//A CASE OF AUTHORI-CIDE: HOW WITTGENSTEIN READS CHOMSKY AND DERRIDA //

POETRY AND HISTORY. A CONFUSED RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT: Who is the author? Is it God, the state, human nature, the artist or simply a discourse that philosophers have indulged in the fallacious presumption that there is essence or being beyond the flux of things? Or is God just the possibility of understanding, wherein the reader is able to enter into a dialogue with the author/other? I've not tried to conclude the argument in any significant sense because the question regarding the supposed identity of the author precludes any attempt to close the discussion. That's a Wittgensteinean stance: you present an argument in order to move the debate to the unexplored aspects of the question rather than resolve the question once and for all. This stance has a Dostoyeskyean dimension to it: belief exists at the end of skepticism. To both, Wittgenstein and Dostoyevsky, understanding is a consequence to the experience of doubt. The rejection of essence complements the essentiality inherent in faith. This is neither a Chomskyean viewpoint wherein the linguist knows for certain through scientific reasoning that language is an aspect of human nature nor is it the Derridean point that deconstructs the question in order to dismantle any essential attempt to understand the other.

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Ivan has no God. He has an idea.
Dostoyevsky - *The Brothers Karamazov*

They all desire the death of their fathers.
Dostoyevsky - *The Brothers Karamazov*

What makes hatred of the father unacceptable is fear of the father; castration is terrible, whether as punishment or as the price of love.
Sigmund Freud - "Dostoyevsky and Parricide"

Fyodor Pavlovitch: You never judge me!
Alexey Karamazov: God will judge you.
Fyodor Pavlovitch: God will also understand me.
- from the movie version of *The Brothers Karamazov*

1. **The idea of/as the author**

What is common to Wittgenstein, Chomsky, and Derrida is the importance of language as an area concealed with the possibility of change in an ethical as well as political sense. Ivan has an idea, i.e., he can arrive by means of syntax to a perspective from where he can logically undermine authority, simply by disagreeing with any complacent notion regarding the existence of a supreme being based on mere faith: "No, there is no God" (Dostoyevsky, 1948: 135). Sartre substantiates Ivan's contention in *Existentialism and Human Emotions*:

> Nowhere is it written that the Good exists, that we must be honest, that we must not lie; because the fact is we are on a plane where there are only men. Dostoyevsky said, "If God didn't exist, everything would be possible"[1]. That is the very starting point of existentialism. Indeed everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to (Sartre, 1957: 22).

The baffling simplicity of Ivan's contention that anything is possible in the absence of a superior power makes him relevant to the discussion regarding authori-cide.

From Ivan's point of view that one can have an idea rather than God, it becomes possible to read Wittgenstein, Chomsky and Derrida. This implies two things: one is that there is an authority that is not a mere idea and another is that ideas could act as disrupters of authority. Unlike Sartre, to whom the "idea" germinates in the absence of an author, to Plato, the idea (as the original being) *is* the author; goodness is the essence that precedes the existence of language. The metaphor of the sun in the Book VI of the *Republic* substantiates the notion of goodness. "This reality, then, that gives their truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower, you must say is the

[1]Perhaps Sartre is referring to the particular passage in *The Brothers Karamazov*, when Mitya is talking to Alexey about Ivan's atheism: "It's God that's worrying me. That's the only thing that's worrying me. What if he doesn't exist? What if Rakitin's right –that it's an idea made up by men? Then, if he doesn't exist, man is the chief of the earth, of the universe. Magnificent! Only how is he going to be good without God? That's the question . . . For whom is man going to love then? To whom will he be thankful? To whom will he sing the hymn?" (Dostoyevsky, 1948: 626-7).

idea of good, and you must conceive it as being the cause of knowledge, and of truth in so far as known" (Plato, 1946: 744). Along the lines of the Sartrean view of anything being possible in the realm of ideas (perhaps even viewing the author as mere idea) and the Platonic view of the author as the idea which makes possible a world of objects, a discussion occurs between the author as *maker* of language and language as the space to explore what is possible, rather than *one* authority that allows the author to be a unified subject.

The premise of the Platonic assumption is that the author is the central figure of metaphysics, the metaphysician or the truth-doctor who is empowered to cure the disease of lie. To investigate the reality of the author is to investigate the presence of objects in the world. If objects are not real then what is the "real"? Arthur S. Eddington in his book *The Nature of the Physical World* furthers the discussion when he speaks of the two tables before him; one is the *substantial* table that is open to simple, commonsensical observation and another is a *scientific* table that is nothing but emptiness (Eddington, 1929: ix-x). As Eddington expresses in the chapter "Science and Mysticism",

> We have torn away the mental fancies to get at the reality beneath, only to find that the reality of that which is beneath is bound up with its potentiality of awakening these fancies. It is because the mind, the weaver of illusion, is also the only guarantor of reality that reality is always to be sought at the base of illusion (Eddington, 1929: 319).

