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A Metaphoric Universe

In Whitehead's characterization of societies from the atom to the human being, societies are what endure or persist through time, implying a line of continuous inheritance, through a "personal order" in the Latin sense of *persona.* Such a society changes yet maintains a character, which character in turn can characterize the change. Contemporary biology puts another spin on the question, as we have seen. It has discovered that biologists have privileged particular cases, describing living beings in terms of an ability to maintain themselves and to reproduce themselves *alone,* given the necessary resources. The rule, however, is now rather cooperation, or what Donna Haraway calls "sympoiesis."[1] Haraway thus asks, with Thom van Dooren, "who are we bound up with and in what ways?"[2] This question places less emphasis on social persistence and more on partial interdependence among heterogeneous partners, on "ontological choreography," wherein each has need of others but not a need of others in general. To be itself, each needs certain others, and each time in its own partial way.

Welding Imagination and Common Sense

If we recall that the term "character" also designates a fictional character, nothing about this ontological choreography should shock common sense. By the same token, it falls to fiction to give full weight to the question of change, through the problem that a "character" poses for an author. The question of character in fiction does not concern

what a character is capable of by itself. It is always about what a character is capable of in a light of how its attachments situate it, generally in the context of a new encounter or under new circumstances, in the mode of "what could it become capable of?" What could it become susceptible to? How would it transform? To keep the reader interested, the author must not subject her character to her sovereign will. She has to generate the experience of "yes, it could become capable of that," which enlarges the reader's imagination.[3]

Along these lines, if we are to avoid a world whose ontological ways are plural only through a degree of originality between the two extremes that are human experience and the conformity in organic societies, we need to relay Whitehead through an activation of imagination that unfurls questions about the circumstances and about what metamorphoses they may occasion. Generality is not an option, neither are *prêt-à-porter* characterizations transcending circumstances. We aim for moments of sheer disclosure, of "becoming manifest," in which it is as if that which we addressed told us that we must now initiate new relationships to understand it otherwise.

This sensation of disclosure does not, of course, afford any guarantee of epistemological validity. It introduces the power of metamorphosis: Cayenne's empowerment is that she does not guarantee. Cayenne has not become able to negotiate, discuss, or argue any more than Haraway has become able to explain what she wants of her. As a dog descended from shepherds, however, she is sensitive to signs, trying to give meaning to them. Thus, when a sign, previously a vector of perplexity, takes on meaning, it becomes entirely her business to answer it, which makes Haraway her witness. And Haraway sharing with us her experience makes us set aside epistemological concerns and territorial conflicts. A welding of common sense and imagination has taken place, so to speak. Specialized forms of knowledge may well, given time, provide different interpretations for the taking-on of meaning that transformed Cayenne. But we will be able to situate these forms of knowledge, to cool their predatory ardor, to call for an enlargement of their imagination. This is because Haraway's story-testimony took the relay of what happened between her and Cayenne, which gives us, we who read it, the ability to make our own connections.

The welding of imagination and common sense is not achieved

in general. It is achieved through intensification, the dramatization of singular experiences, through what might be called "ontological mutations." Sheer disclosure is such a mutation, a manifestation of life, which breaks reiteration of the past, which makes something devoid of importance begin to count, or makes it count otherwise. Whitehead's metaphysics equips philosophy to activate such transformative experiences and to characterize them in a mode such that they resist predation.

Whitehead defined his metaphysics as a matrix for applications. For a mathematician, matrices are operators of a transformation: they thus have to operate; they require something to transform. As such, the application of Whitehead's metaphysical categories should transform what we experience, but experiences do not become mere illustrations of categories. Such categories are tools for philosophy, and philosophers comprehend them only by learning how to handle them, and in which circumstances. This is why to think with Whitehead is to learn. It is to learn to think in zigzag against the straight line. The straight line encourages us to think our statements refer to facts that, correlatively, present themselves as isolable. The zigzag entails experimentation going back and forth between a conceptual abstraction that aims to bring coherence into existence and a situation that our usual statements make bifurcate. The zigzag gives *this* situation the power to reclaim its reality as *individual concrete fact.* "Every science must devise its own instruments. The tool required for philosophy is language. Thus philosophy redesigns language in the same way that, in a physical science, pre-existing appliances are redesigned. It is exactly at this point that the appeal to facts is a difficult operation. . . . Nothing has been defined, because every definite entity requires a systematic universe to supply its requisite status. Thus every proposition proposing a fact must, in its complete analysis, propose the general character of the universe required for that fact. There are no self-sustained facts, floating in nonentity."[4]

Evidently, the aim of philosophy for Whitehead is not to define a fact completely. Neither is it to define the systematic universe that the fact implies in its own limitation. The aim of philosophy is to experiment with language to activate the experience of a fact as individual, whose achievement affirms its own partiality, its "thus." This is why Whitehead ran the risk of drawing an analogy between

philosophy and poetry. In both cases, language must call on an experience escaping generalities in order to generate the event of sheer disclosure, which is the only way toward welding common sense and imagination.[5]

The experience of having a body struck me as failing to generate such an event of sheer disclosure, because too argumentative and too impatiently finalized on the conclusion to be reached.[6] The philosopher Michael Schillmeier produces the zigzag, however, when he puts Whiteheadian concepts to work to provide a reading of a situation in which an old lady diagnosed with dementia receives a visitor who takes the time to listen to her.[7] Schillmeier focuses on how the old lady talks about her situation. The message making her experience shareable becomes an ingredient of a painful contrast.

The lady speaks in distress of her powerlessness. She complains of being endlessly confronted with *faits accomplis*; everything is a done deal. She is in a room that has nothing to do with her. Even her clothes are not hers, as if they have been forced upon her. She is, of course, prone to forget, but for Schillmeier, her forgetting does not mean she has lost the capacity to represent her past to herself. What the old lady no longer manages to do is to appropriate the past in the present, to make it *her* past. She can represent it, but it doesn't mean anything to her.

Schillmeier makes use of the resources of the English language—"remember"; "re-member"—to characterize the ongoing activity that such an apparently simple experience requires: *my* room. That experience demands re-making and re-feeling, re-composing, and re-connecting, continually re-assembling heterogeneous elements anew into a continuous composition that *makes sense.* The old lady complains that she is not demented, but she lives a dementing situation, and the term *fait accompli* takes on its full meaning here: the fact is closed on itself; it no longer points to anything whatsoever beyond itself; it is what it is, without any possibility for composition or for "making society." The old lady lives in a sterile and arid temporality, in which what happens to her is outlandish, in which the present, no longer deriving from her past, is subject to a rule of succession that does not concern her; it is just a succession, she says, of done deals, *faits accomplis.* Here, the "it is done" or "it is accomplished" of the accomplished metaphysical occasion finds its caricature, be-

cause the "accomplished fact" is bare, without reprising any past or opening into any future.

When the slave Epictetus coldly remarks to his master who torments him by wrenching his leg for amusement, "I told you you'd break it; now it's broken," he doubtless took some pride in this statement affirming the *fait accompli,* for he has made the fact public, and his public statement has effectively become synonymous with letting go, an admirable detachment indicating the slave is freer than the master. Neither letting go nor detachment makes sense independently of its manner. The old lady who lives her very body as deanimated does not let go or reach detachment. She is detached, lives without grasp: panic ensues, as there is no longer any attachment or any point of reference, and meaning slips away.

Yet her tormentors, those who have removed her from her familiar environment, wished only the best for her: she was placed in a retirement home due to fear for her safety. Yes, her dementia certainly worsened, but she would be safer there, where people would take care of her. For professionals, too, there is a *fait accompli*: whatever she does, says, or manifests, she does not give them any cause for doubt; her actions may be placed under the aegis of dementia.

According to the consensual ontology of clinicians, the fact is that the old lady is demented, but her words tell another story, when she is able to speak of her plight with someone who knows how to create with her the possibility of an *entre-tien* that momentarily awakened an experience of "holding and being held" or "making society." Her words bear witness to the manner in which a person may be made demented: de-mented; de-minded.

Yes, of course, in the familiar environment of my office, I can, along with Whitehead, register surprise that I must at once think that I am in this office, observable as a stone block in the middle of a field, and think that the office, in some manner or another, is in me: the office is an element of my present experience, of what I am now. But both the dance of Haraway and Cayenne and the distress of the old lady enrich my imagination in a different mode, making me feel that, rather than being *in* this office, I am, in the moment in which I work, *of* this office. In the first instance, we are dealing with the choreography of two bodies in movement. Cayenne and Haraway have been taught by one another and thanks to each other. Theirs is a body-to-body

relationship in which the eyes no longer watch but notice, in which the entire body responds to signs addressed to it. In the other instance, things have ceased to "make signs" for the old lady, which is also to say, "to make memory" and participate in a continuity that would be *hers.* In a conscious manner, the old lady makes evident what epistemology ignores when it takes the changing, variable aspects of our relations with external nature as the primary themes for observation. It ignores the difference between external nature and one's room or den, between space and a *place* charged with memories and histories. Confronted with so many *faits accomplis* through words and things, the old lady is perfectly capable of observing her room, but her room doesn't mean anything to her.

My office is my den, not an external environment in which my body may be found. The books that clutter it are not there only for me to grab; some of them solicit me, silently beckon to me, offer themselves to my attention, and sometimes I get up, somewhat like a zombie, to go look for one of them. They are with me and we share this place.

