

On Paul Celan's Poetic Economy

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In her comparative study of the poetry of Greek lyric poet Simonides of Keos and Paul Celan (1920 – 1970) called *Economy of the Unlost* (1999), poet Anne Carson introduces the term “poetic economy” to explain the nature of their poetry. Poetic economy can be simply defined as the give and take of poetry, or, the way poetry takes or uses language to produce something of its own. In the history of Western poetry, Simonides is believed to be the first poet to have sold his poetry. Carson tells us that Simonides lived at the intersection of two economic systems, between gift economy and monetary economy. As soon as coins were introduced, his greed caused him to demand money for poetry. But this was done at a time when gift economy was still in place. Following Marx, Carson argues that by unknowingly turning his poetry into commodity, Simonides, used to receiving “graces” and gifts, suddenly found himself alienated in this new world of money, and as a result, alienated from his own language. His poetic language was affected by the fact of exchange. Although Simonides’s poetic language became a *measure* for a fixed measure of money for which he wrote, it produced something *measureless* in its wake. This measurelessness is an irrecoverable negativity in the poem due to which it resists a unified poetic character. We may also say that the poem performs the alienation in the exchange, and the measurelessness or negativity becomes its potentiality, that is, potentiality as negativity. Poetic language,



despite being constantly at a loss, is also the poet's last refuge, and in Simonedes' case, his only means for survival.

After the publication of his first collection of poetry *Poppy and Memory* (1952)—eight years after his liberation from a forced labour camp in Bukovina where he was born, and eleven years after his parents had been sent to their death in Transnistria—Celan not only felt alienated in a post-Holocaust world but also found himself assimilated into a tradition of lyric poetry which had until then been monologous and hermetic. Therefore, Celan's poetry is comparable to Simonedes' because it is also afflicted by alienation, bears measurelessness, and carries negativity as its own potentiality. But when it comes to bearing negativity as poetic potentiality, Simonedes is not Celan's only lyric predecessor.

At the beginning of his essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), Walter Benjamin draws our attention to an important change in the lyric poetry of Charles Baudelaire's time—the lyric poet no longer represented the personal experience of the poet, but became a mere representative of the genre. According to him, Baudelaire, who was aware of this sudden rift between the genre of lyric poetry and its writers' and readers' experience, sought to perform the disintegration of the lyric aura in his poetry (Benjamin 204). In addition to *The Flowers of Evil* (1857), Benjamin refers to Proust, Bergson, and Freud to define the readers' experience during Baudelaire's time. By reading Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1922-31), he concludes that the readers' experience resembled Proustian *memorie involuntaire*. *Memorie volontaire* is the memory of that experience which can be recalled voluntarily. On the other hand, *memorie involuntaire* is a kind of memory that a conscious person has no control over. *Memorie involuntaire* is mostly repressed and remains in a person's unconscious mind as a memory



trace of shock experienced in the past. The repressed memory is triggered when a person experiences something uncanny and shocking in their present. Baudelaire transposes his readers' shock experience of living in a hyper-modern, nineteenth century urban world onto his poetry. Unlike the flaneur, the lyric poet had no elbow room while walking in the city and experienced deep shock at every step. Benjamin argues that the poet's shock is repressed in the poem. For example, the poem "To a Passerby" is about the speaker's longing for a woman who fleetingly passes him by when "the deafening street was screaming all around me [him]" (Benjamin 184) and wonders if he will ever meet her again. The crowd, the amorphous urban mass of the "deafening street", is never invoked directly, but referred to indirectly. Baudelaire's silence about the crowd marks the poem's measurelessness or its negativity as potentiality. And in this way, Baudelaire is Celan's second lyric predecessor. Celan was sensitive to this aspect of measurelessness in Baudelaire's poetry and thought that the latter's work marked a radical break in the history of poetry with this measurelessness. Celan believed that Baudelaire introduced the possibility of a relationship between poetics and ethics (Eshel 61 – 62).

