

THE ABSENT WORLD (1.0.0)

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1. Language and Thought

The possibility of language to overcome the boundaries of vision is grounded in the limitations of its referential form. The more sense refers to the less distinct is its referring, the wider its reach the more it leaves unsaid. Language is not only bound by its inability to contain what it refers to, it also involves an indifference to such an attempt. This indifference is foundational to the form and nature of sense itself. Sense does not respond to the full complexity of its referent; it must avoid doing so if it is to fulfil itself. A gap between sense and its referent belongs to their coexistence. In keeping themselves apart they allow their unique relationship to function.

This gap is a moving structure co-defined by both sides simultaneously. It is an essential distance that remains between the two, whose dimensions vary according to the movement of sense towards or away from its world. This unified aspect of their coexistence is not like the unity of two distinct scientific systems that find a common ground. It is the ground of a coexistence between two often incompatible natures, between two orders that must remain distinct if they are to operate together. At every moment this unity, determined by difference rather than similarity, will reflect each order, showing how it is conditioned by the independent movements of each side, how these two orders exist together, how they are both distinct yet deeply entangled in each other. From the standpoint of successful discourse, the difference between sense and its referent is a fundamental tie between them. This difference is not simply a void, but the shape of a fluid relationship between two sides. It creates a movement that constitutes itself as a correlation between two distinct aspects of the world's actuality.

The gap between sense and the real is a difference of form, where the real is understood not as an abstract reality but as the things and events that constitute the everyday world. The grammatical and conceptual differences internal to sense are overshadowed by the variations in nature between real objects, events,

subjective states and happenings, relationships, qualities of objects, actions, and so on. Considered abstractly, as opposed to the real, sense stands as a unified field, bringing together things essentially different in nature within a single realm. The gap between sense and the real is structured by the reality of the world which sense attempts to reflect. Sense responds to the real, it forges itself into the forms required by actual situations of worldly existence. Yet sense can also create its own movements that affect their relationship. In abstraction the gap shifts independently of the real, shaping our understanding of the world according to the ideal constructions of language and thought. The gap allows sense to wander from its referent, providing thought with a means to which it can escape the world's reality.

The referents of sense are not only real but also other senses. To refer to a book as a physical object is not the same as referring to the actual sense it contains as a work of literature. These two forms of the gap are passed over without thought in everyday acts of referring. Within the seamless movements of condensing that allow the gap to operate, we do not discern a difference between referring to objects and referring to sense. Language does not only refer to either sense or the real, but primarily a world in which both are interwoven. This difference is not clear and distinct; it remains unstable because sense is so engrained in things and our understanding of things is so engrained in sense. The actual world is not merely composed of objects, but also of the situations and contexts that allow these objects to have meaning. Within the world sense is always implicit; the real exists in a world of sense. The gap between sense and the real can be seamless, intuitive, invisible, and unnoticed as sense occupies the same physical, linguistic world. This is a world in which objects silently associate with their names. It is where recognising an object and recognising its name occur in the same movement, where both an object's visible presence and its representation in thought stand for the words that denote it. The vision of a material object speaks, but not in the same voice as the written or spoken word. Despite this entanglement of sense and the real, the two remain as independent orders within the world as a whole. Despite being so deeply engrained in each other, there remains a gap between them which can be understood as a unique and essential aspect of their coexistence.

Without the visible object that mitigates the gap between sense and its referent by supplementing meaning, without the immediate comprehension of a sense directly present in speech or writing, however indefinite this sense may in turn be, when it relates to the absent world, language finds itself unsupported by presence, reliant on the ideas, presuppositions, and imaginings that begin to operate in the absence of sight. Thought hides itself from these operations; it makes use of them in silence while speaking. In the depth and complexity of what cannot be seen—in nations, cultures, events, and individuals, in the depth

of the world's sense, and so on—language aims at points of least resistance, representing the indeterminate in the persistence of generality, referring only to what is needed for the communication of sense.

These operations allow language to seamlessly extend beyond what we see. Like the intuitive awareness of the world that extends beyond vision, there belongs to language a silent understanding that encloses the absent world within present concerns. As we exist in a temporal-spatial world, time and space belong fundamentally to language; they occur together simultaneously within the contexts in which it performs its role. We intuitively understand how objects and events can be distant yet coexist within the same temporal duration. Language refers effortlessly to a past or future without conceptualising it as such, to the dimensions of temporality implicit and unsaid in every present moment. The absent intuitively structures our present experience, not only in terms of definite facts known explicitly, but also in the basic temporal-spatial structure of everyday concerns. It constitutes the present world, allowing the manifest to have a depth of its own. The difference between the present and absent is not always explicitly understood. It underlies conversation without being questioned. It supports the fulfilment of actions without being thematised as a distinction between a field of vision and its limits. We do not only know but live in a world of the absent. The absent belongs to the present; it creates its depth, but, in the first instance, it does so without saying.

The absent world becomes an issue for thought, prompting the imagination to speculate about lost meanings, unseen realities, or events belonging to another time. Attempts are made to infer possibilities, to resolve the unknown through explanation, to investigate origins. But thought often grasps the absent in error. Disparities can occur between the idea and reality, signs can be misread, assumptions can be false, meaning can be misunderstood; new significances can be created in the absence of clarity, expectations and prejudgements applied, flawed interpretations habitually put forward as explanatory grounds, connections made where none exist; particular recurrences can be given a new generality, their repetition understood as affirming the link between them that thought made for itself. These operations involve movements of thought that supplement the unknown with meaning, that react to the open spaces experienced as ambiguous or empty; they become creative as a response to the loss of our grasp on context.

The unknown belongs to questions about the world and history; it surrounds us: misheard voices or events partially seen, immediately slipping from temporal presence, ask for thought to provide an answer. Thought posits content in the unknown with subtlety. Unnoticed associations and anonymous abstractions operate when meaning is unfulfilled. Pre-existing ideas move in silence, structuring interpretations within their own terms. The tendency is to fill the

unknown with a fabrication which at least has a name rather than allow it to persist as nameless. In this fabrication, thought gives to the unknown what it already has. The unknown poses a question to thought, allowing its ambiguity to form an opening for thought's own content to be posited. A silent moment of inference occurs, where thought discloses its possibilities and limitations.

