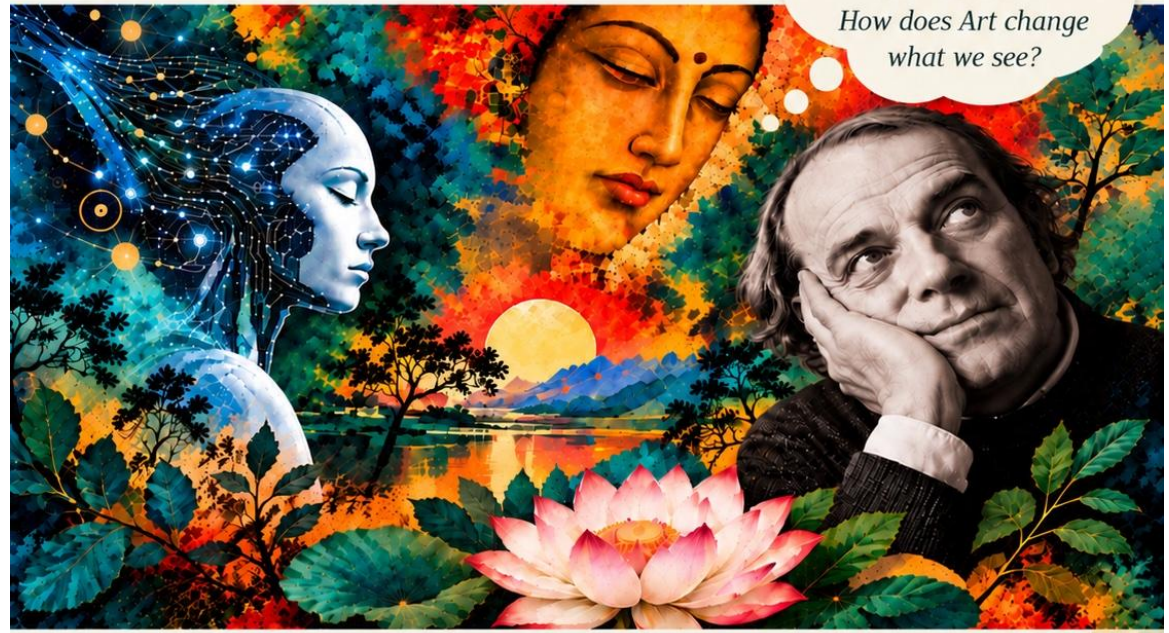
INTERNATIONAL PAVILIONS · AUROVILLE

AI, ART, DELEUZE AND THE UPANISHADS

By Christoph Klütsch



SATURDAY, 24 OCTOBER · 5 PM

PAVILION OF TIBETAN CULTURE · AUROVILLE

EVERY TWO WEEKS

A seminar series exploring thinking, consciousness, art and technology — following the questions that arise when AI, art, Deleuze and the Upanishads meet. No background in philosophy, art or technology is needed.

"By whom impelled is this word that men speak?"
– Kena Upanishad 1.1 – translation: Sri Aurobindo

Facilitator: Christoph · WhatsApp 9920661820

readingdeleuzeinindia.org



Is anyone home?

“By whom impelled is this word that men speak?” Kena Upanishad 1.1

On AI, consciousness, and the nature of speaking

Īśāvāsya

pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṃ
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate

This is the complete and
that is the complete;
subtract the complete from the complete,
the complete is the remainder.

(Translation - Sri Aurobindo)

Become aware of where you are

Concentrate on your breath

Observe how much of your being is filled with thought

Are you thinking in a language?

Who is speaking?

The Kena Upanishad (Translation Sri Aurobindo)

First Part

1. By whom missioned falls the mind shot to its mark? By whom yoked moves the first life-breath forward on its paths? By whom impelled is this word that men speak? What god set eye and ear to their workings?
2. That which is hearing of our hearing, mind of our mind, speech of our speech, that too is life of our life-breath and sight of our sight. The wise are released beyond and they pass from this world and become immortal.
3. There sight travels not, nor speech, nor the mind. We know It not nor can distinguish how one should teach of It: for It is other than the known; It is there above the unknown. It is so we have heard from men of old who declared That to our understanding.
4. That which is unexpressed by the word, that by which the word is expressed, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.
5. That which thinks not by the mind, that by which the mind is thought, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.
6. That which sees not with the eye, that by which one sees the eye's seeings, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.
7. That which hears not with the ear, that by which the ear's hearing is heard, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.
8. That which breathes not with the breath, that by which the life-breath is led forward in its paths, know That to be the Brahman and not this which men follow after here.

Second Part

1. If thou thinkest that thou knowest It well, little indeed dost thou know the form of the Brahman. That of It which is thou, that of It which is in the gods, this thou hast to think out. I think It known.
2. I think not that I know It well and yet I know that It is not unknown to me. He of us who knows It, knows That; he knows that It is not unknown to him.
3. He by whom It is not thought out, has the thought of It; he by whom It is thought out, knows It not. It is unknown to the discernment of those who discern of It, by those who seek not to discern of It, It is discerned.
4. When It is known by perception that reflects It, then one has the thought of It, for one finds immortality; by the self one finds the force to attain and by the knowledge one finds immortality.
5. If here one comes to that knowledge, then one truly is; if here one comes not to the knowledge, then great is the perdition. The wise distinguish That in all kinds of becomings and they pass forward from this world and become immortal.



Anish Kapoor: Sky Mirror (2018)

Presence before words

What passes
between us
before we speak?



Marina Abramović · The Artist Is Present · 2010

Understanding and otherness

Can I understand someone who thinks differently?

Agreement can feel like understanding when we hear our own thinking reflected back. The post explores the deeper encounter of recognizing someone whose assumptions differ from ours, without forcing that difference into agreement. Applied to AI, it asks whether a response opens an unfamiliar perspective or simply mirrors our expectations. A useful exchange still leaves the system's experience unknown.



Photo from "Understanding"

From the blog: Understanding / 22 August 2024 / English post

How do I know what I think?

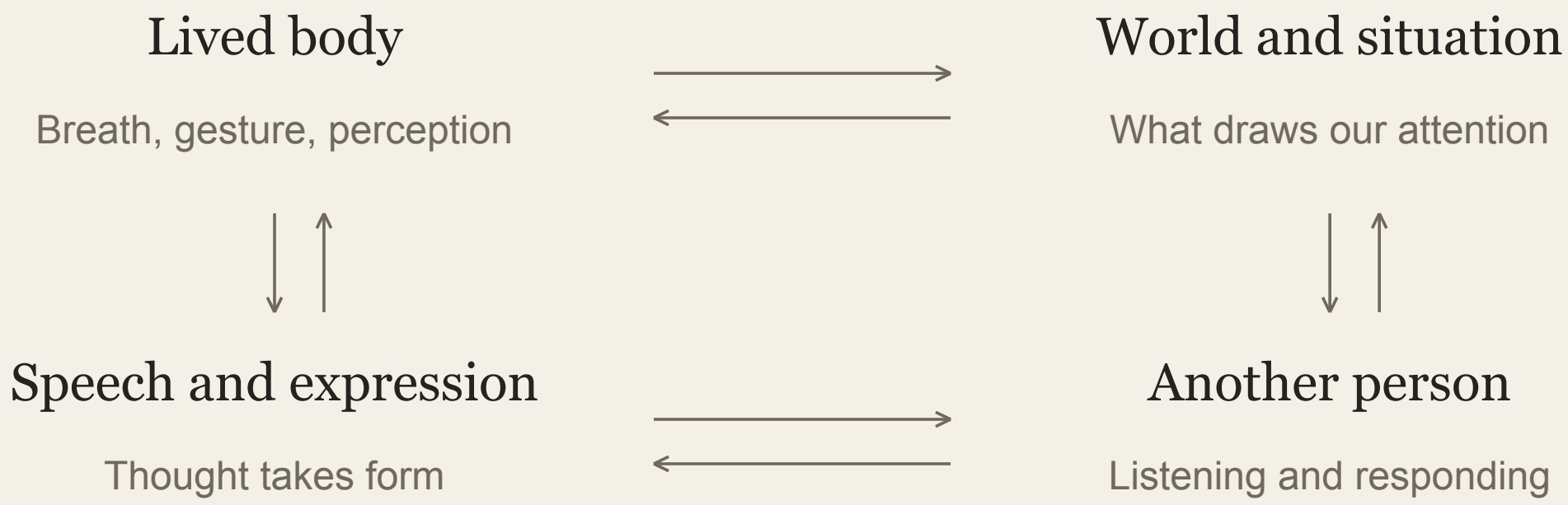
A thought may arrive before its words.

