Melancholy in John Dryden's All for Love

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ABSTRACT

Antony, the mourner, sticks to his bondage to others by entering the bondage of love of Cleopatra. This makes the difficulty in acting independently. Antony shows most persuasively that he is seeking a life secure in the arms of Cleopatra. In Freud's narcissism, secure life is achieved through the process of self-regard. This is a pathology. However, I argue that Antony does not incorporate Cleopatra into himself but loses her to demand a possibility, a mood, or an orientation toward the world. His feeling is changed into a mood that copes with the problems caused by the libidinous involvement with the object in Freud. He changes his feeling into a countenance towards the world, rather than a pathology. This is what Walter Benjamin calls melancholy.

Keywords: Dryden, Loss Love, Melancholy, Mourning, Work.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In "Antony Bound: Fragmentation and Insecurity in All for Love," Vance (1986) argues that Antony, the mourner, finds no way to escape his bondage to others. Antony signifies his willingness to enter the bondage of love (not losing Cleopatra) and his difficulty in acting independently. Antony expresses himself most eloquently when envisaging a life secure in the arms of Cleopatra (Vance, 1986, p. 430). Putting Vance's interpretation in Freud's language, the secure life is achieved through the process of self-regard, as Fonagy et al. (1991) state:

In the first place self-regard appears to us to be an expression of the size of the ego; what the various elements are which go to determine that size is irrelevant. Everything a person possesses or achieves, every remnant of the primitive feeling of omnipotence which his experience has confirmed, helps to increase his self-regard (p. 28).

In Freud's view (Fonagy et al., 1991), this is called narcissism, "the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature." The self-regard shows itself in melancholy where the person who has lost an object loses his ego. The melancholic suffers "a loss in regard to an object, what he tells us points to a loss in regard to his ego" (p. 3-4). In Freud, the structure of this melancholic response is perceived as the opposite to the base of the ego's structure whose survival is put in danger. In this sense, does Antony live the narcissistic identification with Cleopatra as the love object? This chapter argues that Antony without incorporating her into himself loses her and this loss becomes a stipulation of possibility, a mood or orientation towards the world. His feeling is transformed into mood, thus coping with the problematic libidinal relation to the object in Freud, bringing about a posture towards the world, rather than a pathology. Below, I argue in three sections that this loss becomes faithfulness and devotion to the thing and creates a work.

II. Loss

After his humiliating defeat at Actium, Mark Antony retires to Alexandria, Egypt, where he remains in seclusion for some time in the template in the template of Isis. He avoids meeting his mistress, Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, whose cowardice largely caused the defeat. Meanwhile, the Romans, under Octavius, Maecenas, and Agrippa, have invaded Egypt, where having laid siege to Alexandria, they calmly await Antony's next move. Freud believes that in mourning one reacts to the loss of the love object or, when he loses some idea representing some ideal state, or his country, etc. (Freud et al., 1974, p. 256). But melancholy causes one to feel doubt about the death of the loved object while it has been lost. However,

some may have enough justification to believe that he has lost a loved object but he is not able to see what loved object he has lost. The main concern here is that in melancholy something is lost that already exists in our consciousness but in mourning one consciously feels the loss of the object. (p. 245). Putting it in a different language, the loss situates at the heart of the two disparate reactions: in mourning, it is a conscious and locatable one, while in melancholy the deep feeling and sorrow for the loss become unconscious. A loss has happened, but it is not clear who or what was lost. Obviously, this is not to lessen the painful disappointment and sadness one feels in melancholy; it can also be stated that his affliction is even greater, insofar as he cannot find the source of this pain. According to this, Freud believes "in mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia, it is the ego itself" (Freud et al., 1974, p. 246). Hence, though on different planes, Freud places the loss in the middle of mourning and melancholia.

