name's resonance reminds the reader of another consequence of digestion, which rests at the limit of this expression's figuration of thought as a matter of a dialectical digestion: namely, that there is always, consequent to the process of digestion, an expulsion of an unassimilable remainder.¹¹ In *Hafen Slawkenbergius*, which one might take so far as to be rewritable as 'chamberpot,' the reader may determine that sense of what reading and writing may ultimately entail. Concerning the relations born through the substantive forms of a name towards which Sterne points the reader, the whole story may itself may amount, as Sterne moves *Yorick* to conclude regarding the provided account of

¹¹ In reading of this passage of *Tristram Shandy*, it may be easy to overlook Sterne's reference to this limit of thought in its digestion of formative encounters insofar as it is only after a long digression—during which *Tristram* establishes the familial history concerning the significance of noses as well as providing his own translation of one of *Slawkenbergius*' fables—that the reader may pick up the passing indication: "My father lay stretched across the bed as still as if the hand of death had pushed him down, for a full hour and a half, before he began to play upon the floor with the toe of that foot which hung over the bed-side; my uncle *Toby*'s heart was a pound lighter for it.—In a few moments, his left-hand, the knuckles of which had all the time reclined upon the handle of the chamber-pot, came to its feeling—he thrust it a little more within the valance—drew up his hand, when he had done, into his bosom—gave a hem!—my good uncle *Toby*, with infinite pleasure, answered it; and full gladly would have ingrafted a sentence of consolation upon the opening it afforded; but having no talents, as I said, that way, and fearing moreover that he might set out with something which might make a bad matter worse, he contented himself with resting his chin placidly upon the cross of his crutch" (IV.ii, 219).

Shandean affairs, to naught but a story about “a COCK and a BULL” (IX.xxxiii, 539), at whose content the critic might openly scoff.¹² However, the keen interest with which readers of this story return to its matter impels yet a sense that such a heaping pile of substantive excrement—as may yet be divined in the fiction of words—bears, still, import for the constitutive representation of thought. In lingering upon the question of what precisely may be born in these names, however, the reader observes that the determination of the body of *Hafen Slawkenbergius*—if the reader were to read this name as but a pot of excrement, preferably left unspoken and expunged from one’s mind—may be too hastily concluded. Alternatively, the reader might interject the possibility of reading this name as the *port* [*Hafen*], whose liminal boundary encompasses the communal location of myriad importing approaches and exporting departures. This, also, invokes a sense of the domain where divergent comings and goings of travelers-through— as well as of staid members—collectively encounter another’s dialect or reading of that which mediates their shared presence, and yet still definitely facilitate the mutual exchange and trade of substantive values still held in common. One might also welcome the possibility, as ‘*Hafen*’ stands before the misrepresented form ‘*Slawkenberg*’, that what is implied here would point to an awareness of the entanglement of the sorites paradox—the paradox of the heaping pile [*Haufen*] that stands ambiguously against the mountain [*Berg*] of a shared substance—in the Shandean representation of formative thought. Additionally, the reader might otherwise read ‘clinker’ and think, rather, of that which is amassed or composed from the slag or residual matter of a *metallurgical* process [*Schlacke*].

¹² As in the critique Plato sentences Socrates to levy towards the rhapsode Ion, those who would purport to read dialectically—that is, to be able to explicate or read between or beyond the lines of a given verse in order that their recitation is augmented by means of the reader’s apprehension of the thought and intent of the poet rather than “merely learning off his words” (Plato 409)—must admit either to a divine faculty, or to being dishonest (Plato 447).

Here, on the subject of noses, the reader may grasp what is at stake in the smith's determination of a word's minded frame. Even as one's nose defines but a portion of the frame of one's directed vision, the bearing of one's thought is yet accompanied by a certain faith in the knowable propriety of defined terms, precisely on account of what one—as if by the evidence of their very nose—knows. For *Tristram's* part in relating *Walter's* partaking of this idea, we may turn to the point in *Tristram's* telling of Shandean relations where it is as if the reader has just caught *Walter* in the midst of lecturing uncle *Toby* on the very subject of *Slawkenbergius'* masterful approach on the subject of noses. Here, *Tristram* attests in response to his relation of his father's lecture that the sapient gift of rational thought and the matter of definitive determination arrives not by one's intuition, but rather mediated indirectly insofar as beings inferior to angels and spirits are sentenced “to syllogize by their noses” (III.xl, 189). That is to say, *Tristram* brings the reader to recognize the extent to which thought arrives otherwise at a formative idea by virtue of syllogistic relation—whereby a mediating or intervening party is given to the categorically measured frames towards, and amongst which, one's mind turns. As *Tristram* explains, human thought amounts to but “the finding out the agreement or disagreement of two ideas one with another, by the intervention of a third; (called the *medius terminus*) just as a man, as *Locke* well observes, by a yard, finds two mens nine-pin-alleys to be of the same length, which could not be brought together, to measure their equality, by *juxtaposition*” (III. xl, 189). When *Tristram* proclaims that, in his continued use of the word ‘Nose,’ he should mean naught but its tautological equation, he would thereby also open a challenge to the validity of this tautological assertion in its being bound according to the juxtapositional relation of copulative form. That is, in proclaiming that the one ‘Nose’ *is* or *is equal to* another ‘Nose’ positioned across or through the mediating sign, the implication that nose (A) is the same as nose (B) is yet

contested in the ambiguity of whether this formative prominence may in fact be taken as the same: should one count the number of noses indicated by this proclamation, one cannot deny that there are presented here two *separate* noses. Indeed, in the same measured process of Locke's appointed medium, the reader is aware that—when formative measure gives itself to the conclusion that the two disparate alleys are equal by the measure of a yard—the pitches of comparison are in fact not the same, even as they are equated by a categorical determination.

Following the straightforwardness with which *Tristram* relates his father's system of understanding to the function of thought's syllogism as measured by one's very nose, *Tristram* then lays out the Shandean shortcomings of such a method of thoughtful determination:

Had the same great reasoner looked on, as my father illustrated his systems of noses, and observed my uncle *Toby's* deportment,—what great attention he gave to every word,—and as oft as he took his pipe from his mouth, with what wonderful seriousness he contemplated the length of it,—surveying it transversely as he held it betwixt his finger and his thumb,—then forthright,—then this way, and then that, in all its possible directions and foreshortenings,—he would have concluded my uncle *Toby* had got hold of the *medius terminus*; and was syllogizing and measuring with it the truth of each hypothesis of long noses, in order as my father laid them before him. This by the bye, was more than my father wanted,—his aim in all the pains he was at in these philosophic lectures,—was to enable my uncle *Toby* not to *discuss*,—but *comprehend*—to *hold* the grains and scrupels [*sic*] of learning,—not to *weigh* them.—My uncle *Toby*, as you will read in the next chapter, did neither the one or the other. (III.xl, 189-190)

As if presaging René Magritt's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, *Tristram* demonstrates that in *Toby's* apprehension of the parts which may be subsumed under the categorical designation of his pipe, it is demonstrated that the pipe is not *yet* a pipe in the grasping measure of his mind. Instead, he must place each of its parts and perspectives in sequential relation to the nominal idea of its being as a whole. While 'pipe' may indeed come to stand for that by which this object may be comprehended as a whole, from whatever direction one would levy this determination, its definite sense constitutes ever but a *foreshortened* point. Formative understanding constitutes

itself thus according to Shandean functions of thought's nominal claims: in arriving not directly according to an intuitive sense, but in being conceived rather by way of mediating points and through categories under which defined objects are subsumed and grasped according to their equally foreshortened parts, it is as if it were only best by synecdoche that one would represent the qualifying measure of entire wholes. The philosophical presumption Sterne would hereby put to question through his exposition of Shandean thinking contends precisely the extent to which the pursuit and representative relation of knowledge—insofar as these are carried and born in fictions that merely hold the substantive import of comprehension *as if* in the place of their formative proxy—would thereby miss or imperil the *discursive weight* of formative knowledge as it is born forth on the flights and returns by which Shandean narration and thought are marked.

CHAPTER TWO

Concerning the Authority of Originality and its Representation: The Risk of Imitation and Renunciation in Diderot's *Jacques le Fatalist et son Maître*

Car c'est ainsi qu'il faut entendre ces paroles, conformément à la droite raison et au sens littéral, et non conformément à l'interprétation de la flatterie, qui prétendent que toute puissance, quelle qu'elle soit, vient de Dieu. Quoi donc, n'y a-t-il point de puissance injustes? N'y a-t-il pas des autorités qui, loin de venir de Dieu, s'établissent contre ses ordres et contre sa volonté?
(Diderot, "Autorité Politique" 12-13)

Ce qui précède sur le gouvernement républicain me semble de toute vérité; mais le gouvernement démocratique supposant le concert des volontés, et le concert des volontés supposant les hommes rassemblés dans un espace assez étroit, je crois qu'il ne peut y avoir que de petites républiques, et que la sûreté de la seule espèce de société qui puisse être heureuse sera toujours précaire. (Diderot, "Democratie" 478)

There lies a tension concerning a text's originality that opens itself to the reader's contemplation as the text's originality is confronted, in its novel reproduction of definite forms, through the matter of its representation and reading. As thought traces and construes the form of its idea, impulse, or will to participate in the constitution of its own point, thought's definitive representation risks problematizing its own apprehension by way of nominal identification. Representative reformulation is furthermore unable to avoid problematizing the supposedly manifest discreteness of the nominal identity contained by its apprehension—as if a given form were thereby definitively put to rest—of a thing according to itself, or as to the ultimate essence of its being in and of itself.¹ Soliciting further contemplation of the extent to which iterative and

¹ If—as Grimmelshausen's Simplicius laments in a moment of melancholic madness spurred even by the contradictory entanglement of definite terms—there can be no peace without disunity [*kein Fried ohne Uneinigkeit*] and no friendship without falsehood [*keine Freundschaft ohne Falschheit*] (545), then one may be forgiven for asserting the troubling question of the

original production are interrelated, the thinker-as-reader of encountered textual circumstances is driven to divine the import of the critical differences produced and foreclosed through the gesture of representation—whether this take the form of a reformulation, explication, or expository critique of an authoritative determination—and to consider what the fatal relation of representative intersectionality portends for the concept of original authority.²

Even as one steps to undertake a reading of Diderot's *Jacques le fataliste et son maître*, the reader may become aware that the words and narratives encountered in the text do not belong entirely to Diderot himself.³ Indeed, while the text was renowned first among speakers of

propriety inherent to the act of attributing an exclusive claim to one's centering apprehension concerning the absolute significance of a representative form or its relation, when an original form once settled—as if in place—by exclusion of its otherwise critical intersections and alternative conceptions imperils the prospects of one's relating with another whatsoever. As developed in this dissertation's introductory remarks concerning the repressive risk inherent to the totalizing gesture of understanding, the general form of an idea avails itself—in the common distribution of a word—of a critical conception.

² In observing that “Language is archiphilology,” Hamacher speaks to the selective practice employed in the use of language—occurring both in the conveyance and understanding of the significance of employable forms—by which the significance of any linguistic element is only explicable through its mutual relation with other given and precedential elements, whereby furthermore each element then speaks “for that which still remains to be said within that which is said” (25). As Hamacher himself recognizes, philology is an engagement in a critical relation of given forms with “repetition, clarification, and multiplication of impenetrably obscure languages” (*ibid*), which in turn constitute all the necessary keeping and renunciation of valencies and connotations entailed in the reproducibility of language, as in a translation. Without this quality, language would either be inherently meaningless, or its underlying significance would remain utterly uncertain and beyond even the tenuous grasping which may be hazarded by our faculties against this prospective risk.

³ The selection of *Jacques le fataliste et son maître* is no accidental move as this chapter steps to follow the *sottises* and narrative representations of Shandean thinking yet further. Indeed, Jacques' story is inextricably bound with the figure of *Tristram Shandy*. Indeed, Diderot signals the entanglement of Sterne's ideas with his own in his appropriation of corporal *Trim*'s abstract representation of freedom, which Diderot presents in the front matter of his own work. *Trim*'s retraceable yet opaque representation of freedom reads: “Nothing, continued the Corpora, can be so sad as confinement for life—or so sweet, an' please your honour, as liberty. Nothing, Trim—said my uncle Toby, musing—Whilst a man is free—cried the Corporal, giving a flourish with his stick thus—” (IX.iv, 490). This dissertation will return to a more in-depth consideration of the intercurative relation of these texts in the following chapters, but it is worth

German, it was not until twelve years after Diderot's death that the text made its way back into French. Undergoing travails of its own reproduction, Goethe's initial encounter of the text comes as early as 1780 through the handwritten newsletter *Correspondance litteraire, philosophique et critique*, and while Friedrich Schiller's partial translation in 1785 was followed by Wilhelm Mylius' full translation in 1792, the loss and scattering of original manuscripts portended that the text's recognizable return to France in 1796 would depend upon the *German* translation (Sander 347). In the very performance of its translation and reproduction, the work thus stages its own case for our consideration concerning the equivalency of representative forms.

As if already anticipating an intratextual dialogue with the reader, Diderot's narrator of *Jacques the Fatalist and his Master* opens with the question of the origin of the state of affairs constituting the critical relationship between Jacques and his master:

How had they met? By chance, like everyone else. What were their names? What does it matter to you? Whence had they come? From the nearest possible spot. Where were they going? Do we ever know where we're going? What were they saying? The master said nothing and Jacques said that his captain said that everything that happens to us down here, good or bad, was written up yonder. (3)⁴

bearing in mind already that the form of Jacques' narratological exposition comes to figure an explicitly authoritative extension—in the form of a reproduction, response, and re-opening of inconclusive moments and ideas drawn in and from out of *Tristram Shandy*.

⁴ In stepping to engage in a common discourse with *Jacques the Fatalist*, one is invariably confronted with the question of which language one should most appropriately cite in their own reading of the text. Recognizing that moving between translations opens more interesting approaches to how the text presents itself for reading, this dissertation is hesitant to resolve itself to but one representative form, although for the sake of the breadth of its argument it also recognizes that in order to open itself to a given reading, it must make an executive decision in that regard. Whenever possible, this dissertation's reading will resort to the English translation in order to provide a broad perspective for its own readers, who may lack their own access to either the French or German languages. This dissertation's argument being often dependent upon a poetic reading of nuances revealed through the comparative play of these other interlinguistic forms, the respective translation will be referenced instead. All translations are my own, unless indicated otherwise.

With reference to the idea of original authority, Diderot engages with the question of the nature of the given form of nominal relationships, even as he opens the text in a performative representation of the issue at stake in reading. Indeed, it is through the appeal Jacques finds represented in the expressions of his former captain's authoritative expression, "That everything that happens to us down here, good or bad, was written up yonder" (*ibid*), that the reader also opens a text with a certain sense that there is a reason—or, at least, an authoritative sense—driving the ordering of the textual matters whose apprehension they then set themselves about determining. As if the given form of these affairs were planned and ordered according to the sagacity of an authoritative creator, Jacques' appeal to an authoritative origin invites the possibility of reading textual forms in view of a teleological resolution. That is to say, the reader may sustain the possibility of there being a higher authority that would have ordered any state of current affairs as essentially necessary encounters insofar as these then lead towards an ultimate reconciliation. This teleological claim is, furthermore, sustained despite or even through the text's bearing of transient contradictions and unclarity that become manifest in the unfolding of its formative significance.⁵ Indeed, such a totalizing gesture would necessitate that every

⁵ This teleological idea according to which the formative determinations and conceptions of thought approach the apprehension of an immanent significance, which would relate any misfortune in a given state of affairs to the authoritative ordering of an ingenious tragedy on the road to the apotheosis of its ultimately and totalizingly significant justification, is—as Georg Lukacs observes—a typical mechanic in the production of the novel as a genre: looking to the pre-eminent example of classic Greek literature, the philologist finds the narrative model of the novel in precedential texts whose "answers preexist their questions" (Lukacs 32). As Lukacs develops, this original model allows for the production of a linguistic form whose scope is not only limited to the circumstantial encounters of its hero, but whose significance is authoritatively "organised by the orientation of his development towards finding the meaning of life in self-recognition; on the one hand, the discretely heterogeneous mass of isolated persons, non-sensuous structures and meaningless events" according to which the text's significance "receives a unified articulation by the relating of each separate element to the central character and the problem symbolised by the story of his life" (Lukacs 81). In this journeying toward self-recognition, these encounters with heterogeneity articulate an immanent significance to the inner form of the text (Lukacs 32).

misfortune and evil were, through the causal nexus, significant in the grand view of a teleological reconciliation orchestrated by an original authority.⁶ Yet the ambiguity of

⁶ Thought's arrival at a teleological conclusion lends itself to a consideration of the manner by which its judgment is determined by abstraction of the causal relationship between two forms, whose nexus cannot however be empirically verified. Nevertheless, causality stands as a logical principle of judgment, which allows for the necessity of something which cannot be immediately verified, namely that when a new condition of one or more real objects appears [*Wenn ein neuer Zustand eines oder mehrerer realer Objekte eintritt,*], it follows by necessity that another condition predates this one, from which the new follows as if by regulated measure whensoever the primary condition exists [*so muß ihm ein anderer vorhergegangen seyn, auf welchen der neue regelmäßig, d.h. Allemal, so oft der erstere da ist, folgt*] (Schopenhauer 46). The abstract nature of this logical principle is evident even as the primary condition is referenced to exist in the present tense [*da ist*], as if its being in principle were still represented in the present condition despite having taken place in the past and arriving then under novel conditions. The cause of novel conditions is, as Schopenhauer elaborates, thus taken according to a determination of time that places by means of thought's representation of past and present in a simultaneous comparison that exposes the arbitrary or imprecise divisions of time as well as the recognition that it is only in retrospect that a certain condition may be determined to be the cause of another [*Zufällige Zeitbestimmungen haben denn in jener Hinsicht zu entscheiden, welches die Ursach sei*] (Schopenhauer 47). The regulating and chronic necessity of eventuating change, insofar as it is apprehended by the abstract recognition of a perpetuating bond connecting present and past together into an identifiable unit, however imprecise, constitutes a logical principle of a necessary causal nexus [*Jede Veränderung kann nur eintreten dadurch, daß eine andere, nach einer Regel bestimmte, ihr vorhergegangen ist, durch welche sie aber dann als nothwendig herbeigeführt eintritt: diese Nothwendigkeit ist der Kausalnexus*] (Schopenhauer 48). Knowledge thus appeals to this principle in the extension of its own forms with which it passes sentences according to adequate reason, which arrives however by the grasping apprehension of one reaching ever *towards* the ground of its derivative familiarity [*Satz vom zureichenden Grunde des Erkennens*]: "Aber auch das Denken im engern Sinne besteht nicht in der bloßen Gegenwart abstrakter Begriffe im Bewußtseyn, sondern in einem Verbinden, oder Trennen zweier, oder mehrerer derselben, unter mancherlei Restriktionen und Modifikationen, welche die Logik, in der Lehre von den Urtheilen, angibt. Ein solches deutlich gedachtes und ausgesprochenes Begriffsverhältniß heißt nämlich ein Urtheil. In Beziehung auf diese Urtheile nun macht sich hier der Satz vom Grunde abermals geltend, jedoch in einer von der im vorigen Kapitel dargelegten sehr verschiedenen Gestalt, nämlich als Satz vom Grunde des Erkennens, principium rationis sufficientis cognoscendi. Als solcher besagt er, daß wenn ein Urtheil eine Erkenntniss ausdrücken soll, es einen zureichenden Grund haben muß" (Schopenhauer 114). As Schopenhauer argues here, that which we call thinking in the narrowest sense doesn't occur as the mere consciousness of abstract ideas, but consists rather in the binding or separating of two or more concepts and phenomena, portending that each must exist in a chain of mutual relation. As such, if a judgment [*Urteil*] concerning the separability or connectability [*Verbinden*] of two or more concepts [*Begriffe*] is to be made, it must have a sufficient reason or ground justifying this determination.

composition here—unassumingly contained within this recurrent claim and veiled by the self-evident givenness of its representative form—already troubles the authority of the producer of this teleological thought insofar as they would move to lay claim to a totalizing determination of a momentary apprehension; even as a location is represented in the text through an adverbial form, the reader’s take of this formative ‘here’ cannot extricate itself from abstraction.⁷ Rather, the equivocal location pointed to in the ‘here’ of the narration overextends itself in referring to the concept of a predestination or immanence of worldly affairs—arriving as if preordained in the carved inscriptions and weaving threads of divine minstrels of fate in a realm beyond, transcendentally superior, or above that which can be said to be ‘here’ in the sense of material presence—just as the text purports to manifest the forethought and intention of an author in their ordering of the forms in direct accordance to the flow of their own conceived narrative. As if every affair were preconceived according to a sage and authoritative creator, this totalizing gesture would imply that the appearance of chaos and discord would be ultimately reconciled if one could but take stock of a telescoping view reaching towards a teleological resolution orchestrated by an original authority. As Diderot’s *Lui* argues in *Rameau’s Nephew*, “Erst Mittel und Ende klären die Finsternisse des Anfangs auf” (131-132). That the singular beginning [*Anfang*] would be constituted in multiple eclipses [*Finsternisse*], suggests however that its

⁷ The text’s exposure of the abstract nature of even such a straightforward concept as ‘here’ is echoed as it is born through Hegel’s own reading of *Jacques der Fatalist*, in which Hegel troubles the extent to which thought accounts for its own abstraction even insofar as the explanation of what is grasped by defining ‘here’ should ultimately miss the whole of its point: “Mir selbst ist es schrecklich genug, wenn einer zu erklären anfängt, denn zur Not verstehe ich alles selbst. Hier zeigte sich die Erklärung des Denkens und des Abstrakten ohnehin schon als völlig überflüssig; denn gerade nur, weil die schöne Welt schon weiß, was das Abstrakte ist, flieht sie davor” (Hegel, *Wer denkt abstrakt?* 575). In the indication of a definite point towards which thought’s formative relation may return, one understands what is meant when necessary, but one’s understanding also thereby flits away in a performative foreclosure of the otherwise overflowing extensions and associations of its formative representation. How did we get the word, ‘here’---in abstraction from what is *not and what is no longer* here.

opening is also constituted in a multiplicity of breakages. Indeed, the superfluity of the repetitions of this teleological claim of a pre-ordained significance is juxtapositionally couched within the narrative's persistent need to account for the troubling insistence of chance, interposition, and indeterminability that we as readers may find manifest in the narrator's inability to explain even the evident entanglement of its two main characters: "Comment s'étaient-ils rencontrés? Par hasard, comme tout le monde" (19). Here, in inquiring after the origin of the state of affairs between Jacques and his master, the reiteration of the teleological claim of significance itself becomes imbued with the potency of a contradiction contained within its own chronic reiterance, destabilizing the certainty with which its significance is grounded.⁸

In view of practical necessity or expedience given towards the momentary grasping of understanding—even in the production of an emanating representation of the original text in translation—Loy's English translation returns Diderot's *'hasard'* to the reader as 'chance' (3) but in so doing he must simultaneously reject other possible alternatives.⁹ Should the reader but

⁸ This problematization of our conviction in ascertaining the significance of chanced encounters constitutes the fatalistic risk of questioning the authority of original production: as André Brink argues in his assessment of the fatalistic quandary Diderot makes manifest in *Jacques le Fatalist*, "Merely asking the question [pertaining to the identity of the author] does not, of course, suggest the absence—or death—of an Author, an Auctor, a Maker, a Prime Cause; but posing the question *does* convey, at the very least, an uncertainty about the nature, or even the existence, of such an Author, and the first casualty of such an uncertainty is the stability of meaning in language" (Brink 93).

⁹ Insofar as this dissertation will continue to step towards a consideration of the poetics of thought's representation or translation of thought into graspable yet murky forms, in following another's expression as if thereby becoming the original's shadow, acolyte, or steadfast companion, it interests us to reflect also upon the manner in which thought's relation to the sense it draws from and reads into its myriad encounters is itself a practiced exercise within an ongoing activity of discourse, even as the form against which one posits their own apprehension stands fast as if constituting a lasting pronouncement. Roger Pearson prefaces similarly regarding the entanglement of translation in reading Diderot's contemporary *Voltaire*, concerning which he remarks, "Translation itself, of course, is a much debated activity. In more self-important moments I felt it to be the supreme form of literary interpretation: each act of linguistic transposition having to be undertaken in as full an awareness as possible of all the conceivable functions of the unit to be rendered, not to mention the effects of one's proposed rendition, with

conceive an opening in the recursive encounter and propagation of forms, then they may weigh the disparate possibilities that would contest the direct import of this ‘*hasard*,’ and from out of which the reader may move to say something more or altogether different than a mere resigned equivalence. One may claim that the textual ground over which the definitive holding of this straightforward translation, ‘chance,’ is yet proper to this context in its carrying of a sense of the accidental or chaotic succession of encounters, especially as these stand in contrast to Jacques’ uttered appeal to a sage or divine predestination. At the very point the narrative claims to arrive at a definite point of reason, however, the text would risk missing the portent born in alternative or recursive takes of what it means for the definitive forms of conceived relationships to arrive ‘*par hasard*.’ Indeed, in his reproductive translation, Loy’s selection of ‘chance,’ while keeping the narrative directly in line with the nominal uncertainty of its coursing narrative, simultaneously precludes alternative approaches that may liken the significance of this form to the English homophone, ‘hazard.’ If we accept that Diderot is playing with the aporetic question of original authority versus the accident of circumstance, the apparent claim of the word itself may reveal the hazards and risks of its own circumspection. While the certainty of the text’s reading may be beholden to the forms with which it is represented, the reader is invited to reconsider the portent of meaningful exchange insofar as the text’s form then appears to skirt around or withdraw entirely from a foreclosure of its certainty. That the significance of language in a text is ever something somewhat uncertain even insofar as it is given, its producer and reader

the final choice of the best of all possible words being in itself literary commentary of the most authoritative kind. But the implicitness of such commentary left me with a Pan-glossian desire to pronounce further” (ix). The Shandean contention of definite terms—and their shadowy interpositioning of disparate ideas—thus becomes a motive that this dissertation aims to trace as the definite terms and ideas pass through myriad fictional relations. This dissertation will return specifically to *Nietzsche’s* reflection of the significance of Voltaire’s fictional *contes* for the development of his own poetic relation of that which this dissertation will have read by comparing the Shandean constitution of thought’s form by abstraction as it is carried further in a feudal animus of interursive and inter-discursive thought.

may yet each take a chance at it. In doing so, thought also thereby risks the production of a fatalistic meaninglessness or unsignifiability in its endangering of the authoritative foundation, upon whose appeal any given significance would appear to rest.¹⁰

In relating for his master the origin of his love affairs, Jacques returns to thoughts of the bullet without which he would not have fallen in love: “*Jacques*. A regiment was passing on its way to camp before Fontenoy. Out of spite, I join up. We arrive and the battle is on. *The Master*. And you receive the bullet with your name. *Jacques*. You have guessed it—wounded in the knee” (3). A number of things go awry already in this translation. First, the matter-of-fact anticipation with which Jacques’ master supposes that this narrative is already related to his servant’s wounded joint effectively attenuates the haphazardness with which the English gives the form of the master’s determination to be a mere “guess.” The French ‘*deviner*,’ in contrast, resonates with a belief that the master’s logical faculties were partaking in a divine understanding or revelation. Second, in sustaining the image of the fraught battle in which one may lose all sense, or from whose adversarial contention one otherwise flees, retreats, or withdraws, the reader may begin to wonder whether Jacques were not in fact also speaking to a more fundamental concern of sapience that is reflected through the narrative staging of his taking a bullet to the knee. In returning to the French noun, ‘*genou*,’ this concern is also exposed insofar

¹⁰ The inherent possibility of exchanges in language seems to allow for or even necessitate the risk of linguistic fallibility insofar as its forms remain open to a manner of misuse and impropriety that might otherwise pose significant threats to the limits of the formative definitions that are constituted in the very certainty of their momentary use. This recognition of the performative certainty of language is cast in the critical conception of *Rameau’s Nephew*, in which Diderot’s *Lui* disparages the danger comprised even in knowledgable claims: “*Lui*: Combien il me serait facile de vous prouver l’inutilité de toutes ces connaissances-là, dans un monde tel que le nôtre; que dis-je l’inutilité, peut-être le danger.” [*Er*: *Wie leicht wäre es mir Euch zu zeigen, wie unnütz alle diese Kenntnisse in einer Welt, wie die unserige, sind. Was sage ich unnütz, vielleicht gefährlich*] (*Rameau* 131). It would seem, precisely in order that folly should somehow also oppose the danger of an invoked death or senselessness—thought may uncover the tenuous uncertainty upon which the very possibility of significant linguistic reproduction depends.

as its pronunciation comprises a nominal contention of grammatical identity. In hearing that Jacques becomes struck by a shot “au genou,” we may also hear the resonant exposition of Jacques’ fundamental problem that consists in his being individuated from others who are all more or less equally subject to the sharing of encounter and the modes of discourse in general. One might then instead read into the relation of Jacques’s affairs that he is struck here by the contentious entanglement of ‘*je*’ (‘I’) and ‘*nous*’ (‘We’). In a word, Diderot sentences Jacques to give and take account of this entanglement, and the reader’s suspicions are confirmed not least of all on the occasion of Jacques’ most glaring refusal: when he refuses his master’s order to ‘go down,’ or to subjugate himself thereby to another’s authority.

