

Language, Time, and Death. An Ethico-Philosophical Perspective Following Hegel, Heidegger, Lévinas, and Blanchot



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Abstract: Our daily existence is affected by how we perceive death, be it our own's death-to-come or others' death. The intimidating nature of death has the potential to affect our daily ethical existence in relation to the other, as is seen in various crises in human history. In such a context, since expansive literature in various approaches such as biological, sociological, psychological, and political addressing the question of death is already available, this essay presents an ethico-philosophical perspective on death and argues if death should be seen as the worst event that is to be experienced by being. In this essay, I correlate language, time, and death, contrasting popular analogies, i.e., death is possibility of impossibility (Hegel and Heidegger), and death is impossibility of possibility (Lévinas and Blanchot). Firstly, the essay stages the discussion with contrasting synchronic and diachronic perspectives of language, i.e., historical understanding of language and time in Hegelian terms and the messianic time in Lévinasian terms, to see how sensibility, i.e., universal meaning, is expressed through concept. Secondly, the essay sees how sensibility is expressed through a concept beyond dialectic opposition and negativity while acknowledging that the question of ethics arises only after the end of philosophy, for something is always inexpressible through expression; there is always remnant beyond philosophical significance. This essay not only argues language, time, and death as the ethical responsibility of the self towards the other, but also contributes to the understanding of language as ethics beyond philosophy, and death as passivity beyond ontology following Lévinas's idea of messianic time and Blanchot's views on literature and death.

Keywords: Language; death; literature; Hegel; Heidegger; Lévinas; Blanchot.

Death is possibility of impossibility (Hegel and Heidegger)

Death is impossibility of possibility (Lévinas and Blanchot)

Introduction

Our daily existence is affected by how we perceive death, be it our own's death-to-come or others' death. The intimidating nature of death has the potential to affect not only our daily ethical existence in relation to the other but also how we end up responding in anticipation, as is seen in various crises in human history, e.g., WWII, the ongoing Corona pandemic, or the recent incident of Taliban taking over Afghanistan. It is, hence,

imperative to make sense of how the concept of death concerns us and how it is dealt with in the present literature already.

In such a context, expansive literature following various approaches addressing the question of death is already available, e.g., biological understanding of death in terms of medical ethics determining critical situations aimed to improve overall health communication (see e.g., Gaille et al. 2020; Thompson 1984; Jakušovaitė et al. 2016; Nair-Collins et al. 2017; Rentmeester 2018); sociological understanding in terms of culture aimed to make sense of death in relation to socio-religious practices and beliefs (see e.g., Ahmadzai 2021; Setta et al. 2015); psychological understanding in terms of symptoms of withdrawal of self from society while subjectivizing intra-communication (see e.g., Leach 2018; Purdy 2018; Hayes et al. 2016; Morese et al. 2020); political understanding of death focusing on existentialist paradigm (see e.g., Harris 1972) or using dead as symbols to maintain memories and citizenship rights of its deceased members (see e.g., Kearl & Rinaldi 1983) and various other political theories on death (see e.g., Dolgoy, et al. 2020); and philosophical understanding of death (see e.g., Kokosalakis 2020, Bradley et al. 2012; Shariatinia 2015; Steffen 2014) in terms of ethical being (see e.g., Kokosalakis 2020).

This essay focuses on the ethico-philosophical perspective on death by emphasizing the idea of writing through literature, and it also argues if death should be seen as the worst event that is to be experienced by being.

In order to understand at the outset why death needs to be understood in relation to language, one may refer to the edifying text by Oberst (2009), where he provides a provocative and profound explanation of Heidegger's views on the relationship between language's origin and how being experiences death. Exploring the very intrinsic connection between the two fundamental human traits, i.e., language and death, Oberst contends that the invention of language is impelled by being's drive towards immortality, that is to say, that language emerges as a response to humans' experience of mortality. Oberst, while writing on Heidegger's notions on language, focuses on how 'humans extend their existence linguistic-ontologically – in language as both *Dasein's* individual and communal foundations'; and how 'Heidegger's thinking asserts language as the onti-ontological extension of existence' by exploring the 'death-language connection constitutive to human existence' (Oberst 2009, 3).

