

# Speech, Repetition, Renewal

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## Performative Utterances

A contributor to the book *Hating in the First Person Plural* opens her article on misogyny in the following way:

I am a woman trying to write an essay on misogyny. [...] In his invitation to contributors, [the editor] introduces the phenomenon of irrational hatreds by [...] naming the inflammatory terms with which we hate and hurt the other: 'nigger,' 'faggot,' 'cunt.' I am caught and cut up by this language and I have just tried to pass that effect on to you, the reader. It is impossible not to recoil and feel unsettled. The words will not stay simply symbolic. Primary process leaks out. [...] But of course we are supposed to feel these strange affects, these frissons of shame and rage and (alarmingly?) excitement. (Harris 2003, pp. 249–250)

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This description of how the words appear contagious, permeating the flesh of their intended recipient, may serve as an introduction to the theme of hate speech and injurious discourse. I would like to think about the role of language in hate speech as magical, and yet socially constituted, as instances of repetition, and question what it takes for meaning to be renewed. Austin introduces the theme of performative utterances as follows:

It was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a 'statement' can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs, or to 'state some fact', which it must do either truly or falsely. [...Yet] Utterances can be found [...] that

A. [...] do not 'describe' or 'report' [...] anything at all, are not 'true or false'; and

B. the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action [...]

Examples:

(E. *a*) 'I do (sc. Take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)'—as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony.

(E. *b*) 'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*'—as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stem.

(Austin 1962/1975, p. 1, 5)

To utter these statements is not to describe something, or even to state that I am doing something, rather, uttering the statement is to perform the action in question; when I state that I name the ship *Queen Elizabeth* in the relevant context, I am doing just that. Austin is concerned with how such performances can misfire and he lists several examples of infelicity, which give rise to the following criteria for the performative's success:

A.1. There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, [including] the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances.

A.2. The particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked. (Austin 1962/ 1975, p. 26, 34)

In other words, performative statements rely on social rituals and social norms of authority. The examples are not focused on the speaker's thoughts or feelings, but on the ritualistic element: insincere speech-acts are still not void (p. 40). In order to have made a promise, I must have been heard by someone and have been understood by him or her as promising (p. 22); a social framework must be in place for the performative utterance to be effective. This indicates how performative utterances relate to power structures. Austin's mention of 'appropriate persons and circumstances' reminds us that a statement's meaning, if uttered by a person in a different social context, may change completely or may be deprived of meaning. 'The question,' Austin wonders at one point, 'how far can acts be unilateral? Similarly the question arises as to when the act is at an end, what counts as its completion?' (1962/ 1975, p. 37). I shall let these questions provide an entry into Judith Butler's discussion of injurious speech.

## Linguistic Injury and Social Conventions

Butler refers to the situation of being addressed injuriously as one in which one suffers from disorientation:

To be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, not to know where you are. [...] Exposed at the moment of such a shattering is precisely the volatility of one's 'place' within the community of speakers; one can be 'put in one's place' by such speech, but such a place may be no place. (Butler 1997, p. 4)

To relate her description to Charles Taylor's metaphor of the 'map of the good'—it presents a picture of being pushed off the map of the good from the point of view of the perhaps socially dominant other. As human beings, as actors, we need to operate according to differentials of

worth, to have a ‘map of the good’, and to be able to place ourselves on this map. To Taylor, the ‘fact that we have to place ourselves in a space which is defined by [...] qualitative distinctions [of worth] cannot but mean that where we stand in relation to them must matter to us’ (1989, p. 42), but this situation is one where we are forcefully being placed in, or thrown off balance in an evaluative social space. Butler’s formulation: ‘one can be “put in one’s place” by such speech, but such a place may be no place’ (1997, p. 4) captures very succinctly how the wounding speech act may appear from the point of view of the speaker to put its recipient back into ‘the place where he or she belongs’—an inferior social place or category, while the recipient experiences a disorienting blow, spatially a loss of place.

