

# Speech and Knowledge

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## 1. *Gaya Sciensa*

*Las Leys d'Amors, The Laws of Love*, is the title of a work written in Provençal, composed in Toulouse in the first decade of the fourteenth century. At the opening of this text, the compiler informs us of the occasion for which the work was composed:

In the noble and regal city of Toulouse there were seven brave, wise, subtle, and discreet men who had a longing and great love to find this noble, excellent, beautiful, and virtuous woman Science, because she gave them the joyous knowledge [*gay saber*] to compose speeches [*dictar*] in the Romance language . . . in order to instruct the ignorant and to restrain the mad and foolish lovers and to live in joy and happiness and to escape anger and sadness, the enemies of *gay saber*.<sup>1</sup>

In the poem sent to the “troubadours and subtle speakers [*dettatori*],” the seven gentlemen who were called “the overjoyed company of the seven troubadours of Toulouse,” announced that they would return each year on the first of May to assign the title of “doctor of gay science” and to award a golden violet to whomever made the best speech. On the first of May, 1324, the *violeta* was assigned to someone called Arnaut Vidal, who received the title of *doctor en la gaya sciensa, per una noela canso que hac fayta de Nostra Dona* (“doctor of gay science, for a new song that he made for Our Lady”).

It is not easy to say how Nietzsche became acquainted with this text, whether directly (the first edition was accessible at the end of 1841)<sup>2</sup> or indirectly; but it is certain that he was so struck by the expression “gay science” that he drew from it both the title and subtitle of his work (*Die*

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*fröhliche Wissenschaft*, to be precise), in which he sought to delineate another face of knowledge. If we ask ourselves, at this point, What is the gay science, the *gay saber* that is questioned in *Leys d'Amors*? the response, after reading a bit further, leaves little doubt: The gay science that this work contains is essentially a grammar of the Provençal language. The title of “doctor of gay science,” we then understand, implies the first accurate knowledge of grammar, defined as a “primitive science,” and the future doctor must demonstrate the ability to respond to each linguistic and grammatical question. The gay science, therefore, is nothing other than grammatical knowledge. But, on my reading, this *knowledge* appears simultaneously as a *love*. *Fin aymant*, the “perfect lover,” is defined as one who has knowledge of *gay saber*, and “Our Lady” is language, also the object of this love-knowledge; and “the laws of love” are precisely (to use a metaphor that was not new in the medieval tradition, one that often assimilates sexual rules and grammatical rules, sexual perversions and grammatical violations) the rules of language: grammar.

Grammatical knowledge is presented here as a love of language. Recall that, in the preface to the second edition of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche defines himself as a lover of words.<sup>3</sup> In a fragment from the period of *The Gay Science*, he speaks of “fondling and caressing words.”<sup>4</sup> In a poetry project from the same period, entitled “Speech,” he speaks again of a proper love for living speech and warns against those who “kill words,” words so fragile that “one look is enough to make them die.”<sup>5</sup> Here, he also lovingly describes the corpse of speech, which “rests without form, lifeless, icy, and impoverished, a little corpse horribly broken from death and agony.”<sup>6</sup> The question I would like to ask at this point is: Why was science made into a love of speech? Why did philosophy become philology, that is, gay science, *gay saber*? And is the gay science, the love of speech about which Nietzsche speaks, the same *gai saber* of *The Laws of Love*, namely, grammatical knowledge, knowledge of language? And is this love of speech an insignificant episode, an “adventure” in the history of knowledge, or is it not rather an essential part of its own more original project?

## 2. Language/Speech

I would like to invite you to leap over a few centuries and to bring your attention to another book: the *Course in General Linguistics*, by Ferdinand de Saussure. Here, as is well known, Saussure grounds the possibility of a science of language [*linguaggio*]<sup>7</sup> upon the distinction between *langue* and *speech*. He does not tire of repeating that only language permits the ordering of the multiform and heterogeneous

chaos of human language [*linguaggio*], which does not allow itself to be classified according to any existing category: “A language,” he writes, “on the contrary, is both a self-contained whole and a principle of classification. As soon as we give linguistic structure pride of place among the facts of language, we introduce a natural order into an aggregate which lends itself to no other classification.”<sup>8</sup> In this way, Saussure comes to say that the science of language [*linguaggio*] can at least make the other elements of language [*linguaggio*] (that is, of speech) once it is founded on the basis of language. Strictly speaking, it is only possible if these other elements are not mixed. “For all these reasons, it would be impossible to consider language systems and speech from one and the same point of view. Language in its totality is unknowable, for it lacks homogeneity. . . . It is necessary to choose between two routes which cannot both be taken simultaneously.”<sup>9</sup>