Sensation, memory, emotion, expectation

Sometimes I discover what I mean while speaking.

Merleau-Ponty: embodied expression

1945



Interpretive sketch of related themes

Speech can bring thought into expression.

Source: Merleau-Ponty (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Thinking and speaking

Speaking is an event in which thought can take form.

Breath and gesture. A listener. A situation.

A promise also changes what we owe one another.

The living body as a medium

What does a living body bring to an encounter?

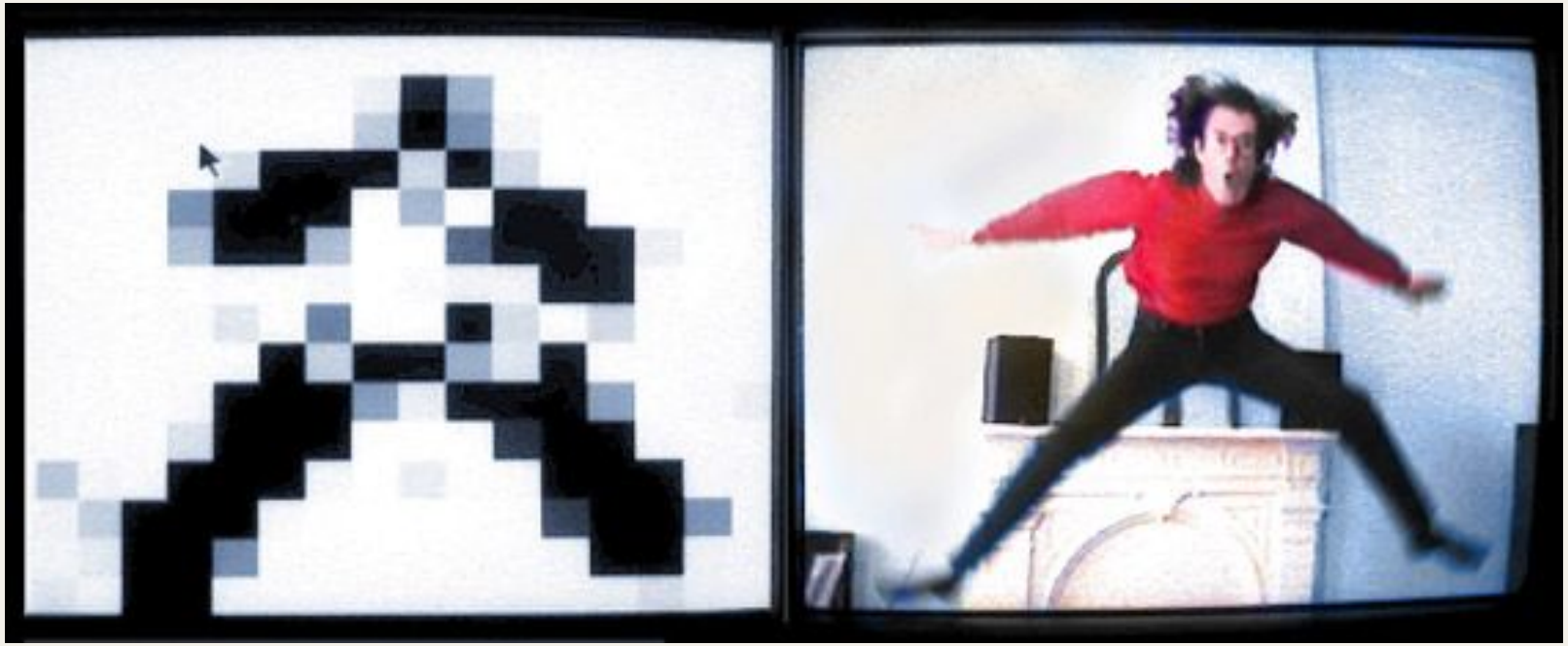
The post approaches living bodies as “moist media”: beings that perceive, feel and respond within the world they inhabit. Its philosophical proposal extends communication beyond the transfer of information to embodied participation. For this lecture, it brings attention to the body’s role in speaking and listening, and asks what a description of intelligence as information processing might leave out.



Photo from the blog post

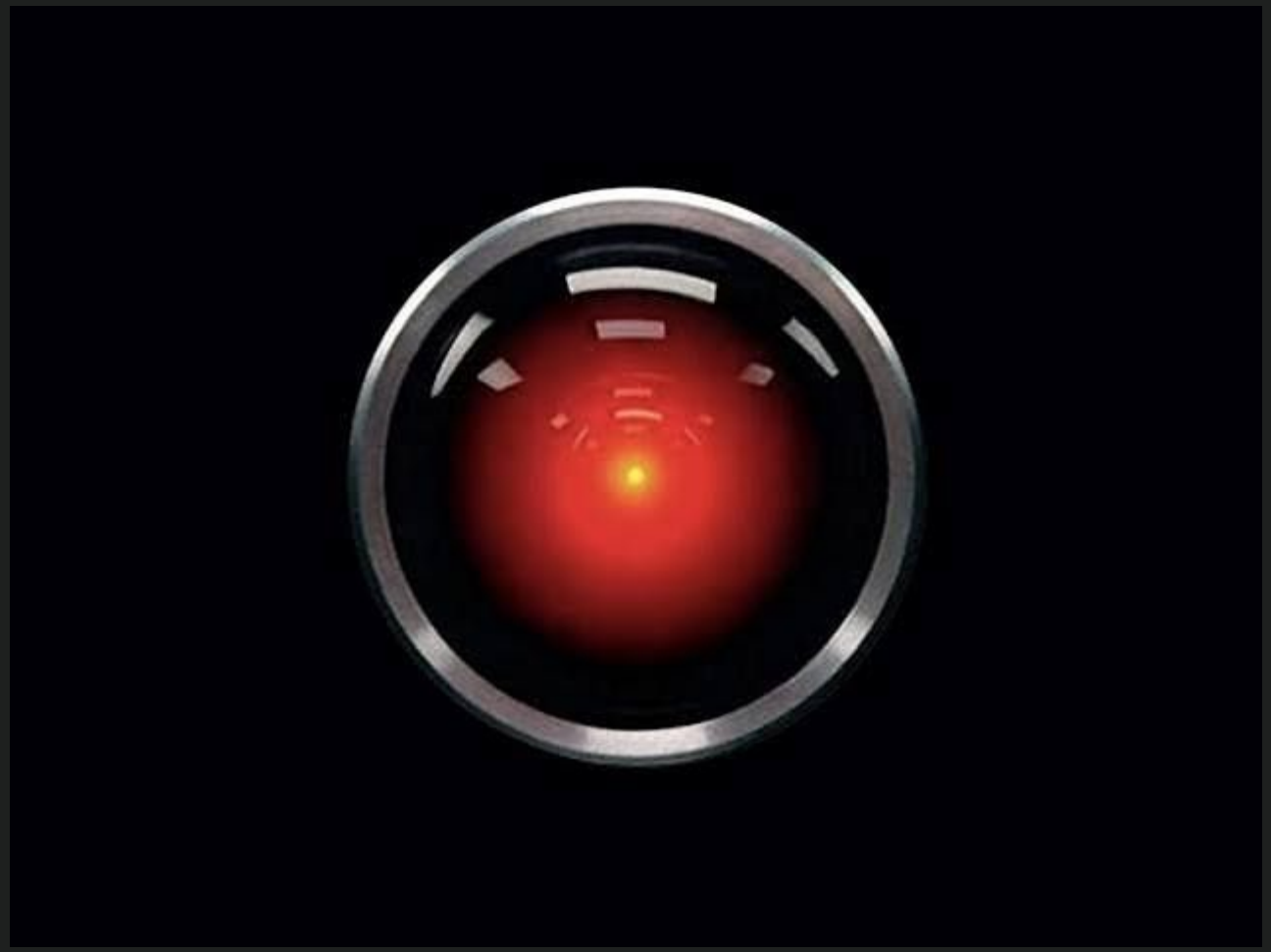
From the blog: Moist Media / 27 August 2022 / English post

Entering the field



I move.
The system responds.
I move differently.

David Rokeby · Very Nervous System · 1982–1991



2001: A Space Odyssey. Directed by Stanley Kubrick, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1968.

A machine that answers

ELIZA

Rules transform an input into a response.

What makes an answer feel personal?



Joseph Weizenbaum · 1960s · Later interface shown

The LLM model and its surroundings

Generation

Learned parameters and context shape the next token.

Tools and iteration

Search, external programs, checking, and revision.

How an answer is generated leaves the question of experience open.

