

Text is a Living Being, selected paragraphs from *Insecurity of the Text*, 2010
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*translated from Croatian by Urša Vidic

“It is precisely by overthrowing data that the act of attention is related to previous acts, and the unity of consciousness is thus built up step by step through a ‘transition-synthesis’. The miracle of consciousness consists in its bringing to light, through attention, phenomena which re-establish the unity of the object in a new dimension at the very moment when they destroy it.”¹

It is not known whether texts are built into languages or if languages are constructed into texts. Just as much as languages are constructed into texts, texts are constructed into languages. In the world or in halfworlds of meta-language, it is unknown which one of them makes the armatures for the other, reinforces, which one is the support, which one gives and which one fills the form. Texts often seem to be completed and pronounced, like reinforced concrete that is designed to resist external and internal physical forces. Similar to language, texts take on representations of finality; they simulate boldness and definiteness through their linguistic material that does not have much in common with such definiteness, except that the language in the text pretends to be a representation of finality. Owing to the fact that language has endless abilities of converting, the text seems to be and is understood to be some kind of a finished material with sharp edges and carefully selected angles. Owing to the empirical culture to which we belong, we usually choose a representation of finality from the infinite combinations of representation offered by the language in a text, since it boldly pretends to support the above-mentioned dependent relationships among people; between people and language; between language, society and its institutions, and between the forces of power that virtually push this illusive, reinforced discursive structure into the texts. Such relationships are very safe, very mutually supportive and in their textual concrete they perfectly resist the development of understanding, time and space through our existences.

“The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them.”²

¹ Merleau-Ponty 2005: 35

² Merleau-Ponty 2005: 94

**“The points in space ...
mark, in our vicinity, the varying range of our aims and our gestures.”³**

The text is reinforced like concrete by the illusory character of language and it is that what suits it best, since it is a living organism.

In the context of the transience of ideas and the constant production of new textual material, in the atmosphere of ceaseless, furious, tumor-like activities of language, in the midst of the once well-educated textures of texts, the text constantly mutates through language, makes mistakes, destroys the degrees of normality, metastases from one textual body to the other, from one part of the body to the other, forming clumps, bumps, swellings, gnarls, bundles, knots of textural material (“lump of matter”⁴). With their deceptive, rigid forms, texts mutate into infinity, trying to bring their expressions as close as possible to that infinity that has been taken away from them by the idea of regulated linguistic systems and carefully chosen meta-linguistic crossovers, which at times redirect the functioning of some linguistic track into the direction in which this is necessary in given historical or future circumstances. Textual rails, axioms of parallel paths that cross in infinity, cross countless times in a “regulated” reality, in countless combinations, continually create new directions on different tracks of language. Texts are much too full of linguistic trains and the wheels of their locomotives are constantly turning in wastelands of perception, in directions that are inconceivable even for the language itself. This is where the machine, the force, the electricity that causes it to move, are stored in the rhythm of alloys that are clicking on the rails making the immense noise of language in all texts. They carry loads in their wagons; linguistic and textual surpluses, textual thefts, textual potentials and in the next crossings their material will be either streamed or woven into or crashed or accumulated or melted or stranded or trapped or reduced. Textual wagons with their metatextual cylinders will be working, transporting constantly, outside of time lines or spatial strings, all in order to at least briefly silence this unorganized, unbearable noise of language.

“... the relation of language to painting is an infinite relation. It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other’s terms: it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say. And it is in vain that we attempt to show, by the use of images, metaphors, or

³ Merleau-Ponty 2005: 166

⁴ The expression “lump of matter” is borrowed from Halasz, Ivan, “What precisely is a single crystal-to-single crystal reaction?”, in: *Crystal Growth & Design*, 2010, vol. 10, p. 2817-2823

similes, what we are saying; the space where they achieve their splendour is not that deployed by our eyes but that defined by the sequential elements of syntax.”⁵