In the similar interest, the essay correlates language, time, and death by contrasting influential works by Hegel, Heidegger, Lévinas, and Blanchot. In order to understand a comprehensive role of language in addressing the question of death, this essay first stages the discussion by drawing on synchronic and diachronic perspectives on language, i.e., historical understanding of language and time in Hegelian terms and the messianic time in Lévinasian terms to see how sensibility, i.e., universal meaning, is expressed through concept. The latter part of the paper focuses on the relation between language, time, and death, ultimately leading to the concept of language as ethics beyond philosophy, and literature and death.

I. Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives of Language

Language is perceived with regard to two perspectives, i.e., synchronic and diachronic perspectives of language (de Saussure 1959). The synchronic view implies a connection between *sense* and *presence* which is equivalent to language and time and the concept of being on the contrary. However, the diachronic aspect is entirely different; it refers to the conglomeration of language of the other and time of the other. Hegel speaks of time from the synchronic perspective; he understands time historically. Since history has a linear progression, the end of history is significant of abstract knowledge; thus, there is a sense of finiteness.

The present *is*, only because the Past is not; conversely, the being of the Now is determined as not-being, and the non-being of its being is the Future; the Present is the negative unity. The non-being of the being which is replaced by the Now, is the Past; the being of the non-being which is contained in the Present, is the Future. In the positive meaning of time, it can be said that only the Present *is*, that Before and After are not. But the concrete Present is the result of the Past and is pregnant with the Future. The true Present, therefore, is eternity (Hegel 1970, 39).

This way of determining time as presence fulfills conditions of the possibility of experiencing time, e.g., thinking of *time* as continuous and thinking of *presence* as simultaneous. Hence, everything in Hegel, such as notion, idea, spirit, sense, truth, Absolute etc., can be thought in this way of determining time as presence, i.e., the synchronic time that returns its own identity as *re-turn* of self-sameness. However, Lévinas contradicts this view of time by referring to the infiniteness of time through the *messianic coming of the other* (Lévinas 1969, 285). He speaks of time not bound within the boundaries of historical closure; it cannot be synchronized in the name of *being* since it extends beyond dialectics; in other words, it is diachronic. There is a rupture of time, thus implying a discontinuity of time; however, there is always a remnant. The messianic time begins prior to history and ends after history; it is metaphysical, thus making provision for a future outside history. Messianic time must evince a different quality than world-time or the atemporality of the *world-to-come* if the problem of return and redemption is to move pass the aporetic position. It is in this light that the question of the *Other* arises. As a result, a redemption of history takes place, i.e., to give voices to those voices which have never been realized in history. It, therefore, welcomes the coming of the *other*. The exigency to think anew of the time *to-come* suggests thinking to learn to predicate the time *to-come*, i.e., the promise of future, the messianic time of thinking, i.e., the thinking and the time of thinking are related to future having this messianic sense (Das 2020, 180).

Thus, a parallel may be drawn between language and time, where one may say that language is not confined within spatio-temporal limits. It pre-existed time and will continue to exist after time since time happens to be a humanmade variable. Language forms part of the transformation of the given world into a human-made world. Language is “determined in such a way so that presence is secured in its self-presence: this is done

precisely at that point in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* when the problematic of time is posed, the problematic of determining the aporetic ‘nows’” (Das 2020, 160). This brings us back to the Hegelian determination of time in terms of *now* and *non-now*, where non-now affirms the validity of a particular *now*. As a result, we arrive at a logical contradiction or syllogism. That is, *now* cannot be static; it leads on to the concept of presence; it is universal. The signified remains but the signifier disappears. The *now* of the sensible negates itself, for it becomes other the moment it occurs and passes into a non-being; this negation is again negated for it *has been* and *is not*. In such negation of the negation, “‘Now’ returns into the first ‘Now’, but as mediated” (Das 2020, 30). With this return, the Now maintains its ‘presence as being through the negation of its own nothingness. As such, this ‘Now’ is the unity of the ‘nows’ of every appearing and vanishing before and after.’ (Das 2020, 30). Hegel highlights such instance of constant return of the same as follows:

(1) I point out the ‘Now’, and it is asserted to be the truth. I point it out, however, as something that *has been*, or as something that has been superseded; I set aside the first truth. (2) I now assert as the second truth that it *has been*, that it is superseded. (3) But what has been, *is not*; I set aside the second truth, its *having been*, its super session, and thereby negate the negation of the ‘Now’, and thus return to the first assertion, that the ‘Now’ is. The ‘Now’, and pointing out the ‘Now’, are thus so constituted that neither the one nor the other is something immediate and simple, but a movement which contains various moments. A *This* is posited; but it is rather an *other* that is posited, or the *This* is superseded; and this *otherness*, or the setting aside of the first, is itself *in turn set aside*, and so has returned into the first. However, this first, thus reflected into itself, is not exactly the same as it was to begin with, viz, something *immediate*; on the contrary, it is *something that is reflected into itself*, or a *simple* entity which, in its otherness, remains what it is: a Now which is an absolute plurality of Nows. The pointing-out of the Now is itself the movement which expresses what Now is in truth, viz, a result, or a plurality of Nows all taken together; and pointing-out is the experience of learning that Now is a *universal* (Hegel 1977, 63–64).

This way of looking at language addresses the fundamental question of relation to language to its event character to the mortal human being who speaks language, further highlighting the totalized event character of language, i.e., logistic and grammatical characterization. There is nothing linguistic about looking at language as an analyzable property; it is rather metaphysical through and through. Hence, it is imperative to bring the edifice of metaphysics to its de-structuration to open up the closure of metaphysics to another thought beyond metaphysics. This metaphysics is nothing other than an essential determination of humans in their historicity and their relationship to themselves and others. Since humans’ relationship to themselves and others cannot be understood without their fundamental relationship to language, metaphysics, therefore, must determine this being called ‘mortal’ in its relationship to language. Hegel never addressed the concept of remnant, i.e., a future which is infinite. In other words, remnant implies *what-has-not-happened* is carried forward through the time, and hence, remains to be realized.

With respect to the diachronic aspect, one may speak of time from a pre-ontological view or a time before the self begins. The pre-ontological view is implicative of lengthening

of time, beyond the finite to the infinite, i.e., beyond past and future, thus, reflecting a non-conformity between synchrony and diachrony. It signifies a beginning before beginning and ending before end, i.e., messianic time (Lévinas 1969, 285); it flows out of being. Lévinas describes subject repeatedly experiencing itself as 'up against a wall, or twisted over itself in its skin, too tight in its skin in itself already outside of itself' in the contracture of an instant (Lévinas 2006, 104); messianic time, though anticipating end-time, is lived in the intensification of the moment; this theme structures Lévinas's phenomenology of ethical investiture, i.e., if that investiture comes to pass from without or from within the I-self. The lived immediacy of (messianic) time does not declare what *time* itself is; it simply elucidates the modality by which *it*, if it *is* at all, is lived experience. It is in this connection that one may establish a relation between language and time since language also leaves a remnant beyond philosophical significance. Language embodies a messianic sense; it is neither present nor absent; it is neither being nor non-being; it leaves a trace through which presence is accompanied by absence. In other words, the absence remains as a trace of the other, which in turn leads to the existence of a *sensibility*, thus, leading us to the relation between the self and the other in terms of language.