Through the nominal appeal to an authoritative origin that would stand in its relation with others, we may also further our contemplation of the effect upon the significance of the given or representative form itself as it is produced in repetition of an idea’s formative representation—even when citing or quoting another. Paradoxically, the captain’s authority over the contextual significance of his iterable idea dissipates even as Jacques defers to his authority in speaking of the idea of an original producer who would have ordered or directed all significant encounters towards their proper, necessary or consequential circumstances. In citing his captain’s words, Jacques must *himself* give voice to the form of the idea in his captain’s stead, and the captain’s conspicuous absence troubles the reader’s certainty that Jacques were still representing the *captain’s* belief. Increasingly, the reader might question the extent to which the idea has become usurped, thereby shaking the foundational certainty that a thought’s apprehension may be grounded in the exclusive authority of an original author. If, for example, we allow that Jacques’ captain sincerely believed that all the travails one passes through were written precisely so by this grand author in the realm beyond the material plane which thought purports to grasp,

then it would disturb us to see how even the act of citation and direct quotation subverts the certainty with which the reformulation instead *attenuates* the certainty of an authoritative significance. Instead—even as Jacques’ master reacts violently to their having accidentally lost their way in the dark— this appeal to necessity is given as if to justify the judgments of these traveling companions’ momentary concerns, and the sharing of its repetition troubles the sense of whose decisive usage were in this case more prevalent:

Jacques started the story of his love affairs. It was after dinner, the weather was sticky, and the master went to sleep. Night overtook them in the middle of the fields, and there they are, lost. There is the master in a terrible rage, falling on his lackey with a whip, and that poor devil saying with each blow: “That one, too, must have been written up yonder.” (Diderot 4)

Taken at face value, the definitive article renders a singular image of this scene in giving itself to a predetermination of who precisely this “poor devil” is that takes their turn in repeating this appellant phrase. Rather, the image staged here is shaken insofar as it is not yet explicit *which* of the two poor devils is in fact speaking. On account of the equivocality of the definitive article here, each of the two characters may utter or think the phrase simultaneously, each importing a unique understanding to the scene. It must be noted furthermore that their having gone astray from the direction of a prelaid path, and the consequences thereof, can be attributed neither to Jacques nor his master alone, but rather occurs as the cumulative consequence of myriad circumstances into which the pair are thrust. Jacques’ master’s arbitration seems rather to amount to his having renounced the authoritative responsibility for ordering their path ahead in his having fallen asleep while following the course and their weathering together of the sticky slog of their after-dinner stupor, accompanied by Jacques’ diverting narration of his love affairs. Through his novel reformulation of the appeal to an original authority, Jacques’ master has divorced the significance of this appeal from any of its original author’s claim to its significance

with regard for the moment at hand—indeed, the captain’s possible judgment of this situation between Jacques and his master, as well as its consequential portent or propriety in view of whether Jacques’ captain would support or renounce the direction in which his idea is being taken in this scene, remains undisclosed and is tantamount to mere speculation at best.

By comparing the unknowable thoughts of Jacques’ captain with the novel instantiation of its formative appeal, the repeated form entangles itself with that form whose presence, now, must be imagined through its representation. In this entanglement of representation, it becomes all the more evident that the original producer of the idea has become absent in its passing through another producer. As such, the only authority to whom one can appeal is, precisely, the one who speaks as if in repetition. As Diderot’s narrator explains, attempting to determine the significance of these affairs through an appeal to an original authority would do nothing to advance any argument pertaining to the certainty of its original signification: the question of this appeal to predetermined significance is, as Diderot’s narrator remarks, “a subject about which so much has been said and written for two thousand years, without, for that, advancing the argument the slightest bit” (Diderot 8). Although we may be dissatisfied with this uncertainty, we may pause in our haste to reject our encounter with nominal uncertainty outright to consider instead the very possibility this chance opens to our conceiving of anything else that the author may have left unsaid. That such a use of given forms may produce a contradictory or incomplete representation suggests that meaning is not necessarily already contained in an original formulation, but that it is rather actively determined by those who pick up the form, read into it, and carry it further. For Diderot, the destined significance towards which a given form will be taken remains just as uncertain as the foundation towards which its substantive matter appeals: where the authoritative foundation of an original representation opens unto uncertain ground,

none have insight enough to appreciate where they are going to end up in conclusion [*Où allaient-ils? Est-ce que l'on sait où l'on va?*] (Diderot 19).

While these forms are undeniably entangled in a history of signification whose original authority may not ever be refuted, nor whose immanence can be perfectly divined, in asking whether we can say if we were the master or rather the subject of our fates, Diderot moves to undermine the very conviction with which our circumstantial encounters may be comprehensively apprehended or appreciatively assessed [*apprécié*] in any way whatsoever:

Et puis, y a-t-il un homme capable d'apprécier juste les circonstances où il se trouve? Le calcul qui se fait dans nos têtes et celui qui est arrêté sur le registre d'en haut, sont deux calculs bien différents. Est-ce nous qui menons le destin, ou bien est-ce le destin qui nous mène? (Diderot 32).

In asking whether any person were capable of appropriately appreciating [*d'apprécier juste*] the circumstances in which they find themselves, the conclusivity of one's resolution is confronted with the measure of their calculation and their accordance with the absolution whose arrest exists, on high as if pre-recorded in the very organ of its being envisioned beyond its own momentary apprehension [*d'en haut*].¹¹ Indeed, it is as if at every momentary apprehension one is sentenced to place the superficial form of their understanding in confrontation with that image,

¹¹ The reader may recognize the false resonance of the French '*haut*,' as it describes a degree of altitude or highness, with the German noun '*die Haut*,' which contains within it a further resonance with English in its conveying either—or both—'skin' and 'hide.' Despite the false cognizance born in the deception of this mistaken cognate, its fictional conception is still worth contemplating insofar as—through its impropriety—the false cognate may also point the reader towards a curious aspect of thought's formative *Shandeism*: even as one claims to be able to appreciate the formative circumstances one encounters through thought's apprehensive grasping of but a superficial form, one is able to justify the immediacy of their claim as if its case were already recorded in a higher realm; but, at the same time, one then insists upon a halting detention of thought's contemplation that would claim there to be nothing more to it than what can be read by a measure that is only skin-deep. As Glissant similarly critiques of the French language, "Everything [within the limited framework of French] just goes along as if, at the moment it entered into the poetics of worldwide Relation, ready to replace the former hegemony, collective thought working within the language chose to cover up its expressive relationship with the other, rather than admit any participation that would not be one of preeminence" (Glissant 23).

by which the single object of contemplation becomes composed in two very different measures or calculations entirely. That one cannot say with certainty, then, where fate will lead even as it is demonstrated in the incongruence of these two measures, ought to trouble the certainty with which one claims to define the measured circumstances of their comprehension. The fatalistic risk inherent to reproduction of given forms lies in the possibility that, in rejecting or re-opening the question of these forms' significance in spite of any definite meaning determined by an original authority, we should also recognize the aporia potentiated by the possibility of unrestrainable contradiction, whereby the certain significance of language would be irrevocably undermined and risk its being thrown over the abyssal rim otherwise delimited in the givenness of its form, and there into the disconnected depths of meaninglessness.

If the question of linguistic understanding relies in part upon the proliferation of valent possibilities, then the risk of fatalistic meaninglessness also requires contemplation of a conceived limit to which this proliferation may be taken according to the measure or conditional determination of substantive matters. After all one's clamouring for relatable understanding, if one's open permission to employ any given form were impugnable in its absolvment from either confirmation or reproach, then the certainty of the foundation upon which the prospect of the communion of mutual understanding would dissipate. On the one hand, it would be possible that—in one's search for understanding—their fervent investigation of possibilities would lead instead down an endlessly aporetic road upon which would then become arrested in the weary traveler's refusal to take any further step: As their conversation pertaining to the theological dispute concerning the idea of predestination produced no mutual understanding [*Tandis que nos deux théologiens disputaient sans s'entendre, comme il peut arriver en théologie*] (Diderot 26), Jacques and his master take up lodging at a nearby inn with unavoidable disregard for the risks

contained in lingering within an area known for its miserable administration and a preponderance of banditry [*Ils traversaient une contrée peu sûre en tout temps, et qui l'était bien moins encore alors que la mauvaise administration et la misère avaient multiplié sans fin le nombre des malfaiteurs*] (*ibid*). There, we find Jacques' master inactive according to his wont, while Jacques follows his impulse to teach a lesson to the brigands they encounter:

They heard nearby the boisterous laughter and unbridled merriment of a dozen brigands who had preceded them there and taken all the food. Jacques was rather calm; his master was far from it. He, poor fellow, paraded his worry all about him, while his lackey devoured bits of the black bread and swallowed a few glasses of the bad wine with a grimace. At this point they heard a knock at their door; it was a servant. Their insolent neighbors had forced him to bring to them, on one of the brigand's own soiled dishes, all the bones of a chicken they had eaten. Jacques, indignant, takes his master's pistols. (Diderot 9)

It is here that the reader may join Diderot in retrieving the Shandean conception of thought which Laurence Sterne likens to a dialectical process of digestion. As discussed in this dissertation's previous chapter, the digestive process of dialectical, poetic, or Shandean thinking is evinced in the accumulation and subsumption of various substantive matters that are then reproduced in another form entirely. The question which concerns the *dialectic* digestion of words and the secreted understanding born in their novel conception has precisely to do with the extent to which there remains anything left for others to partake in. According to a sense of common shares and leftover remnants, we have observed that the taking and giving of words may appeal to the claim of an original idea, whose authority is thought to precede that of the reader. Here, the reader observes that the brigands have similarly arrived prior to Jacques and his master, and because of this have assumed authority to claim rights to whatever substance is at hand for their own sustenance. Jacques might have been okay with being sentenced to partake in the undesirable or long-overlooked provisions, if not for the sequenced ordering of events by which the reader is presented with the question of the brigand's insolent gesture as it stands, in

context, opposite from the breaking of Jacques' indignance. While that which makes Jacques most indignant appears contingent, rather, to the bandits' dispensation of the skeletal remains of their meal, the reader may notice how the motive of their gesture is set apart—if not obfuscated—in the narrative's representation of the servant's mediation of their order, as well as the punctuated point of an unavailing conclusivity that stands immediately between the servant's following of the bandits' order and Jacques' indignant response.

The reader is invited to consider what is at stake in this literary gesture and Diderot's authoritative decision to represent the hazardous conflict at all. Indeed, the reader may be invited to concern themselves with what precisely the recipient of this mediated delivery is supposed to make of this gesture and the matter borne along in its conveyal—thereby arriving at the same question which so frustrates Jacques. The fact that the contentious affair revolves around the question of gestures and the capricious mediation of understanding suggests the text itself may be engaged in a critical handling of the manner by which meaning is represented and taken in the conception of words. The question at stake here concerns whether the reader should also ever acquiesce to the proposition that there is nothing left to think about or digest in a word other than what is borne in its own skeletal frame. As if revolting at the prospect of what he is to make of the gesture, Jacques' protest is constituted in a belief that he may also stand on equal terms with those who came prior, in terms of the digestion of substantive matters. Indeed, Jacques raises himself up rather than to accept quietly the skeletal form that has been picked clean of any renderable substance. We may imagine that Jacques' indignance here is not merely attributable to the incident with the impertinent delivery of skeletal remains picked clean of any usable sustenance, but that it also works towards Diderot's disposition concerning the figurative use of language: it is as if Jacques also takes affront at the suggestion that the significance of given

linguistic forms could be enjoyed simply through the givenness of structural matter—even when disconnected from the corporeal sense of a once-living being. Adamant in his refusal to acquiesce to the insult that would place his right to equal terms beneath the absolute hegemony of another's authority on the matter, Jacques' indignant response would then seek to insist also upon his shared need to partake in more than used bones and their mocking accoutrement. We may say that Jacques is defending the proliferation of self-same forms among novel dispositions, even if that should risk the formative limits of their substantive meaning. But again, the metaphor of digestion reaches a limit here insofar as one recognizes the self-evident difference between sustenance and words: whereas food, once consumed, ceases to be available for the consumption of others, words instead give themselves ever with the same offerings of substantive matter, from out of which one may even locate overlooked morsels. In both cases, nevertheless, the bones of these substantive matters become, for Jacques, the bones of contention.

Jacques' master, on the other hand, feeling uncertain about where this course of action will lead, becomes paralyzed by the plethora of uncertain possibilities that would proliferate with the grumbling contention of conflict should they in fact not merely accept the bones they have been given at face value [*Son maître, incertain sur la manière dont cette aventure finirait, l'attendait en tremblant*] (Diderot 28). Even after Jacques' dangerous rebuke of the improper antics of the local banditry, his master remains mired as if in fright at the possibilities that could have arisen out of Jacques' indolence at having been given nothing but unsustaining bones as if that alone should suffice:

Le Maître. Jacques, quel diable d'homme es-tu! Tu crois donc...
Jacques. Je ne crois ni ne décrois.
Le Maître. S'ils avaient refusé de se coucher?
Jacques. Cela était impossible.

Le Maître. Pourquoi?

Jacques. Parce qu'ils ne l'ont pas fait.

Le Maître. S'ils se relevaient?

Jacques. Tant pis ou tant mieux.

Le Maître. Si... si... si... et...

Jacques. Si, si la mer bouillait, il y aurait, comme on dit, bien des poissons de cuits. Que diable, monsieur, tout à l'heure vous avez cru que je courais un grand danger et rien n'était plus faux; à présent vous vous croyez en grand danger et rien peut-être n'est encore plus faux. Tous, dans cette maison, nous avons peur les uns des autres; ce qui prouve que nous sommes tous des sots... (Diderot 28)

What if, Jacques' master imagines, the bandits would have refused to couch [*se coucher*] their impertinence at the insistence of Jacques' authority, which he thereby simultaneously risks, or if they had rather risen up against Jacques' confrontation [*S'ils se relevaient?*] (*ibid*): with each elliptical cessation of his contemplation of the myriad unspeakable possibilities [*Si... si... si... et...*], Jacques' master becomes bogged down in the uncertainty of novel possibilities. In our contemplation of the selective renunciations of translation, we may yet further our understanding of the effective possibilities enabled by the interplay of repetition and signification. As Jacques' master becomes paralyzed by inaction—as if he were arrested by an interruptive uncertainty—we may take the liberty of reformulating his contemplation of the threat of potentiation in an uncertain world. We may thus ask in his stead, “Were it not possible that the bandits would have refused? Were it not possible that they, too, should have risen up against your claim?” Even Jacques, who rises to the defense of the proliferation of significant possibilities, adopts a derisive tone that echoes his master's former reticence to condone conflict as Jacques contradicts *himself* in warning now against the tracing of possibilities without end. As Jacques explains, inconclusive pondering would be as pointless as supposing what would occur should the sea boil over [*Si, si la mer bouillait, il y aurait, comme on dit, bien des poissons de cuits*] (Diderot 28): indeed, in Jacques repetition here of the form ‘si,’ the reader attains the sense that

Jacques is not simply mocking his masters anxious apprehension, but is rather giving credit to him in saying, “yes, indeed, it *were* possible, *if...*”¹² Insofar as this scenario would furnish an excess or abundance of cooked food, Diderot moves to suggest that this is also a possibility that concerns the excessive imaginings that one may cook up in discourse. That is to say, the possession of one’s own absolute sense would embody the problem of an unrelatable signification insofar as each would have their fill, after which nobody would have to enter into contest with others insofar as there would no longer be any nominal substance that is still held in common after the shared medium—standing between and thereby reflecting the separation of existence—is boiled away. In thinking upon a formative idea, one may avail themselves of an extensive imagination of possibilities upon which one can yet chew, but at some point in discourse, one must delimit one’s own contemplation of the possible directions in which the given form or state of affairs may be taken, in common, by the use of definite terms.

The reader may be forgiven then for becoming confused as to what the relationship between a comprehensive thought and the form through which its representation is grasped may actually *be*, when the form of its relation seems ever to give itself to the possibility of a multiplicity of readings, especially when these would come to a state of self-contradiction. As much as a word may be taken according to where it has originated as well as how it is presently encountered, when necessary, so too does it seem that a word should already contain a sense of

¹² This sense is lost in Loy’s English translation due to the practical matter of English not possessing a certain manner of affirming a question or postulation posed in the negative, as if to negate the negative position of the proposition. Loy works around this in altering the grammatical construction of Jacques’s retort, replacing the comma with an exclamation mark as if to convey Jacques’ emotional frustration at having to shut down so many impossible suggestions, conveying Jacques’s response as, “If...If! (10). In missing Jacques’ grammatical affirmation of a renounced possibility, Loy’s elliptical rendering may also otherwise lead the reader to inquire after what is left out of Jacques’ response in remarking the ellipses’ opening of possibility that otherwise risks its own absolution in Loy’s rendering of Jacques’ emotional outburst into English forms.

where it will end up. The forms in which thought delimits its sense by necessity while sustaining its constitutive possibilities takes then the form of a paradox, which Diderot describes in responding to the reader's incessant badgering of the author to know where the characters and narrative are going:

Where?—Where? Reader, you have the most embarrassing curiosity! And what the devil is it to you? Suppose I had said that it was toward Pointoise, or Saint-Germain or Notre-Dame de Lorette, or Santiago de Compostela, would you be any further advanced? If you insist, I shall tell you that they were traveling toward—yes, why not?—toward a tremendous castle on whose front could be read the inscription: 'I belong to nobody and to everybody. You were here before coming, and you will still be here when you have left.' —Did they enter this castle?—No, because either the inscription was false or they were already there before entering.—But, at least, then, they came out of it?—No, because either the inscription was false or they were still there after leaving.—And what did they do while there?—Jacques said what was written up yonder; his master said what he pleased: and they were both right. (Diderot 21-22)

Amidst the authoritative direction driving the narration, we may yet maintain that the nominal significance of its conclusive whole cannot be taken exclusively in the presence of its given form. Diderot sustains the question concerning whether the text's significance were in fact inclusive of interposing claims which the text's producer may have missed or have improperly or prematurely excluded. The intercurion of objection and disruptions to formative and authoritative claims throughout Jacques' own narrative, in their troubling of any direct sense of an orderly and unified significance at its core, stages for the reader a contradiction of the authoritative claim asserted by Diderot's narrator. To wit, it is as if the text itself constitutes a protest against the apprehension of general forms in problematizing the authoritative claims over textual significance—even when asserted by their most original producers. As if able to contradict himself or approach the form of one of his ideas in another direction entirely, the reader may also compare the insight represented through the dialog contained in *Rameau's Nephew*, where Diderot's *Lui* construes the sense of the opening enclosure of words: "I confess

to you, this question goes over my head. In this we see how we all are. In recollection we have but words that we *believe* to understand, because we avail ourselves of them so often and even use and apply them properly. In their fabrication also our understanding has only indefinite concepts. When I say the word song, I don't have any more definite notions than you or any of the greater part of your counterparts when they pronounce: reputation, fault, honor, vice, virtue, shame, decency, disgrace, ridiculousness" (Diderot, *Rameau* 259). The differences composing the communal contestation of these formative ideas thus trouble the reader's sense of who may claim to take a passage, in a word, to its appropriate or absolute conclusion.

Indeed, despite claims of an appealing teleological authority of the state of given affairs that would accept these structured forms as a necessary consequence of an articulated beginning with a view of affecting its ultimate resolution, Diderot problematizes the authority of his own narrative control over the course and destination of the text, as well as that of his narrator and their myriad interlocutors. While narrating Jacques' own relation of his love affairs, Diderot's ostentatious narrator flaunts on the one hand their claim to absolute authority in the ordering of the text, asserting that it is completely up to their own original ideation whether they allow Jacques to continue with his story, or whether Jacques should never get to do so due to the narrator's whimsical fabrication of tangential stories and events that would prevent precisely this outcome: "you see, reader, that I am well on my way, and that it is completely up to me whether I shall make you wait one year, two years, or three years for the story of Jacques' loves, by separating him from his master and having each of them go through all the vicissitudes that I please" (Diderot 4). Indeed, the narrative performance would strive to appear to provide its own evidential justification: that its authority were in fact master over the text's representative forms simply by virtue of the original act of production.

Yet for all the narrator's claims to control the ongoing development of the text, the text itself appears at times to resist its purposive ordering at their hands. On the one hand, it is as if Diderot's narrator is forced at times to respond out of hand to supposed interjections from the reader that threaten the certainty of the narrator's authoritative control. At one point, for instance, the vain folly of the narrator's direct performance of authority is exposed in the narrator's being unable to keep Jacques and his master on the public thoroughfares, as it were, of relating Jacques' love story. The significance of tangential interposition for a text is thereby developed not only through the episodic interruptions to the dialogue between Jacques and his master, but also through the narrator's own interjections to the narrative. Upon concluding the representation concerning Jacques' convalescence at the transition into Diderot's second chapter, for example, Diderot's narrator loses narrative control of the text precisely where he appears to flaunt his authority in the determination of what is significant to the narrative's direction:

Such, to the letter, was the conversation of the surgeon, the peasant, and his wife. But what other coloring shouldn't I have been able to give the scene by introducing a felon amongst these good people? Jacques would have been seen, that is, you would have seen Jacques in the act of being torn from his bed and thrown on the highway or into a slough.---Why not killed?---Killed, no. For I should easily have known how to call someone to his aid; this someone would have been a soldier of his own company; but that would have smelled to high heaven of *Cleveland*. The truth! The truth!---The truth [you will say] is often cold, uninteresting, and flat; for example, your latest recounting of Jacques's medical dressing is true, but what is there interesting in it? Nothing.---I agree.---If you must be true, it should be in the manner of Molière, Regnard, Richardson, and Sedaine, for truth has its interesting sides, which one can catch if he has genius.---Yes if he has genius, but suppose he lacks it?---If he lacks that, then he ought not to write.---And suppose that, unhappily, you were like a certain poet whom I sent to Pondichéry?---What about this poet?---Well, this poet...but, reader, if you interrupt me, and if I interrupt myself at every turn, whatever shall become of Jacques's love story? Listen to me and forget the story of the poet. (35)

Amidst the authoritative directedness driving the narration, we may yet maintain that the nominal significance of its conclusive whole cannot be taken exclusively in the presence of its given

form. Much like the representation of the narrative's tangential indirectness drawn from Laurence Sterne and reproduced by Diderot—almost as if the one were impossible to grasp entirely without recursion to the other—Diderot sustains the question concerning whether the text's significance were in fact inclusive of interpositions, whose relation even the text's producer may have missed or have improperly or prematurely excluded; over the claim of definitive authority of an original narrative or novel expression stands a lasting circumspection sustained in its very form and constitution. Diderot's story is, after all, not constitutive of an originality that may be said to find its trace exclusively as a representation beholden to Diderot and his narrator, but contains also the dialectic relation of Jacques, his master, and all with whom they share an encounter—whatever the significance of their interposition—in which Diderot and his narrator only momentarily partake as they stand and posit their own respective claim to authoritative control by representative relation.¹³

Through the interpositioning of interjections and tangential disruptions to Jacques' own narrative, the text itself troubles any direct sense of an orderly and unified significance at its core. As if to contradict the authoritative claim of control put forth by Diderot's narrator, it is as if the myriad protest against the apprehension of its forms in general would consequently trouble any proprietary claim of authority over textual significance—even by the text's most original

¹³ In his own ruminations concerning the constellation formed by the relationship of the author, reader, and language in his conclusion to *The World and the Book*, Gabriel Josipovici also poses the question concerning the dispensation of authority to determine the significance of the textual forms one encounters, which he presents in the form of "A Critic's Postscript" (309): "Language is not plenitude, nor is it an emptiness waiting to be filled. Only when we pause to examine it does it seem to us to be the sign of an absence for which we need to search; while we use it we do not worry about it and it works as well as it needs to. But language in a piece of literature is frozen language. It belongs in a book, with a beginning and an end, and therefore surely a meaning. But how is this meaning to be discovered? And where does it come from? Who, in other words, is the author of a work of literature? The man whose name appears on the cover? But by what authority does this author determine the meaning of what he writes, since he is after all only deploying a language which belongs to his culture and not personally to him?" (*ibid*).

producers. At times, Diderot's narrator appears to mock openly the concept that precisely that which is to be most expected by the reader in the course of the narrative is not, in fact, what could possibly occur—nor that which is sentenced to transpire. Yet for all their impulses to do without the anticipatable tropes of genre, character types or plot devices one finds in a novel's various taxonomical representations, Diderot's narrator is not unaware of the preservation of their text's inextricable relation to these precedential forms that arises precisely through their own referential disavowal, begging the question whether an author has achieved an originality entirely independent of that from which it withdraws or declines. Tracing this question in his introduction to his English translation of *Jacques le Fatalist et son Maitre*, J. Robert Loy observes that—for all of Diderot's narrator's protestations—this purported negation of the genre has not only not utterly done away with its entanglement in the genre itself, but that, in addition, our grasping of its renunciation is at the same time limited to the performance of affixing a ready-made negative form to the genre's name itself. Despite the divisive hyphen's insistence upon their separability, the one form must then—through the novel entanglement of their constitution—carry forth the other to which it is also attached: according to Loy's argument, through such determinative terminology, amounting to the forms “‘anti-novel’ and ‘a-novel,’” we succeed only in lending “a slight extension of comprehension,” which, however, is “essentially so negative that [these terms] leave us where we were before,” namely in the question of the limits of the genre and Loy's rueful answer that “[T]he simplest solution is to call *Jacques* a novel and to warn the reader at the same time that it cannot be judged according to the usual rules of that genre” (Loy ix). In this light, it would seem that *Jacques le Fatalist* would then also be but an extension from the original idea of the novel, as if it were yet branching from the myriad forms comprising an originary concept of the novel's constitution—an observation that is

not without Loy's own confirmation of Diderot's contrarian insistence that *Jacques le Fatalist* "is not a usual novel" (*ibid*). Its unusualness—when confronted with the demand to determine what precisely would constitute a text's classifiability as a novel—can't help then but to trouble the authority of its creator as well as its reader, in their shared use of a linguistic faculty, to make such a determination.¹⁴

In reading Diderot's *Jacques the Fatalist and his Master*, we must consider, *apropos* our contemplation of originality, the gregariousness of Jacques' loquaciousness. Jacques is keen to provide his master with something not only entertaining to listen to, but also indispensably conducive to the transitions of their wandering—or, in tarrying, to while away night's forbearance of another day. In this way, Jacques and his master are—as Diderot's narrator remarks—prone to "deceiving boredom and fatigue with silence and chatter, as is the habit of those who walk, and sometimes even of those who sit still" (13). It is precisely in the signifying activity of narration that our questions of the relation of originality and authority—whether and to what extent an original is in fact authoritative in the determination of a certainty of significance—are sustained.

Marking Jacques' pleasure to talk aloud, the conversation turns in the course of Jacques' narration to the origin of his loquaciousness, to which Jacques attributes the effect of his grandfather's negative disposition toward repetition. Jacques informs his master that, for the first

¹⁴ As Georg Lukacs affirms, the impulse to renounce some or entire components of a genre in the creation of an entirely original work causes the new work rather to engage, "As a result of such a change in the transcendental points of orientation," in a subjective dialectic whose course "will depend, however, on the *a priori* origin or 'home' of each genre" (40). The result of such an always referential renunciation, Lukacs elaborates, is that such an original renunciation succeeds only in changing the "object and the conditions under which it came [to] be given form, and it does not question the ultimate relationship of the form to its transcendental right to existence; when this is so, only formal changes will occur, and although they may diverge in every technical detail, they will not overturn the original form-giving principle" (*ibid*).

twelve years of his life, he had “ran all around the room with a gag in [his] mouth,” the imposed silence of which, Jacques insists, has fostered in him his “madness for talking” (107). The reader may understand Jacques’ protest against the former injustice. Casting about for an explanation for this inhumane subjugation, Jacques subsequently remarks that his grandfather—the man we are informed is responsible for giving the order that Jacques should be gagged—had been so fervently opposed to the folly of repetition as for there to be “days where he was tempted not to believe the Bible,” not for any theological or philosophical criticisms, but rather simply, Jacques informs his master, “because of the repetition, which he regarded as unworthy of the Holy Ghost. He used to say that people who repeat are stupid asses who take those who listen to them for stupid asses” (108). It would indeed seem that the sentence of Jacques’ inhumane punishment was determined as consequence of his having acted like a fool or donkey, and Jacques himself attributes to this abusive state of affairs the cause of his propensity to speak in flagrant disrespect to those who would censor him.