The text has a black splotch. A black stain stands on the  text. A black stain in the midst of the text, does not belong to the text, it is not pretending to be its stain; one does not know whether it was created in the moments of creating the text. It is there on the walls of the text along with typos, printing errors or ink drops. The stain is black; black like letters and their surfaces, as a dot, a comma, a dash or a colon. It distinguishes itself by going astray, by blackness and the piercing force with which our glance follows the line of the stain's text. The stain hinders the glance in continuing along the spelling line of the sentences; it is annoying, unwanted and uninvited. It spreads within the text as if it catches the eye or as if the eye is caught in it or as if the stain makes the focus of reading blurry. The lens of the eye expands in surprise, taking in the light that the stain through its blackness is pouring into the text, as well as to the eye. The eye caught in the stain gives attention and space to the black stain, expanding the darkest part of the eye's body – the pupil. The black pupil and the black stain are facing each other; the pupil in the body of the eye, the stain in the body of the text. The more the pupil observes the stain, the blackness intensifies and fuller it gets. The stain spreads convulsively through the ocular body of the pupil. The pupil swallows the ink while the stain sucks the pupil in like a wormhole, into the now, into its textual space into which it retreated with the strategy of an impostor. The shape of the stain is reflected in the pupil's ring and falls down in the soft body of the eye. The stain, swallowed into the body of the eye, and the pupil sucked into the text are progressing towards the word-tissue environment in which they have found themselves to be, in which they are located, in which they encounter each other. In the eye and in the text, the stain and the pupil mix their black inks by leaving their original environments, leaving those spatial barriers that separated them until the moment they looked at each other – they made a stain out of the stain, a pupil out of the pupil, and the eye an external observer of frozen, outlined textual events. The ends of the sentences get sucked through the stain and through wormhole that merged with the pupil, they travel towards events and their respective times floating in the blackness of the pupil. Sentences are spinning in the eye along reading channels, distorting, shrinking time, stretching time, meandering beneath swallowing thoughts that release digestive juices for the sentences and their previous textual realities into these reading channels. Digestive juices of the pupil consist of fragmented time enzymes that break up the textual time into delusive units

⁵ Foucault 2005: 10

of action that move freely along the wormhole of linguistic reading. The speed of absorption determines the reading speed: the speed in which the textual time is fragmented determines the speed in which a particular textual occurrence is comprehended. Dispersed events with distorted sentences, fragmented into random motives, make of any form of encounter between the pupil and the stain possible. They may meet and can meet in textual time, where this time may and can transform into coincidence, thereby having the potential to turn the whole, until then frozen, linear textual event into a coincidence. Reading takes place through an encounter, through possibilities of an encounter, of the crossing between what is experienced, what is presumed, and that which is in the future. This time of reading and time of the text returns to the moments of writing, while the moments of writing, using the stained pupil-shaped wormhole learn to touch the potentials of the future. In the wormhole and in the stain and the pupil, the time of the text is coloured black and the decaying; in the space crossroads between wormhole-stain and the pupil, the time is afraid of disappearing through the slippery serpentine of reading.

The stain in the middle of the eye. The stain in the eye. There is a black stain wiggling on the eye. It is most likely a cataract, they say. Or problematic intraocular pressure. Eye pressure is measured by puncturing the eye with a little tube, centrally through the pupil, to reach the inner plasma of the eyeball. The stain does not belong to the eye, it is not planned to be a part of it, nor did it occur in moments of the eye's formation. It is placed on the walls of the eyeball together with errors in the retina or linear forms of tiny dirt particles on the surface of the eye. The stain is transparent but cloudy; like opal glass, frosted windows, greasy glasses. It is characterized by wandering, movement, and constant presence in the frame of the eye; it linearly follows the movement of the eye, of the glance, of eye plasma. It is the accumulated material in the eye plasma, ocular surplus; by its linear movement along the observed objects, it hinders the glance at focusing, at its optical rhyming of objects. It is intrusive, unwanted and uninvited. If an object that is observed by the eye is by coincidence a stain, possibly dark or completely black, then the stain in the eye comes to existence. On the dark stain, on the black background, the stain of the eye takes on the shape of short lines resembling points, commas, dashes or colons. If this phenomenon is explained by a non-Latin script, the stain takes on the form of the Arabic letter r (ﺭ) or z (ﺯ). By moving the eye, two Arabic consonants – r and z – are constantly being written on the black background. On a black background, in the middle of the ink outside, an endless text of only two consonants is printed out. Sometimes z r z. Sometimes commas, intervals of a cut. Just like the eye has the

