Ing

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1. Reading.

Suppose you read the following paragraph, in an as yet unidentified text:

> A constituting procedure initiates and geysers forth eventings or
> eventnings at any number of different speeds, often simultaneously
> letting loose every speed in its repertoire. A constituting procedure
> that could not pace the eventuating of its eventings or eventnings
> would come up empty. (Arakawa and Gins, work in progress)

And suppose that, not being a fan of the Arakawa and Gins project, you try to
understand this as a paragraph of Standard English. You may admire the
metaphor (the constituting procedure that geysers forth), and you will be
puzzled by the coinages, "eventings" (a possible derivation, turning the noun
"event" into a verb – "eventing", a gerund - and then again into a noun:
"eventings", in the plural) and "eventning", an impossible derivation that may
induce a string of quasi-poetical musings, in the best Saussurean style ("light",
"enlighten", "enlightening", therefore "event", *"eventen", "eventning", except
here the middle term is a linguistic monster, to be shamed with the asterisk that
marks impossible forms). And you must surely be aware of the proliferation of "-
ing" verbal suffixes, eight in four lines. The question is: is this merely a stylistic
device, the hallmark of the authors' style, or is it (also) a conceptual tool that
allows a philosopher to blur the distinction between the two main grammatical

categories of noun and verb and to multiply entities (events, eventuatings, eventings, eventnings)? My contention is that it is both, so that the question becomes: how can a grammatical suffix which is the mark of a style be the instrument of a philosophical construction? We know that philosophy is a kind of writing, and that philosophers often have style: what we need to know is the precise function of this grammatical marker.

2. Grammar.

The "-ing" suffix is one of the glories of the English language. Because it has a double origin (a mark of the present participle, and the mark of a series of nouns, the Old English equivalent of the "-ung" suffix in German, as in "Ordnung"), it has become incredibly versatile, as the following sentences show:

> (1) My heart is in Yoro Park, a-chasing the mechanism of meaning.
> (2) The versatility of Arakawa and Gins is amazing.
> (3) Arakawa and Gins are writing a new book.
> (4) Their collected writings will one day be part of the school curriculum
> (5) Writing *Architectural Body* was quite a feat.

Sentence (1), with thanks to Robbie Burns, uses an archaic form, which illustrates the origin of the present continuous ("they are on hunting", "they are a-hunting", "they are hunting"). It also contains a noun, derived from a verb through the suffix "-ing." Sentence (2) has an adjective, with all the usual appurtenances, like degree ("this is most amazing"), derived from a present participle. Sentence (3) has an occurrence of the present continuous. In sentence (4), the same verbal form has become a full-fledged noun, complete with its plural marker, whereas in sentence (5), the same form is a gerund – a noun form, but unaffected by number.

Such versatility is a challenge to the linguist, whose professional ethics may be summed up by the following maxim: one grammatical marker, one meaning. Let me try to fulfill this program by evoking what William Croft, a British linguist,

calls "the idealized cognitive model of an individual event," as expressed in a verb (Croft 1994: 37). His model is represented in the following diagram:

Initiator   Endpoint   (Endpoint)   (Endpoint)
.------------→. -----------→ (.)----------→(.)
CAUSE   CHANGE   STATE
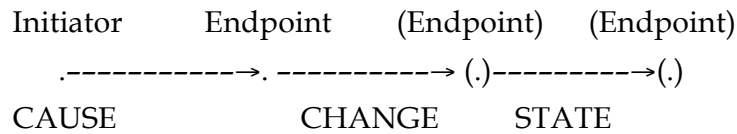
Events encoded as verbs consist of those three segments. Thus, the canonical example of an "event" embodied in a verb may be found in "he broke the glass," where "he" is the initiator, "the glass" the endpoint, and the verb may be glossed as "(he) caused (the glass) to become broken" (in the same vein, the verb "kill" will be glossed as "cause to become dead"). Some verbs will select only some of those segments: causative verbs will select all three, inchoative verbs will select the last two, and stative verbs (or adjectives) only the last.

