# Rhetorics of Truth, Justice and Secrecy in Pascal's Text

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ABSTRACT: Beginning from a definition of philosophical discourse which states the necessity of rhetoric meant as the whole of the linguistic devices aiming to persuade the interlocutor of truth and justice, the author points out that Pascal's text would be an outstanding example of such a discourse, while showing, nevertheless, the specificity of the rhetoric he employs. Such a specificity would aim to carry out a complex logic of the secret, concerning chiefly the ackowledgement and identification procedures of the subject of the discourse-enunciation, and its pronominal and nominal markers.

The author studies this logic on one hand by starting from the pragmatic patterns developed by the linguistics of enunciation, and on the other taking into account the philosophical, ethical and religious themes of the Jansenist thought in the XVIIth century. The distinction between concealment and secret leads the author to set up the forms of political rhetoric against the actual Pascalian aspects of philosophical rhetoric. Such a logic of the secret, which is the projection of the hidden God teologema into the field of philosophical discourse, would enable us to position as "absent" the subject producing this discourse and thus to transform what he states into a discourse of truth and justice. The very careful examination of the anonymity strategies and mostly of the writing tactics concerning the author's real name (anagram) would seem to confirm this conception of the rhetoric of Pascal's philosophical discourse.

KEY WORDS: Enunciation, secret, dissimulation, subject, truth, real name.

Let us consider the Pascalian text as a philosophical one, that is to say as a text which is intended to convince his reader of the truth it presents, to persuade him of the demands of justice it proclaims, and to make him believe truth and behave according to justice.

Once this initial assumption taken for granted, we can observe that Pascalian text as a whole belongs to what Benveniste in his seminal essays on subjectivity in language called "discourse".[1] That modality of enunciation is characterized by the presence throughout the text of linguistic markers of enunciation, that is a deictic network (personal pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs, verb tenses, etc.) through which énoncés, sentences and propositions are connected to the subject that utters them: an "I" addressing a "you" in statements concerning matters of common interest. These very schematic and elementary remarks on what Benveniste calls the formal apparatus of enunciation can be developed in two direc-

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tions. First of all and generally speaking we may observe that when in a written text, an "I" is written, it is only a textual written trace of the subject of enunciation, a subject that remains implicit in any occurrence we could consider. The "I" I read, the "I" I write is only a track, a mark or a trace of the writing apparatus that produces the text. Even at the very moment when a text is going to be written where "I" occurs, the subject of enunciation is manifesting itself while at that very moment retreating to meta-level of enunciation. In other barbarous words, when reading or writing "I" in a text, I deal only with an enunciated enunciation produced by an enunciating agency belonging to a plane other than that to which discourse as a linguistic product belongs.

From Augustin to Leiris, all the writers of autobiographies encountered aporias in that kind of narration which can be considered as a crucial experiment making manifest the paradoxical structure of enunciation. We may summarize quickly these first remarks in more philosophical terms: enunciation is the "transcendantal" sphere — in the Kantian sense of the term "transcendantal" — of any speech utterance. This means along the Kantian line of critical thinking, that we have to refrain from ontologizing enunciation, even if we cannot escape from such a reification.

On the other hand, enunciation cannot be identified with the network of its markers which display it in the empirical énoncés it founds and allows to occur. Narratives make that impossibility obvious: as such, they do not comprise any of these deictic marks and nonetheless we cannot help but think that they were written through an enunciating agency.

Neither a reified essence nor a mere linguistically manifested pattern of deictic elements, enunciation is rather implied, insinuated, alluded to in a text by all of its marks, traces and even by means of their absence. When considered from that problematic point of view, a text appears to obey a kind of very complex logic quite akin to that of secrecy. The main resemblance between the two is that in both, the subject of enunciation or the person who keeps the secret have "to secrete the secret", to make enunciation seep through some traces, marks and indexes which insinuate the secret or enunciation as concealed or implicit.

On the other hand, the major difference between secrecy and enunciation — the difference indeed between a particular and a concrete functioning of language and a general theoretical model — is that in secrecy the addressee of the secret is excluded from its communication while knowing that is has some concern with him, while desiring to receive the hidden message. This is not the case with enunciation which is the basic pattern of linguistic communication.

It will be up to Pascal and the Pascalian text to remind and show us that the discourse of truth and justice obeys the logic of secrecy and that that logic is somehow deeply connected to the semantic and pragmatic structure of enunciation.

This last remark leads me directly to the second point to which I just alluded: if the Pascalian text as a whole belongs semantically to the discursive modality of enunciation, pragmatically it is intended to convince and persuade its reader, to make him believe and agree in what the text is supposed to expose, that is to say to have through reading an effect on his way of thinking, willing, desiring, behaving. Moreover it seems to me that the logic of secrecy, the semantics of enunciation and the rhetorics of persuasion are intimately related to each other in Pascal's text. This precisely is the subject of this paper: What about the art of persuading in Pascal? What interpretative theory and practice does it try to construct on relation to secrecy and enunciation? In what sense do I think that Pascal's text as a text paves the way for the critical writing which characterizes our philosophical modernity?