It is against "dead" abstraction, which would situate me objectively in this office or in nature, for instance, and ascribe all else to an excess of subjectivity, that Whitehead defines what he understands by a proposition: "A proposition is an element in the objective lure proposed for feeling, and when admitted into feeling it constitutes what is felt."[8] Put another way, propositions are that which require what we call abstractions. They are lures that propose a particular manner of making meaning. To admit a proposition into feeling is to experience an articulation: a logical subject (that which is felt) is luring, emerging from a crowd of feelings and claiming this crowd as pertaining to it. When a rabbit bolts, the ensemble of little perceptions making its experience of being on alert is brutally articulated in a vital proposition—"something approaching." When these perceptions are admitted into experience, propositions impact them, and that impact is first and foremost emotional: horror, wonder, disgust, indignation, laughter, or when Cayenne ceases to feel as a *fait accompli* the acceptance or rejection by Haraway of her answer to a sign. She has grasped it, or has been grasped by it, as a proposition telling what the situation requires.

Nonetheless, like other living beings, we do not experience the impact of a proposition if it is socially conformal, if what is felt already

belongs, as such, to the milieu that is ours, if it is already socially admitted. At the same time, when Whitehead speaks of "dead abstraction," he does not mean only that it conforms, but also that it appears "normal," shorn of what makes it important. Dead abstraction lays claim to the power of omitting what would situate it. But, as hegemonic in character as this grasp may be, it cannot deny to what it omits the power to make itself felt. As Schillmeier relays the testimony of the old lady in distress for whom everything is now a *fait accompli,* it speaks to us of the catastrophe of a world that is effectively deprived of the effectiveness of "making feel." She can name things, but they are a pure "what." She understands what people say to her, but what they say no longer communicates with a familiar past or a shared future. What she perceives is established in the manner of a matter of fact, without for all that making sense. Unmade is the changing continuity, the intensive strand of variations of interest through which propositions and what they propose to neglect never cease to interrespond in a mode imparting importance to things felt. It is worth recalling that Whitehead called this strand a living person.

As for Whiteheadian metaphysics, it is a matrix for producing nonconforming propositions that are neither illustrated by familiar, habitual facts nor in conformity with social heritage. If such propositions become objects of feeling, if the statement conveying them is not rejected with indifference in the mode of "that doesn't make sense to me," then they zigzag along with suddenly dishabituated fact, creating an experience of what Whitehead calls *individual concrete fact.* The welding of common sense and imagination, that metamorphic experience Whitehead calls "sheer disclosure," does not involve revelation of some sort of concrete truth beyond our abstractions. Instead it lifts the hegemony that prevents us from feeling our abstractions as living, as engaging in thought, as imparting importance in this way and not some other, and as claiming no power to judge and eliminate what they omit.

The impact of a nonconforming proposition, which makes us think-feel, inspires analogies quite other than those that have prevailed since Hume and that stage a way of thinking by constructing the meaning of mute data, imposing a form on what, in itself, would not commit to anything. The result Humean analogies obtain is pure thought, not engaged in or by the world, which means all the better

conveyed by verbal statements that take on the allure of judgments, generating the experience of matters of fact that remain detached from the sense of importance that they nonetheless express. "The notion of pure thought in abstraction from all expression is a figment of the learned world. A thought is a tremendous mode of excitement. Like a stone thrown into a pond, it disturbs the whole surface of our being. But this image is inadequate. For we should conceive the ripples as effective in the creation of the plunge of the stone into the water. The ripples release the thought, and the thought augments and distorts the ripples. In order to understand the essence of thought we must study its relation to the ripples amid which it emerges."[9]

Whitehead here tries to express the type of experience that undoubtedly allowed him to resist doctrines that dismember what we nonetheless know, the experience of struggling to give expression to the impact of a thought (or a nonconforming proposition): the "that's to say . . . ," with no equivalence in play, or "I mean," with no "I" beholding a meaning. With its trajectory of hesitations and reprises as it blindly gropes, thought does not unfold in a rarefied milieu. Thought "makes ripples," which in turn may finally give the verbal articulation allowing at last to say, "and that's what I think," with respect to that which made an impact. What emerges then is not only a thought that has found its expression, but also a metamorphosed thinker who knows what she wanted to say, who inherits the trajectory from which she has emerged.

The image of thought, Whitehead remarks, would have been inadequate if it had suggested a simple relationship. If the ripples were defined only as effects of the stone's plunge, the expression of a thought would seem to find its explanation in that thought. Once corrected, now resistant to decomposition, the image puts it this way: thought seeks its expression, which will render it explicable for and to others, including the thinker herself. It is only then that the thinker becomes able to enter into stabilized verbal relationships with others that make of thought an object on which one may "reflect."

This is, of course, still an abstraction that simplifies the image of the milieu of the plunge. Thought seeking its expression may refer to a solitary episode, but also to a discussion, and in this case, to the suggestions of each and every one involved. Their potential impatience—"come on, express your thoughts clearly!"—might start

to interfere, raising more ripples. It often happens that the thread is lost, the process stops short, and a general conversation prevails that leaves somewhat frustrated the person who retains the vague sensation that there had been something of greater importance.

What Whitehead characterizes as a "tremendous mode of excitement" runs in a zigzag with the process of subjective appropriation that is the elementary link of his metaphysics. In any event, the mode of excitement shares its indecomposable character with this process of subjective appropriation, and hence the indecomposable succession of "I mean" and "that is to say" through which a thought seeks its expression. And it also shares the experience of "that's what I think" that marks the relationship of the thinker with respect to what is now "his" thought, with the conclusion of the process of subjective appropriation in the realization of what it aimed for. The expressed thought, having found a satisfactory formulation, has become public, open to being commented on, dissected, evaluated, contested, and reduced, if necessary, to a simple opinion.

The contrast between the private and indecomposable process of feeling one's way and the public mode of existence of a thought that has become an object of reflection, analysis, or requests for clarification dramatizes the contrast instituted within Whitehead's metaphysics between the thick, private, and indecomposable present, which is that of the accomplishment of the occasional subjective process, and what will have been accomplished, now an object available for appropriation by other occasions, data for their own prehensions. What has been obtained has become a heritage for the thinker as well as for others, a public matter, one might say. Still, it is up to each inheritor to determine in a private mode the manner in which they inherit it as well as the value they confer on it.

We may also have the experience of an indecomposable process of participation. One example is the good course that Haraway characterized as ontological choreography. It may equally well happen between humans. A thought may make an impact through repeated, groping statements that interrespond such that a form of shared trance is produced, in a mode that remains opaque to those who listen yet feel it would be an intrusion to intervene, to demand explanations.

Thinking together is rare and precious, marking a contact zone

that may be called trust. When Haraway and Cayenne reached the point of making each other crazy, Haraway writes, it was their trust in each other as well as in themselves that was endangered. Here, too, a zigzag may be generated out of the shock that the term "trust" may arouse in some people. Trust is often seen as a renunciation of thinking for oneself, as a letting go that exposes one to the possibility of being duped, being taken for a ride, falling prey to the powers of suggestion. We may know very well that we live, think, and imagine through others, with others, and at the risk of others, and yet, for those who have learned to venerate keeping to oneself, to feel and accept trust is not a matter of inevitable vulnerability, but weakness. It is common to hear confessions such as "I trusted him, and he fooled me" and "we succumbed to his power of suggestion." To have been duped is cause for shame.

If produced, the zigzag unsettles the claims of the "thinking by oneself" to pass judgment on such terms as "trust" and "suggestion." Of course, the zigzag suppresses neither the danger nor the vulnerability (we are at risk from others), but it changes the terms of the question. The ideal of the "by oneself" becomes an incongruity, a shield, as if no thought could plunge into the pond, now frozen.

Trust apparently does not have any direct Whiteheadian metaphysical correlate, any more than do its risks of deception and betrayal. At the same time, the incongruity of the "thinking by oneself" or of the "each for themselves" is correlated to the very possibility of metaphysical concrescence, to the subjective unification of the multitudinous prehensions whereby the subject will determine itself through the way it will make them its own. It is worth recalling how Whitehead placed particular emphasis on not considering prehensions as something initially disjointed, without relation to one another: prehensions in disjunction are an abstraction.[10] Even though they may initially be characterized as a crowd, prehensions cannot be described as a crowd of "as to myselves" indifferent to the aim at unification. Concrescence or composition can occur because, as soon as there is togetherness or grasping together, there is a mutual sensitivity. Composition itself is nothing other than the manner in which this sensitivity takes on consistence, progressively eliminating all possibility of abstracting each component from its relations with all the others.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that each prehension (or feeling) complies with the role that it will have in the composition, as if the role preexisted enrolement. It means that each becomes itself, obtains its concrete reality through the process along which its role is determined. At the final stage, "the feelings are what they are in order that their subject may be what it is."[11] At this stage, mutual sensitivity between prehensions has become relations of fully determined interdependence of each with all the others; each has participated together with all the others in the taking on of consistency by the subject. Composition requires mutual sensitivity, which may zigzag with the experience of what, between living beings, is called trust. This transforms "trust in," whether it is well founded or not, into "trust between," between those who together (engaged by a common aim) strive to make sense in common: not to agree, but to compose through and thanks to their divergences.

In *Modes of Thought,* Whitehead calls the word "composition" a blessed word.[12] And in *Process and Reality,* to characterize the fact that, from the origin of the concrescence, prehensions aim at the subject that will unify them, he speaks of a breath of life animating dry bones, dubbing this initial moment the "miracle of creation."[13] Needless to say, such terms do not bear any particular religious significance. At the same time, they indicate the efficacy Whitehead's metaphysical propositions aim for. While the ontology of societies was dominated by resistance to the bifurcation of nature, and thus was situated by it, Whitehead's metaphysics is constrained by the obligation of coherence and brings into existence what coherence requires. Without composition, there would be no coherent characterization, neither of our experiences nor of our world: disjunction would remain disjunction. And without mutual sensitivity, there would be no composition. But coherence requires challenging all specialized definitions; it demands generic affirmation, which will situate every application of Whitehead's metaphysics.