As these movements become habitual, as their content becomes engrained in daily occurrences of thought, it can not only be the answer that's posited but also the question itself. The question may not be something directed at thought, but a space that thought has given to itself. Within the habitual giving of content, thought creates the space in which it fabricates. This is where thought forms for itself the opening in which its content can be grounded within our understanding of the world, where answers generate questions that support and perpetuate them. In this space thought may react to almost nothing, creating a deception that appears confirmed wherever there is uncertainty.

The content that thought can give to the unknown is unlimited. The world may appear as a mirror for beliefs, wishes, fears, vanities, pretensions, and prejudices, for the idea of a fate that personalises events, holding the limitlessness of the absent under subjective expectation. An idea, a history, a doctrine, a goal, an end, the story or destiny of a people may cover the world's depth with a depth of its own. This collective operation produces meaning that becomes engrained in a culture's understanding of what, even as a whole, it cannot reach.

An indifference to the unknown may be fostered in such themes. They allow the absent to be disregarded in being defined, rendering it more distant. A deceptive ideology is made all the more possible when it refers to an unseen other shallowly comprehended. Within practices of investment, consequences are hidden when the only visible outcome is the rise and fall of monetary value. The unknown is concealed in the moments where a referent is defined according to the desire of a desiring subject. In the images and texts where unseen events are communicated, choices motivate what's brought to our attention or left unseen, and what sense is used as an event's narrative to preserve or deform it. We are given world events, but habitually we may only hear the message without contemplating their reality; habitually we may think the absent in terms of mere generalities that become engrained in the conditions of our understanding.

2. The Gap and Grammatical Difference

Language belongs to the depth and complexity of the world. It lives within the meaning of the world's difference and similarity. But the flux of the world and the flux of language do not mirror each other; the two are not always subject to the same forces. Within the possible situations of a linguistic community, generalisation operates according to requirements of use; its context decides what is

left out as unnecessary, determining the characterisation of the referent, the particular way in which the overflow of the referent in relation to sense is allowed to pass unproblematically without comment. The value of sense within this context remains the focus, allowing thought to follow generality in understanding the referent as uniform, allowing it to define externally, imposing an idea and its consequences on the other, referring to an action or surface appearance as if it were a complete definition of the other's way of being. In defining individuals, nations, cultures, and so on, an overflow of meaning occurs which is left outside, inoperative. It is a lost meaning that the purposes of communication overlook. But at the same time the limitations of language are only one side of its operation. This failure to grasp the referent in any complete or absolute way constitutes the possibility of language itself. Generalisation is the silent work of language that makes sense manageable. It involves a functional limitation that allows the unthinkable into thought.

The gap between sense and its referent is the basis of this limitation. It allows thought to contain the uncontainable, to refer in a single word to what in principle could never cease being described. Perhaps at first the gap appears as a purely featureless void, entirely unthinkable without any space or shape due to the essential shapelessness of sense. Yet by attending each side, structural features can be traced. The structure of the gap is the way in which the sense of an expression does not contain its referent. These structures allow for the movement of sense in relation to the real, for thought to situate itself between the concrete and the abstract. They are the basis from which deeper more complex senses are levelled out. In these relationships sense lives within the world of referents, but shapes their meaning according to its own properties, reflecting the structure of objects according to its own parameters. It locates the meaning of the real in a form of its own, a form grounded in its own unique ability to express the reality of the world.

When we name an individual, we provide a continuity in which sense can be communicated without regard for any alterations that occur to the referent. This continuity allows thought to think an entity as uniform, as static, as an abstraction from its actual self. But there is always a limit to abstraction in these cases. When naming a specific entity, the structure of the gap, the differential relationship between sense and referent, prohibits certain movements of abstraction. Between the two sides a distinct shape remains that pulls sense towards the real, that grounds sense despite the ideas that may accumulate within it. When we name a collective, a nation for example, the possibilities of abstraction are extended. As we lack any singular specific entity, abstraction allows itself a greater idealisation of the referent. Here we denote an abstract multiplicity, a universality in relation to an indefinite collective sharing a common feature or form. This allows thought to think a uniformity invisible as a whole, where

within thought ideas may become attached to the abstraction rather than the things themselves. The external, collective difference of the referent in these cases, compared to the internal difference of the particular individual, becomes more subtly overlooked in the movements of abstraction that the gap allows. We may think of a collective in such a way that the abstraction occurs in silence, unseen by the thought that constructs it. Here it is the structure of the gap that produces another path towards abstraction. It allows for a particular movement of sense unavailable when the referent is an individual. This movement is towards an understanding of the real purely within sense, an understanding cut off from the real, where even a counterexample may be dismissed as insignificant, powerless to overcome the sense amassed and engrained within its operation.

Adjectives further qualify their object in terms of a property. Created from and supplemented by vision, they allow an object to have detail but only within the limits of conventional sense. They describe differences between objects, but they do not respond in themselves to the fine subtleties of degree that the world manifests. When we predicate a subject, we may remain silent about all other aspects of it. From this we can create a vision of the entity, a version of it formed within sense, in which what we predicated it as becomes the guiding idea, the source of the way in which we construct an understanding of it. As the property becomes the focus of the entity to which it belongs only as its surface, thought may allow this surface to define all such entities. It may allow the property to become a marker of the ideas through which they are comprehended. Predication is another form of abstraction that, in terms of their sense, allows the properties of the real to be separate from their object. As another dimension of separation from reality, this form allows another direction of abstraction towards the abstract property that floats freely from the real in which it is grounded. This property may take on a meaning of its own independent of any specific instance of its manifestation. It may be understood as a force, as almost an entity in itself, that inhabits the world. Like good and evil, such an abstraction may be understood as that which inhabits something, rather than that which it manifests from itself.

In the structures of sense that refer to the position of objects, we express a myriad of spatial arrangements by a set range of prepositional terms. Multiple senses can refer to these arrangements, differing according to perspective. A consequence of the gap is that within the divergence of opposing points of view, an object can be both up and down depending on the context and circumstances of communication. Spatial prepositions are not exact. They do not define with precision but achieve their aim nevertheless when context is correctly understood. The real itself, understood independently of the sense which represents it, is not a pure abstract form of these terms. Real objects remain indifferent to being

posited according to spatial ideas structured according to linguistic practicalities and purposes. The gap allows these terms to settle into their contexts; it allows this indifference of the real to exist in partnership with sense, just as it allows the same object to have two names.