There are two possible ways of asking oneself about the art of persuading in Pascal and about the very possibility of speaking about this art: to gather together the fragments where Pascal speaks *about* rhetoric, *about* the aims of discourse in general, *about* conversations between people, *about* conversion, *about* the discourse of Jesus Christ. Or else to explore the fragments, the short treatises, the letters, the interrupted text of Pascal in order to disclose *his* rhetoric, to recognize *his* art of persuasion, to track down *his* strategies and *his* tactics of discourse and writing with regard to the listener or reader. Even if one of these paths were chosen over the other, it would remain to be seen at what point they would converse and to what degree of coherence. We could, for example, construct with the meta-discursive fragments of Pascal an articulate and systematic theory of discourse and once the logic and the force of its effects had been extracted from what Pascal has written, we would of necessity ask whether the treatise on rhetoric comes up to the level of the art that his discursive practice reveals or what lacks or what excesses appear in the former relative to the demands and the objectives of the latter. We would then wonder about the possible meanings which could be attributed to these gaps between an explicit theory of persuasive discourse and the hidden art of a practice of speaking and writing which instils belief. In this way, reading Pascal would amount to discovering the secrets of a discursive practice (as one can speak of manufacturing secrets which a theory of discourse would present only in order to dissimulate them all the more). In reading the short treatise "on persuasion", the reader discovers a glaring failure in the theory of the art of persuasion, but perhaps this failure does no more than make secret the success of the art since the reader cannot help but believe that the theory is impossible.

This would be the "long" way of approaching my subject then. Perhaps it would be best to proceed differently, to take what Pascal has written as such, that is to say as a text, a torn fabric with holes and in pieces, and to pull some of these threads. In reading the text, to reach the heart of our

proposal, let us apply to the text the following fragment: "I shall here write down my thoughts without arranging them, but not perhaps in a confusion without design: it is the proper order which always marks my object by disorder itself."[2] Let us draw from the discourse of persuasion a first thread of order and disorder: a confusion which does not have an order but which has a pattern which is the true order. In this way, a strategy comes to light which effaces ordered differences, hierarchies and regular successions. However, in terms of writing, this strategy aims at marking by a design, a seal, what is being written about, the object of discourse, a marking which is the true order inscribing itself in the object as disorder. How then can the confusion preserve a design? A contradiction in terms. It is not however a question of signifying but of showing; not of giving to read and to understand but of indicating and giving a signal. The whole fragment is *written between* a project of signifying: "I'll write my thoughts" and a will to indicate "I intend to show", between a semiotic project and a deictic desire, a field or interval which, in Pascal, is that of the discourse of persuasion and of its art of the effects of belief.

But, it is quite possible that I have read too quickly that "pensée": in trying to draw the thread of the order and disorder of discourse, in mimicking in my written reading Pascal writing about his writing, perhaps I have been caught up in the play because the one I mimic, the one whose project, whose design and proposal I played when I was acting the Pascalian on that other scene of writing is perhaps not Pascal but Montaigne. The first word of the fragment is in fact *Pyrrhonism*. I forgot it. But could it not be that in this fragment, Pascal was acting out Montaigne by speaking as Montaigne would have spoken, just as a moment ago I tried to speak *like* Pascal in order to speak and write *about* Pascal. So, far from speaking about Montaigne, while thinking I am speaking about Pascal, because I speak like this, it is Pascal speaking about Montaigne that I imitate and I thereby imitate the inimitable manner of the author of the *Art of Persuasion* that is Montaigne in speaking about the object which "the incomparable author of the art of confering" is dealing with . . .[3] In a word, who says "I"? There in the fragment I just quoted, here in the commentary I just made, Montaigne? Pascal in the manner of Montaigne? Pascal speaking about Montaigne? Pascal? And me between all these possibilities and all the possible effects of the text? Who says "I"? Here is the key problem of the Pascalian art of discourse, the fundamental springboard of his discursive strategy: who says "I"? But the question is perhaps unanswerable and then the spring would break and there would be no strategy, only tactics of discourse. Nevertheless it could well be that these diverse tactics (if not devoid of centres of programming or decision making, but with plural, variable and shifting centres), may constitute the only possible strategy of the whole enterprise. Who says "I"? The only possible answer, no doubt, parodying that made by an "I" in the *Pensées* (but is it the same "I" as earlier?) is: "Guess . . ."[4]