This is surely why this metaphysics takes on meaning only in the zigzags it induces. Metaphysics can only prove disconcerting to any reading equipped with the tools of the master, as Audre Lorde calls them, that ask us to offer definitions for everything we speak of. Perhaps the children of the master and those of slaves may succeed in creating contact zones, together. In this regard, however, Houria

Bouteldha is surely right to invoke the difficulty of the trust she dubs "revolutionary love," which defies any principle of conservation of the "as for myself."[14]

In Praise of the Middle Voice

For these reasons, we will not define composition, but let it travel where it makes sense, from biology with its zones of contact and reciprocal inductions to what is sometimes called the life of the mind. The life of the mind is not about spiritual life. It is about metamorphic life dealing with the insistence of what since Plato we call ideas that call for realization. As a mathematician, Whitehead is quite familiar with the insistence of mathematical ideas that confer on coherence the power to oblige, giving its life to the mathematical mind. One needs to be alien to the mathematicians' passionate demands to situate mathematics among the master's tools, imposing the authority of their definitions. For Whitehead, mathematical ideas should be radically separated from all authority. In *Science and the Modern World,* he compares the historical role of mathematics to the role of Ophelia in *Hamlet*: Ophelia is "very charming—and a little mad"; she has no grasp on events, and yet she is "quite essential to the play."[15]

It seems to me, then, that there exists a generic characterization of the manner in which nonconforming propositions, a little mad, born of Whiteheadian metaphysics, zigzag and compose with experience: the syntactic twisting that grammarians call the "middle voice."[16] The middle voice stands in contrast to, on the one hand, the active voice, where the subject of syntax designates who, and on the other hand, the passive voice, in which the syntactic subject is what undergoes the action.

Jacques Derrida associated the middle voice with an operation "that cannot be conceived either as passion or as the action of a subject on an object, or on the basis of the categories of agent or patient, neither on the basis of nor moving toward any of these terms"—thus, an operation "that is not an operation."[17] The accumulation of negations suggests the unthinkable that must nevertheless be thought: for Derrida, the middle voice is repressed, and repressing it may be what marks the origin of philosophy.

It is true that our languages, Latin in origin, seem to impose choos-

ing either active or passive voice, either acting or being acted upon. Bruno Latour, however, contributed somewhat to the resuscitation of the semantic pertinence of the middle voice by proposing that we hear it in instances in which we *hesitate* over the attribution of an action.[18] Who acts versus who undergoes remains in question when we speak in terms of letting things happen to us (letting ourselves be led, seduced, interested, taken on board, attracted, recruited, touched, influenced, moved, captured by), and also when we speak of what makes us do something. Such cases are not merely about lamenting or denouncing a flaw, or some sort of lack regarding the autonomy accorded to the subject in the active voice. Sociology itself hesitates, Latour notes. Sociology struggles between the abstract hypothesis of society as the result of individuals acting and the hypothesis of individuals acted on by society. He asks what drops out of these grandiose alternatives. And he answers: the multiplicity of attachments, existences, techniques, and apparatuses that make us do something to others. The question of "who is master?" or "who has the upper hand?" is an empty one. At best, it gives rise to the abyss of infinite regression: "Who pulls the strings of the puppeteer?," and so forth.

Latour proposes instead a careful consideration of the puppeteer's art, the manner in which her gestures respond to the puppet's own movements. The puppeteer's art comes precisely of her capacity to let herself be enacted through *this* puppet, and not to impose movements onto *a* puppet. It is akin to what Haraway calls training in the contact zone, which transforms the subject and all subjects, which makes possible an ontological choreography defying any attribution of responsibility to an author.

Instead of associating the middle voice with a general acknowledgement that we are not the sovereign authors of our actions, Latour proposes to associate it with concern and care over our manners of being attached. Latour's proposal resonates with Whitehead's call: we cannot think without abstraction, for our abstractions are what make us think, but then it falls upon us to remain vigilant with respect to our modes of abstraction. In other words, there is not an insurmountable dilemma here, not a dramatic alternative between an "I think" subject to abstractions that determine it and an "I think" free to gauge its abstractions. From this point of view, vigilance belongs to the middle voice, which implies a cultivated attention toward

a possible "change of the subject." We are not vigilant in general, nor can we determine specifically what we need to be vigilant about, for then it would no longer be vigilance, but acts of verification bearing on what is already defined as important. Vigilance implies an indissociable relation between being acted on, which is feeling one's attention attracted *by* something, and acting, which is responding in one mode or another to the question posed by that thing. Typically, each zigzag aroused by a nonconforming proposition takes on the middle voice: the proposition imparts importance to an aspect of experience, but it is up to the activated imagination to "realize" this importance and to explore its consequences, even if it may be in a mode of panic (the trick of evil).

Whitehead became a philosopher to find the means of resisting the bifurcation that dismembers our experience through its demand that either "objective" doings of nature or our "subjective" modes of appreciation are to be responsible for what we know. But then, he gave coherence the power to force him into hand-to-hand combat with the syntax that insists on specifying who acts or causes, who is acted on or caused. This is how Whitehead unpacks the relationship between feelings and the subject who feels them:

> It is better to say that the feelings aim at their subject, than to say that they are aimed at their subject. For the latter mode of expression removes the subject from the scope of the feeling and assigns it to an external agency. Thus the feeling would be wrongly abstracted from its own final cause. This final cause is an inherent element in the feeling, constituting the unity of that feeling. An actual entity feels as it does feel in order to be the actual entity which it is. In this way an actual entity satisfies Spinoza's notion of substance: it is *causa sui*.[19]

Hence, once again, is the importance of speaking neither of goals, which evoke the possibility of an abstract definition of an end pursued, nor of results, which evoke indifferent causes. If we say, "the subject obtains itself from what causes it," however, the middle voice is relevant, for the subject obtains being what it is through causes that have become what they are. But then, in *Modes of Thought,* Whitehead exploits the possibilities of another term. Whitehead specifies

that each occasion may said to be "concerned," in the Quaker sense, with things that lie beyond it.[20]

Among all the religious denominations, Quakers are the only one Whitehead cites positively, and in the context of a metaphysical discussion at that.[21] For Quakers, "concern" designates something whose insistence is felt by a member of the community, something that spurs other members to assemble, not to debate or interpret but to devote themselves collectively to *discerning* what is required. The *concern* around which the Quakers assemble does not belong only to a past that the present must determine how to inherit. The present itself is made into a past for a future that will rekindle or reexplore the sense of its limitations. The Quaker procedure of discernment has clearly proved itself, considering that its members have shown themselves capable of political and social discernment for centuries. Yet this procedure does not involve any external criteria of legitimacy. Nor does it have any goals formulated in advance. The question of the future beyond them becomes active in the mutual sensitivity among members of the collective that discernment requires.

"To be concerned by" belongs to the middle voice. To say that they are *concerned* by this realization is one way of saying that prehensions are animated by the aim of which they will be the progressive realization. Mutual sensitivity, to let oneself be affected by the others, is the enactment of a shared concern.

Some experiences are such that we feel the solemnity of "and so it will have been" or "may it not be said that . . ." We feel in such experiences that the finite, the decision obtained or to be obtained, is of importance beyond itself. But the experience can also be of an accomplishment in the present. It is nearly redundant to stress that the indissociable relation between acting and being acted on, between feeling and being felt, between doing and being made to do, characterizes this dilated present, indecomposable, that a good course constitutes for Cayenne and Haraway. The joy with which Haraway writes of how she and Cayenne live a good course together "is tasted."[22] There is not the least guarantee that they experience the same taste. What is important is that Australian shepherd and university professor obtain together and taste together the experience Haraway calls joy.

When all is said and done, taste too may require the middle voice. After all, taste is a matter not only of enjoyment but also of active discernment, and active discernment requires that one agrees to let oneself be affected. It is unfortunate that, like colors, tastes have become symbols of secondary qualities that we are not supposed to discuss. Taste is an integral part of the adventure of life, of encounters that indicate that we are not *in* the world but *of* the world, a world in which it is a matter of discerning between what nourishes us and what poisons us, what heals us (and, if one follows biologists, it is a world in which this "us" includes a bacterial multitude for whom where we are may be a matter of indifference, but not what we eat).

It is worth recalling that touch is a tactile sense, and to touch, one must dare to be touched. Which may make it also worth recalling that Horace's *Sapere Aude,* which Kant made the proud motto of Enlightenment thought, might be translated as "dare to taste" instead of "dare to know." Indeed, Horace wrote, *Sapere Aude, Incipe*—Begin! Kant, of course, omitted the last word. Yet, the final imperative may mean that the exhortation is about the necessity of first taking the risk of letting oneself be actually affected if one wishes to learn to discern. Dare to taste the way in which the situation proposed to you affects you. Dare to taste the mode in which the situation makes you feel and think. Such a motto might prove worthy for critical thinking that does not define itself against beliefs and superstitions.

