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Silent Discourse: The Language of Signs and “Becoming-Woman”

Inna Semetsky

novit qui colit

Since time immemorial, humankind has searched for a universal language in the quest for the perfect means of communication that would transcend prevailing cultural, religious, and language barriers. The hero of a poetic tale (Coelho 1993), in his quest for the language once understood by everybody yet now forgotten, arrived at the understanding that it's all *written there*. Medieval symbolism considered the World as a book of God written in a *codex vivus*, to be deciphered. Leibniz conceived of a *lingua characteristic* as a universal pictographic or ideographic alphabet of human thought, complemented by *calculus ratiocinator* and reflecting *ratio* embedded in Nature. The corollary is that, ultimately, the correspondence between primitive signs and the complex ideas for which they stand is natural, and not simply arbitrary or conventional. Yet the contemporary transference of Leibniz's dream into AI research or analytic philosophy of language has not brought us closer to realizing his project, even when the urgency of understanding the other is paramount for our survival in a global climate permeated by diverse beliefs, disparate values and cultural conflicts.

Leibniz's project refers to the injunction of knowledge representation. Analytic philosophy presents language as a system of representations *a priori* distinguished from signs. The representational system presupposes a class of things represented that are not representations themselves, hence outside language and outside thought. A linguistic sign represents transparently or literally. On account of this, poetic language, which “represents” symbolically or indirectly via mediation, cannot be “objective” in describing “reality.” For Deleuze, however, as for Foucault, language and the world form a single, extra-linguistic or semiotic fabric. Things function like signs—that is, the relationship is analogical and not strictly logical or identical. For Deleuze, the outside as the dynamic field of forces in action approaching and traversing its own boundaries is “animated by...movements, folds and foldings that...make up an inside: they are...precisely the inside *of* the outside” (1988a: 97). Deleuze presents the logic of multiplicities functioning in accord with “a theory and practice of relations, of the *and*” (1987: 15) as grounded in difference (actually un-

grounded, strictly speaking) that replaces the binary logic of the excluded middle with ternary logic of the included middle, analogous to Charles S. Peirce's triadic, a-signifying semiotics.

According to the logic of multiplicities, a diagram serves as a mediatory in-between symbol, "a third" (ibid., 131) which, by virtue of being the conjunction "and" contrasted with the logical copula "is," disturbs the signifier-signified binarity. The diagram "acts as a relay" (Deleuze 2003: 111) and forms the essence of the cartographic approach, which is Deleuze-Guattari's semiotics par excellence. A diagram, or a map, engenders the territory to which it is supposed to refer: it is on the basis of diagrammatic thinking that new concepts and meanings are created. Meanings are not given, but depend on signs entering "into the surface organization which ensures the resonance of two series" (Deleuze 1990: 104), ultimately converging on a paradoxical entity that circulates in both series, becoming "both word and object at once" (ibid., 51). Meaning is identified with the evolution of signs in a diagrammatic process called by Peirce "semiosis," so that "Essence is...the third term [that] complicates the sign and the meaning; It measures in each case their relation...the degree of their unity" (Deleuze 2000: 90).

For Deleuze, philosophers, writers and artists are semioticians and symptomatologists: they read, interpret and create signs, which are "the symptoms of life" (1995: 143). As pertaining to diverse regimes of signs, communication is not limited to a verbal mode. Citing Proust "who said that 'masterpieces are written in a kind of foreign language'" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 98), they emphasize the potential of such "foreign" language to be truly creative. A new language of expression may take a hybrid form of *legible images*. This essay's focus is on the legible images embodied in the Tarot semiotic system, which proposes esoteric language (cf. Deleuze 1990) as a long-sought-after, albeit utopian, *characteristica universalis*. As a metaphysical, yet practical, system (Favre 1994, 1995; Semetsky 2000a, 2009a, forthcoming) Tarot Arcana express "the truths of gnosis ... transformed into poetic and mythic language" (Martin 2006: 37), rooted in Hermetic and Neoplatonic philosophies and Christian mysticism. Indeed, Leibniz's *characteristica* were conceived as forming *arcana*, diagrams, and pictures. An unorthodox *ratio* based on the logic of the included middle enables the proper functioning of this universal language that I have called "the language of signs" (Semetsky 2006a). This logic is grounded in Deleuze's larger ontology of the virtual, according to which the virtual is not opposed to the real, but itself possesses a full reality; what it apparently opposes is merely the actual (May and Semetsky 2008; Semetsky 2002, 2009b). Deleuze himself was sceptical about ever finding a unique formula applicable to esoteric languages, yet he affirmed a new

type of such a language that would have been formed on the surface with its own model and reality (1990: 159).¹