We are so accustomed to this distinction, upon which all the work of modern linguistics is constructed, and we are so accustomed to considering speech as a sort of putting into play and exercise of language, that we forget that the two terms are not homogenous in any way, nor can they ever really be said in the same sense or to the same extent. It is sufficient, in fact, to reflect on one moment alone in order to notice that, while speech, the concrete moment of discourse, is something immediately and concretely experienceable, language is not a scientific construction that starts from speech. Because something like language could also be conceived of and because it became something more firm and real than speech, ages—even millennia—of grammatical and logical reflection on language [*linguaggio*] were necessary. This process culminated in the Romantic age with the attribution of language to a subject: *Das Volk*, the people, and with it the wonderful work of the history of comparative grammar—from Bopp to Saussure—attempted to reconstruct Indo-European. But that work was preceded by a century of modest analysis and grammatical education, through which language had been severed from speech and internalized as knowledge. In an illustrated grammar book for children written at the end of the nineteenth century, entitled *Little Miss Mimi's Grammar*, we see a child ask her mother what grammar is: “Grammar,” responds the mother, “is the art of speaking (and of writing) correctly.”

Great astonishment from Little Miss Mimi, who speaks very well without the need of grammar. It must be explained to her what it is to speak correctly and to speak inside-out without reasoning [note these words, “without reasoning”—GA] as the dog does when it yelps and the cat when it meows, which is not speaking, but squawking.<sup>10</sup>

In effect, in the accompanying illustration we see the little girl standing between a dog and a cat, a symbol of human speech in danger of becoming lost in the animal voice. The example is very simple, but I believe it illuminates what was necessary in order for language to have been distinguished from an act of speaking, from Little Miss Mimi's "speaking without reasoning."

If this is true, if language is nothing but a scientific construction beginning from speech, then one of the central problems of contemporary linguistic reflection presents itself in a completely new light. It is well known that the very distinction between language and speech, the distinction upon which Saussure had believed it possible to establish the science of language [*linguaggio*] years earlier (and which semiology continues to consider as obvious and settled), was the rock upon which Saussure was shipwrecked at the end of his studious journey. In an unedited manuscript, he dramatically poses the problem of the shift from language to discourse: "Language," he writes,

is only created with a view to discourse, but what separates discourse from language? What allows one to assert at a given moment that language has *become active as discourse*? Various concepts are present in language (that is, clothed in linguistic form) such as *ox, lake, sky, red, sad, five, to split, to see*. At what moment, and by virtue of what operation, what interplay between them, what conditions, do these concepts form *discourse*? The sequence of these words . . . wishes to convey something specific.<sup>11</sup>

It is this same problem that Benveniste took up again in an exemplary study,<sup>12</sup> explaining it as the problem of the "double signification" of human language [*linguaggio*] that presents two distinct and contraposed modes of signification: the semiotic (pertaining to the plane of language) and the semantic (pertaining to the plane of speech); there is no passage between these two ("a gap separates them," writes Benveniste).<sup>13</sup>

But if language is not a construction of knowledge, then the central problem, the last stumbling block of linguistics, is revealed as a pseudo-problem, the formulation of which is flawed from the start. What is truly in question is not, in fact, how it is possible, *given speech*, to construct language (that is a problem of historical order).

This problem is that of the birth of grammar and logic in Greece, beginning with the first reflection on language [*linguaggio*] by the Sophists, and by Plato and Aristotle, up until the formation of the modern concept of grammar in the historical thought and writing of the Hellenistic age, in the first grammar: the *Techne Grammatike* of Dionysius Thrax.

### 3. The Fragrant Panther

The experience of speech without language, of a human discourse that has not always already found a grammar within and before itself, but rather is explicitly opposed to grammar, is not something remote from us, but coincides with what the long tradition was accustomed to consider the original place of Italian culture and language.