The description of shattering, of ‘not having a place’ can be seen to point to what I have termed ‘enforced splitting’ (Auestad 2011). In a situation of being generally blamed, accused and degraded, there would seem to be a scope for either accepting the definition thrust upon one, and maintaining the relationship, or rejecting the definition and consequently withdrawing from the social setting. If one relates to the other as he or she would like to see one as all bad, one is adapted to the social situation, but at a too great loss to oneself; however, to see oneself as good, one must cut off the relationship to the damaging, judgmental other, which may not be socially possible. Splitting is a way of doing both these things: of partially remaining inside and in contact with a social system in which one is devalued while partially also being removed from it—it involves switching back and forth between the two positions, which cannot coexist in consciousness at the same time. As a parallel to Menzies Lyth’s (1960/1990) description of ‘enforced introjection of the social defence system’ I have proposed the term ‘enforced splitting’ to cover this reaction to environmental pressure, as opposed to the ego’s spontaneous splitting of itself.

We describe instances of racist speech, writes Butler, as being ‘like receiving a slap in the face’ or as a ‘verbal assault’. These and similar formulations suggest that linguistic injury acts like physical injury: ‘that physical metaphors seize upon nearly every occasion to describe linguistic injury suggests that this somatic dimension may be important to the understanding of linguistic pain. [...] there is a strong sense in

which the body is alternately sustained and threatened through modes of address' (Butler 1997, pp. 4–5).

If we think of how the 'I' is described by Freud alternately as 'first and foremost a bodily ego' (1923, p. 26) and as 'altered by identification' (1917/1915, p. 249), we can see how it is threatened by the verbal attack in the latter sense, as lacking in good inner objects or invaded by bad, malevolent ones. These assaults can unconsciously, and at times consciously, be felt as physical attacks. Thus the verbal assault can be understood as an attack on the coherence of the 'I', similar to the loss of a place in a social space.

With reference to the work of Mari Matsuda, Butler describes how hate speech not only acts upon its listener, but contributes to the social constitution of the one who is addressed:

By virtue of the social position he or she occupies, [...], the listener is injured as a consequence of that utterance. [...It] does not merely *reflect* a relation of social domination; speech *enacts* domination, becoming the vehicle through which that social structure is reinstated. (Butler 1997, p. 18)

In other words, hate speech constitutes the subject, its recipient, in a subordinate position. Making use of an already existing social relation of domination, and rather than merely reflecting it, it actively aims to reinstate this social structure. It is appropriate at this point to refer to Freud's description of *mana* in *Totem and Taboo*. With taboos, as with obsessional neuroses, people entertain the belief that a logic of contagion is operative; direct or indirect physical contact with the taboo, or forbidden person or thing, is thought to entail a transmission of the dangerous quality, and the same mechanism is thought to be operative in the case of 'ideational contact' by means of associative paths:

The avoidance of the name of a dead person is as a rule enforced with extreme severity. Thus in some South American tribes it is regarded as a deadly insult to the survivors to mention the name of a dead relative in their presence, and the punishment for it is not less than that laid down for murder. [...] Thus the Masai in East Africa resort to the device of

changing the dead man's name immediately after his death; he may then be mentioned freely under his new name [...]. This seems to presuppose that the dead man's ghost does not know and will not get to know his new name. [...] The Adelaide and Encounter Bay tribes of South Australia are so consistently careful that after a death everyone bearing the same name as the dead man's, or a very similar one, changes it for another. (Freud 1912–1913, pp. 54–55)

The example of the names of the dead is linked with the idea that the dead bear a grudge against the living and want to return to injure and kill them. Freud cites Westermarck's opinion that we fear the dead because we fear death, and that a person, according to primitive ideas, only dies if he or she is killed. Hence the dead would naturally seek revenge; they are envious of the living and attempt to cause their deaths (p. 59). He proceeds to announce a more comprehensive explanation, stating:

In almost every case where there is an intense emotional attachment to a particular person we find that behind the tender love there is a concealed hostility in the unconscious. This is the classical example, the prototype, of the ambivalence of human emotions. (Freud 1912–1913, p. 60)

Social practices of magical thinking or 'omnipotence of thought' can be seen to be operative in depositing feelings of shame and guilt, forcefully and collectively, in culturally selected others. 'Everything that is not me is dirt', said one of Karl Abraham's patients (1921, p. 376). In Norwegian, the colloquial expression 'throwing shit', meaning 'to speak badly of someone' is indicative of the action of bombarding another with a disowned part-object. Importantly, like Austin's speech acts and like practices of taboos, the injurious statement works through its appeal to, and reliance on, convention:

The subject who speaks hate speech is clearly responsible for such speech, but that subject is rarely the originator of that speech. Racist speech works through the invocation of convention; it circulates, and though it requires the subject for its speaking, it neither begins nor ends with the subject who speaks or with the specific name that is being used. (Butler 1997, p. 34)