Guess who says "I". What is the secret of the correct distance of true judgement? What is the secret of the place of "I" in the fragmentary writing of Pascal or in his art of persuasion? And since to simulate is to feign to be that which one is not, is this "I" simulating when he writes: "I will write here my thoughts without order", etc? If so, who is he simulating? And I in my turn when caught by the question, Montaigne? Pascal? Montaigne (cited) in Pascal? Or Pascal permeated by Montaigne? . . . and if to dissimulate is to feign not to be what one is, what does the "I" dissimulate? What he is. But what is he? How could he feign an absence except through reference to the presence whose absence he feigns? Feigning not to be Pascal in feigning to be Montaigne (who he is not), dissimulating who he is in simulating who he is not or feigning not to be Montaigne in feigning to be Pascal? But how can one feign to be what one is? Is this still feigning? How can one dissimulate what one is not? Is this still dissimulating? Can one play at being oneself? In what interest? A secret located between a simulation and a dissimulation of the same and the other, a secret which is the very site of the plural tactics of the diversity of the art of persuasion in Pascal.[5]

## DISSIMULATION OR SECRET?

What, then, is the secret of this "I"? Simulation for the sake of dissimulation or the reverse, here is a text drawn from elsewhere and which is worth reflecting on because it brings together Montaigne, Pascal, "I" and "me". We read in the *Logic of Port-Royal*,

> Men who love no one but themselves cannot tolerate not to be considered with esteem and they consider anything that cannot be referred to them as unbearable. They usually move from the hatred for persons to the hatred for opinions and reasons. These wise men try to escape from displaying to others' eyes their strong points. They avoid presenting themselves directly. They avoid being seen face to face. They try instead to hide themselves in the crowd so that in their discourse, others see only the truth they propose.[6]

This passage sets the scene for the entry of the great rhetorician:

> The late M. Pascal who knew the true rhetorics more thoroughly than anyone else pushes that rule so far that he claims that an honest man avoids naming himself or even employing words like "I" and "me". On this subject, he used to say that christian piety annihilates Man's self and that profane civility only dissimulates it.
>
> Nevertheless that rule must not fall into scrupulousness.[7]

The first stage: the crafty strategy of the Christian moralist. If hatred of the other is the necessary corollary of love of oneself, is this not merely because in his discourse the other in portraying himself appears to me like another "me"; and if people find obtrusive everything which does not relate back to themselves, then the strategy of the wise man, unique and

singular in his difference, consists in hiding himself in the crowd so as to escape being noticed, to become someone like all the others, indistinguishable from them, less a "he" than a "one". He dissimulates himself by assimilation; feigning to be that which he is not, the same as all the others, he feigns not to be that which he really is, a wise person holding the discourse of truth; a double fiction, a double criss-cross image of being and non-being, of presence and absence in which one recognizes the motif of representation, that of the truth, in the discourse addressed to all the others.

The true discourse of the "wise person", through this strategy of simulation-dissimulation is spoken by "nobody" precisely in the degree to which it is spoken by "one" who is the same, therefore invisible in the crowd where he is hiding. Nobody speaks: the truth (of the proposition) seems *to make itself seen*, a fiction which dissimulates the subject of the utterance by assimilating it.

The reader will have noticed that the main instruction given by the moralist to ensure the irresistible success of the persuasive *coup* concerns the optical mechanisms of the gaze, of the imaginary. The wise person hides himself in the multitude so that not he, but only the truth which his discourse *represents*, should be *seen*.

So, from a careful reading of the moralistic text, it seems that it is this instruction of the art of persuasion and the maxim of Christian wisdom that Pascal carries to the point of making the efficacious discourse of truth almost impossible: here, directed towards language and in language, the rule becomes in fact "hyperbolical", striking out the proper noun, the first person pronoun "I" and its autonym "me". The excess, if excess there be, consists in displacing the instruction from the scene of the imaginary (the gaze, representation) and the effects aroused in the beholder, to the order of the symbolic (language, sign systems) and its effects. What is appropriate and feasible for the moralist — not to expose himself to the concupiscent gaze so as to better propose the truth to the reasonable view, becomes intolerable and useless in the field of language. The instruction on effective conduct, technical rule and moral maxim becomes an ideal, a fictive point on the horizon of discursive usage, in the same way as naming oneself is *like* presenting one's own face and exposing oneself to the eyes of others; and as using *I* and *me*, is *like* making oneself be seen in particular. That is why the Pascalian rule must not go too far. But it could well be that the Christian moralist has not completely understood it and that he has been too quick to assimilate it to the rhetorical instructions which he formulates with wise people in mind. It could well be that the strategy of concealing the speaker in the crowd is in no way the norm of which the Pascalian rule would be at once the excess and the perversion. This rule could well require something qualitatively different: a tactic of the secrecy of the subject of the utterance, enunciation of his "retreat"