archives that transmit the information by radar to syntactic units which, by means of vibrations, form the background for new forms of the sentence’s existence. All these processes take place in predicted time of language, which, of course, is bounded by its linguistic spatial meanings. **“A sentence means there is a future.”** Linguistic tenses entail each other. The past implies the existence of the present, while the present would not be present if the past did not archive it while it was still the present. This past would not have been archived without the help of the present and its indication that it as well would once become a past. With each new “present moment,” this indication transformed into the future, while the future was called invoked to faster become the present, and then the past. So it can be said that the future is already in its first step, in its first sentence, in its uppercase letter, already present and past. The future is already in a clichéd way written into texts and sentences.

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It is created in every reading and writing; while the potential of the sentence is brought to the knowledge, the future has already passed. The textual material is, as an a priori building of the sentence, regardless of its edges, its conclusions and its piles of points transmitted by reading through the blocks of the sentence, each time “reading from the future” in the past, passed, exhausted content. The text is an a priori schizophrenic being which, by reading, offers only consecutive paranoia and a search for meanings which may never have been, nor ever will be, in this text. Thanks to its linguistic structure, the text (at this textual moment) has been interpreted for a hundred of years⁸ by means of the sign and the occurrence of meaning. The text is neither a sign nor it has a meaning. It is an empty, dead, crystallized being moving the perception of paranoid quests for signs using textual remnants and threads like a radar. Text is never true or accurate. The text always lies.

→↓↔↕↗↘↙↚←↑→↓↔↕↗↘↙↚ So, if it is claimed that the text is a priori a sentence, because in the end – as it also appears – it consists of sentences; →↓↔↕↗↘↙↚←↑→↓↔↕↗↘↙↚ there is no other conclusion left than the one that the text in its essence does not consist of sentences nor is any text and its linguistic material subject to syntactic rules. But, again, if the text always lies, this means that it actually tells the truth at every new moment of reading. Therefore, it can be concluded that the text consists of sentences as much as it does not consist of sentences. **“A sentence means there is a future.”** A characteristic that makes the

⁸ Reference to C. de Saussure's “Course in General Linguistics”

there is no time, only a point, infinitely long, a point that is never a closing point: **“A sentence means there is a future.”**

The body deliberately asked the discursive question: “What am I capable of doing?” and in what ways it is capable to do anything. In essence, the body asked this question by means of a movement and, thanks to the textual absence, it succeeded and it manages to develop its own “gestural text”¹⁴. The body renounced the text and their mutual textual-linguistic-physical space that tabooed it, castrated it and determined it with conceptual categories which, due to the determinism of natural sciences, were established as prenatal, innate and therefore implicitly belonging to the body. Such is the text and such is the textual body that offered a unique genetic messenger sermon preacher to the body, with which the text and the body remained bolted between normative categories of what is healthy and thus acceptable; or acceptable, therefore healthy. So, the individual body could easily belong to a particular social category, which, thanks to its linguistic structures, tend to operate with deterministic concepts of acceptance at the level of standardized (popularly considered as “congenital”) conceptual categories of things or objects, events, states of being, actions, places, distances travelled – or journeys, ownership and quantity.