## Repetition and Responsibility

I have argued previously that when psychoanalytic studies focus on prejudice as a feature of the prejudiced person's subjectivity, the extent to which this phenomenon is founded on a silent social consensus remains in the dark. The prejudice that 'works', because it agrees with a social norm, is left untouched (Auestad 2012, 2015). In that context, I used the example of a study of thousands of 11-year old pupils, which concludes that black pupils perform consistently better in external exams—marked anonymously—than in teacher assessment (Asthana et al. 2010). The study does not tell us anything about the teachers' motivation, and is thus compatible with the hypotheses that: (1) the teachers who routinely marked down their black pupils consciously entertained racist beliefs, (2) although they were not consciously racist, they unconsciously held racist beliefs, or (3) the teachers form part of a social system in which unconscious racist beliefs are embedded, hence their judgments are expressive of a bias they contribute to reproducing, but of which they are unaware.

The third possibility is of special interest, as it points to a limitation of some common assumptions about moral and political responsibility. Let us assume that a large number of the teachers meant no harm in marking their pupils down, that they thought they were judging their performance fairly—yet the study shows that their practice is discriminatory. The Kantian-inspired response that 'I did not intend to produce this result, hence I cannot be held responsible', is clearly insufficient. Kant himself would presumably not have approved of such a response, since he argued that our motives are not transparent to us; 'we like to flatter ourselves by falsely attributing to ourselves a nobler motive, whereas in fact we can never, even by the most strenuous self-examination, get entirely behind our covert incentives' (1996/1785, p. 61). Thus the Kantian insistence on the importance of motives to the exclusion of other situational factors appears to lend itself to a disregard for purportedly unintended consequences, although his statement to the effect that our motives are, at bottom, unknowable to us undermines any insistence upon one's own 'good will'. The study of

teachers' assessments points towards the importance of inquiring into what is absent from subjectivity, and often unconscious, individually and socially.

Butler's discussion of injurious speech contains a similar concern with the legal identification of the speaker as the creator of the racist, antisemitic, islamophobic, misogynist or homophobic statement:

The legal effort to curb injurious speech tends to isolate the 'speaker' as the culpable agent, as if the speaker were at the origin of such speech. The responsibility of the speaker is thus misconstrued. [...] Responsibility is [...] linked with speech as repetition, not as origination. (Butler 1997, p. 39)

The injurious speaker, writes Butler, cites rather than invents—he or she repeats traditional statements of humiliation, forms of imaginary already present within the cultural tradition. The active bit is the speaker's declaration of support for the evaluatively charged categories: 'The power to "race" and, indeed, the power to gender, precedes the "one" who speaks such power, and yet the one who speaks nevertheless appears to have that power' (p. 49). The speaker has, in what we may think of as a positive affirmation of him or her as a subject, been given a singular name, and has learnt to answer to that name, and has perhaps been subject to name-calling, to a series of humiliating, shaming or guilt-inducing identifications, and probably answers to some of these as well. The quote from Harris in the beginning communicates how we often cannot but identify with these hurtful, inflammatory terms that are, so to say, thrown upon us. The responsibility of the speaker lies precisely in the repetition, in re-using and refreshing traditional terms of abuse, and thus affirming their continued validity. The citational aspect indicates, though, that the responsibility does not end with the speaker. Butler's question; 'If the utterance is to be prosecuted, where and when would that prosecution begin, and where and when would it end?' (1997, p. 50) is not, in my reading, a denial of personal responsibility, but an entry into a more social and critical focus.



## Frameworks and Underlying Violence

Not just what is explicitly said, but the underlying frames matter. An illustration is provided by Marianne Gullestad's example of a woman who called up a professor of Nordic languages to ask him about the meaning of the word 'immigrant':

According to the professor, 'she spoke Norwegian well, but not perfectly'. 'Now I have lived in Norway for a long time', she told him, 'I know Norway, and I have become a Norwegian citizen. Therefore I want to know if I am still an immigrant (*innvanderer*)?' 'Yes', answered the professor, on the basis of his lexical understanding of the problem. 'You were born and bred in India, and this makes you an immigrant to Norway'. (Gullestad 2006, p. 174)