At the beginning of “On Eloquence in the Vernacular,”<sup>14</sup> Dante indeed objects to the “vulgaris locutio,” or “vulgar speech,” *quam infantes adsuefiunt ab adsistentibus*, “to which children were made accustomed by those close to them,” and of which it was said that *sine omni regula nutricem imitantes accipimus* (“without any rule, we learn by imitating the nurse”), in a “grammatical language” in which, instead, *per spatium temporis et studii assiduitatem regulamur et doctrinamur* (“we are corrected and trained over time and through assiduous study”).<sup>15</sup> What is in question in these words is not simply, as has been repeated many times, the distinction between vulgar Latin, spoken by the common people, and Latin, but between *speech* and *language*—more precisely, between a “maternal speech” that is not speech (like the vernacular of Dante’s time, language without grammar, *sine omni regula*) and a speaking that necessarily presupposes a language and a grammar (*lingua grammatica*, to be precise), that is, between a language [*linguaggio*] that *speaks*, but does not *know*, and one that *speaks* and *knows*.

What the long-standing “question of language” in Italian culture—from Trissino to Bembo to Manzoni—has made us continually unable to see, in reducing the interpretation of the Dantescan treatise to an alternative between a program for a national language or poetic art, is precisely the “fragrant panther” that Dante seeks, “whose scent is everywhere and whose person nowhere” (*redolentem ubique et necubi apparentem*).<sup>16</sup> It is neither one thing nor the other, neither a new national grammatical language nor a poetic art, but another figure of language [*linguaggio*], of which a science is not possible, but only a love. The singularity of the Dantescan program (as in that of the troubadourian “new style” program in general)<sup>17</sup> is, namely, that in question here is the relationship between knowledge and speech, between man and language [*linguaggio*], which is not the same as the relationship upon which λόγος established its power in western culture. Of course, this program was only made possible in a particular historical situation in Europe between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, which saw the newly born non-grammatical mother tongues and the unique grammatical language living together in a fecund and inflamed tension. When these conditions diminished and the mother tongues developed into grammatical languages, the program was also canceled as it was

consolidated within the logical-grammatical project that governed more than two thousand years of our culture. But if Heidegger was able to properly seek an overcoming of metaphysics in dialogue with poetic speech and if Lacan was able to properly inscribe another relation to language [*linguaggio*] in the homology between speech and love, this must also be due to the fact that the love poets opened a dimension of speech at the end of the Middle Ages in which all of modern European lyrical poetry found—consciously or unconsciously—its proper place.

#### **4. *Homo Sapiens/Homo Loquens***

If language is not this, if it is not a construction of knowledge starting from speech, then the sense of the “philological” project of western science and its “gay science” must be put into question in a new and more radical way. Why did science have to construct language, in order to make itself grammatical knowledge? What is the meaning of the love of speech that does not find peace until it succeeds in logically analyzing its object, exhausting and understanding it in language?

From this perspective, the construction of grammar and logic does not appear as one event among others in the history of western culture, but instead expresses the original project of this culture as metaphysics. Perhaps metaphysics is not this entwinement, this mutual implication of speech and knowledge, in which knowing (according to the Platonic, Aristotelian, and later, Leibnizian, definitions) is λόγον δοῦναι, to make reasonable, that is, to be able to say how something is known and what is known, and speaking is always already *knowing how to speak*, mastering a language. Western science (which a superficial problematization presents as a division between natural science and human science, that is, philology) is essentially a philology, a love of speech and a reflection on speech, and *homo sapiens* originally develops as *homo sapiens loquens*, “man who knows how to speak.” The original division between knowledge and speech, between *homo sapiens* and *homo loquens*, in which is the condition of every man in virtue of his having understood the infancy of language [*linguaggio*] as the mother tongue, man is therefore found talking without the power to give reason, without the power, in other words, that metaphysics inscribes in *animale rationale*, ζῷον λόγον ἔχων, when logos no longer simply signifies “speech,” but “knowledge-speech,” that is, an interpretation of speech and of human language [*linguaggio*] as knowledge, as “reason,” as language and grammar. Western man is the man who, having found himself speaking, that is, having found language [*linguaggio*] always already ahead of himself, wanted to become wise about this speech, wanted to finally cancel the infancy that originally and