II. Language as Sense, Sensibility, and Responsibility of the Self towards the Other – Language, Time, and Death

Hegel mentions the concept of negation which results in absolute Idea (Hegel 1977, 518) inclusive of both the objective and subjective. The objective and subjective keep disappearing through participation in language as we happen to be mere place-holders in language. Heidegger (1962, 272) refers to a subjectivity that is not concrete and everlasting; he speaks of the distinction between *Being* and *being*, which is an ontological difference. On the contrary, Lévinas highlights it in the address of the other, that is, *saying* can never be equal to *sense*; instead, it is a signification in the face of the other; saying exceeds sense; sense presupposes saying for speech itself is riven into the *saying* and the *said*. Hegel perceives sense as being, and non-being in terms of Being; and that sensibility passes into concept. Sensibility exists from the beginning and cannot be contained in history. Hegel maintains that sense has a universal meaning; the '*I*' refers to a universal *I*. In other words, the universal is expressed through concept. Language is constitutive of the universal order of reason. There exists a disjunction between *saying* and *said* on the one hand and *saying* and *sense* on the contrary; the correlation of *saying* and *said* is an optimum instance of the correlation of intended meaning and the intended object (Llewelyn 2004, 204).

Further, Hegel speaks of the *subject* which constitutes itself by becoming other than itself. The self produces itself by differing from itself, thus signifying an impossibility of being. It is in this light that one may mention that the Other is displaced in order to signify *I*. In the process, a negation of the other takes place. The debt to the Other is brought about

by negating the other, suggesting that the responsibility to the Other is infinite; it never satisfies the levels of adequacy, thus constituting an *an-economy*. This is characterized by a lack of commensuration between the self and the other, since the fulfillment of obligation remains incomplete.

All language presupposes the idea of gift through giving. It is a gift without involving the idea of reciprocity. It is a gift given to the self by the other and again by the self to a different other; this highlights the fact that ethics cannot be grounded in being. According to the ontological view, Being is one and identical to self since all ontology presupposes identity. Diachrony speaks of ethical difference, and identity realizes itself through difference. The Other can also be conceived of in terms of time. That is to say, the time of the Other is time of the future; this follows from Lévinas's idea of a time beyond retention and protention, thus reflecting the incalculability of time (Lévinas 2000, 147).

As already mentioned earlier, Blanchot attempts to imagine the place of language beyond dialectical opposition and negativity. While Lévinas conceives of language as a gift to the ethical other, to the infinite, in its *passivity beyond the passive* beyond any dialectical re-appropriation in the self-presence, Blanchot (1995) conceives of language, especially writing, as *worklessness*, the fatigue of writing beyond the measure of absolute knowledge, outside concept and outside negativity. This brings into focus the closure of the dominant western metaphysics, which considers Being as presence and work (Heidegger 1962, 215). The closure may be opened up to the infinite ethical responsibility to the other, which cannot be determined in terms of Being. If in Hegelian dialectical discourse, language is determined in terms of or on the basis of death, it leaves its outside the other dying, the non-negative dying of the other, which is not associated with the *work* of death, but rather as an *infinite unworking* (Blanchot 1995, 83) – *the impossibility of all possibilities* (Blanchot 1995a, 70).

Heidegger perceives death as *possibility of impossibility* (Heidegger 1962, 294). In other words, since action is stimulated by nothingness, it is capable to be *not capable*. A Being is capable of its impossibility or *not to be*. A being towards death encompasses the idea that the possibility of death is given to the one who is born. Nothing is indispensable apart from death; it is the impossibility of being. The authenticity of *I* comes about only when *I* is taken away from *I*. In other words, death is an extreme possibility; it is the possibility of sense and concept. The subject reinforces itself through death in order to act in an authentic way in the historical milieu. On the contrary, according to Lévinas, death is *impossibility of possibility* (Lévinas 1968, 235), thus reflective of the worklessness of death. One cannot die another's death; other's death is a *not possible* to be *not to be*. It is in the dissolution of the subject in relation to the other as a response to the other that infinite responsibility of the subject to the other takes place in terms of the gift of language. In other words, the response to the Other refers to an answer which is nothing but a linguistic item. Irrespective of the disappearance of being, the response remains, and thus one may say that language is not shackled by the chains of death. Lévinas, in his