His answer was correct according to the dictionary definition. Though this usage of the word is problematic in that neither the length of her stay in Norway nor her Norwegian citizenship is taken into account. The usage may be seen to reflect a privileging of 'origin'—geographical and socio-cultural—over and above what one has done and experienced later in life. What is hurtful about the presumably neutral definition is that she is told: 'You are never going to be one of us'. The employment of the term 'immigrant' singles out and acknowledges one aspect of her identity to the exclusion of other aspects. And although it may not be apparent from the dictionary entry, the meaning, in the sense of ordinary contemporary usage, of the word 'immigrant' is neither evaluatively nor racially neutral. An imaginary dictionary of common usage and associations might have listed: 'suspect person, liar, illegitimate resident, criminal, violent, parasite'. A rhetorical practice of sliding between these senses allows for a declaration that one is not a racist, by using 'immigrant' in the non-racialized sense, when that seems called for, and a playing on the racialized set of associations before the part of the electorate to whom that might appeal, which is what right-wing populist parties are consistently doing. This strategy of addressing multiple audiences with contradictory messages is what Ruth Wodak (2015) has recently termed 'calculated ambivalence'.

In the popular book *Don't Think of an Elephant* (2004), George Lakoff argues that a great rhetorical victory is won when even your opponent accepts your underlying frame, citing Thatcher's statement that her greatest achievement was New Labour. The word, or metaphor 'ethnic cleansing' is one example of how the mainstream has taken over a euphemism, indicating that what is performed is an act of cleaning up, rather than killing people. Similar terms abstract and transform the image conveyed from hatred of, and violence towards, people to intellectual exercises.

In Britain, incidents of reported racist, Islamophobic and xenophobic attacks have increased dramatically after the EU referendum. Reports to police increased by 42%, to more than 3,000 allegations of hate crime across the country in the week before and the week after the 23 June vote. Offences were mainly harassment and threats of a racist nature, directed against "visible minorities" and people from Eastern Europe. In Great Yarmouth, by 10 a.m. on Friday morning, just hours after the results, people were slowing down to laugh at multinational staff, wave and mouth 'goodbye'. Sociologist Paul Bagguley pointed to the gleeful tone: 'There is a kind of celebration going on; it's a celebratory racism.' (Khaleeli 2016). People interviewed on TV after Brexit were commenting that they thought they should 'get on with it'. Though they did not specify what 'getting on with it' meant, I believe the implied meaning was that everyone who is not white and English should get out of the country. These eruptions of racism appear as sudden and shocking, although it should be emphasised that they have been preceded by only slightly more subtle expressions by the political elite. For example, then Home Secretary, Theresa May was behind the memorable campaign, piloted in six London boroughs, where billboards on vans, leaflets and posters displayed the message: 'In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest'. The campaign was criticised by Labour, Lib Dem and even The UK Independence Party (UKIP) members. May decided that the campaign would not be repeated, since it had not been effective—it had resulted in the voluntary repatriation of just one person (Wintour 2013). It is interesting to note that freedom of movement across national borders was imagined by the leave campaign as applying one way and not another, as not a two-way affair. At the Conservative

party conference in early October 2016, the new Home Secretary, Amber Rudd set out a wide-ranging tightening of immigration rules to drive down the number of new people coming into the UK. She proposed that businesses would be forced to list the foreign workers they employ, that they may be ‘named and shamed’ by being forced to publish what proportion of their workforce comes from overseas, and that firms employing from abroad could have to use tests to ensure foreign workers do not take jobs ‘British people could do’. Furthermore, in relation to foreign students, she declared that the current system too often ‘treated every student and university as equal’ and that the Government would look at ‘tougher rules for students on low quality courses’ (Watts 2016).

Perhaps an example of ‘calculated ambivalence’, the government declared that there would be ‘no immediate change’ to the status of EU students, a formulation which leaves open what might happen beyond the immediate future. At the same time, Theresa May has refused to rule out the idea of sending EU nationals who live in the UK out of the country—and has been accused of using them as a bargaining chip in the negotiations (Jones 2016). ‘But of course as part of the negotiation we will need to look at this question of people who are here in the UK from the EU’, she announced. ‘Nobody necessarily stays anywhere forever’ (Wintour 2016).

