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 **Silent Discourse: The Language of Signs and "Becoming-Woman"**

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Silent Discourse
The Language of Signs and "Becoming-Woman"

Inna Semetsky (bio)

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 characteristica* 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 ungrounded, **[End Page 87]** 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...

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