It is worth letting our thoughts linger, however, upon the justification given by Jacques’ grandfather for his finding Jacques’ behavior to be unacceptably foolish: the nascent Jacques’ extra-contextual repetitions of the linguistic forms given to him by his family, were written to be met with rebuke by manual censorship at the hand of the grandfather’s progenitive authority. While the rest of Jacques’ family spends their time working or reading in *silence*, the dialogic encounter these members each undergo beneath the surface of a scene performed *as if* silent and unchanging is belied however by the conditions through which their practiced consistency is subject to the breaking of a novel exchange. Indeed, when these members would then utter at times minute phrases whose significance—although not without their own reiterative quality—are yet subject to the reception of others, one’s apprehension is determined ever anew

in the uniqueness of their momentary intersection with the novel interests and interlocutions of interposed individuals. Indeed, repetitions of common forms of exchange and appeal would—by virtue of their utilitarian practice and the critical difference their practice fosters in each interrelated iterance—constitute a proper repetition of a practiced form according to the judgment of Jacques’ progenitor.

The question of the equivalency of repeated and derivative insights is elevated in Diderot’s performative point: that his conception of *Jacques le fataliste et son maître* not only opens itself to the holes comprising Sterne’s narrative form by approaching its Shandean questions from another perspective, but that it does so also in its depending directly upon its bearing forth of *Tristram Shandy*’s own formative encounter, in so many of its own words. The intercursivity of Jacques’ besotted narration, as it may accompany Sterne’s Shandean accounts, is an open secret. The intercursive relation of these two texts reveals itself most aptly at the point where the narrator’s authoritative control ultimately succumbs to the tension of originality and readerly conception with which it has grappled all along, without however thereby arriving at a definitive conclusion of its own:

And how about Jacques’ love story?---Jacques said at least a hundred times that it was written up yonder that he wouldn’t finish the story, and I see that Jacques was right. I also see, reader, that this upsets you. Well, then, take up the story where he left off and finish it however you’ve a mind to; or else, pay a visit to Mlle Agathe, find out the name of the village where Jacques is imprisoned, go see Jacques, and ask him. You won’t need to urge him; it will keep him from getting bored. According to some memoirs which I have good reason to distrust, I could perhaps supply what is missing, but whatever good would that be? One can be interested only in the truth. However, since it would be a bit rash to say the final word, without a careful examination, on these conversations of Jacques the Fatalist and his master [...] I shall reread those memoirs with all the broadness of mind and all the impartiality of which I am capable. And in a week I shall give you a judgment which will be definitive, except that I reserve the right to retract should someone more intelligent than myself prove to me that I was wrong.//The publisher adds: The week has gone by. I have read the memoirs in question. Of the three paragraphs that I find not an integral part of the manuscript in my possession, the

first and the last seem original, but the middle one is, to my way of thinking, obviously interpolated. (Diderot 265-266).

Diderot's narrator addresses their readers' dissatisfaction at the text's incomplete explication and telling of Jacques' affairs by putting to the readers the invitation to pick up the narration at the points where it leaves off, even if that were to require one to seek recourse in the creative musings of their own imagination [*Reprenez son récit où il l'a laissé, et continuez-le à votre fantaisie*] (Diderot 344-345). As if to elaborate upon this gesture of invitation, Diderot crafts the imposition of an editor to the narrator's text who—in their taking up of the work after the narrator's unfulfillment of their promise to elaborate upon points of interest in Jacques' affairs, whose origin is said to be that of Jacques' own memoirs—thereby affirms the entanglement of Jacques' and Tristram's stories despite their formative points of self-differentiation insofar as this editor finds the memoirs themselves not only to be full of gaps and holes of their own, but that at least an entire paragraph stood out to them as having been copied directly from Sterne's rendition of the life of Tristram Shandy, although even this editor cannot attribute the significance of the entangled formulation of these texts to any single author [*Voici le second paragraphe, copié de la vie de Tristram Shandy, à moins que l'entretien de Jacques le Fataliste et de son maître ne soit antérieur à cet ouvrage, et que le ministre Sterne ne soit le plagiaire, ce que je ne crois pas, mais par une estime toute particulière de M. Sterne, que je distingue de la plupart des littérateurs de sa nation, dont l'usage assez fréquent est de nous voler et de nous dire des injures*] (Diderot 345-347). Although the editor fashioned here by Diderot himself esteems the creative originality of Sterne's work—and in a move that insists upon the inherently renunciative relation of self-sameness produced in any novel work—Diderot utilizes this instance of creative reformulation to demystify the authority of originality over the forms and significance with which it trades: “Mais ce qui ne laisse aucun doute sur le plagiat, c'est ce qui suit. Le plagiaire

ajoute: ‘Si vous n’êtes pas satisfait de ce que je vous révèle des amours de Jacques, lecteur, faites mieux, j’y consens. De quelque manière que vous vous y preniez, je suis sûr que vous finirez comme moi. — Tu te trompes, insigne calomniateur, je ne finirai point comme toi” (Diderot 347-348). The homophonic resonance of being and following found here attests to Diderot’s assertion that, in some form, those who follow [*qui suit*] and relate to a formative work are sentenced to engage in an act of plagiarisation of the linguistic forms given to them—but in admitting to this taking of forms, Diderot—the plagiarist in this case—also adds something to these forms in his taking of them as his own [*Le plagiaire ajoute*]: producing not merely a rote casting of the same forms, but rather taking and proffering their own additive evaluation [*ajouter*], the plagiaristic sentencing of one fated to follow another in the casting of given forms speaks towards the properties of an integral precedent while simultaneously manifesting its difference with the form, or forms, from which it remains inextricably derived.

As the prefix itself may attest, the sparring contention of such renunciative addition comprises a withdrawal from the lists in and towards which it yet tilts [*jouter*]. Between the surety of the original and the daring of the novel—whose iterative manifestations portend neither ultimate conclusion nor resolution of the tension constituting this relation—this inconclusiveness, however, is precisely that which Diderot lauds as the essence of our poetic being. Diderot’s assured faith—that others who would take up the points of narration and being would do well in their own way—is manifest precisely in others’ ability to arrive at the point after the same style, yet in so doing also as but a differentiating approximation rather than as a definitive conclusion regarding the simultaneously affirmative renunciation of the differential similarities towards and away from which one’s own formulation may approach, by which the interlocutor may arrive at the conclusion even as [*comme*] Diderot himself, albeit not just as he

[*ne point comme*]. In this way, Diderot insists upon language's inherent entanglement of possibilities that then comes to comprise a participatory common of poetic properties, contributions, and iterative appropriations. That the forms of speech avail themselves of—and in spite of—the face of the given authority of a seemingly original formulation portends that the novel representation of speech forms reconstitute themselves in the undergoing of a performance of review under which its displacement submits itself to the contending judgment and understanding of its further recipients.

The gap formalized in the text itself, representing perhaps the passing of the narrator's requested week of rumination, constitutes also a permanent separation of our relationship with the narrator. It would seem the narrator never did get around to reaching a definitive judgment regarding what these memoirs ultimately reveal concerning Jacques' love story, although it may be rash to determine the cause of the narrator's silence based exclusively upon their own earlier speculation as to why they might not have done so. Instead, the reader joins the publisher as the latter takes up their own reflection upon the memoirs indicated previously by the narrator, in common pursuit of a potential source for the text's continuation. It is important to recognize that the text's naming of the publisher does not in this case indicate that *Diderot's* publisher is now making a note upon the text, but that it indicates rather that, hereafter, the "I" of the conceived publisher stands apart from the preceding nominal form. In taking up a reflection upon the previous narrator's indicated memoirs, the publisher determines that, while the first and third paragraphs "seem original," the originality of the second paragraph in particular is circumspect insofar as the publisher holds it to be an "obvious interpolation" to the thoughts contained in the preceding and subsequent paragraphs (266). The conclusion the publisher then draws is, to a certain extent, representative of anyone's use of language in general: where it is clear from the

manuscript itself that the text we have now read together, to varying degrees, were itself a direct reproduction in parts of *Tristram Shandy*, the reader may feel certain also of its own differentiated novelty.¹⁵

¹⁵ In this dissertation's reading of the poetics of thought's relation, which directly follows this chapter, we will return to a significant reading of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre, oder, die Entsagenden*, in tracing the extent to which this work, also, is entangled in the conditional terms of Shandean thinking.

CHAPTER THREE

Concerning the Poetics of Thought's Relation: Renunciative Self-Sameness of Forms in

Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahren, oder, Die Entsagenden

*Alles Gescheite ist schon gedacht worden, man muß
nur versuchen, es noch einmal zu denken. (Goethe
513)*

Just as Tristram's father's insistence that a name will significantly determine already the significance of its bearer's life and affairs, so too does Goethe—in his returning to the question of the formulation of the title he is to give to the narrative of Wilhelm Meister's journeying observations—risk affirming that the form its narrative will take will have been inextricable from what may become a nominal representation of the text which follows. However, prior even to the text's publication, this certain correlation of name and text becomes troubled insofar as it has been conceived under multiple names. As Gonthier-Louis Fink observes in his introduction to the second edition of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre, oder, die Entsagenden* (hereafter, *Wanderjahre*), by the time the title culminated in the authoritative duality, the work's title had already undergone multiple revisions stemming from conceptual developments of its various iterations. In the critical archive through which different formative stages may be anachronistically compared, the work's primary title is given also previously with preliminary formulations revolving around Goethe's idea for a narrative framed with myriad intercalations [*eine Rahmenerzählung mit verschiedenartigen Einlagen*] of conversations among emigrés [*Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*], or particularly concerning their relation through a narratological encounter of “Letters of a Traveler and his Charge” [*Briefe eines Reisenden und seines Zöglings*] (960). As Wilhelm's *Wanderjahre* follows in the narrative steps of his *Lehrjahre*, so too does Goethe's playful invocation of the guild relations invite us thus to

consider for ourselves the entanglement of original and novel within the terms of Wilhelm's profession. By Goethe's discrete suggestion, we thus pick up here the question of where this story's first steps may properly be said to open.

Working within models of language, our literary work here opens again with the case pursuant to the giving and taking of names. As if not yet certain of himself, or as if still caught amidst the equivocating throes of indecision, Goethe names this textual successor of Wilhelm's apprenticeship even as he then joins to the work yet another, putting "*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*" apart from "*Die Entsagenden*" just as the myriad components of the text stand apart from each other in the history of their conception, composition, and publication. In the formative relation of parts and wholes that the conjunction 'Or' thus conceives, the question of the relation of an original exposition is furthermore sustained and driven forward: that is to say, in the suggestion of another title, it remains unclear whether the conjunction should serve to offer an understanding wholly separate from original provision, or whether it should rather cause the reader to construe the complementary element as signifying what the original had already meant but could not yet say; as a further consequence, our sense that this preliminary form would claim to have already given itself to a proper understanding is thus confronted with its own problematic. Indeed, the reader is invited to consider whether this staging of nominal multiplicity should speak towards or renounce the perpetuating bonds of nominal identity—a question whose practiced convention is troubled by the matter of that which we may divine *in* the original only by the possibility of stepping apart *from* the formative berth in whose tract the matter of contention is yet clasped. Goethe's expositional title thus heralds Wilhelm's engagement with the question of how the product of his journeys may become the realization of his craft. Furthermore, where one's exposition may altogether contradict or subvert convention, and

thereby rend the one irrevocably from the other, the work of the journeyman may thus be conceived through the problematic of the conjunction, ‘Or,’ as its performance stages an invitation for us also to play our own part in contending with the exposition of thought’s encounter.

The transit of named connections thus invites an evaluation of the extent to which the novel form remains entangled with that from which it steps to differentiate itself. The renunciative gesture contained in the title’s own nominal alterity—while indicating a self-sameness of reformulating explication, as if its difference were thereby saying what the referent already meant but could not yet say—would move the successive iteration of the work’s formative title to speak itself away from any claim to a nominal self-sameness with the former title, just as its self-differentiation takes shape. At the same time, the fostering of separation within this renunciative gesture is contradicted insofar as the nominal dyad yet shares together a common claim to the course of the text. The opacity of their contesting terms invites an open comparison of the one’s properties with those of the declining or equivocating force of the opposing form, which thereby develops into an evaluative question concerning the extent to which the renunciative alternative remains entangled with that from which it would rather differentiate itself. Indeed, just as each alternative title stands together in a shared relation to Wilhelm’s wandering observations with which the very duplicity of the text’s title presents itself as if it were somehow analogous to the journeyman’s grappling with the manner and path by which they may successfully differentiate themselves—not only away from the grounding forms previously given by an original master and jealously guarded in appeals to their authority, but also from themselves as the formerly studious apprentice who must now find their own way towards any originality they may themselves yet achieve—so too does the renunciation of the

alternative form insist itself even as it approaches the apophatic extreme whereby the renunciant would give weight and thought to that which it would purport to refute and deny: for all the journeyman's performative or productive distancing and differentiation, the journeyman must also speak from a position that cannot—in its drawing or speaking of itself *away* [*entsagen*] from that precedent—but sustain a relation to its original form or model, *towards* which it thereby necessarily speaks. Just as the distancing prefix 'ent' of *die Entsagenden* may become its opposite in the form of the verbs 'entstammen' and 'entsprechen,' so too does the distancing gesture of renunciation transform into one of entanglement—as if the one were still rather commensurate with or inextricably related to the other. As a result, that which would take the place of the original instead takes the form not of a renunciation—but of an equivalence, compliance, or conformity. In this way, within the very title of his work, Goethe demonstrates the inherent dilemma of renunciation which then becomes inextricable from any new approach to the work's textual content.

Whereas the beginning of a task may be made clear for the apprentice in the bearing of imperative tracts and precedential models, the journeyman is confronted with a critical dilemma whose severity weighs upon every step of their bearing. Consequent to this relation of creation and imitation [*Nachahmung*], the journeyman is tasked to contend with the gravity of originality [*das Nach<zu>ahmende*] (717) as they undergo a manner of exile from the illuminating trials of their craft's opening steps. Indeed, although Wilhelm steps forth under the conditions prescribed by the Tower Society [*der Verein*], his obligation to the letter of their mandate is not without his own underwriting of their instruction: "Mein Leben soll eine Wanderschaft werden. Sonderbare Pflichten des Wanderers habe ich auszuüben und ganz eigene Prüfungen zu bestehen. Wie lächle ich manchmal, wenn ich die Bedingungen durchlese, die mir der Verein, die ich mir selbst

vorschrieb! Manches wird gehalten, manches übertreten; aber selbst bei der Übertretung dient mir dies Blatt, dieses Zeugnis von meiner letzten Beichte, meiner letzten Absolution, statt eines gebietenden Gewissens, und ich lenke wieder ein” (Goethe 245-246). At times in preservation, at others in transgression of instruction, Wilhelm argues that his critical acquiescence to the wanderer’s mandate stands rather as a testament [*Zeugnis*] to his last confession [*Beichte*] and deliverance [*Absolution*], rather than any mere *dictation* of its conscientious spirit [*Gewissen*]; in this way, the form of his craft or profession may become the spirited product of its renunciative transience [*Wanderschaft*]. It is for this reason, Wilhelm elaborates, that he marvels at those masters who proffer but the spurious or mechanical movements, duties, and charges [*äußere, mechanische Pflichten*], who thereby understate the *non*-mechanical realization of their craft’s deliverance: “Doch will ich dir gern gestehen, daß ich oft diejenigen Lehrer und Menschenführer bewundere, die ihren Schülern nur äußere, mechanische Pflichten auflegen. Sie machen sich’s und der Welt leicht. Denn gerade diesen Teil meiner Verbindlichkeiten, der mir erst der beschwerlichste, der wunderlichste schien, diesen beobachte ich am bequemsten, am liebsten” (246). From this place of difference, the journeyman is bidden to apprehend that which lends itself to imitation *in* formative instruction, so that they may step differently *towards* the form whose whimsical severity Wilhelm admires as most befitting of one’s craft.

The extent to which this duplicity of conjunction between nexts and lasts remains integral to the derivation of the novel fosters the question of Goethe’s own relation of the questions born in originality—including the question of the distribution of linguistic authority or conjunctive propriety, particularly as the form of these questions may be said to have already been given to Goethe—in part—in the Shandeistic narratives of Sterne and Diderot. We may remember that Goethe played a pivotal role in Diderot’s exposure to the European literary community, for it was

through Goethe's own translation, for example, that Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* found public readership. Goethe's interest in Diderot's literary thought connects him also to Sterne, and these connections may be traced in Goethe's own text. In tracing the manifestation of these thoughts in Goethe's text, one thus pursues a line of questioning that concerns the extent to which *Wanderjahre* would stand in a derivative relation that would border upon an original plagiarism. That is to say, it is as if Goethe were here accepting Diderot's invitation to produce his own iterative contemplation of the state of Jacques' affairs and Tristram's opinions.¹ In looking to account for Goethe's own relation with these texts we may wonder whether Goethe—much like Diderot before him—should admit anywhere within the text itself to his complicity with their ideas. Significantly, we find that Goethe confesses to his own plagiaristic derivation in a manner akin to that of Diderot, couching the revelation of the text's iterative relation to an original precedent through the text's own performative discovery of archival traces of this influence, which Diderot as well as Goethe preserve and reveal through the collection of an archon who is simultaneously extant in and yet external to the narrative. For Wilhelm's part, he is contextually invited to stay within one of the archon's residences while on his way to introduce himself to that very archon, and is granted entry and free use of the archive of knowledge.

¹ The reader may be reminded of this dissertation's previous chapter, which concluded with a reading of Diderot's open invitation for the reader to open the inconclusivities of the text's representation according to their own flights of imagination: In *Jacques le Fatalist et son Maître*, Diderot's narrator addresses their readers' dissatisfaction at the text's incomplete explication and telling of Jacques' affairs by putting to the readers the invitation to pick up the narration at the points where it leaves off, even if that were to require one to seek recourse in the creative musings of their own imagination: "Jacques a dit cent fois qu'il était écrit là-haut qu'il n'en finirait pas l'histoire, et je vois que Jacques avait raison. Je vois, lecteur, que cela vous fâche: eh bien! Reprenez son récit où il l'a laissé, et continuez-le à votre fantaisie" (Diderot 344-345). Even though the reader encounters at least a hundred of Jacques' expositions—that it was written on high that he would not finish his story—it is not until Diderot figures his own departure that the novel's narrator confirms that Jacques was, in fact, correct. Whether it were *in* his possession of reason that Jacques was right [*que Jacques avait raison*], is left to the reader's open contention.

Whereas Diderot makes use of the interlocutions of a figmentary editor to reveal the traces contained in Diderot's own archive of an iterative relation to Sterne, Goethe appends a selection of aphorisms drawn from Makarie's Archive [*Aus Makariens Archiv*] to the textual body of Wilhelm's *Wanderjahre*, which may be read as the product of Wilhelm's own taking note of selections of the archon's collection.² Indeed, we are informed that Angela—as Makarie's trustee—gives Wilhelm access to a hefted selection of texts in response to Wilhelm's excited interest in the collection and his questioning of the extent to which this collection were broadly known and open to visitation [*Auf seine Frage, inwiefern dieses Archiv als Geheimnis bewahrt werde? eröffnete sie: daß allerdings nur die nächste Umgebung davon Kenntnis habe, doch wolle sie es wohl verantworten und ihm, da er Lust bezeige, sogleich einige Hefte vorlegen*] (Goethe 356); furthermore, Wilhelm remarks as narrator that he was at liberty not only to derive insight from their opening encounter, but to freely make copies and notes of their contents [*Darauf...vergönnte sie dem Begierigen sich derselben, so wie alles übrigen zu bedienen, und nicht nur Einsicht davon, sondern auch Abschrift zu nehmen*] (*ibid*). The particularities which draw Wilhelm's interest most pointedly, however, remain here undisclosed, as Wilhelm promises rather that the reader will know to glean their attributive significance in a manner proper to them, even as their pointed significance may manifest in myriad reformulations throughout the course of the narrative [*Auch dergleichen dürfen wir aus oben angeführten Ursachen keinen Platz einräumen. Jedoch werden wir die erste sich darbietende Gelegenheit nicht versäumen und am schicklichen Orte auch das hier Gewonnene mit Auswahl darzubringen wissen*] (356-357). The

² Derrida's insights into the archon's relationship with the archive bear repeating here. Where Derrida recognizes the consigning nature of the archive's collection, he also argues, "In an archive, there should not be any absolute dissociation, any heterogeneity or *secret* which could separate (*secernere*), or partition, in an absolute manner. The archontic principle of the archive is also a principle of consignment, that is, of gathering together" (10). Indeed, the archive that is not open to visitation and donation, and thus to the interjection of different approaches and associations, is not an archive in the proper sense.

entanglement of these appended notes to the narratological significance of Wilhelm's transient observations furthermore inculcates the primacy of that which has been pre-written, and so we may also take this appendix to be the reproduction of a superscript already given in Goethe's own original authority just as it informs the text and its author's own distancing approach to the works of preliminary masters.³

The moment of Goethe's own confession concerning the text's piracy of themes from Sterne and Diderot is as manifest as the calling of a name. Within the appendix that we may hold to be a representation of the associations and notes Wilhelm himself draws from his time spent in Makarie's archive, we find—without implicit explanation of any relationship and despite a transliteral alteration—the prominence of a name that gives evidence of Goethe's having had an understanding of—or with—Sterne and Diderot in his carrying forth the ideas and themes towards which these nominative recastings beckon: “Lorenz Sterne” (Goethe 711). The appended notations portend a significant entanglement undisclosed by any authoritative explication as to

³ In his commentary to the second edition of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Wolfgang Bunzel makes note of the importance of this appendix to the entirety of the text's narrative despite its incidental exclusion from and reproduction in iterative editions, noting Goethe's own request for its re-inclusion as well as their conceptual entanglement—through analogy or contrast—with the framework of the narrative, in part, in Angela's fidelity to Makarie's desire for a collection of singular thoughts to be extrapolated from their own spirited conversations, since no book preserves the strike of thought's impulse that is sentenced rather to be lost or drowned in the course of discussion [*So verzeichnet Angela auf Wunsch Makaries 'einzelne gute Gedanken <...> aus einem geistreichen Gespräch' (S. 355, 23-25), weil 'kein Buch' (S. 355, 21) die Gedankenblitze aufbewahrt, die im Gespräch wieder untergehen, und die 'doch wieder das Beste <sind>, was Bücher jemals enthalten haben'*] (*Wanderjahre* 1206). Indeed, as Bunzel notes by way of elaboration, these appendices allow Goethe to elucidate the various themes of his work without giving to their ordering any strict priority or exclusivity over another [*Auch hier werden in losen Reihen verschiedene Themen aufgeworfen*], including Goethe's deliberation of the possibilities of thought and understanding, the relationship between spirit and matter, artist and work, and the subjectivity of expression—especially concerning that of historiographical, religious, social, political, and literary questions [*erörtert werden u.a. Die Möglichkeiten der menschlichen Erkenntnis, das Verhältnis zwischen Geist und Materie, zwischen Künstler und Werk, die Subjektivität der Aussage, insbesondere der Historiographie, religiöse, soziale, politische und literarische Fragen*] (*ibid*)

their connection with Goethe's and Wilhelm's understanding beyond the translation and aphoristic reformulation of Sterne's primordial ideas that this appendix reproduces. But from this referential admission of textual entanglement we may yet surmise that the text of Wilhelm's *Wanderjahre* is inextricable from an association which Goethe recapitulates here through Wilhelm's notes—namely that Sterne has given form to a term with which one may refer to an idea that is not yet fully accountable: “Shandeism nennt er die Unmöglichkeit über einen ernsten Gegenstand zwei Minuten zu denken” (*ibid*). Insofar as any given context and its objects are only at hand momentarily, that to which Goethe gives name in this allusive notation concerns the nominative grounding of understanding and the seriousness with which one may consequently grasp the nominal significance of an object in one's being sentenced to resort to the use of names as a practical recourse in one's grappling with the encounter of things whose properties exceed the observable limits of their minute encounter. In the Shandean recourse of thought, the pursuit of understanding is relegated to a speech-act that is inextricable from a certain folly that lends itself nevertheless as a tool for speaking, with the giving of a subsequent notation of Wilhelm's wandering observations in Makarie's archive, of Sterne's aversion to the didacticism, dogma, and rash pedantry of terminology [*Er fühlte einen entschiedenen Haß gegen Ernst, weil er didaktisch und dogmatisch ist und gar leicht pedantisch wird, wogegen er den entschiedensten Abscheu hegte. Daher seine Abneigung gegen Terminologie*] (*ibid*).⁴ Speaking to the general limitations to

⁴ In his own ruminations over language in general and of the language of mankind [*Über Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen*], Walter Benjamin speaks toward this folly of the name insofar as he also observes that where language purports to give a name as an accurate measure of understanding (148), “Der Name erreicht so wenig das Wort wie die Erkenntnis die Schaffung. Die Unendlichkeit aller menschlichen Sprache bleibt immer eingeschränkten und analytischen Wesens im Vergleich mit der absoluten uneingeschränkten und schaffenden Unendlichkeit des Gotteswortes” (149). As if recognizing something akin to the Shandeism of understanding, Benjamin reveals and gives words to the idea of an essential harkening to the presence of the unfathomable and eternal in a name that must concern the practical comparability of the nowness of a name's formulation with its original or unifying significance, with which we may glean the significance of Goethe's poetic rendition: “Ich

understanding attributable to a categorical *Shandeism* in one's inability to overcome the integrally-given relational encounters *with* which one must nevertheless strive to apprehend the entirety of their poetic being, Wilhelm's picking up of this fragmentary notation from Makarien's archive in turn reflects Goethe's own affinity with and towards the ideas of Sterne and Diderot, whose reference here begs the question of the influence of a nominal *Shandeism* upon Goethe's narrative of Wilhelm's journeyman years—precisely in his taking up of these questions as his own novel moves to grapple with the frailties of language and their entanglement with the work of understanding even as the work itself is made to deal with, trade in, and handle the graspable limits according to which the objects of language are held and exchanged in common.

As Goethe mixes himself into this question of nominal relation as it pertains to the relative production of an original work through reproductive use of commonly given forms and practical conventions of expression and narrative, he first offers a poeticized prelude that would appear to stand beyond the framework of the text's narrative—indeed in part even prior to the title's own exposition—as if the title's poetic form could demonstrate an alternative or supplement to the authoritative originality with which the rest of the text was conceived. Goethe's decision to put forward poetic verses rather than a prosaically summative introduction of the ideas which will follow begs the question furthermore that there may be something precisely about the practicality of the poetic that may emphasize the point—even as it thereby misses the introspective, clarifying formulation of a prosaic forward—towards which Goethe writes. Once more, if we look to the reflection of Goethe's position in the text as it is developed through Wilhelm's encounter with the authoritative insight of the archon Makarie, we may glean insight into Goethe's poetic intention: “Warum beneiden alle Menschen den Dichter? Weil seine

scheine mir an keinem Ort,/Auch Zeit ist keine Zeit,/Ein geistreich-aufgeschloßnes Wort/Wirkt auf die Ewigkeit” (Goethe 16).

Natur die Mitteilung nötig macht, ja die Mitteilung selbst ist” (301). The duplicity of the work’s title, when viewed from the perspective of the poet’s necessitation of *Mitteilung* can now be read as a demonstration of this essential component of the poet’s nature, as if the name that Goethe imparts to the text as a whole cannot stand by itself without a nominal complicity signaled through the conjunctively eschewing gesture given in the word “Or” as it speaks towards the necessarily partitive and potentially self-contradictory construction that is shared in the partaking of a name in general. One must begrudge [*beneiden*] the poet then perhaps for their Shandeistic honesty, whose subversive expression would expose—like Diogenes’ lantern—the general lie that would move to obfuscate the fatal potency of this linguistic firmament as it guards a jealous principle according to which practical transactions are handled in common: as if one were asked to ignore the seeping expansions of tenable constructions, the poet is begrudged for their remonstrating performance of the equivocality with which the essence of the poetic turns, precisely *with* the potent valency of its apprehensive *Shandeism*, within language in general. Consequently, the everyday reader is also invited to inquire into the partitive nature of *Mitteilung* that Makarie names the essence of the poet, as well as the reason—if any—for the poetic being necessarily entangled amidst the same forms given to everyday or common language.