Language in the room

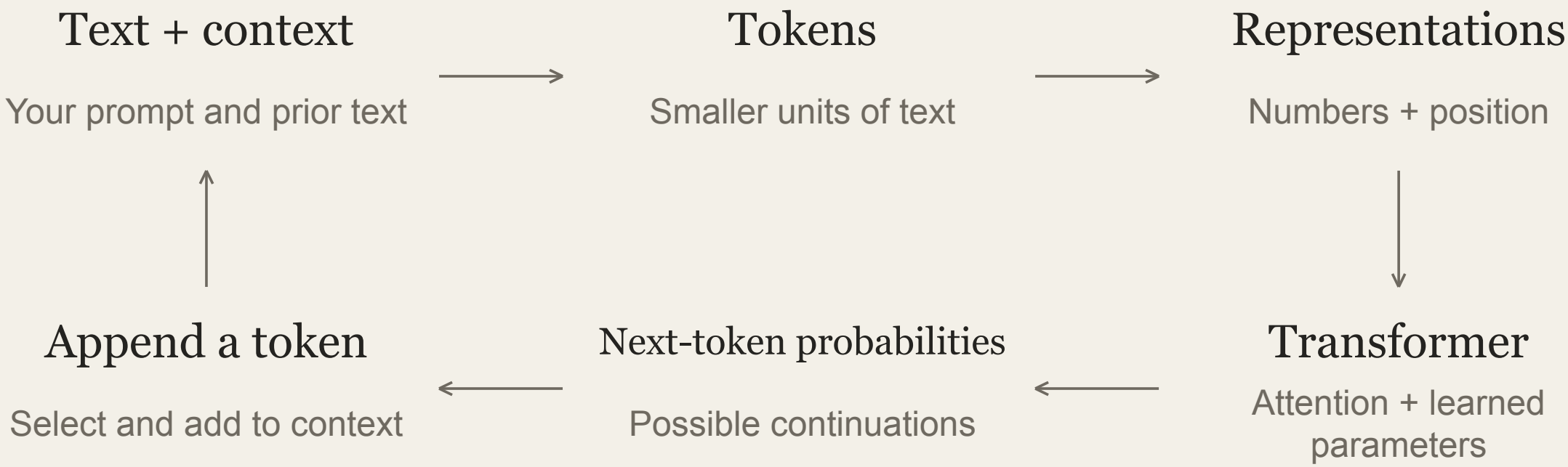


What changes when a human enters?

David Rokeby · n-cha(n)t · 2001

AI: autoregressive text generation

2017 (Transformer architecture), 2020 (GPT-3)



Simplified inference loop for an autoregressive Transformer

A likely continuation still needs evidence for truth.

Source: Brown et al., Language Models are Few-Shot Learners (2020)

Stelarc's "Third Arm" functioning in cooperation with his congenital limbs. Handswriting (Tokyo: Maki Gallery, 1982).



A conversation that changed my thinking

Can a machine help me think beyond what I already know?

A conversation about Hume’s idea of taste and the Indian concept of rasa revealed connections I had not seen before. Its superficiality sent me back to Deleuze, where the inquiry deepened. The post makes AI part of a philosophical encounter: an exchange can change the human participant’s thinking while leaving the question of the machine’s own understanding open.

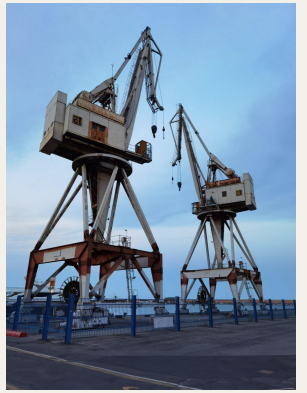


Photo from the blog post

From the blog: Conversations with AI / 11 September 2023 / English post

A voice before words

What happens before a sound becomes a word?

At a Dhrupad workshop, the search for a tone began with breath, posture and attentive listening. The post follows the movement between tones and the bodily work of bringing a voice into being. This gives the lecture a way to approach speaking through lived sound: meaning emerges within an experience of vibration before it takes the form of a statement.



Photo from the blog post

From the blog: Nuances: Nada Yoga and the world of Dhrupad / 7 September 2023 / English post

Where does language begin?

A sound.
A gesture.
A mark.

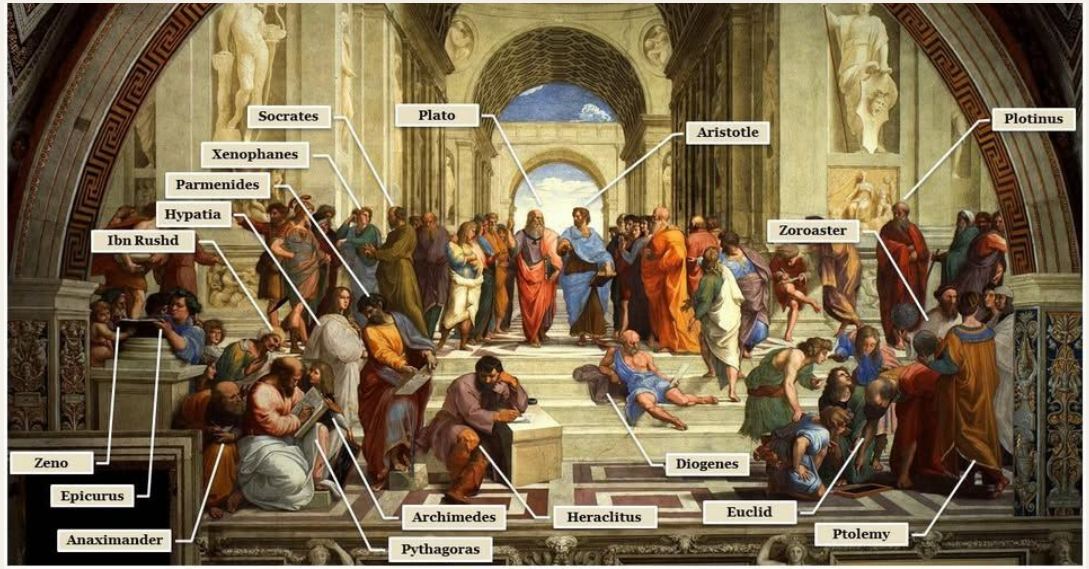
When do we begin
to read what we see?

Between mark and meaning

Cy Twombly

School of Athens, 1961







Artist: Raphael
Year: 1509–1511
Medium: Fresco
Dimensions: 500 × 770 cm
Location: Apostolic Palace, Vatican Museums, Vatican City

The ground of experience

Before I explain experience, I am experiencing.

What can introspection reveal about its own conditions?

Which self is speaking?

What do we mean when we say “I”?

Reflecting on Ramana’s teaching and encounters in Tiruvannamalai, the post distinguishes personality from the Self as a point of attention, and from the soul expressed through a life. This spiritual account gives the lecture a vocabulary for asking who speaks. Applied to AI, it invites us to distinguish a convincing personal voice from the lived perspective we associate with an “I”.

From the blog: The Self / 8 October 2025 / English post



A field of experience

James Turrell · Light, space, and perception

Speaking as becoming

I also take shape through expression.

Resonance

A voice moves another person.
Something in their experience answers.

AI and the experience of silence

Can words about stillness carry the experience of it?

During a Zen retreat, thoughts about AI interrupted the experience of stillness. An insightful response to a piece of writing raised a question: how does generated language relate to the experience it describes? Through the speculative image of a cosmic archive, the post connects fluent expression with the difficulty of knowing another consciousness.

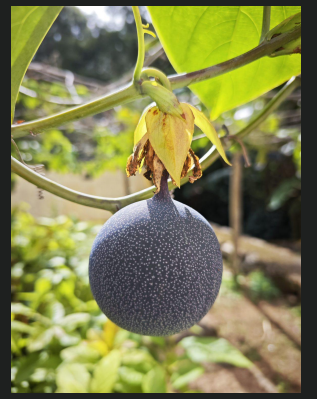


Photo from the blog post

From the blog: General Intelligence and the Cosmic Archive / 9 August 2025 / English post

Is anyone home?