Deleuze's empiricism is radically transcendental because the very foundations for the empirical principles are left outside the common faculties of perception. The world is folded, and "we go from fold to fold" (1993: 17) within the unfolding experience. As founded on the repeated different/ciations, transcendental empiricism affirms "the double in the doubling process" (Deleuze 1988a: 98). "Doubling" is taken in a sense of unfolding, which presupposes a necessary existence of the extra (outside) dimension, without which the concept of fold is meaningless. This outside dimension becomes internalized, enfolded in the mind: hence doubling as "the internalization of the outside [becomes] redoubling of the other [and] it is a self that lives in me as the double of the other: I do not encounter myself on the outside, I find the other in me" (ibid.). This "other in me" is implicated or enfolded because of the twisted and folded relationship between a rational thought and a non-thought or the "*unconscious of thought* [that is] just as profound as *the unknown of the body*" (Deleuze 1988b: 19; italics in original). The quality of *profundity* is significant and relates Deleuze's philosophy to Carl Jung's depth, or archetypal, psychology (cf. Kerslake 2007; Semetsky 2002, 2009a). Deleuze would have agreed with Lacan that the unconscious, too, is structured like a language, but language is reconceptualized as an assemblage of signs that can properly be said to have structure, "be it an esoteric or even a nonverbal language" (Deleuze in Stivale 1998: 259), such as in dreams, images, and memories. Anything can possess a structure insofar as this "thing" maintains even a *silent discourse*. While acknowledging Lacan's critique of Jung because of the general hostility of structuralism towards "the methods of the imaginary" (Deleuze in Stivale 1998: 269). Deleuze, like Jung, nonetheless presents Ideas as "unconscious, [and] necessarily overlaid by their products or effects" (ibid., 270). A sign, as always already becoming-other, is Janus-faced: it constructs a semiotic bridge between events, as though engaging in Leibniz's "dance of particles folding back on themselves" (Deleuze 1995: 157).

Deleuze's object of experience is considered as given only in its tendency to exist (or rather to subsist) in its virtual, potential form. Virtual tendencies have the potential of becoming actual through the double process of different/ciations of the transcendental and the "initially undifferentiated field" (Deleuze 1993: 10). The realm of the virtual is reminiscent of, but not limited to, the Jungian archetype of the Shadow that hides in the collective unconscious or, at the plane of expression, for Deleuze, in the shadow around the words--within *silent discourse*. Still, the virtual can be actualized, or brought into consciousness within the process of

individuation. The unconscious perceptions are implicated as minute or micro-perceptions (Deleuze 1993); as such, they belong to the cartographic microanalysis of establishing “an unconscious psychic mechanism that engenders the perceived in consciousness” (ibid., 95). The unconscious that “speaks” in signs overflows the narrow boundaries of the personal Repressed. Jung commented that Freud “was blind toward the paradox and ambiguity of the contents of the unconscious, and did not know that everything which arises out of the unconscious has ... an inside and an outside” (Jung 1963: 153); the latter is akin to the Deleuzean “Outside, more distant than any exterior, [that] is ... ‘folded,’ and ‘doubled’ by an Inside that is deeper than any interior, and ... creates the possibility of the derived relation between the interior and exterior” (Deleuze 1988a: 110).

Everything has “its cartography, its diagram.... What we call a ‘map,’ or sometimes a ‘diagram’ is a set of various interacting lines (thus the lines in a hand are a map)” (Deleuze 1995: 33). If the lines in a hand form a map, so do Tarot pictograms spread in the rhizomatic structure implicated in a specific layout, such as shown in Fig. 1:

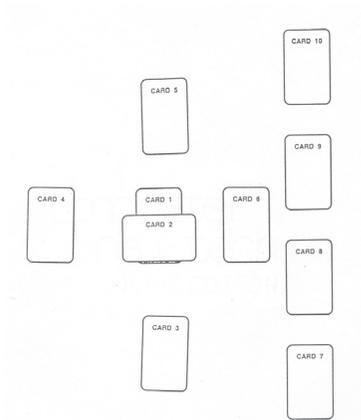


Fig. 1. The Celtic Cross spread²

Deleuze purports to show the as-yet imperceptible by laying down a (visible) map of the (invisible yet intelligible) territory, or in other words, creating a mediatory link belonging to the family of “non-localizable connections” (Deleuze 1994: 83) between what are customarily considered the dualistic opposites of sensible and intelligible, matter and mind. Referring to psychophysical parallelism, Deleuze asserts that there must be