attempt to think of the other in *Totality and Infinity*, critiques the domination of Other's totalizing thought as violence for it defines Other in terms of Same. Other, being outside of all conceptual relations, is *unthinkable*. The Other is outside the adequation by a concept in this transcendence and exteriority, that is also the infinity that Lévinas places beyond totality. Thoughts originate in their intentional activity. However, language, as Lévinas sees it, is not the object of consciousness, rather it is always arriving. Language is given by the Other that questions the Same (Lévinas 1969, 204). Thus, in language, we relate to "transcendence, radical separation, the strangeness of the interlocutors, the revelation of the other to me" (Lévinas 1969, 73); this work of language is stepping into a rapport with the locus of meaning that is beyond thematization. The other "is present in its refusal to be contained" (Lévinas 1969, 194), also signifying self's responsibility towards the other in terms of language as ethics assuming Other as an interlocutor who speaks, questions, commands, or teaches and is predisposed to escape thematicization leaving behind Other as a theme, i.e., "the formal structure of language' which 'thereby announces the ethical inviolability of the other" (Lévinas 1969, 195).

III. Language as Ethics beyond Philosophy

Deconstruction of philosophy is necessary for the understanding of ethics beyond philosophy, where philosophy is a system representative of a totality of relations. Having discussed the concept of language in relation to the Self and Other along the parameters of time and death, the present part of the essay approaches the domain where language in terms of literature is viewed along the same parametric divisions.

Lévinas and Blanchot look at existence beyond the *chronic* existence, to the time of the other or the diachronic time; this is also seen by Lévinas as ethics that pre-exists existence that Heidegger proposes in *Being and Time* as ontological-temporal inquiry. Contrary to this, Blanchot speaks of literature or language writing, that is fundamentally pre-existential. Writing or literature's task is not to generate only linguistic significance, instead aspire for a space that is both exterior and anterior to language. Language refutes truth as well as preserves truth. In Hegel's opinion, writing preserves truth, while according to Blanchot, materiality is not reduced to signification or meaning. In other words, Blanchot emphasizes the fact that literature cannot be conceived in terms of semantics; a Book is representative of a system. There is an end of philosophy along with the end of the Book, as the task of thinking of system is exhausted (Blanchot 2003, 243). In other words, absolute knowledge cannot exist beyond philosophy. Philosophy cannot go further after realizing its possibility. It is with the end of the Book that writing begins. The question of ethics arises only after the end of philosophy:

The end of the work is its origin, its new and old beginning: it is its possibility opened one more time, so that the dice thrown once again can be the very throw of the masterful words that, preventing the Work from existing (...) lets the final wreck return in which, in the profundity of place, everything has already

disappeared: chance, the work, thought (Blanchot 2003, 243–244).

Ethics is representative of the thought of the outside; ethics does not form a part of metaphysics and ontology. Hence, philosophy is incomplete since the Other is outside it. Even in literature, something remains inexpressible through expression, as a result of which there is a *remnant* beyond philosophical significance. Literature, therefore, embodies a messianic sense.

Literature affirms the reality of language; it reaffirms the being of language. A particular expression stands out of its own being. Institutionalization of language takes place through grammaticalization for the purpose of language to function within the cultural and political framework; it symbolizes a representation of an ordered world of culture, the mode of which happens to be literature. The absence of the Book results in the non-accomplishment of the Book, i.e., not being able to realize its totality. The time of totality presupposes the time of the Other; therefore, writing precedes the Book and also follows the Book; writing transcends closures; hence, it is infinite as well as ethical. Ontology is founded upon ethics. Philosophy and literature are asymmetrical languages; they are representative of two distinct language games, one being ethical and the other being political. However, they are incommensurable since ethics and politics are incommensurable.

The end of the Book is symbolic of the end of Being, while writing reaffirms the existence of the Other; it is metaphysical as it deals with the being of Beings. Being melts into concept (Hegel 1977); it is indicative of the transfer of sensuousness into concept, thus symbolizing death, though Hegel does not affirm the idea of remnant; he believes literature or poetry to be a sensuous form. All sensuousness is mortal and thus finite. In other words, literature cannot remain in its non-being state as it is not backed by an ontological status. Thus, that which is *sensible* metamorphoses into *sense*.