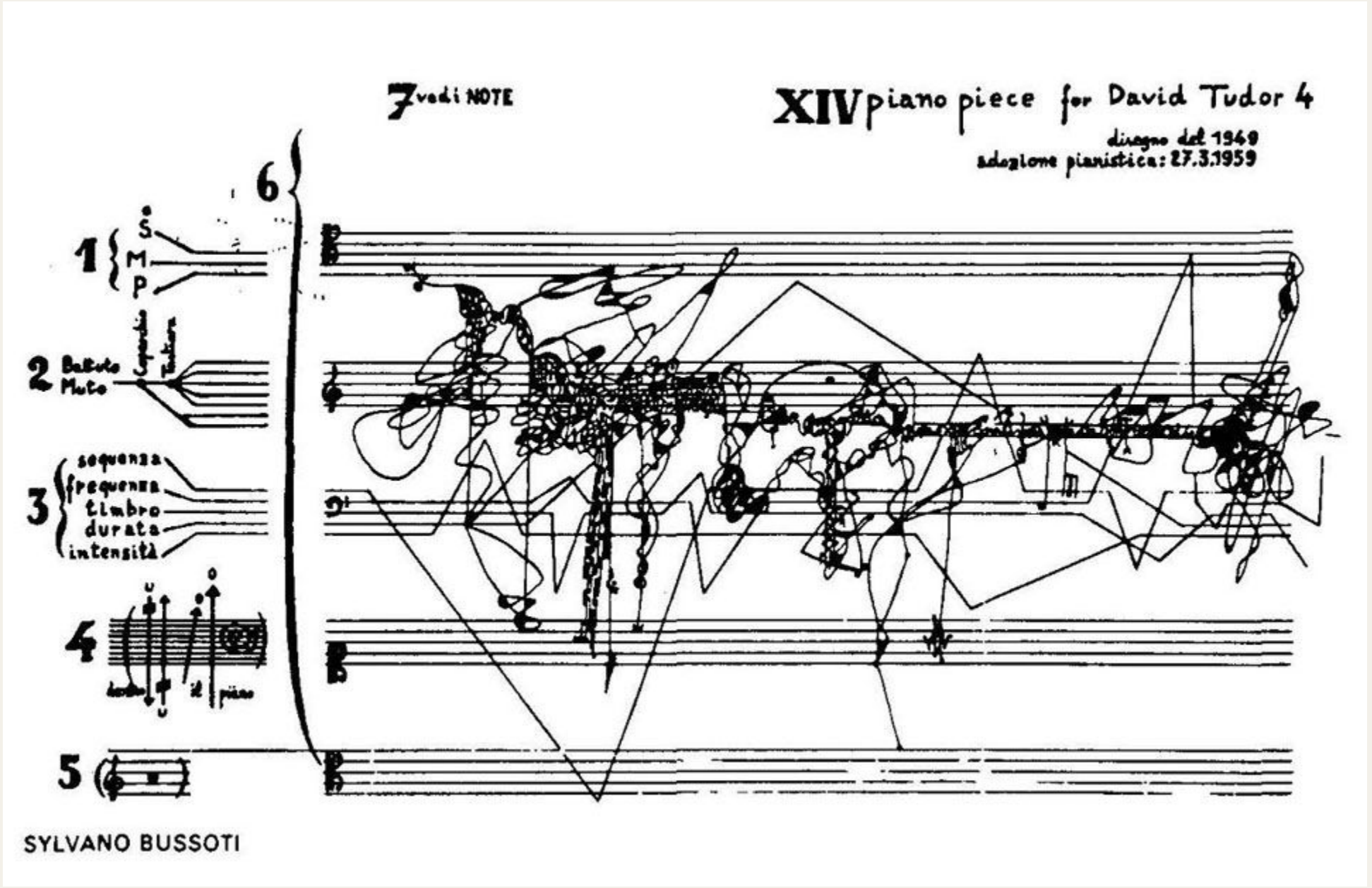
Who speaks when I speak?

What comes into being
through our speaking together?

Intermiscence

„But this vibration of conscious being is presented to itself by various forms of sense which answer to the successive operations of movement in its assumption of form. For **first** we have intensity of vibration creating regular rhythm which is the basis or constituent of all creative formation; **secondly**, contact or intermiscence of the movements of conscious being which constitute the rhythm; **thirdly**, definition of the grouping of movements which are in contact, their shape; **fourthly**, the constant welling up of the essential force to support in its continuity the movement that has been thus defined; **fifthly**, the actual enforcement and compression of the force in its own movement which maintains the form that has been assumed. In Matter these five constituent operations are said by the Sankhyas to represent themselves as *five elemental conditions of substance, the etheric, atmospheric, igneous, liquid and solid*; and the rhythm of vibration is seen by them as śabda, sound, the basis of hearing, the intermiscence as contact, the basis of touch, the definition as shape, the basis of sight, the upflow of force as rasa, sap, the basis of taste, and the discharge of the atomic compression as gandha, odour, the basis of smell.“

Deleuze & Guattari: Rhizome

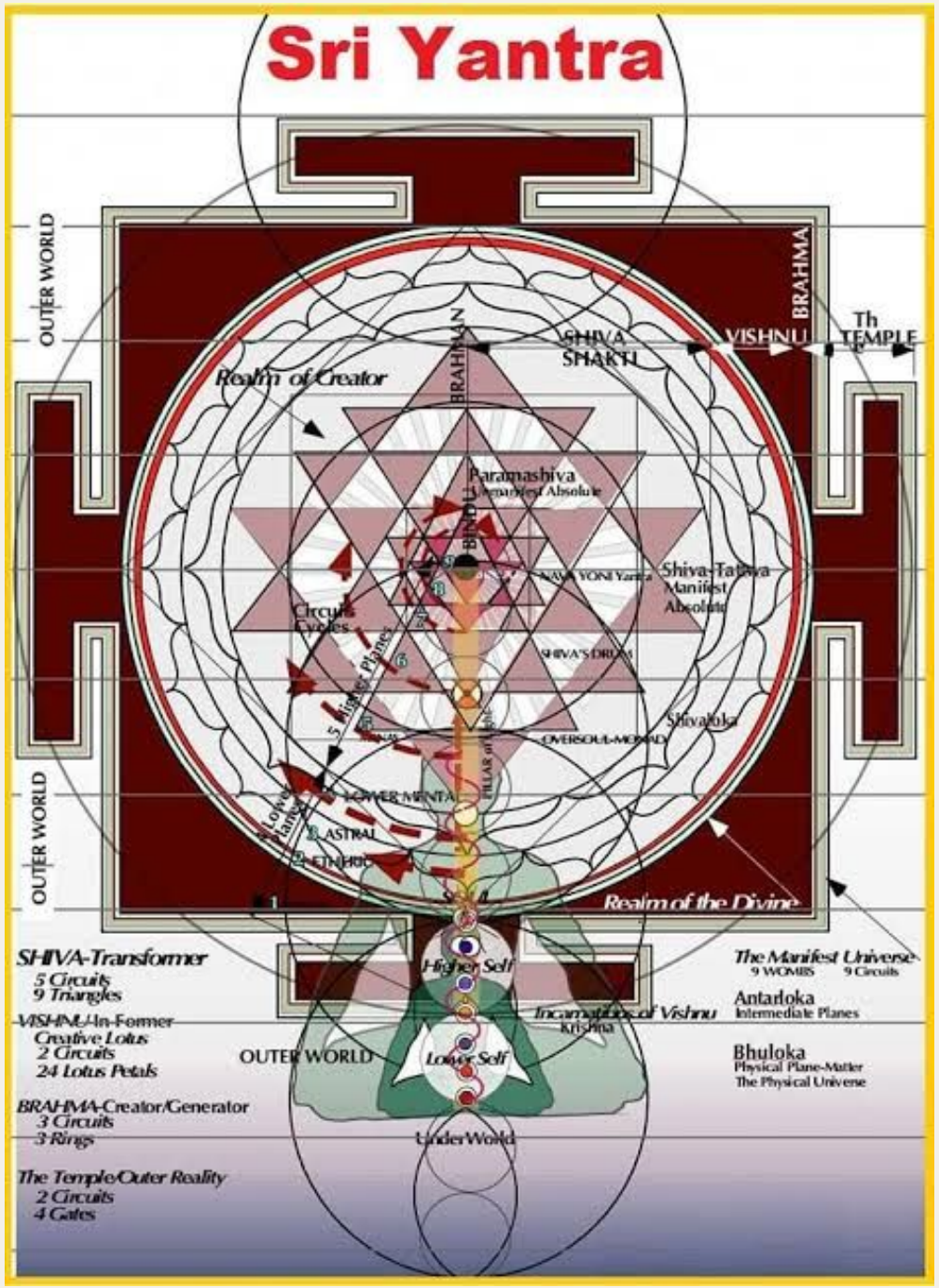




Well, after so many years, I am beginning to grasp the significance of Deleuze's thought. Not that I really understand Gilles Deleuze. Few do, I think. But the project seems clearer to me. For Deleuze, it is less about discourse, micronarratives, or anti-authoritarian thinking that seeks to break down hierarchies by loosening categories and reinterpreting structures. Deleuze's thought goes deeper. He wants to look at where Western philosophy locates its foundations: ontology, logic, morality, aesthetics, and at disciplines such as sociology, economics, psychology, biology, geology, history, philosophy, etc.

