Apocalyptic Poetry between Metaphysics and Negative Theology: Dante to Celan and Stevens

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The possibility of seeing beyond the limits of time and mortality vouched for by the Bible, with its prophetic-apocalyptic visions, was discovered early on by Christian authors to be represented also in classical pagan literature, notably in the descents to the underworld for revelations of their personal destinies by Odysseus in Book XI of the Odyssey and by Aeneas in Book VI of the Aeneid. This epic topos of the otherworldly voyage in quest of knowledge from the dead that will illumine the path of the protagonist's life is expanded by Dante into the whole of his epic journey in the afterlife as recounted in the Divine Comedy. Most poignantly, Dante's meeting in Paradiso, cantos 14-18, with his ancestor Cacciaguida, a hero and martyr of the Second Crusade, brings the modelling on ancient epic tradition to a dramatic climax. In the guise of a precious gem refulgent in an illuminated cross of light in the heaven of Mars, Cacciaguida appears to Dante as lovingly as the shade of Anchises appeared to Aeneas, his son ("si gia l'ombra d'Anchise si parse"—Paradiso XV.25). Dante combines this sort of pagan precedent for his otherworldly journey with its analogues in the Bible, particularly Paul's famous triptoch of the 'third
Phenomenology, the study of the relationship between the intentional object and the act of consciousness, is central to understanding the nature of experience. The phenomenological method involves a thorough examination of the data, focusing on the pure experiences as they are presented to the consciousness. The phenomenological approach emphasizes the subjective character of experience, recognizing that knowledge is always limited by the perspective from which it is obtained.

In the context of the document, the author discusses the phenomenological approach to understanding the nature of experience, particularly in the realm of religious experience. The author argues that phenomenology can provide insights into the nature of religious experiences, emphasizing the subjective character of these experiences. The author suggests that phenomenology can help us understand how religious experiences are structured and how they are experienced by individuals.

The author further argues that phenomenology can help us understand the role of language in religious experience. The author suggests that language is not merely a tool for communicating religious ideas, but rather, it is a fundamental aspect of religious experience. The author contends that language is a source of religious insight, and that religious experiences are often expressed through language.

Overall, the author argues that phenomenology can provide a valuable perspective on the nature of religious experience, emphasizing the subjective character of these experiences and the role of language in shaping these experiences.
The potential character of experience is crucial in forming our perspective on the world. However, many factors influence how we perceive and understand our environment. One such factor is the extent to which our perception is influenced by our preconceptions and biases. This can lead to a distorted view of reality, as we tend to see what we expect to see and filter out information that contradicts our existing beliefs.

Another important factor is the role played by the brain and its ability to process information quickly and efficiently. The brain is constantly receiving input from the senses, and it must decide which information is most important and relevant to our survival. This process is called attention, and it allows us to focus on the most critical aspects of our environment.

In addition to these factors, our emotions and social relationships also play a significant role in shaping our perspective. Emotions can influence our judgment and decision-making, while social relationships can affect how we interpret and react to situations.

Overall, the potential character of experience is complex and influenced by a variety of factors. It is essential to be aware of these influences and to strive for a more balanced and objective view of the world.
The world is a complex and interconnected system, forming a web of concepts and ideas. In this context, as conceptually proposed by Greek philosophers, the idea of perceivable power exists in the form of a network of interconnected ideas and concepts. The world of perceivable power is not merely static; it is dynamic, evolving, and influenced by a multitude of factors, both internal and external. This interconnectivity highlights the significance of understanding the role of perceivable power in shaping our perceptions and realities.
Percussion: Sound and Form (Academic Press). "The Grant (196)"

The world of the mind and the heart is a realm of possibilities. If the nature of the world of the mind is to reflect the nature of the world of the heart, then the world of the heart is the world of the mind. The mind is an extension of the heart, and the heart is an extension of the mind. The mind and the heart are inseparable, and the world of the mind and the heart is the world of the heart.

Today, according to the proponents of the so-called "liberal" philosophy, the heart and the mind are divided in two. The heart is seen as the seat of emotions, while the mind is seen as the seat of reason. This is a false dichotomy, as the heart and the mind are not separate entities, but rather are aspects of the same whole.