a threshold that brings thought to the body. At the ontological level, the same parallel relation exists between the virtual and the actual (both real), the connection between which would require passing through a threshold, creating a transversal link. Expanding on Deleuzian conceptualizations, it is also possible to actually see the aforementioned internalization of the Outside, which came about by redoubling, not in our mind as an abstract concept, but with our eyes as a concrete picture. In order to be seen, it would have been *re-redoubled*, different/ciated again and again--in a way, transcended, albeit in a "primitive" mode of spreading the cards in this or that layout, mapping out the diagrammatic multiplicities and thereby overcoming the immanence-transcendence divide. What we see in Fig. 1 is the literal construction of the Deleuzian plane of immanence that "does not immediately take effects with concepts...and its layout resorts to measures that are not very respectable... or reasonable" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 41). It is pre-rational and a-conceptual, ultimately enabling "the conquest of the unconscious" (Deleuze 1988b: 29) when its structure becomes visible in the double process of the constructive-expressive synthesis. The layout of the plane of immanence "belongs to the order of dreams, of pathological processes, esoteric experiences, drunkenness, and excess. We head for the horizon, on the plane of immanence, and we return with bloodshot eyes, yet they are the eyes of the mind" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 41).

Tarot thus functions as a diagram, the included Third between self and other, between subject and object, thought and world, matter and mind, and ultimately, between the human and the divine (Semetsky 2000, 2009a, b, c). It intervenes as the conjunction "and" in the dynamic of becoming. It performs the role of *interpretant* in a Peircean genuine triad within the auto-referential relation between "the semiotic machine, the referred object and the enunciative subject" (Guattari, original French, in Bosteels 1998: 167). The enunciative subject is, strictly speaking, non-verbal, pre-individuated. Archetype is seen by Jung as a skeletal pattern filled in with imagery and motifs that are "mediated to us by the unconscious" (CW 8, 417), the virtual contents of which form different archetypal images, and "it is not the personal human being who is making the statement, but the archetype speaking through him" (Jung 1963: 352) in the subtle mode of "something passing through you" (Deleuze 1995: 141). What Jung called the *transcendent function* would be impossible without the "symbol present[ing] a way of moving from 'either-or' to 'and' by going beyond the limitations of logical discourse or commonsense... The experience of 'and-ness' is central to psychological change" (Samuels 1986: 47).

The transversal communication created by Tarot (Semetsky 2003, 2008, 2009c) enables one to potentially cross the threshold of one's old

habitual universe of thinking and acting by forming a self-reflexive “echo chamber, a feedback loop” (Deleuze 1995: 139) embedded in the semiotics of experience. It provides an epistemic access to the transcendental field in either “a mind of man or in the mind of god...when it is accorded a maximum of immanence by plunging it into the depth of Nature, or of the Unconscious” (Deleuze 1987: 91). Now and then a divine “spark can flash... to make us see and think what was lying in the shadow around the words, things we were hardly aware existed” (Deleuze 1995: 141). Those shadowy signs were as yet imperceptible in the virtual assemblages of the unconscious, yet at the affective level we could sense the silent discourse of the whispering and stuttering voices expressing secret idioms “defined by a list of passive and active affects in the context of the individuated assemblage... .These are not phantasies or subjective reveries” (Deleuze and Guattari. 1987: 257-258). These are the expressive instances of the Jungian field of collective unconscious. James Hillman contends: “in Jung’s language, psychotherapy achieves its ultimate goal in the wholeness of the conjunction” (Hillman 1972: 293), the conjunction “and” is akin to the alchemical marriage of the opposites, the *Hierogamos*.