The inquiring reader may then look to see what they may make of the extent to which the poem would reveal its own pointed value. In looking to the formative idea of the text that Goethe’s prefatory poems would share, however, one may then find that these poems are themselves transient: where the 1821 edition interrupts its own poeticized prelude with Goethe’s interposition of the example of the title’s own duplicity (11) as it is bracketed between the poetic expositions of “Wanderjahre” (9-10) and “Wüßte ich kaum...” (12), the subsequent edition of 1829 is remarkable for its not having reproduced or reformulated an iteration of these poems

beyond their nearly renunciative relegation to a separate, epigrammatic volume (Goethe 1084). Whether this difference in edition renders the later version more authoritative—especially where it becomes evident that a given form, or the significance thereof, may have become self-differentiating—then becomes the question with which the text will have opened.⁵ Indeed, Goethe’s very decision to introduce the text with poetic renditions invites a consideration concerning the equivocal multiplicity of their formative significance. Even as the text concerns itself with the representation of its nominal identity in its repossession of an already-given form, the instigation of the text’s poetic rendering, in pursuit of the equivocal revelation of its name, then poses the question of self-sameness as if to itself:

Wüßte kaum genau zu sagen
 Ob ich es noch selber bin,
 Will man mich im Ganzen fragen
 Sag’ ich: ja so ist mein Sinn
 Ist ein Sinn, der uns zuweilen
 Bald beängstet, bald ergötzt,
 Und in so viel tausend Zeilen
 Wieder sich ins Gleiche setzt. (Goethe 8)

⁵ We may find a similar revealing of the multifarious possibilities of poetic language in Walter Benjamin’s essay, “Zwei Gedichte von Hölderlin,” in which he traces the two poems’ formatively unifying entanglement as they demonstrate together the fatalistic contractibility of self-same forms that is nevertheless essential to the playful work of the poetic insofar as the poetic is comprised simultaneously through the grounding self-assuredness or pious courage [*Mut*] of the poet—a grounding less attributable to an innately given or formative property [*Eigenschaft*], but which is constituted rather in the poet’s relation to the world as well as the relation of the world to the poet [*der Mut, der, je tiefer er verstanden ist, desto weniger eine Eigenschaft, sondern eine Beziehung von Mensch zu Welt und Welt zu Mensch*] (123) — whose devoted entanglement with a precarious world drives the poet to risk with abandon [*Mut ist Hingabe an die Gefahr, welche die Welt bedroht*] the frail tenuousness of fatuity [*Blödigkeit*] in their own formatively remonstrate conception [*dem Mutigen besteht die Gefahr und dennoch achtet er sie nicht. Denn er wäre feige, würde er sie achten; und bestünde sie ihm nicht—er wäre nicht mütig*] (*ibid*), precisely *with* that which would synthesize the ephemeral [*geistig*] and material [*anschaulich*] through the categorical ordering of a nominal unity that Benjamin names *the poeticized* [*Das Gedichtete ist in seiner allgemeinen Form synthetische Einheit der geistigen und anschaulichen Ordnung*] (106).

As the poetic transience between various editions given under the same name would invite the recurrent question of self-sameness, it is as if the iterability of a name would sentence the precision with which one may purport to define the constitutive or integral limits of a given form—given that an apparent self-contradiction or differentiation may arise through an inherent and essential multiplicity—to a merely conditional provision rather than any fully determinative statement.⁶ Were one to speak with any precision as to whether the one is yet consistently selfsame in their being [*Wüßte kaum genau zu sagen/Ob ich es noch selber bin*]⁷—indeed in order to be able to make a determination of this self-sameness—one would want to present the totality of that being to the question [*Will man mich im Ganzen fragen*] rather than be limited to the momentary *now* in which it is given to understanding.⁷ However, when thus provoked to speak to

⁶ Goethe praises Sterne’s charming wit of self-contradiction, observing how Sterne’s playing with the paradox of contradiction reveals the equivocality of his own condition [*Er scherzt gar anmutig über die Widersprüche die seinen Zustand zweideutig machen*] (712). We may also find, in the second volume of Nietzsche’s *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, an intersecting vector considering the human condition when, in the second collection of aphorisms contained under the name “Der Wanderer und sein Schatten,” he posits, “Jeder, der seinen Geist zeigen will, lässt merken, dass er auch reichlich vom Gegentheil hat” (594): The bearing of one’s soul to another lets it be known to each that they, too, are replete with contrariness.

⁷ In the second aphorism of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, under the section concerning the accounting of first and last things [*Von den ersten und letzten Dingen*], Nietzsche names the inherited fault of philosophers [*Erbfehler der Philosophen*] with such language as to appear to echo or arrive at the concept of Shandeism according to his own path in declaring, “Alle Philosophen haben den gemeinsamen Fehler an sich, dass sie vom gegenwärtigen Menschen ausgehen und durch eine Analyse desselben an’s Ziel zu kommen meinen. Unwillkürlich schwebt ihnen ‘der Mensch’ als eine aeterna veritas, als ein Gleichbleibendes in allem Strudel, als ein sicheres Maass der Dinge vor. Alles, was der Philosoph über den Menschen aussagt, ist aber im Grunde nicht mehr, als ein Zeugniß über den Menschen eines *sehr beschränkten* Zeitraumes. Mangel an historischem Sinn ist der Erbfehler aller Philosophen” (24). For Nietzsche as for Sterne, the arbitrary corporealization of totality within a very confined fragment of time—in the giving and taking of names—constitutes the foundational deficiency [*Mangel*] which the thinking being fails to account for in its acting as if its exposition of a *historically* constructed form would already have been arriving at a form of analysis that could stand as an eternal truth, in its weathering of any tempest and storm, to arrive precisely at its proper destination. In the second section of his contemplations concerning the state of sapien affairs, “Der Wanderer und sein Schatten,” Nietzsche furthermore alludes to the Epicurean duality with which the inherent iniquity in the taking of any nominal self-sameness reassuringly avails itself

the significance of a given form, all one may reply is precisely in accordance to one's own momentary sensibility—exposing thereby the *Shandeism* of one's thinking, according to which one is unable to hold on to a serious object for longer than a number of minutes. Sentenced therefore to miss the mark of the totality to which substantive matters give—and are given—a nominal identification as if one were in fact *there* in their totality, it is yet as though the gesture could performatively apprehend all its breadth and thereby give shape to an otherwise fleeting understanding. As if one were confronted with the remonstrating question whether this momentarily unifying sense could achieve an accurate measure—when that which becomes identified there is rather a momentary manifestation of a unity encountered in but a staccato punctuation drawn sequentially out of time—it is as if the moment of self-awareness thus instills within itself at times the worry and alarm of uncertainty fostered with the preponderance of self-difference that may only now be perceived, even as the entirety of its being is enthralled—still, as if enraptured in divine delight—just as the myriad reformulations settle once more into a difference all the same [*Sag' ich: ja so ist mein Sinn/Ist ein Sinn, der uns zuweilen/Bald beängstet, bald ergötzt,/Und in so viel tausend Zeilen/Wieder sich ins Gleiche setzt*]. This formative sameness cannot then however deny that it may no longer be identifiable precisely as that self-sameness of *Dasselbe*, but becomes rather as a self-differentiation yet sensibly inextricable from a previously given form to which its propagated self then always relates as if sustaining a common core.

as the union of its first and last—even with the endurance of each momentarily-given form or state of affairs with its own integral ambivalence: “Wer also Trost zu spenden wünscht, an Unglückliche, Uebelthäter, Hypochonder, Sterbende, möge sich der beiden beruhigenden Wendungen Epikur's erinnern, welche auf sehr viele Fragen sich lauten: erstens, gesetzt es verhält sich so, so geht es uns Nichts an; zweitens: es kann so sein, es kann aber auch anders sein” (544). Like Jacques, Nietzsche attests—with Epicurus—that the encounter of forms is composed with the mutual tranquility of two contradicting arrangements: firstly, that if conduct were decreed to be so on principle, so also would it be of no concern of ours; secondly, that it can be so, so can it also be otherwise.

In recognizing this essential transience of constitutive forms, we may also turn towards a critical observation of the extent to which the renunciative self-sameness of given forms applies not only to the becoming of one's own self—as the imaginative telling of a narrative's significance—but applies also to an essential working of the poetic nature of all language. As the journeyman invariably affects the model given them by a master during apprenticeship, the sameness of their formative being becomes—even through their apprehension of the means and material given to them—itinerant in their eventual reproduction. This itinerance may yet carry with it the integrated steps of the original opening muster when one is given or knows to look:

Die Wanderjahre sind nun angetreten
Und jeder Schritt des Wanderers ist bedenklich.
Zwar pflegt er nicht zu singen und zu beten;
Doch wendet er, sobald der Pfad verfänglich,
Den ernsten Blick, wo Nebel ihn umtrüben,
Ins eigne Herz und in das Herz der Lieben. (Goethe 9)

Even as it is as if Goethe were announcing the propriety of these poems as a point of the work's beginning, the reader—as well as the wordsmith—will have already conceived myriad possible paths of ingress which may then multiply the points at which the narrative could be said to open. Indeed, by the time Goethe declares the journeyman years to have begun, the reader has not only potentially already remarked upon the troubling sense of the work's titular renunciation, but may also have already read to the final page and then felt an impulse to return again to the penetrative significance of their opening exposition, or the reader may have also first read a subsequent edition from which these lines are omitted or chrono-stylistically altered.⁸ We may point to the

⁸ As Martin Bez observes in his analysis of Goethe's *Wanderjahre*, the text itself cannot be extricated from preliminary renditions that one may encounter in Goethe's archive: "Für einen Zugriff auf die 'Wanderjahre' bietet sich das Archiv aus mehreren Gründen an. *Erstens* arbeitet der Text auf inhaltlicher Ebene selbst explizit mit Archiven [...] *Zweitens* existieren bereits einige archivorientierte Vorarbeiten zu Texten Goethes, an die sich anknüpfen läßt" (2). For example, we may find in Goethe's archive that he had already previously written and published various components and narrations—such as "Die pilgernde Törrin," which was published first in the *Taschenbuch für Damen* in the year 1809 (Goethe 1080)—of which he then avails himself in

source of the uncertainty troubling our understanding, then, in the otherwise seeming self-evidence of *now*, as its poetic exposition here seems to resist such a constraint in that it seems rather to avail itself of or to bear with it something even beyond the tenability of its given limits: indeed, to accept such an impulsive demand for temporal precision would imperatively preclude any transience of the adverb's own significance, as if it could in fact enclose the opening of this moment with that which is merely at hand. Consequently, this impulse would in turn be tantamount to asserting that any former reading of titular equivocality or textual significance has in fact come to no avail, and that one must begin again here and now—as if anew—with the insistence upon this very *renunciation* of any entanglement not contained with the tenable *nowness* of presently determinable limits, irrespective of any pull toward conceivable points of intersection even as one then looks towards the same pointed corpus of text to which this line refers.⁹ Nevertheless, in the poem's subversion of conventional, common, or everyday this work as if they were in fact constitutive of Wilhelm's interlocutive transience rather than a performative sublimation of their different names into one.

⁹ One is reminded of Wilhelm's apprehension in his encounter with Makarie's resident astronomer, during which the reader bears witness to Wilhelm's fatuous protestations against the claustrophobic effect borne upon him with the perspective of Jupiter which the telescope disconcertingly avails him, as if he could somehow in protest return—precisely with the renunciative act performed in his laying of the telescopic prosthesis to the side conjunctively with the declarative presumption of the power of his renunciation [*So oft ich durch eine Brille sehe, bin ich ein anderer Mensch und gefalle mir selbst nicht; ich sehe mehr als ich sehen sollte, die schärfer gesehene Welt harmoniert nicht mit meinem Innern und ich lege die Gläser geschwinder wieder weg, wenn meine Neugierde, wie dieses oder jenes in der Ferne beschaffen sein möchte, befriedigt ist*] (352-353). This he purports to be able to do even after having indulged and satiated his arbitrary curiosity: to hold the same sense in his mind of the planet and its place in the harmonic cosmos, whose encounter would take the tapestry of starlight as signs of consistency and consequence—for one's own course of relations even despite how different one may themselves be at the time of each encounter—in their invariably repeated returns which provide agreeable measure to their own heavenly recurrent wanderings: “Wie oft hast du diese Gestirne leuchten gesehen und haben sie dich nicht jederzeit anders gefunden? sie aber sind immer dieselbigen und sagen immer dasselbige: wir bezeichnen, wiederholen sie, durch unsern gesetzmäßigen Gang, Tag und Stunde; frage dich auch wie verhältst du dich zu Tag und Stunde? [...] Bei diesen Worten und Gedanken wendete er sich umher zu sehen, da fiel ihm Jupiter in die Augen, das Glücksgestirn, so herrlich leuchtend als je; er nahm das Omen als günstig auf und

expression, the readers' taking of meaning is availed of the penetrative entanglement of things beyond the bareness of any of the poem's share of nominal forms. If the *now* to which the opening of the *Wanderjahre* would refer cannot then be understood as any specific line or word of the poem, without having to renounce some other part with which it nevertheless may be said to share something in common, the reader is instead wont to avail themselves of their imaginations as they take steps to locate that towards which this 'now' speaks. Then, the reader may practice their own dialectic reading of poetic relations through the discovery of self-otherness through the form's nominal valency, associative connotation, and penetrating homophonic play—or even, at times, of a curiously availing misunderstanding. In so doing, the transience of language has already opened, not in any chapter or line of a poem, but already in the giving or calling of a name.

The Shandeism of language and its entanglement in thought and understanding would therefore make every word subject to a multifarious opening with which the very firmament of language is precariously construed. Just as every step must miss the mark of the one prior—even

verharnte freudig in diesem Anschauen eine Zeit lang. Hierauf sogleich berief ihn der Astronom herabzukommen und ließ ihn eben dieses Gestirn durch ein vollkommenes Fernrohr, in bedeutender Größe, begleitet von seinen Monden, als ein himmlisches Wunder anschauen. Als unser Freund lange darin versunken geblieben, wendete er sich um und sprach zu dem Sternfreunde: 'Ich weiß nicht, ob ich Ihnen danken soll, daß Sie mir dieses Gestirn so über alles Maß näher gerückt. Als ich es vorhin sah, stand es im Verhältnis zu den übrigen unzähligen des Himmels und zu mir selbst; jetzt aber tritt es in meiner Einbildungskraft unverhältnismäßig hervor und ich weiß nicht, ob ich die übrigen Scharen gleicherweise heranzuführen wünschen sollte. Sie werden mich einengen, mich beängstigen'" (351-352). It is curious, as Wilhelm reveals in his impossible renunciation of the perspective that the telescope opens before him, that the opening of the heavens' truths to Wilhelm's eyes would rather cause him to feel confined and anxious, as if he were suffering from a claustrophobic apprehension. Wilhelm himself attests that he isn't sure whether to be thankful for his own folly of judgment—of the star's ominous relation to his own fortune—having been exposed in such a manner. Indeed, the apprehension is enough for Wilhelm to forego any further desire to even attempt to compile the scores of remaining perspectives the tool might avail him due to the uncertainty that doing so could ever generate a relatable [*verhältnismäßig*] concept of the heavenly bodies which Wilhelm could take account of within himself.

despite the minuteness of their practical self-sameness—so too must each instantiation of a name take myriad forms. In the practiced contention of Shandean thought’s poetics, the nominal form cannot escape a renunciative self-sameness. Thus, every step of our transient being opens itself to a dubious contemplation, whose precarious uncertainty is belied by the serious import of its own determinative performance [*Und jeder Schritt des Wanderers ist bedenklich*]: these clambering propagations, as they walk in step with the opening of their form, may be at times critical [*bedenklich*]¹⁰—either in the sense of correcting for some defect or as constituting a critical juncture of thinking—or may also take a form tending towards the apprehensive [*bedenklich*] to the point even of original insight or neurotic madness. All the same, some may also view these valencies of the journeyman’s *Bedenklichkeit* as alarmingly suspect [*bedenklich*] precisely for their nominal unfamiliarity or opacity as a transient being, who appears before another who, in turn, would rather begrudge the poet their demeaning subversion of convention and so also expose the precarity of language.

The severe gravity [*Bedenklichkeit*] of these questions as they are borne upon the wanderer’s own countenance and demeanor as a linguistic figure may be especially considered here, at the lines immediately following the attested instantiation of nominal transience. Curiously [*zwar*], it is not in song and prayer—in whose performance one may be wont to conceive of the transcendental or the eternal [*Zwar pflegt er nicht zu singen und zu beten*]¹⁰—towards which one turns here when pressed somehow by the weight of one’s own transience.¹⁰ Rather, the wanderer turns [*doch wendet er*]¹⁰—in apprehending that even the trodden

¹⁰ We may compare the curiousness of this assertion with Wilhelm’s conversation with the groom [*Reitknecht*] (380) who accompanies the father and his charge into the pedagogical province—as the second book of the 1829 edition opens with a reformulation of the tenth chapter of the 1821 edition—in which Wilhelm was bade to seek out the figure of the domain’s authority, or authorities, for whom he was given no proper name with which to designate their being other than the mystic address of his letter of introduction, “an den Obern, oder die Dreie” (77, 380). Hampered even by this authority’s transience within their own domain [*der bald in einer, bald in*

path is aporetically entangled with self-defeating or impassable potential [*sobald der Pfad verfänglich*], acutely aware even as the certainty of one's grounded orientation falters into mercurial abstrusion in the apprehension of all-encompassing uncertainty [*Den Ernsten Blick, wo Nebel ihn umtrüben*]*—thus towards that ground which one bears and may yet turn within themselves—and also, there and then—in commune with those they hold close to their hearts* [*Ins eigne Herz und in das Herz der Lieben*]. That it is not song and prayer towards which the wanderer is wont to turn in such cases would postulate the entanglement of the poetic not solely or even most significantly with the aspirations of the transcendental or the eternal in music and prayer, but rather belies the poetics of eternity and pious belief that otherwise constitutes language in general.

That this poetic turning within oneself of that which one shares in common with others may be understood as an essential component of the poetically partitive essence of linguistic encounters in general then becomes the predication with whose common share Goethe proceeds with the turning of a page:

Und so heb ich alte Schätze,
Wunderlichst in diesem Falle;
Wenn sie nicht zum Golde setze,
Sind's doch immerfort Metalle.
Man kann schmelzen, man kann scheiden,

der andern Abteilung seine Residenz hat] (77) that causes this authoritative figure to be even generally known to avail themselves of no single residence [*von dessen Aufenthalt man keine Rechenschaft geben konnte*] (77, 380), Wilhelm is in the meantime struck by the prevalence of musical performance in the region, whose centrality to everyday life in the province the groom then confirms: “Allerdings...bei uns ist der Gesang die erste Stufe der Ausbildung, alles andere schließt sich daran und wird dadurch vermittelt. Der einfachste Genuß, so wie die einfachste Lehre werden bei uns durch Gesang belebt und eingeprägt, ja selbst was wir überliefern von Glaubens- und Sittensbekenntnis, wird auf dem Wege des Gesanges mitgeteilt” (382-383). If the linguistic foundations of developing thought into a refined sense of judgment and understanding are themselves necessarily flawed in their partitiveness, it would indeed countenance their constitutive formulation in lending themselves also to the fostering auspices of musical instruction.

Wird gediegen, läßt sich wägen,
Möge mancher Freund mit Freuden
Sich's nach seinem Bilde prägen! (Goethe 10)

In this way, as if restoring sentimental treasures from the archive of one's own encounters [*Und so heb ich alte Schätze*], the poet reproduces the given forms of language—as if by a divined eloquence and sagacity in an affinity towards the differentiation of self-sameness—in view of producing the most wonderfully original iterations to suit their given case [*Wunderlichst in diesem Falle*]. Should they however fail to refine the glistening carat of the given material [*Wenn sie nicht zum Golde setze*], it will nevertheless remain substantive [*Sind's doch immerfort Metalle*], lending the elements of its composition to further malleability at the hands of the yet-spirited wordsmith's critical rendering [*Man kann schmelzen, man kann scheiden*] (*ibid*). It falls to them, then, to let the sterling refinement of their sense be weighed against that of common measure [*Wird gediegen, läßt sich wägen*]; and should these works prove masterful, the hopeful joy which Goethe here espouses is that others—with welcome invitation as that extended towards one's friends—may be jubilant in informing their own sensibilities after the image of one's own permeative examples even as these are themselves recoined after one's own conception [*Möge mancher Freund mit Freuden/Sich's nach seinem Bilde prägen!*] (10). Indeed, even the skill and material of the smith's work is subject not only to their own determination, but rather is the value of their work's substance held, along with the very abstrusions of language, in common.

The reader might interject here along with Goethe a concern over what one should make of the actual novelty of any availing notion. Should one be thusly tried by the court of common measure and opinion according to the aptness of their own common share, it seems almost as though the given forms and structures themselves would put the user of language to the test, as if

the ground of these form's foundational inheritance were asserting an original authority that would wish and implicitly command for one's abstemiously compliant mummery [*Prüft das Geschick dich, weiß es wohl warum:/Es wünschte dich enthaltsam. Folge stumm*] (Goethe 15). In a turn that may remind us of Jacques' own recurrent idea—that anything which occurs in life was already determined by an original authority—Goethe then reformulates this appeal to divine revelation even as it resonates with the idea of a predetermined significance of given forms:

Was machst du an der Welt, sie ist schon gemacht,
Der Herr der Schöpfung hat alles bedacht.
Dein Los ist gefallen, verfolge die Weise,
Der Weg ist begonnen, vollende die Reise:
Denn Sorgen und Kummer verändern es nicht,
Sie schleudern dich ewig aus gleichem Gewicht. (Goethe
15)

In view of the reliance upon given forms in linguistic production, it may be that any original work pursuant to one's interest has already been completed in another form. Were one to pick up the thread of this disposition, one may also arrive already at a paratactic conclusion: there being an original master who had already conceived of every element of such a formative creation [*Was machst du an der Welt, sie ist schon gemacht,/Der Herr der Schöpfung hat alles bedacht*].

However, insofar as one's lot as a thinking being befalls apprehension with ready-made forms, one's own encounters with the authoritative claims of even an original formulation remains abstrusely given in hand with the distribution of linguistic authority. In its turn, this dispensation gives to every thinkable encounter—as evidenced in Goethe's falling back to that very form—the imperative that one need but to prosecute the means and the manner of the wise [*Dein Los ist gefallen, verfolge die Weise*]. If we do in fact keep ourselves beholden to this authoritative demand even to that of the form of its own utterance, we may become

mired—confoundingly—once more in uncertainty at the inveigling entanglement of these forms’ homophonic valencies. At times, it would seem, it would befall us not only to prosecute—in the sense of carrying out or following [*verfolgen*]*—the model or agenda of the sage commonly known to be wise enough to be an authority [die Weise], or to derive with some extent—as if by tracing [verfolgen]—the means [die Weise] of expression as they are given after and towards a manner of their schematic use. Yet at the same time, still, it would also seem that it would fall to us in some cases to engage or take part in a critical renunciation, that is to say, prosecution [verfolgen] of the given case of self-perpetrating schematics, or even towards the fostering of such a relation which would seek to distance itself—as if stepping towards an alternative path—from that delineation whose detoured course it then, ever straying, nevertheless follows [verfolgen]. In any case, the path has already been graded before us, and it is left to us then only the imperative to move towards completing this journey [Dein Weg ist begonnen, vollende die Reise].*

The method forward becomes more questionable however than the misgivings even of an individual perspective. Even as the partitions of the poetic in language, in general, are composed not only in the multifarious steps of language’s identifiable forms, so too are these forms also entangled in the performative constitution of hermeneutic appropriation that is encountered in the contestation of any singular claim—concerning any namable unity—over the vectors of any given step. Indeed, the act of poetic creation and encounter would necessitate the giving and taking of its forms from one to another. In a move that renounces the authority of his own authorship in the formulation of the poem’s significance to expand the partitive nature of the poetic further, Goethe thus makes a show of passing the word to another—whom he here names as the Ottoman poet-historian Enweri:

Enweri sagt's, ein herrlichster der Männer,
Des tiefsten Herzens, höchsten Hauptes Kenner:
Dir frommt an jedem Ort, zu jeder Zeit
Geradheit, Urteil und Verträglichkeit. (Goethe 15)

With effervescent praise of Enweri's magnificence as one of the most original of people, and for being in keeping of the deepest of hearts and insight of the greatest pinnacles of thought [*Enweri sagt's, ein herrlichster der Männer;/Des tiefsten Herzens, höchsten Hauptes Kenner*], Goethe takes Enweri's name as he then affirms—with but a nominal citation to mark his paraphrasis—that the formative ambiguities we have been tracing in the persecution of the original wisdom of given forms lends itself to our use, in any given case, in a way that is inextricable from a certain confession of zealous piety regarding the exactness of one's precision of insight, judgment, and concord [*Dir frommt an jedem Ort, zu jeder Zeit/Geradheit, Urteil und Verträglichkeit*].¹¹ Indeed, the act which language performs appears to be but the poetic manifestation or confession of a divine encounter with the availing significance of the form's givenness—which is not to say that the field of applicability and everyday practicality of this inheritance is not wonderfully broad [*Mein Erbteil wie herrlich, weit und breit!*] (*ibid*). Still, the Shandean conditions of one's understanding are given but a momentary share in the possession

¹¹ The reader is invited to compare this reading of Goethe's poetic apprehensions of being-in-relation through a Shandean perspective with this dissertation's ruminations upon these similar impulses in the work of Nietzsche. Namely, in this dissertation's reading of Nietzsche's contributions to the withdrawal and *Bedenklichkeit* of thought, the reader may stage an encounter which exposes the value of allowing these respective works to be read as if together. Specifically, in following the Shandean trace, this dissertation will move to address also *Nietzsche's* own invocation of a nominal entanglement of pious faith [*Frömmigkeit*] through which one conceives of the sense of a divine or ever-beyond, of which one would partake through a communal reception of one's own freely given use [*jdm. frommen*]. As if creating themselves anew in their own perpetuating contributions to the accumulation of a unifying sense, the divivable poetics of words is reflected not only through their ever self-differentiation, but is recognized also in Nietzsche's aphorism which would equate language's entanglement in the pursuit of knowledge and truth to but a presumptive belief [*Die Sprache als vermeintliche Wissenschaft*].

of the partitive objects of one's nevertheless fervent belief. The momentary field of one's apprehension, however, extends beyond that to which any now alive may bear witness; although it may now be harvest day, upon which one's sensibilities are astir, there will always be something—still—which escapes the possessive gesture of creative or contributive encounters [*Die Zeit ist mein Besitz, mein Acker ist die Zeit.//Noch ist es Tag, da rühre sich der Mann,/Die Nacht tritt ein, wo niemand wirken kann*] (*ibid*). The poetic contestation of totality within oneself cannot however be purely denied, and for all the daily regularity of thought's determining conclusions, there remains the disconcerting pang that drives one to seek reconciliation of the prospects of their daily tillage when, with the sinking of the sun, the wanderer shivers at the frisson brought upon in losing one's shadow.¹²

It is perhaps in recognition of the unfathomable or abyssal extension of totality—even towards that integrality which is momentarily given of it—that there is simultaneously also the recurrent shadow of chronic apprehension that moves Goethe therefore or nevertheless to scorn and question the self-certainty of these forms' divinity, despite the extent to which the multifarious valency of linguistic forms avails itself of the divination of its poetic encounter:

Was wird mir jede Stunde so bang? –
Das Leben ist kurz, der Tag ist lang.
Und immer sehnt sich fort das Herz,
Ich weiß nicht recht ob himmelwärts;
Fort aber will es hin und hin,

¹² As in the staging of the apprehension of night's encroachment in Nietzsche's "Der Wanderer und sein Schatten," in which Nietzsche strikingly punctuates the moment of departure and transition: "*Der Schatten*: Tritt unter diese Fichten und schaue dich nach den Bergen um; die Sonne sinkt./ *Der Wanderer*: — Wo bist du? Wo bist du?/****" (704). As the latter apprehends the loss of the former, it is as if the wanderer's shadow—who the reader may conceive to be the wanderer's introspective apprehension, through whose conception the wanderer converses critically with themselves—exists then only in the wanderer's thoughts or in the sky above. The final opening of the yearnful dissipation of the narrative consists not in any words, but the giving of dubious symbols—whose dissipating connection to the text itself remains ambivalent or easily overlooked [***].

