

wedding ring: the labyrinth is the ring, the ear, the Eternal Return itself that expresses what is active or affirmative. The labyrinth is no longer the path on which one gets lost, but the path that returns. The labyrinth is no longer that of knowledge or morality, but the labyrinth of life and of Being as *living* being. As for the product of Dionysus and Ariadne's union, it is the overman or the overhero, the opposite of the higher man. The overman is the living being of caves and summits, the only child conceived through the ear, the son of Ariadne and the Bull.

13

He Stuttered

It is sometimes said that bad novelists feel the need to vary their dialogic markers [*indicatifs*] by substituting for "he said" expressions like "he murmured," "he stammered," "he sobbed," "he giggled," "he cried," "he stuttered," all of which indicate different voice intonations. And in fact, with regard to these intonations, the writer seems to have only two possibilities: either *to do it* (as did Balzac, when he made Father Grandet stutter in his dealings with business matters, or when he made Nucingen speak in a contorted patois; in each case we can clearly sense Balzac's pleasure). Or else *to say it without doing it*, to be content with a simple indication that the reader is allowed to fill in: thus, Masoch's heroes are constantly murmuring, and their voice *must* be a barely audible murmur; Melville's Isabelle has a voice that must not rise above a murmur, and the angelic Billy Budd cannot stir without our having to reconstitute his "stutter or even worse";¹ Kafka's Gregor squeaks more than he speaks, but this is according to the testimony of others.

However, there seems to be a third possibility: when *saying is doing*.² This is what happens when the stuttering no longer affects preexisting words, but itself introduces the words it affects; these words no longer exist independently of the stutter, which selects and links them together through itself. It is no longer the character who stutters in speech; it is the writer who becomes *a stutterer in language*. He makes the language as such stutter: an affective and intensive language, and no longer an affectation of the one who speaks. A poetic operation such as this seems to be very distant from the previous

cases; but it is perhaps less distant from the second case than we might think. For when an author is content with an external marker that leaves the *form of expression* intact ("he stuttered . . ."), its efficacy will be poorly understood unless there is a corresponding *form of content*—an atmospheric quality, a milieu that acts as the conductor of words—that brings together within itself the quiver, the murmur, the stutter, the tremolo, or the vibrato, and makes the indicated affect reverberate through the words. This, at least, is what happens in great writers like Melville, in whom the hum of the forests and caves, the silence of the house, and the presence of the guitar are evidence of Isabelle's murmurings, and her soft, "foreign intonations"; or Kafka, who confirms Gregor's squeaking through the trembling of his feet and the oscillations of his body; or even Masoch, who doubles the stammering of his characters with the heavy suspense of the boudoir, the hum of the village, or the vibrations of the steppe. The affects of language here become the object of an indirect effectuation, and yet they remain close to those that are made directly, when there are no characters other than the words themselves. "What was it my family wished to say? I do not know. It had been stuttering since birth, and yet it had something to say. This congenital stuttering weighs heavily on me and many of my contemporaries. We were not taught to speak but to stammer—and only by listening to the swelling noise of the century and being bleached by the foam on the crest of its wave did we acquire a language."³

Is it possible to make language stutter without confusing it with speech? Everything depends on the way we consider language. If we extract it like a homogeneous system in equilibrium, or close to equilibrium, defined by constant terms and relations, it is obvious that the disequilibriums and variations can only affect speech (nonpertinent variations of the intonation type). But if the system appears in perpetual disequilibrium or bifurcation, if each of its terms in turn passes through a zone of continuous variation, then the language itself will begin to vibrate and stutter, but without being confused with speech, which never assumes more than one variable position among others, or moves in more than one direction. If language merges with speech, it is only with a very particular kind of speech, a poetic speech that actualizes these powers of bifurcation and variation, of heterogenesis and modulation, that are proper to language. The linguist Guillaume, for example, considers each term of a language not as a constant in rela-