Just like human bodies, textual bodies as well (which, in the end, are also “human”) belong to the same taboos and castrations, and subconscious mechanisms function in a way that is similar to them, on paths that are beyond any category, they send out the contents and forms that work in-between, below, above, beyond any conceptual category and any inborn characteristics we are ready to detect or measure. Between the texts there are gestural texts of the body, layers that were formed by the body with its spatiality, with those abilities, those affects that it is able to act in. Beneath, above and beyond the texts, movements are created, often social movements, but always movements that are perceptive. The eye moves with the text while the entire body moves with the eye, imprinting texts into the body, the human body, liquid, bloody body of bone and cartilage. The body is in constant motion, either due to the fact that five litres of blood pass through the heart in one second or that neurons transmit nerve impulses at a speed of 400 km/h. The body constantly writes the movements, its gestural texts that are subject to the laws of fluids rather than to textual conventions. Movement is the only textual convention of the body. It belongs entirely to other instances of

¹⁴ The expression “gestural text” was taken from “The Discourse of (the) Mime”, in Pavis 1993: 60

events and duration than those that our conceptual categories are ready to write into the world and thus standardize.

When writing about movement, Deleuze refers to Bergson's understanding of duration. Deleuze writes about the concept of an open whole (always taking into account its characteristic of constant variability), putting it in a relationship with movement. So movement and its change (as it happens in the corresponding whole) affect the duration by dividing it into objects which “gaining depth, by losing their contours, are united in duration.”¹⁵ The variability of the whole happen through movement; the whole is “is divided up into objects, and objects are re-united in the whole.”¹⁶ Deleuze considers these objects to be “immobile sections” and explains their relationship with movement that “is established between these sections, and relates the objects or parts to the duration of a whole which changes, and thus expresses the changing of the whole in relation to the objects and is itself a ‘mobile section’ of duration.”¹⁷

“Question: See what?

Answer: See what is moving, not people moving.”¹⁸

Bergson’s notions of movement, duration, whole, changes and objects (“immobile sections”) apply to the textual body and to the matter that it consists of at all textual levels. If we start drawing, for example, with a pencil (or with anything else) a line along the body of the text – between parts of the text; between sentences or words or punctuation marks or letters or lines; randomly; horizontally or vertically, then at some moment we will have a text of lines that move in different directions, dividing the text into spaces and contents between the lines. If we identify the lines with Bergson's idea of a movement, then the lines in the text, in the entire textual occurrence, can be conceived as movement. In this way, Bergson's distinction between movement and space travelled¹⁹ is emphasized by linear characteristics of the movement and separate parts (clods) of the text – the immobile sections that together with the movement (that is, the line) and the text as a whole, contribute to the creation of change between all the above-mentioned occurrences. By releasing the movement into the text, a change occurs at all textual levels: at the syntactic level, the clods of texts are breaking up that

¹⁵ Deleuze 1986: 11

¹⁶ Deleuze 1986: 11

¹⁷ Deleuze 1986: 11

¹⁸ Klunchun, Pichet in “Thoughts on the Future perfect: my Dance as a Demon” in Gareis 2009: 372

¹⁹ Deleuze 1986 Deleuze elaborates how the space covered is divisible, indeed infinitely divisible, whilst movement is indivisible, or cannot be divided without changing qualitatively each time it is divided.

probably are then able to leave the existent textual syntax and semantics, while the whole takes on a new form, consisting of clods of textual material, randomly created by drawing the lines of movement along the body of the text. The movement (the line) as it traces its way through the body of the text, it draws using the body of the text; the boundaries between the clods and piles of text are a movement, the movement of the clods that is visible at their borders creates a movement, constitutes it. By moving of the textual clod, the movement glides over the clods, across all of their surfaces, drawing them out, bounding them. Because the text, as one whole, reflects the ways of functioning of the whole as something that is open and constantly changing, it is not closed or finite, neither on its syntactic nor its semantic level, similar as its boundaries and the clods boundaries of the textual body, are not bounded by finalities. Although movement forms these boundaries of the text and is made up of these boundaries; like borders that make the movement and are created by the movement; the movement, forming boundaries, passes through these same boundaries in the other direction and constantly creates new divisions between the piles of text, the new textual clods, new Bergson's "immobile sections".