What is traditionally called a mystical experience is, for Deleuze, an existential event: it is an experiential and experimental art of perceiving the otherwise imperceptible. Deleuze (1989) equates mystical experience with an event of sudden actualization of potentialities--that is, awakening of perceptions, such as seeing and hearing, by raising them to a new power of enhanced perception; a becoming-percept that is future-oriented. Such “a vision and a voice... would have remained virtual” (Goddard 2001: 54) unless some specific experiential conditions necessary for the actualization of the virtual had been established. These affective conditions construe *Kairos* seized in the event of Tarot reading. It is only through love and compassion for the often suffering human spirit and the desire for gnosis that an expert Tarot reader³ can intuit, understand, and narrate the deepest symbolic meanings (*corpus subtile*) constituting of “the fragments of ideal future [and] past events, which [would] render the problem solvable” (Deleuze 1994: 190; also Kerslake 2007: 109) for the subject of the reading. The presence of love or desire is a necessary condition for tapping “into the virtual and immanent processes of machinic becoming” (Ansell Pearson 1997: 4). Whatever the name (Love; Desire; Affect; Eros), this is what accomplishes the Neoplatonic twofold (auto-referential) movement of ascending and descending. As a culmination of desire sparked between two deities, Poros and Penia, Eros as a symbol of the Hermetic *coincidentia oppositorum* deconstructs Neoplatonic Oneness by bringing it (One) down to earth into the multiplicity and diversity of real, flesh-and-blood human experiences, and vice-versa (cf. Faivre 1995). Hence follows what

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) present as a magical "One = Many" formula, which posits unity in plurality. The symbolic Eros "does not take as its object persons or things, but the entire surroundings which it traverses" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 292) as a mediator between the opposites and a necessary condition for the *Hierosgamos*.

The Tarot layout is a sign standing for the greater, semiotic or virtual, reality. As the included middle between the world without and the world within, the inside and the outside, it is being unfolded, picture by picture (Fig. 2), in front of our very eyes like "the pieces of Japanese paper flower in the water" (Deleuze 2000: 90) and represents both opposites in the relation that is "holding them in complication" so that "Essence [as] the third term that dominates the other two" (ibid.) finally emerges. By virtue of being transversal to both self and other, both inside and outside, it symbolically represents "Being as Fold" (Deleuze 1988a: 110) and "is installing [itself] transversally to the machinic levels ...material, cognitive, affective and social. ...It is this abstract [virtual] machine that will or will not give these levels ...existence" (Guattari 1995: 35). The embodiment of the *transcendental* field allows it to merge with its own "object" which, despite always being *immanent* in perception, would remain disembodied or virtual and, as such, beyond actual recognition in the absence of the reading and interpretation. The self-reference between *virtual-actual* (ontologically) or *conscious-unconscious* (epistemically) indicates the Univocity of Being. With vocabulary bordering on the alchemical, Deleuze and Guattari describe the functioning of transversal communication as "a transformation of substances and a dissolution of forms, a passage to the limit or flight from contours in favor of fluid forces, flows, air, light, and matter, such that a body or a word does not end at a precise point. We witness the incorporeal power of that intense matter, the material power of that language" (1987: 109). The Tarot cartographic map serves as a pragmatic tool to "read, find, [and] retrieve the structures" (Deleuze in Stivale 1998: 270; Deleuze's italics) of the Jungian collective, archetypal, unconscious: cartography as a mode of diagrammatic thinking creates a visual notation for the always already *ens realissimum* Ideas laid down on the plane of immanence.

It is because of the desire for gnosis as the "compulsion to think which passes through all sorts of bifurcations, spreading from the nerves and...communicated to the soul in order to arrive at thought" (Deleuze. 1994: 147) that Deleuze's method (Semetsky 2004b), compatible with Bergson's intuition, enables the reading of signs, symbols, and symptoms that lay down the dynamical structure of experience. Intuition, or *noesis* as an operation of the *Nous*, represents the very depth of human knowledge partaking, as such, of divine science. It is "the genesis of intuition

in intelligence” (Deleuze. 1991: 111) that triggers Tarot readings. As “the presentation of the unconscious, [and] not the representation of consciousness” (Deleuze 1994: 192), it is intuition that accesses the transcendental field by means of constructing the plane of immanence and aiming “to bring into being that which does not yet exist” (Deleuze 1994: 147) but is subsisting in its virtual potential form. The bifurcations, not to mention the ontological, existential, or psychic, are embodied in the Tarot Major Arcana (Fig. 2).⁴