In The Council of Europe’s European Commission against Racism and Intolerance’s latest monitoring report on the UK, which covers the situation up to 17 March 2016, it was noted that ‘[t]here continues to be considerable intolerant political discourse focusing on immigration and contributing to an increase in xenophobic sentiments’ (Electronic Immigration Network 2016). Terms such as ‘invasions’ and ‘floods’ were frequently used to refer to immigrants or refugees, as well as the expression ‘benefits tourism’, despite the lack of evidence that the motivation of EU citizens to migrate was benefit-related. Even the Prime Minister, when asked about the Calais crisis in July 2015, had spoken in terms of a ‘swarm’ of people crossing the Mediterranean. ECRI called upon all political parties to take a firm stand against such forms of intolerant discourse, warning that prejudicial comments from well-known politicians have an impact on the public and legitimise intolerance. On hate

speech in the media, the Commission stated: ‘ECRI considers that hate speech in some traditional media continues to be a serious problem, notably as concerns tabloid newspapers. [...] *The Sun*, for instance, published an article in April 2015 entitled “Rescue boats? I’d use gunships to stop migrants”, in which the columnist likened migrants to “cock-roaches”’ (EIN 2016). In emphasising decades of ‘sustained and unrestrained anti-foreigner abuse’ in the press, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, stated that ‘vicious verbal assault on migrants and asylum seekers in the UK tabloid press has continued unchallenged under the law for far too long’, urging the authorities and media to act to curb such incitement to hatred in accordance with the country’s legal obligations nationally and internationally (EIN 2016).

A background for these reflections is that in Norway, post-Breivik, the official belief has been that opening up debates would lead to racist statements being countered by better arguments, and hence lead to more enlightenment. Instead, racist statements have become more widespread and more generally accepted. Endorsement of a laissez-faire conception of freedom of speech has entailed more abuse and less room for nuances, so as not to enhance freedom of thought. Thus hate speech provides a stark contrast to Habermas’ theory of communicative action and his ideal speech situation. Ideally, freedom of speech should enhance free thinking, though interpreting it as a right that applies to one person in isolation independently of the rights of others appears to thwart its purpose. As against the official Norwegian standpoint referred to above, according to which freedom of speech is an inviolable right that trumps all so-called ‘other concerns’, I have previously argued (Auestad 2015) that while Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights asserts that ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression’, Article 7 asserts that ‘All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination’ (United Nations 1948). Inflammatory speech of the kind considered in this chapter is precisely speech which violates other people’s rights to protection against discrimination. Thus, we are faced with what appears to be a paradox when a human right—to freedom of speech—is being used to violate another human right—to protection against discrimination. This represents a genuine dilemma. There is every reason to suspect

a claim to the effect that ‘my right to disrespect other people ought to be respected’, and to pose the question, ‘why should it be?’

If we think of language as having an expressive pole and a communicative pole, this reading isolates the expressive pole, as well as abstracting the speaker from the community of speakers and listeners. In Wright’s words, ‘The typical speaker of a racial epithet cannot entirely denature that epithet through tone of voice, facial expression, mood setting, or even express disclaimers’ (2000, p. 6). These insults neither seek to inform, nor to invite responsive discourse, though they can be directed towards a third, inviting the third to join in the attack. This testifies, if anything, to the social force of *mana* or contagion.

## Change and Counter-Discourse

When a word ‘deals with an area of difficulty’, writes Valerie Sinason ‘[...] it is allowed to have a historical life until the painful feelings connected with the word are no longer held by it, but leak’ (1989, p. 219). At that point, a new word is introduced, with the hope that it will be free of unpleasant associations, but, she states; ‘word changes are symptomatic and as such they do not solve problems’ (p. 219). This is the context in which her statement occurs:

When a word deals with an area of difficulty, for example, the Anglo-Saxon word ‘mad’, it is allowed to have a historical life until the painful feelings connected with the word are no longer held by it, but leak. What happens then is that a new word is brought in, often from the Greek or Latin. In the fourteenth century the word ‘insane’ was imported to ease the pain of ‘mad’, but when that too became burdensome then ‘mad’ returned. There is a hope that the foreign word will be a blank which will be free of unpleasant associations: chemise for shift, intoxication for drunkenness, perspiration for sweat. Word changes are symptomatic, and as such they do not solve problems. (Sinason 1989, p. 219)