"Dare to taste" may bring us back to common sense as well, for it is the cooks' art to taste what they prepare. Plato opposed the art of cooks to that of doctors: cooks flatter the senses, he asserted, while doctors, for the higher good of their patients, concoct and prescribe potions of dubious taste. The war machine functioning in the name of reason was launched. At the same time, no one would claim that knowing how to taste signals some immemorial wisdom of the body: it is learned, it is cultivated, it is refined. It even passes through words, as the rich vocabulary of wine tasters attests. But words here do not point, as verbal signs, to the abstraction of categories. Words here stabilize a memory of experiences, activating new contact zones, inducing new sensibilities.

By the same token, "dare" does not signify the flattering heroism of confrontation or emancipation, reason liberating itself from the yoke of seductively reassuring illusions. To dare is first of all to dare

to trust, to dare to embark on a journey to learn what is required, to know how to taste, and not to let the injunction of having to prove oneself, or the fear of letting oneself be duped, anesthetize the dynamics that activate the middle voice. *Dare,* but knowing the danger. It is not about pretending to be able to accept everything, but about knowing how to reject, maybe while quaking. Recall that Whiteheadian metaphysics affirms negative prehensions, rejected by feeling: "A feeling bears on itself the scars of its birth; it recollects as a subjective emotion its struggle for existence; it retains the impress of what it might have been, but is not."[23] Reject, but in the mode of "not that, not here, not now," instead of in judgment.

"Dare to taste" does not attribute truth to intuition. Haraway, for instance, had to learn to resist the intuition that suggested to her that Cayenne was starting to understand what she wanted of her. For Quakers as for Horace, "dare to taste" means instead "dare to *begin.*" If you wish to activate processes of discernment through which will be generated a "knowing how" to appreciate it, dare to let yourself be touched. Do not transform yourself into a frozen pond on whose surface the stone will crash, incapable of plunging into the waters and activating ripples across it. Such an image, however, evokes the surely too-particular image of a solitary thinking, inheriting not only from Hume or Kant but also from my own isolated den.

Quakers know how to connect the art of tasting to the collective, appreciating the concern that troubled one of their number, discerning its tenor, grasping its potential importance for the one proposing it, but also recognizing the lack of taste if someone tries to have the last word. For the collective, each word expressing a particular appreciation is always the next to the last. Each such word comes before the obtention of what the encounter of discernment aims for: an agreement that does not belong to any one among the participants. Words then call each other, for the concern has metamorphized, taking on the power to make sense in common.

Put another way, Quakers invented an apparatus of the sort that I previously characterized as generative in the specific context of the *palavra*. It is with such apparatuses that the relevance of Whiteheadian metaphysics, as a metaphysics of the middle voice, is found fully deployed. The efficacy of these apparatuses recalls the middle voice, because it makes the subject what is *generated,* instead of what acts.

Evidently, the efficacy of these apparatuses may be reduced to a general explanation of the psychosocial type, trucking with suggestibility, which will always be in bad taste wherever the abstract ideal of an autonomous subject predominates, endowed with "its" ideas, having to defend "its" positions. One may object that participants know that they have to reach an understanding, and they unknowingly comply with this imperative. Such an objection ignores, however, that American activists adopted the practice of decision-making through consensus from Quaker activists, precisely because it generated decisions that had to hold up when put to the test, especially that of police provocations whose goal would be to divide and sow discord. We must here apply the full force of the word *s'entendre,* to listen to one another and remember that, in most meetings, people do not listen to others; they more or less patiently suffer them. Apparatuses coming from "arts of composition" aim to activate among participants "mutual sensitivity" among diverging voices and perceptions. This sensitivity is not created by the apparatus: the constraints of this apparatus aim instead to struggle against what anesthetizes, against those manners of doing, behaving, and speaking that enclose each person in its aloof "as for myself." Composition doesn't have to be explained, simply cultivated. What is obtained is in the order of metamorphosis: the situation that previously divided has got the power to generate thought and imagination, to arouse the possibility of a making sense in common.

Activating mutual sensitivity is also at stake in the agora as Latour imagines it. The agora, with its assembled specialists, the diplomat, and the public, is an apparatus whose meaning, whose aim, is a possible composition, a composition implying a transformation of the relationship of specialists not to their practice, but to what this practice requires—in this case, a way of linking its continued existence to a certain way of affecting its surroundings. Such a transformation, then, cannot be addressed to humans in general. It can be addressed only to practitioners, to those humans who feel the precarity of what they belong to, who know that the ties of affiliation letting them exist as practitioners may be destroyed or dissolved. It is this knowledge that is intensified in the agora, but in the mode of hesitation. Will I let myself be interested? Will I dare "let go" the manner in which I usually present myself, as serving a cause that should be unanimous?

Will I let myself be touched by the hesitation of others, by the mode of public attention? And this intensification is possible only if the public knows how to appreciate and taste this hesitation, and knows how to feel the risk of the decision to be made: "amateur public."

Of course, the question posed to each participant in the agora supposes the relevance of the proposition. Latour, as a sociologist, learned a good deal about such relevance from his work concerning human and non-human actors. Relevance here might be said to be a matter of what the experimental sciences call a "crucial" experience, which puts a thesis "on the cross," between success and failure: the experimenter publicly puts a thesis to the test, presenting an apparatus whereby the thesis should be able to defend itself "on its own," without any further transactions, developments, or regulations. There is one important difference: the agora is not a "public laboratory." If practitioners refuse to let themselves be concerned, be troubled by the proposition that is posed to each of them, failure will not be attributable to anyone, for sociologists can explain the refusal through the adherence of specialists to the role that had been institutionally inculcated in them. Here, then, it is not a matter of confirming or denying what the sociologist has "found." It is a matter of responding to a scenario putting each of the specialists "on the cross." Will the practitioner reiterate a presentation of his practice that keeps at arm's length those deemed incompetent, who are supposed not to be able to grasp what her practice makes matter? Will she agree to engage in the test that constrains her to stop being defensive? To be sure, she is free to deny that the scene has anything crucial about it, to refuse to let the situation force her to hesitate, and to keep with her "as for myself." The diplomatic proposition will then crash into the frozen surface of her sensitivity.

The agora's apparatus runs in zigzag with the metaphysics of the middle voice that I have associated with Whitehead's categories. If the practitioner agrees to be concerned by the proposition that concerns her, the ripples raised might reactivate experiences that till then had not been able to make her hesitate, permitting them to get intercomposed with the proposition, to enter into relations of mutual sensitivity with it, to the point where, maybe, the practitioner becomes capable of answering "yes, but" to the one who addressed her. The apparatus of the agora has allowed the proposition of the

diplomat to make an occasion. The possibility of exploring together, *with* the diplomat, opens the question "what does the belonging to their practice make practitioners capable of?"

As Michel Foucault taught us, any apparatus may be characterized by its efficacy in inducing particular manners of affecting and being affected. Yet, in contrast to the apparatuses of power he analyzed, the apparatuses I characterize as generative require those whom they gather to be *explicitly concerned* with the question or proposition that assembles them. Generative apparatuses demand that each of those assembled knows that what will emerge from their gathering will not belong to any one of them, but will be the achievement of the "being together" the apparatus brought into existence. The metamorphosis that a generative apparatus aims for is at the same time what is anticipated, what possibility the participants trust in, all the more so if they have already had an experience of it, and what must be obtained again each time. When it comes to a "manifestation of life," no one is in charge of it; it takes place.

As Foucault's work shows through the corrosive efficacy of his analysis, among the many types of apparatus, there are some that need to dissimulate what they aim for behind general justifications, to make it seem as if the type of transformation they induce complied with legitimate needs of society or human nature. Others are rather mobilizing apparatuses that define the milieu as dangerous, endowed with a seductive power liable to incite treason. This may be the case of this institution called Science. Let's remember how, in *Science in the Modern World,* Whitehead emphasized the modern discovery of a method allowing for the training of professionals advancing in their groove and bringing superficial and arrogant judgments to bear on questions insisting outside this groove. For a professional, letting oneself be infected by such questions, which demand they pay attention to what is none of their disciplinary business, would, in effect, be treason. "Don't take a taste of that, or you will be lost for science!"

It is striking how the mode of socialization constituted by this method for the disciplinary training of professionals is analogous to the mode that makes disciplined soldiers. Trained soldiers, however, are meant to "hold together" through real tests instead of mobilizing in relation to an inculcated threat. It would seem that training, pun-

ishment, and even the prospect of an execution squad do not offer a sufficient explanation for the transformation of civilians into soldiers capable of obeying orders that may lead them to kill or be killed. In this case the apparatus has for its untold efficacy the metamorphosis of civilians into "comrades," those whom one never leaves behind when confronting danger, unless, of course, the confrontation provokes panic, a frantic unraveling of the band, and then it is a matter of "running for your life" and "every man for himself." The army, then, is not conquered; it is "defeated," undone.

The example of soldiers' comradeship, object of numerous testimonies and matrix of innumerable fictions, is useful for highlighting the necessity of learning to taste what apparatuses do to us and make us capable of doing. If life is manifested through what might be called metamorphosis, few metamorphoses approach the sheen of authority that Cayenne acquires when she grasps what Haraway's signs require. Some metamorphoses come to have a stake in apparatuses whose success is fearsome, channeling mutual sensitivity in an exclusive mode, killing imagination, making what troubles us into a threat. The apparatuses we know the best are those that, everywhere with impunity, prevent, or rather try to prevent, life from manifesting itself, those that aim to eradicate the dynamics of metamorphosis in order to enforce "individuals" endowed with their own reasons to be evaluated according to their own competencies, driven by offers of consumption placing them in the service of growth.[24]

To feel the ontological violence of apparatuses that make individuals of us is to refuse the regime of scarcity judging it normal that some—those who still feel, still think, and still imagine—fall outside the common regime; it is to know that these people are not the chosen or deserving ones, but survivors, partly yet not fully anesthetized. And this knowledge bids us to keep alive the unknown of our era in some way or another: we do not know what humans might be capable of.