When Dr. Johnson tells Boswell "I refute it *thus*", –while referring to "Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry to prove the existence of matter, and that everything in the universe is merely ideal" (Boswell, 1953: 333) - by kicking a rock, the refutation itself can be seen as an attribution of reality to the presence of the rock. The rock is the essence of what Derrida terms as "Western metaphysics". While Johnson aims a kick at metaphysics, he falls into the trap of suggesting that there is reality outside perception and language is instrumental in connecting perception and the rock in question.

To Wittgenstein, the question is: can a world exist without objects in it? Is there another world outside perception or is language embodied in perception impinging upon the material world? Wittgenstein does not avoid the question of the real but instead says that, "Doubting and non-doubting behavior. There is the first only if there is the second" (Wittgenstein, 1969: 46). When one acknowledges the spatiality of objects, that objects possess being (not in the sense of either life or even perception) but merely space which endows objects with an in-built possibility of movement (when the scientific table becomes the substantial table and vice versa the mind moving from the ordinary to the poetic and mystical), then it is possible to understand that perception and phenomena are not only bound by language but in an *essential* region *outside* language. "It is the essence of philosophy not to depend on experience, and this is what is meant by saying that philosophy is *a priori*" (Wittgenstein, 1979: 97). In the absence of experience, one could learn philosophy solely by asking questions.

Russell, in his introduction to the *Tractatus* captures the dynamic of Wittgenstein's mysticism in saying that

> […] every language has, as Mr. Wittgenstein says, a structure concerning which, *in the language*, nothing can be said, but that there may be another language dealing with the structure of the first language, and having itself a new structure, and that to this

> hierarchy of languages there may be no limit . . . The totalities concerning which Mr. Wittgenstein holds that it is impossible to speak logically are nevertheless thought by him to exist, and are the subject-matter of his mysticism (Wittgenstein, 1961: XXII).

The notion of totalities that cannot be logically spoken about is a possibility that has to be seen as the *possibility of a totality*, even if one is unwilling to enter into a serious discussion regarding the status of the totality. In a way, this answers the question of why *use* is more important than the real existence of objects. Use, perhaps, is one way of acknowledging the function of objects, rather than their existence, in strictly material terms. Correspondingly, the question of whether objects exist or not in real terms is *immaterial* to a discussion on language. The question of *knowing* language is a value-based decision above everything else:

> I know that this is my foot. I could not accept any experience as proof to the contrary. - That may be an exclamation; but what *follows* from it? At least that I shall act with a certainty that knows no doubt, in accordance with my belief . . . But doesn't it come out here that knowledge is related to a decision? (Wittgenstein, 1969: 47).

The ultimate question of reality remains "ultimate" because of its elusiveness. As important as indicating language by means of values is to define value as an indicator of language.

In the importance that he places on values, which pertain to decision-making "It's a good thing I don't allow myself to be influenced!" (Wittgenstein, 1980: 1). Wittgenstein, as much as a philosopher, is a literary artist in a significant sense. That philosophy can be studied as literature goes against the conventional view that identifies the discourse of philosophy as different from the language of other disciplines. As Wittgenstein ironically says, "People nowadays think that scientists exist to instruct them, poets, musicians, etc. to give them pleasure. The idea *that these have something to teach them*–that does not occur to them" (Wittgenstein, 1980: 36).

Unlike Wittgenstein, Chomsky's theory of language as competence has an explicitly political purpose in view in the way it opposes anarchy to authority; it almost seems that Chomsky shares Plato's view of the poets in Book X of the *Republic*; literature is isolated or survives apart from the rational part in the human mind. Logically this implies that there is a language of reason, just as there is a reasonable mechanism (functioning on the principles of reason) in the human brain that makes language possible in a human being and the mechanism stands apart from a work of art that is purely based on the performance of individuals. This assertion is concomitant to what D'Agostino points out in "Chomsky's Mentalism and Rationalism" that

> Language-users are capable of making a potentially infinite number of assertions about their language. In a whole range of cases, for instance, language-users will, when queried, typically assert that a given string of words either is or is not an acceptable sentence of their language. These assertions are explicit manifestations of language-users' propositional knowledge about their language (D'Agostino, 1986: 82).

In addition, the "propositional knowledge" or what can be known as language of reason is a fundamentally political instinct in terms of the individual, his or her relation to the group in which he or she lives, and the need to be free from external constraints to an

extent where he or she is free to obey the innate language mechanism that not only helps one come to terms with the art of communal living, but also empowers one to articulate his or her basic demand for a just and decent living based on egalitarian principles.