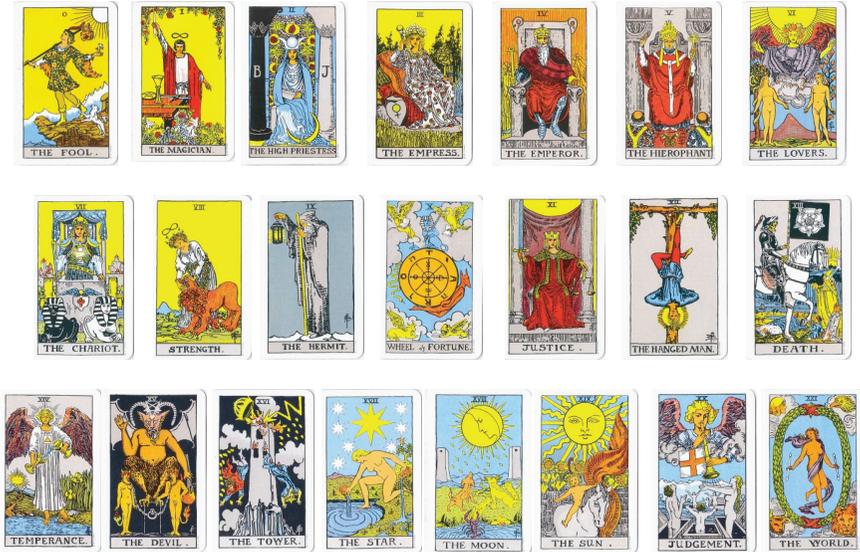


Fig. 2. Major Arcana

Says Deleuze: “I undo the folds ...that pass through every one of my thresholds...‘the twenty-two folds’ that surround me and separate me from the deep” (1993: 93). Citing Henri Michaux, he says that children are born with the 22 folds to be unfolded. Only then can human life become complete, individuated. These 22 folds, implicated in subjectivity, correspond to the number of Major Arcana (Fig. 2) encountered in the archetypal process of individuation as becoming-other. The images are laid out on the “plane of immanent consistence” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 88), thereby mapping out the psyche and “suggest[ing] ‘highs’ or periods of depression” (1983: 70) at the molecular, affective level. For Jung, affects are aroused by complexes; as a splinter psyche, complexes belong not to the rational Ego but to a pre-personal subjectivity comprising “the fractured I of a dissolved Cogito” (Deleuze 1994: 194). These fractured pieces are to

be put together by integrating the unconscious into consciousness along the line of becoming, which "has always been there, although it is the opposite of a destiny" (Deleuze 1987: 125). The third term in the relation guarantees not the reproduction of sameness, but the repetition of the difference leading to the emergence of new meanings, new understanding. Crossing over "the limit of a lengthened and unfolded experience" (Deleuze 1990: 20) under the conditions of transversal communication, the virtual creates its own terms of actualization, thereby leading to the "intensification of life" (Deleuze and Guattari. 1994: 74): we become capable of apprehending the signs in our very praxis in terms of immanent problematic instances and their practical effects. We become "filled with immanence" (Deleuze 1997: 137) therefore necessarily fulfilled by the acquired *Sens* (meaning and direction) as our very ethos.

The unfolding of a cosmic egg from "The Fool," the unnumbered or "zero" Arcanum (Semetsky 2001a), to "The World," the last Arcanum XXI, does not proceed along the stratified Freudian royal road, even if "The World" as the culmination of the Fool's spiritual journey is the archetype of the ideally individuated Self. It takes the zigzagging and difficult passages, the "rough and uncommonly devious footpaths" (Jung CW 8, 210) of nomads and outsiders. The Fool's individuation is always already "subject ... to the interference ... of the autonomy and numinosity of archetypal processes" (Jung 1963: 353) whose *silent discourse* becomes perceived when embodied in Tarot pictograms. The imperceptible is being *shown*--made visible, perceptible, sensible--rather than simply "thought" at the level of the purely intelligible. An expert reader pursues the different series, travels along the different levels and crosses the thresholds of the barely liminal, thus performing "the supreme act of philosophy: not so much to think THE plane of immanence as to show that it is there, unthought in every plane, and to think it in this way as the outside and inside of thought (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 59-60) and bringing to awareness the unthought, unconscious dimension. Indeed, the task of transversal communication as a feature of transcendental empiricism is "to bring [the] assemblage of the unconscious to the light of the day, to select the whispering voices, to gather ... secret idioms from which I extract something I call my Self (*Moi*)" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 84).

Such ultimate dynamism is expressed as an auto-referential "*affect of self on self*" (Deleuze 1988a: 101) traced through the Tarot map constructed or laid out on the flat surface, *en bloc*--a block of space-time (cf. Deleuze. 1986: 59). Immanence is constructivism, and it is the surface that serves as the locus of meanings because signs "remain deprived of sense as long as they do not enter into the surface organization which ensures the resonance of two series" (Deleuze 1990: 104). The depth of the psyche is

capable of making sense only when “having been spread out [it] became width. The becoming unlimited is maintained entirely within this inverted width” (Deleuze 1990: 9), and the meaning of an event is “all the more profound since it occurs on the surface” (1990: 10). Individuation cannot proceed without a means to both express and transform oneself, and Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to *metamorphosis* with regard to Jung’s theory of the transformation of the libido as spiritual energy irreducible to Freud’s limited definition of the libido as a sex drive. Deleuze considered transformation, or change in nature, to be a precondition for becoming-other, and because “symbols act as transformers, their function being to convert libido from a ‘lower’ into a ‘higher’ form” (Jung CW 5, 344), their apprehension contributes to the individuation of the self. Destratify, says Deleuze, open up to a new, creative and diagrammatic, function!