In 1954, Celan wrote the poem "Sprich auch du" ("Speak you too") in response to a review of his first collection by well-known poet and critic Hans Egon Holthusen in the respected monthly journal *Merkur*. Holthusen congratulated the poet for his "fantastic association" (qtd in Felstiner 78) and "unqualified arbitrary lyric imagination" (78). Celan's biographer John Felstiner writes that this review severely discomposed the poet as he felt that the reviewer had unmindfully appropriated his work to an existing tradition of lyric poetry, focusing only on the form instead of its meaning (79), reducing



the poem to a mere abstraction on the page. This one-dimensional reading had greatly pained Celan. He wrote:

Speak you too,
Speak as the last,
Say out your say.

Speak—
But don't split off No from Yes.
Give your say this meaning too:
Give it the shadow.

Give it shadow enough,
Give it as much
As you know is spread round you from
Midnight to midday and midnight.

Look around:
See how things all come alive—
By death! By Alive!

Speaks true who speaks shadow. (Celan and Felstiner 79 – 80)

Since this poem was written as a response to the disappointing review, we may say that it suggests that Celan was dissatisfied with the existing guidelines for interpreting poetry in the literary-hermeneutic tradition of his times. The desperate injunction to the addressee to speak, to make her speech shadowy betrays the speaker's tension and



disappointment with the existing tradition of writing and reading poetry. In this poem, poetic economy is negotiated with an addressee, a nameless “you” whose shadowy speech is the marker of measurelessness. The addressee’s truth will be shadowy and measureless just like Lucile’s sudden cry “Long live the king!” at the end of George Buchner’s play *Danton’s Death* (1825).

On 22 October 1960, Paul Celan received the Georg Buchner Prize, Germany’s premier literary award. He began his widely known speech “The Meridian” with the premise of art that is an automaton and a puppet. Art, Celan writes in the speech, is emblemised in the characters of Danton and Camille from his play *Danton’s Death*. Here, art is presented as a ubiquitous and powerful assimilating force that all the characters are continuously talking about. Art, they agree, is a stable index of one’s time, place and being. “Oh, art!” (“The Meridian” 40) sighs Camille, since art is also the mainspring of revolution. Those who discourse on art, Danton and his men, dream of going to their death together— “Fabre would even like to die ‘twice’” (39), since the men always rise to the occasion. But when Celan mysteriously writes that whenever one talks about art, there is someone who does not pay attention, someone who does not listen, we meet Lucile. What do the confusing words “Long live the king!” (qtd in Celan 40) coming from Lucile towards the end of the play signify, we may wonder. Lucile comes to the stage following Danton’s and Camille’s execution and painfully remarks:

Everything else is allowed to go on living [...] Everything’s astir... everything continues just as before, for ever and ever. —But no! It mustn’t happen, no! I shall sit on the ground and scream, so everything stops, shocked into stillness, not a flicker of movement. [She sits down covers her eyes, and screams. After a pause,



she stands up.] It makes no difference. Things are just as they were... (qtd in Levine 38)

Lucile's words fail to create an impact on the people around her. But in the next scene, she screams "Long live the king" at a patrol that was on its way to the site of the execution. This sudden cry (or address) leads to her immediate arrest and eventual death. Her absurd cry suddenly stops the play in its tracks. Who is Lucile? What does she represent? Lucile stands for poetry, Celan writes. Her absurd, unassimilable homage (or address) to the monarchy, comprises the words of poetry that art cannot make sense of. In the speech there is an antagonism between art and poetry—poetry ricochets off of art, but the latter continues to guide the former's movement. Art is the overarching, guiding force of poetry— "art is the distance poetry must cover, no less and no more" ("The Meridian" 45). But, Celan writes, sometimes a poem can move faster, can surge ahead of art in its flight *towards silence*. In the speech, poetry oscillates between the figures of Lucile and Lenz, between *absurd cries for freedom and silence*, between "still here" and "already no more" (49) — "Lenz—that is Buchner—has gone a step farther than Lucile. His 'Long live the king' is no longer a word. It is a terrifying silence. It takes his—and our—breath and words away" (47). The silence that he refers to is the silence of the historical Lenz, Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz—the contemporary of Goethe who worked extensively during the Sturm and Drang movement—whose schizophrenia became so worse on the "20th of January" (46) that he permanently fell silent. Remembering Lenz Celan writes, "Perhaps we can say that every poem is marked by its own '20th of January'?" (47) suggesting that poems bear the mark of historical and personal wound. Poems make us remain painfully mindful of all these dates. Art marks the estrangement of the self from its "I"; poetry marks freedom in this estrangement,