If goodness and learnability are at the basis of a child's nature–if the language of reason is something that a human child possesses merely by being one; first and foremost, this would be an ethical premise that Chomsky translates into political terms, rooted in a biological basis:

> The principles of mind provide the scope as well as the limits of human creativity. Without such principles, scientific understanding and creative acts would not be possible . . . In investigating some of the most familiar achievements of human intelligence--the ordinary use of language, for example–we are struck at once by the creative character of free creation within a system of rule (Chomsky, 1971: 50).

One of the formidable implications of Chomsky's rule-based theory of competence is that language is the biological destiny of an individual capable of functioning creatively within a system. An individual must articulate in order to make survival feasible. In fact, it is merely competence as manifested in language that made the human being possible. As John Lyons points out,

> Chomsky maintains that it is only by assuming that a child is born with a knowledge of the highly restrictive principles of human grammar, and the predisposition to make use of them in analyzing the utterances he hears about him, that we can make any sense of the process of language learning . . . It is the child's inborn knowledge of the universal principles governing the structure of human language that supplies the deficiency in the empiricist account of language acquisition. These principles are part of what we call the "mind", being represented in some way, no doubt, in the structure or mode of operation of the brain, and may be compared with the "innate ideas" of Descartes and the rationalist tradition going back to Plato (Lyons, 1977: 133).

To Chomsky, for one to question the nature of authority is contrary to examining the source of the authority of human nature, i.e. language. It is the authority of nature that is a premise enabling one to analyze the real nature of authority. To Derrida, Chomsky's distinction of competence from performance would be one that is essentially based on *différance*; if language is a discourse of signs, then performance is closer home to a concept of linguistic perspectivism (viewing language as a point of view), rather than competence that seeks to assume a transcendental point (with a strong argument in favor of a scientific ground of language as a mental organ) outside the text which is a field of signs. Derrida might question Chomsky's view of language itself and its biological significance as simply being another discourse on the human body that is within the text. Language, in Derridean terms, can be defined as a series of performances. Philosophy is not just content, i.e., what it talks about, but also the language of presentation, i.e., the way it talks about something. The content of speech is as important as the way philosophy is written; by the way philosophers betray themselves through the act of writing in the concentration on speech or content. As Derrida notes in his interview to Houdebine from *Positions*,

> 'Thought' (quotation marks: the words 'thought' and what is called 'thought') means nothing: it is the substantified void of a highly derivative ideality, the effect of a *différance*

> of forces, the illusory autonomy of a discourse or a consciousness whose hypostasis is to be deconstructed, whose "causality" is to be analyzed, etc. First. Secondly, the sentence can be read thus: if there is thought–and there is, and it is just as suspect, for analogous critical reasons, to contest the authority of all 'thought'–then whatever will continue to be called thought, and which, for example, will designate the deconstruction of logocentrism, means nothing, for in the last analysis it no longer derives from 'meaning'. Wherever it operates, *'thought' means nothing* (Derrida, 1981b: 49).

If there is no thought and if a thinker is one who thinks about nothing, can an *author* (of philosophy) be a philosopher himself with a certain authority to profess a rather subjective truth as if it were an objective fact of life independent of other factors? The point of the apparently repetitive question is that philosophy is *the history of authority*[2]; the author of a literary text is not an isolated figure; he is a function of history and his centeredness is a reproduction of other social institutions, which include the church, the family and the state. He is a priest, father, statesman and writer too. If language is the field of the text, every other institution would automatically fall within its purview. This implies that the priest, father and statesman enunciate a particular philosophy that makes patriarchy a dominant discourse prevailing over alternate discourses of language, like, for instance, matriarchy *(la langue*, language of the mother as manifested in the woman-mother as a point of dispersal). The alternate discourse can be understood when it is juxtaposed with the so-called dominant discourse. Language slips from position to position, from the dominant to the alternate and vice versa. A "pure" discussion of alternate discourses (like matriarchy) can turn metaphysical unless understood in the terms of various other discourses. In fact, the very discussion on discourse can be metaphysical unless one goes into the use of language.

2. Understanding "understanding"

The Wittgensteinean point is that philosophy would be *interpretation that finds meaning in use*. "There may be a sense of 'understanding' in which the word refers to a state of mind which occurs while making a move in chess or while using a word . . . But there is also a sense in which 'understanding a word' means knowing its use" (Wittgenstein, 1979: 49). If literature is identified with language, then there is a literature to every discipline. As language-users we are continuously saying one thing or the other and that's what makes us literary figures (who are always thinking about *thought*). "Thought strikes us as mysterious. But not while we think . . . It isn't while we're *looking at* it that it seems a strange process; but when we let ourselves be guided by language, when we look at what we say about it" (Wittgenstein, 1974: 154). We're not only saying, but are also looking at what we say. If language is a way of saying, literature is the *use* of saying for the manifold purposes of thought. It is a point of view, argument, metaphor and paradox. Every time an individual uses language, language acts as an interpreter between him/her and the objects that compose the world. Is there something outside

[2]A history of authority can be visualized as the history of proper names. For instance, unless the context is specified the name of the philosopher Socrates might easily be confused with the name of Lady Ottoline Morrell's dog "Socrates" since the word is the same.

the interpretation of language as *language* or the so-called meaning in use? That's a *useless* question because it exists outside the context of objects, but which can be posed, less in the anticipation of an answer, rather, in an attempt to visualize possibilities outside the text. Fyodor Pavlovitch's assumption that there is an understanding that surpasses man's judgment and that is able to look at him with compassion despite his utter degradation is based on this *useless* premise that questions the adequacy of the text to respond to the possibilities that exist on the margins of discourse.