However, according to Blanchot, literature cannot be reduced merely to concept. For instance, let us consider an extract of Robert Burns's poem written in 1794 where he uses the expression 'O my Luve's like a red, red rose'; here, the description of the flower is such that it evokes the sense of a particular rose which is red in color and also exudes a sweet fragrance. In other words, it conforms to the concrete reality of being the signifier and does not get relegated to the status of the universal rose in terms of the signified. According to Blanchot,

In philosophy, the concept of remnant stands negated. There is neither death nor life in-between sense and sensibility. Dying is postponed since the sensuousness in the process of disappearance remains. Literature is neither being nor non-being; it is neither presence nor absence. Hence, it is considered as *neuter* (Blanchot 1992; 1999).

And here is the corresponding excerpt from Hill:

The Neuter, if it may be called neuter, could be said to be that which withdraws while withdrawing and withdrawing even the act of withdrawing [*ce qui se dérobe en dérobant et dérobant jusqu'à l'acte de dérober*], without anything appearing of what thereby disappears, an effect reduced to an absence of effect: the neuter, at the articulation of the visible invisible, the inequality still of the equal, the answer to the impatient question (that classifies and determines in advance by incautiously dividing into two, asking: which one?), albeit an answer that immediately and imperceptibly, even as it seems to entertain the question, modifies its structure by its refusal not only to choose, but even to accept the possibility of a choice between two terms: such as the one or the other, yes or no, this or that, day or night, god or man. 'Which of the two?' – 'Neither the one nor the other, the other, the other', as if the Neuter could only speak in the form of an echo, yet thereby perpetuating the other by way of the repetition that difference, always included in the other, albeit even in the form of the bad infinite, ceaselessly calls forth, like the swaying of the head of a man exposed to endless commotion (Hill 1997, 128).

Literature partakes in neither sensible nor sense nor both sense and sensible. It is equivalent to a being in nothingness. Literature interrupts philosophy; hence, writing interrupts the Book; *the other* interrupts being. Literature embodies a thought of restlessness and can only be thought at the limit of philosophy, i.e., beyond philosophy. It serves as a halt to the dialectical movement of philosophy. According to Heidegger, philosophy is subject to death; therefore, it ends; whatever is unthought is Being. The ontico-ontological distinction refers to the distinction between *Being* and *being*. Heidegger speaks of the concept of *Dasein* which is the unique Being for whom being is at stake. Being thrown into existence affirms its possibility of existence. Being is conscious about the possibility of its being, of going ahead of itself; it signifies a being-towards-death since death or finitude is not an accidental property of being. Being's existence leads to this death, thus signifying possibility, absolute possibility. Destruction of ontology is necessary in order to think in terms of Being. Absolute possibility implies the possibility of impossibility. Hence, Being moves towards the possibility of this impossibility of possibility.

IV. Blanchot – Literature and Death

According to Blanchot, death has already begun and is never going to end. Literature is a space of dying; it is an extension beyond history, philosophy, and sense. Writing becomes exterior to itself; it is non-coincident, thus, exhibiting a discontinuity of writing with itself. It exceeds itself and hence cannot be *one*, making the closure impossible, which is in opposition to Hegelian thought of *sensible* negating itself in order to become *sense* that aims at doing away with the remainder.

On the contrary, in Blanchot's opinion, the literary word pushes language to a limit till it gets transformed into a *murmur*, "and it expresses without expressing, it offers its language to what is murmured in the absence of speech" (Blanchot 1995, 340). There

exists a language of negativity and a language of affirmation; they are not subject to coincidence; it is an impossible necessity. It is our duty to affirm the non-coincidence of the two aspects of language. The Book not only represents a tangible object, but it is also a cultural product. It is a totality of *sense* or *concept* accomplished through negativity. The writing that exceeds the Book, negates sense. Writing finds its beginning after the end of the Book. In other words, infinity begins from where totality comes to an End. However, totality actually never ends. There is no time for writing to begin; consequently, it becomes finite. The reader reads the absence of the writer. The writer is infinitely responsible for the Other's death; writer's concept, sense, and intentionality disappear.