Tentacular Affects

This essay has called upon Whitehead to assist with thinking an era of which we do not know whether it marks the end of modernity or explores the possibility of modernity becoming civilized. But it must

also attempt to enlarge the field of what spurred Whitehead to think, the field dominated by the triad he associated with the bifurcation of nature (Newton, Hume, Kant). Although such bifurcators are still present and continue to define the horizon of thought, they must become part of the past. And our present, as it is still struggling with them, must become the past to make way for a future that is not defining itself against them. Nonetheless, such an attempt may involve reactivating a past more ancient still. If I began with the stupefaction of Athens' inhabitants when faced with Socrates's nonconforming questions as staged by Plato, it was also because Whitehead once remarked that philosophy was footnotes to Plato's writings. Among these footnotes, there should be one that would raise questions about the apparatuses that ensure that, from our school days, we know that we must answer Socrates's sort of questions if we wish to be heard.

Whitehead wrote, "the account of the sixth day should be written, 'He gave them speech, and they became souls.'"[25] This does not mean that speech endowed us with souls. Speech may make us more subject to conformity than a cat or even a rabbit could ever be, capable of enforcing and justifying highly noxious modes of abstraction. The soul in Whitehead's sense is an outcome that he links to the individual concrete experience he names "disclosure." The experience of disclosure, in which life is made manifest, has nothing exceptional in itself, but when we lose the *sense* of this experience, when we attribute elucidation to ourselves as a result of our own activity, when we forget to give thanks to what has made it possible, "we are shedding that mode of functioning which is the soul."[26]

To become a soul, then, is also to become susceptible to losing it. Speech allowed Socrates's nonconforming propositions to find efficacious verbal expression, but it also allowed them to be made into a requirement demanding our conformity to it, which may pose a threat to souls. In *Adventures of Ideas,* Whitehead associates the ambivalence of this particular efficacy with the entities Plato called "Ideas."

> But the notion of mere knowledge, that is to say, of mere understanding, is quite alien to Plato's thought. The age of professors had not yet arrived. In his view, the entertainment of ideas is in-

> trinsically associated with an inward ferment, an activity of subjective feeling, which is at once immediate enjoyment, and also an appetition which melts into action. This is Plato's Eros, which he sublimates into the notion of the soul in the enjoyment of its creative function, arising from its entertainment of ideas. The word Eros means "Love," and in *The Symposium* Plato gradually elicits his final conception of the urge towards ideal perfection.[27]

And he immediately adds, without commentary: "It is obvious that he should have written a companion dialogue which might have been named *The Furies,* dwelling on the horrors lurking within imperfect realization."[28] It is important to recall that Ideas, here, are not another name for propositions. Ideas are born in the particular milieu constituted by Athens, where young people competed in argumentative jousts that earned them the name "Sophists."[29] Plato enrolled Ideas to differentiate the philosopher from all others: the philosopher has access to Ideas, while others play with words and profit from false resemblances. Assigning to philosophy the task of vigilance toward our modes of abstraction, Whitehead himself pens a footnote to Plato's text with reference to the missing dialogue warning us about the formidable power of Ideas: Ideas may also make Furies of us. Still, it is not surprising that Plato never pursued a dialogue on this topic. As baptized by Plato, Ideas had already lent themselves to realization as so many weapons of war against those who stood accused of utilizing speech for seducing us or fooling us. Poets included. Clearly, Plato would have identified Whitehead, who spoke of philosophy being like poetry, as a Sophist.

Still, for better and worse, ideas have continued their adventures, and like Whitehead, we have learned that the idea that activates may equally well devour, that to be touched by an idea is also to risk being possessed, becoming prey to it and losing the mode of functioning called "soul." Consider professionals, for instance, who are incapable of thinking before the people who will pay the price for the abstraction that is feeding on them. To be realized without becoming furious, the idea necessitates being *entertained* instead of enrolled. Whitehead often uses the term "entertainment," be it for ideas or for possibilities that ask to be realized, and it is worth recalling that, etymologically, this term refers to the art of hospitality as well.

As nonconforming propositions, Ideas are neither good nor bad. They have the power to touch us and to solicit a realization that goes by the name of thought. The dialogue that Whitehead laments for not having been written would have dealt with the necessity of tasting, of discerning, as the Quakers knew how to do, remaining vigilant with respect to the manner in which we let ourselves be touched and the manner in which such touching makes us think. As regards the touching and being touched associated with the middle voice, Haraway inspired me to think in a tentacular manner.[30] Its tentacles make the octopus especially sensitive to its world as they palp, seek, and explore, and yet tentacles may capture and suffocate as well.

The idea touching the mathematician embarks him on an adventure. But the idea whose realization is associated with the power of combating confusion and false resemblances spurs an anesthetizing or even murderous mobilization. It is doubtless why the metaphysical propositions of Whitehead function in zigzag, activating thought but never giving it the power of defining, of claiming possession of what is proposed.

The question, then, is no longer only about what Whitehead called civilization, nor about that universal called the human individual, who claims to have a soul. As much as anthropology, biology today asks us to consider such an individual as a particularity. For biologists, what we judge to be "normal," an individual organism in its milieu, is anything but obvious. And anthropologists, when they step out of territories conquered by modernity, rather deal with *persons,* who are to be characterized in the manner of what I have called an "obtained," whose proper value is inseparable from the links and alliances that situate the person and the obligations involved by these links and alliances. A tentacular version of Whitehead's personal order might prove relevant here. How one becomes a person is a question that concerns us as much as it concerns peoples who have cultivated it, but in different modes. We have defined ourselves against these cultures. We have accumulated practical aporias of which we are proud, all of which hinge on the enigma of "making oneself by oneself." What if taking seriously the tentacular character of what "being a person" requires involved a culture of entertaining beings (as I will call them) without characterizing them otherwise? A

culture where the manner in which we can characterize them is relative to the relation, and to the metamorphosis this relation requires.

The words of a Native American of the Omaha nation entertaining a boulder, which, for the moderns including Whitehead, is incapable of hearing them:

> unmoved
> from time without
> end
> you rest
> there in the midst of the paths
> in the midst of the winds
> you rest
> covered with the droppings of birds
> grass growing from your feet
> your head decked with the down of birds
> you rest
> in the midst of the winds
> you wait
> Aged one[31]

The one who speaks thus addresses a boulder as an animated being, in a mode we should not hesitate to call animist. Now, animism, in our civilization, is synonymous with adherence to frankly obsolete beliefs. If the task of philosophy, in Whitehead's sense, is not to transcend the civilization it is part of, can philosophy nonetheless problematize the judgments of our civilization? There, where humor's disclosure of the absurdity of bifurcating doctrines has no efficacy, might not the middle voice I have associated with Whiteheadian metaphysics crack the walls that exclude what, for us, obviously has no soul? Can we let ourselves be touched, be engaged to feel and think, by the words of this Native American?

When art is in question, a stone statue for instance, we know that "letting ourselves be touched" is what is asked of us. When confronted with pain, disappointment, or discord, we know that the manner in which we make our response to what, irrepressibly, touches us, engages us in a risky history, as is attested by professionals in care, for

instance, who deem it necessary to conserve a stone-deaf emotional distance, to remain in their role. So be it. But it is in this way that they may become tormentors, justifying their distance and their role through theoretical judgments: "In any case, she is demented," or maybe worse, "she is setting a kind of trap for us, unconsciously." Here, it is about letting oneself be touched by a mode of relation from which we are usually "shielded," with no need for justification. The judgment "this Native American is animist!" can at best be modulated by a certain nostalgia, a vague poetic empathy, yet will preclude any doubt: the boulder is indifferent to the words of the Indian.

To be sure, it is not *a* boulder, a "block of stone," the Omaha addresses, but *this* boulder, in *this* place where it rests, of which it is an integral part, immemorial, inseparable from other beings with which it shares the place: winds, birds, grasses, those who pass along the trail. To imagine a bulldozer, for which it would be nothing more than a block, is to imagine the destruction of this place, a *fait accompli,* to adopt the turn of phrase of the old lady deemed demented. Such a fact counts those beings attached to the boulder as nothing. While this first uneasiness may well arouse a sense of remorse and scruples, it may also provide reassurance a little too cheaply. Contrary to the old lady whose removal from her home has rendered her "demented," we ourselves are capable of changing place, of reweaving attachments. We know that it is "merely" a matter of habits. The notion of traditional cultures takes a similar tack: the respect we pay to them now and then signals their fragility and their dependence on conservation values. This also means that the choice of safeguarding belongs to us, tolerant humans, who deem ourselves at home wherever we are.

"It matters which ideas we think other ideas with."[32] Against the Furies, let's adopt Haraway's phrase as a talisman that forces us to think with the consequences of our ideas. The question, then, is not only to let oneself be touched but also to make oneself capable of answering for the manner in which we think the relation of thought that the Omaha Native entertains with the block of stone. It is not by chance that Haraway owes this phrase to Marilyn Strathern, an anthropologist. Other contemporary anthropologists, such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Helen Verran, Marisol de la Cadena, and Lesley Green, have given new significance to the task Whitehead assigns to

philosophy: not to explain by eliminating, by depriving experience of its proper value. They have made the opposition—they who believe versus we who know—into a professional flaw. They have also refused any passport permitting them to feel at home everywhere, or to assert that "nothing that is human is foreign to us." What Viveiros de Castro characterizes as the task of "decolonizing thought"[33] involves then resisting the temptation of what Verran calls "anthropological bad faith."[34] Here it would mean deliberately depriving oneself of all resources that permit interpreting what the Omaha Indian said in a mode that appears respectful but in fact comes down to *denying authority* to this Omaha Native over the nature of his engagements with the world.