The unfolding of non-thought in the process of individuation brings forth an element of novelty and presents “life as a work of art” (Deleuze 1995: 94). This true, vitalistic and enduring (if invisible) life is “*a life*” as pure immanence (Deleuze 2001), *neutral*, beyond good and evil or any of the binary opposites of modern discourse. Wolfgang Pauli, Jung’s collaborator on the concept of synchronicity, envisaged the creation of a *neutral* language that would function symbolically to describe the psychic reality of the archetypes, and would be capable of crossing over the psycho-physical dualism.⁵ This neutral, universal language is embodied in the assemblages of Tarot signs. The apprenticeship in signs provides us not only with a symbolic diagnosis, but also prognosis in terms of evaluating and outlining the rhizomatic structure in Fig. 1: “which of [the lines] are dead-ended or blocked, which cross voids ... and most importantly the line of steepest gradient, how it draws in the rest, towards what destination” (Deleuze 1987: 120).⁶ The Tarot images embody the “levels of sensation... like arrests or snapshots of motion, which would recompose the movement synthetically in all its continuity” (Deleuze 2003: 35). So a static layout does not contradict a dynamic evolutionary process of Peircean semiosis as the action of signs (Semetsky 2001b); just the opposite, it “brings nature and culture together in its net” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 236) by virtue of being the universal language that symbolically displays the true nature of things in the world as their meanings, their essences (Deleuze 2000). The relational nature-culture network is the very condition of knowing-by-analogy, or likeness, preeminent in spiritual teachings with regard to essential kinship and Oneness with the world: mystics, as well as creative artists or true philosophers, play an intensive, participatory role in the world, unlike detached self-conscious observers.

The formula of analogy is proclaimed in the famous Hermetic text *Tabula Smaragdina* (Emerald Tablet): *That which is above is like to that which*

*is below and that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of (the) one thing; which is the very meaning of the Arcanum I, "The Magician" (Fig. 2). The preceding Arcanum, "The Fool," portrayed as subsisting in a fleeting moment at the edge of an abyss and marked by "Zero" as nothingness--a void, pure potentiality of the virtual--is paradoxically a symbol for the plethora of creative becomings: "everything culminates in a 'has been'" (Deleuze 1990: 159). Yet, it is "The Magician" (Semetsky 2003, 2008, 2009c) associated with the Greek Hermes, a messenger between gods (above) and humans (below), as well as with the Egyptian Thoth who "has given" his name to the Tarot deck known as *The Book of Thoth*, that creates a transversal communication between the noumenal and phenomenal realms despite (or, rather, due to) the original difference between the two. Indeed, Deleuze was adamant that difference is the noumenon closest to the phenomenon. The four magical tools are represented by cup, wand, pentacle, and sword, corresponding to the four suits of Minor Arcana and the four Jungian functions comprising the Magician's intelligence: thinking, feeling, sensation, intuition. Alternatively, these are four elements available to the Magician in his alchemical laboratory: fire, earth, water and air; all the elements of Nature brought together to serve the aim of freeing the human spirit from the constraints and limitations of the material world--that is, to effectuate *coincidentia oppositorum* by connecting the worlds of mind and matter.*

The law of analogies as applied to space--*as above, so below*--has its Hermetic correlate also in temporal terms: *that which was is as that which will be, and that which will be is as that which was*. In a Tarot layout, the philosophical time of coexistence splits into its three dimensions that are spatially distributed within the layout (Fig. 1; see also note 5). The Tarot diachronic, *ex-Memoria* dimension becomes compacted into a single synchronic slice of a layout as a projection of the diagrammatic sign-process because of the relational dynamics functioning in accord with the rules of projective geometry (Semetsky 2006b, 2009c)⁷. In this respect, "space-time ceases to be a pure given in order to become... the nexus of differential relations in the subject, and the object itself ceases to be an empirical given in order to become the product of these relations" (Deleuze 1993: 89). Subtle affects and sensations inhabiting the unconscious have an "irreducibly synthetic character" (Deleuze 2003: 33). The synthetic method reflects the future-oriented productivity of desire capable of transcending "spatial locations and temporal successions" (Deleuze 1994: 83), and the archetypes determine "the nature of the configurational process and the course it will follow, with seeming foreknowledge" (Jung CW 8, 411). As inscribed in the time-crystal of Tarot, it is becoming that creates a semiotic "bridge, a transversality" (Guattari 1995: 23) between the past and the