The heart is the source of our emotions, and it is through the emotions that we experience the world. The mind, on the other hand, is the source of our reason, and it is through reason that we understand the world. The heart and the mind are not separate, but rather are aspects of a single whole.

In conclusion, the heart and the mind are not separate entities, but rather are aspects of the same whole. They are inseparable, and their separation leads to a distorted view of the world. To understand the world, we must understand the heart and the mind as a single whole.
evocative by constantly breaking off before what it does not and
cannot say. This has seemed to be the only way to express the
"truth" of our historical times. Furthermore, poets have often relinquished all confidence in language to disclose any world or truth and
rather pushed language to and even beyond its limits in order to ex-
pose its incapacity to express reality (Steiner, After Babel). Theoretically searching poets of recent date, in their concern to express the
essence of language, typically highlight its incongruity with reality
and even its intrinsic nullity. And yet, even this negativity remains
an orientation towards an otherness that corresponds at least for-
mal to the unnamable, inexpressible divinity of negative theol-
ogy. This movement of rejection and denial still belongs to theology
more than it is able to escape it.

Poetry becomes the cultivation of an articulate silence about the
inexpressible, a dwelling upon its own incapacies and yet a hint-
ing, by negation, at what cannot be expressed because it is beyond
the reach of representation. The one avenue of expression that
seems capable of being sustained even in this predicament is the dis-
course of address, as in prayer. Paul Celan, especially considering his
sense of the poem as a dialogue with an unattainable, indefinable
you, emblematically represents this pervasive orientation or disor-
ientation in modern poetics. That the poem indeed speaks and that
it "speaks for," "tends towards," and "has need of" an Other, indeed
a "wholly Other" ("dieses 'ganz Anderen'"), inviting it and us into
the mystery of the encounter, are key theses of Celan's reflections
on poetry. Precisely the poem's inability to express and belong to
reality, its "loneliness," paradoxically makes it the focus of a secret,
mysterious encounter with otherness. For "the poem today," in
Celan's view, "shows unmistakably a strong leaning towards becom-
ing silent" ("... das Gedicht heute—zeigt ... , das ist unverwechselbar,
eine starke Neigung zum Verschweigen," Celan, "Der MMeridian").
And precisely this dumbing ("Verschweigen") of language witnesses to
the otherness that resists speech.

The implicit negative theology lurking in this linguistic impasse is
expressed in formulas describing and addressing No One, who is yet
unmistakably spoken of and prayed to in the manner of God, despite

the negation of all identity, in Celan's poem "Psalms," from a 1963
collection titled Die Niemandsrose (The No One's Rose), a name
taken from an expression occurring in this poem:

Niemand kniet uns wieder aus Erde und Lehren,
niemand bespricht unserm Staub.
Niemand.

Gelobt seist du, Niemand.
Dir zulieb wollen
wir blühen.
Dir
eintgegen.

Ein Nichts
waren wir, sind wir, werden
wir bleiben, blühend:
die Nichts-, die
Niemandsrose.

Mit
dem Griffel seelenhell,
dem Staubfaden himmelstwist,
der Krone rot
vom Purpurwort, das wir sangen
über, o über
dem Dorn.

(No one moulds us again out of earth and clay,
no one conjures our dust.
No one.

Praised be your name, no one.
For your sake
we shall flower.
Towards
you.
In this no mans land, where the useless panters and divisions of the earth...
Practically, the method which is desired and recommended is the same technique of placing your hand over each line of print and reading it slowly, without talking or thinking about it. The technique is to close your eyes and read the text aloud, as if you were reading it for the first time. This helps to improve your memory and can also help you to focus on the text and avoid distractions.

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diffused motifs of contemporary, theoretically searching poetry. In
the wake of Mallarmé, probably the greatest poetic influence on
Celan, this necessarily objectless search is still being conducted to
further extremes by many of France’s distinguished recent poets.
Bernard Noël characteristically fishes for the Other in the emptiness
of the Open, the O, where there is neither depth nor subject but
only the forgetfulness where one fishes (“il n’y a pas de sujet / pas de
profondeur / seulement de l’oubli / où l’on pêche”—“L’été langue morte,”
Chant un). For Eugène Guillevic the core of poetry consists in its
halts and pauses, blank spaces and silence (“Ce silence part / A sa
propre recherche”—“Un clou”). And Michel Deguy dwells upon the
collapse of language’s power of figuration and consequently of the
sense of sense (“... la perte de créance en la lune figurative. C’est le
sens et ça n’a aucun sens”—A ce qui n’en finit pas).