The author’s reflections on how words are changed in order to avoid the use of stigmatising terms, and on how the offensive meaning, or associations that later reappear in relation to the neologism, can be recognised

as valid in many cases. To use 'mad' as an example, the current term used in the *Guardian's* Society section is 'mental health problem', which, in its capacity to be mystifying rather than clarifying, appears to qualify as a euphemism. As it does not state what kind of problem, it leaves everything to the reader's imagination, thus the imaginative elaboration may be more frightening or scandalous than concreteness might have been, such as stating that someone hallucinates from time to time. One of Sinason's primary examples comes from her work with mentally handicapped patients, where the term has moved from 'mental deficiency' through 'subnormality' to 'learning difficulties', 'special needs' or 'emotional and behavioural difficulties'. She mentions that her patients choose the word 'stupid' for themselves, a term which, in its concreteness signals that the patients are less inclined to beat about the bush than the professionals are.

To compare this process with the example from *Totem and Taboo*, the dead person's ghost has here recognised its new name, in spite of the change, and has returned to haunt the speaker. An attempt has been made at removing the term from its painful associations, though like in the example of the use of the term 'immigrant', the categories, the underlying framework that guides the 'othering' is kept intact, and the change is temporary or non-existent. Butler, to the contrary, has an interest in how a speech act may fail to achieve its purpose and also, in how it may be counter-acted, or better, counter-spoken; in how a revaluation of words may result from this inter-subjective process. Among her most prominent examples is the word 'queer', the revaluation of which suggests 'that speech can be "returned" to its speaker in a different form, that it can be cited against its originary purposes, and perform a reversal of effects' (1997, p. 14). The change in the word's meaning, in the sense of people's associations to it, illustrates how a popular movement can transform shared meanings through a change of context, of discursive and political frameworks. A recent example of a counter-discourse initiative took place in the summer of 2011. A representative of the Toronto police had declared that 'women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimised'. As a response, a group of activists organised an event called SlutWalk. One was held in Toronto, followed by similar events in Boston, London and other cities worldwide. Women marched

in protest with slogans, dressed in revealing clothes. I was interested in this example of an attempted revaluation of the word ‘slut’ and the wider issue of demonization of female sexuality and victim-blaming, though a question is whether such purely symbolic display, unaccompanied by demands for legal changes, has transformational power.

Often, challenging the frame appears to bring forth hate speech—as seen when the issue of representation is brought to the fore. Recently, when the actor Lenny Henry campaigned for more black and ethnic minority people on TV, UKIP politician William Henwood tweeted ‘If he wants lots of blacks around, go and live in a black country’ and later defended his comment stating that the ‘real racism’ was the ‘bullying by the BBC and the political elite of ordinary British people’ (BBC 2014). Thus far the outright racism of the UKIP candidate has met with widespread disapproval, while the underlying issue of representation has not yet been properly addressed (Jones 2014).

Where, argues Jô Gondar (2011), the majority of the thinkers of language, including Saussure and Lacan, take the arbitrariness of the sign as their starting point, and the sphere of words and that of things as irreducibly separate, Ferenczi maintains that: ‘To speak is to imitate [...] objects of the world around. “Ma-ma” is magic of imitation’. In Notes and Fragments, under the heading ‘The Language of the Unconscious’, he states:

If the intellectual urge to communicate is completely eliminated and the speech organs are given free rein [...] there comes—after senseless vowels and consonants (as in the play of *infants* with lips and tongue) *imitations* of things, animals and people.

The *imitation magic* is here:

1. The only way to *abreact* emotional impressions of the external world by one or several repetitions.
2. To *impart* to another person what happened. (Ferenczi 1932, pp. 265–266)

Based on this, we can state that hate speech acts as a form of magical gesture that *abreacts* as well as *imparts*, and it works because, to some

extent, the target cannot but agree—therefore it is painful. In terms of my distinction between two poles of speech, this is mainly expressive. Imparting may be more or less communicative. Here it is communicative in the sense that the act of throwing the infected and infectious words is supported by history, by a frame of conventional meanings. It is not communicative in Gadamer's (1960/2004) sense of seeking a mutual or mutually transformative understanding, which would require openness, mutual vulnerability, and a view of one's own limitations. The speaker of hate speech is indifferent to this hermeneutic aim, but may aim to get a third party to join in the hatred and degradation.

Something unknown, incompletely grasped, has spoken to us before we are confident speakers. We have always already absorbed a language of traditionally oppressive as well as egalitarian values before we can articulate anything. Yet repetition is active, and we play a role in shaping which bits we repeat and what we aim to reformulate.

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