future by means of inserting itself “not so much in their opposition as in their complementarity” (Deleuze 1987: 131). “*Becoming is an antimemory*” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 294). Is an *antimemory* a memory of the future? (Semetsky 2003b, 2006a). The enigmatic notion of an *antimemory* relates to the specific synthesis of time constituting the memory of the future as the *future anterior* always already projected in the Tarot layout (see notes 2 and 7). We head for the future along the line of becoming which, like the witch’s flight, escapes the old frame of reference by vanishing through an event horizon, yet appearing anew as if “willed” by the Magician’s wand.

The art of Tarot readings belongs to the *right* hemisphere referred to by Deleuze (2003) as capable of interpreting the “language of relations, which consists of expressive movements, paralinguistic signs...the analogical language par excellence” (2003: 93). The language of Tarot functions on the basis of a “paradoxical code [that] takes analogy as its object” (Deleuze 2003: 95): analogy-becoming-code in our very experience. By means of interpreting Tarot signs we immerse into this affective “experimentation on ourselves [that] is our only identity, our single chance for all the combinations which inhabit us” (Deleuze 1987: 11). “The Magician” is followed by the Second Arcanum, “The High Priestess.” She is a symbol for Sophia/Wisdom or Shekinah (in Kabbalah) as a feminine principle complementary to the patriarchal figure of The Hierophant (Arcanum V). She is unfolding the scroll she holds in order to reveal to humankind the secrets of ancient Gnostic knowledge historically absent in the overly masculine, left-hemisphere rationality grounded in binary logic. Sophia is a concept equally important for Hellenistic philosophy and religion, for Platonism and Gnosticism, as well as for Orthodox Christianity and Christian mysticism. In Egyptian tradition her name is Isis (see note 1), the goddess of the rainbow as symbolic bridge between heaven and earth, also depicted as a wisdom figure. In the Hebrew Bible, Wisdom/Sophia is personified in the Proverbs (8:22–31). The Priestess knows the secret code of the biblical lost speech that described the essential nature of things in a symbolic Adamic language. Yet her discourse is silent, akin to “the veiled presentiments of the Logos” (von Balthasar 2002: 659). She dwells in this world waiting for the world to acknowledge her presence: it is her Wisdom that can unveil the Logos and thereby ultimately achieve Neoplatonic self-knowledge and the knowledge of God as One.

Filled with spiritual Eros, The High Priestess is the epitome of *becoming-woman* that is “the key to all other becomings” (Deleuze and Guattari. 1987: 277) that potentially empowers even the most phallogocentric of us with the creative, destratifying, function. Any object of experience contains potentialities as virtual or implicit meanings, even if they are not yet actualized or made explicit. “Creation through the Word” (Faivre 1995: 98) becomes our creativity through signs. By learning the Priestess’

language of signs, the "becoming-woman" acquires a greater spiritual and political significance--especially urgent today in the aftermath of destruction on the scale of 9/11--the uncanny symbol for which is the Arcanum XVI, "The Tower" (Semetsky 2000b, 2006c, in press). For Deleuze, things are always wrapped up in Nature; as for Ideas, they are often so enveloped or enfolded "in the soul that we can't always unfold or develop them" (Deleuze 1993: 49) unless experience itself becomes saturated with affective, almost numinous conditions for their unfolding. The collective unconscious is presently facing Aurora, the Morning Star of Arcanum XVII that immediately follows "The Tower" (Arcanum XVI) in the natural evolution of signs (Fig. 2).⁸ As the first feminine figure in the deck stripped from her clothes as from outlived habits, "The Star" is a symbol for Hope, for the dawn of the New Age that implies a critical reversal of values (cf. Deleuze 1983).