In the operation of verbs, movements and actions are referred to by a sense that provides a rough form, a type in which these movements and actions can be compartmentalised. Their fluid happening is brought into the stillness of set terms that capture their moments. For verbs the gap is the difference between the world's action and the forms that sense creates for it, that condense a myriad of movements into a set species. As sense distances itself from the real, these movements can be understood in an entirely abstract way when the infinitive form denotes the pure idea of a movement in general, a species of movement understood independently of all instances of its realisation.¹

When verbs are inflected according to the past, future, and present tenses, sense demarcates the continuous flow of time according to an understanding that operates within the necessities of communication. Together the tenses do not reflect the unity of time, the interconnection of a time span, the now that continually slips from all operations of reference, or the ways in which what transcends the now belong to it fundamentally: the having-been within the now, and the now that forms the basis from which things become. Tenses fix time within structures of sense; they make a fluid movement distinct within a collective of words that mutually support each other in their structuring of the gap.

We can measure time, but in itself it is neither an object nor a sense. We cannot point to time or demarcate it other than symbolically. Time as a referent remains indifferent, continuing regardless of the sense that becomes structured around it. Yet we do not always refer to time itself. The gap is most often between the referent of the way we live in time, and the sense that refers to ourselves living in time. Sense plots points in time, not only points of measurement but also practical ones. These points define when something happened, when we will perform a certain action, or when some possibility can be fulfilled. These points move, they are only relevant for limited periods. They carve time up according to their own purposes, becoming amassed on top of each other as different purposes interpenetrate. We implicitly understand time in terms of activities and productivity, as the results of the time period, where time is condensed within the sense that expresses these results and the objects that testify to it.

If we refer to sense rather than the real, new levels and structures of indeterminacy become manifest. As the gap is further structured by modalities that

¹ For the abstraction of the infinitive, see Luce Irigaray's *On Phantasm and the Verb*. In *To Speak is Never Neutral*, trans. Gail Schwab. (London: Continuum, 2002), 55-62. Here it is described how the subject-object relations implied by *to live*, *to absorb*, and *to give* structure the discourse of the analysand in psychoanalysis.

express a limitless range of circumstances within set forms of possibility and obligation, it changes shape as the nature of the referent shifts, as the referent becomes more entangled in sense. A gap remains, there is no complete conjunction between the two, but sense becomes more creative as the referent is less indifferent to its operation. Obligations are shaped by sense, their reality is grounded in the meaning that belongs to them. But their expression in language is only a moment within the vast complexity of the world in which their meaning belongs.

The creativity of sense reaches another level in performatives that do not only describe but are themselves actions. Here language may inaugurate historical events and shifts in ways of life. Yet the language of their promises, affirmations, and confirmations is overshadowed by the consequences they represent. A performative condenses such consequences into a single moment, a moment understood as definitive for them within the real, holding them under its sustained influence. This moment allows these consequences to remain unthought, to even remain inoperative in the statement that defines them. In these instances sense shows itself as a constituent of the world's reality. It becomes more active than reactive, the focus and force behind the context of its situation. Here the gap does not form simply in response to a referent; we do not simply describe a world indifferent to sense. Sense is creative, it constitutes the real. It creates the meaning which itself becomes that which is referred to, which becomes absorbed into the referent it once spoke of externally. This absorption of performatives creates movement in the world. Opinion is defined by their sense. The real is created on the basis of their declarations; it is destroyed on the basis of their disclosures.

3. The Gap and Conceptual Difference

The referents of terms such as knowledge are unknowable. They do not refer to something we can clearly define, they are without any distinct referent. Remaining unthinkable as a whole, their referent can only be pictured in limited aspects and elements, but they continue to operate as a general sense whose understanding is shared and can be shaped according to innumerable concerns and purposes. They refer to an indistinct sense rather than a sense clearly delimited like a specific work of literature. They refer to ways of being for individuals, to the workings of organisations, to the sense of the world in which we understand them to have contributed. They give unity not to many objects that can be grouped as a single type, but to many things of radically different natures. In doing so these differences of nature can be disregarded, the gap allowing us to think of them within the singular nature of sense. Because of the indeterminacy of the referent, because vision can never supplement the referent with any level

of significance, although it remains silent, the gap in these cases is further expanded. These concepts are particularly susceptible to being shaped by the themes, presuppositions, and prejudices that come to surround them. They become susceptible to taking shape as an idea or formulation, to becoming operative as a system that follows itself as a sense rather than the complex actuality it attempts to define.

In its classical form knowledge is represented as something definite, something secure in itself, clearly demarcated according to a strict order of rationality. Its referent becomes abstracted in such a way that is conducive to the conditions of a particular use. The gap becomes shaped by current practices and concerns, its movement defined by historical processes. The gap allows thought to think concepts in ways that are pulled in different directions. It allows a word to miss its referent in various ways, perhaps even within the same opposing debate. The referent of knowledge does not remain indifferent to the sense that refers to it. Although the gap remains, in changing how knowledge is understood, a systematic concept becomes operative in changing the practices of knowledge, developing them according to its own understanding.

In the development of knowledge as a concept, as the understanding of its referent shifts, it creates spaces for other concepts. A duality forms when a particular idealisation of knowledge creates a space for the classical concept of opinion. As knowledge becomes focused on a set form, this second concept enters to both relieve it of the breadth of its reference, and also influence our understanding of knowledge in opposition to it. In this movement thought becomes understood in opposition to the frailties of the senses, resulting in a knowledge purified of empiricism. The shape of the gap is altered. For knowledge it narrows, prising out of sense another term to support it, allowing its relationship to this term to be partially constitutive for it as a concept. The referent, the actual practices associated with knowledge and its creation, finds a new direction. A set of criteria for judging the value of particular examples arises, which both supports the production of knowledge and allows opinion to become the bearer of all deficient forms. For opinion the gap widens; a new specialised use forms from the old, allowing it to fulfil its new purpose. Its everyday meaning is reshaped to become a container for what does not fulfil the requirements of the new conception of knowledge in truth. It begins to take on the meaning of *mere* opinion, conjecture, a confusion that is the enemy of thought. It becomes associated with those who we oppose, who we wish to discredit. But such a duality does not remain static. In the continuing development of knowledge, the criteria of its definition shift as new ideas become operative within it. The wider acceptance of epistemic ideals removes the need for oppositional concepts. Opinion loses its special use. It no longer operates alongside knowledge as part of the same system, becoming once again a general term without systematic value.