granting the self an “inhabitable distance” (52) from the “I”. In this freedom, Celan writes, one corresponds with the other, and the poem holds the mystery of the encounter. Towards the end of the speech, Celan suggests that we withdraw art into our innermost narrowness, into our darkness and set ourselves free—not to enlarge art but to render it vulnerable and fragile.

To understand the configuration of measureless silence in Celan, let’s read two companion poems by Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) and Celan on the absence of voice.

No longer, voice. No longer let wooing shape

Your cry.

You’re beyond it. Even though you’d call out as

clear as a bird

when Spring first bears him aloft, almost forget-

ting

that he’s a cautious creature and not an unsheathed heart...

Like him, with all his art, you’d also woo—: as

yet invisible,

so that some silent mate might learn of you thus... (Rilke 531)

Hours, May-coloured, cool.

The no more to be named, hot,

audible in the mouth.

No one’s voice, again.



Aching depth of the eyeball:

the lid

does not stand in its way, the lash

does not count what goes in.

The tear, half

The sharper lens, movable,

brings the images home to you. (Celan, *Selected Poems* 56, emphases mine)

If we pay attention to the isolated phrase “No one’s voice, again”, we will realise that it’s analogous to Rilke’s excerpt because the latter also draws our attention to the absence of voice— “No longer, voice”. Yet, there is a difference in the implication of absence of voice. Rilke’s excerpt may begin with the absence of voice or, the inadequacy of voice for the addressee, but it does not foreclose the possibility (or availability) of voice as the addressee is urged to cry out or woo for the “silent mate”. Besides, the adjective “longer” suggests that voice was at least present during a previous occasion. But, in Celan’s poem on the other hand, the use of the adverb “again” suggests that apart from the instance present in the poem, there was at least one other instance when voice was absent, foreclosing the possibility of hearing any voice. In the total absence of voice, there is also an absence of name. In the absence of voice, the other senses are active. The addressee relies on the senses to find the images. But there comes something to replace voice that is not hegemonic, something that does not silence. This is no voice, but a “late-noise”:

No

voice—a



late-noise, alien to hours, a
gift for your thoughts, here at last
wakened: a
carpel, eye size, deeply
nicked; it
resins, will not
scar over. (Celan and Felstiner 100)

In the absence of the voice, the other hears a noise that cannot keep up with time. But, despite this privation, despite being “nicked” (wounded) from this privation, it “resins” (hardens), and doesn’t “scar over” anymore. This “late-noise” is a gift for the addressee, a gift for the others’ thoughts.

There is good reason to believe that “art” in “The Meridian” represents the genre of lyric poetry. We have already learnt from Felstiner that Celan was dissatisfied with the assimilation of his poetry into an “arbitrary lyric imagination”. Moreover, the speech bears veiled responses to Gottfried Benn’s¹ 1951 lecture “Problems der Lyrik”² (“Problems of the Lyric” or “Problems of Poetry”). Incidentally, Benn was also awarded the Buchner prize before Celan in 1951. We can speculate that Celan invokes Benn

¹ In the introduction to *Impromptus*, Gottfried Benn’s selected poems, editor and translator Michael Hofman writes that Benn (1886 – 1956) was a military man, a doctor and a poet, all at once and inform that,