Although "immobile sections" only appear to be immobile because, due to the movement that creates them, they are constantly moving and they are creating movement by being elusive, making somersaults, turning over, contacting. Moreover, if these sections were accepted as immobile; that is, if the clods of text (for the purpose of an experimental analysis of movement) were deprived of the possibility of moving in order to observe the movement itself and its slipping and sliding, exactly the opposite would happen than what we wanted to achieve by isolating (in this case by isolating the movement). By accepting the presumption that the text can stand still and that there are textual clods, the movement, or the line that is drawn around the clods, would freeze and enter a state of stillness. In accordance with this, movement would be equal to the state of stillness, which would mean that one is observing the stillness and not the movement. At the same time, by stopping the clods and freezing the line, the whole of the text would also go into a state of stillness, a petrified state, a sort of crystalline state in which there is neither movement nor possibilities of conversion. By observing this state of the text, that is, the textual whole, syntax and semantics as well could readily be interpreted as petrified states, finite, determined.

The slipping of the movement (of the lines) through the text; or cutting of the text could occur spontaneously or in a controlled manner. It would allow us to see the textual body in more

than two dimensions; with the progress of the movement and the creation of the clods. It would be possible to see the text as a three-dimensional object whose levels are realized in spatial dimensions. In this way the textual body could abandon its plane and gain its three or four spatial dimensions. ~~By random or controlled cutting of the textual body and thereby the formation of clods, the syntax of the text would disintegrate, as well as its corresponding linguistic relations of time and space, and thus the relations between subjects and objects.~~ Random or controlled syntax disintegration would contribute to the creation of new semantic connections between all elements of the sentence that, due to the constant change in the direction of the movement (i.e. the line along the textual body and in it), would always be finding themselves in an ever new syntactic environment, creating a new semantic potential every time.

The textual body has large potential of adaptability due to the potential itself that carries the movement. Movement can be spontaneous and controlled. Its special feature lies in the fact that it can simultaneously exist in such two contradictory opposing states. The potential of the movement is that it can simultaneously be spontaneous and controlled; and this moment of division opposition, the state of tension between such two states of motion or existence allows it to be moving, dynamic in its essence, to always be the one that moves forward. Considering that the movement in the textual body are the lines created in the text, but also that the movement consists of the material through which it progresses – from the textual body or from the clod of text – then the basic characteristic of movement (simultaneous spontaneity and control) belongs to the material – the clod of text that forms the movement. Consequently, the constantly creative textual clods exist in a state of incessant movement, in syntactic relationships that are creative and destructive all the time and simultaneously, constantly educating the growth rings of semantic potential with their tensions. Wriggling also through the textual body, the semantic potential advances like movement, sliding and overturning the textual clods and their syntactic tangents, which in their tossing and turning create new semantic potential, again sliding like fluid, lubricating the clods of the textual body that are rolling, falling, disintegrating, reassembling with movement and semantic potential, rolling around with semantic potential, dropping, falling apart, then reassembling with their movement and semantic potential, rolling on the growth rings of semantic potential, flicking, rubbing, crunching, crushing, falling out, decanting, transforming the textual body, the textual whole into smooth, fine-grained sand.

Reading as duration

Reading corresponds to Bergson's term *durée*; the quality of psychic time, which is only available through the analysis of consciousness, by way of introspection²⁰, one great continuous process of creation, the whole of the time of this creation, this evolution.²¹

Reading endures. Reading always has its own duration.

It happens exclusively in us, in the reader; between the reader's intertextual memories or spontaneous associative sequences. The semantic potential of the text, the body, or textual clods is never identical to the reader's semantic potential. Reading always has its own syntax, it is always related to someone and something, it takes evolves within the category of possession, habit or obsessiveness. The reader's syntax is also subject to tensions of spontaneous and controlled reading. This is why reading in its appearance is always a movement, it never stops; its syntactic tensions act in a psychic time that, like movement or a line, outlines possible sequences of time and takes place simultaneously in reading. Duration or reading is simultaneously moving along the syntactic field lines of reading imperatives and reading yearning, the reading desire. Always combined, they invoke a new combination of waiting and expectation: in waiting, they expect their imperatives or; in expectation, they wait for a fulfilment, for recognition of their desires.