Und möchte vor sich selber fliehn.
Und fliegt es an der Liebsten Brust,
Da ruht's im Himmel unbewußt;
Des Lebens Strudel reißt es fort,
Und immer hängt's an Einem Ort;
Was es gewollt, was es verlor,
Es bleibt zuletzt sein eigener Tor. (Goethe 14)

Even as the poet renounces their own apprehension in view of all which one may themselves partake in over the course of a day, even this potential for a critical glance may however yet be squandered as night takes its dissipatory turn in constituting the duplicity of being [*Das Leben ist kurz, der Tag ist lang*]. This chronic apprehension that haunts every dubious incrementality [*Was wird mir jede Stunde so bang*] troubles itself in its entanglement with the rhetorical exposition of its own withdrawal, inviting the reader to sustain the question that would speak itself towards and away from the measuring of the value of its own line of inquiry.¹³ As the poet recognizes the

¹³In the thirty-second aphorism of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, Nietzsche speaks towards a nominal principle which would sentence all human judgment to be necessarily unjustified, inequitable, or iniquitous [*Ungerechtsein nothwendig*] (51). As Nietzsche develops further, the source and cause of this viceful impropriety in the aggrievement of our judgment's valuation of life is entangled in the illogical genealogy of our ability to judge. As Nietzsche develops, in one's judgment concerning the value of life lie three faults originating in their illogical, and therefore improper, development [*Alle Urtheile über den Werth des Lebens sind unlogisch entwickelt und deshalb ungerecht*]. Firstly, the material form which life lends itself to our judgment is manifest—namely [*nämlich*] in such a way as to be itself so greatly fragmentary that it is not able to stand on its own [*Die Unreinheit des Urtheils liegt erstens in der Art, wie das Material vorliegt, nämlich sehr unvollständig*]. Consequently, the nominal faults of the first fault necessitates its leaning upon the second faulty foundation, whose own fault lies in the manner in which our aggrievement of judgment makes an aggregate total from out of the distribution of these fragments into an imagined or heuristic unity [*zweitens in der Art, wie daraus die Summe gebildet wird*]. Thirdly, every single piece of material, in order to be conceived in accordance with the necessity of the first two foundational lies, must be once more—in its own apprehension—the resulting sublimation of these impure cognitions into a presumptively consequent understanding [*dass jedes einzelne Stück des Materials wieder das Resultat unreinen Erkennens ist und zwar diess mit voller Nothwendigkeit*]. Nietzsche affirms, in addition, that even in the nominal encounter of another person, even should they stand in our very presence, fails—according to the linguistic propriety of logic—to attain what may be said in no uncertain terms to be expletive of, or a related component in, the declension of their person: “Keine Erfahrung zum Beispiel über einen Menschen, stünde er uns auch noch so nah, kann vollständig sein, so dass wir ein logisches Recht zu einer Gesamtabschätzung desselben hätten; alle

physical effects born of a mental condition or state of being—here in the catching of their aspiration and there in the palpitation of their heart [*bang*]*—it is only in the Cartesian apprehension of self-difference, born along with the easily-overlooked recurrence of a corporeal rhythm. After recognizing that which one senses had been there all along, the poet then thinks to seek the source and essence of their own chronic apprehensibility in—as with—the poetic folly whose constitution would give the formative measure of its own itinerant encounter.*

It is precisely this chronic apprehension of self-difference, contained in the metonymy of a name, with which language would construe the poetic firmament of its own participation in, and entanglement with, the confinement of an integral whole. Consequently, the heart—as well as the mind with which it is born—are sentenced to ache and long in perpetuity for something of

Schätzungen sind voreilig und müssen es sein. Endlich ist das Maass, womit wir messen, unser Wesen, keine unabänderliche Grösse, wir haben Stimmungen und Schwankungen, und doch müssten wir uns selbst als ein festes Maass kennen, um das Verhältniss irgend einer Sache zu uns recht abzuschätzen. Vielleicht wird aus alledem folgen, dass man gar nicht urtheilen sollte; wenn man aber nur *leben* könnte, ohne abzuschätzen, ohne Abneigung und Zuneigung zu haben! — denn alles Abgeneigtsein hängt mit einer Schätzung zusammen, ebenso alles Geneigtsein” (51-52). Nor is it, according to Nietzsche, the fact *that* the act of human judgment is principally flawed that would turn one’s partaking in it to a deplorable performance: if one were in fact able simply to *live*, without being sentenced to eternal judgment, precluding then even any assessment of their own tendencies or aversions, one would be all the more enviable for it. But, the vile grotesqueness seems to assert itself, rather, there where one acts as though this foundational folly weren’t the necessitated case which all thought must share. Or, the grotesqueness to which thought is ever imperiled is exposed with the foolish claim that one’s acuity could make this inherent flaw to be the case no longer: “Ein Trieb zu Etwas oder von Etwas weg, ohne ein Gefühl davon, dass man das Förderliche wolle, dem Schädlichen ausweiche, ein Trieb ohne eine Art von erkennender Abschätzung über den Werth des Zieles, existiert beim Menschen nicht. Wir sind von vornherein unlogische und daher ungerechte Wesen, *und können diess erkennen*: diess ist eine der grössten und unauflösbarsten Disharmonien des Daseins” (52). Indeed, we are sentenced to be *capable of recognizing* the disharmonic irresolution lying in the foundation of our being, and one eludes [*ausweichen*] the shame of its illogical impropriety [*dem Schädlichen*] by giving themselves to the impulsive hedging of one’s bets *against* the devaluing effect of their unscrupulous scrutiny that would sentence them thereby to be off-point and off-key [*Abschätzung über den Werth des Zieles*]. One cannot at the same time, however, faithfully execute this assessing scrutiny if one dismisses or ignores out of hand the natural esteem of its cognizance.

itself *beyond* the extension of its presently-given form [*immer sehnt sich fort das Herz*].

However unpropitiously its direction may be judged to be written out here as if it were already so presaged in the sky above [*Ich weiß nicht recht ob himmelwärts*],¹⁴ where every availing outlook

¹⁴ In his aphoristic elaboration of the necessity of one's own impropriety in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* [*Ungerechtsein nothwendig*], Nietzsche speaks also towards the piety that must be confessed if one is to foil the severity of their own linguistic lie, even as he furthermore speaks to the development of this fiction's common entanglement with the irreverence of the poetic: "Nun ertragen aber gerade die allermeisten Menschen das Leben, ohne erheblich zu murren, und *glauben* somit an den Werth des Daseins, aber gerade dadurch, dass sich Jeder allein will und behauptet, und nicht aus sich heraustritt wie jene Ausnahmen: alles Ausserpersönliche ist ihnen gar nicht oder höchstens als ein schwacher Schatten bemerkbar. Also darauf allein beruht der Werth des Lebens für den gewöhnlichen, alltäglichen Menschen, dass er sich wichtiger nimmt, als die Welt. Der grosse Mangel an Phantasie, an dem er leidet, macht, dass er sich nicht in andere Wesen hineinfühlen kann und daher so wenig als möglich an ihre Loos und Leiden theilnimmt. *Wer* dagegen wirklich daran teilnehmen könnte, müsste am Werthe des Lebens verzweifeln; gelänge es ihm, das Gesamtbewusstsein der Menschheit in sich zu fassen und zu empfinden, er würde mit einem Fluche gegen das Dasein zusammenbrechen, — denn die Menschheit hat im Ganzen *keine* Ziele, folglich kann der Mensch, in Betrachtung des ganzen Verlaufes, nicht darin seinen Trost und Halt finden, sondern seine Verzweiflung. Sieht er bei Allem, was er thut, auf die letzte Ziellosigkeit der Menschen, so bekommt sein eigenes Wirken in seinen Augen den Charakter der Vergeudung. Sich aber als Menschheit (und nicht nur als Individuum) ebenso *vergeudet* zu fühlen, wie wir die einzelne Blüthe von der Natur vergeudet sehen, ist ein Gefühl über alle Gefühle. — Wer ist aber desselben fähig? Gewiss nur ein Dichter: und Dichter wissen sich immer zu trösten" (53). Where it now appears that people mostly bear their lives without substantial grumbling [*ohne erheblich zu murren*], Nietzsche emphasizes this is because they *believe* [*glauben*] in the value of being—consequent to their being entangled thusly in its valuation [*somit*]. Yet, Nietzsche elaborates, this belief is maintained precisely through that impulsive claim each makes on their own with regards to a *conjunctive* approach that nevertheless holds the sense of identity as if it were not ever stepping outside of itself—like those others who constitute an exceptional case [*wie jene Ausnahmen*]. Anything beyond oneself amounts, to such base individuals [*ihnen*], to nothing, or is remarked at best as a weak shadow. Thus is it, Nietzsche asserts, that the value of life for the common, everyday person is based but in the settling complacency [*beruhen*] that gives one to take themselves as more important than the world. One's suffering from a coarse lack of imagination and the fancy of a mind's conceived images would make one, in turn, incapable of perceiving the innerness of other beings where one would perceive *themselves* in reflection [*dass er sich nicht in andere Wesen hineinfühlen kann*]. It follows that such individuals have as little to do with the lot [*Loos*] and sorrows of others as possible. What's more, Nietzsche recognizes that they who could actually, fully, partake of another's apprehensions would be sentenced to become subject to despair [*Verzweiflung*] as if the shared duality of a paired encounter were in this way become dissolute in being unitarily disjoined [*verzweifeln*]. The indicated reason of Nietzsche's argumentation strikes a chord with this dissertation's reading of "The Author's Preface" to *Tristram Shandy*: should one in fact succeed in taking in the entirety of human consciousness within the grasp of their own understanding and sensation, they would in fact break apart and curse existence. The value of

then construes a new opening rather than any arrival at a resolution to the pulse of its itinerance, the opening of every apprehension leads further from its pointed disposition not only as if it had but one face or horizon, but also ever and again in self-renouncing vectors—on *and* on—according to the concatenative extent of its apprehensive impulse [*Fort aber will es hin und hin*].¹⁵ As if this recurrently confrontive flight would sentence every iteration to partake in its

life, Nietzsche maintains, is made only in the approach of the poet, in whose formative consolation only may a single petal be not squandered of its momentary solace.

¹⁵ Even as one may be struck with the ambivalence of measure given to this impulse, its parabolic exposition reveals the measure of its form—as when Zarathustra confronts the burdensome daemon he was sentenced to bear forth as if it were his own shadow—still only through nominal analogy: “‘Siehe diesen Torweg! Zwerg!’” (173). The fatuous gateway [*Torweg*] to which Nietzsche’s wanderer would liken this impulse is faced there with two perspectives [*der hat zwei Gesichter*] constituted by the collision of two paths, both of which being the same in that no one has yet traveled either unto its own end [*Zwei Wege kommen hier zusammen: die ging noch niemand zu Ende*]. The one alley is similar to the other insofar as the one—extending at length behind—goes on for an eternity, while the other—directly ahead—constitutes yet another eternity [*Diese lange Gasse zurück: die währt eine Ewigkeit. Und jene lange Gasse hinaus – das ist eine andre Ewigkeit*]. In the moment at which these conflicting eternities collide in one’s apprehension, it would seem as if these waypaths oppose one another in mutual contradiction, as if they would put each other at a distance even as they might avail the barest of differentiability before the wanderer’s very eyes, providing the reader caught up in this moment with the trace of the renunciation of self-same forms in the homophonic entanglement of these paths’ mutual contradiction [*Sie widersprechen sich, diese Wege*] with the similarly linguistic acts of *widerhallen* and *wiederholen*; This moment of mutual distancing, however, has always already collided just before the wanderer’s very eyes [*sie stoßen sich gerade vor den Kopf*]: and it is as if it is only here, with this gateway, that these eternities are sentenced to come together in this way [*und hier, an diesem Torwege, ist es, wo sie zusammen kommen*]. The name of this fatuously lying gate is even inscribed there, if one looks apprehensively above in the blink of an eye: Moment [*Der Name des Torwegs steht oben geschrieben: ‘Augenblick’*]. In contemplating those parts of the serviced trail which transcend one’s own wanderings, however, one eventually begins also to wonder whether this mutual contradiction were always the case, or whether beyond one’s own taking of these paths they might in fact no longer be at a distance from one another whatsoever [*Aber wer einen von ihnen weiter ginge – und immer weiter und immer ferner: glaubst du, Zwerg, daß diese Wege sich ewig widersprechen?*]. The scornful wisdom of the wanderer’s daemon, should the wanderer have the presence of mind to apprehend the daemon’s murmur, is that “‘Alles Gerade lügt [...] Alle Wahrheit ist krumm, die Zeit selber ist ein Kreis” (*ibid*). It is as if the wanderer’s daemon sentences his host to the murmuring reminder that all that of which one now thinks of as opening directly—that ahead as well as that behind—is *itself* already lying in its nominal embodiment. The belied truth which the daemon whispers is precisely that which the apprehensive thought would disdainfully renounce, *must* renounce defiantly—as if in denial— if it is to overcome the peril of its carriage: the passageway

own renunciation—sustaining also an autophobic countenance of self-annihilation—¹⁶ this fatal potency of irresolution would furthermore constitute its own conditional preference or affinity [*Und möchte vor sich selber fliehn*] regardless of the severity of any consequential melancholia.¹⁷

Indeed, the heights upon which the renunciant would loftily hazard their hopes must bear also the certainty of being thus disappointed:¹⁸ should the heart attain that condition for which it through which the wanderer is sentenced to travel—towards what they call truth—is itself narrow, requiring an illusive precision of transversal that must misgauge totality if it is to pass over whatsoever to the duplicitously common domain of its myriad shanties. At the same time, all time's differentiated intervals and partitions will have already belonged imperceptibly to the same existence in the end, as if every step of the way were encircled or contained within all along.

¹⁶ Although a thorough comparison with the plethora of texts by which one might approach another is beyond the absolute scope of this dissertation, we might yet draw a parallel of the fatalistic potential of this poetic flight-from-self with Ethel Cornwell's reading of what she names the Beckett hero, of whom she observes, "The Beckett hero is crushed by the burden of consciousness, out of which comes that self-responsibility he would like to escape but cannot. He has neither a god to assume it for him, nor the courage to escape through self-destruction—which he yearns for perpetually. His life is one long ambivalence between the desire for and fear of its termination, one long attempt to reverse the process of birth and speed his return to the state of pre-conscious nonbeing from which he came; that is his lost Eden. The Beckett hero does not seek his identity, he flees from it; his quest is for anonymity, for self-annihilation. [...] Without hope of heaven, or of any hereafter, the Beckett hero travels in a meaningless circle to where he started. As Beckett suggests in the Addenda to *Watt*, it is simply a matter 'of the long way/of the short stay/of the going back home/the way he had come.' The inevitable question of course is: if life is so meaningless, and self-creation such an effort, why go on living? A question the Beckett hero asks himself, but never answers. He simply retreats from the physical world into the inner recesses of the mind, from which there is no way out" (41).

¹⁷ The reader may be reminded of Albrecht Dürer's 1514 engraving *Melencolia I*, in which the saturnalian melancholy of the pensive figure is contextualized amidst the seeming impossibility of drawing the myriad signs—contingent also to the figure's contemplation—into an absolute understanding, the consequence of whose resistance fomenting in the observer the same uncertain dismay visible in the outlines of the human figure's expression.

¹⁸ In resonance with this dissertation's own persecution of linguistic *Shandeism*, Ernst Bloch invokes the impulse of renunciation that is sustained in the yearnings of hope and its necessary disappointability precisely in the manner that hope strives—in the de-reification of moments of suspension—to effect an ever-opening change even *with* the fatuity of its concrete form: "Hope must be unconditionally disappointable, *first*, because it is open in a forward direction, in a future-oriented direction; it does not address itself to that which already exists. For this reason, hope—while actually in a state of suspension—is committed to change rather than repetition, and

yearns—in alighting also upon the cherished sentiments of another with whom it may then even fleetingly partake in commonly held joy and aspiration [*Und fliegt es an der Liebsten Brust*]¹⁹—the desires of one’s heart and mind are still not precisely guaranteed of any certainty in the congruence of their reception. If that which the heart would extend beyond itself could enjoy the tranquility of respite in that other place, the balm of its confirmation would be just as unbeknownst to the heart itself as if it were already resting there in peace, as that conceived only upon night’s Plutonian shore—incognizable there even as the haunting countenance of death [*Da ruht’s im Himmel unbewußt*].¹⁹ Rather, the form of life now apprehended in the exchange of its poetic exposition is one that tears and unsettles the substance of its confluence simultaneously towards *and* away from what is called itself, even as it thereby avails the form of its being to be traced in the roving and revolving eddies that form the wake of its life’s current as if spuriously surmised in the folds of an overcoat hung upon a hook—whose presence may be derived from the apprehension of a consequential force that would beg the question of an integrally isolated

what is more, incorporates the element of chance, without which there can be nothing new. Through this portion of chance, however sufficiently determined it may be, openness is at the same time also *kept open*. At last to the extent that hope, whose field of action this is, pays in the coin of hazard so as not to be indebted to the past. *Second* (and the following proposition is closely connected to the preceding one), hope must be disappointable because, even when concretely mediated, it can never be mediated by solid facts. For these are always, in the face of what informs hope, merely subjectively reified moments or objectively reified stoppages within a historical course of events” (341).

¹⁹ The ominous utterance of the tale’s harbinger itself being now a common household name, we might borrow the imagery conceived in Edgar Allen Poe’s “The Raven,” which similarly reads as a poeticization of thought’s demonic hauntings: “Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there/wondering, fearing,/Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;/But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token [...] This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing/To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom’s/core;/This and more I sat divining [...] ‘Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I/ implore!’” (82). As this dissertation discusses in its chapter on poetic withdrawals, we may compare the dark uncertainty of this figure’s divining with Wilhelm’s apprehensive “Zweig im Bach” analogy through which he composes his letter to Natalie, and in which he also gives form to the conditions of his itinerant outlook.

locality—its engrossed capital furthering the measure but of its own nominal property [*Des Lebens Strudel reißt es fort/Und immer hängt's an Einem Ort*].²⁰

For all the spirited heart's yearnings, and whatever it must bear to have lost or sacrificed in order to undertake the travails of attaining its desire of such a self-transcending form whatsoever [*Was es gewollt, was es verlor*], the apprehended unity that is thus entangled in the turmoil of this roving locality is remarkable in the contingency of its intransigent ambivalence, whose adverbial confrontation sustains the contradiction of a staid transience [*es bleibt zuletzt*]: tethering itself to a remainder unto its last [*zuletzt*] as also to that which is familiarly availed in

²⁰ In a similar defense of the poetic relation of thought to language in general, Hegel posits the question of who is to be said to think abstractly by inviting the reader to imagine the staging of a scene in which one would purport to claim all the world to be opposed to the force of wills: “Solche Erkennungsszenen, wodurch die Welt wider Willen belehrt werden soll, haben den nicht zu entschuldigenden Fehler an sich, daß sie zugleich beschämen und der Machinist sich einen kleinen Ruhm erkünsteln wollte, so daß jene Beschämung und diese Eitelkeit die Wirkung aufheben, denn sie stoßen eine um diesen Preis erkaufte Belehrung vielmehr wieder hinweg. Ohnehin wäre die Anlegung eines solchen Planes schon verdorben; denn zu seiner Ausführung wird erfordert, daß das Wort des Rätsels nicht zum voraus ausgesprochen sei” (*Wer denkt abstract* 576). *Precisely* this, however, has already transpired in the placard's inscription [*Dies ist aber durch die Aufschrift schon geschehen*]. Hegel elaborates further upon this point: “wenn dieser Aufsatz mit solcher Hinterlist umginge, hätten die Worte nicht gleich von Anfang auftreten dürfen, sondern, wie der Minister in der Komödie, das ganze Spiel hindurch im Überrocke herumgehen und erst in der letzten Szene ihn aufknöpfen und den Stern der Weisheit herausblitzen lassen müssen. Die Aufknöpfung eines metaphysischen Überrocks nähme sich hier nicht einmal so gut aus wie die Aufknöpfung des ministeriellen, denn was jene an den Tag brächte, wäre weiter nichts als ein paar Worte; denn das Beste vom Spaße sollte ja eigentlich darin liegen, daß es sich selbst zeigte, daß die Gesellschaft längst im Besitze der Sache selbst war; sie gewönne also am Ende nur den Namen, dahingegen der Stern des Ministers etwas Reelleres, einen Beutel mit Geld, bedeutet. Was Denken, was abstrakt ist – daß dies jeder Anwesende wisse, wird in guter Gesellschaft vorausgesetzt, und in solcher befinden wir uns. Die Frage ist allein danach, *wer es sei*, der abstrakt denke” (576). Indeed, Hegel holds here that all present—by virtue of their contemplation of the inscribed placards of language's forms—know in advance, and by necessity of their communal encounter (as that in which we now find ourselves), what it means to think abstractly. The question Hegel poses rhetorically—after having already performatively exposed the riddle's scripted solution that *all* thought is inextricable from abstraction—itself hinges around the encounter of the claims of hearsay, reporting to one's contemplation the nominal thought: that attributing to one or another the properties of abstract thought is itself already the positing of a claim whose judgment must be conditioned in taking account of the report's indirectness, necessitating a conjunction of reality and imaginative abstraction charged with the power of contestation around the same point.

recentia—as if from but one measure downstream from what last transpired [*zuletzt*]; if this nominal locality would remain self-same even as it dissipates into another form altogether its own, then this sublating gesture of creation is also sentenced ever to be its *own* renunciative instantiation of this gated division of eternities, giving itself then and there only ever as a *porta fatuus*—the gateway of one’s own folly [*sein eigener Tor*].

CHAPTER FOUR

Concerning the Poetic Withdrawal and *Bedenklichkeit* of Thought: Tracing Impulses of Shandeism in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, *Menschliches*, *Allzumenschliches*, and Also

Sprach Zarathustra

He did not pretend to examine every action by the strict rules of reason, but was always ready to make proper allowances for the weakness of mankind. [...] He was generous and was never afraid of obliging the ungrateful, remembering the grand precept of Zoroaster: "When thou eatest, give to the dogs, should they even bite thee." (Voltaire 151)

Il n'affectait rien; il ne voulait point toujours avoir raison, et savait respecter la faiblesse des hommes. [...] il ne craignait point d'obliger des ingrats, suivant ce grand précept de Zoroastre: Quand tu manges, donne à manger aux chiens, dussent-ils te mordre. (Voltaire 85)

By comparing the impulses which come to form the claims of thought as they are shared among the narrative tensions constituting the works of Goethe and Nietzsche, the next step in our pursuit of the concerns of Shandean thinking leads us here to trace the question of the manner and extent to which thought may conceivably measure its own formative process—while caught in the midst of its own encounter. That is to say, if but by way of a paradoxical question, the reader may trace the respective expositions of Goethe and Nietzsche, among others, concerning the form and manner in which the self moves to effect in itself the critical glance of an outward observer, as if thereby to think critically of its own being. Born in the substantive comparison drawn between two disparate takes of analogous or representative forms, whereby one's timely iterations become subsumed under the determination of a conceived whole that is nevertheless ever sentenced to convey a discreet opacity, it will be shown furthermore that the poetic images and fictional exposition of substantive relation is not only complicit in everyday thought,

but—insofar as thought's substantive form consigns itself in a constitutive withdrawal, the formative matter of its relation would sustain a fundamental conviviality of contentious difference. By way of nominal encounters, one's thought takes part—in parting ways—even as it may arrive upon the same point of passage as another. In the terms of these parties' exchange, the constitutive forms of thought thus become not merely self-perpetuating repetitions, but extend rather a nominal invitation to those beyond itself, whose invocation opens itself to a novel similitude—even if also to the point of sustaining an inconclusive self-contradiction.

In sustaining questions concerning that which the poetic relation of everyday thought and understanding will have heralded for the courses borne in even quotidian encounters, this chapter looks to pursue the continuing development of the nominal thought of these formative questions in returning, as if to the advancement of a critical apprehension that would hold narrative's itinerant encounter as but a fictional, misleading, or false apotheosis, to the *Shandean* determination of thought's conclusive apprehension. Re-opening these questions concerning the poetics of practical language through the narratological relation of Wilhelm's journeyman years, Goethe steps as if from out of a poetic dream to stage here, for but a moment, the opening rest Wilhelm and Felix share from the course of their travels, whereby the reader catches a glimpse of the pair in the shadow of a great precipice:

Im Schatten eines mächtigen Felsen saß Wilhelm an grauser, bedeutender Stelle, wo sich der steile Gebirgsweg um eine Ecke herum schnell nach der Tiefe wendete. Die Sonne stand noch hoch und erleuchtete die Gipfel der Fichten in den Felsengründen zu seinen Füßen. Er bemerkte eben etwas in seine Schreibtafel, als Felix, der umhergeklettert war, mit einem Stein in der Hand zu ihm kam. Wie nennt man diesen Stein? sagte der Knabe. Ich weiß nicht, versetzte Wilhelm. Ist das wohl Gold, was darin so glänzt? Sagte jener. Es ist kein's! Versetzte dieser: und ich erinnere mich, daß es die Leute Katzensgold nennen. Katzensgold! Sagte der Knabe lächelnd: und warum? Wahrscheinlich weil es falsch ist und man die Katzen auch für falsch hält. Das will ich mir merken, sagte der Sohn, und steckte den Stein in die lederne Reisetasche, brachte jedoch sogleich etwas anders hervor

und fragte: was ist das? (Goethe 241).

As if availing himself of the vantaged perspective given by their ascension, we might imagine that Wilhelm may be seeking here—in taking some respite from the pressures of the day’s travails—to apprehend not only the particularities of the path in reflection of that which has borne them yet to this point, but also at the same moment to foresee the path towards or along which they are hence invited to travel. The narrative’s directive draws Wilhelm’s gaze heavensward in reflection upon the pointed vantage of the utmost peak—looming above as if to form there in nature an equivalent to the gothic spire that draws one’s gaze towards God—yet neither distanced perspective nor the shared communion of a momentary stillness serve to absolve the overlook of its looming precarity: while one might from such a significant point [*bedeutende Stelle*] behold, and at once draw determination from, the myriad paths and points towards which one’s steps may turn in descent, the prominent location is itself also terribly frightful [*grausam*], reminding Wilhelm that the potential of one’s path is ever haunted by the fatal risk of the deep plunge [*wo sich der steile Gebirgsweg um eine Ecke herum schnell nach der Tiefe wendete*] (*ibid*). We might read in these lines a foreshadowing portent of narratological significance by apprehending a sense of the literary import of this point in the text [*Stelle*] in its connection with the rest of the narrative—as if our protagonists’ arrival at this precise location [*Stelle*] will have put them on the path towards a thereby determined denouement befitting the narratological point [*Stelle*]. Simultaneously however, as if this point were also to concern the vivid clarity of various forms of reproductive emulation, imitation, or *Nachahmung*, the text seems to abdicate any authority to reveal here either way, for any of the interested characters or witnesses, concerning the conclusive portent of its formative circumstances.

The reader may already get caught up in this moment in attempting to apprehend the inner workings of Wilhelm's thought as he considers the same view conceived now in the reader's imagination. As if troubled by the entanglement of an equivocal precarity or poetic opacity that is born *with* the certainty of that which is otherwise relatable by way of a common thoroughfare or parlance,¹ Wilhelm turns his gaze away from thoughts of the vertiginous abyss and towards that which is yet at hand, even as he traces the glancing of the sun's rays atop the spruces at the cliff's base, and to where they are then laid at his feet [*Die Sonne stand noch hoch und erleuchtete die Gipfel der Fichten in den Felsengründen zu seinen Füßen*]. Seeming to glean there some insight of an interconnecting significance between his present situation and the elevated peak borne under the weight of his perception, Wilhelm takes note of *some* thought [*Er bemerkte eben etwas in seine Schreibtafel*]. The matter of his apprehension remains however unrevealed here, sentencing any reading of its thought to a defined uncertainty that opens the distance spanning the reader and the text, as if Goethe were inviting us to question after or imagine the contents of this thought. In furtherance of the extension of this invitation, the reader may step further to follow the question concerning the extent to which Goethe's abstrusion of the protagonist's heartfelt thoughts at such a seemingly significant stage would be better partaken in discretely. In searching to ground this movement within our own encounter of the narrative's relation, we are thus left to reason or to imagine for ourselves in Wilhelm's motives—or that of the narrator who reports to the reader their own determining narrative sense, and whose

¹ One is reminded of the poetic turn with which Goethe observes the manner in which one arrests the uncertainty or doubt one would have faced in the event that the objects of one's expository gaze should escape apprehension, as if the clarity of sense were become caught or entangled in a dark thicket or the shadowy conditions of a nebulous fog: "Doch wendet er, sobald der Pfad verfänglich,/Den ernsten Blick, wo Nebel ihn umtrüben,/Ins eigne Herz und in das Herz der Lieben" (Goethe 9). This dissertation will expand further upon *Nietzsche's* take concerning the purported wisdom constituted in the conditional comprehension of Shandean forms within its own chapter concerning the feudal animus of thought's conclusions.

connection with Wilhelm himself is not always clear. The reader is left with an intimated sense of privacy, guarded uncertainty, or, perhaps, even determined or practiced expediency, to whose nominal constraints the benefiting logic of its form is subject. The reader may imagine what the substantive content of Wilhelm's recorded thought may entail or concern. Or, the reader may otherwise glean a fitting association for this occasion from the appendix of observations that would interpose the text through the musings of the wanderer's sentimental wit [*Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer*].² Either way, whatever worry or joy may be inscribed *here* glances off at the moment of its apprehension. As if the thought's extension, or the formative reach of its notation, were obscured in its being borne by linguistic forms that *seem* to give shape to expositions of the very roads and passes through and over which Wilhelm and Felix traverse—Felix then returns to Wilhelm's side with interruptive questions of names and their entanglement in the measure of objective worth.