from personal forms like "I" and "me", of his "retreat" from his own name; a tactic which would consist in absenting himself from them while continuing to mark them incessantly. Because in the last analysis, with the exception of the word "God", there are no words which occur more frequently in the *Pensées* than "I" and "me". But it is very uncertain and risky to affirm that these "I"s and "me"s designate the very person who writes them. This, then, is the first indication of retreat and the first insinuation of secrecy. We find the second in this "saying" of the late M. Pascal which the moralist cites: "Christian piety annihilates Man's self while profane civility only hides it". What register can the hyperbolic rule of M. Pascal be situated in? Does it come into the category of Christian piety or human civility? Is it not merely an excess of this civility which limits itself to hiding the self by not saying "me", to preventing "I" from appearing by implying it, by disconnecting the statement from the subject of enunciation through the mere effacement of the enunciated marks of enunciation? Or in its excess, does the rule annihilate the human self? Dissimulation or destruction, (de)negation or abnegation, suppression which prevents appearance or suppression which causes disappearance, fiction of absence or vertigo of a void? Is it a question of making oneself so similar to others that the others will be unable to hate this "one" who resembles them so much that they take him to be one of their own? From then on "one" only *sees* in the discourse of the wise man the truth which "he" proposes because he has become "one".

## TYRANNIES

But is this not in fact dissimulation of human civility rather than its annihilation through Christian piety?

There are therefore two registers where the ego constitutes itself as an object of hatred of the "I". The first level is the one which the courtier, obliging towards everyone, hides his will to power through his equal measure of politeness. The second level is the one aimed at by Christian piety and its incessant work of eradication. The level on which self-love shapes the self through its centripetal movement. Self-esteem, love for oneself is the other side of the universal hatred of others, and what the discourse of knowledge says relating to the difference of the one in relation to all the others, will be read by the language of desire, as the war of each and of everyone.[8] The art of persuasion rhetoric is somehow the passion of philosophical discourse. It operates the conversion of knowledge to desire, of the abstract idea to love-hate. It signifies "otherness", "difference" and "distinction" as war, violence and force. Thus sociability according to the courtier can only be that of the regulated exchange of obligations of prestige and respect.

Through dissimulation, the universal hatred of all the others invests itself more profoundly in the secret of its contrary, the singular love of oneself. The art of persuasion through what is agreeable, through pleasure, is only a strategy of civility which, through dissimulation of the universal hatred of the self, leads to consent regarding the truth proposed by removing the displeasure which is attached to the desire of total domination.[9] But there is perhaps another rhetoric, not that of speculative philosophical discourse but that of ethical discourse — that is for Pascal that of Christianity, a polemical rhetoric, a rhetoric of *war* which is a radical hatred of the self in its essential injustice, in the centre of its secret. To the secret of the self corresponds the secret of the polemical tactic of the artful one who uses the very weapons of the self, its signs, but in order to withdraw infinitely from them.[10] These signs are reserved forces, represented violence: they are the name of the self, its discursive marks, its powerful indexes. This is the secret of the art of persuasion, the secret of that discourse destructive to the self which makes itself the centre, the secret which in discourse itself sets into incessant displacement and in fact thereby destroys this centre. Not dissimulation through dissimulating oneself, but destruction through withdrawing oneself (through "secreting oneself").

## MORALIST OR JESUIT?

"Wise people . . . try to hide themselves in the crowd so as not to be noticed . . ." writes the crafty moralist in the service of truth. "They hide themselves in the crowd and summon numbers to their rescue. Uproar."[11] This is a fragment of the *Provinciales* which disclose the political strategy of the Jesuits. The moralist concealing himself in the crowd makes the other believe in a statement which hides the essential injustice of the self which makes itself the centre: "Nobody says it, but I could have said it, it is as if I had said it, it is really what I say, therefore it is true." But it is the Jesuits who adopt this strategy and its effects are quite different: by hiding themselves in the crowd, they summon the crowd to support them. Far from making "one" consent to the peaceful truth of a statement without a speaker, the good Fathers lead the crowd to believe in the falsity of a statement whose speaker is the "majority". Peace, no: violence, "tumult". By hiding themselves in the crowd, invisible, they make visible the strength of the greatest number, of those they make speak like themselves. But who, then, is hiding in the crowd and puts number on his side? The Jesuit or the correspondent of the *Provinciales*? The writer of the letters which were one of the major best sellers of the time? The debate now has three poles: the strategy of the artful moralist, who, by dissimulation, delivers a discourse whose speaker is unmarked; the strategy of the Jesuit who, by

dissimulation, delivers a discourse whose speaker is the majority and who obtains assent to falsity (through force) and the tactic of the polemicist who, by retreating into the secret of the utterance, indicates the secret place of justice and of truth, where, in the silence, the command of justice could be heard: this is another way of posing the question of the force of Pascalian discourse, a force which prevails over its meaning. What about the mechanism of the enunciation of this discourse in its confrontations or its differences with the courtier, the moralist of Port-Royal, the Jesuit, the theologians of grace, Epictetes and Montaigne, etc.? Which would amount to asking how signs are manipulated differently; and perhaps even more to asking what, in the structure of the sign itself, permits its manipulation, and how, in manipulating signs each in their own way, the senders manipulate the receivers by the signs thus manipulated. Dissimulation or secret? To hide or to withdraw oneself? Tumult or war? Let us speak of the *Provinciales* and of the names and the "I"s and the "me"s which inscribe themselves there, and hide themselves there in others words.