After his humiliating defeat at Actium, Mark Antony withdraws to Alexandria, Egypt, where he stays secluded in the temple of Isis for some period. He keeps away from visiting his mistress, Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, whose lack of bravery greatly brought about the defeat. At the same time, the Romans, under Octavius, Maecenas, and Agrippa, have occupied Egypt, where, having laid siege to Alexandria, they are quietly waiting for Antony's next move. In the first act, as Antony has lost Cleopatra, he reveals his own feelings regarding his past heroic life before being lost in love and his present condition in which he has lost both the self and the world. The loss of the world is expressed by Gentleman about Antony:

He eats not, drinks not, sleeps not, has no use

Of anything, but thought; or if he talks,

'Tis to himself, and then 'tis perfect raving:

Then he defies the world, and bids it pass,

Sometimes he gnaws his lips, and curses loud

The boy Octavius; then he draws his mouth

Into a scornful smile, and cries, "Take all,

The world's not worth my care" (Dryden, 1909, p. 12).

In Freudian language, apparently, the mourner sounds to have drawn off the world itself, extending the scope of loss to hold everything but the depressing subject. On the other hand, the melancholic experiences the loss of the ego. This loss engraved in the melancholic is the after-effects of the loss of love. It occurs when the lost object is internalized into the ego stricken with pain, as a result breaking it apart, splitting it from within and making the ego itself lost. Through the internalization of the loss, the inner side of the ego becomes absent. At last, the ego is emptied out. In contrast with it, the conversation between Ventidius and Antony makes known a different mental process from Freudian mourning and melancholy:

ANTONY. I do, to see officious love.

Give cordials to the dead.

VENTIDIUS. You would be lost, then?

ANTONY. I am.

VENTIDIUS. I say you are not. Try your fortune.

ANTONY. I have, to the utmost. Dost thou think me desperate,

Without just cause? No, when I found all lost

Beyond repair, I hid me from the world,

And learnt to scorn it here; which now I do

So heartily, I think it is not worth

The cost of keeping (Dryden, 1909, p. 20).

Antony has already lost his ego and loses the world afterward. His aversion to life, losing all the world and himself, is experienced enthusiastically. He does not experience that the ego has been divided and the loss has made him be hateful and instable. He does not identify himself with the lost object to do normalization. Thus, his ego does not attack itself upon this ground. He reacts melancholically to the world emptied for him. Actually, Antony who looks deeper sees the scene of his existence as a pile of inauthentic behaviours.

In Trauerspiel, Walter Benjamin (1977) states that "truth is the death of intention" (p. 36). This sentence is sophisticated and vague exemplifying one of the most essential attributes of Benjamin's view about the relationship of the human with objects. In "Calderon and Hebbel," he describes sadness and intention are related: "sadness [...] would be boundless, were it not for the presence of that intentionality which Goethe deems an essential component of every work of art, and which manifests itself with an assertiveness that fends off mourning. A mourning game [Trauer-Spiel], in short" (Benjamin, 2002, p. 373). Antony's sadness and mourning are opposite to intention, which has the capability to fend them off. This quotation goes along with the melancholic in the sense that Antony can not attach his sorrow to no object. He moves the eyes of the melancholic toward inside just to discover the consciousness he has lost.

Antony is now sad because he experiences the non-intentionality of the melancholic loss:

ANTONY. Give me some music, look that it be sad.

I'll soothe my melancholy, till I swell,

And burst myself with sighing.— [Soft music.] 'Tis somewhat to my humour; stay, I fancy I'm now turned wild, a commoner of nature; Of all forsaken, and forsaking all (Dryden, 1909, p. 16).

It seems that in the first four lines Antony tries to be intentionally to stop and put a borderline for an unmeasurable and unbounded sorrow. This sorrow is surrounded by powerful intentionality, situating it within the boundry of the object intended, thus blocking it from increasing without bound and cure. However, Antony by becoming a commoner of nature, being a part of nature, neither own nor disown all around himself. He does not intend any object. He experiences something inevitable and uncontrollable. Antony lives in a non-intentional condition, a specific kind of relation with objects which must be kept with the critical object, that is the object of truth. In this collective relationship, Antony turns wild signifying that he is the potential now for some productive operation. Here is the point where Antony goes opposite to Freudian melancholic.