To understand, in a hermeneutical sense, also means power. Far from being just the power of empathy (with obvious religious overtones), it is power that challenges, exposes and negates the reader from ever understanding the text in a comprehensive sense. This brings to book not "understanding" as a concept as much as the reader's ability to understand the text or the reader's innate linguistic competence.

> It is very hard to imagine concepts other than our own because we never become aware of certain very general facts of nature . . . Imagine someone who counts only on his fingers, for whom five is a hand and ten the whole person, and who then goes on to count people on his fingers, etc. For him the decimal system will not be an arbitrary number system. For him it is not a method of counting, but counting (Wittgenstein, 1982: 31).

To Chomsky, who subscribes to the Cartesian notion that a triangle being rooted in the brain would retain its triangularity irrespective of the dynamics of culture, the social order is a reproduction of the natural order. If human competence leads to the making of history, the competence itself is outside the language of history and is of interest to a historian of language or maybe a linguist. While a history of language might at best document the sources and events that lead to innate competence, it is the history of science or science that deals with competence; the science of language offers the biological bases to the existence of the language faculty in the brain. A science of language is also the science of grammar, i.e., the ability of the human child to make meaningful sentences in any language or learn another language. What makes this possible is the extraordinary premise that universal grammar is the basis of human language.

Understanding is also to state the truth; and an anarchist society is perhaps one of the consequences of such a truth on "the child's innate disposition to learn language of a certain type and to the linguist's account of this" (Chomsky, 1965: 25); but the truth itself can be logically observed because it is based on the positivist conclusion of the innateness of language. Such a premise of innateness endows the human being with a rationality that comes naturally with his/her capacity to make language.

To Derrida, the natural order is a construction of the social order, one among many, but one, which has become the dominant discourse in philosophy. The word natural has numerous historical associations, one of the most important being that of construction or the need to offer a causal relation which follows the connection and the text points to such a connectedness rather than deterministically verifying it to the reader. *Understanding is construction*. For one to understand "understanding," one must undermine the premise on which understanding is constructed, both as concept and as means of approaching the other. Deconstruction is an alternative to understanding thus applying criticism as weapon to examine the authority to comprehend the text in a

positivist manner. It functions like a "sponge that expunges the proper name, puts it outside of itself, effaces and loses it, soils it as well in order to make it into a common noun; it contaminates the common noun . . . But simultaneously, the sponge can also retain the name, absorb it, shelter it, and keep it within itself" (Derrida, 1984: 64).

One unexamined possibility is whether Wittgenstein is moving toward Chomsky's innateness when he says that "Logic is transcendental?" (Wittgenstein, 1961: 65). Logic can be seen as the connectedness of the world, i.e., is the innate disposition to *be*, if being in turn is the ability to imagine the world. Logic is imagination that transcends the world. The logical disposition toward colors offers an instance of the function of imagination that makes the world possible. Rather than just the consciousness of being, it is the disposition to cognize the world in terms of transcendental logic that belongs to a person.

From the Chomskyean point of view, the human brain, not unlike the computer, which would be an apt metaphor, is a data-processing mechanism and one of the sub-mechanisms like the visual system in the language acquisition device (or the LAD). Far from being constructed, the LAD is a natural device that has evolved through time. One implication of this assertion is that the brain is identified as constant and any attempt to correlate it to mind is unscientific. Chomsky translates a philosophical Cartesian notion of innateness to a scientific fact where language becomes evident through the workings of the human brain in a social order. What is not beyond dispute is the means of knowing experimentally if such a device actually exists in the absence of the given form of a society.

To Wittgenstein, the authority of the mind displaces the authority of the brain. "A proposition is a model of reality as we imagine it" (Wittgenstein, 1961: 19). Words are pictures of reality. A word is an object because it occupies space on a page; it also exists in the air in a state of articulation. It both has and does not have a physical quality to it. In the context of the latter, a word exists in a mental space rooted in a social context. It makes sense or meaning. From a physicist's point of view, if the world is a picture of emptiness, i.e., visually unpictureable electrons simultaneously moving in all directions, then language is a picture of the mental model that goes into the making of the world.