“...in 1933 and 1934, Benn drifted into the Nazi orbit... He drafted the declaration of loyalty to the newly returned Nazi government that precipitated mass resignations from the *Preussische Akademie der Kunst*, to which he had only recently been elected... he gave a talk welcoming the Italian Futurist (and Fascist) poet F.T. Marinetti to Berlin; he was briefly Vice-President of Hitler’s ‘*Union Nationaler Schriftsteller*’.” (xiv) Benn was part of the proto-modern Nordic Expressionist movement in Germany. According to Hofman, he is one of the greatest poets Germany has ever produced.

² This essay has been translated with the help of colleagues and friends.



without directly referring to him.³ Towards the end of his speech, Celan asks a series of rhetorical questions about the use of images and referents in his poems and answers them by saying that none of them can make up the absolute poem: “I am talking about a poem which does not exist. The *absolute poem*—no, it certainly does not, cannot exist... in every real poem, even the least ambitious, there is... this exorbitant claim” (“The Meridian” 51, emphasis mine). Benn, on the other hand writes, “Everything comes from the colours, the unpredictable nuances, the vaults—the poem comes from everything. Out of all this comes the poem... the *absolute poem*, the poem without faith, the poem without hope, the poem *addressed* to no one” (Benn 39, emphasis mine). And then finally, he makes an urgent claim that is perhaps more pertinent for our study: “The absolute poem needs no turnaround, it is able to operate without time, as the formulas of modern physics have long been doing” (42). In other words, a poem that knows its own *measure*. In this long and engaging appraisal of lyric poetry of his time, Benn makes a case for poetry that is essentially “monological”. He studies three special themes of lyric poetry, namely, a poem’s appearance, the process of composition, and finally, the word. At the very outset, Benn laments the overabundance of poems and objects that people write about in his time. He observes that poems which result from spontaneous reactions to everyday incidents are simply created, while the lyric poem is “made” (1). He differentiates lyric poetry from this “emotional”, “moody” (2) poetry as that which encapsulates the poet’s “artistry” (2). The modern lyric poet, according to Benn, presents a philosophy of the composition of the poem. He further argues that the modern lyrical renaissance started in France with Mallarmé and radiated to Germany and

³ James K. Lyon in his essay “*The Meridian: An Implicit Dialogue with Heidegger*” confirms that the speech is a veiled criticism of Benn (Lyon 228) and so does Amir Eshel in the essay “Paul Celan’s Other: History, Poetics, and Ethics”. See pages 62 – 63.



influenced poets such as Rilke, Stefan George and Hofmannsthal. The western poem, according to him, is held together by a thought of the form and this thought is represented in lyric poetry: “Artistry is the attempt of art to experience itself as content within the general decay of content and to form a new style out of this experience; it is an attempt to set a new transcendence against the general nihilism of values...” (13) And while explaining the monological nature of the modern lyric poem he quotes a certain Richard Wilburns who wittily said, “a poem... is addressed to the muse, and one of its purposes is to conceal the fact that *poetry is not addressed to anyone*” (14, emphasis mine). “The Meridian” underlines several moments from the “Problem of the Lyric”. One such outstanding response is Celan’s proposition that the poem is uncompromisingly dialogical—it’s a “desperate conversation” (50) with the other. But this conversation is not merely a means to an end that returns to the subject of the poem as Benn suggests, and nor is it dialogical in the sense we have elaborated in the introduction. The site of the conversation is a radical opening, and this is both the means and the end of the poem. Celan’s essay undercuts the notion of opposition. In Celan’s critique⁴ of art (we must recall that Benn constantly refers to poetic practice as “artistry”), he does not forsake art to distinguish his poetry. Poetry has to *effect* a radical difference and break within art, or in this case, the tradition of monological lyric poetry. We may read one of his short poems to think about this point:

⁴ It’s important to note that, unlike Benn, Celan bypassed his well-known German poet predecessors and sought inspiration from excerpts of a play. It is certain that he felt alienated by the expressionist poetics of his predecessors and his contemporaries. The plagiarism charges made by Claire Goll, expressionist bilingual poet Yvan Goll’s widow, made matters worse. Not only did she accuse him of lifting from her husband’s 1951 volume of poetry for his *Poppy and Memory*, she also blamed him for the rejection of his German translations of Yvan Goll’s French poetry by a Swiss publisher, calling them “cursory and inept”. Even though several well-known poets and critics like Ingeborg Bachmann, Peter Szondi, the German Academy of Language, came to his defence, Goll’s accusation left an indelible mark on his already fragile and wounded poetic mind (Felstiner 154).



Illegibility

of this world. All things twice over.

The strong clocks justify

the splitting hour,

hoarsely.

You clamped

into your deepest part,

climb out of yourself

for ever. (*Selected Poems* 105)

The deictic address appears at a moment in the last stanza when there is no legible world left to gather. It marks a moment of crisis and stasis even for the one uttering these words. The words that precede this stanza where “You” is urged to climb out, takes away the presence or even the possibility of a fixed hour. Yet they are urged to climb out and stay on “for ever” promising them abundant time and world in the absence of a legible world and in the absence of functional objective time. In the absence of a legible world and a fixed hour, the poem no longer remains a stable site for gathering. Due to the “illegibility” of the world and its split hour, its structure remains undetermined. We can neither determine its temporality, nor its spatiality. The “ontological emptiness” of the world becomes the poem’s subject. The poem is rendered as lonely as “You”, as the other. The deixis solicits the voice of the other and in doing so, destabilises its interiority and solipsism. It opens up the possibility of a conversation, perhaps a “desperate conversation”.



In his draft notes to the “The Meridian”, notes which did not finally make it to the final version of the speech, Celan writes,

The poem is inscribed as the figure of the [complete] language; but language remains invisible{.}; that which actualises itself—language—takes steps, as soon as that has happened, back into the realm of the possible... The poem is the place where synonymy becomes impossible... Stepping out of language, the poem, steps opposite language. This opposition cannot be *sublated*... that’s why the poem, in its being and not through its subject matter first—is a school of true humanity: it teaches to understand the other as the other [i.e. in its otherness] ... (Böschenstein and Heino 104 – 105)

We can hardly miss the reference to Hegel in the word “sublated”⁵. It becomes clear that the opposition between poem and language is not dialectical. The opposition cannot be resolved into a synthesis with the cancellation of one by the other. A good example of poetic sublation can be Rilke’s poem “Love Song”:

⁵ There is an uncanny resemblance between a passage from Hegel’s *Introduction to Fine Art* describing the mind’s infinite ability to think about the sensuous realm and a poem by Celan: While writing about the practical aspect of the mind’s infinite ability to think and grasp the sensuous realm instead of hovering in the supra-sensuous, Hegel writes, “Even the child’s first impulse involves the practical modification of external things. A boy throws stones into the river, and then stands admiring the circles that trace themselves on the water, as an effect in which he attains the sight of something that is his own doing” (Hegel 59). And Celan’s poem says:

I heard it said there was
A stone in the water and a circle,
And above the water a word
That lays the circle around the stone (*Paul Celan: Selections* 32)

Celan takes Hegel’s phenomenology of spirit and turns it into a riddle. The “word” seems to have superceded mere appearance of phenomena in the world. The appearance of “stone” and “circle” is simply reported and this act of reporting falls short of thought’s ability to establish a connection between the two. In the poem it is the “word” which establishes the expected causal connection between the two. Word seems to be split between thought and poetry. The poem then ends by evoking a few questions: Is word here the vehicle of thought or is it detached from thought? Does it supercede thought? These questions destabilise the notion of subjectivity in the poem. If the self-consciousness of thought is what subjectivity is anchored to, then subjectivity is compromised through the subtle blurring of thought.



