

10.1

The following was found in T's room after her disappearance:

(a) entity # 1: semi-transparent plastic wrap (345 x 316 mm), consisting of 459 sphere-shaped capsules filled with air (each with a diameter of 10 mm), folded around entity # 2. Status: entity registered, analysis completed, entity archived.

(b) entity # 2: cuboid-shaped piece of black thermosetting plastic (110 x 80 x 11 mm), with rounded corners, and a 9 x 2 mm hole on one of the faces. The entity carries several inscriptions. Status: entity registered, analysis initiated.¹

(c) entity # 3: cable in black polyvinyl chloride (length: 478 mm, diameter: 3 mm), with connectors on the ends. Status: entity registered, analysis initiated.²

(d) entity # 4: single-seat furniture, model C32. Status: entity registered, analysis completed.³

(e) entity # 5: work desk, model D64, with a diagonal blue line in ink, stretching from the lower right corner to the center point of the surface, where entity # 1 and entity # 2 was placed. Status: entity registered, analysis initiated.⁴

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3 Entity # 4. Rationale: There is no indication of contact between entity # 4 and (a) entity # 2, or (b) entity # 3, or (c) any kind of structure different from that of the entity itself. Conclusion: Entity # 4 can be destructed, without there being any risk of influence on the ongoing analysis of entity # 2 and entity # 3. Nor will the destruction affect the parallel investigation of the disappearance of T. Action: Destruction.

4 The tool with which the line was drawn is missing.

10.2

It was winter, and all the windows in the huge room were wide open. I was lying cold and naked on the stone floor, unable to move my limbs, as if my body was an amorphous mass of congealed flesh and blood.

I had no idea where I was, or how I had ended up there. Then I noticed that T was there too. She sat on her knees next to me, and watched me gravely. The only sound that I noticed was the sound of her breathing. I was surprised to see that the steam of her breath didn't dissolve, but remained in the room as a cloud floating above us. As the cloud grew bigger, I could feel its warmth.

I didn't know what to say to T, but I thought that it would be appropriate to say something. I decided to say, "Hi, how are you?", but when I pronounced the words I didn't hear them. Instead I heard a dog-like whimpering.

The sudden sound of a dog frightened me. I do not like dogs. I find them unreliable and self-centered, especially small dogs like dachshunds and bichons frises. This was definitely the whimpering of a small dog that most probably belonged to T.

When I asked T to take the dog outside, I heard the whimpering again, louder this time. "Please, leave the dog outside", I repeated, but I couldn't hear anything but the dog, who now was barking shrilly. It was definitely the annoying sound of a dachshund. T didn't seem to notice that her dog started to bark, whimper or howl as soon as I said something. She just continued to silently watch me, as I was lying motionless on the floor.

Suddenly it dawned on me that I was the one making these sounds. I panicked, and tried to speak again and again. I didn't try to say

anything particular, I just wanted to hear myself utter a word, any word at all, or something that resembled a word, but all I could express was the sounds of a dachshund, the mere sounds of a creature without speech, a being without logos.

After a while, I gave up and turned silent. T smiled at me, and I could see that her mouth was full of small stones in various shapes and colors—red, black, yellow, purple, and white. They looked like the kind of stones that I used to collect from beaches with my mother.

Meantime, the cloud had grown so thick that I could no longer recognize T, and I felt that I could move my body again. Nonetheless, I remained on the floor, breathing the steam of T's breath. I was convinced that it was her language that I was inhaling. That she had left it in the cloud for me. When I was done, both the cloud and T was gone. Only the stones from her mouth were left on the floor.

They were still warm when I picked them up.

10.9

I don't speak more than between seventy and eighty words on an average day. But of course the number of words depends on what is happening during the day. Some days I say nothing, other days I say quite a lot. But if I have a choice, I generally prefer to be silent, since spoken words disappear the very same moment as they are being said, unless you record them. Yet, I would rather lose my eyes than my ability to speak. Without eyes I could still use my language, but without my language I would no longer be able to use my eyes. Without words it wouldn't be possible for me to see the difference between entities, between signs and non-signs. Without

them, all entities would merge into one huge monstrous non-sign. The world wouldn't be black and white. It would be black or white. Most likely, it would be white, fresh white, like something recently forgotten.

20.1

"There are no traces of T at all," said B. He uttered the sentence at the same moment as he opened his fly and began to urinate. "No traces!" he repeated in a loud whisper. Then he made a groan of contentment. He was silent for a moment. I had the feeling that he was inspecting my penis. "Unintelligible!" he exclaimed.

I do not believe that anything is unintelligible, especially not disappearances. I can admit that T's disappearance is remarkable. But something being remarkable is quite different from it being unintelligible. I could of course have asked how B would define the adjective "unintelligible", and on what grounds he used it, but I didn't. In fact, I said nothing at all to him, whereas also I was urinating, and on such occasions, I prefer not to talk.

