

ii. Circle of Performativity

Accepted hypothesis regarding the origin of language states language evolved from hunting, unfolding into conception, creation, and usage of many kinds of material and abstract tools (Kimbrough Oller, Dale, Griebel). However. First, during a prelinguistic phase, primitive man tooled the body itself by copying and repeating favourable actions: hand became tool. By use of this protolanguage - based on gestural communication – It became possible to *transform* available matter into articulations of need: i.e. a single stone (Toth)¹ became sharp spearhead, incisor... dissector... The concept of *unity* cut into divide, embodied. A technological index towards cultural replication conceivable only from a diverse complex communication system (Levinson, Holler). The 'gesture-first hypothesis'² suggests gesture and speech evolved together. However, non-verbal cultures are vulnerable to environmental change. An imitative and non-verbal culture will lose skill if the environment from where the skill originated and used, disappears longer than an individual lifespan (Kimbrough, Oller et al.). Primate culture vulnerability research therefore argues that since early Homo species - Homo Habilis (qtd. in Schrenk, Ch 9), retained their tool cultures despite millennia of temporal cyclic climate change. These species had sufficiently developed language abilities to verbally describe complete procedures. Grammar is needed to express series of action, a two-word "proto-language" would not suffice (163 -170)³. These actions require *nouns* or names of thing(s)⁴, which can occur as the main word in the subject of a clause, the object of a verb, or the object of a preposition. And verbs, which *inflect* in specific ways, encoding tense, aspect, mood, and voice influencing the relational position of object and subject. I regard *syntax* a micro landscape built up of time-space

¹ "...flakes and retouched flakes - were essential tools in Oldowan technology, particularly for activities involving cutting..." Toth, Nicholas, 1985.

² "...the "gesture-first" idea was put forward by several prominent thinkers—for example, by Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, in Paris in 1746 (Condillac, 2001), or by Giambattista Vico, in Naples in 1744 (Bergin & Fisch, 1984). It was further sympathetically discussed in the nineteenth century by Edward Tylor (1865), Garrick Mallery (1881/1972), George Romanes (1898), and Wilhelm Wundt (1901/1973), among others.

³ New Frontiers in Language Evolution and Development: Introduction to the topics Volume, D. Kimbrough Oller, Rick Dale, Ulrike Griebel. Taken from: Kendon, Adam. Reflections on the "gesture-first" hypothesis of language origins. *Psychon Bull Rev.* 2017; 24(1): 163–170.

⁴ Nouns: living creatures, physical objects, places, actions, qualities, mental or physical states of existence, and ideas or abstract entities.

location, temporality, modality, values, movement, voice, and negation. And within these linguistic landscapes tools are (not only) deployed (-) they also *take* position.

I believe, an intrinsic relation exists within the triptych: space - language/gesture - tool. As a mother, graphic designer, and teacher I observe, live, and analyse affect from this construe. I contemplate how it influences me...seeing what it can do with others. And wonder. Could it be that language creates landscapes within syntax, empowering us to intervene through the 'gestured' use of tools? How does this *turn* influence us? How does it define us and what are the consequences for the world we live in. I will discuss this so-called "wording" of the exterior world with interior needs, through what I have coined "the circle of performativity"⁵. A perpetual cycle in which language (syntax) and gestures define space articulating landscapes where actor positions (problematised through gesture) are translated into need and materialized in the conceptualization of tools ... which in turn effect language through use. This model helps me understand how profound historic earthy matters (such as oil, wood, and stone) create verbal (metaphoric), organizational, material tools...and a paradox. Using these tools domesticated our wildness while at the same time forces us to return to a *Wild* we have become too *unhanded* to survive in without technological *guidance*. I feel today's unbridled domestication paralyses the idiosyncratic leading to an involuntary return to the wild for the inadequate, unprofitable, and dispelled social groups. The scope of disorders termed disability, seems to be widening. Causal by nature, linear thought enhances this mechanism. It is therefore imperative to unveil and counter exclusion contrivances created by causal thought. Non-linear narratology is an interdisciplinary method which could help us to re-form abject performative nouns such as alterity.

⁵ *Performativity*. John Austin (1962), credited with initiating the study into performatives, states that a 'performative utterance' is a speech act that *creates* events or relations in the world for example the statement: the naturalisation of a new citizen to a state. Every utterance is a *locution*. Performative Speech acts are *Illocutionary* and *Perlocutionary*. *Illocutionary*, when they are *intended* speech acts that bring about certain realities -determined by social conventions in particular situations (i.e. judicial pronouncements). *Perlocutionary* performatives is the effect that follows by saying something upon listeners within society. Per-formatives are utterances that cause formative force *per* (by means of) the utterance. Performativity in its causative sense, reverses the concept of identity as the source of secondary actions (speech, gestures).