III. ETHICAL FAITHFULNESS

Antony does not identify himself with the lost object. He does not confine Cleopatra within his ego to make her an integral part of him. Antony, the melancholic, is faithful to his loss. As the commoner of nature, Antony lives in a shady forest and stretches underneath some destroyed oak. He leans his head upon the moss-covered bark and seems to be a piece of it as he grows from it. He now becomes a part of nature. He grows from his own death bed. As Laplanche and Fletcher (1999) write to explain Freud, "far from being my kernel, it is the other implanted in me, the metabolized product of the other in me: forever an internal foreign body" (p. 256). The internalization is destructive and the melancholic embodies the endless dedication and responsibility to the love-object. The melancholic can only destroy the object to be faithful to it. Thus, the Freudean model of loyalty is not that of extreme destruction in Antony. Antony acknowledges the loss to be in nature as his death bed, but he grows anew without consuming the object into the self for the sake of keeping the object from being lost. According to Clewell (2004), Freud supports the removal of the signs of connection with the object, for the sake of stablising mental health again and going back to life. This proves Freud's profession that a subject may indeed live without the signs of the lost object, or the healthy subject who is able to repudiate connection to the others lost (p. 60). This admission would bring Antony into an extreme problematic condition comprehended as the experience of mourning not as the coping with and intentionally removal of loss, but as the serious thoughtful expression of its permanent signs which keeps him distracted in his nightly slumbers.

The work of mourning in Antony cannot be seen as an egotistic one when he states: "No word of Cleopatra: she deserves/More worlds than I can lose" (Dryden, 1909, p. 23). There is no selfish aspect in mourning in his speech; it does not introduce the narcissism in loving oneself relevant to subjectivity in an extreme sense. Antony's words suggest, thus, that the incident of Cleopatra's loss is an occasion to perceive that she is not imminently replaceable and that the loss of her is not taken as the temporary interuption of the narcissism experienced by the mourner. Antony does not lose more worlds to gain her, but rather she deserves in herself. At the other end of mourning, he positions himself in melancholia and overwhelmingly commits to loss, which gets control of his consciousness at the expense of stopping the wellness of the self and the ego. In the second act, when he meets Cleopatra he expresses: "Yes, we have made them [our fates]; we have loved each other, Into our mutual ruin" (Dryden, 1909, p. 37). He internalizes and circumscribes loss and offers his selfhood to be lost. Here, the construction of the self goes to margin, since the responsibility towards the lost object comes to center. Antony, the melancholic, gives up the construction of selfhood even when he joins Cleopatra:

There's no satiety of love in thee: Enjoyed, thou still art new; perpetual spring Is in thy arms; the ripened fruit but falls, And blossoms rise to fill its empty place; And I grow rich by giving (Dryden, 1909, p. 47).

He loves to lose ego not to shape it narcissistically. Rather, he is destructively satisfied by his love that becomes the expression of his endless loyalty to loss. In other words, he is not involved in the economy of the loss and gain play. He grows anew through losing. About the above passage, Aubrey L. Williams (1984) referring to the elm and vine motif among seventeenth-century English writers (in which the vine, the woman, embraces the elm, the man, to kill him) argues that Antony associated with the elm tree is not only depleted and undone but also adorned and enriched: "we see Antony serving as generous elm-like brace and support, enabling a clasping, twining, feminine vine to become more lavishly fruitful than it would be if it trailed, unsupported, along the ground" (p. 13). Antony, like the generous vine, gains strength from the embrace he gives. He grows rich by giving.

Benjamin (1977) in the Trauerspiel explains the dialectics of loyalty in the visage of the courtier. The courtier becomes disloyal to the prince, and remains instead loyal to the objects of monarchy: "His unfaithfulness to man is matched by a loyalty to these things to the point of being absorbed in contemplative devotion to them... Loyalty is completely appropriate only to the relationship of man to the world of things. The latter knows no higher law, and loyalty knows no object to which it might belong more exclusively than the world of things" (p. 156-57). This example illustrates the different position of Antony's faithfulness in an ethical sense. Antony does not remain faithful to the most valuable law within the scope of human relations, going beyond ethical realm; he devotes himself to the world of things functioning as the most ethical lawfulness; this is where that responsibility gives up its ethicality turning into unthoughtful loyalty. Antony rather chooses to penetrate the world of things which fuses him to the life on earth; thus, he is detached from the world of human life:

...Live in a shady forest's sylvan scene, Stretched at my length beneath some blasted oak, I lean my head upon the mossy bark, And look just of a piece as I grew from it; My uncombed locks, matted like mistletoe, Hang o'er my hoary face; a murm'ring brook Runs at my foot (Dryden, 1909, p. 16).