I would like to pursue Croft's analysis by suggesting that the segments may be grammaticalized by using grammatical suffixes or auxiliaries. Thus, as the very canonical example shows, the STATE segment is not only included in the semantic constitution of some verbs, like "break" or "kill," it is also expressed by the suffix of the past participle. In the same vein, the CAUSE segment is expressed by quasi-auxiliaries like "cause" ("the earthquake caused the wall to collapse"), "make" ("they made her drink tea at breakfast") and "have" ("we had the house restructured by Arakawa and Gins"). What I would like to suggest is that the third segment, CHANGE, is expressed by the "-ing" suffix, hence the constant use of the suffix to express action and/or becoming, not only in the form of the continuous or "imperfective" aspect ("imperfective" means that the action has begun but is not yet finished), as in "What are Gins and Arakawa doing these days?", but in gerunds, which typically express a process (of change) in nominal terms, as in "the eventuating of its eventings": the role of the coinages is to present (to make present) not the event as result but the event as process. And since verbs are typically meant to express events (actions and becomings), and the meaningful center of the model is the CHANGE segment, the "-ing" suffix will be able, through synecdoche, to express not only the central segment, but the whole "individual event", which explains why "eventing," the name of a

becoming, of a process, may also express the process *and its result*, or rather its result in so far as it still contains, as a virtuality, the process of which it is the actualization (I am suggesting that the "-ing" suffix is a philosophical tool that inscribes what Deleuze calls "the virtual"): by which time the word has become a full-fledged noun, and can be used in the plural, as in "eventings and eventnings". The philosophical importance, therefore, of the "-ing" marker, a glory of English grammar, is that it expresses both the time of becoming, of process, and the fixing of the result of the process into a noun, the name for an entity. In other words, it enables the English language to name entities not in so far as they are fixed objects in space, but in so far as they are condensed forms of time, not the time of chronology but the time of the virtual, what Deleuze calls *Aiôn*: virtual processes become actual entities, expressed through a grammatical displacement (from verb to noun) which is the grammatical equivalent of a metaphor. The "-ing" marker expresses not so much time in the form of space (our languages are rich in metaphors that do just that, as in "time's arrow") as space (a fixed object or an actualized state of affairs) in the form of time (an ongoing process or a series of virtualities, a sequence of tentativeness).

3. Philosophy.

In order to assess the philosophical relevance of what is no longer a grammatical or a stylistic, but a philosophical marker, we shall turn once again to Arakawa and Gins's work in progress, to their definition of the concept of "agencying," another apparently bizarre coinage:

> *Agencying*. In fits and starts, organisms that person generate agency, or better, agencying. Although how a person has agency/agencying remains a matter of supposition, "the having of agency" would likely be high on any thinker's list of traits necessary and sufficient to (being) a person. Throughout this writing, one of whose primary goals is the keeping of the notion of person fluid and open, the notion of agencying, which keeps the emphasis on action, no entity intended, will be used to modulate the notion of person. *An agencying organism that persons*. (Arakawa and Gins, work in progress)

This may remind us of a passage in *Architectural Body* where the concept of "personing," another "-ing" coinage, is introduced:

> A person as a moving body describes an ever-changing sequence of domains, associating herself with some more closely than with others. Surely personing is preferable to person – in the name of accuracy as in the name of tentativeness. (Arakawa and Gins 2002: 66)

We find ourselves in a philosophical universe where agency, the attribute of the classical subject, as centre of action and consciousness, as bearer of the identity of a person, is no longer sufficient, where it must give way to impersonal, non-individual, pre-subjective "agencying" (those three adjectives define the characteristics of what Deleuze calls a haecceity), even as "person" gives way to "personing." This universe is a long-term consequence of Kant's Copernican revolution, when he split the unity of the Cartesian *cogito* into a psychological self, endowed with all the characteristics of a person, and a transcendental *ego*, an empty form consisting of categories and forms of intuition, to be filled with the empirical data of experience. The time of the "-ing" process, the time of tentativeness and procedures is the time of this filling, which means that Arakawa and Gins's philosophy might be described as a form of transcendental empiricism (and we remember that this is how Gilles Deleuze defined his own philosophical project in the period of *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*). It is the time of what they call not "event,"but "eventing."