tion to other constants, but as a series of differential positions or points of view on a specifiable dynamism: the indefinite article *a* covers the entire zone of variation included in a movement of particularization, and the definite article *the* covers the entire zone generated by the movement of generalization.⁴ It is a stuttering, with every position of *a* or *the* constituting a zone of vibration. Language trembles from head to toe. This is the principle of a poetic comprehension of language itself: it is as if the language were stretched along an abstract and infinitely varied line. Even with respect to pure science, the question must be posed thus: Can we make progress if we do not enter into regions far from equilibrium? Physics attests to this. Keynes made advances in political economy because he related it to the situation of a "boom," and no longer one of equilibrium. This is the only way to introduce desire into the corresponding field. Must language then be put into a state of boom, close to a crash? Dante is admired for having "listened to stammerers" and studied "speech impediments," not only to derive speech effects from them, but in order to undertake a vast phonetic, lexical, and even syntactic creation.⁵

This is not a situation of bilingualism or multilingualism. We can easily conceive of two languages mixing with each other, with incessant transitions from one to the other; yet each of them nonetheless remains a homogenous system in equilibrium, and their mixing takes place in speech. But this is not how great authors proceed, even though Kafka is a Czech writing in German, and Beckett an Irishman (often writing in French, and so on). They do not mix two languages together, not even a minor language and a major language, though many of them are linked to minorities as a sign of their vocation. What they do, rather, is invent a minor use of the major language within which they express themselves entirely; they minorize this language, much as in music, where the minor mode refers to dynamic combinations in perpetual disequilibrium. They are great writers by virtue of this minorization: they make the language take flight, they send it racing along a witch's line, ceaselessly placing it in a state of disequilibrium, making it bifurcate and vary in each of its terms, following an incessant modulation. This exceeds the possibilities of speech and attains the power of the language, or even of language in its entirety. This means that a great writer is always like a foreigner in the language in which he expresses himself, even if this is his native tongue. At the limit, he draws his strength from a mute and unknown minority that belongs only to

him. He is a foreigner in his own language: he does not mix another language with his own language, he carves out a nonpreexistent foreign language *within* his own language. He makes the language itself scream, stutter, stammer, or murmur. What better compliment could one receive than that of the critic who said of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*: this is not English. Lawrence made English stumble in order to extract from it the music and visions of Arabia. And what language did Kleist awaken deep within German by means of grimaces, slips of the tongue, screechings, inarticulate sounds, extended liaisons, and brutal accelerations and decelerations, at the risk of horrifying Goethe, the greatest representative of the major language, and in order to attain these truly strange ends: petrified visions and a vertiginous music.⁶

Language is subject to a double process, that of choices to be made and that of sequences to be established: disjunction or the selection of similars, connection or the consecution of combinables. As long as language is considered as a system in equilibrium, the disjunctions are necessarily exclusive (we do not say "passion," "ration," "nation" at the same time, but must choose between them), and the connections, progressive (we do not combine a word with its own elements, in a kind of stop-start or forward-backward jerk). But far from equilibrium, *the disjunctions become included or inclusive, and the connections, reflexive*, following a rolling gait that concerns the process of language and no longer the flow of speech. Every word is divided, but into itself (*pas-rats, passions-rations*); and every word is combined, but with itself (*pas-passe-passion*). It is as if the entire language started to roll from right to left, and to pitch backward and forward: *the two stutterings*. If Gherasim Luca's speech is eminently poetic, it is because he makes stuttering an affect of language and not an affectation of speech. The entire language spins and varies in order to disengage a final block of sound, a single breath at the limit of the cry, JE T'AIME PASSIONNÉMENT ("I love you passionately").

