

Noise, Clinamen

From an early age, we are taught how to walk, how to sit, when to speak, when to be silent. A choreography of movements, words: clarity, conciseness, avoidance of double meaning. It is hierarchical, linear, mute, motionless and passive. The forming of identity follows strict rules. Nothing new under the sun of sameness. It is the principle of reason, to exist, rather than nothing. It marks our being, world-making, our presence, our utterance.

Can we envision the opposite—in existing? Not in death, or nothingness, but existing rather in terms of not being bound to a stable position of zero. Existing as a means of reasoning—inclining from equilibrium of just existing. Reasoning to exist is a deviation from equilibrium. Deviation that occurs spontaneously, with no cause and no end. Atomically bound, universally connected.

Serres confirms: *“If things exist and if there is a world, they are displaced in relation to zero. And if there is a reason, it is this inclined proportion. If there is a science, it is its evaluation.*

If there is a discourse, it speaks of inclination. If there is a practice, it is its tool. We do not exist, do not speak and do not work, with reason, science or hands, except through and by this deviation from equilibrium. Everything is deviation from equilibrium.”¹

Equilibrium seems absurd. Possible, but surely not very creative. Disturbances, anomalies and events close to equilibrium get absorbed and alleviated. Away from it, more differentiation, diversity, multiplicity appears. This bet is not a cheap one: the more differentiation there is, the more unstable and expensive the system becomes. Instability is the precondition of creativity.

Can this text invite you to an exercise in deviation? Can it invite you to talk to it, to talk in other ways, to take other directions when claiming dialogue and space. To purposely disobey the normative bodies of hierarchies and generate new space through deviations.

What happens then? When we organise deviant formations? When we stand

instead of sit, walk instead of lie down, play instead of listen? How do we move in a room filled with objects that distract our usual patterns? Finally, how do we document this behaviour, where space becomes wilderness, and our imagination is beyond our limits?

From Serres' noise to Lucretius' clinamen. Let's reflect on this peculiar context, and index the world from antiquity to this day, in a vortex of space matter compiled from an infinite number of atoms which randomly move through space, like specks of dust colliding under rays of sunlight, merging and forming complex structures, only to diverge again in the process of creation and destruction.

Lucretius gave us *clinamen* which relates to the swerving and deflecting of celestial configurations; from the arch of the Sun and the unpredictable swerve of atoms which move and collide in the universe. Inclinations, declinations, statues. Lucretius gives us physics before physics. In pre-Socratic philosophy, clinamen is the smallest angle by which an atom deviates from a straight line. When atoms fall through the void, according to Lucretius, they deviate slightly from their course. This deviation is the generator of differential energy and matter. For Lucretius, "*If it were not for this swerve, everything would fall downwards like raindrops through the abyss of space. No collision would take place and no impact of atom upon atom would be created. Thus nature would never have created.*"²

If the fall of atoms had nothing to disturb it, there would be nothing more than the fall; a constant equilibrium and stasis. It's only with the swerve in the fall of atoms—with clinamen—where differences are articulated. Matter is clumping

in a new way, sometimes forming only momentary coagulations of turbulent systems that dissolve as soon as they appear.

A creation of new characters happens—in grammar too: a declension, *die Deklination*, the inflection of nouns, pronouns, and adjectives. Change is hidden in the swerve of words. Clinamen allows the production of differentiated forms, open to many meanings, complex and sophisticated syntaxes, just like language does. If letters are to words what atoms are to bodies, that would imply they are constantly in flux. Roland Barthes knows the delicate connection between the letter and the word: "*Such is the alphabet's power: to rediscover a kind of natural state of the letter. For the letter, if it is alone, is innocent: the Fall begins when we align letters to make them.*"³

We realise that time and language does not only flow linearly, but goes through stop points, cracks, confluences, lightning trajectories, accelerations, rifts, cavities, and all that occurs at random...—Time flows in an exceedingly turbulent and chaotic manner; it drips, filters, drains, discharges, washes away, leaks. Thanks to clinamen, we discover a real locus of poetic creativity. It is the final victory of the aleatory over the motivated: the unpredictable, the imperfect, the unbalanced.

1 Michel Serres, *The Birth of Physics* (Philosophy of Science), 1980

2 Lucretius, *The Nature of Things*, 1 BC

3 Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, 1967