To Derrida, the mind/brain dichotomy is a construction imposed on the "reality" of the world. Chomsky's attempt to give to the Cartesian notion of the mind biological basis in human language is as much a construction as Wittgenstein's attempt to attribute transcendentality to logic. The attempt to discover a positive foundation of authority is the essence of metaphysics since the authority invested in the question of origins has a patriarchal basis to it. Deconstructing authority is to disprivilege the traditional opposition between reality and metaphysics (since one is the other). This does not mean that the futile search for the author undermines authority itself from being. On the contrary, Derrida's différance is the displacement of authority from a transcendental position of dominance to a point of view; language as a system of signs. As Spivak points out in her "Translator's Preface" to *Of Grammatology*,"It is therefore not too extravagant to say 'writing' or '*différance*' is the structure that would deconstruct structuralism–as indeed it would deconstruct all texts, being, as we shall see, the always already differentiated structure of deconstruction" (Spivak, 1976: LIX). What is "proved" about reality can only be *imagined* in terms of points of view.

3. Imagine . . .

Imagine an author without a name? Imagine that the author belongs to a people who do not have a concept of time, i.e., do not think in linear terms of the past, present and future. What if such an author would write a book, an autobiography, let us assume. Throughout the entire book he would refer to himself with the pronoun "I". Since he is not aware of time, his entire autobiography would consist of a bunch of descriptive statements–that the grass in his village is green, etc. Whether he says: I eat grass or the grass eats me, he still means the same thing, because in the absence of the name as a condition of being, the "I" and the "grass" become interchangeable terms:

> It is, of course, imaginable that two people belonging to a tribe unacquainted with games should sit at a chess-board and go through the moves of a game of chess; and even with all the appropriate mental accompaniments. And if *we* were to see it we should say they were playing chess. But now imagine a game of chess translated according to certain rules into a series of actions which we do not ordinarily associate with a *game*–say into yells and stamping of feet. And now suppose those two people to yell and stamp instead of playing the form of chess that we are used to; and this in such a way that their procedure is translatable by suitable rules into a game of chess. Should we still be inclined to say they were playing a game? What right would one have to say so? (Wittgenstein, 1953: 81).

Although there are no rules of name and time in the sense that we imagine the rules as prescriptive of identity, the game could still be played. The book can be written, but whether it is a book, a self-defined, compact entity open for anyone to find a meaning for him or herself, that is something we could talk about only by imposing our rules on the tribe.

Chomsky would see it differently; whatever is the limitation of their conceptual ability as we see it, from a present standpoint, the people of the tribe possess an innate linguistic competence. The language-game is secondary to the biological fact that the members are born with the game-playing ability. The ability may be defined as a *language organ* that all human beings are equally endowed with. Different individuals may perform differently, but this does not affect the basic equation of language with the human situation:

> So what's clear is that there is some biological capacity which differentiates us from rocks and birds and apes and so on; it plainly isn't just a sensory capacity . . . there is some mental characteristic, if you like–something about our nature which reflects itself in the structure and growth of a particular mental organ and that constitutes the intrinsic, innate contribution to the growth of language (Rieber, 1983: 49).

For Derrida, playing the game would be a strategic means to throwing the essence off balance; it is a way of accepting the reality of metaphysics while simultaneously overturning reality to make it stand on its feet. The game is played as much as for its own sake as with the explicit purpose of criticizing any fundamental concern to discover a stable origin or enter an apocalyptic now. Style is not just a means to playing the language-game; style is the game; a language-user is above all a stylist; he is a reader

without a past or a transcendental purpose in view; like Nietzsche, he writes in order to mock; the mockery of essence is the essence of all writing. As Derrida writes regarding the hymen that "differs (defers) from the present, or from a present that is past, future, or eternal, then its sheet has neither inside nor outside, belongs neither to reality nor to the imaginary, neither to the original nor to its representation. The syntax of its fold makes it impossible for us to arrest its play or its indecision, to fix it on any one of its terms . . ." (Derrida, 1981a: 231). Style is the hymen that both is and is not confusing the reader from knowing the truth of the essence or the son knowing the "father" for a fact.

4. Fathers and sons

> We act by virtue of what we recognize as beneficial," observed Bazarov.
> "At the present time, negation is the most beneficial of all–and we deny–"
> "Everything?"
> "Everything!" (Turgenev, 1941: 55)

Is the Wittgensteinian imagination, where one perpetually opens the mind to possible instances, a point of denial of *everything*, also a point of negation of all authority? The history of discourse would be the description of an imaginative account of possibilities. One begins theorizing about the world from an apparent state of "nothingness". As Bazarov puts it, here only "personal character" matters (Turgenev, 1941: 54). There is an element of rebellion in Wittgenstein, a rebellion against Western metaphysics, against philosophy as a quest for wisdom or ultimate reality, or philosophy as theoretical counterpart to science. For Wittgenstein, character is the language that transcends any discussion on a philosophy of language.