The thing is, I am not closely acquainted with B. I know who he is, since he works at the same department as I, but that's pretty much it, and I've never had a conversation with him. So naturally, I was stunned when he showed up just next to me in the restroom and without any obvious reason began to talk about T at the very same moment as I could hear his squirt of urine hit the porcelain urinal.

B could after all have chosen another urinal. There are a total amount of ten urinals in the restroom, and nine of them were free, since I was alone in the restroom before B made his entrance. If it had been me entering the restroom after B, I would've chosen a

urinal on a distance of at least two urinals from his, and I would definitely not have spoken to him while urinating. It is possible that I could have said something if I met him by the sinks, which would have been quite a different thing. Anyway, I let B go on without giving him any notice. When I was done urinating, I left without saying anything.

Naturally, I have no reason to doubt that T is gone, but I strongly oppose to the description of her disappearance as unintelligible. I also find it difficult to imagine that it was traceless. What is a traceless disappearance, by the way? A trace is the remains of an event, some kind of imprint. In this case an imprint of the disappearance of T, a sign, that is. If the sign is vanished just like T, which I doubt, then it is not meaningful to talk about T.

Anyway, the circumstances surrounding B' disappearance is not of my professional concern. The only thing that concerns me is that it is now my responsibility to identify the entities that was found in T's room. It would undeniably have been helpful to take part of T's observations and hypotheses, but unfortunately there exist no such things. Although I didn't know T well, I knew that she was admired for her commitment as well as her ingenuity. The total absence of results is therefore maybe even more remarkable than the fact the she is missing. She hadn't even removed entity # 1 from entity # 2.

20.2

B most certainly knows that there are only two basic entities in this world: signs⁵ and non-signs. Signs can take part in semiotic chains. Non-signs cannot.

5

This incapacity of non-signs renders them devoid of value. Non-signs occupy space, but they signify nothing but silence. This excludes them from the real, i.e. the significant part of the world. They belong to the other part; the ~~dark impenetrable~~ endless white two-dimensional space of the non-real.⁶

All this must be familiar to B. We are after all repeatedly instructed to keep these simple but necessary distinctions in mind, whereas we sometimes encounter the most deceptive entities. Entities which seem to keep something within them, something that glimmer like a secret light inside of their darkness, or as "a living trace of their past" as N once said when warning us for them.

When encountering such an entity we are told to immediately adopt a higher degree of analytical suspicion in order to not be intrigued by its visual appearance, and to avoid ascribing to the entity a sense that most probably is absent. Such mistakes can give raise to disastrous errors that distort whole chains of signifiers, which might include millions of units.

Non-signs can indeed be harmful, and of course B is well aware of that. Therefore I do not trust him. This morning he walked into my room and continued to talk about T. He didn't stop until I asked him to leave. I think he is trying to corrupt my analysis with his nonsense. Why else would he keep on talking about T?

T is vanished. That turns her, as well as the proper name "T", and the rest of B's words into nonsensical non-signs.

6

20.4

There was a sharp smell.

The nonsensical had been dismantled into its smallest nonsensical parts, which had been sorted by size and weight. It had been fragmented and thereafter pulverized into dust.

The machines had been cleaned with a viscous liquid that seemed to glow as it slowly ran towards the drain.

The nonsensical dust was now assembled in eight light beige and cone-shaped nonsensical piles, each with a height of approximately five meters. The piles were arranged in two straight lines.

The woman stood a bit away from us. Unlike us she wore neither glasses, nor protective clothing, which indicated that the nonsensical now had reached such a pure level of insignificance that it no longer was harmful.

I appreciated that she had received us without introducing herself by name. There is really no reason to introduce oneself to one another unless you know that you will see each other again, which was unlikely to happen. This was the first and probably also the last time I would see this distant part of the plant.

"The colour will gradually fade," she said. She directed our attention towards a white spot that appeared at the top of one of the piles. "The process doesn't necessarily start on the apex. It might just as well begin at the base. We do not know why it starts where it starts. But it doesn't matter either. What matters is that it starts, and that the colour eventually disappears, which it hitherto always has done."

She said nothing else during our visit.

I didn't say anything either, but not because I had nothing to say, which is a perfectly sound reason for not speaking. I had prepared the visit with a question, which was of great importance for also my practice. I wanted to know if they applied the distinction between form and content when dealing with the nonsensical. I also wondered whether the dust particles were of equal size or not, and why the piles were cone-shaped.

I didn't say anything. Instead I felt something.

I believe that it was a feeling, but I'm not certain, since it wasn't one of the usual ones. It wasn't fear, anger, or happiness, nor was it sadness, surprise, or disgust, which are all very easy to recognize. When I know something, I know it with certainty. That applies to feelings as well. I don't doubt what I feel when I feel something. But this particular feeling I couldn't identify. I just felt it as I watched the perfect piles of the nonsensical, which I had heard about, but never seen before.