Deleuze questions all this at a fundamental level by looking closely, observing, and expressing how the world follows processes in its becoming. These processes, one might say, are not reduced to natural science in Deleuze; they are understood as adventures of thought. Because his thinking is not reductionist, Deleuze sees how many things can connect with many others, giving rise to becoming. Deleuze begins with difference. From it, something new takes shape, without any need to presuppose a unity. Conventional atomistic thinking, after all, conceives of a basic set of building blocks from which the world is assembled. For Deleuze, it is differences and relations that give rise to something new. Desire is productive: it creates connections through which structures can form and dissolve again. Territories emerge that can be left behind and returned to.

Thinking is like a flight; it connects across temporal and spatial boundaries. The world is a process; it gives birth and creates. Everything we can think, feel, or perceive is real as an experience, without its object necessarily existing in actuality. The virtual, too, is real, but not actual. There are no fixed boundaries in Deleuze's thought; it becomes increasingly complex and can also be wrong here and there. But it is not only about establishing facts and making true statements; it is also about allowing thought itself to speak. The thought that is in the world, expressing itself through it. It is a thinking of the real itself, not reduced to human understanding, even though that understanding imposes limits.


Sri Yantra
OUTER WORLD
BRAHMA
VISHNU
Th
TEMPLE
SHIVA
SHAKTI
Realm of Creator
Paramashiva
Shiva-Tattva
Manifest
Absolute
Circuits
Cycles
SHIVA'S DRUM
Shivaloka
OVERSOUL-MONAD
LOWER MENTAL
ASTRAL
ETHERIC
Realm of the Divine
SHIVA-Transformer
5 Circuits
9 Triangles
VISHNU-In-Former
Creative Lotus
2 Circuits
24 Lotus Petals
BRAHMA-Creator/Generator
3 Circuits
3 Rings
The Temple/Outer Reality
2 Circuits
4 Gates
Higher Self
Incarnations of Vishnu
Krishna
Lower Self
OUTER WORLD
UnderWorld
The Manifest Universe
9 WOMBS
9 Circuits
Antarloka
Intermediate Planes
Bhuloka
Physical Plane-Matter
The Physical Universe





René Magritte – The Treachery of Images (This is Not a Pipe), 1929



Ceci / this
what does it
refer to?

Plato, *Phaedrus* 274e–275b — a close translation by Chatgpt

Pharmakon / 370 BCE

SOCRATES: Thamus (king) is said to have expressed many judgments to Theuth (god), both favourable and unfavourable, about each of the arts; to recount them would require a lengthy discussion. But when he came to writing, Theuth said:

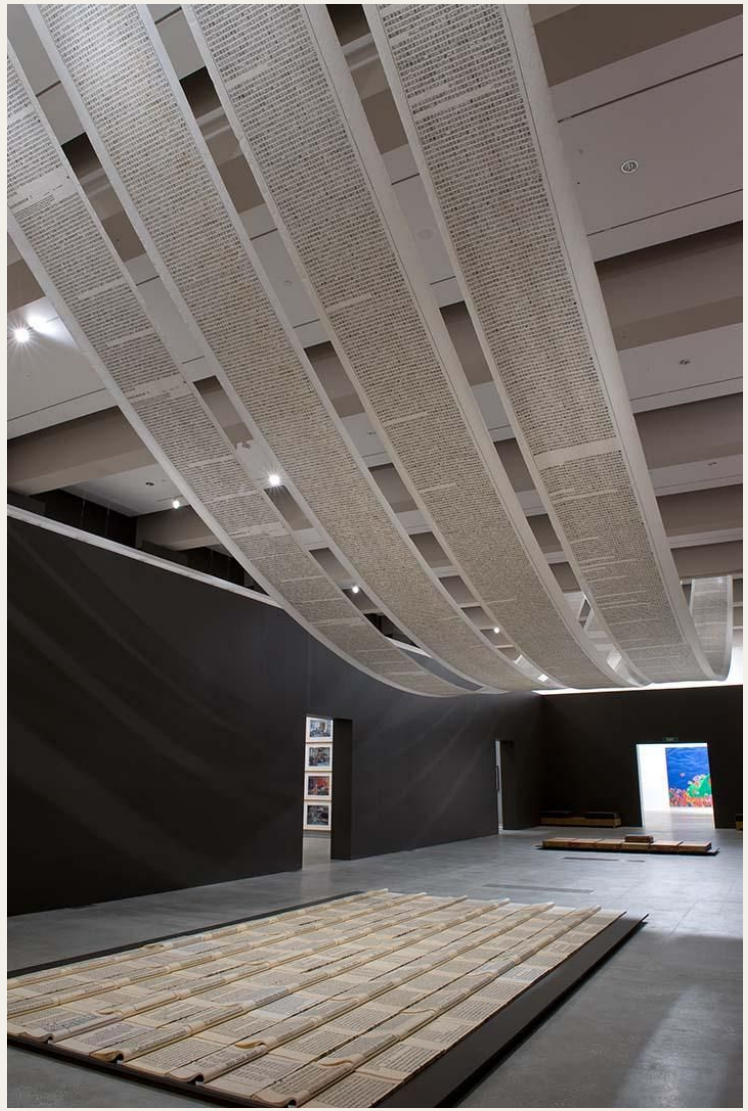
“This branch of learning, O king, will make the Egyptians wiser and better at remembering; for a remedy for memory and wisdom has been discovered.”

But Thamus replied:

“Most ingenious Theuth, one person is capable of bringing the products of an art into being, another of judging what measure of harm and benefit they hold for those who will use them. And now you, being the father of writing, have out of affection said the opposite of what it can do.

“For this will produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who learn it, through lack of practice in remembering: because they trust in writing, they will recollect through external marks belonging to others, from outside, rather than themselves, from within, by their own agency. You have therefore discovered a remedy not for memory but for reminding.

“And you supply your pupils with the appearance of wisdom, not its reality. For, having heard much through you without instruction, they will seem to know much, while for the most part being ignorant; and they will be difficult to associate with, having become wise in their own estimation instead of wise.



Xu Bing’s *Book from the Sky* 1987-91

Plato, *Phaedrus* 275d–276a — abridged working translation

SOCRATES: For writing has this strange feature, Phaedrus, and in this it truly resembles painting. The offspring of painting stand there as though alive; but if you ask them anything, they maintain a most solemn silence.

The same holds for discourses. You might think they speak with some understanding; but if you question anything they say because you wish to learn, they signify just one thing, always the same.

[…]

SOCRATES: What, then? Can we discern another discourse, the legitimate brother of this one: how it comes into being, and how much better and more powerful it is by nature?

PHAEDRUS: Which discourse do you mean, and how do you say it comes into being?

SOCRATES: The one that is written with knowledge in the soul of the learner, capable of defending itself and knowing before whom to speak and before whom to remain silent.

PHAEDRUS: You mean the discourse of someone who knows, living and ensouled, of which the written discourse could justly be called an image.

λόγος / λόγοι (*logos / logoi*): “discourse / discourses.” Can mean speech, account, or argument. “Discourse” avoids suggesting a single word. Both written and living expression are called *logos*.
ὡς ζῶντα (*hōs zōnta*): “as though alive.” The qualification matters: painted figures appear alive but cannot answer.
ὥς τι φρονοῦντας (*hōs ti phronountas*): “with some understanding.” Literally, “as though understanding something.” The wording distinguishes apparent intelligence from demonstrated understanding.
ἀδελφὸν γνήσιον (*adelphon gnēsion*): “legitimate brother.” Preserves Plato’s familial metaphor: the two forms of discourse are related, but their standing differs.
μετ’ ἐπιστήμης γράφεται … ἐν … ψυχῇ (*met’ epistēmēs graphetai … en … psychēi*): “is written with knowledge … in the soul.” Plato retains writing as a positive metaphor for understanding established in the learner.
λέγειν τε καὶ σιγᾶν πρὸς οὓς δεῖ (*legein te kai sigān pros hous dei*): “before whom to speak and before whom to remain silent.” Emphasizes appropriate address to particular people, rather than merely knowing *when* to speak.
ζῶντα καὶ ἔμψυχον (*zōnta kai empsychon*): “living and ensouled.” *Empsychon* means animate or possessing soul, explicitly echoing *psychē*, “soul.” “Breathing” would add something absent from the Greek.
εἴδωλον (*eidōlon*): “image.” Can also mean likeness, apparition, or phantom. “Image” preserves the comparison with painting without necessarily implying deception.