The gap between a sense and its referent continually shifts, each movement supporting other movements in the concepts that lie in its vicinity. Different concepts aid each other in the way in which they make the world thinkable, the way in which together they leave things unsaid. They shape and become shaped by each other within the combined operation of their sense. Within language there are basic relationships that allow for contact and movement between different terms. These relationships may be logical (a concept's negation or the relationships that it requires a priori), etymological (the connections that are reopened through the exploration of the history of language); they may occur as an associative connection, an overlap of sense, an opposition between terms, or where multiple concepts belong together by virtue of an organising theme. The world becomes divided and structured by these forms of conceptual relationship, not only one at a time, but together as a multiplicity of forms acting within the same system. We find a theme that develops from the associations it creates, is split in two by its negation, and grounded historically by its development as a sense. We find concepts that make the world abstract, that produce a world of thought in which it can be understood, a world of a vast complexity of sense, an entire work constructed in language as a world within itself. The gap allows these conceptual systems to be led by the themes, contexts, and presuppositions of their own thought. As they become abstracted from reality, their possibility depends more and more on the limitations of a sense that refers to that which overwhelms it. Thinking can allow itself to depart from the referent. It can enter a world of concepts as a world of thought distant from the real. But nevertheless, in conceptual development the referent remains as an aspect of its progress, without which its operations of reference would be reduced to pure fantasy.

The analytical certainties of logic and mathematics have a different relationship to generality. In the pure analytical truth, the indeterminacy of the gap between sense and its referent is closed. As a pure abstraction it does not refer to another indeterminate sense but a sense that is entirely determined from within itself. The certainty it denotes is equal to the idea it expresses. Nothing is lost in the act of denoting, nothing is hidden in the expression. The nature of sense and referent becomes the same: a sense that completely expresses a certainty within sense itself. The physical world supports these abstractions, but it does not contain the referent in any physical or literal way. The basic analytical principles of numerical addition are indifferent to what objects may or may not be added in the actual world. These principles mirror the physical logic of objects, but they do not rely on them for their validity. With the world's multiplicity presupposed, there is no experience outside the apprehension of their content that would provide greater understanding.

When the world enters as a referent in the mathematical sciences of nature, even though the latter are founded on mathematical principles, even

though their foundations are pure, the gap reopens as the purity of their sense is directed towards a world that they refer to externally. Modern science transformed mathematical relationships into the sense that captures the functioning of the real, a sense whose value is determined not only by internal consistency but also by its demonstrable effectiveness as a description of the real. Scientific abstraction is not pure in itself but relies on its concurrence with the facts of the world. Through the observation of facts, science ensures it remains a reflection of an external referent rather than a mere mathematical possibility. This scientific reflection is composed of unique movements from within the structure of the gap; it uses the gap in its own unique way. The way in which science leaves out what is unnecessary to it is thoroughly systematic. It disregards what it cannot account for through measurement, lets pass what cannot be contained in the form of its structure, and leaves in the dark what is inoperative within the movements of its system. The possibilities that the gap provides allow science to create an abstract description of the real. Discarding all but the abstract from the world, leaving behind a mathematical structure untainted by anything which cannot be accommodated in it, science creates a model of reality that, as a sense, exists as a world in itself.

Compared to the generality of everyday language, of the concept, of natural scientific abstraction, it is the referent of the analytical truth that is of a radically different nature. It does not refer to something outside of its own sense, it has no referent other than itself. In the context of rational thought, this purely abstract uniformity of referent and idea is natural and intuitive. No alteration or construction is apparent in its use. There is no additional distinct operation that creates such a unification. There is no additional explanation required. In classical metaphysics the same purity in the act of referring is sought after, but here an alteration of the referent appears explicit. In metaphysics the meaning of the sign is transformed to refer to the world's root and essence, a meaning that becomes not merely an abstract description of the world but the fundamental structure of transcendent reality. This extramundane usage posits a uniformity of the sign and referent that overcomes the reliance of the possibility of language on its limitations. The gap between sense and its referent becomes bridged by giving thought something to connect with, not only of like nature but also complete in itself, in order to reinforce its operations of reference. It resolves the indeterminacy of language by positing a pure ideational content as the referent that exists as the origin of the world's reality. Taking an alternative path from everyday language, from the limitations of reference, metaphysics posits being as thought and thought as capable of thinking being. The referent and the content, the noumenon and the idea, become identical. It is not a generalisation in any negative sense if the essence of reality itself is generalised, if generality is not only the essence of language but also the essence of the world. In this transfor-

mation of the referent, the difference between the present and the absent is dissolved in an absolute reality, leaving an omnipresent universal as the locus of value. It leaves a deified language everywhere yet hidden, accessible only to pure thought, a language formed from the requirements of a demand for certainty, for thought's hidden referent to be thought itself, pure, eternal, and complete. In this demand we see how a problem generates a solution, how it creates the terrain for it, how its purpose is manifest within it, how a lack of certainty generates a world of essences.

4. The Absent as Actual

The absent as such does not show itself to the present; it is always unknown and unknowable as a whole, beyond the presence and absence fundamental to the conditions of manifest being. In transcendental philosophy the absent is understood under the concept of absence. This concept explores the conditions of the being of something in its absence. It names a lack within the present for a subject, emphasising modes of non-appearance over that which does not appear. Going no further than the deficient ways in which the absent announces itself within the present, absence is in this way fundamentally connected to the present; it names the *presence* of absence. But what is absent does not reveal itself in its absence. It is not defined fundamentally by the absence that appears outside it. The absent cannot be understood in terms of the openness of present experience. It cannot be understood on the basis of a totality of merely invisible objects that relate to our own world only by their lack of presence. The absent is a context in which the primacy of presence over the absent itself is lost. It is a context in which the primacy of absence, of the conditions of non-presence *for me*, is superseded by the unseen beyond an individual's experience of phenomena. Thinking absence is to think of the present, of what is or is not here within immediate experience. Thinking the actuality of the absent is to think the absent as such. This actuality is not simply implied by an entity's being-absent; it requires a new thought, an additional distinct movement that thinks the entity not in terms of its absence, nor within a generality, but as absent, actual, unseen, and unknown. An entire world belongs to the absent, free from the limits of any singular viewpoint, continuing indefinitely beyond the existence of individuals, indifferent to their conditions and situation. Within the context of the absent, we find a fundamentally distinct relationship, irreducible within our basic engagement with the world, even when it is unheeded.