If the reader were to attempt an ongoing exposition of the encounter with which *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahren* opens, they might conceive of logical explanations or further interconnected fictions to expose the discrete notation of Wilhelm's thought—if but for the interposition of another moving to traverse the same passage:

Kaum war dieses gesprochen, so zeigte sich den schroffen Weg herab eine sonderbare Erscheinung. Zwei Knaben, schön wie der Tag, in farbigen Jäckchen, die man eher für aufgebundene Hemdchen gehalten hätte, sprangen einer nach dem andern herunter, und Wilhelm fand Gelegenheit, sie näher zu betrachten, als sie vor ihm stutzen und einen Augenblick still hielten [...] Wilhelm hatte nicht Zeit, diese beiden sonderbaren und in der Wildnis ganz unerwarteten Wesen näher zu betrachten, indem er eine männliche Stimme vernahm, welche um die Felsecke

² As with Goethe's appendation of the notes drawn from Makarie's archive, *Wanderjahre* cannot be read fully without also considering the relevance of the aphoristic observations and ruminations that are, also, provided as material supplement to the final edition of the text. The thoughts contained in their representation cannot be said to fall properly within the course of the text's narrative, but their insight also cannot be extricated fully from a sense that they carry significant weight in the anachronistic sublimation of their thoughts with those contained, represented, or alluded to in the narrative.

herum ernst aber freundlich herabrief: Warum steht ihr stille? Versperret uns den Weg nicht! (Goethe 242).

The reader, much like Wilhelm, is thus drawn out of their own apprehension of possibilities that may otherwise be conceived in even a singular moment or encounter. In the passing through of a mountain pass or of a textual passage, one's own apprehension is subject to a consideration that gives way to the common traversal of its coursing path.

As if re-opening the portents of Wilhelm's thought in tracing light's breaking over familiar peaks—or else inspired in envisioning the turns and falls transversing the lucid pinnacles amongst which one has dwelled ever in passing—Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* opens also with the eponymous figure taking stock of his own itinerance as he also considers the pinnacles of a mountainous range:

Als Zarathustra dreißig Jahre alt war, verließ er seine Heimat und den See seiner Heimat und ging in das Gebirge. Hier genoß er seines Geistes und seiner Einsamkeit und wurde dessen zehn Jahre nicht müde. Endlich aber verwandelte sich sein Herz, — und eines Morgens stand er mit der Morgenröte auf, trat vor die Sonne hin und sprach zu ihr also: “Du großes Gestirn! Was wäre dein Glück, wenn du nicht die hättest, welchen du leuchtest! Zehn Jahre kamst du hier herauf zu meiner Höhle: du würdest deines Lichtes und dieses Weges satt geworden sein, ohne mich, meinen Adler und meine Schlange. Aber wir warteten deiner an jedem Morgen, nahmen dir deinen Überfluß ab und segneten dich dafür. (Nietzsche 5)

It would appear that over the course of an errant decade, Zarathustra had not once grown weary of both the spiritual elevation and isolation he attained in scaling and then withdrawing into these ranging peaks. In stepping out from or availing himself finally of his journey's pinnacle, however, Zarathustra then turns—critically—to accuse his former *Wanderschaften* of being indistinguishable from a domestic hermitage, its conception thereby exposing the trappings of his own cave [*Höhle*].³ The manifestation of a poetic turn—as if Nietzsche were here venerating or

³ One may also recognize by way of comparison that Zarathustra is guilty here of violating the conditions of *Wilhelm's* renunciative agreement, according to which Wilhelm agrees not to ever stay in one place longer than three days. This dissertation conducts a reading of the conditions to

re-writing the Shandean opening of Goethe's *Wanderjahre* in Zarathustra's renunciation of prior conclusions—may pass unnoticed here in the wake of the quotidian translation. Rather than giving itself merely by self-evidence as Zarathustra's 'cave,' the naming of Zarathustra's familiar abode would rather allow for the poetic intervention that shows the enlightened spirit or sage to have been but dwelling within a diminutive height, as is exposed in the preliminal combination of 'die Höhe' with a diminutive suffix, as if one might be permitted to say, 'das Höhle.' The recognition of this contamination of "height" [*die Höhe*] and "cave" [*die Höhle*] may yet be apprehended, however, in the reader's sustaining of the very grammatical disavowal of this possibility [*herauf zu meiner Höhle*]. The reader might wonder whether the grammatical conformity might in fact expose its own poetic paralipsis, whereby one might yet suggest the improbable or even nonsensical thought that even the jealous guarding of the ordered structure of grammar's convention here were instead, however begrudgingly, still inviting the discovery of its precarious uncertainty. Here, where the nominal expression—irreverent of the poetic opening of self-contradiction conceived in the very structures of its relation, and with whose fast certainty one purports to lay determinant claim—were rather merely a *fabricated* condition of apprehensive clarity. Where the representative form's self-evidence lies upon the myriad openings of its momentary presentation, the poetic extensions of renounceable relations may yet be realized—even unto risking the opening of nominal contradictions or errant conclusions. In order to contend with these realized conceptions, one must also consider whether the fictional imaginings of a text's reading, even in the face of whatever misfortune or error that should befall one's encounters along the way, could be turned to one's favor if one were but permitted

which Wilhelm's undersigning of his journeyman years becomes subject in its chapter concerning the poetics of thought's relation.

extensive oversight—or the faculty to conceive of yet further conditions or possibilities to be read in a given text whatsoever.

Zarathustra receives the bounty of the sun's luminance every day for a decade, yet it is only as can be attained in the poetic extensions of an alterable being [*sich verwandeln*] through whose finite [*endlich*] circumstances he finally [*endlich*] undergoes a change of heart—*according to which* he perceives the folly of his chronically quotidian mistake just as he then steps to advance the revelation overlooking the pinnacles of his oversight. Stepping thus beyond his former self in addressing the bountiful lucidity with which he came to be blessed in his own overturning of his prior apprehension of the luminary pinnacles of enlightenment, Zarathustra undergoes here, as if all at once, a critical change of heart that arises as if by his own reflexive agency [*endlich aber verwandelte sich sein Herz*]. Now, in availing himself of the superfluosity of the sun's provenance—as if her radiant quality were sublimated hence into Zarathustra's own being—Zarathustra returns to conciliate the divine sphere her benevolence. Thus blessing her radiance in his own rejoinder, Zarathustra *also* returns more than mere veneration of her provenance insofar as his reflection appears to lift, by affirmation, the very tract [*Wege*] of the great star's luminance [*Licht*]*—otherwise and beyond the circumstantial tranquility or serene order whose measure would be merely in accordance with her own contentment* [*satt werden*]. Through Zarathustra's posing as if he were in fact sharing in the presence of the divine body—for it may also seem as though Zarathustra were indeed speaking to nobody save perhaps himself, or for the benefit of an unknowable entity overhearing Zarathustra's speech—Zarathustra also demonstrates a spur of that thought which may mark the changing of his heart regarding the pinnacles of his prior conclusions.

It is at this point that the reader may recognize a limit to the comparison of the respective openings of Wilhelm's and Zarathustra's respective wanderings and contemplation of thought's pinnacles. Indeed, where Wilhelm's thoughtful notation escapes any immediate representation to the reader, Zarathustra effuses speech that may appear as if it were in fact a recapitulation of what Wilhelm might have thought. It is interesting to note that, although Zarathustra's effusive proclamation mimics the form of a question, he does not in fact merely pose the question of what value the overflow of the sun's prominence would be, or what and whence the measure of satisfaction concerning the fulfillment of her own radiant creation might entail, if it were not bearing also some measure given to the benefit of those independently graced by her solar abundance. Indeed, the affirmation of uncertainty in one's own apprehensive valuation concerning the givenness of their own state of affairs is reflected in the irony of Zarathustra's *declaring* rather than *inquiring*, "*Du großes Gestirn! Was wäre dein Glück, wenn du nicht die hättest, welchen du leuchtest!*" (Nietzsche 5). By drawing the proximal relation of the upward movement towards the heavens, and in hearing the phonetic resonance of '*Gehirn*' in '*Gestirn*,' the reader may perceive that which is at stake here in the determination of common affairs insofar as thought's consideration of a divine judgment seems to concern itself not only with the radiance of celestial bodies, but all the more in the conceptual determinations of the mind. The value of a celestial radiance, then, is put to the question of its illumination of others, as are also the conclusive pinnacles of thought's formative apprehension.

As if driven by an emulative impulse, Zarathustra bears the lucidity of his revelation forward as if it now weighs constitutively upon his own being.⁴ One might say in other words, he

⁴ Insofar as Zarathustra steps from out of the moment of his utterance, the text would emphasize that the reader is always encountering an exposition of what Zarathustra has *said*. This representation of past words becomes all the more poignant insofar as that having-been-said weighs upon the bearing of subsequent thoughts. The weight of what has once been said that is borne upon one's own imagination is echoed in Zarathustra's exposition, "Vom Geist der

steps forth in taking the celestial lesson to heart, moving to carry forth a novel reproduction of the solar example of sublime radiance, whose extensive overflowing [*Überfluß*] abounds benevolently without order, condition, or authoritative demand. In order to do so, however, Zarathustra is sentenced then to propagate further the reverence he now sustains for that which he also claims to have overcome in his parting ways from the partitioning walls of his withdrawal into his own cave. Namely, we may read out of Zarathustra's new determination also his reverence *for* his errant conclusion in having taken any of his former [*letzt*] conclusions as the final [*letzt*] pinnacle towards which he or another may aspire. As it did not seem to occur to Zarathustra to emulate the sun's provenance *until* he overcame the error of his own conclusion, even though he had been previously wholly satisfied with the isolated elevation of his being, the question of the spuriousness of Zarathustra's overcoming thus revolves around the finality of Zarathustra's conclusions in turn. The question remains, even after his change of heart, to what extent the elevated condition of thought has a capacity to overflow its own being, and by what form this overflowing may occur. Its course may or may not take on a conclusive form, for instance, even for Zarathustra. Beyond his own conception, furthermore, the overflowing of thought may take place not *in order* to have its object lifted beyond the manner of its own acclaim, but rather so that *others*—upon whom the gravity of its reflection falls— may lift themselves up by taking for *their own* from an abundant extension. This extension, in turn, then

Schwere." The name of this spirit, however, is not ever certain insofar as it gives itself through relation of the difficulties, gravity, austere severity, or heaviness, which may all amount to the same thing in their concurrent arrival in the form of "*Die Schwere*." The severity of one's apprehensions as one grasps but a momentary portion of a fleeting encounter lingers as a burden upon thought's further attenuations: "Und wahrlich! Auch manches *Eigene* ist schwer zu tragen! Und viel Inwendiges am Menschen ist der Auster gleich, nämlich ekel und schlüpfrig und schwer erfaßlich —" (243). Truly, Zarathustra declares, even some *of one's own* is difficult or burdensome to bear. What's more, much of what one interiorizes is but an austerity of equivalence, insofar as the interiorization of thought is, *namely*, repulsive, slippery, and difficult to grab hold of.

radiates beyond the pinnacles of its own substantive form, and may thereby transcend the propriety of any one being's constituent claim—so as not to rest or fall merely upon but some ill-measured foundation or falsely esteemed firmament. Formative thought is thus substantiated poetically in holding reverence for the pleasant austerity of its estimation.

In step with the runagate period of their own introspective reflection, the reader may compare each itinerant figure—in this case Wilhelm as well as Zarathustra—in regarding the extent to which each pivots in apprehension as if to re-open the question of their continuing withdrawal. Indeed their respective courses—even as their extensions may appear to be laid out beyond and before the preliminary apprehension of their formative exposition of a novel thought's renunciative standing—appear only to withdraw then from their own terminal or momentous conclusion. As if by the tenuous entanglement of a luminescent trace, by whose apprehension the otherwise isolated grasping of thought's pinnacles and descents is invited to draw itself as if over—if not also by, before, and askance from—itself, Nietzsche may also be said to seize the opportunity left open by the discretion of Wilhelm's thought as he gives to Zarathustra the expression of a thought whose formative relation may have remained otherwise infinitely or absolutely undisclosed in Wilhelm's reflection. In tracing each itinerant figure's way of grappling with the questions concerning the poetic constraints of formative encounters and their extensive relation as they are thus born in the gravity of nominal precarity, the concern presented by the *Shandeism* of language's self-assurance may thus be reopened in returning to the extensive question Felix poses: “*Wie nennt man diesen Stein?*” (Goethe 241). Once more, thought's precarious entanglement in nominal relations is exposed precisely, as the case turns out, that Wilhelm does not know the name of the stone [*Ich weiß nicht, versetzte Wilhelm*] (*ibid*), but is nevertheless able to identify its composition in remembering the common convention that

gives to it the name ‘fool’s gold’ [*ich erinnere mich, daß es die Leute Katzensgold nennen*] (*ibid*). Grasping further to explain his logic as to the original provenance of this nominal form, Wilhelm then suggests his seemingly self-apparent reason that people hold cats by this convention to be as false as the spurious value of the shimmering substance gilding its form [*weil es falsch ist und man die Katzen auch für falsch hält*] (*ibid*).⁵

One might suggest that even the coincidental intersection of Felix’s question with Wilhelm’s thoughts of precarity and apprehension may demonstrate precisely the question underlining the poetic extension given over to the possibility of shared communion: namely, the question concerns what reverence is to be given for the fatal precarities one may imagine in the terms of their exchange, which must be overcome if nominal relations are yet to be commonly sustained. In this way, the reader may perceive that Goethe stages this scene to concern the reader’s treating with language in an exposition of the validity with which one’s thought partakes in evaluation, even insofar as it concerns the giving and taking of a name. As if to bear the weight of this insight, Felix pockets the stone—almost as if, in its holding, it could serve as a mnemonic fetish whose persistent weight would stand as physical testament to Felix’ otherwise ephemeral assertion of his will to remember the adage going forward [*das will ich mir merken, sagte der Sohn, und steckte den Stein in die lederne Reisetasche*] (Goethe 241). Here, already in the breadth of each line’s respective opening, Goethe demonstrates the poetics of differential encounters insofar as, where Wilhelm and Felix both engage in an act of observation, thoughtful engagement, and notation, the forms of their undertaking appear at first and at the same time so

⁵ The significance of this conceived falseness of the feline awakens further insight into Nietzsche’s ruminations on the fallacious truths given by one’s perception, which Nietzsche invokes through Zarathustra’s speech concerning the possibility of untainted perception [*Von der unbefleckten Erkenntnis*]: “Jedes Redlichen Schritt redet; die Katze aber stiehlt sich über den Boden weg. Siehe, katzenhaft kommt der Mond daher und unredlich. – Dieses Gleichnis gebe ich euch empfindsamen Heuchlern, euch, den ‘Rein-Erkennenden!’ Euch heiße *ich* – Lüsterne!” (156).

different as to cause their fundamental analogousness to escape one's notice. The reader may at this point also expand their uncertainty of the apparently straightforward remark in considering the ambiguity of Felix's manner of uptake regarding the exchange in his own turn. The text's relation of Felix's bearing not only evokes his will to carry the insight going forward, but also conjures echoes of the eternal contest of will and destiny, as if in echo of Diderot and his master through the determined conditions of formative encounters, just as one's identity becomes entangled with the conditions of their relation with another. As if Wilhelm were himself unable to reconcile in this place the contentious entanglement of his thought's pinnacles and depths with that concern borne hence in Felix's question of measure, Felix's inquisitive nature would attest also—as if in recapitulation—to the Shandean conditions of thought according to whose constitutive form one may approach an encounter or relate to another's approaching constituency, whatever form that may take. In a name, bearing the question of the precarities of determined values, the question of nominal apprehension would oblige the responsible or critical thinker to contemplate the extensive measures towards which one ought to sustain reverence—perhaps in one's travails to attain new heights. This question would extend, in turn, to the pinnacles and pitfalls given to the benefit of one's measuring of formative encounters, according to which one's traversal of common straits becomes composed and construed in the common extensions of each substantive encounter.

To ponder Wilhelm's discretionary thought at this stage requires stepping beyond the minute form of its presentation, even as the text's entanglement in the question of nominal abstrusion renders the terms and conditions of mutual exchange anew, through a spurious yet practical form.⁶ In taking part and thereby skirting around, glancing off, and parting ways with

⁶ The reader is reminded of the basic practicality of marketable repetition, as this dissertation discusses in its engagement with the representation of Jacque's familial relations and the abhorrence of repetition he inherits from his grandfather's concerning demands.

whichever course this prominent point may lay claim to, this encounter may however be recapitulated in the spurring-ahead of the narrative. The reader may take another point in the third book of Wilhelm's *Wanderjahre* in a certain sense as a constitutive return to the relation of the idea of the risk contained in thought's inheritance of poetic forms. This risk entails, namely, that in being free to expose the extensive or fraught limits of significant meaning borne in the contentious matter of ideas, contradiction would not only prevent any practical navigation of the passage in general, but also thereby exposes the uncertain constitution of one's own being. It is interesting to note furthermore that this interrelational apprehension of the poetic gravity of language is given in the third book not through Wilhelm's own relation, but rather through the interposition of *Lenardo's Tagebuch*. Previously, the reader encounters Wilhelm's private notation only insofar as the narrative writes *about* it, without however consigning itself to any further disclosure even at the hands of the narrator. In this interjecting place, the reader encounters a textual representation of Lenardo's inner thoughts, through which the voice of the narrator is disquieted in a different manner even as they reproduce Lenardo's words:

Eine große Reihe Saumrosse zog vorbei, eh' ich mich hätte ankleiden und ihnen zuvoreilen können. Nun erfuhr ich auch, meinen Weg antretend, gar bald wie unangenehm und verdrießlich solche Gesellschaft sei. Das monotone Geläute betäubt die Ohren; das zu beiden Seiten weit über die Tiere hinausreichende Gepäck (sie trugen diesmal große Säcke Baumwolle) streift bald einerseits an die Felsen, und wenn das Tier, um dieses zu vermeiden, sich gegen die andere Seite zieht, so schwebt die Last über dem Abgrund, dem Zuschauer Sorge und Schwindel erregend, und, was das Schlimmste ist, in beiden Fällen bleibt man gehindert an ihnen vorbei zu schleichen und den Vortritt zu gewinnen. (Goethe 568-569)

In going out into the world whose terms have been settled according to the markets of human activity, one is subject already to expectations of proper demeanor and relation. Already before Lenardo may don the vestments requisite for common interaction, the drawing of others' labor precedes his own entry into the noisy affair. As much as these actors share here a common path,

one's own traversal is discomfited and irked by the activity and labor of those wayfarers whose society they join. Interestingly, it is not a cacophony of disparate tones which grates so unprecedentedly on Lenardo's ears, but rather the monotony of the peeling bells—by which the shepherd or merchant tracks the animals bearing the burden of man's marketable wares—that Lenardo admits he nearly lost all auditory sense. The reader might also read into the fact that these pack animals are carrying sacks of cotton—the product not only of human labor but also the material which one employs in the production of textiles—and lead themselves into a metaphorical consideration of the fabrication of tales or—as one says metaphorically of the magic of fiction—spinning threads. In this passage of fabric, then, one may begin to read again the risk comprising language's fanciful flight: in the partaking of common passages, one treads amidst and along with others whose traversal cannot be overtaken without plunging oneself over the side of the narrow channel.

Through tracing the entangled tangents of next and lasts, this chapter marks a further step towards sustaining the poetic questions of language in the Shandean relation of what amounts to the nominal encounter of poetic forms.⁷ The question concerning the uniformity of such an act of reproduction is that there lies, in every emulating formulation, also a fundamental differentiation that avails itself *of* the original form's nominal poetics—through which the form becomes either its own novelty or contradiction. The practical communion which is at stake in this question of reverence for the *Shandeism* of thought's *reading* of formative encounter is demonstrated in Wilhelm's epistolary reflection to Natalie:

Nun ist endlich die Höhe erreicht, die Höhe des Gebirgs, das eine mächtigere
Trennung zwischen uns setzen wird, als der ganze Landraum bisher. Für mein

⁷ The reader is reminded of the manner in which, when *Tristram* declares that his use of the word 'Nose' means nothing in any place throughout the text other than 'Nose,' the reader yet senses the poetic differentiation that lends itself to the word's repeated use so as to depict, in every turn, a novel take of its representation.

Gefühl ist man noch immer in der Nähe seiner Lieben, so lange die Ströme von uns zu ihnen laufen. Heute kann ich mir noch einbilden, der Zweig, den ich in den Waldbach werfe, könnte in wenigen Tagen vor Ihren Garten landen; und so sendet unser Geist seine Bilder, das Herz seine Gefühle bequemer abwärts. Aber drüben, fürchte ich, stellt sich eine Scheidewand der Einbildungskraft und der Empfindung entgegen. Doch ist das vielleicht nur eine voreilige Besorglichkeit: denn es wird wohl auch drüben nicht anders sein als hier. (Goethe 245)

At first take, the certain assurance with which Wilhelm steps forth into his itinerant period is so vivid that one would be forgiven for overlooking the doubt plaguing the form of his own self-assurance. The reader may catch note of the trepidation against which Wilhelm afterward steels himself in remarking upon his first conclusive observation with which Wilhelm embarks also onto the page: that it is precisely in arriving—finally [*endlich*], as if demarcating there a conclusive point from which their storied domains will have been established to be separate—upon the elevated peaks. Indeed it troubles Wilhelm expressly that this range [*das Gebirge*] will establish an even more powerful separation of the couple than all the already-traversed domains put together. That the connection he feels with Natalie will continue to be sustained through language becomes, for Wilhelm, the absolution of his longing apprehensions. Indeed, Wilhelm falls upon language's word that it will transcend the distance separating individuals just as if it, also, constituted a channel akin to the physical current of the stream which the reader might presume Wilhelm knows—if but by the cartographical trace of his journey—to lead one to the other. It is yet in consolation of the reality of their separation that Wilhelm lays his worries to rest in conceiving how, if one but follows the steps leading towards an already undergone conclusion, the heights of one's separation may be rendered as ephemeral there as any formative proximity. Just then, the reader might also pause at the composure with which Wilhelm states that this sense of connection is but a feeling [*Gefühl*], which he then recapitulates to be rather something he imagines according to his own fancy [*mir einbilden*]. In

the consignment [*senden*] of images through which one's self may be construed, it is comforting at first to Wilhelm—just as it is for the reader—that the nominal consignment of identity unto representative images may be, in fact, the case according to which one's sentimentalities find ground [*landen*] in the garden of one's solicited relations. However, in the same comparative form of the comfort [*bequem*] derived from such a sense, the reader recognizes that—in so consigning themselves to the representative images of language—one's spirit is only more comfortably sent-off than it would be otherwise. This, in turn, begs the question as to whether there could be a *recognizable* condition in which one's presence were not so comfortably broadcast. In this turn, one recognizes that both possibilities are intrinsic to the inherent directionality of relation, insofar as that which is furthered in relation rather descends or declines through meandering channels, whose diversions are not always certain [*abwärts*]. Indeed, Wilhelm's distress comes to a point in the indeterminacy concerning *where* this sending off of thought takes place. Where Wilhelm's invocation of a determinable locality of thought's presence is rather reminiscent of Diderot's likening of the upward glance to Jacques' compulsive appeal to thought's aggravated entanglement with a prescriptive sense of celestial predetermination [*drüben*], Wilhelm is accordingly overcome by *fear* [*er fürcht*]. As if drawn from a sense of mortal dread, he recognizes that there is something like a dividing veil [*Scheidewand*] that separates the images of one's thought [*Einbildungskraft*] from the derivation of their own sensation [*Empfindung*]. As the consignment of words gives itself over to the separation of one's own thought from the images it construes of the world in order to represent the sense of its being among others in any way, thought's conception of this division comes to constitute the very form to which its representation is subject. As the reader may remark from out of Wilhelm's terminology, thought conceives of its own relation in such a manner as to posit

its being on opposing sides of a confrontation [*sich entgegen stellen*]. The recursive reader might note furthermore the haste with which Wilhelm then turns away from what he refers to as a precipitous [*voreilig*] solicitude [*Besorglichkeit*] as he then falls back upon a teleological sense of definite relation, whereby that which is written on one side of the consigning agreement is likely or rather [*wohl*] no different from that which is at hand [*nicht anders sein als hier*].