It was a feeling of something leaving me slowly.

It was like a bodily pain that I had felt for such a long time that I had gotten used to it, but that now slowly faded. As this feeling proceeded, I didn't hear the murmuring or the breathing of the others, not the rustling sound from their coats, nor did I sense the sharp smell of the nonsensical dust, or the pressure of the stone floor on my feet, and I didn't think a single thought. The only thing I experienced was the complete perfection of the nonsensical piles I had in front of me. Soon they would be nothing else, than what they in essence truly are.

20.6

There was a sound of a signal that grew louder. There was a flashing blue light. My group was not there. The woman stood on the very same spot as before, close to the nonsensical piles. She watched me indifferently. I didn't move. I was trying to sense if the feeling was still present. It wasn't.

The white spot on the pile had grown a bit larger. The other piles remained unchanged. My feet ached. I felt as I usually do. I didn't feel anything special.

"Hurry up," yelled Z. I knew his voice too well. The words bounced between the walls. He stood by the exit, together with the others, as if he was the center around which they had gathered. Now I felt something that I without doubt identified as disgust mixed with anger.

Z always awakens my deepest disgust, especially his voice. I find his voice maybe even more disgusting than his method, or at least equally disgusting. His voice is just too relaxed, and too self-confident. Like his method, it's a cliché lacking any substance. When he talks, which he always does, people don't pay attention to all the stupidities that he actually says. They just hear the mere sound of his deep, drowsy voice. They just think he is right because he sounds as if he is right. People like that. They don't like doubts, they don't like complexity, and they don't like silence.

I don't understand how Z reached his position as head of the archive. All he ever does is to take entities apart, since he is convinced that the most important signs always are located on the insides. That's what his method basically is about, to tear entities apart.

Quantitatively he has reached some results, I have to admit that, but I don't find these results very impressive. The quantitative so-called success of his method is only an effect of the banal fact that the whole as an entity in itself is always one, and thus always lesser than the sum of its parts.

The method, for which Z is famous and which he usually refers to as "my method", is not even developed by him. He has only made it popular by simplifying it, which means that he has corrupted it. The original method was at least sensitive to the difference between entities that cannot be separated from their wholes, and entities that are separable from their wholes and from each another. In Z's vulgar version of the method, every entity is separable from its whole. He has made something that was bad even worse, and for that he is rewarded.

If Z would find out about entity # 2, I know he would try to get permission to apply his method on it, which I cannot allow to happen. Hitherto, I have therefore avoided the archive. But soon I can't avoid it any longer. I will have to go there to test my hypotheses.

20.9

I had felt something that perhaps wasn't even a feeling. Now it was gone. I had been so close to the nonsensical as it was possible to be. I had seen it, just before its colour had faded, just before it was enclosed in capsules of stainless steel, and sent to its final storage in what was called non-places.

It was often said that these non-places were located deep down in the earth, or under the bottom of seas. This I doubted, since I find it hard to believe that non-places are located at all. To dig down an

entity, no matter how devoid of meaning it is, is nothing but making a space for it. To me, that doesn't seem like a proper way of getting rid of it forever. What is buried can be retrieved again, especially if it is a capsule of stainless steel.

Maybe the earth cannot be described as a place in itself, but it consists nonetheless of the sum of its inhabited and evacuated places. For an entity to be a non-place, it has to be in constant movement, and maybe also lack every connection to something else, or at least to have very few connections that are easy to break.

The most obvious non-place I can think about is the sky, which I am not very familiar with, however. The sky doesn't belong to my field of expertise. But even if I know little about it, I think I know enough to say that the word non-place suits it perfect. In my opinion, it would therefore be better to send the nonsensical high up in the sky, to let it float there above us, without direction, instead of burying it underground.

I wouldn't mind being a non-place myself. My connections may be few, but they are unfortunately far too strong to be broken by me or anyone else. The laws bind me to my function, which I perform in the room that formerly belonged to T. It is now my room.

From my window I see the foliage of the trees in the park from above. I know the names of all the plants and animals that exist there.

The birch is my favourite plant, and "birch" is also my favourite word. In the found languages, the words for birch are very similar: Birke, berzas, breza, bhurja, björk. The similarity indicates that they all come from the very same word, a word that has proven hard to find.

Of the animals I like the spiders most, especially because of how they move in the air, carried by their own silk strings, connected to nothing but the wind.

When the light is not too strong, I can look upwards, and see the spotlights. Far away, where the park ends, I can see the façade of another building that also is part of the plant.

My door leads to a corridor, with twenty doors to rooms like mine. In one end of the corridor there is a chair in front of a wall. I've only once seen a person sit in that chair – a very fat man. In the other end there is a huge door of glass, which leads to the other departments.

I don't think that T is gone. I think that she is nearby.

I don't believe that the nonsensical is somewhere under us. I think it floats in the sky above us.