

Do colourless green ideas - still - sleep furiously? A Plea for a Poetic Turn

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Could Chomsky's famous sentence, originally meant to exemplify the exclusion of meaning from the scope of formal linguistics, get a new interpretation through a poetic and contextualized reading?

With the "linguistic turn", analytical philosophy and modern linguistics became a leading paradigm of the 20th century and therefore co-responsible for the modernist *communis opinio*, including ecological and social consequences.

Yet, the mood is changing. In the last decade the notion of poetry or *the poetic* gained a new existential actuality. Bruno Latour was asking: what is the responsibility of the arts towards science and society? We in turn can ask: what can poetry and poetics teach us that the modern scientific mainstream neglected? Along this line I will discuss two main issues:

I. The Solid and the Liquid - Particle and Wave?

Reculer pour mieux sauter: We must take a critical look at our own history and practice. Modern linguistics began with a broad vision of language, i.e. the view of Wilhelm von Humboldt, where the "solid and the liquid", the speaker and the hearer's role and the arbitrary and the motivated features were in balance. With the beginning of the industrial age and particularly with structural linguistics the bias towards arbitrariness grew, the cognitive taking priority over emotional and sensorial intelligence. This raises the question: what remains of the "natural" in natural language? It can be shown that the lopsided focus on arbitrariness furthered the increase of alienation and impedes a sense of interdependence.

II. Learning from Poetry

Features of poetry require specific modes of awareness and interpretation skills that can be transferred to other fields of life. Poetry makes inventive use of analogue qualities and multiple layers of meaning, it is able to deal with ambiguity and vagueness, with deviation, contradiction and paradox, the potential of sound and rhythm, the entanglement of seemingly unrelated elements of a text, in short: dealing with high levels of complexity and exploiting the tension between fixed form and the inexhaustible dimension of meaning. A deeper understanding of the creative aspects of language and the interactive creation of meaning could also clarify fundamental differences between artistic (human) and artificial intelligence.

A generalized kind of "poetic intelligence" provides a training in *exploring the edges of the intelligible* and an *ethics of entanglement* (Bayo Akomolafe), understanding connectedness, dealing with complexity, recognizing the existential value of beauty for our sanity, social life and wellbeing. It also underlines the value of the endangered diversity of languages, many of them at the brink of extinction.

We need a thorough paradigmatic shift, in order to keep our planet inhabitable and our personal and social life satisfying. Could poetics in a wider sense serve as a bridge between "*La langue est un système où tout se tient*" and "*Le monde est un système où tout se tient*"?