The aphoristic style of writing is significant to the Western sage; the style is meant to influence and bring about a moral change in the listener and have a dramatic effect. He does not appeal to a history of philosophy; rather philosophy is means to discovering the obvious or commonplace. As Norman Malcolm notes in *Wittgenstein. A Memoir*: "Once when we were together, he (Wittgenstein) made a striking observation about philosophy: 'A person caught in a philosophical confusion is like a man in a room who wants to get out but doesn't know how. He tries the window but it is too high. He tries the chimney but it is too narrow. And if he would only turn around, he would see that the door has been open all the time!'" (Malcolm, 1984: 44). It is the metaphorical "open door" that consistently has been ignored by philosophers.

For Chomsky, it is common people who have historically been ignored by vested interests. The open door of philosophy is in a morality of politics connected with the supra-institution of the state, which permeates the other institutions of family, church, etc. In Chomsky's vision of an anarchist society some form of authority is bound to exist, an authority that springs from the innateness of individuals and their potential competence to be language-users. Experience is not so much a source of language as much as evidence to the disclosure of the innate language potential. In historical terms, the experience of common people conclusively demonstrates that a human being naturally seeks certain form of society free from hunger and oppression, one in which their creativity is expressed in a manner compatible with their nature and the social order to which they belong. As Chomsky observes in his essay "Language and Freedom", "it is

obvious by introspection that each man possesses a mind, a substance whose essence is thought; his creative use of language reflects this freedom of thought and conception" (Chomsky, 1987: 145).

For Derrida it is not so much the obvious or commonplace as much as the undisclosed or the borderline; the open door would perhaps be a metaphor to the repressed; the obvious, in fact, is what is concealed as false, illusionary, hysterical, woman and child. Deconstruction is an act of unconcealing; it is opening the door; the open door is/of writing; writing in turn is a metaphor to the metaphor; it is the undoing of the comparison; it is the other at the heart of the metaphor; it is authority without the presence of author; reality is a metaphor or a comparison: since the essence is always, already *not* there owing to its state of perpetual displacement.

In his analysis of Nietzsche's "I have forgotten my umbrella," a very inessential statement from a great philosopher, Derrida points out that "There is no infallible way of knowing the occasion of this sample or what it could have been later grafted onto. We never will know *for sure* what Nietzsche wanted to say or do when he noted these words, nor even that he actually *wanted* anything" (Derrida, 1978: 123). Did Nietzsche have an umbrella or was he imagining one, a new metaphor in the making! The metaphor of the umbrella is in turn the reality of philosophy. "Even my admission can very well be a lie because there is dissimulation only if one tells the truth (only if one tells that one is telling the truth), still the text will remain indefinitely open, cryptic and parodying" (Derrida, 1978: 137).

Bazarov, in ironic ways, is the paradigm that reconciles the dialogue between Wittgenstein, Chomsky and Derrida. He is a deconstructionist in his stance of denying everything that he observes before Nikolai Petrovitch. In his negation, Bazarov is a stylist above all; scientific reasoning that, according to Bazarov, must lead to a nihilist perspective opposing the influence of tradition is a conclusion that he works out through language. To Nikolai Petrovitch's accusation of nihilism as a form of "'materialism', 'a foreign word again!,' broke in Bazarov" (Turgenev, 1941: 57). In an earlier instance, Bazarov is "displeased" with Arkady's use of the word "personal egoism" to refer to some kind of a self-interest because "there was a flavor of philosophy, that is to say, romanticism about it, for Bazarov called philosophy, too, romanticism" (Turgenev, 1941: 56).

The above statement can be read in two ways: one is that Bazarov is attacking the voices in Western philosophy: the entire *self*-perpetuating discourse that exists for its own sake. As Bazarov exclaims in a rhetorical outburst of passion:

> Then we suspected that talk, perpetual talk, and nothing but talk, about our social diseases, was not worth while, that it all led to nothing but superficiality and pedantry; we saw that our leading men, so-called advanced people and reformers, are no good; that we busy ourselves over foolery, talk rubbish about art, unconscious creativeness, parliamentarism, trial by jury, and the deuce knows what all; all the while, all the while, it's a question of getting bread to eat, while we're stifling under the grossest superstition, while all our enterprises come to grief, simply because there aren't honest men enough to carry them on, while the very emancipation our Government's busy upon will hardly come to any good, because peasants are glad to rob themselves to get drunk at the gin-shop (Turgenev, 1941: 57-58).

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Another facet to the same point would be that Bazarov is attempting to write in a simple language (an alternate discourse); a Wittgensteinian project of writing to describe rather than philosophize; and in the process filter the existing language of much that is useless, i.e., the romanticism of philosophy. The "romanticism" facet has a double reading in the case of Chomsky. One is an indubitable Bazarovian contempt for authority in any form of state-controlled discourse; another, is the romantic aura that surrounds libertarian socialism in the notion of an anarchist society free of the state, an egalitarian social order and the idea of connecting that order to a theory of human nature. If everything can be rejected because it carries the weight of authority, what then constitutes action or in Ivan Karamazov's/Sartre's terms why should one be good?