Neither is the point to bow down to that authority. We are not dealing with experimental science, with reliable testimony about the manner in which a boulder ought to be defined. At stake is a rigorous practice of critical imagination: if the thinking that thinks the thinking of the Omaha Native lays claim, in one way or another, to the power to situate the Native American, to "understand" him better than he understands himself, it must be carefully, painstakingly, conscientiously problematized, not to pronounce it "guilty," but rather "trivial" in the mathematician's sense in order to indicate a failure in formulating a problematic: one finds what was already known.

To let oneself be touched is not in the least to try to transform us into a Native American, but to try to confer on him the power to situate us. We are dealing then with what William James called a voluntary act, and it is in this way that James distinguishes between imagination and imaginary. The fundamental act of Jamesian will is not the decision taken by the subject; it is the tension of attention, the effort to give importance to a thought that is a priori unfortunate, intrusive, or running counter to our habits, to hold it "fast, in spite of the host of exciting mental images which rise in revolt against it and would expel it from the mind. Sustained in this way by a resolute effort of attention, the difficult object erelong begins to call up its own congeners and associates and ends by changing the disposition of the man's consciousness altogether."[35]

James's description could be an application of Whiteheadian metaphysics in its tentacular version, calling for a thought in the middle voice. The effort to "not expel it" implies an aim to obtain instead

of a goal to attain, a response to a subjective insistence instead of a decision to accept. In this effort, we can detect a concern for what lies beyond ourselves, which Whitehead associated with Quakers. The present, in which we prove incapable of hearing the Native American, becomes the past for a future that will reenact the sense of this limitation and reenact the manner in which the judgment "it is merely animism!" will be received: other thoughts will think this judgment; it will not be forgotten, but problematized, separated from the furious power of differentiating thought and belief.

This does not mean the sad relativism of "to each his own mode of thinking," a relativism without effort, ironic, an avatar of the bifurcation of nature. We aim at acknowledging in the Omaha Native the power of situating us. This power is not about making us recognize that he knows better than us what a boulder "really" is, for it is we who cannot prevent ourselves from doubling a real feeling with the question of what it is the feeling of "really." We do not taste experience, but pass from the experience to the question of what this experience is or is not the reliable witness of. The Native American does not ask such a question. Instead, he will doubtless wonder what comes over us when we pose such questions. And therein may indeed lie the tentacular version of the question, the one that touches us and forces us to think: What comes over us? What has come over us? What thinking makes us think the thinking of others in a mode that makes of us masters who attribute meaning to our experience and to theirs? What gives our ideas their furious power?

What has come over us? The manner of formulation matters, because we must remain suspicious of modernist fables in which a war is waged between the celebration of the greatness of Man and the denunciation of his Guilt. These *prêt-à-porter* thoughts never seem to fail to give us trivial answers that confirm our eminent responsibility and give others only the role of victim, even while dressing these victims in the innocence we have lost.[36]

David Abram makes a proposition of great interest by approaching the question of what has come over us in the mode of "intrigue" instead of "sin." His point of departure touches on an exceedingly sensitive point for me. In his struggle against Hume's empiricism, Whitehead found in the body the most intimate experience of what his metaphys-

ics calls for. But he abandoned perception to Hume, associating it with the triumph of abstraction by placing "external nature" such as it is perceived under the sign of a radical asymmetry between "I perceive" and "it is perceived." Counter to Hume, who denied that it is "with eyes that we see," Whitehead evoked oculists and antiprohibition leagues. For his part, Abram practices the ancient art of prestidigitation, and this is what allowed him to forge connections with indigenous shamans who were appreciative connoisseurs of his practice.

"What has come over us" is what spurs us almost automatically to ask, "is it true or is it an illusion?" If shamans and the prestidigitator share a bond, it might well be forged in the refusal to transform this question into tragedy. The practice of prestidigitators is certainly an art of manipulating the senses, of taking advantage of perceptual abstractions and the anticipations they activate, and yet, if they can take this advantage, it is because the senses are engaged *with* things, as certain neurocognitive scientists now recognize.[37] To seduce and to be seduced, to attract and to be attracted, to solicit and to respond to a solicitation—according to Abram, such reciprocity demonstrates that the sensory apparatus is "tuned for relationship" instead of disengaged observation first and foremost. We must take seriously what we say: "This boulder attracted my attention." The sensible object is not available for grasping; it proposes, promises, invites, solicits, induces, and may even capture.

> Each presence presents some facet that catches my eye while the rest of it lies hidden behind the horizon of my current position, each one inviting me to focus my senses upon it, to let the other objects fall into the background as I enter into its particular depth. When my body thus responds to the mute solicitation of another being, that being responds in turn, disclosing to my senses some new aspect or dimension that in turn invites further exploration. By this process my sensing body gradually attunes itself to the style of this other presence—to the way of this stone, or tree, or table—as the other seems to adjust itself to my own style and sensitivity. In this manner the simplest thing may become a world for me, as, conversely, the thing or being comes to take its place more deeply in my world.[38]

In the texts of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Abram finds inspiring testimonies for a reciprocity between feeling and felt, seeing and seen, touching and touched, a reciprocity I would call "tentacular." And, far from urban life, he himself had the transformative experience of relationships of coanimation defying the dismemberment between active and passive voices: like an anesthesia that would be lifted, a relationship that would be regenerated, senses that would be awakened, and above all not effects of belief "being projected" on a world that, for its part, would remain what it is, passively offered to our point of view.

But then, if our sensory apparatus, being participatory, makes "animists" of us, what has happened to us to make us so proud of not being animists? How are we to recount the history that has allowed the statement "perception is the triumph of abstraction" to feel plausible? In this respect, instead of recounting the grand history of a progressive disenchantment that separates us irremediably from our origins, the great interest of Abram's hypothesis lies in proposing that we experience a surprising realization. Animists we were, and *animists we always are,* and now more than ever. Participation or attunement *with* things, whereby they become animated and animate us in return, has never been interrupted, and cannot be, but its site has changed. What "came over" us would be a new relationship of intense coanimation that surged up between the sensory apparatus and alphabetic writing, the only writing that allows words to be imposed on us in an irrepressible manner, as self-sufficient, as meaning something.

> In learning to read we must break the spontaneous participation of our eyes and our ears in the surrounding terrain (where they had ceaselessly converged in the synesthetic encounter with animals, plants, and streams) in order to recouple those senses upon the flat surface of the page. As a Zuñi elder focuses her eyes upon a cactus and hears the cactus begin to speak, so we focus our eyes upon these printed marks and immediately hear voices. . . . *This is a form of animism that we take for granted, but it is animism nonetheless—as mysterious as a talking stone.* And indeed, it is only when a culture shifts its participation to these printed letters that the stones fall silent. Only as our senses

transfer their animating magic to the written word do the trees become mute, the other animals dumb.[39]

Thus, according to Abram, we the literate would be animists. And so would be the other humans who inhabit our so-called civilized world, in which the signage is everywhere, indicating what to do and where to go, in which lights turning red call for us to brake and ideograms on doors advise us not to go into the wrong toilet. We live in a world that lets itself be read, but we cannot feel surprised by it, because texts and signage are perceived as expressing an intention, that of their author or of someone who put the signals in place with the intent of something to tell us. We live in an urbanized (civilized) world, which is also to say, talkative, saturated with intentionality making us do things, making us feel and think. It is precisely this intentionality, this meaning, that we cannot attribute to a boulder. With good reason, for that matter, because, even for us, the question "what is your intention here?" is not neutral, and sometimes becomes as aggressive, as "what do you mean by this word you are using?" The question of a confessor or an inquisitor. As Alice might say, how can I know what I mean to say before saying it? And Whitehead would agree: aiming at is not the expression of an intention.

Whitehead noted that "the effect of writing on the psychology of language is a neglected chapter in the history of civilization."[40] He then expands on this point: "Of course, we are much more civilized than our ancestors who could merely think of green in reference to some particular spring morning. There can be no doubt about our increased powers of thought, of analysis, of recollection, and of conjecture. We cannot congratulate ourselves too warmly on the fact that we are born among people who can talk about green in abstraction from springtime. But at this point we must remember the warning—Nothing too much."[41]

Nonetheless, the very example Whitehead selects is still "lettered." The contrast he evokes is ours. To let ourselves be situated by the words of the Omaha Native, we must cease speaking of the enhancement of our capacities by writing, singled out from among all the devices through sympoiesis with which we have become what we are. We must stop forgetting that, on a lovely spring morning, "noncivilized" humans doubtless see something quite other than "green."

It is not a question of proclaiming writing to be nefarious, even guilty, but of learning not to mistake its power. As a philosopher, I am a daughter of writing: one becomes a philosopher through encounters with the writings of other philosophers. Yet it is not the theses advanced by other philosophers that secure such a becoming. Instead, when there genuinely is an encounter with certain philosophers, it is through the setting into motion of feeling and thinking by what has forced them to think, by what has made philosophers of them. It is much the same for mathematics, for literature, and for so many other practices born of the written that have transformative potential. They may, as Gilles Deleuze wrote, "make larva of us,"[42] which is to say that they may unmake the habits and intentions of an "I" that is then no longer "in the world," or in her den, but is captured, transfixed, "initiated." In brief, they expel the one who reads from her position as a reader in the active voice, who deciphers what the author wishes to make known to her; they instead affect her in the mode that I have associated with the middle voice.