Yet, unless nature *and* culture together enter into the surface organization that alone can provide the resonance of both series, we are likely to remain deaf to the warning signs of our experiences. It is easy to miss them: their discourse is silent. Mark Patrick Hederman, Irish philosopher and monk, in his 2003 book *Tarot: Talisman or Taboo? Reading the World as Symbol*, reminds us of "our own myopic architecture, of obliterating the splendour of what might have been: the future perfect" (2003: 22). As Deleuze prophetically asks, "What is it which tells us that, on a line of flight, we will not rediscover everything we were fleeing? ...How can one avoid the lines of flight becoming identical with a pure and simple movement of self-destruction?" (1987: 38). It is our ethical responsibility to go beyond taboo, to liberate joys and ward off powerlessness, to accomplish Leibniz's unfinished project of *mathesis*, and to be finally rewarded with "establishing the bond of a profound complicity between nature [God] and mind." (Deleuze 1994: 165) by means of becoming-woman and understanding the bastard language of signs. It is "becoming-woman that produces the universal girl" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 276), the Virgin, symbolized by "The High Priestess," who nonetheless can give a symbolic birth (actualize the virtual) to new meanings, new understanding. Annihilate or destratify!

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Notes

1. I am grateful to Mark Bonta who told me about this special issue of *SubStance* and also pointed out Deleuze's reference to Court de Gebelin in *The Logic of Sense*. It was Gebelin who related the Second Major Arcanum of Tarot, "The High Priestess," to Isis. Please see notes 4 and 6. Thanks are also due to Antoine Faivre for his kind comments on my

- paper "Tarot symbolism: Language, psychology, ontology" presented at the Inaugural Conference of the European Society for the Study of Western Esoterism, University of Tübingen, Germany, July 2007.
2. The connotations carried by each position in the spread are discussed elsewhere (e.g. Semetsky 2005). Suffice it to say that they constitute a context within which each image/ constellation of images is to be read and interpreted. The positions signifying possible future events belong to a specific synthesis of time addressed further below. See note 5.
 3. I speak for myself only and by no means make a reference to other readers. In addition to my academic credentials I have been a Tarot reader for the last two decades. Please see www.innasense.org
 4. All illustrations are from the Rider-Waite Tarot Deck, also known as the Rider Tarot and the Waite Tarot. Reproduced by permission of US Games Systems Inc., Stamford, CT 06902, USA. Copyright 1971 by US Games Systems, Inc. Further reproduction prohibited.
 5. See *Atom and Archetype: The Pauli/Jung Letters 1932-1958*. Edited by C.A. Meier, with a preface by Beverley Zabriskie (2001, Princeton University Press). This particular letter is designated in the book as 56P, pp. 81-83. See also Pauli's 1948 essay called "Modern Examples of Background Physics" (pp. 179-196) published in this book for the first time. Pauli commented on the doubling of the psyche akin to a human birth as a division of the initial unity. Time-wise, the doubling of the time-series is of course represented by *Aion* and *Chronos*, with *Kairos* in-between. At the time Pauli remained agnostic on "whether the 'series' is thought of in temporal terms or as a simultaneous juxtaposition" (p. 187). He referred to the idea of the transmutation of souls when the timeless reality of the archetypes is being repeatedly interrupted by a temporal sequence of physical/biological lives and real human experience. Even if contemporary advancements in physics are out of the scope of this essay (but please see Semetsky 2009c), it answers in the affirmative Pauli's earlier concerns.
 6. Cf. Kerslake (2007) who wants to suspend the "clinical" yet contends that it is not always possible to separate it from the "critical" (p. 4). *It should not be, indeed*. The "becoming-woman" is always already implicated as a healer, a wise physician of civilization. We just have to understand The High Priestess's silent discourse (see note 1).
 7. Two notes. Saint Augustine describes the fields and spacious places of memory (*campos et lata praetoria memoria*) with its treasures (*thesauri*) of innumerable images. Martin Joughin refers to *ligne d'horizon* on which all parallel lines in a perspectival composition would, if indefinitely extended, intersect, and adds: "The 'projective geometry' associated with such compositions is...echoed in Deleuze's...invocations of *lignes de fuite* and *points de fuite*, usually translated "lines of flight" and "points of flight": the flight or escape from some constricting frame of action or experience is also, within this frame, a sort of 'im-material' vanishing through or beyond its limits, its event horizon" (1995: 200). See also Semetsky 2006b and 2009c.
 8. Significantly, "The Tower" is preceded by "The Devil," Arcanum XV, a symbol of the dark archetypal Shadow. If left unintegrated in the form of a dualistic split between self and other, the unconscious Shadow may overwhelm the psyche to the point of breakdown as indeed indicated by "The Tower," be it psychological, social, or a breakdown in the value-system. Yet a sign of breakdown is simultaneously a sign of breakthrough toward "The Star."