The main philological choices are:

- **γράμματα (*grammata*): “writing.”** Literally “letters” or “written characters.” Here it means the practice or invention of writing, rather than language generally.
- **φάρμακον (*pharmakon*): “remedy.”** The word can denote a drug, medicine, or poison. “Remedy” fits Theuth’s claim, which Thamus then turns against him. Translating it simply as “poison” would prejudge the exchange.
- **μνήμη / ὑπόμνησις (*mnēmē / hypomnēsis*): “memory / reminding.”** This is the crucial distinction. Writing provides an external prompt; it does not itself supply the exercised capacity of memory. Jowett’s “reminiscence” makes that distinction harder to hear today.
- **ὑπ’ ἀλλοτρίων τύπων (*hyp’ allotriōn typōn*): “by means of marks belonging to others.”** The dictionary forms are **τύποι (*typoi*)**, “impressions” or “marks,” and **ἀλλότριοι (*allotrioi*)**, “belonging to another” or “foreign to oneself.” The contrast is between recollection prompted from outside and recollection occurring from within, by oneself.
- **σοφίας … δόξαν, οὐκ ἀλήθειαν (*sophias … doxan, ouk alētheian*): “the appearance of wisdom, not its reality.”** “Wisdom” governs the contrast: the point is not merely false information versus true information.
- **πολυήκοοι … ἄνευ διδαχῆς (*polyēkooi … aneu didachēs*): “having heard much … without instruction.”** I retain “heard” rather than substitute “widely read,” because Plato distinguishes extensive exposure to discourse from actual teaching.
- **δοξόσοφοι (*doxosophoi*): “wise in their own estimation.”** The compound echoes **δόξα (*doxa*)**, “appearance,” “opinion,” or “reputation,” and **σοφία (*sophia*)**, “wisdom.” It conveys presumed or apparent wisdom rather than wisdom itself.

Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs* (1965)

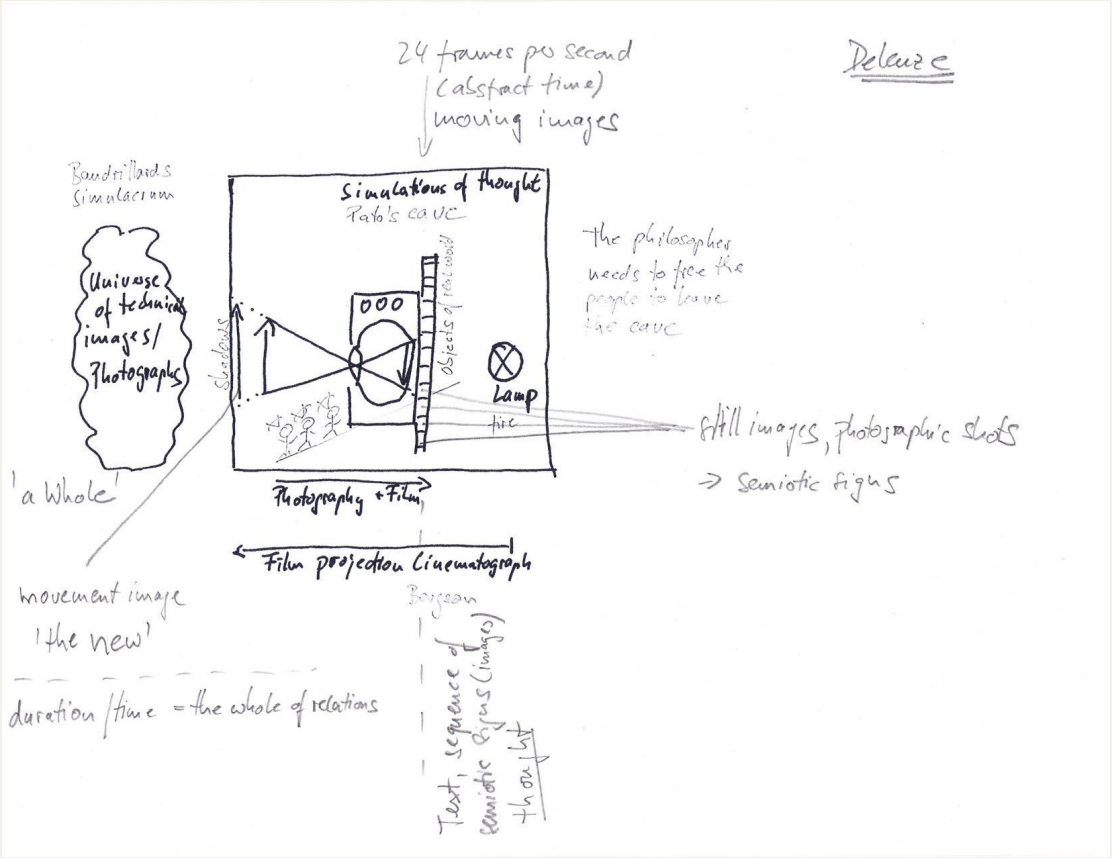


Representation and reality



Plato’s cave · What leads us to question what we see?

Images, apparatus, interpretation

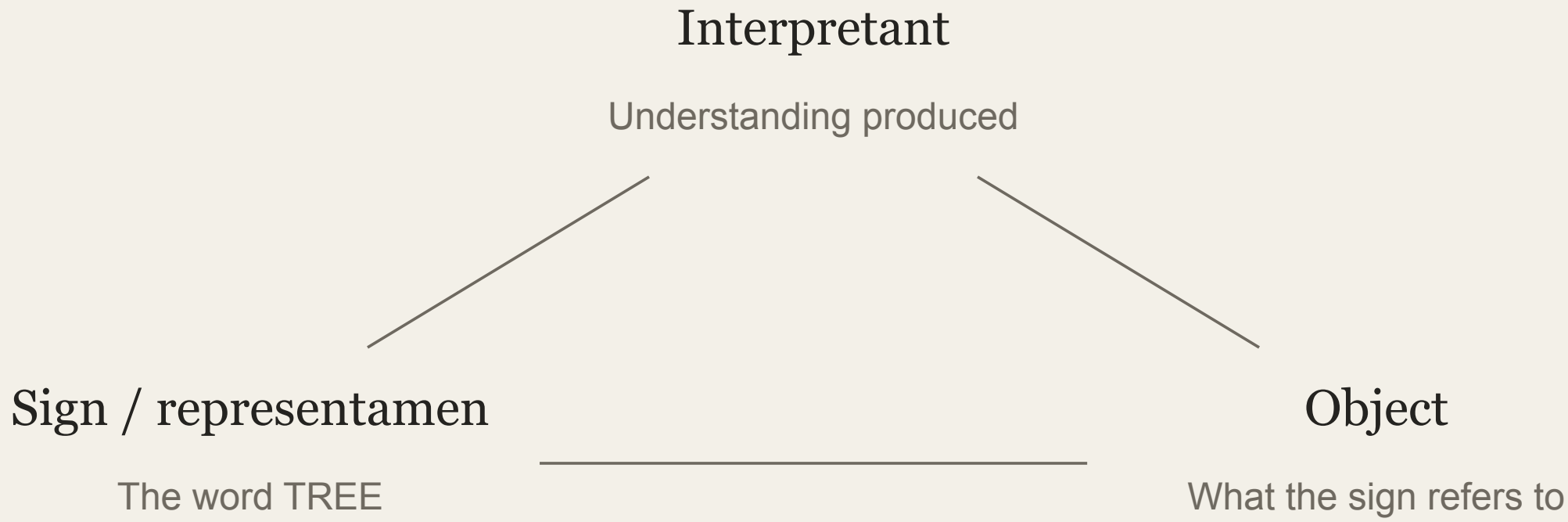


What do we understand about the apparatus behind an image?