5. Numbers/words

Language is relative; morality is absolute; but it is absolute from a point wherein a person can understand his or her relativity in terms of the rest of the universe. That is the Wittgensteinean paradox that while contradiction is possible in language, morality transcends contradiction. Faith translates the universe from a rational order of things with or without an end in view to a poetic state of unreason, where things *become*, in spite of themselves and language responds to this becoming with a transcendent logic. In its openness and simultaneous undermining of essence, poetry as art form anticipates philosophy as discourse. Borges in his "Argumentum Ornithologicum" in an interesting way plays on this poetry of philosophy:

> I close my eyes and see a flock of birds. The vision lasts a second or perhaps less; I don't know how many birds I saw. Were they a definite or an indefinite number? This problem involves the question of the existence of God. If God exists, the number is definite, because how many birds I saw is known to God. If God does not exist, the number is indefinite, because nobody was able to take count. In this case, I saw fewer than ten birds (let's say) and more than one; but not nine, eight, seven, six, five, etc. That number, as a whole number, is inconceivable; *ergo*, God exists (Borges, 1964: 29).

If an argument is a scientific means of exposition leading to quantifiable results, then the *argumentum* is conspicuous by its absence of one. Apparently it is a piece of intellectual prose operating within the discourse of a poem, if we see a poem as being an argument without an essence or only a surreal one. The prose-poem can be paraphrased: "To believe in a God means to see that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter" (Wittgenstein, 1969: 74). Borges' attempt to philosophize is a mockery of philosophy as a discourse of possession, God or numbers or words, without ceasing to see "the facts of the world" as an "end of the matter". It could probably be a flock of birds, which can or cannot be counted, whose number is indefinite or definite, but comprising an argument.

Why is the vision (with the eyes closed) any different from reality? If possession is a way of securing identity, and identity structured around a set of dominant values, reality could only be an adjunct to the vision that deviates from identity; and philosophy an extension of poetry, since "Philosophy is the attempt to be rid of a particular kind of puzzlement" (Wittgenstein, 1980: 1). A vision of birds is an instinctual occurrence and not a puzzle that can be unraveled through reasoning in a sequential manner. The world

is not constructed on identity because it is not built on possession, since the world is the world. As Wittgenstein sees it, "Aesthetically, the miracle is that the world exists. That what exists does exist" (Wittgenstein, 1969: 86).

In Chomskyean terms, private property is the essence of the state that in an anarchist society would undergo transformation with social welfare as end in view. The function of language as an intrinsic aspect of the mind is realization of an anarchist society. Social transformation is the essence of language. The anarchist is a visionary like the poet and a Platonist who visualizes the good as the metaphorical sun. Since it is a metaphor of the eye or the mind, the mind *is* ideally speaking competence itself.

> A vision of the future social order is in turn based on a concept of human nature. If in fact humans are indefinitely malleable, completely plastic beings, with no innate structures of mind and no intrinsic needs of a cultural or social character, then they are fit subjects for the 'shaping of behavior' by the state authority, the corporate manager, the technocrat, or the central committee. Those with some confidence in the human species will hope this is not so and will try to determine the intrinsic human characteristics that provide the framework for intellectual development, the growth of moral consciousness, cultural achievement, and participation in a free community (Chomsky, 1987: 154).

For Derrida, Borges' prose-poem offers a brilliant instance of deconstruction of authority; while "count" is an aspect of numbers, in/definiteness belongs to the realm of words. Numbers and words are sign-systems that exist in a state of *différance*. They do not oppose one another as much as displace any attempt to fix them as indisputable entities going by the Saussurean view that "the arbitrary nature of the sign is really what protects language from any attempt to modify it . . . language is a system of arbitrary signs and lacks the necessary basis, the solid ground for discussion" (Saussure, 1966: 73). The very basis of the discussion number/words functions on the deconstruction of the sign (/)–is it "or," or "and," or even nothing that can be varyingly interpreted depending on the context in view. As Derrida defines in his essay "Freud and the Scene of Writing", "the fundamental property of writing, in a difficult sense of the word as *spacing*: diastem and time becoming space . . . The border between the non-phonetic space of writing (even "phonetic" writing) and the space of the stage (*scene*) of dreams is uncertain" (Derrida, 1976: 217). Deconstruction as *spacing*, in the sense of being in a transitional state between the sign on the page and the stage of the dream, is real in the difference it makes to the reader but also a dream (rather than an illusion) in escaping the grasp of meaning.