Reading lasts as long as the textual time of the reader and the text lasts, through the tension between the entire readers's potential and the textual potential. Regardless of the fact that the textual potential is always limited by the reader's potential, there is no line of delimitation between the two, as it is constantly evading existing tensions between the potentials. Reading always implies movement, as well as possible mastering of different types of textual movements, and also the perceiving of textual clods, and reading along the lines of movement or along the boundaries of clods. Reading always carries accelerating potential; can slow down textual movements, redirect them and form new ones. Summarised, reading is transforming the textual wholes entities: narrowing and extending, prolonging and shortening, and the duration of this transformation corresponds to the sum of the duration of overturning the textual clods and the reader's tensions.

²⁰ Grečić 2002: 16

²¹ Grečić 2002: 23

Reading is duration, combined in the duration of the text and its personal duration – the reader's perception. Through it, textual movement and textual clods are brought together and it is subject to constant change, since it creates a reading and textual entity with its own duration. Reading is at the same time creating and recording changes in reading entities, as well as always a very personal mix of experiencing one's own conscious and subconscious movements that vibrate together with the strokes of textual movements. Reading as duration works as a personal metronome for each text, each reading and duration, regardless of the text; it offers and switches its own metric and performs gestures by textual serpentine turns at its own pace, applying different cadences. Reading forms memory, shapes cadences beats of memory, like Bergson's "durée" "in the form of the term of duration constitutes consciousness as a distinct own world as opposed to the outside world and the unclarity of the facts in it."²² Reading, as a metronome, strikes its own pace and duration in the combination of the subconscious and conscious rhythm with the textual rhythm. Reading-duration as a psychological time is untraceable and immeasurable, while the application of classic temporal and spatial units of measurement to it results in a convulsive distortion and evading these units of measurement and this anomaly of results is eventually explained by a human error. Since reading is not subject to measurable expectations, and also because movement in the textual body and in the human body is progressing thanks to the immeasurable tensions between spontaneity and control – certain conventions of reading and their categorization are completely redundant for the understanding of reading-duration. Reading, like Bergson's "élan vital", is always poured over the edges, creating "mistakes", transgressions, mutations, convulsions; textual and personal tumours.

The same thing happens in the text, as it carries a similar "élan vital", which manifests itself at the level of textual life. Text is a living matter, such as water, like crystals, like viruses, like insects, like humans. *Omne vivum ex vivo*. It conceals in itself algorithms of intelligent systems; it has genetic matrices that with their genetic algorithms have the ability of a living "organism": self-reproduction. The text is both body and tumour. The text is both subject to rules and chaotic, held together by the tension between these contradictions that produces its life potential. Because text, as pure matter, is indefinable, it can only offer insecurity and alteration in its search for it. Its mutations are permanent because they are inspired by the movements of reading, always personal, rarely universal. Mutations occur in language, in characters, in meanings, in movement, in textual clods; in the illusion of

²² Grečić 2002: 12

linguistic and thus textual performances in the textual whole. The punctuation in the text serves only as a short breathing space during reading, they are not able to stop the sentence and keep its elements together in one place and in exactly specified roles in a sentence. The text, thanks to its own movement and reading-duration, switches words from locus to locus, while this remains unnoticed syntactically. Although once the movement of the text starts to be followed by reading, also the syntax of the language can be demolished during the reading. This is the moment of reading when we allow our personal conscious subconscious movements and metrics to untie and start following the rhythm of textual clods. This is when, with the text in front of us, we could manage to cut our own language to the limits at which it becomes unrecognizable and use the permutations of textual cloths to make a new text, a collage of them while always following the rhythm of textual movements. If there is a stream of consciousness in the writing stream, there is no reason why there could be no stream of reading in the stream of consciousness or vice versa.

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