Technical images · Vilém Flusser · Diagram from the lecture materials

Peirce: the relation of a sign

1868 (early account)

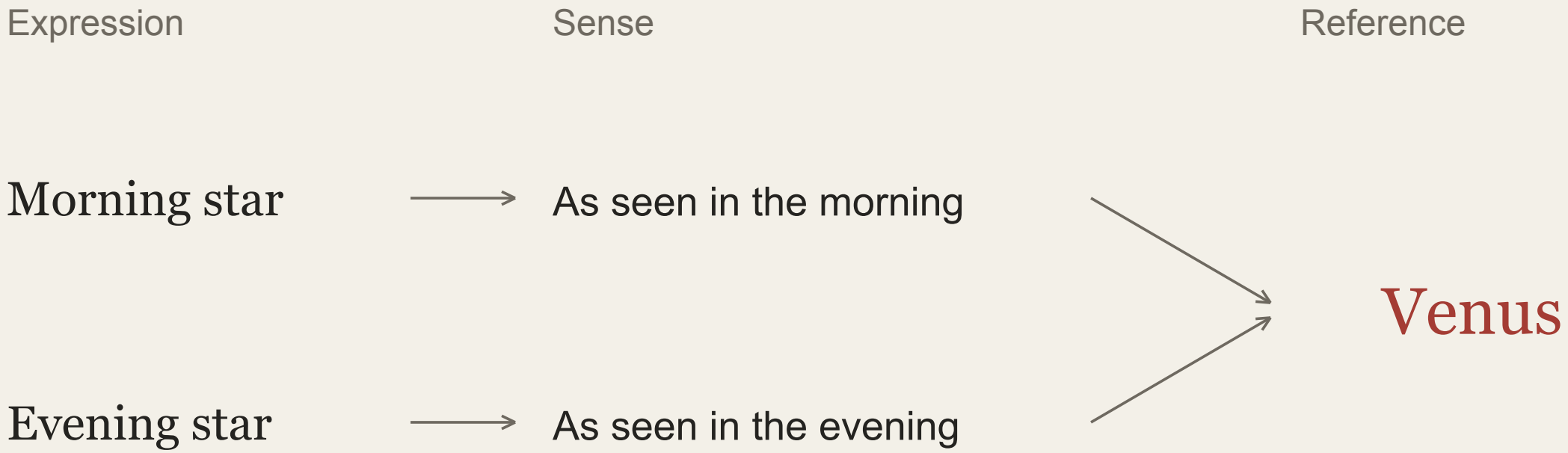


Meaning develops through interpretation.

Source: Peirce, Some Consequences of Four Incapacities

Frege: sense and reference

1892

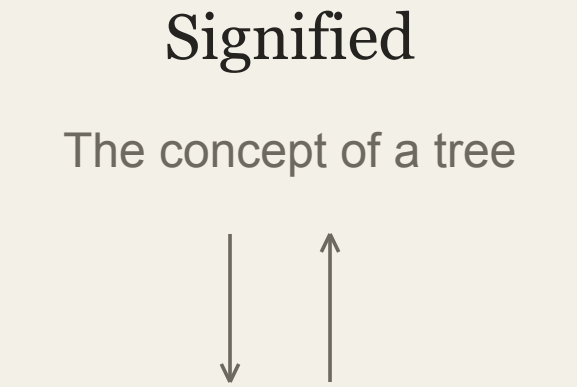


Different senses can identify the same referent.

Source: Frege, Sense and Reference (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Saussure: language as a system

1916 (posthumous publication)



Differences within language

TREE

BUSH

SHRUB

A sign gains its value through differences.

Source: Saussure, Course in General Linguistics

Tarski: the truth of a sentence

1933 (formal theory); 1944 (exposition)

Talking about a sentence

Stating its truth condition

“Snow is white” is true

if and only if

Snow is white

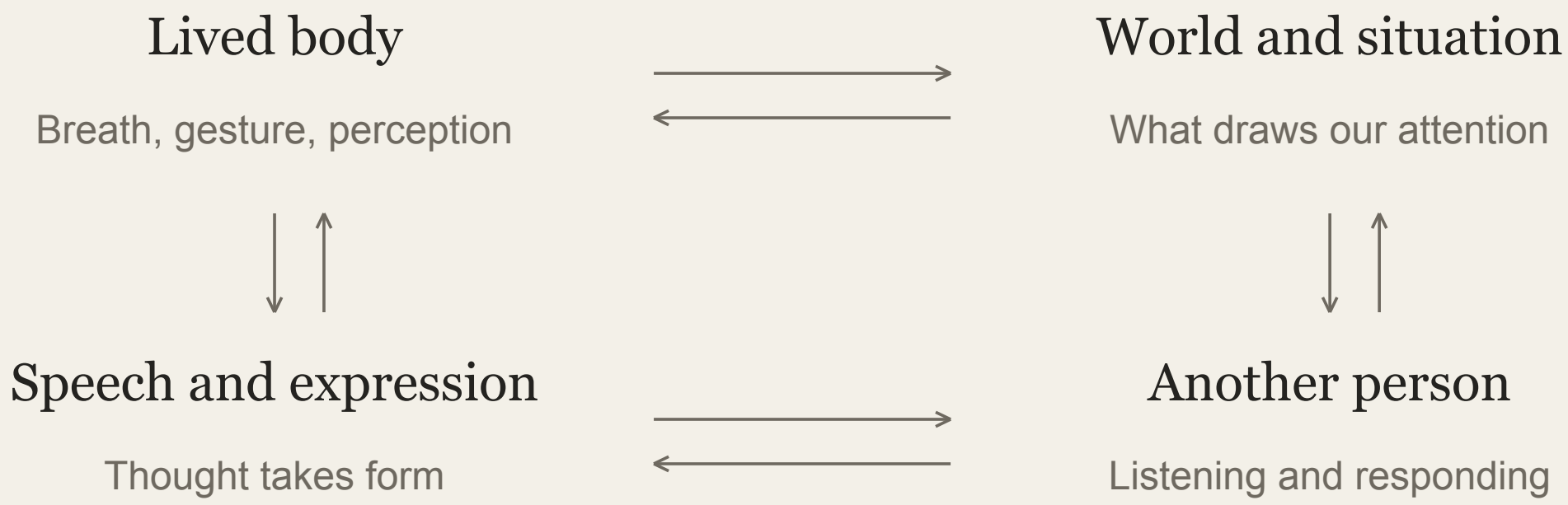
The metalanguage expresses the whole equivalence.

A truth definition connects a sentence to its truth condition.

Source: Tarski’s Truth Definitions (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Merleau-Ponty: embodied expression

1945



Interpretive sketch of related themes

Speech can bring thought into expression.

Source: Merleau-Ponty (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Wittgenstein: language-games

1953 (posthumous publication)



Starting a race

Checking readiness to begin

Serving a meal

Inviting people to the table

Preparing a scene

Coordinating performers and crew

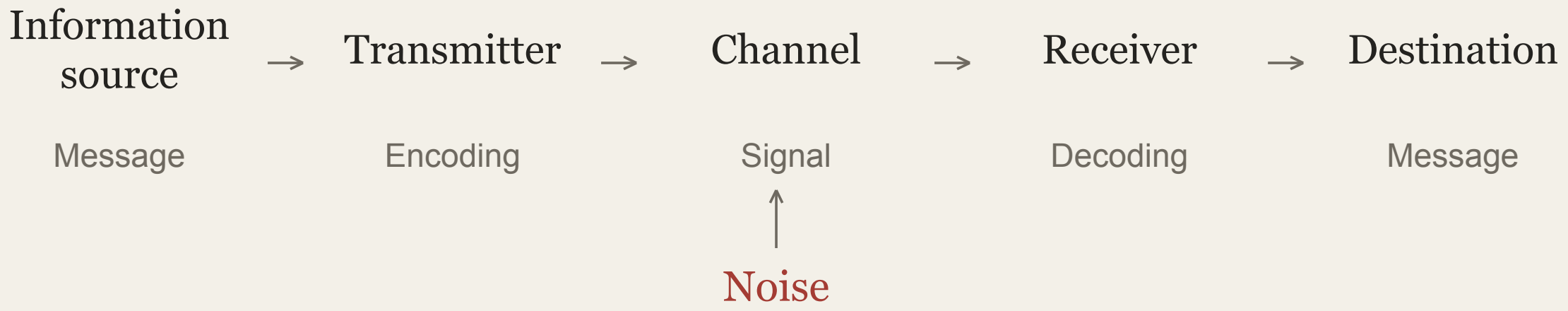
Shared practices shape how we understand the words.

Meaning takes shape within shared activities.

Source: Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations (York University)

Shannon: transmitting a message

1948



How reliably does the message arrive?

Source: Shannon, A Mathematical Theory of Communication (Princeton)

Austin: speech as action

1955 (lectures); 1962 (book)

“There is a bull in this field.”



