

ENDLESSLY SIGNIFYING WHAT IS ABSENT*

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I. Letters are grouped together and from them come signs, bearers of a simultaneous sound and meaning. A fresh beginning, twenty or so initial word-elements as pure as if they had never been used before. Cards suddenly gathered up in the hands of one for whom—in order to begin a new deal, a different distribution of the same letters—other words will be born, other sounds and other meanings, according to combinations and permutations that will soon appear weighed down with hidden meaning, initiating a series that may not lead to our locating the model, the echo, the resemblance, the traced ring of a common origin, the indefinable look of a family likeness.

Yaël, Elya, Aely: dispersion attacks the name that continuously reforms itself.

II. Signs organized in occasionally enigmatic locutions, whose balance and opposition create maxims that a so-called wisdom articulates. Borrowing the names of imaginary rabbis in order to deposit its sibylline statements, fragments of a fictive wisdom detached from a great and immemorial wisdom no less fictive, being the involuntary coalescence of millions of books whose signs will have blended themselves into these twenty or so initial word-elements, which take on meaning only when a breath disperses them and only when a page gathers them together, each time in a different order.

III. Maxims grouped in paragraphs, paragraphs whose sequence forms chapters, chapters composing parts, parts that answer, oppose, attract each other in books that are only phases of a cycle; a cycle that repeats itself in its double, endlessly examining the resemblance; a copy that from the back of the studio poses questions to the sculptor's table where, under a veil that a breath raises and in the absence of a model, the cast of a mask behind which no face is hidden dominates the scene.

IV. And if it succeeds in being fleshed out, the story does not resist, slow coalescence of singular word-elements deposited in the book like documents in a file; it is the result of a violent act, as if the names, the gestures, the places, and the time, having bloomed separately in simple maxims, were for an instant to accept being united under a common law so that one would know finally, as in the hard light of a blunt interrogation, who made what, where, and when; but soon this draft literally bursts into pieces, hurling fragments of voices into the abyss: book within the book within the book within the book, and that already one can no longer distinguish from the multiple echoes reverberating against the covers, spine, edges, boards; vain appeals that come again within your hearing and that we send away without having responded to them in their space, our space, the space that their passage describes, as if an imperious force dictated that the same figure be taken up again and again, that an endlessly new version of it be created, thus making sure, through the repetition of a model, a structure, a gesture, of the incessant reiteration of signs that trace faces and stories, a refuge against the irreversible; an equal force sets in motion this construction of words suspended in time, in a final drifting where no cycle comes full circle, no similitude is ever found—thus endless, losing itself in the infinity of unexpressed hope.

V. Next year, here even, everywhere, elsewhere, the always upcoming year, in an always unfamiliar place, the writing, the past, the memory, the lived, through others as well as through oneself, the tribe that carried you, gathered you up in a gesture, tore you away from a mythical Eden, deported you on the wind of history—hackneyed metaphor but with indelible traces, six million trees having grown, thus endlessly signifying what is absent; writing, the reforestation of a hillside, the promise of another land where, if you truly wish, and leaving nothing behind, you will go with arms and bags, real and imagined, there being little chance that you could ever lay either of them down; writing, extension of deadlines, land perpetually hidden from view, deception, lack, failure, distorted cycle, open mouth, missing link, future, pierced and filled with gaps.

Translated by Richard Stamelman.

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