Passionné nez passionnem je
je t'ai je t'aime je
je je jet je t'ai jetez
je t'aime passionnem t'aime.⁷

Luca the Romanian, Beckett the Irishman. Beckett took this art of inclusive disjunctions to its highest point, an art that no longer selects but affirms the disjointed terms through their distance, without limit-

ing one by the other or excluding one from the other, laying out and passing through the entire set of possibilities. Hence, in *Watt*, the ways in which Knott puts on his shoes, moves about his room, or changes his furniture. It is true that, in Beckett, these affirmative disjunctions usually concern the bearing or gait of the characters: an ineffable manner of walking, while rolling and pitching. But this is how the transfer from the form of expression to a form of content is brought about. But we could equally well bring about the reverse transition by supposing that the characters speak like they walk or stumble, for speaking is no less a movement than walking: the former goes beyond speech toward language, just as the latter goes beyond the organism toward a body without organs. A confirmation of this can be found in one of Beckett's poems that deals specifically with the connections of language and makes stuttering the poetic or linguistic power par excellence.⁸ Beckett's procedure, which is different from Luca's, is as follows: he places himself in the middle of the sentence and makes the sentence grow out from the middle, adding particle upon particle (*que de ce, ce ceci-ci, loin là là-bas à peine quoi . . .*) so as to pilot the block of a single expiring breath (*voulais croire entrevoir quoi . . .*). Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium: *Ill Seen, Ill Said* (content and expression). Being well spoken has never been either the distinctive feature or the concern of great writers.

There are many ways to grow from the middle, or to stutter. Péguy does not work with asignifying particles, but rather with highly significant terms: substantives, each of which defines a zone of variation until it reaches the neighborhood of another substantive, which determines another zone (*Mater purissima, catissima, inviolata, Virgo potens, clemens, fidelis*). Péguy's repetitions give words a vertical thickness and make them perpetually recommence the "unrecommenceable." In Péguy, stuttering embraces the language so well that it leaves the words intact, complete, and normal, but it uses them as if they were themselves the disjointed and decomposed members of a superhuman stuttering. Péguy is like a thwarted stutterer. In Roussel, there is yet another procedure, for the stuttering no longer affects particles or complete terms, but propositions, perpetually inserted into the middle of the sentence, each within the preceding sentence, following a proliferating system of parentheses—to the point where there are five paren-

theses inside each other, so that "with each additional increase this internal development could not fail to overwhelm the language it enriched. The invention of each verse was the destruction of the whole and stipulated its reconstitution."⁹

This is therefore a ramified variation of language. Each variable state is like a point on a ridge line, which then bifurcates and is continued along other lines. It is a syntactic line, syntax being constituted by the curves, rings, bends, and deviations of this dynamic line as it passes through the points, from the double viewpoint of disjunctions and connections. It is no longer the formal or superficial syntax that governs the equilibriums of language, but a syntax in the process of becoming, a creation of syntax that gives birth to a foreign language within language, a grammar of disequilibrium. But in this sense it is inseparable from an end, it tends toward a limit that is itself no longer either syntactic or grammatical, even when it still seems to be so formally: hence Luca's formula, "je t'aime passionnement," which explodes like a scream at the end of long stuttering series (or the "I prefer not to" in *Bartleby*, which has even absorbed all the prior variations; or e. e. cummings's "he danced his did," which is extracted from variations that are assumed to be merely virtual). Such expressions are taken as inarticulate words, blocks of a single breath. This final limit eventually abandons any grammatical appearance in order to appear in its raw state in Artaud's breath-words: Artaud's deviant syntax, to the extent that it sets out to strain the French language, reaches the destination of its own tension in these breaths or pure intensities that mark a limit of language. Or again, sometimes this takes place in different books. In Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night* places the native language in disequilibrium, *Death on the Installment Plan* develops the new syntax in affective variations, while *Guignol's Band* achieves the ultimate aim: exclamatory sentences and suspensions that do away with all syntax, in favor of a pure dance of words. The two aspects are nonetheless correlative: the tensor and the limit, the tension in language and the limit of language.