Let us consider the *Provincial Letters* as a textual experimentation on logic of secrecy, on subjectivity in discourse and our reading of the Letters as a critical questioning of our contemporary reading (and writing philosophy).[12]

A succession of pamphlets, from 23 January 1656 to 24 March 1657, then a collection of eighteen letters with a preface; then in 1657, a book consisting in these eighteen texts with a title and an author's name, Louis de Montalte: such are the initial stages of the history of the *Provinciales* whose writer passes from anonymity to a pseudonym. This long birth of the interrupted work can be read, from the point of view of the "sender" as the increasing opacity of a dissimulation of the "author"; but in reverse, from the point of the "receiver", as the progressive unveiling of a title, then of a proper name. Then the Provincial is succeeded from the XIth letter by the RR. FF. Jesuits — a collective name for the members of the Society of Jesus — and from the XVIIth letter by R. F. Annat, a proper name. It would doubtless be fruitful to explore from the point of view of the secret and of dissimulation, not only the angle of attack of the polemical discourse in the first letters but also the maneuvers of interruption and resumption, of rupture and displacement which the text carries out as the front changes; in other words, as the semantic and pragmatic mechanism of the enunciation is structurally modified.

At the beginning of the correspondence, the "I" is a wise person who is not a theologian, but who informs himself about a current event and a question of faith.[13] He desires to know the true, a truth with which he is not acquainted. In other words, this "I" is nothing if not a desire to know. But in order to know the truth, his tactic is to simulate: he feigns to be of the opinion of one, then of the other; he "acts" the Molinist, then the Jansenist, he speaks like the one and like the other. Better still: it is the

excess of this double simulation where the "I" dissimulates his "nothing" which provokes the dynamic of his coming and going, of the quest for truth in his enquiry among the diverse parties, a coming and going in order to know, or more precisely to *judge* one side and the other. "It is necessary to have a thought in the back of one's mind and to judge everything from there while speaking, however, like the people."[14] But where then is the "I" in its place of judgement? His "simulations" oscillate around a point of withdrawal, a secret point which is only secret because it withdraws, displaces itself in proportion to the simulated reversal.

## SOCIAL CONTRACT OF MEANING OR POLITICAL AGREEMENT OF THE SIGN

The "I"'s only desire is to find the point which would stop the oscillation of reversal, to fix the difference between *positions*, the point of true judgement in the place of uncertain and opposing discourses.

This imperceptible point which makes the difference between heresy and truth is not found by "Montalte", but by his Molinist interlocutor, and it is a word: it is "prochain" in the phrase "pouvoir prochain", a new and unknown word. What then are the requirements of its meaning? It is a meaning which once either determined by a noun definition or else left to the common intelligence of the people, defines a contract of meaning, a community of discourse, a society of communication which is relatively transparent, at least as far as this sign is concerned.[15] Now what "Montalte" discovers in the company of his Jansenist is that the subversion of the social contract of signs is operated strategically by the Jesuits, to the benefit of a political agreement whose signs are the instruments and which reveals completely different objectives and completely different interests. For the Molinists are all of different opinions concerning the meaning of the word "prochain", but linked in a single body by the common hatred of one person, they have decided (a political decision, a strategic decision) to all say the same word, to emit together the same sound in order to be the strongest. Political agreement, tyrannical agreement; constituting in this way a plurality which has the number, the greatest number, that is to say the force to make itself obeyed. Thus there is a tyranny of discourse which is nothing more than a form of the universal war of every self against all the others in order to enslave them, a general war of the greater number against a single individual.[16] In this way, a "crowd" can *form an agreement* and constitute a body politic through hatred, at the cost of subverting the social contract of signification by means of which the tyranny of each self was covered and dissimulated by agreement on meaning in order to find a "certain" peace of language.

The two-sided face of the sign (signifier-signified, exterior-interior) like

the double field of its usage (public-private), opens the "ideal" space for the conclusion of these tyrannical agreements through which, with greater or lesser durability, political bodies, bodies of hatred with a destructive function, *established* themselves. Why? Because with the signs of language, it is always possible to speak like everyone else while thinking differently, provided that there is a union of hatred. In this way a difference of opinion is *dissimulated* under the conformity of words, in order to mechanically combine the forces of the greater number against the weakest.