I suggested the term "eventing" in my introduction to *Making Dying Illegal* (a title rich in "-ing" suffixes). I used it in connection with their stylistic and linguistic strategies ("eventing the text," "eventing language" – turning the text or language itself into a series of events in the strong sense, to be found in the philosophy of Alain Badiou; Lecercle 2006: 12, 14). With their usual flair, they have seized upon the term (hardly a concept yet) and made it theirs, giving a much wider range, as their list of eventings shows: "turnings-up, bestirrings, initiatings, instigatings, irritatings, movings-about, comings-from," and so on and so forth (Arakawa and Gins, work in progress). The term now refers to all types of events, or rather turns all types of occurrences into events: not merely

movements ("comings-up") but also affects ("irritatings"). And here we must move from one concept of event to another. I suggested in my earlier text that Arakawa and Gins, with their concept of event – we can now add: with their conversion of events into eventings – soon part company with the rare and violent upheaval of Badiou events. Their concept of eventing is now much closer to what Deleuze means by "event."

Deleuze derives his conception of events from the Stoics, with their pan-somatism (there are only bodies and mixtures of bodies, for instance the mixture of the knife that cuts the flesh and the flesh that it cuts). The actions and passions of such mixtures have effects that are incorporeal: the event is that mist hovering over the surface of bodies and states of affair, a metaphysical surface. Thus, the knife and flesh are enveloped in the mist of the event of wounding. Deleuze, who writes in French, claims that the event is captured in language not by a noun but by a verb in the infinitive. But this is only because the French language does not know the glory of the "-ing" suffix (which will pose a problem to the translators of Arakawa and Gins into French): in English, it is naturally captured by a gerund ("wounding"), which, as bearer of the "-ing" suffix does not merely turn the verb into a noun, but expresses the moment of change and becoming in its very grammatical form.

The time has come to summarize the philosophical work that their apparently obsessive use of the "-ing" form enables Arakawa and Gins to complete: (i) in concentrating on the moment of change, even if the grammatical form is that of a noun (derived from a verb), they blur the limits or dissolve the fixity of objects: the only entities are not fixed objects but processes and becomings; (ii) the "-ing" form has another grammatical asset: *qua* participle or gerund, it is a form in which the grammatical subject, the subject of agency, may not be expressed, which engages a blurring or dissolution not only of the object but of the subject, as "agencying" replaces "agency"; (iii) agency, therefore, becomes not the attribute of an individual subject (endowed with consciousness and moral responsibility) but of a structure, that is a series of practices and procedures; (iv) this -ing term involves a change in the concept of time, which becomes the time corresponding to what I have called Arakawa and Gins's materialism of space:

the time involved is the time of procedures (a series of structural moves, captured by the gerund form that inscribes through synecdoche the totality of the segments of the event) and it is the time of tentativeness, of the exploring of the world through the Keatsian snail horn perception of the architectural body that the architectural surrounding of an Arakawa and Gins building induces or produces (and the "-ing" marker inscribes such tentativeness, by shifting tense into aspect: what is called the "continuous present" in grammar is not the mark of a tense but of an aspect, the imperfective aspect); (v) the entities involved, which are steeped in the time of tentativeness and procedures, are not objects, nor are they subjects, but events in the sense of Deleuze: the only fixed points in this model of the event (the initiator and endpoint in Croft's diagram) are not individuals (subjects and objects) but haecceities and collective assemblages (Deleuze speaks of assemblages of *enunciation*: in the case of Arakawa and Gins, we will speak of *architectural* assemblages).

It is increasingly clear that the Arakawa and Gins project involves a first philosophy of a new kind, one that must be granted paramount importance. After all, what can you expect from people who have decided to make dying illegal?

4. Architecture.

I was going to start describing the architecture that corresponds to this philosophical revolution. But apart from the fact that Arakawa and Gins, in their architectural practice, actually make such description real, much more so than what a philosopher could hope to achieve in his language (in the words of the work in progress: "language, and all symbolizing, tends to push organisms that person towards a linearity that limits them unnecessarily"; Arakawa and Gins, work in progress), this would invert the relation of causality. This is not a case of a philosophy producing a form of architecture as its illustration or justification (it is sometimes claimed that the philosophy of Derrida had that effect), this is a case of a practice of architecture that, because it is a *verbal* architecture, an architecture of events, or rather of eventings, induces a form of philosophy. In that form of philosophy, the role of a grammatical form, the "-ing" marker, is of

the essence: not (merely) the mark of an idiosyncratic style, but the hallmark of a philosophical enterprise.

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