Moments of the absent are engrained in everyday language. Language functions within a world of the present and the absent, implicitly understanding the absent as meaningful. There are terms that refer to what goes beyond any possible vision, temporal expressions which refer to what cannot in any way be

brought to presence, concepts that refer to what is beyond any possible moment of comprehension. The discourses of everyday life refer to the things done, said, meant, and thought in contexts beyond any experience of our own. Although the absent itself is inaccessible to language, this ongoing movement of sense is not entirely self-reliant. It does not appear from nothing but gains its momentum from the world's actuality, from the innumerable, endless, and incomprehensible interconnections between the present and the absent, from the overall context, whether known or unknown, that the absent world has created for any present experience. In its relation to the absent, the gap between sense and referent must imply another object, another sense, actual but unseen, providing one side of the basis of its structure. The thought of actuality is the surrogate of this side. It is the attempt to think the absent world from where present experience finds itself. But the absent is always beyond any possible experience. It is unstable and uncontrollable; it may appear within presence as a nothingness inaccessible to thought. The structure of the gap, the sheer presence of the gap itself, reflects this. It reflects how the limitations of language form within these gaps of indeterminacy, how this indeterminacy fosters these limitations, making them part of the most fundamental yet silent functions of thinking.

The name of a city operates around the indeterminate complexity of its referent. Because this complexity is ungraspable, the gap appears allowing sense to stand independently, to overlook the instability of what it refers to. This appearance of the gap allows the name of a city to remain intuitive in its use. The name leaves implicit the full extent of its inability to contain a complex referent. It remains simple, continuous, static, familiar, condensing the difference, complexity, and flux of actual objects, movements, actions, and sense. But the thought of actuality turns back to what is condensed in the name. It is the thought in which the referent is unthinkable as a whole, in which the name is overshadowed. It is a thought that cannot encompass every detail but attends the incomprehensibility of detail itself. The idea of this actuality is overwhelming; it prevents the understanding any grasp. In this thought the absent is not perceived but almost sensed. It is the thought of a distant city understood as being there but not here, a city whose existence is actual as the unknown reality of the temporal present; its past is actual as the previous happening of objective situations, as the signs and structures that remain manifest, as the circumstances that confine and create the reality of its present; its future as the conditions of persistence within the present, as the potential repetition of the pre-existing, and as the possibility and coming to be of the new encompassed by the now and before. This is not a possibility in abstract opposition to the actual, but one that belongs to it fundamentally. A thought of actuality is not strictly concerned with predictions focused on disclosing truths. It is not merely a speculative statement or declaration of facts about what will happen. It thinks not of certainties but of the unknown as a hap-

pening as such. It is the thought of an actual happening, the thought of something being actual as an experience or event.

A thought of actuality occurs when the hidden experience of a present individual is intuited not as a generalised sense but as an empathic thought of the unseen. It occurs when we think an experience that is there within presence but is not actual as ours. It is when we think this experience, hidden but expressed in the present, as an experience as such. Similarly, for the absent individual a thought of actuality occurs for an experience that we cannot infer from what immediately shows itself. This is where the wider dimensions of the empathic experience open, when we see it within its full temporal scope. Empathy is not restricted to only what is happening within the current moment of time. We experience empathy for the past when we think of an experience within the actuality of the vast intricate histories of the world. We also experience empathy for the future: for the possibilities that have opened, for the event that has become inevitable. Within these thoughts we enter the referent's own situation. They bring us to the situation of the other experienced as if it were our own. The actual confronts us in empathy, perhaps provoked by language but always experienced as something beyond it. In empathy we move out of our well worn everyday situations, catching a glimpse of worlds that transcend the boundaries of our own. Yet we grasp these worlds with only a fragile hold; they remain unknown as far as they do not restrict themselves only to our own presence.

There are also the moments in which we think of death not as a general possibility but as the actual possibility of our own non-experience. In these moments we may have the feeling of a nothingness not yet here, the thought of experiencing a final moment, the thought that the actual body that will expire is your own body, that the actual experience that will cease is your own experience. The actuality of death belongs to the present as an ongoing possibility, as an unknown that somehow lives within every moment. Its presence is most often silent, but it remains as an inevitability, not only something that might occur, something ambiguous that we need only avoid. Death is lost in our immersion in the past, present, and immediate future. It remains subsumed by our reasons to live. Even when it is thought or spoken of, death is most often only understood in terms of a generalised sense, the death of others, its practicalities or financial aspects, our preferences regarding funeral customs, or the practices with which we withhold ourselves from it. In our everyday experience, death is something only named, belonging to events absent and unseen, rather than a real possibility that belongs fundamentally to existence. But rare moments occur that bring us into the thought of its actuality. Perhaps an event shows us death as a reality, preventing the movements of our average everyday thoughts about it. Perhaps in empathy the death of another is not merely spoken of but thought as an actual experience. Perhaps a moment in literature strikes us with a vision of it. Perhaps

its actuality is seen in the beginning of death's process within ourselves.

Thoughts of actuality break in on our everyday experience of the present. They disrupt our thoughts about the world, about the conditions of our situation, about the possibilities we may embrace or submit to. They show the indeterminacy of our relationship to the absent world. In them we see a breakdown of generalisation; they are where generality is brought out of its silence and its swift operations are disrupted. In thoughts of actuality the depth and complexity of a referent, having been subsumed under generalisation, reach back into awareness. To think the absent as actual is to rethink the gap between sense and its referent. It is the reformation of our understanding of the referent away from the uniformity of the sign. It is to decentre the sign in relation to the referent, to acknowledge the referent's indeterminacy. To think the absent as actual is to challenge our ideas. It makes our ideas break down, disrupting the thought that knows only generalisations. It is where the idea of the simple fulfilment of the object or activity by the word becomes displaced, where the absent is seen as a limitless overflowing of the present. It is a thought in which we can see the relationship between sense and its referent in terms of the structure of the gap between them, a structure that reflects the divergence between the operations of generalisation and the world's complexity. The thought of actuality is where the world reaches out from the gap between sense and referent, where the referent is no longer understood merely as the target of language but as an independent entity. To think the absent as actual is not to think of this structure abstractly, but to see it occur within thought. It is to see the multiple ways in which the gap is formed within linguistic use, to see the multiple shapes in which these gaps are structured, to see how, within this structure, sense can move independently of what surpasses it.