We are no more guilty than writing in itself is harmful. It may be, however, that the Omaha Native would call us ungrateful. No other world has ever made its human inhabitants as dependent on a multiplicity of others as the modern world has. It may be that no other world has pushed ingratitude, and thus imprudence, toward others so far, including the other that is writing; no other has cultivated deafness toward the manner in which others solicit us to such a degree; no other has transformed what we owe to relationships with others into property rights (my past, my sensitivity, my thought, my interpretation of this text). In *Science and the Modern World,* Whitehead underscored the importance of an education that cultivates habits of aesthetic appreciation. We should also think of an education that cultivates "entering into relationship" and metamorphoses that name and honor those with whom we have made relationship, and those who know how to let us taste how this relationship engages us.

So often we ask, "do we have the right?," only in order to grant to ourselves the authority and permission to ignore the consequences. If we cultivate a sense of being obligated, we undo the type of security we ask of "the right." An ontology of tentacular lures communicates with a sense of existential precarity that calls for what James

described as "consent," accepting the risks inherent in the tentacular capture instead of counting on a world in which things patiently conform to their role and we to ours.[43]

Living in the Ruins

Haraway proposed an important analogy between the string-figures game and her practice of thinking and working.[44] String-figures games are found nearly everywhere across the world. Several players are needed for this game; one does not play it alone; one does not come up with ideas oneself. At each stage of the game, a string figure is held out by one player, which serves as motif for the next player who takes it up. The first player lets go the figure she held as the next player takes over it, producing a new figure. Figures are successively made and unmade. The player who holds out a figure remains passive while the next responds to the offer, engaging with the interlaced strings to deploy a new figure. Each new figure is at once deployed and exposed, open to serving as motif for another player. The play may recall the indecomposable chain of the actual occasion of Whitehead. It also proposes a figuration of "life": instead of staging the persistence of a composed figure, the play stages a tentacular becoming through the passage of relays making each string figure into a motif or proposition, generating continuity that is also metamorphosis.

My attempt to think a tentacular version of Whitehead's metaphysics does not contradict the ontological figures Whitehead lays out. It takes up the strings held out by his metaphysics to produce different ones. Whitehead situated every nascent occasion in relation to a proposition of social conformity. Of course, his metaphysics denied neither social entanglement nor interdependency among societies. In fact, in *Science and the Modern World,* he took issue with the successors of Darwin for having ignored how the cooperation among organisms mutually produces a favorable environment.[45] Nonetheless, in *Process and Reality,* he continued to speak of philosophy of the organism, which provides a good indication of the importance he gave to the success constituted by the "holding together" of a society. From the atom to animal societies and human societies, those who compose the society reiterate its way of holding

together thus and not otherwise. As for the milieu, it is mostly qualified in terms of patience with respect to this reiteration. In contrast, when Haraway speaks of "worlding," what matters are the *with,* the *through,* the *thanks to,* and the *at risk of*: a world is never *my* world; it is that entangled world in which I am actively engaged, touching and being touched, a world that solicits me, proposes to me, "motivates" me. It is that world at whose risk my manner of living and dying belongs.

There is no contradiction between organismic and tentacular versions. There are different ways of making things matter. Hume, Newton, Kant, the biology of the organism, and the decline of civilization generated a motif for Whitehead's thought. In my attempt to reprise what he proposed, I have seized upon it with another aim. From that past, I inherited not only the defeat of common sense but also the worldwide destruction of generative apparatuses. If I have conveyed what Whitehead proposed for thinking less as some kind of irrevocable defeat than ongoing devastation, it was not by sovereign choice. In fact, it is in this way that I let myself be touched by him. If devastation is ongoing, so must be resurgence. In fact, this is what I experienced reading: we may *take* the right to think that! It is an experience of *regeneration* that I wished to relay, and which I ultimately characterized through the figure of the middle voice.

This leads me to put quotation marks around the term "modern civilization." Modern civilization has worked for the destruction of apparatuses cultivated by peoples for whom language was not reduced to a tool for intentionally communicating what we mean to say. Instead, language participated in the fabrication of always precarious worlds, ceaselessly reprised. Indeed, I reprised Whitehead in a manner that is not "mine." "My" reprise was activated by the situation that is ours today. It might be said that the question of the decline of our civilization has given way to the question of its collapse. Cracking and grinding can be heard that indicate the calving of ice sheets. Grounds once considered secure are dislocating.

Cultivated academics announce that we have entered the Anthropocene, the Age of Humans who discover that They have impacted the world in such a mode that the history of the planet itself is affected. Amid the destruction of so much, worthy of note is the activation of indomitable entangled dynamics that are likely to destroy

the habitats of innumerable species. It would seem that the Age of Humans is, in fact, about to come to an end.[46] Nothing but tired myths come in response to the devastation. For instance, humans discovering their de facto responsibility will rise to take responsibility and succeed in mastering the uncontrollable (geoengineering). Or else, taking leave of their ravaged birthplace, humans will migrate to other planets to be terraformed. Or they will succeed in decoupling their civilization from the material and energetic flows on which it depends and will live off the ground thanks to technological miracles. Or else again, it will be the end of the world, punishment for our hubris.

It is nonetheless true that, in only a few years, climatological models have allowed "finding a lot more" about what has been called nature. These models have multiplied the number of agents whose potential sensitivity to each other implies consequences that have forced researchers to quickly rethink all the previous abstractions that implied the perennial stability of the Earth. But finding more, even explaining what is happening, has little to do with becoming capable of responding.

On the contrary, climate models can stupefy us with their abstraction. Thus, one often hears that, according to their calculations, in 2050, it will be too late to attempt to avoid the worst. It is as if the moment of truth were at hand, the verdict condemning us. We forget that other peoples have already, at our hands, lived through untold devastation, without any truth other than that of the destruction of their world.[47] And we also forget that, even if we proved capable of escaping the worst, our descendants will go on living on a poisoned and exhausted earth in a profoundly and *very* persistently disrupted climate, an earth from which a great part of living beings will have disappeared. Thus "2050" does not mark the closing of the curtain, the end of the play. What is coming will indeed demand learning to "live in the ruins," to quote Anna Tsing.[48]

For many people who greet the idea of the end of the world with equanimity, the thought of going on living in the ruins is intrusive in James's sense. A deliberate effort is needed for the mind to hold onto a thought to permit it to evoke "congeners and associates" who can give it consistency. My attempt at a tentacular version of Whitehead's metaphysics contributes to this effort. It does not give

a crucial importance to the possibility that, in 2050, or even today, we must conclude that it is too late. We have to think and imagine before those who are already living in the ruins or will tomorrow live in the ruins, before the innumerable living beings, humans and nonhuman, who, in one manner or another, will continue to live and die on this earth, regardless of our conclusions. And this creates what James called a "genuine option," an option not possible to avoid on the pretext that the game is over. In one manner or another, the inhabitants of ruins will inherit what we leave them. As in the string game, we are engaged by the figures that we will prove capable of proposing.

We are indeed no longer in the streets of Athens. Nor are we in the violent era in which Leibniz dreamed of a philosophical reason capable of curbing the furious arguments that justified war and massacres, with his *dic cur hic,* or "say why here." Instead of the discourse of those who know, it is the situation itself that defies common sense. It would feel vaguely obscene to ask a robber who steals the chance for a future from innumerable living beings to find any sort of justification. To opt against the set of perspectives and histories that justify our civilization is not to show that it is all wrong. To opt for learning, right now today, to live in the ruins is to opt for learning to think without the security of our proofs and to consent to a world that has become intrinsically problematic.

Are we not quite far from common sense that broods? According to Abram's hypothesis, we may not be all that far. For Abram, the torpedo effect of the Socratic method lies in the stupefying character of questions that are off the ground, beyond circumstances, detached from memory. School children, those who will live in the ruins, may be similarly torpedoed: yes, to be sure, to pass from the practice of dividing a pie into three slices to understanding what the fraction ⅓ means can awaken us to a new world. Yet such understanding is not about the manifestation of a capacity for abstract thought in opposition to concrete knowing-how. It is a matter of the potential success of a genuine metamorphosis. Such an operation is always full of risks, however, because the child who does not understand anything and the teacher who does not understand that the stupefied child cannot understand can, like Haraway and Cayenne, drive one another crazy. The Greeks held mathematics to be the very example of

the transmissible, something that, once disclosed, is self-evident. But this is because, as with writing, entering into relation with a mathematical being entails the risk of an amnesiac capture, what today we call "competence."[49] But what is acquired? We say, "I got it." But we might equally well say, "it got me."

Still, learning to live in ruins is not about common sense in the sense in which Whitehead understood it, the common sense of civilized humans who were counting on things (or on slaves in Athens) functioning for them, without them. Other than the absence of guarantee and the right to count on, nothing else defines what "ruins" means here. Whoever speaks of ruins now speaks of an apprenticeship in the art of attention in a world that no longer conforms to the roles assigned to it by our habits. In this world, nothing is self-evident and nothing happens by right. Consent to precarity must be cultivated, but obviously such precarity has nothing to do with the obscene precarity produced by the politicoeconomic imperative of generalized flexibility.