irreducibly divided him from this knowledge. Metaphysical man is not, therefore, simply *homo sapiens*, nor *homo loquens*, but *homo sapiens loqui*, the man who bridged the original difference between knowing and speaking, between language and speech, placing λόγος and *ratio* between them. Philosophy and philology, love of science and love of speech, are thus the two inseparable faces of the metaphysical project oriented from the very beginning to carrying out a plan that a text that profoundly influenced medieval culture presents to us as a union, a marriage between knowing and speaking, between science and speech: we think of Marziano Capella's *On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury*.<sup>18</sup> This "nuptial" project is essential to metaphysics because, once it defined knowledge as giving reason, as a knowing how to speak, since it was no longer possible to give reason a necessary *medium*, of every instance of giving reason, that is, of language [*linguaggio*], since this was something irreducibly illogical, then the same possibility of a knowledge would come to be radically placed in question. Western science—and this more properly constitutes its character than its specific power—was born as a reflection on language (σκηψις ἐν τοῖς λόγοις).<sup>19</sup>

The idea that one can εὖ λέγειν, speak correctly—that there is a language and, consequently, a well-formed speech corresponding to the grammatical rules of the language—is an essential condition for the constitution of science. This is not, in fact, anything other than a well-formed discourse that is, at its limit, a language in which it is not possible to commit errors or to speak illogically.

## 5. The Birth of Grammar

It is from this perspective that we must look at the thousand-year process of reflection on language that carried out the construction of language from the birth of grammar and logic. This is not the place to cover this process in its entirety: I would like, instead, to briefly dwell on two moments that we can consider as the original and foundational moments of this process and that we will try to define as the "capture of the voice" and the "birth of language." We are accustomed always to consider human language [*linguaggio*] as an "articulated" language [*linguaggio*]. But what does "articulated" mean? Articulated, *articulatus*, is the Latin translation of the Greek term ἔναρθρος, which belongs to the technical vocabulary of the history of reflection on language that profoundly influenced the ancient grammarians. The ancient grammarians began their treatment of it with the definition of voice, of φωνή. They first distinguished the confused voice, φωνή συγκεχυμένη, of animals from the human voice, φωνή ἔναρθρος, the articulate voice. But

when we now ask ourselves what this articulate character of the human voice consists in, we see that φωνὴ ἔναρθρος, *vox articulata*, simply means φωνὴ ἐγγράμματος, that is, in the Latin translation, *vox quae scribi potest* or *quae litteris comprehendere potest*—namely, “the voice that can write,” that can “comprehend,” that can “bring together the letters.” The confused voice is the unwritable voice of the animals (*equorum hinnitus, rabies canum, rugitus ferarum*), namely that part of the human voice that cannot be written, like the whistle, the smile, the hiccup (*utputa oris risus vel sibliatus, pectoris mugitus et cetera talia*).

The articulate voice is nothing other than the φωνὴ ἐγγράμματος, the voice that was transcribed and com-pressed in letters. Here, we can recognize the fundamental influence of the written alphabet on our culture and our conception of language [*linguaggio*]. Only alphabetic writing can, in fact, generate the illusion of having captured the voice, of having com-pressed it and engraved it in γράμματα. To fully account for the fundamental importance of this “capture” of the voice in alphabetical writing, we must free ourselves from its ingenuous representation, still so common, according to which the letters, the γράμματα, would truly be in the voice like its elements, like the στοιχεῖα, just as how the number would truly be in the objects. (Here I can only indicate in passing a commonality, in Greek, between the written alphabet and mathematics, between grammatical reflection and geometrical-mathematical reflection.) The development of phonetics and the *impasse* to which it is joined by its attempt to recognize the sounds of speech in their articulate and acoustic aspect, are, from this point of view, particularly instructive. Here, I would like to recall in passing a film made by the German phoneticist Paul Menzerath<sup>20</sup> that showed how it is impossible to discover any successions and subdivisions in the act of speaking, which, from an articulatory point of view, appears as an uninterrupted movement in which the sounds do not succeed one another, but are interwoven. Also, a strictly acoustic analysis reveals such a quantity of details in every sound of a word that it is impossible to organize it into a system.