But the first letters setting the scene of the differences dissimulated by political agreement reveal the scandalous subversion which this dissimulation enacts for the sake of mere human sociability: the letters can only do this, however, through the successive and provocative simulations of their sender, even if these simulations are feigned; with greater reason if they are, since for the reader, the "I", the friend of the Provincial escapes at once the deception into which people fall and the "tumult" into which Arnauld is thrown. The "I" escapes by withdrawing himself, incessantly and in proportion to the parties which he visits, into the secret of the position from which he judges.

## THE SECRET SPOKESMAN OF THE TRUTH

Who says "I"? At the end of the battle of the *Provincial Letters*, the "I" is no longer the honest man who desires to know the truth. He is its defender and its spokesmen. What does it mean to be the sopkesman of the truth? His opponents reply to the question of the "secret" by giving not the social mark which identifies and which is a proper name but only a quality. Since then it is not enough to say the name, it is no longer enough to name: it is necessary to prove the attribution of a predicate to a subject. It is necessary to demonstrate the proposition: "the 'I' is heretical". "And fifteen times", says Father Annat, a Jesuit. "Prove it", says the "I". "When have I been seen at Charenton, a Protestant Temple? When have I missed Mass and fallen short of the duties of Christians towards their parish?" In other words, furnish such a precise portrayal of the heretic that it becomes my description and my identifying form: "You must answer, Father, or you know very well what I mean. And what do you reply? I ask everyone to observe him."[17] The "I" is the one who writes the letters and "firstly you suppose that he belongs to Port-Royal. Then you say that Port-Royal has been declared heretical; from which you conclude that the one who writes the Letters has been declared a heretic." Thus the "I" is a heretic because the "I" belongs to Port-Royal or rather "you suppose that I belong to it."[18] It is therefore necessary to prove by another means that "I" is heretical, and the "I" once again through his writings provides the means.

To the question of the "secret", "Who is the 'I'?", the "I" replies: "I am the one who says 'I' "; that is to say "I am the one who writes this text in the first person," "I am *this* text." And his opponents cannot appropriate to themselves this text they read by giving it a name (it is an anonymous text) or a designation like "of Port-Royal" since they read that the "I" does not belong to Port-Royal. To the question "Who says I?", in truth they can only give this reply: "You are the text."

> You feel the blows of an unseen hand revealing your aberrations for all to see. You try in vain to attack me in the persons of those whom you believe to be my allies. I am not afraid of you either on behalf of myself or of anyone else, as I am attached to no community and no individual whatsoever . . . I hope for nothing from the world; I fear nothing from it. I desire nothing of it . . . . Thus, Father, I entirely escape your clutches . . . . You have perhaps never had to deal with anyone so far out of your range and so well fitted to attack your errors, by being free, without commitments, without allegiance, without ties, without connexions, without interests.[19]

Vertigo of liberty, fascination of an unfettered, infinite strength in a roving state which emerged perhaps for a brief moment, for a year, to trace itself in a text and even more to manifest itself by its irresistible effects, the force of a retreat into the secret whose entire effectiveness resides simultaneously in its incessant retreat into the obscurity of the secret where it escapes the threats of violence and in its retreat, its retracing, in an explosive text, a weapon of war which hits the powerful people, by making all their dissimulations visible.

There is nevertheless, in the same pages, another reply to the question of the secret of the "I" and which gives to the preceding one the value of a ritual performative speech act where we will find once more the problem of the nominal identification of the subject.

> Even if Port-Royal did hold these impious propositions, I declare that this would not enable you to conclude anything against me, because, thank God, my only allegiance on earth is to the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church in which I desire to live and die in communion of the Pope as sovereign head and outside which I am fully convinced there is no salvation.[20]

Two replies therefore: Who says "I"?

1. "I" is a way of writing this text in the "I" form; the "I" is a writing, a text.

2. "I" single and free has no attachment other than to the Catholic Church, it is a member only of this single body, one of the faithful indistinguishable from all the other faithful united among themselves in the mystical communion in this body: "I" is a member of a universal body. "I" is in a state and position of being quartered between a singular text, without a name, and a universal body of which he is an indistinguishable member. The "I" is a thinking (writing) member of the mystical body,[21] not concealed in him, but becoming one with all the others in him, and thus in

secret and security, it is the whole of the mystical body in the force of truth which, through him, opposes itself to the political body of the Company. How can one be the spokesman of the Truth, and nonetheless say "I" and "me"? The "I" withdraws into the secret of the truth and its voice is none other than the truth itself: the "I" does not say himself in saying the truth, when "I" is saying what he says, truth shows itself in proportion to the retreat of "I".

