

Artaud writes that there is a possibility in theater for the creation of a new freedom, under the light of a “strange sun, [with] an unusually bright light by which the difficult, even the impossible, suddenly appears to be our natural medium.” His unusual description points to the possibility for a radical transformation of psychic and social capability; it also points to the very real likelihood (though not certainty) that all such efforts will fail for the time being.

Of course, culturally speaking, failure is relative; a work of art is only really as profound as its failures. (Not to mention that our own failures contrast our victories, a struggle without which poetry and religion would lose all their power over us.) However, Artaud’s curious image makes it possible to see a path beyond victory and failure, beyond destiny and chance. *It is always possible to act in such a way that the situation itself is transformed.* It all requires the most perfect timing, the most effective and delicate deployment of intensities. Becomings must be undertaken carefully; they are apt to lose control, overflow, and fly off the handles.

Nothing is certain — but also nothing is impossible. Yet failures are not always equivocal or even interesting. There are real dangers. Know that even the most extreme caution will not suffice to save you. The way is most likely still blocked, but change is always possible (though never certain.) All becomings flow into all others. A new space unfolds by itself. Thus *it is possible* to move beyond structure, beyond representation. We can create new structures, we can rearrange social or theoretical space. But even though it is not certain that we can create them, smooth or structured spaces are still not enough; we also need the power to move between spaces. Philosophy attains rigor through *translocation*; it advises us to not be haphazard in our striations and resmoothings. Religion is, in this sense, essentially haphazard (knowing in advance which spaces are smooth and which are complex.) In reality *we do not know* if the next space will be simpler or not.

Philosophy moves beyond chance and necessity, between spaces. It operates from in-between society in order to critique social practice. It moves between spaces, integrates events in the interspaces between their becoming. Philosophy labors in the infinitesimal space between becomings, and is itself a new becoming (insofar as what it’s becoming is also already becoming something else); what I mean is that philosophy is differential. Whereas religion is integral, it generates new forms of becoming, but precisely by affirming unities, ones, closed spaces, limited complexity, simple machines. Religion affirms a Beyond, while philosophy affirms Reality. In the space between, there are only questions. But doubts can also sometimes inspire new psychic and social rhythms.

Religion comes before its time just as philosophy. The untimeliness of religious impulse is often taken to be an explicit endorsement; again, it is the disruption which is important, not the return to order. If religion is a complete fraud, and it is deceptive in its very essence, then we must further admit that it is therefore never what it appears to be. I mean that when we say religion always functions like this or that, we are denying the depth of the religious illusion, the turbulence it covers over. We are denying our secret complicity with the spiritual. Faith is never identical with a single structure or unified function; it is not simple transcendence, but a complex alliance which must be carefully taken apart. If we tear apart the machine too quickly, nothing is left, nothing remains — this is the religious illusion, the myth of stability.

Philosophy can see promises to the changing reality underneath; only philosophy is really strong enough to affirm chance. Religion is an escape from chance, and therefore superficially resembles the philosophers' discursive position and style; but philosophy strives to move beyond religion, it is accomplished by this very movement. Beyond transcendence, there is not only void; we return to the earth, and there is matter, there is movement, there is light and sound and diversity, turbulence and symmetry and chaos. Religion is the most perverse, the most dazzling object of philosophy. Why? Because it is already a subject, it operates by subjectivating, 'blessing' and 'saving' via magical transformations, through poetic becomings.

The philosopher's questioning of the doxa of miracles, of becomings-anything, the questioning of mysteries, secrets and silence belongs to the essence of critical inquiry; it is often resisted by faith, which is certain that the world is grounded in impossibilities. Philosophy makes the double claim: no certainty, no impossibility. It is really a single affirmation. The religious nature is hungry for magical answers, and faith is an answer to an immaterial hunger; whereas philosophy is questioning by nature, hungry for powerful questions, for radical questions — even for new ways to ask questions. In short, philosophy desires; desire, not power, is the classical image of the philosopher's habitual mode. Passionate questions are his duty, his categorical imperative. Morality and immoralist critique differ in style and in their relation to the historical order. But they are isomorphic in terms of gestural content — both offer prescriptions, criticisms, explanations — both are designed to provoke psychic or social transformation. The difference is form and style: religion 'moves' through tradition, spirit is 'channeled' through authority, energy flows through power. First and foremost, *philosophy questions power*, questions the lies which are used to support power; even questioning the conditions which continually recreate hierarchical power structures.

Philosophy poses the question of new becomings. Philosophy is a challenge, a dare: to move beyond *mere* faith, to finally become something, to make a change that coordinates new principles of difference. Religion also bears upon that which remains forever new, a protean and formless principle of (in)stability. Thus what the soul is for religion is, to philosophy, the *act*. All philosophies are philosophies of action or philosophies of memory. A philosophy of duration, or speed, unites both by moving beyond morality, beyond specifically human becomings towards non-human modes or media of expressivity. Religion also makes a double claim: humans are the measure, and humanity is sinful. Alternating joy and shame is proper religious mode: shame and joy are the same affirmation to the faithful. There is no reality, there is only God and becoming human; a soul trapped in an illusionary world where every word and action are already guilty. Whereas critique first casts off shame, lets go of guilt. Philosophy does not merely try to describe the form of the real. Philosophy transforms it, it remembers and becomes real; thought involves both human and non-human becomings. Memory and creativity are by far the capacity of humanity that is the most interesting; but even *matter* remembers, the earth itself is creative of new forms. Geology expresses not only duration but struggle, by following the striations of minerals we remember, we become the pitched battle between tectonic forces, the long-pent up forces and sudden explosions written out, expressed on the body of the earth.

Philosophy struggles to remain capable of being sensitive to non-human expressions. Religion hates its own animality, it resents it; but philosophy is open to all kinds of becomings, human and otherwise: animal and plant and molecular becomings, cosmic and digital and quantum

becomings, becoming-woman, becoming-child... Religion in the end wants only to become a child, to acquire the innocence of children, understood in its most terrifying sense: that they do not know good from bad, they are unindoctrinated. Their 'innocence' is political, and a real danger both to children and philosophy! For the real power of philosophy is shown when it makes itself capable of asking an untimely question: then we see the whole social order disturbed and called upon to 'answer' the innocent question; sometimes we see real change, power structures upset, overturned. Religion is closed spaces and human harmony. What philosophy is consists in moving beyond closed spaces, moving beyond specifically human forms of harmony, of social becomings. Philosophy is in between solid forms, it transforms spaces: philosophy is friction and the onset of turbulence, a tiny parasite which enlightens as it feeds.