The two aspects are effected in an infinity of tonalities, but always together: a limit of language that subtends the entire language, and a line of variation or subtended modulation that brings language to this limit. And just as the new language is not external to the initial language, the asymptotic limit is not external to language as a whole: it is the outside of language, but is not outside it. It is a painting or a piece

of music, but a music of words, a painting with words, a silence in words, as if the words could now discharge their content: a grandiose vision or a sublime sound. What is specific to the drawings and paintings of great writers (Hugo, Michaux . . .) is not that these works are literary, for they are not literary at all; they attain pure visions, but visions that are still related to language in that they constitute an ultimate aim, an outside, an inverse, an underside, an inkstain or unreadable handwriting. Words paint and sing, but only at the limit of the path they trace through their divisions and combinations. Words create silence. The sister's violin takes up Gregor's squeaking, and the guitar reflects Isabelle's murmur; the melody of a singing bird about to die drowns out the stuttering of Billy Budd, the sweet "barbarian." When a language is so strained that it starts to stutter, or to murmur or stammer . . . then language in its entirety reaches the limit that marks its outside and makes it confront silence. When a language is strained in this way, language in its entirety is submitted to a pressure that makes it fall silent. Style—the foreign language within language—is made up of these two operations; or should we instead speak with Proust of a nonstyle, that is, of "the elements of a style to come which do not yet exist"? Style is the economy of language.¹⁰ To make one's language stutter, face to face, or face to back, and at the same time to push language as a whole to its limit, to its outside, to its silence—this would be like the *boom* and the *crash*.

Everyone can talk about his memories, invent stories, state opinions in his language; sometimes he even acquires a beautiful style, which gives him adequate means and makes him an appreciated writer. But when it is a matter of digging under the stories, cracking open the opinions, and reaching regions without memories, when the self must be destroyed, it is certainly not enough to be a "great" writer, and the means must remain forever inadequate. Style becomes nonstyle, and one's language lets an unknown foreign language escape from it, so that one can reach the limits of language itself and become something other than a writer, conquering fragmented visions that pass through the words of a poet, the colors of a painter, or the sounds of a musician. "The only thing the reader will see marching past him are *inadequate means*: fragments, allusions, strivings, investigations. Do not try to find a well-polished sentence or a perfectly coherent image in it, what is printed on the pages is an embarrassed word, a stuttering . . ." ¹¹ Biely's stuttering work, *Kotik Letaiev*, is flung into a becoming-child that is

not a "self" but the cosmos, the explosion of the world: a childhood that is not my own, that is not a memory but a block, an anonymous and infinite fragment, a becoming that is always contemporary.¹² Biely, Mandelstam, Khlebnikov: a Russian trinity thrice the stutterer and thrice crucified.

14

The Shame and the Glory: T. E. Lawrence

The desert and its perception, or the perception of the Arabs in the desert, seem to pass through Goethean moments. In the beginning, there is light, but it is not yet perceived. It is instead a pure transparency, invisible, colorless, unformed, untouchable. It is the Idea, the God of the Arabs. But the Idea, or the abstract, has no transcendence. The Idea is extended throughout space, it is like the Open: "beyond there lay nothing but clear air."¹ Light is the opening that creates space. Ideas are forces that are exerted on space following certain directions of movement: entities or hypostases, not transcendences. The revolt, the rebellion, is light because it is space (it is a question of extending it in space, of opening up as much space as possible) and it is an Idea (what is essential is predication). The men of the rebellion are the prophet and the knight-errant, Feisal and Auda, he who preaches the Idea and he who crosses space.² The "Movement": this is what the revolt is called.

What comes to occupy this space is haze, solar haze. The rebellion itself is a gas, a vapor. Haze is the first state of nascent perception; it creates mirages in which things rise and fall, as if under the action of a piston, and men levitate, as if hung from a rope. To see through a haze is to have blurred vision—the rough outlines of a hallucinatory perception, a cosmic gray.³ Does the gray then divide in two, producing black when the shadow spreads or the light disappears, but also white when the luminosity itself becomes opaque? Goethe defined white as the