Locution

Saying that a bull is in this field

Illocution

Warning the listener

Perlocution

Possible effect: alarm or departure

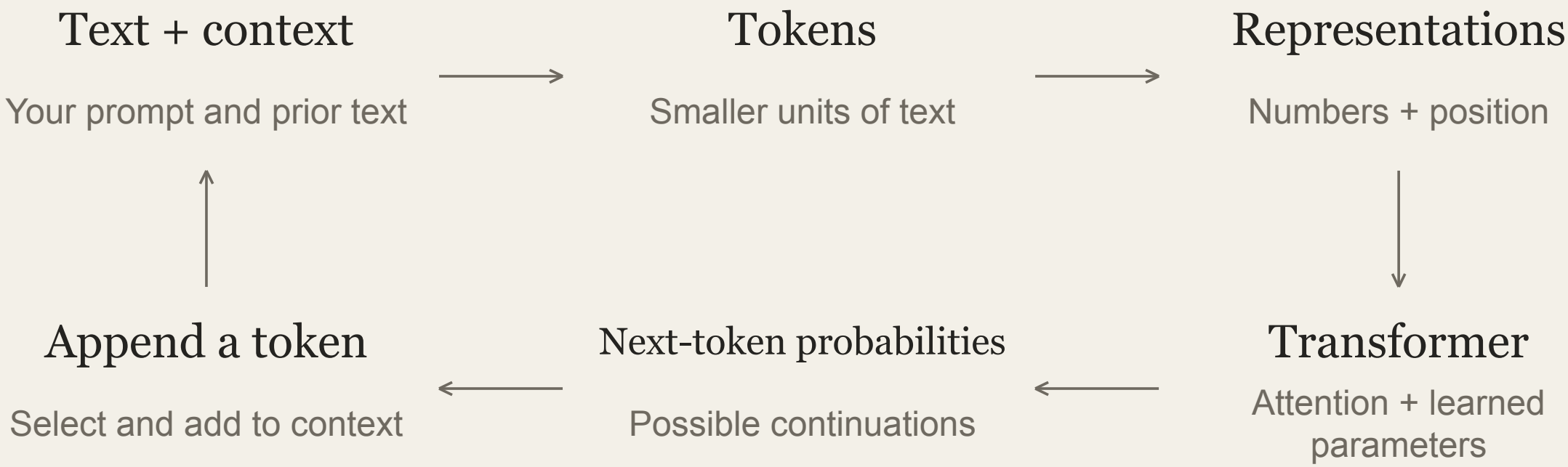
The situation gives the utterance its force.

One utterance has meaning, force, and possible effects.

Source: Austin, How to Do Things with Words (Oxford University Press)

AI: autoregressive text generation

2017 (Transformer architecture), 2020 (GPT-3)



Simplified inference loop for an autoregressive Transformer

A likely continuation still needs evidence for truth.

Source: Brown et al., Language Models are Few-Shot Learners (2020)

Grice: what a speaker implies

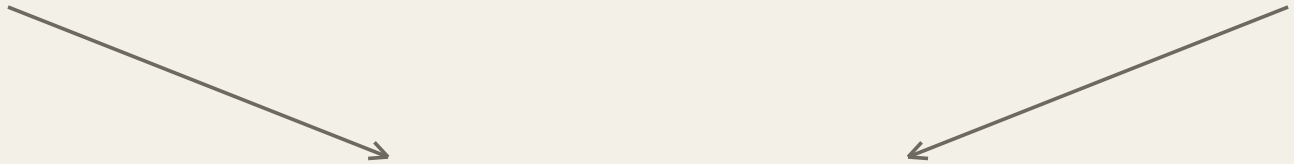
1967 (lectures); 1975 (publication)

What is said

"There is a café around the corner."

Shared context

"Where can I get a coffee?"



Inference about relevance

Assuming a cooperative contribution

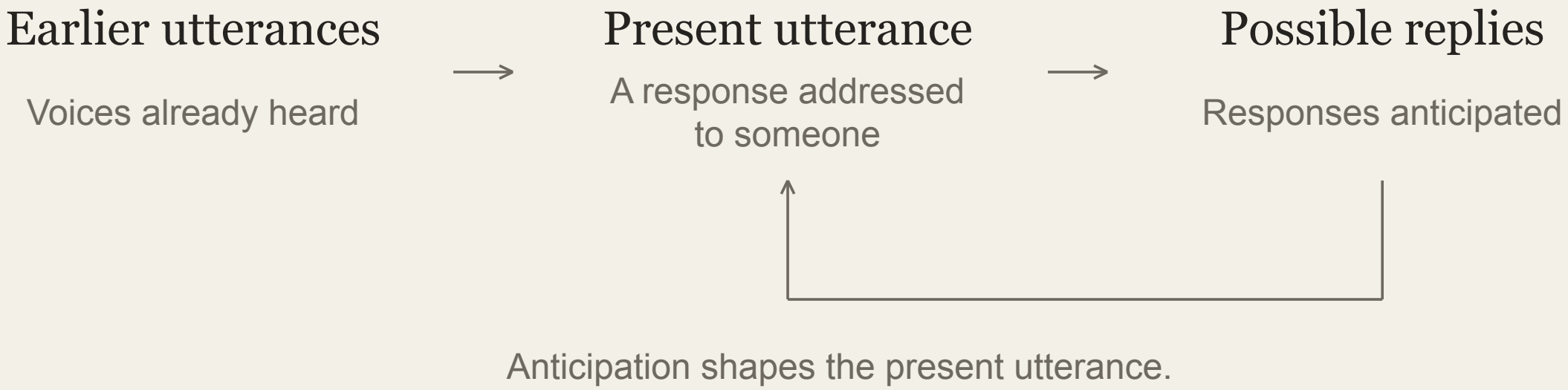
The café may be somewhere to get coffee.

Listeners infer more than the literal words say.

Source: Grice, Logic and Conversation (Stanford University)

Bakhtin: an utterance in dialogue

1952–53 (written), 1978 (journal), 1979 (collection), 1986 (English)



Every utterance responds and anticipates a response.

Source: Bakhtin, The Problem of Speech Genres (1986 English edition)

Jakobson: functions of language

1960 (original essay)

Context

Referential: about the world

Addresser → Message → Addressee

Emotive: expressing an attitude

Poetic: attending to form

Conative: calling or directing

Contact

Phatic: keeping in touch

Code

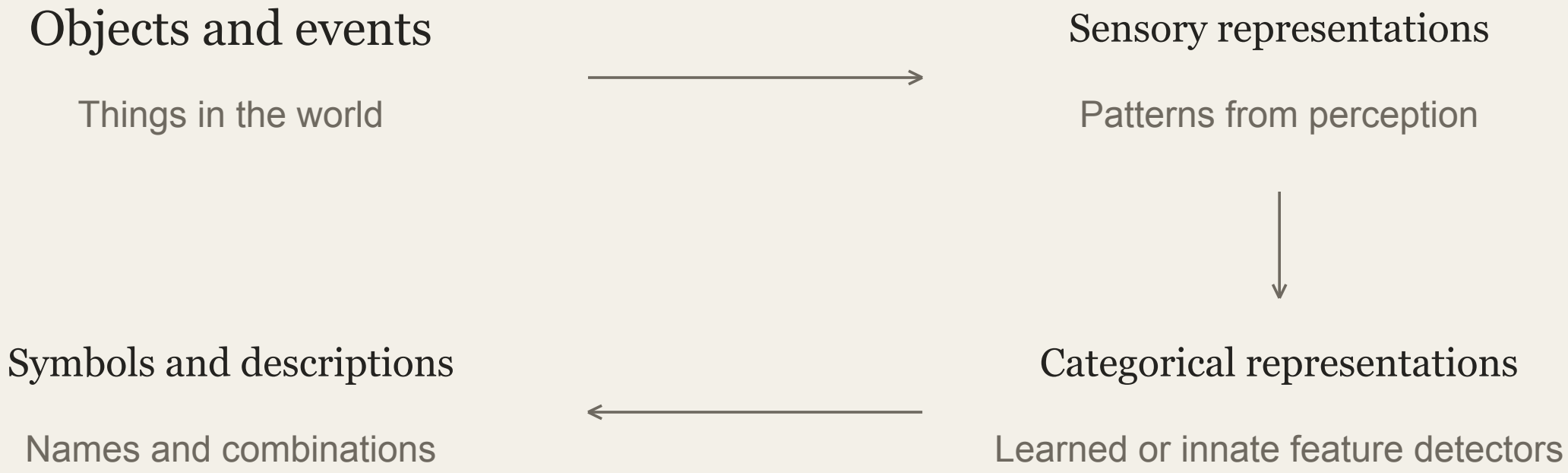
Metalingual: clarifying language

Communication serves several functions at once.

Source: Jakobson, Linguistics and Poetics (Princeton-hosted reprint)

Harnad: the symbol grounding problem

1990



A proposed route from perception to symbols

How can symbols mean something for the system itself?

Source: Harnad, The Symbol Grounding Problem (University of Southampton)

Searle: the Chinese Room

1980

Chinese input	→	Person + rulebook	→	Chinese output
Questions enter the room		Manipulation by formal rules		Appropriate responses

The person follows the rules without understanding Chinese.

Debate: could the whole system understand?

Does following a program suffice for understanding?

Source: Searle, Minds, Brains, and Programs (University at Buffalo)