Engagement with the absent world requires specific modes of relating towards it, modes that allow the absent to be neither understood according to a nature foreign to it nor simply overlooked and left unthought. This engagement is where the unknown is related to on the basis of its actuality, rather than being only represented by a sign that captures it within the structure of a gap or reduces it to the purest abstraction. In the thought of actuality, new conceptual dimensions are created when we develop from it a more general concept of depth. This concept shows our relationship to an unknown world connected to the surface but existing primarily beyond it. It is where we think the absent not merely as a darkness but rethink it as a depth of actualities. It is where we begin to see the properties of the absent, not only in terms of what is merely absent, but also in terms of what has the absent as a constitutive aspect of its qualitative being.

5. Understanding Depth

A complete experience of depth cannot be found from only within the visible. It reaches beyond all possible objects of mere perception. The attempt to enter the world's depth requires thought as well as vision; it is a depth of both ideas and things, found through language and perception, literature and physical presence.

Human finitude, both physical and cognitive, profoundly conditions our relation to depth, but this is not mitigated by ever more detailed or precise descriptions. Such operations do not capture a depth that, as a whole, is of a radically different nature. Nor do they allow sense to function according to its most fundamental forms. Linguistic use operates according to the value of the general and the specific, the concise and the detailed. The ways in which our expressions reflect the world are silently regulated by the contexts and purposes of the concerns we are involved in. Greater generalisation may be desirable within any given discourse. Expanding a more basic sense into greater detail may have a positive effect, yet the concise has its own value in the succinct message it gives. It generalises for its own sake not merely as the result of an inescapable limitation. The world's depth is not a problem that can be solved by overcoming human finitude within the boundaries of linguistic form. It cannot be brought to completion within sense. It is a problem not in the representation of depth, but in our understanding of it.

Understanding depth, like representative generalisation, manifests itself as a reaction to the world. Both involve movements of thought as the subject is confronted with experience. They are modes of attention through which subjects convene with their world. Representation, in its initial limited form, closes as it opens sense. It posits a sense in which the meaning of the world can be overlooked. It shapes an object or idea in terms of itself. Its attention is fleeting, the unknown becomes finished. It moves on, disregarding the hidden. But representations are dual natured: they are a mode of inattention to the hidden yet can also be understood as a depth of their own. Language itself is a depth. Language and the world deepen each other, a deepening that becomes visible within an understanding of depth. This is where thought goes beyond representation in its limited form to understand language as a sign towards depth, as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. It is where thought attends the hidden, reacts to the present as an opening to the unknown. To understand depth is to go beyond the present object. It is to understand the meaning of the thought of actuality, the way in which it constitutes a relation to the world beyond presence.

Understanding depth is not merely reactive. Its projective opening unfolds a space in which we understand the unknown and into which depth can enter. Depth is where experience is enlarged, where thought looks for the density of its concepts. Depth is unseen as a whole but enters the surface as visible entities

and representations. It stands as the unrepresented actuality glimpsed only in moments within vision and sense. The depth of individuals is manifest in their silent physical presence. The depth of printed words is in the associations they create within the context of their use. The depth of cultures is reflected in the practices that belong to their development.

Depth is what the deep leads us towards. This movement of the deep distinguishes it from the shallow that hinders the exploration of depth, that fosters an avoidance of it. The deep belongs to and embraces depth while the shallow turns away from it. If a deep representation opens up contexts, refers to greater areas and layers of depth, the shallow overlooks them. Although the shallow remains within a world of depth, within complex systems, its depth does not belong to it as a quality of its own manifestation. Its depth is external to it: The empty generalisation still relates to the depth that it masks in the movement of its referring. The disposable object still has the depth of the economic conditions that cultivated its production. These aspects of depth do not belong to their intended context. The empty generalisation is the removal of sense from its depth. For the object its hidden conditions are irrelevant to the pleasure and desire it engenders.

The deep can also be made shallow. While a cultural object may have a depth that belongs to it, this can be obscured when its context is altered by removing it from its intended situation. This change in context brings the object into a new situation of thought. It is seen as merely a surface, its depth is overlooked. In the object's presence no thought of depth is encountered, no thought of the actuality of its culture.²

A fundamentally different understanding of our relationship to the absent requires a fundamentally new concept. This concept must include vision and representation without being based upon them, without being defined by their movements, by their modes of presence or referential operations. The actuality beyond the comprehension of sense and the vision of the real points towards a re-imagined concept of depth. This concept refers to both a depth of space and time, not of undifferentiated space or linear time, not a pure abstraction, but a depth that manifests itself and lies hidden within the spatial, temporal world. It is a concept that does not form itself along standardised lines of abstraction, but turns towards the deep and the complex. It is not a generalisation that defines according to what is manifest, but a general concept that names what is hidden among all things. It does not refer only to the present object but to its history, not only to the event but to its surrounding conditions. It names the unnamed, the beyond of attention, the outside of the present or the generalised. Its naming

² This movement of an object losing its depth is illustrated in *Statues Also Die*, a short anti-colonial documentary on the assimilation of African art into the context of Western museums. Dirs. Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, and Ghislain Cloquet. (France, 1953.)

is not parsimonious, transparent to or complete within itself. It is never completed but continually refers to what is beyond itself. It is the sign of what becomes known but never as a totality. Its meaning constantly overflows itself. It is so general that it can only generalise explicitly, in full view.

Depth refers to the overflowing of experience, thought, and language, to the overflow of unknown meaning and absent reality beyond immediate experience. It is not like everyday language that generalises implicitly, in silence. It is not the metaphysical universal complete in itself. Depth has a different relationship to generality. In its development as a concept, it alters not the nature of the referent but the nature of its own referring. If a metaphysical concept alters the referent in order to overcome generalisation, the concept of depth alters itself in order to emphasise it, to push it to extremes, to its breaking point. Depth returns to everyday language to take another path. It returns to the limitations of linguistic form in order to look again at the possibilities of their use. It refers to the overflow of generality beyond the object, to the inverse of the visible, the outside of a moment of definition into which these moments can continue or from which they can overlook. This concept of depth is not merely one of many among innumerable lexical elements. It creates a unique movement in the structural duality of sense and its referent. It is operative within this relationship. It represents not merely an instance of its occurrence but a specific movement within it, a movement in which the actuality of what overflows sense and vision becomes thought explicitly. Like the metaphysical concept, depth transforms the gap. But rather than for epistemic reasons, this transformation is to reach further into it, to explore it as a terrain in itself. It is to explore the gap as a moment in the possibility of language's existence within the actual world, as a way in which thought can be changed.