How shall I keep my soul
from touching yours? How shall I
lift it up beyond you to other things?
Ah, I would gladly hide it
in darkness with something lost
in some silent foreign place
that doesn't tremble when your deeps stir.
Yet whatever touches you and me
blends us together the way a bow's stroke
draws one voice from two strings.
Across what instrument are we stretched taut?
And what player holds us in his hand?
O sweet song. (Rilke 228)

Love is sublated into the song, the poem in the last line "O sweet song" and will remain there forever as a sign of love. As sublation, love reveals the speaker's impulse to create an ideology of love. Poetry that manifests such love in the form of a relationship with an addressee is monological despite address.

In his first collection of poems *Poppy and Memory* (1952), Celan addresses a poem to the lover in a short poem called "The Years from You to Me". It is a poem that is



perhaps closest to the dynamic of love present between the speaker and the addressee
in Rilke's poem:

Your hair waves once more when I weep. With the

blue of your eyes

you lay the table of love: a bed between summer and

autumn.

We drink what somebody brewed neither I nor you nor

a third; we lap up some empty and last thing.

We watch ourselves in the deep sea's mirrors and faster

pass food to the other:

the night is the night, it begins with the morning,

beside you it lays me down. (*Selected Poems* 31, emphasis mine)

Having arrived at this poem after understanding love as sublation, our attention instantly moves to the lines we have emphasised. Unlike Rilke's poem, where love is present in the instrument that symbolises the union of the speaker and the addressee, Celan's poem, in the lines we have emphasised, meticulously places an absence (or measurelessness) that cannot be sublated within the poem. Neither the brewer of the drink nor the drink has a sign to hold onto. As the line proceeds, sublation is arrested in the phrase "neither I nor you nor/ *a third*". The enjambment emphasises and extends the absence in "some empty



and last thing”. From the site of this absence, if we go to the lines that come before and after these lines, we will begin to realise that the absence engulfs all the other signs. The “table of love” has nothing to signify it, nothing to memorialise it. When the speaker and the addressee realise their ephemerality in the “deep sea’s mirrors”, they “pass it [the food] to the other”. The last phrase is ambiguous, so, there are two suggestions: It could either imply that the speaker passes the food to the addressee, or that together they pass the food to an altogether other. The line “the night is the night, it begins with the morning” destroys the illusion that there are fixed hours to mark the beginning and the end of the different phases of the day. Night *is* night during its (illusory) time. But, night also coincides with the onset of morning, engulfing the day in darkness and blinding the speakers. The hour of togetherness cannot be determined by objective time. The hour of togetherness is covered in darkness and marked by the absence of light. In the poem, love is not transcendence, it is an abiding *absence*. Love has no sign to hold onto, and it is not known by its fruits. There is nothing to memorialise the “years from you to me” — the “bed” in the dislocated line “bed between summer and/ autumn” hangs above an abyss—except there is a singular event of an encounter with the addressee in the poem. In the absence of a resolution, the poem bears a trace of measurelessness. But a poem is not the only thing that bears the trace of measurelessness.

Like Lucile, there was one Madame de Maintenon who came before her time and hailed the life of a king. Her king was Louis XIV but unlike Lucile, she was married to her king. The king, she once expressed, “takes all my time; I give the rest to Saint-Cyr, to whom I would like to give all” (qtd in Derrida 1). The aforesaid expression is the starting



point of Jacques Derrida's book on the economy of gift, *Given Time: Counterfeit Money* (1992).