The material and the human are mutually excluding each other. They present faithlessness to Cleopatra as the witness of the loyalty to things. The latter is dead, despairing and immobile, but nevertheless, it is the only realm which can contain even subjective arbitrary meaning as his growth is renewed from it. In contrast with meaning which is evanescent and unachievable, the objects are present incontrovertibly and faithfully. Nevertheless, in Freud, this strong persistence has a pulsing aspect in which complete faithfulness gets involved with disloyalty (Freud et al., 1974, p. 157). This faithfulness has a dialectics inherently in itself: a secret desire to cope with the thing that always exists in this strong loyalty, to go beyond the meaning which Antony does not experience:

ANTONY. The herd come jumping by me, And fearless, quench their thirst, while I look on, And take me for their fellow citizen.

More of this image, more; it lulls my thoughts (Dryden, 1909, p. 17).

This image is not the experience of loyalty in which the melancholic who is saturated with fidelity and loyalty ruins the thing within his conscious boundaries. Being united with the things in nature reminds him of his emptiness, what remains when meaning and belief are dead. This emptiness has the power to be charged with meaning anew when Antony metamorphoses into the objects: the herd drinks him. The world of things has been converted into the image representing loss, yet loss hidden with the capacity, though partial, for recovery.

The act of devotion signifies that there is a strong desire to live with the thing. Antony does not continue to be what he was, and is metamorphosed into something entirely distinct which is laid down with the great passion for it. Benjamin approaches his objects of philosophical work through such loyalty which stands between love and ruin, loyalty and a control. However, Antony does not tear away the objects and is transformed into an object. This is to go beyond devotion.

IV. WORK

The idea of work (in the Benjaminean view of Arbeit and not Werk) might be considered as the crucial part, because it elucidates how Antony's experience of loss may change Freud's attempt for pathology into a philosophical and critical productive outcome. Whereas Benjamin derives the conception of commitment from the melancholic state, he takes out the idea of the work from the mourner. Freud defines the work of mourning (Trauerarbeit) as the subjection that the mourner carries out in the lengthy and severe act of separation from the object which is lost. The call of reality for Antony in this sense is to return back to the days of honour and glory when he was the emperor. The loss of Cleopatra should be accepted, there is work that should be done. In Act I, scene I, when Antony experiences the loss of Cleopatra, he speaks with Ventidius about his past and present status. Antony recalls his many triumphs for which he felt so happy, so great, so beloved. In these years, he was in love with Cleopatra and his duty simultaneously. As a consequence, she leaves, divorcing him forever because of his devotion to his work and carelessness to her. At this point, the reality-principle does not take over and directs Antony to the significant act of separation from Cleopatra which is intended to live once more, independent from the state of mourning. Antony through the lengthy and laborious course of mourning keeps Cleopatra within his psyche. However, he does

not accept his state of being lost and does not attempt to release himself from the bond to it when he curses and calls himself mad for he has wearied Cleopatra. According to Ferber (2013), "The work of mourning is composed of a slow and painful working through each of the strands attaching the dejected subject to the object, which Freud defines as a thousand links" (p. 57). However, Antony keeps his memories of

Antony does not untie completely all points of bond to release himself in order that "the ego becomes free and inhibited again" (p. 245). Putting it differently, the voice of honor (reality) dictates the cutting of the threads of bond so that the work of mourning is aimed at life; it is said by him:

Pr'ythee, do not curse her,

And I will leave her; though, Heaven knows, I love

Beyond life, conquest, empire, all, but honour;

But I will leave her (Dryden, 1909, p. 25).