The reader is invited to walk along with this consideration of the tension according to which the grasping attitudes of sentient beings purport to claim knowledge of truthful matters. The tension, one may reflect within themselves, is constituted in the self-same otherness according to which one's being is realized in its poetic consignment of another. Nietzsche, in turn, picks up the form of this tension and bears it further. As if signaling the extensive entanglement of his own thoughts with those of another, it is significant that in the titling of Nietzsche's own work concerning the conditions to which the bearing of thought become subject, Nietzsche would also dedicate the first publication of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* to the memory of Voltaire's own nominal apotheosis: "Dem Andenken Voltaire's geweiht zur Gedächtniss-Feier seines Todestages, des 30. Mai 1778" (1). The remembrance with which Nietzsche would thus interrupt the opening of his own work is inscribed upon the title page as if thereby also to subsume the entangled thought of another—under the conditional designation of substantive content that Nietzsche names, in calling his work *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*—among the conditional forms through which Nietzsche would thus invoke his own thoughts concerning that which is all-too human. In opening thus with the sharing of reverence on the occasion of the anniversary of Voltaire's death, Nietzsche's writings concerning the all-too human condition of thought's apprehension comes to concern thought's own properties. Insofar as any claim born by thought's attribution comes to be entangled with the

conditions of their substantive matter, understanding—in a word—comes to be but nominally grasped through a dialogic relation that itself troubles the formative limits of its own conclusive point.⁸ We turn thus again as Nietzsche picks up his own ruminations concerning the matter of the human condition insofar as that which is purported to be the scientific production of knowledge is entangled in the conveyance of linguistic forms. Indeed, language itself comes to stand in place for this purported scholarship [*Die Sprache als vermeintliche Wissenschaft*]:

Die Bedeutung der Sprache für die Entwicklung der Cultur liegt darin, dass in ihr der Mensch eine eigene Welt neben die andere stellte, einen Ort, welchen er für so fest hielt, um von ihm aus die übrige Welt aus den Angeln zu heben und sich zum Herrn derselben zu machen. Insofern der Mensch an die Begriffe und Namen der Dinge als an *aeternae veritates* durch lange Zeitstrecken hindurch geglaubt hat, hat er sich jenen Stolz angeeignet, mit dem er sich über das Thier erhob: er meinte wirklich in der Sprache die Erkenntnis der Welt zu haben. Der Sprachbilder war

⁸ In tying his own thought to the philosophy of Voltaire, Nietzsche signals the entanglement of literary forms within thought's conclusive expression insofar as Voltaire was not only a reader and proponent of a constellation of others' interlinguistic philosophical works, which he himself absorbed and synthesized in a manner that gives itself to Peyton Richter and Ilona Ricardo's description of Voltaire as a "poet-turned-philosopher" (Richter 94), but also insofar as Voltaire's favoring of the fictional *conte* would place the linguistic forms of his thought's express relation in a position to question whether there were in fact some properties of being whose encounter—when grasped but through the measure of empirical claims, judgments, and determinations—becomes formulated rather through the *nominal* conditions of thought, whose extensions are yet subject to being overlooked or mistaken entirely. As Roger Pearson prefaces in his reading of Voltaire's *contes philosophiques*, it is not without a certain sense of a constitutive paradox by which Voltaire would come to be known not for his tragedies and epic verse, but rather most notably for his work within the formative relation of a *conte*: "It has sometimes been thought a paradox that Voltaire should owe his enduring place in the literary canon to his *contes* while those works from which he derived his literary reputation during his own lifetime, namely his tragedies and his epic verse, have since fallen into neglect. No less paradoxical, it would seem, is the fact that he should have written *contes* at all, and that he should have achieved some of his most persuasive feats of enlightenment in a genre which he associated with foolishness and deceit" (Pearson 3). Or, as Richter and Ricardo reflect in their own turning to the "*Philosophy Fictionalized*" of Voltaire's *contes* that assume "a sceptical and quizzical attitude toward humanity, [arousing] the sense of wonderment over the spectacle of human life; [and dealing] with questions that usually were included within the domain of the sage—freedom and fate, truth and falsehood, reality and illusion, good and evil, and so on" (119). In reading the forms that constitute Nietzsche's own all-too-human relation of the substantive matters that concern the apprehension of one's own being in thought, the reader is similarly invited to think along the terms of the extent to which *fictions* are complicit in one's arrival at any conclusive thought or determination.

nicht so bescheiden, zu glauben, dass er den Dingen eben nur Bezeichnungen gebe, er drückte vielmehr, wie er wähnte, das höchste Wissen über die Dinge mit den Worten aus; in der That ist die Sprache die erste Stufe der Bemühung um die Wissenschaft. Der *Glaube an die gefundene Wahrheit* ist es auch hier, aus dem die mächtigsten Kraftquellen geflossen sind. Sehr nachträglich — jetzt erst — dämmert es den Menschen auf, dass sie einen ungeheuren Irrthum in ihrem Glauben an die Sprache propagiert haben. Glücklicherweise ist es zu spät, als dass es die Entwicklung der Vernunft, die auf jenem Glauben beruht, wieder rückgängig machen könnte. — Auch die *Logik* beruht auf Voraussetzungen, denen Nichts in der wirklichen Welt entspricht, z.B. auf der Voraussetzung der Gleichheit von Dingen, der Identität des selben Dinges in verschiedenen Punkten der Zeit: aber jene Wissenschaft entstand durch den entgegengesetzten Glauben (dass es dergleichen in der wirklichen Welt allerdings gebe). Ebenso steht es mit der *Mathematik*, welche gewiss nicht entstanden wäre, wenn man von Anfang an gewusst hätte, dass es in der Natur keine exact gerade Linie, keinen wirklichen Kreis, kein absolutes Grössenmaass gebe” (Nietzsche, *Menschliches* 30-31)

Indeed, the pointed prominence of language’s own portent [*Bedeutung*] for the development of society *lies* [*liegt*], as Nietzsche explains, insofar as one proprietary world is thereby exposed as if it were placed next to another in the form of language as well as in the culture it thereby promulgates [*dass in ihr der Mensch eine eigene Welt neben die andere stellte*]. Through Nietzsche’s words, the reader may also gain insight to the problem that so distresses Wilhelm in his letter to Natalie: that, however he may imagine his words to bear his presence to her as if it were, then, as if he were himself in a place next to her, this proximity is ever but conceived in one’s mind. The folly of thought’s practice becomes evident, furthermore, precisely as Nietzsche describes how thought would establish in language a substantive *location* [*Ort*], which one is then capable of holding firmly and unwaveringly [*fest*]. Within this motive, we may also begin to read the critical mistake to which one’s steadfast apprehension is subject: entangled within thought’s bearing is also its nominal overreach. Insofar as thought’s definitive grasping of knowledge arises out of a gesture that purports—in its stepping from the angular conditions through which one’s own world is set apart from another—one may maintain themselves to be *the* exacting authority over that domain. Through the sustenance of thought’s poetics, however,

one exposes their thought's own continuing entanglement in a relation from which one's claims cannot be fully extricated—as if to then stand entirely above or over [*ausgehoben*] the worldly matter of its consideration—if but for the apotheosis of one's own mortality.

In grasping such ideas as if locating them by the act of naming, Nietzsche continues, the thinking being comes to *believe* that the forms with which one grapples assume the demeanor of eternal truths [*aeternae veritates*], which one in their own domineering attitude believes thus to hold true precisely according to its formative bearing across time, and indeed one might never be given cause to think to expose to a dread fatalism their own grasp of the state of such a commonly-held truth. It is with *pride* [*Stolz*] therefore that humans exalt themselves over animals insofar as they actually think [*wirklich meinen*] that they have understanding of the world because of language [*in der Sprache die Erkenntniss der Welt zu haben*]. It is with a lack of humility furthermore, as Nietzsche elaborates, that the conceiver of language [*Der Sprachbildner*] claims not to give mere sketches [*Bezeichnungen*] of the objects thusly grasped, but rather that one all the more *expresses*, in so *outlining* the limits of a prescription against delusional reference [*wähnen*], the highest form of knowledge about a thing in so many words.

This is not to say that the mistaken form of thought is one to be fully eschewed. Rather, it is this very resolute belief that truth has been found [*Der Glaube an die gefundene Wahrheit*]*—as Nietzsche emphasizes in italics—*from which the most powerful or keenest [*mächtigst*] sources of sapient virtue in craft and faculty [*Kraftquellen*] has flown. All the same, it is only belatedly [*nachträglich*]*—as if following much reflection upon the carrying of heavy concerns—*that such formative thought begins to bear insight into the immense error [*ungeheuren Irrthum*] that one propagates in their belief in language. This is not to say, however, that tending to error in such a formative manner is something to be entirely disparaged. Indeed it is in a happy way

[*glücklicherweise*] for us who are concerned over the logic of thought, Nietzsche asserts, that it is too late for the development of logical thinking to take back its belief in definite truth. Thus is it that the inherent parting ways with an exacting or immortalizing apprehension that logic touches upon principles drawn from nothing that speaks to anything in the real world, or whose accord in the real world speaks from nothing which can itself be found therein [*Auch die Logik beruht auf Voraussetzungen, denen Nichts in der wirklichen Welt entspricht*]. The question of poetics which thus troubles the firm grasping of knowledge in any moment is that very question of nominal identity, which, as Nietzsche explains, holds firmly to the improvable belief that an object is the same as itself—in possessing what we call an identity that persists across different points of time. To return briefly by way of reminder to Goethe's poetic word: "Wüßte ich kaum genau zu glauben/ob ich es noch selber bin" (8). The connection between the errors of language and the errors of mathematical equation becomes, in this way, more vivid: if it were the case that in nature there exists no perfectly straight line nor any genuine circle, so too is it the case that the containers under which one calls an identifiable object by name cannot be said to be genuine representations of the being this nominal category so marginally depicts.

The reader may remember that a central concern of the *Shandeism* of thinking pertains to the manner in which the representation of the clear rationality of even astute thinkers is imperiled, like *Toby's* frustrated attempts to convey the story of his wound, by words themselves. In posing the question concerning the extension of reverence for such Shandean conditions of nominal understanding, the poet exposes the proprietary claims of sapient beings to which the apprehension of formative knowledge is subject. In this sense, the poetic thinker is tasked or invited to defend their exposition of conditional faults insofar as they would simultaneously endanger the certainty with which one otherwise takes account of common affairs. It follows that

the subject—whose apprehension passes through poetic forms of relation—must also account for their arriving at conclusive judgments, while being open to or availing themselves of the further creation, development, or exposition of opposing propositions as they are born within the relation of a common form.

CHAPTER FIVE

Sustaining Reverence for the Feudal Animus of Thought's Inter-Discursivity: *Shandean*

Imaginings; or, the Perennial Threads of Substantive Contention

Der Gründliche.
*Ein Forscher Ich? Oh Spart diess Wort! —
Ich bin nur schwer — somanche Pfund'.
Ich falle, falle immerfort
Und endlich auf den Grund!*
(Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 35)

In tracing the nominal apprehensions of Shandean thinking, it is important to remember that, in moving to give a defining representation of even a single thing or being, one must ever speak away from the object of one's thought in speaking towards it through its relation with others. Although the interposition of Nietzsche's linguistic theory has already accompanied myriad reflections within this work, as it would also concern the nominal constraints of thought's definitive relation, it has yet been but as the unassuming shadow of an amicably contrarian friend: despite the preliminary staging of constellating encounters traced in this work's own development of Nietzsche's resonance with the texts this thesis holds in common, this work has yet to make manifest the interpositioning of the conceptual *Shandeism* whose passages yet constitute an intercurative penetration of *Nietzsche's* own ruminations upon language's entanglement in thought's constitution. That is to say, it bears investigating further Nietzsche's own relation concerning the extent to which the tenuousness of thought would constitute the digestive function of a knowledge-collecting subject, whose intermingling glance would risk otherwise becoming overlooked in the performative certainty of its everyday practice.¹ For

¹ The reader is encouraged to recollect this dissertation's discussion of Sterne's take on the Shandean digestion of thought's terms insofar as thought's dialectic conclusions consist ever of an accumulation of substantive matters, a rendering of them into another form entirely, and their subsequent reformulation along with the exposition of significant remainders.

Nietzsche's own part—and in a word—we recognize from out of his ruminations in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* the bounded recapitulation of a renunciative motive:

Der Entsagende. — Was thut der Entsagende? Er strebt nach einer höheren Welt, er will weiter und ferner und höher fliegen, als alle Menschen der Bejahung, — *er wirft Vieles weg*, was seinen Flug beschweren würde, und Manches darunter, was ihm nicht unwerth, nicht unliebsam ist: er opfert es seiner Begierde zur Höhe. Dieses Opfern, dieses Wegwerfen ist nun gerade Das, was allein sichtbar an ihm wird: darnach giebt man ihm den Namen des Entsagenden, und als dieser steht er vor uns, eingehüllt in seine Kapuze und wie die Seele eines härenen Hemdes. Mit diesem Effect, den er auf uns macht, ist er aber wohl zufrieden: er will vor uns seine Begierde, seinen Stolz, seine Absicht, *über* uns rauszufliegen, verborgen halten. — Ja! Er ist klüger, als wir dachten, und so höflich gegen uns — dieser Bejahende! Denn das ist er gleich uns, auch indem er entsagt. (Nietzsche, *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 74)

In reading Nietzsche's recapitulation of the idea of the renunciant, his thought becomes entangled with Goethe's. In our own reading of this entanglement, the question that the principles of Shandean thinking portend for our reading here concerns the extent to which the motivation driving the practice of the renunciant, and the forms representing their timely relation, align with the relative forms of *all* who concern themselves with the looming prospect of achieving a higher pinnacle. In reading through a passage for oneself, so too does the reader *elevate* that which persists or is subsumed entirely between a given text and its reading, even as the sheer will of the renunciant's flight would set the bearing-forth of the form common to both yet further apart from the content of a mere affirmation—whether that be constituted in the pointed heights of forms already attained, or of those *yet* to be affirmed [*alle Menschen der Bejahung*].

Within this impulse to strive for the lofty ideals of an elevated understanding, the reader may continue to trace the significance of this conceptual flight-taking that would accompany the practice of those endeavouring to envision even the possibility of yet further heights. This *renunciative* drive thus insists that the *burden* with which the visionary must contend—should

the concept of their vision move to do anything whatsoever—is constituted within the very substantive bearing immanent to the matter of formative thought as it would affirm the evidence of its original formative sense: insofar as that which would weigh down or trouble [*beschweren*] this ascendent and broadening vision *also* fuels the discontent of a plaintiff's complaining objection [*beschweren*], the renunciant must first move to unpack this substantive divisiveness if the conception of their vision is to take flight. In the daring attempt to risk the prospect of the yet unaffirmed, or to uphold even theoretically that which may have been previously omitted—or in spite of that which another would outright deny or preclude according to theoretical fancies all their own—the renunciant casts off not only those matters whose affirmative burden weighs upon their fluttering body most heavily, but is also sentenced to sacrifice to a formative abridgment—at the altar of their own vision of a new apogee—portions of practiced expression whose relation the renunciant might still find to be neither unworthy or inamicable, nor disagreeable or unpleasant [*nicht unwerth, nicht unliebsam*]. In the act of renunciation, one thereby exposes the sempiternal agonism of the drive towards a pointed eminence that then falls away from itself as if under the weighted tract of a centering gravity.

In the bearing out of a novel narrative, one author may represent this or another formative encounter, whereby the definite relations of its multifarious content take part in passing through their own Shandean turns by selecting from the collection of myriad transpiring forms. That is to say, the author, like *Hafen Slawkenbergius*, dialecticizes the forms of their own reading through the representation of their own thought or narrative.² In so doing, the author deals in the performative grasping of the definitive limits of their subject's determination, and their

² As this dissertation discusses in its chapter on the Shandean account of *Hafen Slawkenbergius*, Tristram maintains the authoritative expertise of *Slawkenbergius* precisely because of the manner in which he manages to collate all manner of texts and then dilute them into a dialectical and masterful rendition (III.xxxviii, 185).

reformulation may appear to have renounced certain expressions, formulations, or modes. In keeping with this renunciative motif, so too does the novel form avail itself of the force of its own sacrificial practice, if it does not succumb to it. Indeed, as Wilhelm's own renunciative conditions formulate the rudiments of the encounters constituted through his journeyman years, so too is it the condition of his *sacrifices*—the domesticity from which he is sentenced to regularly withdraw—that become precisely most apparent in his renunciative comportment. At the same time, the dispositional partaking in a renunciative gesture that thereby becomes all that may be apparent of the renunciant's person [*dieses Wegwerfen ist nun gerade Das, was allein sichtbar an ihm*] thus singularly convolutes the determinable unity of the renunciant's being, to whose practical relation the renunciant has sacrificed their own former contingencies if but for the appearance that the renunciant's conception may step apart from others' affirmations. As if the omission to which representation is subject were rather a paralipsis—whereby the reader is pointed to recognize that, precisely, which is otherwise precluded in the express constraints of discourse—the renunciant, in their similar move to cast off an apprehension which would burden their own striving, cannot thus escape an intrinsic entanglement with those same burdens and weighted conceptions, from which the user of language would seek deliverance—*or*; in which they would find affirmation. In the act of renunciation, one otherwise sees, precisely, how this representative act, entangled as it is in a gesture of selection and jettisoning, amounts to the creative establishment of a distancing drive against—yet sustained and developing already within—the gravitational force of the practical foundations of common relations.³ To cast away

³ As per one of Sterne's open criticisms of thought's *Shandeism*, the weight of the preliminary foundations of thought runs the risk of madness and nonsense in its very making good on the quality of understanding, which sees the foundations that have been previously grounded as if to form a vivid path, the grade of whose track bears down upon itself under the pressures of its repeated use. As *Tristram* opines, one *may* take another's word thus in all of its sense and nonsense, but the sense of such thoroughfare is not itself already intractable merely by virtue of its being given to our use and practiced tradition. Rather, it is all the more worthy of scrutiny

or sustain that which encumbers the elevation of one's thinking becomes not an absolute disposal of substantive commonalities, but rather an establishment of a disposition that, although conceived in one's own imagining, avails itself of an entanglement of immanent self-otherness that is thus sustained in one's very own formative being, and which then stands in as stark relief as the shadow's outline that cuts the scenery apart from one's own feet.

The relevance of the flighty movements of winged creatures to the representation of thought's formal entanglement is worth bearing prolonged consideration. Our own interest in this comparison may be capitalized upon additionally in taking note of the text which Nietzsche appends to the subsequent editions of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* insofar as the reader finds, in this form, a poetic return to the aphoristic expression of Nietzsche's thoughts concerning the pursuit of knowledgeable understanding. In curtailing the review of his own aphoristic contemplation of the conditions to which the pursuit of knowledge is subject, Nietzsche thus represents his ruminations through a series of songs concerning the Outlaw Prince or Prince of Outlaws—the “Lieder des Prinzen Vogelfrei.” By its nominal appellation, Nietzsche directs the first composition towards *Goethe*:

Das Unvergängliche
Ist nur dein Gleichniss!
Gott der Verfängliche
Ist Dichter-Erschlechniss...

Welt-Rad, das rollende,
Streift Ziel auf Ziel:

should one be open to stepping over its trained ruts and channels: “Well, you may take my word, that nine parts in ten of a man's sense or his nonsense, his successes and miscarriages in this world depend upon their motions and activity, and the different tracks and trains you put them into; so that when they are once set a-going, whether right or wrong, 'tis not a halfpenny matter,—away they go clattering like hey-go-mad; and by treading the same steps over and over again, they presently make a road of it, as plain and smooth as a garden-walk, which, when they are once used to, the Devil himself sometimes shall not be able to drive them off it” (Sterne I. i, 5).

Noth — nennt's der Grollende,
Der Narr nennt's — Spiel...

Welt-Spiel, das herrische,
Mischt Sein und Schein: —
Das Ewig-Närrische
Mischt *uns* — hinein!..."
(Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* 321)⁴

Through its own titular designation, it is apparent that the subject of Nietzsche's contemplation in these verses is the nominal representation of Goethe's own poetic being. At the same time, the very form of Nietzsche's poetic address betrays its own parody of Goethe's *Faust II*. In the giving over to Goethe a parody of his form, the reader is thus presented with a contradiction of the poet's words insofar as this most accomplished wordsmith is simultaneously characterized here as an individual beholden to the constraints of social institutions—as if he were in his command over language free as a bird or existing beyond the constraints of law [*Vogelfrei*]⁵—while recognizing also his firm entanglement in the titular duties of a feudal social order.⁵

⁴ This poetic rendition is interesting not only because of its address to Goethe, which likens the poet to a prince beyond laws, but also insofar as its form signals its own parodic rendition of the poem with which Goethe concludes the second part of the tragedy of *Faust*. Recollecting that Faust makes his famous deal with Mephistopheles so that he may continue his attainment of absolute understanding, it is telling that Nietzsche picks up the poet's equating of all fleeting forms to be but a parabolic allegory [*Alles Vergängliche/ist nur ein Gleichnis*] (364), whose absolution Faust finds only with the tragedy's conclusion. A lingering exposition of what the reader may gain in reading these texts together lends itself to further study, but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

⁵ The relation of feudal positions, entitlements, and duties permeates every text read through this dissertation, and it is therefore worth noting that what is at stake in their representation is precisely the question concerning whether there is a proper hierarchy or equivalence of one's terms that becomes figured through these narrative approaches. For our purposes in the reading of this poem, it is important to note that the combination of "Prinz" and "Vogelfrei" constitute a paradoxical identity of one who is simultaneously the heir to a conceived divine right of authority, or a principal elector thereof, as well as one who is as free as a bird from all duties of social relation in their being cast outside the protection of the law, passive structures of the city, or common exchange.

In a word, that which the user of language thus exchanges in their own expression is held up as an immutable being [*Das Unvergängliche*], whereby the majestic plurality of a name is ordained as if by divine right even as the one's proper form may be but defined according to the approximation of a comparable allegory or parable [*Gleichnis*] through which the sempiternality of words comes to be figured and related. The divinity to which mortals are thus subject in their apprehension of the sublime encounter in the presence of defined forms, and whose claim to parabolic recurrence would invoke the eternality of its being, becomes thus rather subject to the inveiglement of the poet [*Dichter-Erschlechniss*]. The immutable comes in this way to be related through a formative perpetuation of the definite in its returning upon itself just as the rolling-over of a celestial body draws itself ever onward and anew along the wheel of being [*Welt-Rad*]. Just as the orbit of a celestial body may be measured insofar as the rate at which it falls towards its centering body brings the two entangled bodies to miss one another in the recycling movements of their celestial dance, so too does the relation of nominal forms and their poetic representation expose the fact that a word merely grazes along the focus of the word's apprehension in relating and binding—by comparison and syllogism—its one trained conclusion with its next definitive end [*Streift Ziel auf Ziel*]. For those subject to the rolling-off of thundering terms [*grollen*], the practical necessity faced in the antagonistic grasping of emergent and rancorous conditions [*Noth—nennt's der Grollende*] as well as the playfulness of a nominal folly [*Der Narr nennt's—Spiel*] thus simultaneously constitute the constitutive ambiguity that rolls over the denomination of a representative form. In this respect, the world itself becomes something whose encounter also constitutes the most magisterial of games [*Welt-Spiel, das herrische*] insofar as even its own authoritative expression plays at mixing being with its nominal appearance [*Mischt Sein und Schein*]. In so doing, representation sustains itself thus as but an

eternal folly [*Das Ewig-Närrische*], whose constitutive entanglement in our own thinking of being plunges us into its turbulent mix even as it blends together the multifaceted sense of *ourselves* [*Mischt uns—hinein!*]. It is telling that—at the conclusion of each stanza’s graspable thought—the matter of each nominal expression, as well as the direction towards which its bearing may lead, is left to an elliptical ungraspability.

To pursue the significance of the manner by which Nietzsche stages the mortal drive to overcome the defined limits of one’s circumstantial being—not as a fatal error, but rather as a joyful problem comprising the knowledgeable pursuit of understanding [*eine fröhliche Wissenschaft*—invites a further recognition. The problem to which one’s understanding is subject lies in the fact that the nominal result of this pursuit represents itself as if it were thereby already enough to justify its conclusively doing away with that which, within itself, rolls-over and is overcome. The relation of this overcoming to one’s literary work lingers in Nietzsche’s reflections upon his own conclusions, which the reader may also trace. Nietzsche comes to present the second volume of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* as an *overcoming* of the first volume—indeed, of all his own previous work—that nevertheless stands, still, in print opposite to the first volume’s reproduction as if thus constituting the first volume’s shadow, or as if the first volume has become the contention borne hence within the work that comes after. In the feudal animus of encounter—by which the spirit of one’s representation is engaged in a relation of social orders [feudal], while being constituted also in a contention [feud]—each agonist is thus sentenced equally to being put apart from one another in a sharing of a fundamental distance, despite the varied disposition to which the relation of this distance becomes subject. The form according to which the feudal animus of encounter may be conceptualized is demonstrated along the lines of Nietzsche’s ruminations upon the constitution of humanity and in terms of their

transitional encounter of relation [*Der Mensch im Verkehr*]. Insofar as it constitutes a manifestation of one's own individual disposition towards a shared encounter, the textual representation of this equality in distance becomes an obsessive yearning [*Sucht*] that strains the bounds of its apprehension, and whose expression is as the dilution of a chemical secretion whose properties would risk overthrowing those of its precedent—as if to set itself upon new legs in the ruminating digestion within [*Verkleinern, Secretiren, Beinstellen*]:

Doppelte Art der Gleichheit. — Die sucht nach Gleichheit kann sich so äussern, dass man entweder alle Anderen zu sich herunterziehen möchte (durch Verkleinern, Secretiren, Beinstellen) oder sich mit Allen hinauf (durch Anerkennen, Helfen, Freude an fremdem Gelingen). (Nietzsche, *Menschliches*, 240)

In this manner by which a shared encounter is made into one's own hypothesis also arises the aporetic *contention* of the equality of those parties sharing in this encounter insofar as the properties of equation and comparison are double-charged in a form's representation through the grammatical copula of the verb by which one is said 'to be' or 'to remain.' Firstly, thought gives itself to our critical perusal in the critical poetics according to which the sense of one's own being and thought is sustained, wherein lies the dependent subsumption of encountered forms through a process of diminution [*Verkleinern*]. Here, the form given to one's apprehension is turned over to an effective dismantling or partitioning of the matter of its contention—whereby the representative form lends itself thereby also to the elliptical obscuration of whatever else may yet properly be included insofar as its membership or belonging to a whole is concerned. As if by the obduction of a rustling veil that renders the secretions of the myriad parts of one's encounter to be yet secreted still from others [*Secretiren*], the equations by which thought moves to apprehend the equivalence of forms may run the risk of becoming obsessed with another's supplantation [*Beinstellen*] as if by the tripping of another's legs [*Beinstellen*]. From this

perspective, one easily falls into a sense of a shared form of equality that would put one on opposing sides of a Hobbesian or zero-sum nature of relation; or, the potency of one's charge may express itself in the desire to achieve the greater of heights—as may only be achieved when its apotheosis serves to lift up those that strive also towards its pinnacle [*hinauf*]. In the face of this prospect of shared contention, one may also recognize that in the acknowledgement [*Anerkennen*] of a relation that disparate parties share towards a common object, one part helps another [*Helfen*], whereby the joy in the foreignness of another's contentious achievement [*Freude an fremden Gelingen*] may give rise also to a mutual elevation.

The contention of ideas—as of the nominal definition of a graspable entity—thus comes to be inextricably linked with the pursuit of higher understanding. According to Nietzsche, the disputational entanglement of understanding furthermore demonstrates an intrinsic deliberation of the human condition: “*Im Disput. — Wenn man zugleich einer anderen Meinung widerspricht und dabei seine eigene entwickelt, so verrückt gewöhnlich die fortwährende Rücksicht auf die andere Meinung die natürliche Haltung der eigenen: sie erscheint absichtlicher, schärfer, vielleicht etwas übertrieben*” (Nietzsche, *Menschliches* 251). According to Nietzsche's relation of that which is intrinsic to the act of disputing [*Im Disput*], the contradicting speech against [*Widerspruch*] another's formed opinion—while enabling the development of one's own opinion—also displaces, according to a practiced madness [*so verrückt gewöhnlich*], the natural bearing and comportment [*Haltung*] of one's own contrarian opinion in the retrospective perpetuation [*die fortwährende Rücksicht*] of the *other* opinion it would dispute. While the one may appear thus all the more subject to a careful deliberation where one would stand in sharper relief even if only by virtue of a modicum of exaggeration, the nominal ambiguity of pronominal reference *here* does not preclude the elevation of one opinion over the other. Nor is it certain that

language overcomes the paradox by which its regard, in looking ever backwards [*Rücksicht*], leads also ever onward.

Rather, in the contrarian disputation of opposing positions, the constitutive relation of thought to conditional measures of *images*, such as the sharpness of their relief, begins to problematize the entanglement of deliberated opinions with the faults inherent to the picturing of ideas insofar as this imaginative facility is entangled in the disputing representation of nominal forms. The incongruence of a momentary or Shandean apprehension with the elliptical totality of a sempiternal being thought would grasp thus lends itself to Nietzsche's comparison of this problem construed through the dominating authority of the portrait with which one represents nameable entities:

Tyrannie des Portraits. — Künstler und Staatsmänner, die schnell aus einzelnen Zügen das ganze Bild eines Menschen oder Ereignisses combiniren, sind am meisten dadurch ungerecht, dass sie hinterdrein verlangen, das Ereigniss oder der Mensch müsse wirklich so sein, wie sie es malten; sie verlangen geradezu, dass Einer so begabt, so verschlagen, so ungerecht sei, wie er in ihrer Vorstellung lebt. (*Menschliches* 252)

It is telling that Nietzsche's criticism of the tyranny of the portrait hinges upon, to an extent, the rash speed with which the artist and statesman combine individual and separate lines into a comprehensive image [*das ganze Bild*] of a person or an event. In *most* cases, Nietzsche continues, these assemblages are unjust—but precisely insofar as the artist or statesman desires, afterwards [*hinterdrein verlangen*], that the person or event so depicted would *have* to be as they are depicted in the image [*müsse wirklich so sein*]. This perspective is tyrannical precisely because the reader knows this to not be true in all cases. What's more, even should the image portray something factual, it is only ever a portion of all that its subject is, may have been, or will one day become. The portrait, however, remains tyrannical insofar as its representation would decree the absolute equivalence of its image. In our continued reading of Nietzsche, this chapter

thus moves to reflect further upon the extent to which the conditions to which the critical thinker is yet subject—in terms of their practice of critical departure in grasping that which they themselves come to apprehend rather as the constitution of a perennial distancing—may allow that even one's own contradictions may come to constitute the totality of their very comprehensible being.

In the perceived encounter with a text, one is yet confronted with their own Shandean relation of the constitutive forms that are given to thought's expression, and the Shandean thinker is left to ponder how—if at all—the competing approaches of an encounter or text are in any way reliable or consistent in the apprehension of a readable form when this form's definable limits only ever roll away in the elliptical play of their recurrence. Yet, within the very *Shandeism* of thought's extensive encounter also lies the possibility of its *approach*, without which it may not be apprehended by those whom it concerns: that is to say, the nominal form melds with each contrasting interjection of its myriad encounters and differentiating expressions. Indeed, Nietzsche describes the intercurivity that is drawn from out of innermost thought [*Aus der innersten Erfahrung des Denkers*] (*Menschliches* 389) as an extensive condition of humanity insofar as its members strive to grasp that which their momentary encounter allows the reader to partake in the sublimity of abstraction when faced with the ultimately unfathomable. The *Shandeism* of thought's mediating encounter is thus reflected in Nietzsche's opening of the innermost experience of the thinking being through the suggestion of the mere possibility—or the question thereof—that one's thought may make use of an inherently *contentious* extension, even concerning one's own being in time:

Nichts wird dem Menschen schwerer, als eine Sache unpersönlich zu fassen: ich meine, in ihr eben eine Sache und *keine Person* zu sehen; ja man kann fragen, ob es ihm überhaupt möglich ist, das Uhrwerk seines personenbildenden, personendichtenden Triebes auch nur einen Augenblick auszuhängen. Verkehrt er

doch selbst mit *Gedanken*, und seien es die abstractesten, so, als wären es Individuen, mit denen man kämpfen, an die man sich anschliessen, welche man behüten, pflegen, aufnähren müsse. (Nietzsche, *Menschliches* 389)

It would seem thought must first contend with the initially apparent simplicity of its function.