The art of attention is an art of the middle voice, a tentacular art, for it is about allowing oneself to be touched and conferring on what touches us the power of making us feel and think, always *here* and never *off the ground.* Might we not then recognize the artful rites and initiations belonging to "traditions" that Whitehead assimilated to the maintenance of social conformity as creating a contact zone with the ground that generates an art of attention, as what we must care for if we are to receive from this ground the capacity to cultivate ways of living and dying that are not reducible to mere survival in the ruins? Care for entangled strings, care for motifs that strings compose and recompose, care for the manner in which these motifs hold the situation together—learning to live in the ruins is learning to "make sense in common" within a tentacular milieu wherein no signification or convention can be counted on or taken for granted.

"Making sense in common": a sense that the common situation is problematic not only for humans but also for the ensemble of what participates in this life in the ruins. Naturally, the objection may be raised that problematizing is a human art. Undoubtedly, that is the case if one understands by "problematizing" an examination of the legitimacy of a position, putting one's own reasons to the test and calling others into question, in short, behaving as a citizen speaking

in the agora or as a philosopher writing a critique of a colleague's arguments. But the arts of composition teach us something else: they teach us that the discursive regime designed to determine a winner and a loser is precisely what must be avoided. From the practice of *palavra* to the procedures invented by American activists to create what they call consensus among them, these arts teach a feeling-together of the manner in which a situation affects each person. The arts of composition are arts of slowness, as once a statement is articulated, they exclude all interpretations that fall back on the intentions of the enunciator and what they "mean to say." No one is supposed to defend themselves or to contest or strive to uphold a signification. It is not about courtesy here, or if it is, then it is courtesy toward the statement itself, which must be welcomed as belonging to no one, as being issued from the situation, and its reprise by others must be seen as contributing to the composition of the situation.

The art of *palavra*, one could say, is a collective and situated art of problematization, activating what Whitehead would call "the compulsion of composition."[50] We can speak of an operation of composition without a composer, and of course, without a position of transcendence allowing us to evaluate what has taken on reality. The only criterion is immanent. It refers to "knowing how to taste" of those who are transformed by their participation, transformed but not converted, for the composition is not an agreement that transcends divergences. It is about the situation that obtains the attention it calls for. Composition is about a transformation of divergences as so many dimensions entangled by the situation itself, to which it is a matter of consenting without dreaming of reducing it to a problem that imposes the terms for its solution.

From the ontological point of view, then, what makes sense in common would no longer be the maintenance of social conformity, but the continuation of the composing Haraway calls sympoiesis. In fact, with the notion of proposition, Whitehead already opened this pathway. We need only recall that Whiteheadian propositions are in a contingent relationship with human language and propositional efficacy is above all in the order of a lure to feeling. The proposition is proposition for sense-making/feeling-making/motif-making. If it is admitted into feeling, however, it does not say how it will be felt, or what signification to give to what it makes feel, or what it will

motivate. Propositions are vectors of partiality. Although any relationship that mobilizes ways of making something count or making something matter requires propositions, propositions do not determine the signification of the relationship. Belonging to a common, precarious composition, always without guarantee, entangling relations always to be determined, they do not involve a convergence that would enroll and unify. Interdependence, the *with* of sympoiesis, is not a cause to defend. As is the case with social endurance, interdependence is in the order of "fact." The fact is that each partner functions as a proposition or motif for others, from one to another or in cascade, *but always each in their manner.* In contrast, what can be defended against every appropriation is the question that is the unknown of every composition: "What is belonging capable of?" It is the question that aims to cultivate the arts of composition.

We often beg "to be heard" and not "to be comprehended." In other words, we are not asking "listen to me," but "let yourself be changed." Such petitions typically implicate the middle voice, for they address their appeal against the resistance to hearing, the refusal to taste. The collective practices activated by generative apparatuses are addressed to the same unwillingness to hear. In either case, success puts into play the capacity to let oneself be affected or inflected, not to be persuaded. In *Adventures of Ideas,* Whitehead celebrated the power of ideas, which implied persuasion and not force. Can we speak here of "ideas"? Certainly not, or at least we cannot speak of ideas insofar as the constraints proper to generative apparatuses require that no one claims "having an idea" of which he would strive to persuade others. The *interinflections* among partial and thus divergent perspectives are made in a tentacular mode, through reciprocal affections, without dramatic moments in which agreement would be imposed at the same time as reasons for it. There is no drama here because the reasons for agreement are the situation itself as it has received the power of making sense in common, thanks to the constraints associated with the apparatus.

Still, ideas cannot to be excluded. What is fearsome is the furious hold they have over those who serve as their mouthpieces. When beings or entities for whom no one can claim authority to speak are at stake in the common situation, there is nothing incongruous about them participating in making sense in common through the mode

of inflection of utterances prompted by their presence. To speak in the presence of such beings or entities is not to express oneself (e.g., "I have the right to defend my idea"); it is to speak otherwise, constrained by that presence. For, even if that presence is silent, what is made present is attentive, and its attention obliges those who speak to slow down, to let themselves be touched, modified in a mode activating the tentacular character of the situation.

When those who have tasted the furious power of ideas participate in generative apparatuses, such apparatuses are effective in demanding a use of language that renders present those, human or not, who are concerned by the decision to be made, implicitly or explicitly. Critics would call such usage artificial, as they might say of rituals. In effect, such usages are "facts of art." It is possible to speak of artifice in the pejorative mode only if another usage of language is considered natural, one privileging the active voice, which expresses an idea furiously demanding realization.

At the outset, I noted how the manner in which Whitehead characterized humans in terms of foolish enterprises and dreams—they "would have crossed the Rubicon"—brought a frown to Haraway's face. In fact, when the Whiteheadian zigzag activates the middle voice, another figure now comes to mind instead of "the human": the *entrepreneur.* I see the entrepreneur as someone who defines the world in terms of how it poses problems, and even creates obstacles, for the realization of an idea. For the entrepreneur, anything that troubles the capacity for argumentation, deduction, or rational persuasion is deemed illegitimate or "artificial." The entrepreneur is animated by a possibility that requires him to disregard anything that might compromise the realization of that possibility. The entrepreneur is not guilty. Possibility is not to be prohibited. Ideas are not to be denounced. The active voice is not to be hunted down. What prove poisonous, however, are claims of innocence and legitimacy, which are vectors of anesthesia, and in fact intrinsically dangerous when it comes to learning to live in the ruins.

"Staying with the trouble," then, to use Haraway's motto, might be what a life in the ruins requires of what has been defined as civilization. Trouble is now everywhere, and however capable we are of knowing everything or nearly everything about what has devastated our worlds, that knowledge does not define the "solution," for dev-

astation and reparation or regeneration are not symmetrical. To unmake is a rather easy undertaking. And unmaking may even remain blind to what it is destroyed, advancing in the name of a general good will or a captivating possibility. In contrast, to regenerate is never a general matter, for it is about creating or reactivating, step by step, relationships that are always tentacular, always partial, always to be cultivated, to be resumed under the aegis of the absence of guarantee, and also under the aegis of sorrow when loss is irreparable.[51]

Tentacular reality has nothing enchanting about it. Life may not be mere robbery; it may be the creation of symbioses, the composition of heterogeneous beings, the joy of interdependence; yet it is also capture and parasitism. But it is in that way, and not as purely and simply good, that life may afford motives for histories that we may prove capable of transmitting to those to whom we bequeath a precarious future, without guarantee, a future that will not, in any event, be a fairy tale in which all's well that ends well. A future that does pose the question of what is required for lives worth living, even in the ruins.[52]

Such histories are already beginning to proliferate. Almost everywhere today, an old term has reappeared: "the commons." The commons are not to be confused with common or public goods and not to be reduced to joint management of a resource that reckless and irresponsible use might destroy. To be sure, the fact that those who deal with such a resource are capable of self-governance, a mode of intelligent cooperation without needing externally imposed rules is in itself an achievement whose cultivation will be invaluable in the ruins. And it is indeed the middle voice that is at stake in the statement "there is no commons without commoning," no commons without making in common, without practices that entangle people, that make commoners of them.[53] But this making in common does not define commons as exclusively human. What sensitivity can making in common awaken in those who participate? With whom will they become capable of making in common? Who will participate? With whom will composition happen? The answers to such questions are surely not within the purview of philosophy. The answers can only be local, situated, practical, and if the question itself can be cultivated, relayed, passed on, it is by the wealth of circulating stories that activate the welding of common sense and imagination.

Whitehead can accompany us in the ruins. It is no doubt difficult for academic philosophers to admit that his is a "serious" philosophy, with arguments worth tackling in their dissertations. The motif I have attempted to bring forth with the strings proposed by Whiteheadian metaphysics will not reduce this difficulty—rather to the contrary. For the middle voice whose importance I have tried to stress is poorly suited, not only to historians of philosophy, but also to contemporary philosophy as "positioning" within an academic market where the philosopher-entrepreneur insists on the value of "his" concepts. "As we think, we live," wrote Whitehead,[54] and I am not sure how this old tradition called philosophical thought can contribute to life in the ruins. Of one thing I am certain: it will no longer be to philosophy that common sense will pose the question of coherence. It will fall to each "making sense in common" to reinvent the sense of this question. Perhaps, however, Lorde's warning that "the tools of the master will never dismantle the master's house" is what philosophy can bring to life in the ruins: philosophy that has tasted and tired of all the poisons fabricated by masters, that has explored all the variations on "it is this or otherwise chaos, arbitrariness, violence, treason." Undoubtedly, we will never be done with the tentacular capture by the idea that demands to be realized. Perhaps we still have need of philosophy to learn to taste, with a sense of humor that does not bear insult, the passions of what Whitehead called the "adventures of ideas."