## CROSS-NAMES

> The way of writing of Epictetes, Montaigne and Salomon de Tultie is most usual, most subtly persuasive, most easy to remember, most generally quoted, because it is entirely formed of thought suggested by every day talk. For example, when they fall to talking of the vulgar error that the moon is the cause of every thing, they will not fail to say that Salomon de Tultie says that, when we do not know the truth of anything, the existence of a vulgar error is a good thing, etc. . . . . This is a thought which is on the other side . . . .[22]

Epictetes, Montaigne and Salomon de Tultie share a certain way of writing whose effects manifest and bring together the three names of the stoic philosopher, the pyrrhonic philosopher and another: who? First effect: a discourse which is the most commonly used. Thus the way of writing of Epictetes, of Montaigne and of Salomon de Tultie does not in any way qualify the "style" of an author and even less of an individual. It qualifies only by virtue of the diversity of its possible applications, its pragmatic polyvalence.

Second effect of this art of persuasion: that of insinuation, or the capacity of discourse to be so imperceptibly assimilated by the one who reads it that he no longer recognizes it as other, but as his own. And with this, two other effects, one of memory, the other of citation: through insinuation, incorporation and interiorisation, but also publication and the repetition which derives its authority from this inculcation of the "other" discourse. This way of writing like the discourse of the honest man effaces itself in the "common text" to the extent that it is not noticed for itself and does not designate itself as the product of an author, Epictetes, Montaigne or Salomon de Tultie, but which, for this very reason, has the most powerful pragmatic effects on the reader.

Who is "Salomon de Tultie"? The secret name but also the name of the secret. Let us try to discover the one whom this name hides by the game of its letters, by anagram. Search and you will find two names which you already know: Louis de Montalte, author of the *Letter to the Provincial*, Amos Dettonville, author of memoire of a geometry of the infinite addressed to MMs. Carcacy, Huyghens — two pseudonyms of a moralist and a geometrician, two false names "made arbitrarily" which dissimulate

two "authors" of works. "Salomon de Tultie" is the exact anagram of the one and the other, more precisely a "cryptonym", the name which offers the real name under the game of the letters of the anagram.

Salomon de Tultie, a double name; a cryptonym of two pseudonyms, each one, a double name. Let us stop the circular movement at Salomon de Tultie, the last name: "The honest man avoids naming himself and even using the words 'I' and 'me'."[23] An author's own name disappears through the dislocation of the letters of two false names which dissimulate an author (or even several?), but whose dislocation makes a name where the letters, not the words, arranged differently, make a different name: this name laid out here, produces a different effect. What game is being played here between demonstration and manifestation, between assertion of a meaning and indication? It is the game of the secret. But what would a secret name be if it were not in a certain way said and divulged, if it were not insinuated that there is a false name? In order to be silenced a name is retained in another which is communicated, transmitted to the reader, confided to the sheet of paper. And by this very means the mysterious name finds itself transmitted, but insofar as it is refused, not revealed. A name is silenced: "Pascal", the author of the *Provinciales*; "Pascal", the author of a calculation of the infinite, but the "dissimulating" name ("Amos Dettonville" or "Louis de Montalte") is itself offered as a real name under the anagram which disguises it and dislocates it without however effacing it. False names made arbitrarily take the place of the "real" name, that of the author. "Salomon de Tultie" is a cryptonym: it offers the pseudonyms as real names under the anagram. The pseudonyms are *like* a real name but also the other way round, a real name is *like* these two pseudonyms. This real name cannot be "Pascal", the name of the author which the two pseudonyms silence and dissimulate. The real name is that of another, it is the other name of the truth — under the anagram.

## THE CRYPT OF THE REAL NAME

Salomon de Tultie, Salomon, the wise king of Stultitia, of folly; prophet king of wisdom and folly; a double name: the proper name of a king, the wisest of kings, the common name of the insane; Amos (Dettonville), Louis (de Montalte): the prophet (Amos) — King (Louis) of the wisdom which is folly; the prophet-king of charity, Jesus Christ.

> Our religion is wise and foolish. Wise in that it is the most learned and the best established through miracles, prophecies, etc. . . . . Foolish because that is not what makes us Christians; that brings condemnation on those who do not belong, but not belief to those who do. What makes them believe is the Cross — Ne evacuata sit Crux (that the Cross be not made of none effect).[24]

Wisdom consists in convincing by demonstration, by principles and consequences. Only the folly of the Cross of Jesus Christ converts to faith. It is the cross which brings about belief through another persuasion, the "transcendental" art of charity, which is indicated simultaneously by the strange alliteration of "credo" and "cross" below the level of the term and by the paradox of a folly which is wisdom above the level of the proposition. "Salomon de Tultie": the written text communicates this name to the reader, but ciphers it in such a way as to give the cipher two meanings: it is the anagram of two false names and thus the separation of the secret is maintained; but it also offers the real name whose truth the crypt encloses and shows and it is thus that the secret is insinuated. The aim of this work on letters as ciphers and on proper names as words is none other than to produce the "secreta" of the secret, or to indicate the secret without saying it, to show it without signifying it.