6. Ciding the author

> "I don't know which one of the two of us is writing this page"
> – "Borges and I" – (Borges, 1967: 200)

Between the name Borges and the pronoun "I," there could be Wittgenstein, Chomsky, Derrida, Ivan, Sartre, Dostoyevsky, Bazarov, Turgenev, Boswell or Dr. Johnson, the writer or "you", anybody or/and nobody. To the question "who is an author?" Wittgenstein's characteristic reply might be – a latent possibility that comes into being in

order to realize the world. "Authority" is a state that the world imposes upon the writer. In the use of language, the writer translates phenomena into his/her world. To acknowledge the occurrence of this translation is to negate authority. The fundamental question of phenomena becoming language is both a *useless* one and one that cannot be answered except in metaphysical terms. "As a part of the system of language, one may say, the sentence has life. But one is tempted to imagine that which gives the sentence life as something in an occult sphere, accompanying the sentence. But whatever accompanied it would for us just be another sign" (Wittgenstein, 1958: 5). This is because, in Ivan Karamazov's terms, it is only an "idea" and ideas exist beyond the realm of individual language-users. Authority is the possession of an idea and understanding happens when the world interacts with words. As Dr. Johnson sees it, there is a rock outside the text, which to Wittgenstein would be a possibility realizable in language. Whether there is an im-possibility outside the world or language that determines or oversees the movement of language and the world, an understanding that surpasses words, it would be an extraordinarily poetic situation, since one can never know for certain which of the two of them/us is writing the page.

Borges says in "Poem written in a copy of Beowulf": "Beyond my anxiety, beyond this writing/ the universe waits, inexhaustible, inviting" (Borges, 1967: 202). Borges' problem is not so much of whether language makes sense to the universe as much as it is whether the universe could be understood through language. To Wittgenstein, language is the only possible system through which the universe makes itself known; this does not mean denying the presence of the rock; the rock is there outside of the text; but the question is how do we know that it is there? "A blind man could easily find out if I am blind too; by, for example, making a certain gesture with his hand, and asking me what he did . . . knowing is not a psychological state whose special characteristics will explain all kinds of things" (Wittgenstein, 1956: 63). While Dr. Johnson's forceful kick in a simplistic way encounters Berkeley's idealism, the episode illustrates the very reductionism involved in the question of knowing the world either ideally or empirically. Science and mysticism coincide at this point of marriage between language and the universe, where one becomes possible to the other.

As Wittgenstein points out: "We feel that even when all *possible* scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remains completely untouched. Of course there are no questions left, and this itself is the answer" (Wittgenstein, 1961: 73). From the point of view of science and philosophy, Wittgenstein brings the question/answer method into the purview of religion and mysticism. The result is not a science of religion based on a different gospel other than the scientific method, but rather, to show the limitation under which science operates, when seen from the eyes of a language-theorist.

For Chomsky, questions could be posed and possible answers be derived on further reasoning. The traditional scientific method has not completely exhausted its reserves and, in fact, its area can be broadened to include human affairs as well. The study of language is not just about how we use it, but also an examination of the origin and the scientific basis of the use. The totalities that Wittgenstein attempts to see in terms of mysticism outside the human body, Chomsky deals with in scientific terms of the human body. The 'I' is not a mere language-user but an individual materially endowed with a system that makes articulation a reality.

> The study of language falls naturally within human biology. The language faculty, which somehow evolved in human prehistory, makes possible the amazing feat of language learning... it makes possible the coherent and creative use of language in ways that we can sometimes describe, but hardly even begin to understand (Chomsky, 1975: 123).

The Derridean position steers clear of either Wittgensteinean totalities or the Chomskyean premise basing itself in a biological LAD. Though the question-answer method tends to be the basis of a scientific theology (a dogmatic view of science) that as a source of authority is metaphysical in its own right; it is questionableness (that there is nothing beyond question –language as a question; the question of the text; the question as opposed to the quest for origins) that is a way of "ciding" the author with only traces of the murder for the detection of the reader, "The trace of this wounded writing that bears the stigmata of its own proper inadequation: signed, assumed, chained . . . " (Derrida, 1995: 61).

7. Ideas, rocks and bread

Does philosophy trace its authority to an identifiable source–ideas, rocks (or tables) or something as mundane as bread itself? If knowledge is based on authority and the author makes knowledge a legitimate discourse, the point is whether there is an alternate discourse to knowledge (knowing as a mode of cognizing the world?). To a man who is hungry the reason *to be* is to relieve hunger. How does a new-born child know that she's hungry unless there is a language-mechanism operating between hunger as essential quality and the word "hunger", rather, cry, that makes knowledge possible? Or is hungering an interpretation of the cry? Does explanation make language natural to human body or is it one among other responses to the definition of knowledge? What is certain to be known? Is the rock a phallic symbol erect and sure of itself? Is language matter or pure sensuousness? Are there two languages operating simultaneously–one, the language of commonplace and another, the scientific language that is another version of the Platonic ideas)? Is metaphysics as *useless* as science?

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