Indeed, the coming to consciousness of the impossibility of holding, or fully grasping the sounds of language [*linguaggio*], from the articulatory or acoustic point of view, facilitated the birth of phonology, that is, the disembodiment of language from voice and the breaking of the bond between language and voice that was left aside from Stoic thought until the phonetics of the neo-grammarians.<sup>21</sup> With the consummation of this break, the radical autonomy of language as the construction of knowledge from the voice and the concrete act of speaking becomes evident (to use Bréal’s play on words, a fantastical etymology of the term “phonology” may be given that makes it a “murderer”—in Greek:



φόνος—of “speech” [λόγος]). Indeed this knowledge, which broke free from its original relation to the voice, must now seek itself in another place, sending it into an unconscious structure, into an unconscious, namely, in knowledge that is not self-aware, a knowledge without a subject. The phonemes of phonology, the structure of Lévi-Strauss and the generative grammar of Chomsky are all situated in the unconscious. Whereas classical science, from Descartes to the nineteenth century, placed logos, as a mediator between *homo sapiens* and *homo loquens*, in a self, in a consciousness that was nothing other than the subject of language, today science no longer needs this subject and prefers to situate λόγος in the unconscious, in a hidden knowledge that does not know itself. It remains, nevertheless, that this unconscious, however it is characterized, is a λόγος, a logos in the logical aspect of language, in the case of phonology and in the Lévi-Straussian unconscious, the pure mathematical-differential structure—or λόγος in the aspect of speech, as in the case of psychoanalysis. Here we also see the limit of Derrida’s thought, which finds metaphysics in the dependency of writing, of γράμμα, on the φωνή, the voice. Metaphysics, as phonology and structuralism show, can do very well without the supremacy of the voice. From the beginning, the voice is placed, so to speak, out of focus.<sup>22</sup> Essential to the project of metaphysics is that there is a λόγος, an interweaving of speech and knowledge; but it is of little importance if this logos has its place in the voice, in writing, or in an unconscious.

## 6. Grammar and Logic

The second foundational moment in the history of metaphysics, which I had first indicated as a “birth of language,” is the moment in which the concrete reality of speech becomes isolated from language [*linguaggio*] as a moment of pure signification, equivalent to what Benveniste distinguishes as a semiotic mode opposing a semantic mode. However, in the *Sophist*, Plato already clearly distinguished a logos that names from a logos that discourses. It is in Aristotle’s *Categories* that this decisive passage is completed and western logic is born. “Of things that are said,” says Aristotle, “some involve combination [κατὰ συμπλοκὴν], whereas others are said without combination [ἄνευ συμπλοκῆς]. On the one hand, things said in combination are like ‘a man runs,’ ‘a man triumphs’; on the other hand, things said without combination are like ‘man,’ ‘ox,’ ‘runs,’ ‘wins.’”<sup>23</sup>

In this apparently obvious statement of fact, an event of fundamental importance is completed—that is, the isolation of human language [*linguaggio*] from a saying without combination, from a logos that is not said in any discourse but that as language makes possible the

deduction of the categories and the construction of logic. In the sentence that we read, the verb λέγειν, “to say,” comes to have two completely distinct senses: In the first case (speaking with combination) it is dealt with as speech, as concrete human discourse; in the second (speaking without combination) it is dealt with as a saying of language, or, at most, as a grammatical metalanguage (indeed it is evident that, without συμπλοκή, without combination, nothing, in truth, is said).

All of western logic, from Aristotle to Husserl and Wittgenstein, rests upon the distinction between a sphere of language and a sphere of speech. Thus, to give an example, all the analyses that Husserl carries out in the fourth of his *Logical Investigations*—beginning from the categorematic significations and syncategorematic significations to simple significations and compound significations—only and exclusively have meaning in the ambit of a vision of language [*linguaggio*] that he gives in order to discount the distinction between language and speech and the grammatical analyses of the parts of discourse. Western logic originates in a suspension, an ἐποχή, of speech, that is, from the idea that something like “man, ox, win, run” truly exists in human language [*linguaggio*]. It presupposes the grammatical categories and cannot be separated from them.

But while Aristotle was again conscious of the fact that the classifications of logic only apply in the ambit of the distinction between language and speech, between saying without combination and saying with combination (several times he affirms that “each of the things said [i.e., the categories] does not in and by itself make an affirmation or negation; an affirmation or negation is generated from their mutual συμπλοκή”),<sup>24</sup> this was forgotten from logic and subsequent philosophy in that they no longer distinguished between language and speech alone, and they saw speech only as the exercising of language.