That is, against the initial encounter of thought's form as a seemingly natural givenness of form, as if it goes without saying, nothing in fact becomes more difficult than for one to take the object of inquiry as an impersonal thing, whose grasping can thus but fall to the ground of its own manifest encounter. That is to say, in the grasping of one's thought, the object of their apprehension is mixed up with the personal relations which one attributes to it. Nothing *becomes* more burdensome for the *thinking* person [*Nichts wird dem Menschen schwerer*], however, than to grasp [*fassen*] something impersonally [*unpersönlich*]. That is to say, it burdens the critical thinker insofar as they cannot help but see in that matter [*Sache*] something personified. In being able to ask of oneself whether it would be at all possible for one to hang up [*aushängen*] the clockwork mechanism of their impulsive personification of matters, to fashion images and compositions of another in and of itself for even but one moment, Nietzsche rather resurrects the meaning here of '*Sache*' to convey the intimated matter of a contentious struggle: "*Individuen mit denen man kämpfen müsse.*" The feuding material of an object's apprehension thus perennially poses the question, as when one apprehends another's intimations of a concern, 'what's the matter?'

It interests us here as readers of a Shandean impulse to consider the relation of the intrinsic contention of ideas to the very practice of a critical reading of the passages whose text one must pass through in the pursuit of higher understanding. As Nietzsche opens the subject of the inner experience of the thinking being in furtherance to the matter of our inquiry, we may read for ourselves the process according to which one's thought approaches novel content:

Belauern und belauschen wir uns nur selber, in jenen Minuten, wo wir einen uns neuen Satz hören oder finden. Vielleicht missfällt er uns, weil er so trotzig, so selbstherrlich dasteht: unbewusst fragen wir uns, ob wir ihm nicht einen Gegensatz als Feind zur Seite ordnen, ob wir ihm ein ‘Vielleicht’, ein ‘Mitunter’ anhängen können; selbst das Wörtchen ‘wahrscheinlich’ giebt uns eine Genugtuung, weil es die persönlich lästige Tyrannei des Unbedingten bricht. Wenn dagegen jener neue Satz in milderer Form einherzieht, fein duldsam und demütig und dem Widerspruche gleichsam in die Arme sinkend, so versuchen wir es mit einer andern Probe unsere Selbstherrlichkeit: wie, können wir diesem schwachen Wesen nicht zu Hülfe kommen, es streicheln und nähren, ihm Kraft und Fülle, ja Wahrheit und selbst Unbedingtheit geben? Ist es möglich, uns elternhaft oder ritterlich oder mitleidig gegen dasselbe zu benehmen? (Nietzsche, *Menschliches* 389)

Precisely in the moment in which a cognitive sense is presented in the call of a newly found sentence, it is rather curious that through this encounter—rather than primarily perceiving the content of yonder novelty—one would instead overhear [*belauschen*] or observe [*belauern*] *oneself*. What’s more, within this self-reflection provided by the encounter with a novel expression, it is as if one were also engaged in a speculative review of oneself—conducted as if one were lurking in some remote vantage, or listening privately from a secret or concealed position displaced from the very matter of observation. Contingent to this condition of self-observation is the very possibility that the form of this other presence displeases us on account of its overbearing or high-handed [*selbstherrlich*] standing, which appears to spite that of our own. Indeed, its exteriority spurs the observer to *speculate*—as indicated in the hedging adverb ‘perhaps,’ which would make the burden of the encounter far easier [*vielleicht*]—over the possible reason for its incongruence with the observer’s own findings. In a way, such novel content may be displeasing precisely because of the recognition that its determination defies and *misses* the conclusions of our own sense in its contentious falling away and into our own reading. In tracing the manifestations of the extensions given to everyday encounters, human cognition engages in a contestation of the proprietary matter in and towards which one tilts, whereby one

grapples over the matter of common affairs. In so doing, one thereby bears—as if one layer is subsumed by another within oneself—the constitution of a perennial opposition incumbent to the unfolding of a formative sameness, even as its form is reopened to become subject to the novel conditions of yet further entangled encounters. The constitutive relation through which thought takes form thus makes use of and benefits from a sense entangled within the oppositions of a feudal animus—whose spirit is born and inscribed in the form of a bounding contention.

This contradiction of judgments, or the possible incongruence of one with another, thus constitutes the displeasure born in the sense of disagreeability. In fact, Nietzsche continues, this disagreeability constitutes precisely the practice of forming and giving names to one's thoughts:

— Dann wieder sehen wir hier ein Urtheil und dort ein Urtheil, entfernt von einander, ohne sich anzusehen, ohne sich auf einander zuzubewegen: da kitzelt uns der Gedanke, ob hier nicht eine Ehe zu stiften, ein *Schluss* zu ziehen sei, mit dem Vorgefühle, dass, im Falle sich eine Folge aus diesem Schlusse ergibt, nicht nur die beiden ehelich verbundenen Urtheile, sondern auch der Ehestifter die Ehre davon habe. (Nietzsche, *Menschliches* 389-390)

Here and again—in the pursuance of a returned viewing—one may themselves come to hold in their mind two separate but originary components of the same contentious matter [*Urteile*], which in the components of this contemplative form would seem to stand at a distance from another, such that one couldn't possibly see one another, and without moving towards each other's position. The formal reticence of the one judgment as it stands in opposition to the other teases however [*kitzelt*] out from the form of our thought's nominal expression [*der Gedanke*] the question as to whether the two could be brought together in holy matrimony [*die Ehe*], if only to establish in the sponsorship of their writing [*stiften*], a *closure* that would draw the matter of their contention to a conclusion [*Schluss*]. Interestingly, this question raises itself not through any graspable evidence of the two agonists' resolubility, but rather through a foreboding premonition [*Vorgefühl*] that—should the case be that something else should follow from the conclusion of

two propositions as if according to its own resignation, it would not be merely the pair of contesting discriminations to whom one would then show honor [*Ehre*], but that these would share the privilege of this accredited esteem *also* with that which brings them resolutely together. In the glorification of the matchmaker, one also sustains reverence for the original matter of contention.

All this being an anticipatory function of thought's drive to comprehend already the resolute juncture of opposing judgments, one must—in moving forward towards this envisioned matrimony—nevertheless still grapple with the contention of these determinate separations. In moving towards the resolution of conflicting propositions, one is sentenced to select one or the other to espouse or to critique. As Nietzsche explains further, the consequence of this rash determination is the constitutive subjugation of the form of one's thought to the authority of a superficial glancing: "Kann man aber weder auf dem Wege des Trotzes und Uebelwollens, noch auf dem des Wohlwollens jenem Gedanken etwas anhaben (hält man ihn für *wahr* —), dann unterwirft man sich und huldigt ihm als einem Führer und Herzoge, giebt ihm einen Ehrenstuhl und spricht nicht ohne Gepränge und Stolz von ihm: denn in *seinem* Glanz glänzt man mit" (*Menschliches* 390). In the case in which one should be unable to hold a certain form as leverage over another [*jdm anhaben*], then the transactional merit of a given judgment—for indeed one may hear in the declaration of 'true' [*wahr*] also the suitability of its material as a catalyst for the exchanging of equivalent goods and wares [*Waren*], as well as the keeping [*wahren*] of its countenance—one thus *holds* the matter to be true [*wahr*]. Indeed, this apprehension of truth serves equally in this regard, whether one's critical motives stem from a place of spite and ill-will, or otherwise from a place of good-intent or the favor of a gracing benevolence [*Wohlwollen*]. Upon grasping a thereby preservable judgment, which Nietzsche interjects through

the parenthetical, the one who has become a holder of truth thus subjugates themselves [*unterwirft sich*] and pays fealty to the glistening form of this vivid thought that thereby illuminates and conducts [*führt*] the thinker, in turn. The glorified thought thus assumes an exemplary drive, leading like the ducal authority [*Herzog*] whose political claim of divine authority pulls along those in the train of their eminence. Then, one would claim—and not without a modicum of ostentation and pride—that through pandering obeisance to a thusly sustained principality of thought, one may also shine, themselves, thanks to their own glossy rejoinders of thought and reverence. In the glossing opacity of such an approach to understanding truth, we can already foresee the critical question of a thought's formative congruence with the approach that would make it absolute.

Nietzsche's thought takes a turn here towards the contemplation of a darkening threat. Indeed, the contention entangled in the manner of thought's determination is not lightly refuted, and Nietzsche transposes the caution of a woeful being with the extensive self-reflection that this dissolution of thought's impetus would invite regarding one's own apprehension:

Wehe dem, der diesen verdunkeln will; es sei denn, dass er selber uns eines Tages bedenklich wird: — dann stossen wir, die unermüdlichen 'Königsmacher' (king-makers) der Geschichte des Geistes, ihn vom Throne und heben flugs seinen Gegner hinauf. Diess erwäge man und denke noch ein Stück weiter: gewiss wird Niemand dann noch von einem 'Erkenntnisstrieb an und für sich' reden! — Weshalb zieht also der Mensch das *Wahre* dem Unwahren vor, in diesem *heimlichen* Kampfe mit Gedanken-Personen, in dieser meist versteckt bleibenden Gedanken-Ehestiftung, Gedanken-Staatenbegründung, Gedanken-Kinderzucht, Gedanken-Armen- und Krankenpflege? Aus dem gleichen Grunde, aus dem er die *Gerechtigkeit* im Verkehre mit wirklichen Personen übt: *jetzt* aus Gewöhnheit, Vererbung und Anerziehung, *ursprünglich*, weil das Wahre — wie auch das Billige und Gerechte — *nützlicher* und *ehrebringender* ist als das Unwahre. Denn im Reiche des Denkens sind *Macht* und *Ruf* schlecht zu behaupten, die sich auf dem Irrthum oder der Lüge aufbauen: das Gefühl, dass ein solcher Bau irgend einmal zusammenbrechen könne, ist *demüthigend* für das Selbstbewusstsein seines Baumeisters; er schämt sich der Zerbrechlichkeit seines Materials und möchte, weil er *sich* selber *wichtiger* als die übrige Welt nimmt, Nichts thun, was nicht *dauernder* als die übrige Welt wäre. (*Menschliches* 390)

This passage recognizes a *threat* that any who would obfuscate a glorified thought must contend with. While one who would place the clarity and glory of a graspable truth rather as the subject of contention risks obscuring [*verdunkeln*] the guiding principles of their very own thought, thereby inviting a consequential misery, the undesirability of this outcome is yet refuted by the recognition that it is only through this renunciation of an eternal self-sameness by which the form of one's own being may be apprehended by the grasping of one's thought. Nietzsche posits that it is precisely through the obscuring practice of reading, through tenuous extensions, that one becomes themselves the subject of an apprehensive [*bedenklich*] contention, and one should therefore be open to the critical concerns of determined judgments. In turning the question of indeterminacy upon ourselves, we strike upon the layered history of our own spirit [*dann stossen wir... der Geschichte des Geistes*] and dethrone the one absolute form of our own apprehension just as we quickly elevate its opposition. In this way, one is able to affect meaningful change in their person, demeanor, and opinion—giving themselves over as if to constitute themselves anew. When one weighs this consideration [*dies erwäge man*] with the conduct of one's pursuit of knowledge, Nietzsche affirms that one then begins to suspect the claim one makes towards knowledge for knowledge's sake—for in the weighing of alternatives lies also the arbitrariness with which one may depose one for another, and it is for this reason also that Nietzsche asserts the process by which our mind undergoes substantial changes in opinion and disposition remains fundamentally secret within the subliminal recesses of one's mind. In the perpetual performance of the "true self," the false and the true are subsumed together in a furtive struggle [*versteckt bleibender Kampf*].

Nietzsche anticipates the question to be posed by the reader of one's own person, which would seek to trace the reason this struggle should remain oblique or inexplicit, and concludes it

is drawn precisely from that which grounds the shared encounter of real people: that in exchanging encounters with other individuals, one practices a normative approach of just fairness [*Gerechtigkeit*]. Nietzsche steps further to recognize that its *current* practice is the result of mere conventional habit [*Gewöhnheit*] borne in the inheritance [*Vererbung*] of perpetuating structures according to which individuals are brought up and nurtured [*Anerzogen*]. In the next sentence, Nietzsche contrasts this practice with the *original* [*ursprünglich*] cause, which he finds in the *practicality* of truth insofar as social encounters grounded this impetus in the common usefulness and dignity of truthful exchange. According to this practical conception, the structures of thought's apprehension sustain themselves under the pressure of their own weight—just as the ideal physical structures of manmade craft and engineering—when the matter with which they are constructed cannot be faulted. The proponent of Self thus maintains the structure of their being as does the master builder, and does all in their power to establish a sense of their being that will stand the test of time—one is ashamed of the frailty of their own matter—and does not desire to take on anything that will not demonstrate one's own self-important elevation and longevity in contrast to the world left over from their own encounter.

Ironically, the thinker of truth drives themselves thusly into the folly of their own apprehension, which derives precisely from their claim to an idea that would persist beyond the withering of their physical corpus:

Im Verlangen nach der Wahrheit umarmt er den Glauben an die persönliche Unsterblichkeit, das heisst: den hochmüthigsten und trotzigsten Gedanken, den es giebt, verschwistert, wie er ist, mit dem Hintergedanken 'pereat mundus, dum ego salvus sim!' Sein Werk ist ihm zu seinem ego geworden, er schafft sich selber in's Unvergängliche, Allem Trotz bietende um. Sein unermesslicher Stolz ist es, der nur die besten, härtesten Steine zum Werke verwenden will, Wahrheiten also oder Das, was er dafür hält. Mit Recht hat man zu allen Zeiten 'das Laster des Wissenden' den Hochmuth genannt, — doch würde es ohne dieses triebkräftige Laster erbärmlich um die Wahrheit und deren Geltung auf Erden bestellt sein. Darin dass wir uns vor unsern eigenen Gedanken, Begriffen, Worten *fürchten*,

dass wir aber auch in ihnen uns selber *ehren*, ihnen unwillkürlich die Kraft zuschreiben, uns belohnen, verachten, loben und tadeln zu können, darin dass wir also mit ihnen wie mit freien geistigen Personen, mit unabhängigen Mächten verkehren, als Gleiche mit Gleichen — darin hat das seltsame Phänomen seine Wurzel, welches ich ‘*intellectuales Gewissen*’ genannt habe. — So ist auch hier etwas Moralisches höchster Gattung aus einer Schwarzwurzel herausgeblüht. (Nietzsche, *Menschliches* 390-391)

Truth, as Nietzsche postulates, is thus constituted merely in its own desire, through whose embrace its formative idea lays nominal claim to a perpetuation of individual and nameable properties. The belief in the eternal sameness of a name that this absolute embrace entails thus abandons its own claim to truth in favor of a *belief*, whose spiteful utterance against the inevitable death and dissolution that awaits all mortal forms would, as Nietzsche asserts, make the belief in the immortality of one’s name the sibling of an underlying thought that holds its own person above any of its considerations of the rest of the world. In embracing this haughty belief, thought comes to equate the products of its work with its own being, believing that should the world end (for them, at least), they will continue to live on in their work’s persistent lingering. This it does despite the natural contention siblings are wont to level at one another, and the ego comes to care less about the real world than it does its own entanglement therein, insofar as it would care not for the death of the world provided they themselves live on.

Truth itself risks becoming enveloped in such an egotistical drive, and it is for this reason that Nietzsche cautions of an accompanying danger in the pursuit or accumulation of knowledge. Insofar as the ego comes to equate itself with the name to which its works are attributed, and that these last longer than the rest of the world it encounters, the granules of truth the ego would amass come to serve only the advancement of the ego’s own truth: the ego wishes to construct itself only with those truths most conducive to its own affirmation, leading to a narcissistic proprietariness to that which one therefore claims to be true, and Nietzsche thus connects the

egotist's cavalier pride with the vice incumbent to the weight of knowledge. At the same time, it is precisely this vice which accumulates the requisite weights to be placed upon the scales of truth: it is only in the forceful drive of this vice that the consignments of knowledge give the operative worth [*Geltung*] of knowledge to be held in the world as anything other than pitiable [*erbärmlich*]. As Nietzsche elaborates, it is precisely insofar as the critical thinker is *apprehensive* in the face of their own thoughts, ideas, and words [*Darin dass wir uns vor unsern eigenen Gedanken, Begriffen, Worten fürchten*], while *also* finding in them the dignity of their own honorable citation [*ehren*], that they may spontaneously revere [*ehrfürchten*] the rewards, scorn, praise, and critique of their own participatory vision. It is also only in this way that the thinker becomes able to encounter others in common exchange [*Verkehr*] of one personified equally with other personified equals [*als Gleiche mit Gleichen*]. Paradoxically, as Nietzsche concludes here, the curious phenomenon he names the intellectual conscience [*intellectuales Gewissen*], blooms into something of the highest moral category from out of the darkest roots that would stand against it.

As we return now once again to the pinnacles of Zarathustra's opening conclusion, we find him anticipating the imminent approach of a sign, reprising there a punctuated recurrence as if to recapitulate the breaking dawn of our first encounter.⁶ Departing once more from the cave of his convalescent rumination, Zarathustra signals the creative recurrence of his renunciative work in reasserting his blessing of the radiance born not only of the sign's own imminent point and pinnacle, but rather also insofar as the tract of its weighted encounter then enlightens all those

⁶ As this dissertation carries its thought into this reading of "Das Zeichen," it is interesting to note that the narrative here, although coming at the end of the text, parallels the forms with which the text first opened. As a result, the circularity of the narrative is suggested and—where the conclusion may now be read as a novel opening—the text's preliminary opening now appears to be this conclusion's continuation. The reader may return, also, to this dissertation's reading of Zarathustra's opening novelty in its chapter on the withdrawal and *Bedenklichkeit* of thought.

whom its light graces: “Du grosses Gestirn, sprach er, wie er einstmal gesprochen hatte, du tiefes Glücks-Auge, was wäre all dein Glück, wenn du nicht *die* hättest, welchen du leuchtest!” (Nietzsche, *Zarathustra* 401). In the recapitulation of this reverence, we may join Zarathustra once more as the trajectory and track of his thought turns from the pinnacles of already-obtained fortune and success [*Trachte ich denn nach Glücke?*], to return rather to a novel undergoing of his opening accomplishment and its journey [*Ich trachte nach meinem Werke!*] (404). As the reader may draw a connection to our shared reading of the inner experience of thought, they will recollect that Nietzsche has argued from multiple approaches that, by honoring another’s luminance of thought, one also polishes oneself in its glory. In the recurrent entanglement of these opening conclusions arises the question of what the extensive significance of iteration should portend for the shared—that is to say, the poetic—nature of thought as the framework of our understanding.

However extensive one’s travails may be, the question of totality or absolution in what one apprehensively attains—or of which the senses of one’s mind tenuously partakes—is made evident in the differentiated utterance of but a word.⁷ Indeed, Zarathustra’s insertion here of the word ‘all’ moves to liken the encounter of *one* apprehension with the encounter of *all* facets of its myriad encounters across time. Not only would any singular encounter thus consequently unfold according to the conditions of its subliminal form, but a glimmering sense of an immanent sublimity could be divined also from an inextricably availing apprehension. As the sign of an imminent apprehension, or perhaps rather as an apprehensive immanence, the recurrence of a self-availing form rather *approaches* [*Das Zeichen kommt, ’ sprach Zarathustra und sein Herz verwandelte sich*] (402), as if the arrival of its form could only approach from the distance of a

⁷ This dissertation emphasizes the poetic differences constituted in versions of the same nominal being in its introductory reading of the poetics of thought’s relation.

weighted encounter in giving itself over to a differentiating apprehension. That the sign approaches in step to an imminent change furthermore intimates that a sublime conclusion would be approachable only in the undergoing of an oppositional encounter, whose contention may then be overcome in the traversal of *recurrent* approaches that thus comprise the apotheosis of each work. However, when a text is viewed as if it were no longer in motion, the sign's approach comes to bear the form of its representation without concerning itself over its own contentious grasping of its form. In the beholdenness of understanding to the interposed intervention of yet other definite terms, the novel work thus takes up—in the form of its own contention—the matter of a complicitous renunciation.

The complicity of one's bearing towards the arrival of a sign under which one stands, and over whose coming one grapples, thus takes on the form of an almost mad fluttering of wings. As the sun—the sign of Zarathustra's own breaking daylight [*die Zeichen meines Morgens*] (401)—rises on this dawning as if constituting a new encounter of what would be the same, it is with a *questioning* view that Zarathustra turns his gaze upward, prompted by the sharp cry of his eagle: “Da blickte er fragend in die Höhe, denn er hörte über sich den scharfen Ruf seines Adlers. ‘Wohlan! rief er hinauf, so gefällt und gebührt es mir. Meine Thiere sind wach, denn ich bin wach. Mein Adler ist wach und ehrt gleich mir die Sonne. Mit Adlers-Klauen greift er nach dem neuen Lichte” (401-402). Pleased to pay dues [*gebühren*] to the prevailing faculty of the wakeful being so propertied in this regard, Zarathustra acknowledges the eagle on equal terms—as if thereby recognizing the congruence of the eagle's drive to be about the day [*Wohlan!*]. Roused all the more vividly in view of the self-evident difference of their shared encounter, it is as if Zarathustra recognizes that, should it be true that he is awake, so too would it

follow that his animals, similarly, would be roused by grace of their own individual portions of this spirited refraction faced in the grasping of new light.

However, this grasping faculty of thought's complicit handling of common affairs is not composed only in the flight and talons of Zarathustra's own grasping faculties, even as their keen perception would appear to align with—and by means of conditional interposition of further faculties, aim to surpass—those of his eagle. Indeed, in the sudden clapping of his eyes upon his eagle, suddenly the apparent clarity of his faculties come under threat, as if these were themselves clouded by the analogous wings and talons of others:

‘Aber noch fehlen mir meine rechten Menschen!’ —
Also sprach Zarathustra; da aber geschah es, dass er sich plötzlich wie von unzähligen Vögeln umschwärmt und umflattert hörte, das Geschwirr so vieler Flügel aber und das Gedräng um sein Haupt war so gross, dass er die Augen schloss. Und wahrlich, einer Wolke gleich fiel es über ihn her, einer Wolke von Pfeilen gleich, welche sich über einen neuen Feind ausschüttet. Aber siehe, hier war es eine Wolke der Liebe, und über einen neuen Freund. (402)

Against the apparent congruence of his own faculties when directed towards outward illumination, the form of Zarathustra's understanding is immediately confronted with the pointed absence of those who would stand with him as if in congruence, or as if they were comparable to his own right hand: in the dative case by which Zarathustra views himself as but the beneficiary [*mir*]*—indeed, by way of a contrasting qualification of expectations* [*aber*]*—regarding the circumstances of his vision. In a reversal of Zarathustra's qualified position, the suddenness of this apparent want that yet constitutes his own condition is itself rather refuted* [*da aber geschah es*] as his apprehension takes on the form of an immeasurable swarm of fluttering wings, whose overwhelming flurry and jostling of his own outermost being thereby brings Zarathustra first to close his eyes even from the dispersions of the sign's illuminating radiance. Even should he resist this instinct, in its simultaneously sustaining and imperiling the conviction of its thought, the

immensity of this outward swarm falls over him as a cloud ever corporeal as any despite its mere similitude [*wahrlich, einer Wolke gleich*]⁸—constituting in this way the badgering gestures of animosity, even though we are instructed imperatively to see it as a cloud of love cast over a new friend.

That this contention of fraternity is coincident with one's own being amongst others in general is registered in the difference it exposes, at which point Zarathustra finds again a means to give praise where it is due—namely in the drive of a paralipsis that is complicit in the very constitution of the form given to the bearing of thought: just as Wilhelm encounters the glancing of sublime pinnacles in the vertiginous distance of his approach, so too does the unfathomability of totality become apparent in one's partaking of its outlook. In this way, too, one may think in step with Jacques' reiterative wont: all that comes our way—for fortune or loss ascribed to common affairs—writ upon the absolvent foundations of the skies above [*tout ce qui nous arrive de bien et de mal ici-bas était écrit là-haute*] (Diderot, 19). Although we may differentiate the word '*arriver*' from '*approcher*' in contrast to the manner by which the German verb '*kommen*' signals both valencies at once, even the subject attached to the verb '*arriver*' cannot be extricated from a sense of having-thus-already approached insofar as, to arrive, one must first transition out of the stage of one's approach. As Jacques so straightforwardly opens his narrative relation of the battle at which he would receive the wound to his knee, "Nous arrivons; la bataille se donne..." (Diderot 20).⁸ We arrive at the encounter as readers passing through the matter of its taxing measure [*Taille*], and the sense of the battle avails itself of its own fraught contention—to nevertheless part ways with the measured tattoo of its arrival.

⁸ It is with this phrase that Jacques opens the telling of his love affairs with the bullet destined for his knee, as discussed in this dissertation's reading of Diderot's contestation of the inconclusive openings of *Shandean* Thinking.

IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION

*Daß ich verbannt sei
Von aller Wahrheit,
Nur Narr!
Nur Dichter!
(Nietzsche, Also Sprach
Zarathustra 374)*

In tracing but a portion of the readings that it took to have arrived here, both through and between diverse texts and discourses, there is no avoiding the recognition that those inter-discursive readings open themselves to further traces of *Shandeism*, as well as further considerations of what that particular legacy of language and thought ever yet gives us to think. Whether by way of inquiry or connection, there is therefore much that remains to be said in returning to the texts by Sterne, Diderot, Goethe, and Nietzsche that have been examined thus far. As this dissertation has demonstrated, each of them is blessed with gaps that hold them open to other interventions, even and especially in those passages where they may seem, to the reader, to resolve themselves appealingly and come to a close. The possibility of conceiving of something differently is precisely that which is at stake in reading texts and situations of all kinds, with the consequence that none could conclude in a manner that would not still be entangled in a poetic relation. Each point at which a text or a reading comes to rest thus remains a possible point of departure.

We therefore return, in conclusion, to the question which is entangled in the poetics of relation: in reading the steady persistence of common linguistic forms, whose poetics nevertheless overflow each instance of formalization, Heidegger follows Hölderlin in asking how it is possible for humans not only to abide poetically [*dichterisch wohnet der Mensch*], but also to do so *constantly* [*ständig*] (Heidegger 181). In response, we return the word to another poet:

No matter where one is, no matter how strong the force of errantry, one can hear the mounting desire to ‘give-on-and-go-with,” to discover order in chaos or at least to guess its unlikely motivation: to develop this theory that would escape generalizations.

Poetics? Precisely this double thrust, being a theory that tries to conclude, a presence that concludes (presumes) nothing. Never one without the other. That is how the instant and duration comfort us.//Every poetics is a palliative for eternity. (Glissant 183)

The poetics of relation is, as Glissant also remarks, entangled in thought no matter how one approaches it. It is exposed in the desire to find the rest, stability, or presence of that which ever again withdraws. Poetics is thus a contentious diverting of disorder whose motivation, unexpectedly, conduces to the development of a theory that would expose the categorical ordering of generalization as a fraudulent practice. In reading and writing, the poetic impulse is that which instills in the writer the sense of a possible conclusion, whose actualization they risk in the practice of their writing. In this way, as one’s thought changes through the very reading of Glissant’s sentence: the poetics of thought may arrive upon moments of conclusion, but in the same breath, it does not presume its own closure. The poetics of thought is thus constituted in a duality of contrasting pulls, distilling and sublating the duration of a nameable form with the instant of its indication. In so doing, thought treats the symptom of its inability to witness eternity without needing to cure the constraints to which it is subject, by allowing itself to conceive of an eternal within the given moment.

In being unable to hold on to an object of thought’s contemplation for longer than a few minutes, the forms through which thought lends itself to the representation of truth also puts that lofty goal at risk, precisely so that its approach may be shared, and these separate contestations thereby find communion with one another. The poetic contestation of Shandean thinking is a domain which belongs to everyone and no-one, in which all reside before ever having arrived,

and in which one remains even after leaving. One cannot enter it, because one is already there, but nor can one leave it, for one is still there after moving to leave. It is a form that allows one to walk ever in approach, which also, in returning, exposes that which one overlooked or mistook.

Thought, like writing, is led as if by an authority who cedes the domain of their residence to one's own errant arrival. *Wohlan!*

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