Apparently, here there is a life-energy moving forward and pushing him to detach himself and to turn back to unrestrained life. The intension behind the course of separation is not related to Cleopatra herself, yet to himself who requires to release himself from it. Here the thing signifies just an obstacle that is suggested to be moved away so that the real state overcomes it. Freud asserts that "mourning impels the ego to give up the object by declaring the object to be dead and offering the ego the inducement of continuing to live" (Freud et al., 1974, p. 256). But though Antony leaves her, she is not dead for him and still keeps her; she is lost but alive and present. This is evident when Antony says that he does not want to talk about Cleopatra anymore and believes she deserves all the world to be lost for her (Dryden, 1909, p. 23). She is not gained back to be his object of love. She deserves in herself. He is detached but she still is present. Moreover, he does not detach himself from Cleopatra to internalize her. In Act II, scene I, Antony talking to Ventidius expresses frankly that there is no harm to be embraced softly and kissed by Cleopatra. For Freud, in melancholy the melancholic leaves the lost object to perish while the decay is not likely to happen because of the absence of the required space and obscuring its boundaries with the subject. But Antony is aware of the distance and he has consciously separated himself from her while he keeps her. Freud remarks the chance of the work exists in melancholy yet ignores it instantly, because being integrated with the melancholic and deprived of its self-determining and exterior position, the object becomes unworkable (Freud et al., 1974, p. 257). No work can be carried out whether it is for the reason that loss is undistinguishable or because the lost object was integrated with the melancholic subject himself before; it is because the loss itself ceased to be.

However, as Antony has acted different from Freudian mourning and melancholy, we can argue through Benjamin who joins melancholy and its profound reaction and loyalty to loss with the work. Shortly after that, Benjamin does not think that in the work the psyche is led into separation from the thing, intending to converting it into absence, in order to release the subject once more. Whereas, the work is pointed to present the thing, to give it a language and subsequently to be redeemed. According to Laplanche and Pontalis (1974) the act of mourning is defined as "killing death" would not work in this context (p. 486). It is not the life-energy being initiated, but the absence of life. Benjamin is relocating the idea of the work from the field of mourning to the realm of meaning, thereby the work of articulation will deepen loss and extends the impairment of the thing. The thing would not be deprived of rather put forward and allocated a voice, and therefore kept. Antony does not expect to go back to life after separating himself from the thing being lost. But, he was filled with the life-energy inside the impairment. Putting it differently, the idea of work (borrowing from Benjamin) can be defined as the act of presenting the object, not the absence done by the mourner. In the work, neither the pathology of melancholy is absent, nor the naturalization of mourning; it is a sorrowful work, in the sense that it, almost serious, lacks the life-energy of libido yet, which causes melancholy so ruinous, and mourning so simply separating.

In opposition to the idea of the work in Freud, which removes all signs of loss, Antony does not clearly concern with effacing the signs of loss and ruin, rather, he highlights them. In his explanation of the idea of mosaic representing the portrayal of the philosophical idea, Benjamin (1977) states that the latter's speckes are bonded always in a clear way. "And the brilliance of presentation depends as much on... [the] value [of the fragments of thought] as the brilliance of the mosaic does on the quality of the glass paste" (p. 29). In act V, scene I, Antony and Ventidius visit each other and make ready for combat. Alexas, the messenger of Cleopatra, arrives and notifies Antony that Cleopatra has died.

Antony states:

ANTONY. Forgive me, Roman.

Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death,

My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,

But lets my thoughts break all at random out.

I've thought better; do not deny me twice (Dryden, 1909, p. 104).

Not only is the robustness of the image, Antony's suicide, not influenceded by its being broken into fragments and disintegrated quality, but it is escalated by precisely that. The glue becomes a condition for

the forcefulness of the image. Antony thinks that it is a better thought if he breaks all around him including himself. It is this break in the image he gives of himself, from which its strength comes, and it is the traces of that which was structured by that break and loss, which make themselves known in the truth. Antony does not make a full recuperation or recovery from being lost, but the work and its consequents continually tolerate it inside them. According to Butler (2002), the work, which emerges from the ruins or loss, will always leave its enigmatic trace (p. 468). When Antony sees Cleopatra alive, he is not regretful that he has already committed suicide. Rather, he is happy that he is dying and lives hand in hand with Cleopatra in this death below in groves. This strengthens Antony's attempt at the work of exposition and articulation of loss instead of that of separation. He is thus not coping with loss, since he is no longer mournful, but involves himself with it and works through loss itself, and the exposition of it.

Freud in his text illuminates that the lost object for the melancholic is half-alive. Although the thing has so far been lost and therefore not alive, it is not still entirely dead because it lives yet in another or different way inside the consciousness of melancholic. It could not be said Cleopatra is to some extent alive, she is buried alive. Antony is able or willing to part and bring himself to rest when they meet in Act I. Scenes I:

ANTONY. Well, madam, we are met.