The secret, then is that thing which is believed but not known. It is not of the order of discourse, but of the order of indication. Nonetheless it is neither "I" nor "me" who shows, but an other who shows himself in the dissimulating simulations of "my name"; the Other, a You who designates himself in the place where "I" speak and where, in speaking, I indicate You from where I speak by speaking in my name. It is not a question of knowing, or of convincing: it is a question only of persuading. However I do not persuade an other, it is not the I who makes him believe, it is you, through what I say.

In a game of letters between proper name and word, between pseudonym and cryptonym, between a real, dislocated name and false names arbitrarily made, between the name of the truth which withdraws itself and the name of the self-love which dissimulates itself, the order of charity shows itself by defection in writings which are its effects and which "I" writes: "That order essentially principally consists in digressions about every point which is related to the end in order to always indicate it."[25]

Let us conclude: as we said in the beginning, a philosophical discourse is a text which is intended to convince its reader of the truth it presents, to persuade him of the demands of justice it proclaims and to make him believe truth and behave according to justice. Such a definition immediately implies that rhetoric is an integrant part of philosophical discourse or better, its inescapable means. What is specific of Pascal's "philosophical" discourse and of the rhetorical strategy which is intimately related to it however is a tactic of secrecy: Pascal deseperately attempted to erase his position as a subject of discourse in order to leave that place empty and consequently to make truth and justice "speak" through his words and writing. It would have been a gesture of unbearable pride to identify himself to truth and justice if it had not been operated through that very complex tactics of secrecy I tried to describe in Pascal's texts.

NOTES

[1] E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Gallimard, Paris, I, 1966, pp. 227–267; II, 1974, pp. 79–88.

[2] B. Pascal, *Pensées*, 44; 373. The *Pensées* are cited according to L. Lafuma, Intégrale, 2nd ed., Delmas, Paris, 1952, first number; and Brunschvicg Minor, second number.

[3] B. Pascal, *Opuscules et Lettres*, 'De l'art de persuader', Aubier (ed.), Lafuma, Paris, 1955, p. 148.

[4] B. Pascal, *Pensées*, 983; 114.

[5] About the notion of secret and its functioning in Pascal's rhetoric and logic, the fundamental text is the fourth letter to C. Roannez, in Pascal's *Opuscules et Lettres*, pp. 98–99, and also the famous fragment 494; 698 'Figures'. On the notion of *Deus Absconditus*, cf. H. Gouhier, *Blaise Pascal. Commentaires*, Vrin, Paris, 1966, ch. 4, pp. 187–244. On secret in general, see V. Descombes's acute and illuminating analyses in *L'inconscient malgré lui*, Minuit, Paris, 1977, pp. 27–43. Cf. also P. Boutang, *Ontologie du secret*, P.U.F., Paris, 1973; G. Simmel, 'The Secret and the Secret Society', in K.H. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of G. Simmel*, The Free Press, Glencoe, 1950; in the *Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse*, Gallimard, Paris, Fall 1976, see also A. Levy, 'Evaluation ethnologique et sémantique du mot "secret" ', and A. Zempleni, 'La chaîne du secret'.

[6] *Logique de Port-Royal*, 5th ed., Desprez, Paris, 1685, IIIrd Part, ch. 19, pp. 349–350.

[7] Ibid.

[8] B. Pascal, op. cit., 141; 455.

[9] B. Pascal, op. cit., 106; 332.

[10] Cf. A. Zempleni, art. cit. in Note 5, p. 320.

[11] B. Pascal, op. cit., 790; 260.

[12] About the *Provinciales* and their history, cf. B. Pascal, *Oeuvres*, Hachette, Paris, 1904–1914, IV, 1654–1656, pp. 101 ff., and VII, 1657–1658, the appendix to the XVIIIth Letter.

[13] *Les Provinciales*, in B. Pascal, *Oeuvres*, Gallimard, Paris, 1950, 1st letter, p. 439.

[14] B. Pascal, *Pensées*, 181; 336.

[15] Cf. B. Pascal, 'De l'esprit géométrique', in *Opuscules et Lettres*, p. 122 and pp. 126–127.

[16] B. Pascal, *Les Provinciales*, pp. 455–456.

[17] B. Pascal, op. cit., p. 639.

[18] Ibid.

[19] B. Pascal, op. cit., p. 640.

[20] Ibid.

[21] B. Pascal, *Pensées*, 688; 483.

[22] B. Pascal, op. cit., 927; 18bis.

[23] *Logique de Port-Royal*, p. 350.

[24] B. Pascal, op. cit., 469; 588.

[25] B. Pascal, op. cit., 575; 283.