Madame de Maintenon, Derrida writes, was an exceptional queen and wife. Her expression reveals that she was both "an outlaw and the very figure of the law" (*Given Time* 1). How so? Derrida unpacks her expression about the king taking *all* of *her* time and her giving the rest to Saint-Cyr, a charitable institution for poor young women of good families, as her subservience to the king (or the monarchy) and her defiance, or, her desire to escape. She did give Saint-Cyr all of her time but that was only possible after the death of the king in 1715. Perhaps the rest of her time that she gave them, which otherwise belonged in full to the king when he was alive, something that she wanted to take back in full and in turn, give them in full, betrayed her desire for his death? (4)

A gift is also known as a present—we say we will present a gift to someone, or we say we will give a present to someone. Hence, time is always already inscribed in the expression of gift-giving. When we say that the Madame could not turn her gift into a present because what she desired to gift, all of her time, was taken away by her husband, the king, it has the following connotations: The act of gifting and time are wound together in such a way that it is impossible to think of a gift outside the present, outside "now" and, it shapes our perception of time *as* the present, that is, time is time when it's a "now". Gift can only be phenomenised in the present. What does it mean to give the "rest of her time" to the institution? It means that she gives what she does not have. So, her gift is what is rest, what does not belong to her. Her gift is the impossible. Gift, Derrida writes, is always of the order of the impossible:

Why and how can *I think that the gift is the impossible?* And why is it here a matter precisely of thinking, as if thinking, the word thinking, found its fit only in this



disproportion of the impossible, even announcing itself... only on the basis of this figure of the impossible, on the basis of the impossible *in the figure of the gift?* (10)

We must note that when Madame de Maintenon finally gets all of her time back after the king's death and devotes all of it to the institution, her giving manifests the giving of gift in the present, giving present in the presence of time, manifesting presence. This act invalidates her earlier expression of giving "the rest" of her time (as a gift) to the institution. The act of gifting of all of her time invalidates the gift. She no longer gives what does not belong to her, but gives what she has in abundance such that, the act of giving does not take away anything from her. If what she gives is what is already hers and never depletes, then she doesn't present the gift but presents *herself*. This is not an act of giving a gift to an other—since the separation from what she has given is only provisional—but gifting one's self to another, or, gifting oneself to oneself. Derrida argues that this circular return of the self governs economy, especially gift economy when every gift given is equivalent to the gift received, the counter-gift.

Derrida writes that the figure of the circle is at the centre of economy (6). Economy's law is circular, and has the "odyssean structure" (7)— "The being-next-to-self of the Idea of in Absolute Knowledge would be odyssean in this sense..." (7). Regarding gift's relationship to economy, Derrida writes,

Now the gift, *if there is any*, would no doubt be related to economy... But is not the gift, if there is any, also that which interrupts economy? That which, in suspending economic calculation, no longer gives rise to exchange? That which opens the circle so as to defy reciprocity or symmetry, the common measure, and so as to turn aside the return in view of the no-return? ... If the figure of the circle is essential to economics, the gift must remain *aneconomic*. Not that it remains



foreign to the circle, but it must *keep* a relationship of foreignness to the circle, a relation without relation of familiar foreignness. It is perhaps in this sense that the gift is the impossible. (7)

As long as Madame de Maintenon gives the rest, gives what she does not have, she is our Lucile. Lucile's confusing, unassimilable cry is a gift in disguise. Her cry is the impossible. It compels her listeners to hear and think the impossible. But as the impossible, her cry is a gift for her husband and his comrades as the cry that betrays them is also the cry that unites them in death. Lucile's cry is aporetic, an aporetic cry of melancholy and love. Lucile's cry performs the privation of a language that is violent in its monologicity. Her cry is an *aporia* because it causes a moment of crisis, an impasse from which there can be no return—from which there can only be a "great, great going". Since Celan negotiates his poetic economy with an addressee, his poetry is a gift to the other. Celan gives what he does not have, what he does not own—language. But, it is a language that welcomes the other, a language that performs its loss to give (gift) voice to the other. Celan's poetry cannot be subsumed under monological lyric poetry. His poetry is a gift to this tradition and ushers in a new thinking of lyric poetry. His poetic economy is measureless.

Celan's poetry is *a gift of the lyric*.



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