The difference between expressing the name of a place and referring to its depth is that the former operates as a fluid moment of sense, while the latter reaches a blockage as the limits of thought confront an indefinite endlessness. Depth refers to that which creates such blockages. It refers to that in which moments of the endless are glimpsed, where thought sees in its own inability to see both the depth of the world and the operations of its limits. Depth is a form of conceptuality that alters the relationship between the possibilities and limitations of language. It pushes the limitations of language towards other possibilities that disrupt it from operating in its most natural ways. It is a concept that knows it's impossible, that has this impossibility as an essential explicit moment of it. But linguistic operation is not completely dissolved here. As with the metaphysical concept, another unorthodox movement of the sense/referent structure, the concept of depth is possible as a movement of sense, yet impossible as a referential operation. While the impossibility of the metaphysical concept undermines it, allows it to evaporate from a lack of faith in the transcendent

conceptual reality it requires, the impossibility of depth fulfils its purpose. This impossibility arises from depth's endless referential movement—endless because it does not merely refer to an abstract idea of depth but to the actual depth of the world. The explicit presence of this movement creates a friction, a change of context within thought. Depth characterises the unspeakable; it gives a sense to what there are no words for. It gives a lack meaning, changing our understanding of the absent from what is disregarded in our inability to grasp, to what we understand independently of the limitations of our worldly existence.

In depth the limitations of language are not passed over as in those terms that name a specific sense, entity, or event. In making an implicit aspect of language's functioning explicit, depth is at the same time its critique and expansion. Depth pushes the relationship between the limitations and possibilities of language to its furthest point. In doing so the referential possibilities of language collapse, altering the nature of its referring, creating a unique movement in the structural duality of sense and referent. It is within the gap between operations of reference and the referent itself that depth remains. Its development as a concept is the exploration of the meaning of this gap. Depth understands this gap as unbridgeable. It realises that it cannot reach the other side, constantly finding a blockage within the nature of sense. This blockage illuminates our relationship to the full complexity of the absent; it creates a counterpoint to the way in which, for the most part, language effortlessly operates. The gap is a structure that becomes conceptualised in the concept of depth. As it does so, depth opens the possibility of this purely linguistic relation to the absent to become operative within the overall ideas that constitute our understanding of the world. It changes the way in which the unknown, unseen, and incomprehensible can become operative within thought. It opens the possibility, as reflected by the dyadic structure of the gap itself, of the development of depth as a concept involving the exploration of both language and the hidden absent world.

6. Depth, Difference, and the Subject

A metaphysical system is deep; it has a complexity that reaches over the totality of the world, giving existence a new thought. It creates a context under whose terms the world can be understood. But as it gives the world a transcendent depth, it takes away from the world a depth of its own. The world's details are reduced to the inessential, their depth no longer belonging to their own actuality but to the universality of which they are a part. The depth of the world is straightened out, ordered, and subordinated by transcendent universality. The structure of pure abstraction becomes the foundation of depth, inverting the depth of the world, understanding it as shallow in comparison to the absolute significance of purely intelligible being. A metaphysical system can remain only

within its own territory, restricting itself to its own thought. Its consequences remain valid only within the ground of its presuppositions. It assimilates what is other into itself, explaining it within the moments of its own system. It is deep but only in a single direction. Its thought becomes operative only along its own lines, devaluing all other courses.

Depth's referent is not pure. It involves the false as well as the true, the negative and the positive, the precise and the vague, the trivial and the fundamental, the high and the low, the rational and the irrational. Within it there are contradictions and incompatibilities that create further depth and complexity as the repercussions of their interactions reverberate. There are paradoxes and points in which preconceptions are disturbed. Depth refers to a multiplicity of contexts, to areas of sense independent in themselves but with the possibility of becoming linked or merging, of one becoming dominant over another, or the one being overcome itself. Depth is where contexts are born, where breakages occur in sense and reality, bringing in new understandings and periods of change. It is that in which multiple contexts reside, but depth is not itself a context. It does not merge a multiplicity of contexts into one. It does not operate as a context made absolute, reliant only on what is present to it. As the hidden constitution of contexts, it remains silent within them, allowing them to operate according to their own meaning.

At the level of concepts, depth lets other concepts speak for themselves as doing so allows them to be deeper. Yet when depth speaks in its own name, it speaks of this deepening, of the limitlessness into which the deep travels. In judgements the concept of depth does not impose itself as the measure of all value. The deep and the shallow function as aspects of affirmation and critique purely immanent to the concept of depth, formulated from its conceptual structure and situation. But other forms of judgement are also found from within the actuality of depth's referent, developed from our engagement with the world. These other forms cannot be consumed by depth. As a concept, as an idea that affects thinking, depth must not remain a continual presence. It must, in accord with its own logic, remain silent in particular circumstances. Refraining from the continual imposition of its operation, depth allows the world to be deep independently of its own conceptual structure. But this silence is broken as the concept of depth becomes operative in thought. It supplements the thought that thinks the unknown in general terms, acting like a corrective for the moments in which only the shallow is seen. It becomes engrained as a possible limit on our reactions, in the way that thought itself is understood. Depth allows the world to speak in its own name in order to fulfil itself as a concept, to allow subjects to experience the depth of the world itself in all its possible forms. But it enters this discourse to foster this experience, to alter the way in which the depth of the world is understood.

To the depth of the world in general there belongs the depth of subjects. Depth is an essential aspect of human life. It is foundational to subjectivity, it belongs to the constitution of the subject. It reflects the subject's lack of complete continuity, the complexity of its sense, the extent of its existence unseen and unknowable as a whole but manifest in the surface. Depth does not restrict itself only to the intellectual; it belongs in all places at all times. We may attend the shallow or the deep, we may only see the immediate within vision and representation, but nevertheless in all cases subjects are themselves depths. Their actions always belong to a depth. They carry the absent within themselves as their history, as their wider context, as the possibilities that belong to their nature.

To characterise subjectivity as a depth is not only critical of the generalisations that prise subjects into forced universalities. To see ourselves as an unknown, to see the unlimited possibilities of human life as depths, is to open the myriad pathways of subjective change. Beyond the depth that belongs to all subjects in general, there are the movements of deepening in which a subject's involvement in the world shifts. As an aspect of change, understanding depth intends the ongoing deepening of the subject within the world—not only the self-creation of a subject, but also the creation of a world, where depth may become, not merely a surface reality, a style, or image, but manifest in the self and its surroundings as reflections from within contexts that extend beyond the present. The concept of depth does not define a way of life, but it makes certain aspects resonate when the world becomes understood within it. These aspects of the world become sought after, they become the focus of thought. In this search the world and subjects deepen each other. Together they produce the movements in which new forms of the deep become possibilities of manifestation.