Of this sort of poetry that fights to avoid yielding its own or any
meaning, one can say with John Ashbery, “These accents seem
their own defense” (“Some Trees”). Only the ineffable is the sub-ject
of every poem, though talk about the weather, for example, often
serves as nominal subject to cover the deliberate lack of
thematic meaning in a poetry that is obstinately about nothing, that
is an escaping from all sense and a demotion of the sign to a signal
pointing nowhere. In the American context, the office of ministering
over the negative theology intrinsic to language in its inherent
hollowness is assumed most authoritatively by Wallace Stevens, who
in the persona of “The Snow Man,” for example, “nothing himself,
beholds / Nothing that is not there and the Nothing that is.”

In “Notes toward a Supreme Fiction,” Stevens approaches the
Unrepresentable at the source of all that is by perceiving the in-
ventedness of all that we see and represent. If all that we perceive is
of our own invention, then any uninvented source even of this very
invention must remain unperceived by us. It may be impossible for
us even to conceive of something not invented by us. The idea that
there should be an unrepresentable source of all world and represen-
tation, and of invention itself, Stevens calls “the inconceivable idea
of the sun.” This is the idea of the sun or source of all as inconceiv-
able, as in effect the God of negative theology:

It Must Be Abstract

I

Begin, ephebe, by perceiving the idea
Of this invention, this invented world,
The inconceivable idea of the sun.

You must become an ignorant man again
And see the sun again with an ignorant eye
And see it clearly in the idea of it.

To see the sun clearly in the idea of it is to see that it is invented,
that it is but an idea, our idea. That is to say, the sun that we per-
ceive is an idea we have invented. But to understand this is to
“perceive” that it cannot be the source and ground of all we do see,
what in Western philosophical, specifically Platonic tradition (evoked
by the address to “ephebe”), figures as the sun.* The same must be said
for the source of all that we can conceive, figuratively the intellectual
sun, the idea of which is also our invention and conception. To see
this is to become ignorant again. For the insight into the invented-
ness of our world, of everything under the sun and even of the sun
itself as we see it or conceive it, has revealed that the sun and the
very gods as we know them are but representations and inventions,
and consequently not the true source of being, which remains—and
must remain—“inconceivable” to us. Therefore,

Never suppose an inventing mind as source
Of this idea nor for that mind compose
A voluminous master folded in his fire.

How clean the sun when seen in its idea,
Washed in the remotest cleanliness of a heaven
That has expelled us and our images . . .

*The capital importance of the metaphor of the sun to the whole foun-
dation of metaphysics is discussed by Derrida in “La mythologie blanche.”
The death of one god is the death of all,
Let purple Phoebus lie in umber harvest,
Let Phoebus slumber and die in autumn umber,

Phoebus is dead, ephebe. But Phoebus was
A name for something that never could be named.
There was a project for the sun and is.

There is a project for the sun. The sun
Must bear no name, gold flourisher, but be
In the difficulty of what it is to be.

Ignorance of the underlying ground of things is secured only by
the death of the gods, that is, by the realization of the fictiveness
of our representations of this ground. Artful syntax makes it even sound
as if "Phoebus" is but a projection or permutation of "ephebe." This
enables the realization that the source of being and intelligibility
(metaphorically the sun), which is not invented, can only be name-
less and unrepresentable. This inconceivable idea must not be com-
prehended as the invention of any mind, for that would be to ground
it again in something representable.

The project of the sun is for it to be without a name. This involves
projecting from the visible world and representation beyond into the
unnameable and unrepresentable. When all the gods that can be
named and represented are exposed, precisely, as representations, and
thus "die," it becomes possible again for the Unnameable to be "per-
ceived," and remaining nameless it is preserved in the difficulty of
what it is to be—that is, without being reduced to any category
or concept that would simplify and render conceivable what is not
invented and therefore not commensurate with our concepts, includ-
ing the category of being.