This oblivion of the irreducible distinction between language and speech is the founding event of metaphysics. Across this oblivion λόγος can affirm its uncontested dominion. For this reason, the rediscovery of the irreducible difference that separates the plane of language and semiotics from that of speech and semantics in contemporary linguistics—above all in the work of Benveniste—constitutes the basis on which today it can move radically to question logic and metaphysics. In the formulation of this difference, the science of language reaches its unavoidable limit, beyond which it cannot proceed without transforming itself into philosophy.

For this reason, in *Infancy and History*,<sup>25</sup> I tried to philosophically interrogate this difference, defining it as the *in-fancy* of man. Since only if man is not the animal that has logos, that knows how to speak, but the *infant* animal, thrown, that is, into the difference between knowl-

edge and speech, is it possible to enter into a region in which, perhaps for the first time, an overcoming of metaphysics is made possible.

## 7. Mysticism and Science

I have briefly traced a few moments of what at the beginning I had defined as the love story between science and speech, namely, science's attempt to join knowledge and speech, *homo sapiens* and *homo loquens*, in marriage through logos. We have seen how this attempt reached an impossibility: the impossibility of science to suture completely the scission between language and speech. I would now like to recover the traces in the height of western logic and thus, of science, that is, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. I believe, in fact, that the distinction language/speech [*lingua / parola*] allows for a reading of many illuminating lines of the *Tractatus*, such that certain of Wittgenstein's controversial formulations properly point toward what is unavoidable for metaphysics, that is, this distinction. It is clear, in fact, that the discourse of the *Tractatus* is from the beginning entirely situated on the plane of language. From this point of view, the citation that figures as the epigraph is extremely significant: "Whatever a man knows, whatever is not mere rumbling and roaring that he has heard, can be said in three words."<sup>26</sup> What is known is the articulate language, the propositions (the three words: the axiom) of a logic distinct from the murmur and rustle of speech. Recall the distinction between *vox articulata* and *vox confusa* that opened the ancient grammars. Knowledge for Wittgenstein belongs internally to the ambit of language and semiotics and not to speech. "Logical so-called propositions," he says in a note dictated to Moore, "*show the logical properties of language . . . , but say nothing.*"<sup>27</sup> "What cannot be shown," he affirms in a proposition of the *Tractatus*, "cannot be said."<sup>28</sup>

How must we interpret, then, the concluding affirmation of the *Tractatus*, according to which "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen?" This sentence is usually translated as: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence"<sup>29</sup>; I propose, instead, to translate, perhaps even too literally: "Whereof [*Wovon*] one cannot speak, there [*darüber*] one must be silent." Translated in this way, the affirmation acquires the topological significance of a delimitation of spheres and places. The place from which we cannot speak is language, the place of knowledge and the demonstrating of logical principles. The unspeakable in question here is, thus, the unspeakable of language, not the unspeakable of speech. It could also be said that in the same moment that defines the ambit of knowledge and language as

the place in which we cannot nor must not speak, a place for speech is opened up as that in which we can only speak and not know.

Perhaps, in this way, the phantom of “mysticism” in the *Tractatus*, over which much is discussed and not always expediently, can also clarify itself. In western culture, mysticism and science are much closer to one another than is usually thought. If metaphysics is the idea that there is a “marriage,” an identity, a logos between knowledge and speech, between language and speech, then science and mysticism represent—at their extreme point—two opposing faces paralleling the unavoidable limit of metaphysics. Both together create the experience of *in-fancy*, of the difference between knowledge and speech that metaphysics cannot suture. To science, this difference appears as something that can be *known*, but cannot be *said*—as an excess of knowledge and language over speech. To mysticism, this appears, instead, as something that can be *said* but not known, as an excess of speech over language. Both confront one another as an unspeakable—an unspeakable that is not, however, that of another face—the dark and tremendous face of logos (in the case of science, it is the unspeakable as a pure language, as the “showing of itself,” as the logical property of language [*linguaggio*]; in the case of mysticism it is a speech born in the heart, a mute and unnamable speech: Augustine’s *verbum cordis*, the hesychast’s prayer in the heart,<sup>30</sup> or the Sufi’s inner *dhiker*).