CLEOPATRA. Is this a meeting?

Then, we must part?

ANTONY. We must.

CLEOPATRA. Who says we must?

ANTONY. Our own hard fates.

CLEOPATRA. We make those fates ourselves (Dryden, 1909, p. 37).

This rest is also present in Cleopatra who, for him, does not hover between life and death. Here, fate keeps him in stillness, thus making him to be powerful facing up the ruinous melancholic power. Rethinking what Freud brings out in the field of meaning through Benjamin's change of the pathology of the lost thing, the terms stillness or rest may take supplementary meaning. The stillness not only apprehends the ruinous disquiet but also inactivates the thing. The fate that presents Cleopatra in her completeness while being deprived of the purpose of joining her is that which makes her calm as well. Nevertheless, this inactivation does not signify the burial that would hide Cleopatra to pacify the separation. But, it is a complete stillness signifying going deep into the dying process. Putting it differently, the presentation of meaning does not mean giving life to the thing or reconstructing its remains, but the stillness in accomplishing the work of its elimination. Antony expresses: "When I found all lost/Beyond repair, I hid me from the world,/And learned to scorn it here; which now I do so heartily, I think it is not worth/The cost of keeping" (Dryden, 1909, p. 21). The stillness, thus, is mostly relevant to make meaning actualized and secured, which both are founded on the termination of life or its clearing out into coagulated signification. This signification is obtained by keeping loss, not coping with it. Cleopatra deserves more worlds than Antony can lose. Antony tells this sentence when he has lost her in the early of the play. She deserves not because he loves her narcissistically. She is lost or completely dead but is retained in herself. This new significance in Cleopatra in her language is the madness that transcends her.

Cleopatra expresses this when she is divorced from Antony early in the play:

My love's a noble madness,

Which shows the cause deserved it. Moderate sorrow

Fits vulgar love, and for a vulgar man:

But I have loved with such transcendent passion,

I soared, at first, quite out of reason's view,

And now am lost above it. No, I'm proud (Dryden, 1909, p. 27).

She experiences passion that transgresses reason. She is lost above reason. She is outside it, outside ego or the voluntary calculation of subject. She is dead and lost above reason meaning that she transgresses reason to retain herself outside it. Cleopatra and Antony's ruin in Cleopatra's expression that their love have ruined them mutually can be related to the madness Cleopatra conveys in the above speech.

The stillness also needs separating, but completely different the separation in mourning. The work of mourning implies carefully reconsidering every piece of memory and spot of connection to the thing. There exists much personal state in this kind of work. The person works through his shorelines of connection to loss. This occurs along with standing in the middle of the psychoanalytic plan. The process of separation is not aimed at the thing itself, but at the subjectivity which must be released from. Here the thing is just an obstacle that should be put aside in order that reality be widespread. Antony's work, however, takes completely a different course. The separation which is very important in the course of articulation is aimed at releasing Cleopatra (the thing itself), carrying her to rest, and not releasing himself from it as Antony expresses that she deserves more worlds than he loses and he does not curse her when he leaves her. The one who mourns separates to make the thing absent, but Antony disengages by expressing in order that the thing becomes present. As a consequence, the disengagement signifies articulation and not hiding or

repression. Antony's project is strongly committed to the knowledge and expression of the thing thereby bringing it to rest.

V. CONCLUSION

Loss is situated at both ending points in Antony and Cleopatra's relationship. The work of articulation is conditioned in this way, since it works primarily to be the condition for distinguishing the thing. At the other ending point, loss signifies the situation in which the thing is completely articulated and cleared out of life. The thing are deprived of all capacity of life and capability at the end of the course, but we can only in this way express it completely "at a standstill." While others from Romans and Egyptian reject Antony and Cleopatra's love relationship and want them to lose each other and stop this love affair, Antony situates his love at the heart of this loss, and demands the comprehension and acceptance of that loss, in combination with strong loyalty and work it needs. Thus, Antony kills himself when he hears that Cleopatra is dead not to show he is faithful and eager to join her. Rather, he acknowledges that death is the only way to express the nature of their relationship. In "The Task of Translator", Benjamin (2002) writes: "All purposeful manifestation of life... have their end not in life but in the expression of its nature, in the representation of its significance" (p. 255).

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