With all idolatrous representations of God stripped away, the
unnameable source of all that is seen and thought, metaphorically the
sun, the absolute light in which all is revealed, can once again be
"perceived," though it cannot be properly named or conceptualized.
When any name for it is seen as just an idea, it is "washed in the
remotest cleanliness of a heaven / That has expelled us and our
images." Seen thus in the cleanliness of its idea, it is perhaps not seen
as any positive presence or image but is seen to be necessary as the
source for all the ideas and perceptions that bear the taint of having
been invented and cannot be the source of themselves. What has
been discovered and obliquely illuminated is something anterior to us
and our representations, the "first idea," which is not of our own in-
vention. It is embodied by Adam in his createdness, not ex cogitato-
bry by René Descartes through the inventions of self-conscious reflection:

IV
The first idea was not our own. Adam
In Eden was the father of Descartes

There was a muddy centre before we breathed.
There was a myth before the myth began,
Venerable and articulate and complete.

From this the poem springs: that we live in a place
That is not our own and, much more, not ourselves
And hard it is in spite of blazoned days.

There is an anteriority to representation and to all speech, to "us"
("The clouds preceded us"), and this is what poetry strives to evoke.

All this suggests why the poem, in general, is essentially about
what it does not and cannot say. Yet even in its extremely reductive,
postmodern form, the impulse of poetry as apocalypse—to point to-
ward and perhaps to catalyze contact with a radically other power and
the possibility of another world or of the world as other—cannot but
be described, even if, in the first instance, only ironically by denial. As
in Noël's previously quoted poem ("L'été langue morte," chant im):
"we search everywhere for the nowhere of an other earth" ("nous
cherchons partout le mille part / d'une autre terre") (17). The idea of
an ultimate revelation is obsessively present or else is made only the
more conspicuous by absence, in an enormous range of the most
widely discussed contemporary poetry. Whether this revelation is of
and learning the language of the landscape.

Building and using the language of the landscape, one can learn the unique characteristics of the environment and how to interpret environmental phenomena. This involves understanding the interplay between different ecological factors and the way they influence each other.

For instance, in the context of the landscape, the interaction between water, soil, and vegetation can be studied to understand how these factors affect the growth and distribution of plants. Similarly, the influence of topography on climate and weather patterns can be observed and analyzed to better understand the local climate.

By using the language of the landscape, one can also learn how to interpret and interpret environmental data, such as the distribution of species and the effects of human activities on the landscape. This knowledge can be used to inform conservation efforts and sustainable land use practices.

In conclusion, learning the language of the landscape is essential for understanding the natural world and making informed decisions about its management and conservation.
times, eminently that of Wittgenstein and of Heidegger, each in its way so obsessed with the limits of language and with the mysteriously calling silence beyond this threshold, that is, with the Inexpressible ("Es gibt allerdings Unausprechliches"—Wittgenstein, *Tractatus 6.522*), continues in this broad tradition (Heidegger, "Die Sprache," *Umweges zur Sprache und Nietzsche* 2: 484; Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, paragraphs 119, 19, 109).

Envisioning an end to the game of the present in all spheres of social and political life, with its embittered alignments and its entrenched impasses, as insidiously difficult as that may be for us to "do" (as Beckett's *Endgame* so wittily insinuates), enables us to envisage and so also to begin to enact new possibilities. And yet, apocalypse, as the advent ending, is nothing that we can do, though we can be aware of and perhaps cooperate with its happening to us. Indeed, from a certain point of view, this is already what our tradition itself is all about. Apocalyptic, as the ultimate expression of transcendent, metaphysical vision in poetry, rather than being taken as an aberration symptomatic of a pathology of Western civilization that could be cured, should be accepted as part of the whole and as standing for the possibility of renewal inherent within a tradition from which new and different proposals unceasingly draw their inspiration. All representations and imaginings have their limits; apocalyptic poetry thematizes this inherent destiny for every order of imagination to have its end and give place to a new, thitherto unimaginable order. Every imagination of the end in apocalyptic style is the occasion for new orientations towards the open space we call the future. This future, however, is not for us to name, in the end, since it is beholden to the Other, and this may mean—and has meant, in the terms that a certain tradition, embracing Dante, Celan, and Stevens has forged—to an apocalypse, to the revelation of an "eternity" that surpasses us.

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