Science and mysticism, at the end of their journey, accordingly appear as the two faces of λόγος: the first confronts the unspeakability of language, while the mystical confronts the unknowability of speech. Where one knows, one does not speak. Where one speaks, one does not know. [*Là dove si sa, non si parla. Là dove si parla, non si sa.*] Yet, in being faithful to the original metaphysical project of a “marriage” between knowledge and speech, even where this reveals itself as impossible, these two faces cannot experience the difference as such, as the *in-fancy* of man.

Translated by Meghan Robison

## NOTES

1. *Las Leyes d'Amors* (Toulouse: Anglade, 1920), p. 8. [Agamben here quotes from an untranslated text of the fourteenth century. *Las leyes d'amors* (*The Laws of Love*) is a codification of the rules of Provençal love poetry compiled by Guilhem Molinier in 1341. These rules were created to instruct poets who wished to participate in a poetry competition in

- Toulouse organized by the *Consistòri de la subregaya companhia del gay saber*, or “Academy of the Most Joyful Company of the Joyful Wisdom.” See William D. Paden, “Troubadour Poetry,” in *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia*, ed. William D. Paden (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 930.—Trans.]
2. *Las flors del Gay Saber, estiers dischas Las Leys d'Amors* (Toulouse: Gatien-Arnout, 1841–3).
  3. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrian Del Caro, ed. Bernard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 9.
  4. Friedrich Nietzsche, “Das Wort,” in *Gedichte und Sprüche* (Leipzig: C.G. Naumann, 1908), p. 111.
  5. *Ibid.*
  6. *Ibid.*
  7. [Throughout this essay, I have translated both *lingua* and *linguaggio* as “language.” However, Italian distinguishes between *lingua*, a particular language, and *linguaggio*, the system of language in general. In order to clarify the author’s intended meaning, the original Italian term will always follow the English translation.—Trans.]
  8. See Ferdinand de Saussure, “Introduction,” in *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris, ed. Charles Bally (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing, 2006), esp. chaps. 3 and 4, pp. 8–20.
  9. Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, pp. 19–20.
  10. *La Grammatica della Signorina Mimi* (Milan: Tipografia Editrice Lombarda, 1876), chap. 2.
  11. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Écrits de linguistique generale*, ed. Simon Bouquet and Rudolf Engler (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), p. 277.
  12. Émile Beneveniste, “Semiologie de la langue,” *Semiotica* 1:1 (1969), pp. 1–12.
  13. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
  14. Dante Alighieri, *Literature in the Vernacular*, trans. Sally Purcell (Manchester: Carcanet New Press Limited, 1981).
  15. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
  16. *Ibid.*
  17. [The term *stilnovistico* Agamben uses here refers to the *stil novistico*, an influential literary movement of the thirteenth century, which emerged for the most part out of Sicilian and Tuscan poetry and whose central theme was love (*amor*). The poets of this movement were called *stilnovisti* (the new stylists). Dante himself identifies this new poetic style as *Dolce Stil Novo* (the sweet new style) in Canto 24 of *Purgatorio*. For more on

- Dante and the *Doce Stil Novo*, see *The Dante Encyclopedia*, ed. Richard Lansing (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), p. 310.—Trans.]
18. Martianus Capella, *Geometria: De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (Verona: Libreria Universitaria Editrice, 1983).
  19. Aristotle, *Met.* I.1, 987b34.
  20. See Paul Menzerath and Armando de Lacerda, *Koartikulation Steuerung und Lautabgrenzung* (Berlin: Ferdinand Dummlers Verlag, 1933).
  21. [Agamben here refers to the movement of thought in late-nineteenth-century German linguistics, which argued that change in language can be accounted for by inflexible laws of sound.—Trans.]
  22. [In using the phrase *fuori campo*, Agamben also alludes to the term *voce fuoricampo*, the cinematic term “voiceover,” a subtlety lost in translation.—Trans.]
  23. Aristotle, *Cat.* 1, 1a16–9.
  24. Aristotle, *Cat.* 4, 2a4–7.
  25. Giorgio Agamben, *Infanzia e storia: distruzione dell'esperienza e origine della storia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978); *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (New York: Verso, 1993).
  26. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. David Francis Pears and Brian McGuinness (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 1.
  27. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks 1914–1916*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, 2nd. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 107.
  28. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, p. 31.
  29. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
  30. [Hesychasm (ἡσυχασμός) is an eremitic practice of inner stillness born in response to the Gospel of Matthew that commands: “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 5:6).—Trans.]