Infinity extends beyond totalization. Although the writer dies physically, the writer actually does not die since she/he leaves remnants of her/his presence through her/his literary creation. In other words, the writer survives amongst the readers through her/his works. The writer's absence is transformed into presence which implies that with her/his death the writer seems to transcend from the physical space to a metaphysical space. It is in connection to this relationship between the writer and writer's death that one is able to interlace language and death and substantiate that literature is neither being nor nothing. Literature keeps *unworking* itself as a result of which it produces its own disjunction and exteriority as it gets transmitted beyond all closure. Writing highlights an ethical difference beyond dialectical difference. It is in a constant process of differing and deferring from itself. All reading opens itself beyond any closure of meaning.

Similarly, death seems to be an opening beyond a system constituted by a totality of relations. It may be considered as a transition from the concrete to the abstract. In relation to the writer, one may say that death is that stage of life at which a transgression of the writer takes place from the self to the other. In reading, similarly, there takes place a future that does not actually exist; instead, it is an approach towards meaning.

Thus, language establishes a paradox between *dying* and *remaining*. Language remains as an essential medium through its affectivity. There is always a movement from the crude to the essential; it also reflects Lévinas's (1988) concept of *Il y a – there is*. Literature leads on to a path towards the obscurity of existence. Language through literature may establish a correlation between the physical and cosmological world, where the physical world serves as the point of departure, along with the world of sensation, feeling, and impression. Our sensations, feelings, and impressions remain part of the physical arena as long as they conform to our immediate requirements. However, subjected to reflection and intellection, being metamorphosed into conceptual categories undergoes transmutation into the cosmological world – a world of signification.

Language is, hence, characterized by a continuous displacement. It is not a question of what it is but what it becomes. In other words, it ceases to be what it is. A negation of the given language takes place either explicitly or implicitly. On the one hand, it affirms, while on the other hand, it negates. This negativity establishes the essentiality of language. Language is a staging of what is being negated and set up in that space of writing in the

domain of literature. According to Derrida (1992), writing or literature is a constant linguistic performative activity. Language is not merely a matter of producing form; it involves the notion of inter-subjectivity. Language is a phenomenon existing *in-between* the Self and the Other.

“Life endures death and maintains itself in it; in order to gain from death, the possibility of speaking and the truth of speech” (Blanchot 1995, 322); and it is through language that truth is presented. *Word*, however, is characterized by the absence of being – its nothingness. For instance, on saying *The man*, real death has been announced and is already present in the writer’s language. This is implicative of the fact that the person, i.e., *the man*, in this case, is subjected to detachment from himself, removed from his existence and presence, and in the process gets sublimated into a nothingness characterized by no existence or presence. In other words, language can be a very effective form or instrument of destruction.

Literature undergoes death, and at the same time, it is non-dying. It is characterized by sublation, i.e., the thing dies, but its concept is retained and maintained through meaning. In the opinion of Blanchot (1995), death is not only subjective but also objective. So, it is in this light that one understands that the subjective existence of the other disappears, but the text remains. The space between literature and philosophy exists owing to the lack of entwinement between human and God. The absence of God is the condition for both literature and philosophy to coexist. It is the *in-between* connection that legitimizes the *one* and the *Other*, both of which are *irreversibly atheological*; they coexist in order to secure that which lies *in-between*.

Hence, language in relation to time and death stretches beyond the confinements of ontological reality; it transgresses beyond the Self towards the Other; thus, establishing a sense of responsibility in the process. The domain of language is infinite as a result of language being an abstract entity that is independent of time. As already mentioned and substantiated, language pre-existed before time and will continue to exist even after the end of time; language is not subject to termination. Not only does language serve as a medium to express all that is bound within the closure of totality of life, but it also is effective in reaching the arena of life beyond death. Therefore, language never lives nor dies.

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