Difference belongs to the depth of the world as the unknown other, the unfamiliar that extends beyond the present. In the concept of depth this difference is not assimilated as mere difference, categorised only in terms of its being other, as something only consumed. Depth does not assimilate in terms of an integrated separation, as present but inoperative. It does not imply differences that are only tolerated, accepted, or rejected. It is not merely a container in which generalised differences are compartmentalised, as per the logic of difference and uniformity found within the generalisations in which differences are most often understood. The concept of depth implies actual differences, other contexts, other lines of thought, other directions into the deep, other modes of behaviour in which subjects find both questions and possibilities for the worlds they inhabit. These differences challenge pre-existing conceptions of thought, habits, and behaviour. They are where our modes of thought and being as subjects are questioned, where a new dialogue begins between the subject and the world. In this dialogue differences are understood as possibilities of change that may be hidden, almost impossible to find without an understanding of depth

that gives back to the world what the shallow takes from it, that gives back what is beyond immediate sense and context, beyond what suffices for basic communication. This depth is not found by picking out surface after surface. It is not found by the creation of a context which then solidifies, where the deep becomes habitual, a formula for subjects to follow, flattened out, losing its connection to the movements of the unknown. When difference is understood within its own context, rather than only in a context of our own, it may create the changes that are not only superficial, not merely additions to an existing world, but changes that fundamentally alter our own context.

The difference of the world constitutes what is deep for any particular subject. It is the source of subjective change. Our engagement with it is how subjects deepen themselves, an engagement that does not cease yet neither wanders aimlessly, that does not merely seek a preconceived depth, an overall difference, or a set portion of those possible differences available to us. As per the logic of depth, we become deeper if we do not all pursue the same preconceived multiplicity but find for ourselves a depth of our own. Multiplicity belongs to our pursuit of depth, but it is not entirely determined by it. It is not a pursuit of multiplicity for its own sake. The deep is a singularity supported by the multiple, a singularity that gains its momentum from it. The deep is not just one of many, but the one which has reached into difference and carved for itself a unique area. As an object or sense, the deep creates a space for a subject to enter. It allows a subject, in its involvement with the deep, to be manifest as a singularity itself. But a subject is never wholly singular and never wholly a one. A subject moves back and forth from the one to the singular continually. The one and the singular are the same. The latter is not a distinct entity but only another movement of the one, an attempt to change its relation to the world that surrounds it. The singular is the one that has reached not only the roots of its foundations, but has done so in an awareness of the many directions they may become entangled in. These directions manifest themselves as pathways into difference; they are channels that nourish our foundations with the unknown world.

In the ongoing deepening of subjects and their world, differences are not only found but also created. They are not always mere additions to the pre-existing, assembled brick by brick, but are also created as the new within depth. The new is where spaces are found in the actual, where a ground of possibility is explored. It is not where we uncover an existing unknown, but gradually uncover the unknown possibilities of creation. The actuality of the possible lives within depth. Depth is where we see in the world the unknown possibilities from which new differences arise. It is where subjects and the possibilities that open for them create ways of thought and being that may, in ways previously unseen, transform the world around them. The possible belongs to the unknown of depth. It is hidden but the world points towards it, it is unseen but the world

offers us a foothold. The depth of the possible is constantly searched. This searching pushes the world beyond itself, onwards into depths which are not merely unknown, but impossible until what is actual becomes conducive for them.

The concept of depth brings thought to an understanding of the operations that trap it within itself. Critical not of language as such but of a lack of thought in its use, it questions the facile movements that thought loses itself in. As depth becomes operative in thought, it becomes operative in the changing situation of the subject on which it exerts its influence. In this situation there grows the realisation of the depth of the world, of history, of the possibilities of unknown futures, of life and death, of beginnings and ends. In depth the value of the unexpressed itself is brought to expression where, as a concept, it may prevent subjects from being trapped merely in their own presence, in their own fantasy, in the ideas and things that surround them. As depth questions our reactions to the world, the instinctive positing of thought on the world's absent actuality, it may prevent subjects from remaining only within the shallows, opening new areas that become incorporated within the surface.

But what if the answer to our problem is not an abstract concept of depth? What if the answer is not to think of actuality, to contemplate the hidden and unknown? What if we only need to simply live life itself, to engage as fully as possible in the immediate presence of experience? Yet if this simplicity of life is constituted by that which appears habitually before us, do we not require thought to live more than the life that confronts us, to overcome the static quality of a presence made sterile by repetition? Or more abstractly, do we not require thought to see not only a world of phenomena but also a world of depth? We will not understand our thought, our habits, or our lives as long as we only see them within their own settled, preorganised contexts. The depth of the world is that in which the difference that engenders change in the subject is found. Within this depth unforeseeable situations of both critique and creation arise, every moment of which continue depth's ongoing deepening.

7. Heraclitus' Image

Without a solution to the limitless depth of the world, there will always be a tendency for thought to attempt to overcome the insurmountable, to speculate about the absent, continually leading itself into reasons and explanations that give structure to what is beyond human will. The thought of depth continuing endlessly can overwhelm us. Thought becomes swallowed by its limits in the thought of depth's actuality. There is madness implicit in the attempt to think the fullest thoughts of depth. Yet perhaps there is a guiding idea, a different kind of myth about the world and its history, an attempt to understand rather than

define, to see how rather than what. Perhaps there is an image not of the visible but of the hidden, that communicates the unseen without attempting to represent its presence.

A fragment of Heraclitus provides an image of the world in which it remains incomprehensible and without teleology. Beyond the torment thought finds when it asks for reasons it could never grasp, beyond the attempt to locate an essential meaning internal to the unknown, this image relieves these pressures which act as a force within thought. It is an image of innocence that shows the world as neither an attack on thought nor as a source of guilt. It is an instance where thought finding freedom in itself is thought finding freedom in the world: αἰὼν παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων, πεσσεύων.³ This image of Heraclitus is a guiding thought for the world's depth. Becoming operative within thought, it brings thought back to itself. It provides a release from thought's urge to totalise. This is a thought comfortable without prediction or resolution, that allows the world to be deep, that allows us to understand depth without being trapped therein. It is a thought that allows itself to finish.

³ "Lifetime is a child at play, moving pieces in a game" (DK22B52). Trans. Charles H. Kahn. *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 71.