Silenced and Celebrated Jewish Identities in Modernism:

Tristan Tzara and Giulio Caimi, Isthmi, 'Littorals' and Deserts in… Not So Mythical Lands

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In this article I juxtapose specific texts by Giulio Caimi,[1] a pivotal yet under-researched figure in Greek Modernism, with a text from Tristan Tzara's later period. My analysis probes the respective work of both writers in relation to identity, shifting borders, and migration, inviting contemplation of actual and mythologized constructions of borders and boundaries that are as resonant now as they were at the time of writing by Caimi and Tzara. Central to this exploration is a question regarding the rich potential for a cross-reading of Caimi and Tzara with the concept of the "littoral" as defined by Jacques Lacan. In the course of this article, I will ask what Lacan's conceptualization of the littoral reveals about the views of Caimi and Tzara regarding identity and the socio-political locales, locations, and landscapes that they engage with and navigate.

Two significant but under-researched works in particular will be analyzed closely here: Caimi's portrayal of the land of Israel (at the time the British Mandate for Palestine), written in 1934 and published in 1939,[2] and Tzara's 1954 examination of ancient and modern Egypt, *L'Égypte face à face*, with photographs by Étienne Sved. While Caimi's account precedes World War II and Tzara's follows the conflict, both texts engage with the fabric of contemporary communities and societies. Exhibiting traits commonly found in travel literature, both texts unfold against a backdrop where colonies, mandates, and regions not only bordered each other but were also perceived as a singular expanse. This shared space sets the stage for Tzara's and Caimi's texts to engage with Lacan's idea of the "littoral," opening avenues for literary and philosophical inquiry.

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[1] The Greek name has also been transliterated as Tzoulio Kaimē, Julio Kaïmi, and Julius Caïmis, among other renditions.

[2] "Η χώρα των Προφητών: Φυλαί και ζωή εις την σημερινήν Παλαιστίνην" (Prophets' Land: Tribes and Life in Today's Palestine); henceforth referred to as "Prophets' Land."

Similarly to Tzara's and Caimi's texts, Lacan's initial allusion to the concept of the "littoral" is reminiscent of the narrative style of travel writing. In this aspect, while the works of Caimi, Tzara, and Lacan engage with diverse cultural elements, this article deliberately does not engage with the concept of cosmopolitanism. In the present article, the cultural, national, and religious origins of the two writers in question are deemed contextual, and those aspects of identity are treated here as sources of commemoration, celebration, and research. Tzara's humanistic ethos is a reflection of his intricate identity and his heritage, and in turn that ethos has informed and shaped the diverse cultural and intellectual streams from which it arose.

Though Tzara is often remembered for his role in dadaism, his comprehensive body of work has garnered a specialized yet fervent and productive academic following, a somewhat compact "community." The word "community" reflects the fact that some of Tzara's literary critics do not just engage with each other's work but also know each other to some degree, and that conviviality bringing a joyous breeze to a sea of publications and scholarship on Tzara. In that spirit my aspiration in this article is to disseminate Tzara's work further, especially his little explored post-Dada work, his "approximate" humanism, to pick up a phrase on which this special issue is based. Similarly, while Giuglio Caimi may not be widely known outside Greece, his contributions to art and scholarship have percolated up from the margins. His main body of work is in Greek, and he also served as a correspondent for Italian newspapers. He furthermore studied Sanskrit. Caimi was born in Corfu in 1897, a year after Tzara, having Greek citizenship, as did the rest of the Ionian Jewish population. In contrast, when Tzara took his first breath in the predominantly Jewish town (now a city) of Moinești in Romania, he was not allowed Romanian citizenship. Romanian Jews were only given citizenship after World War I (Lambru).

The Shared Jewish Experience

I will begin by examining the shared Jewish experience as a backdrop to the texts by Tzara and Caimi and considering how their citizenship status shaped their sense of belonging and representation. To those who have it, citizenship might seem a purely legislative, administrative, or bureaucratic matter. However, national citizenship – and the laws preventing it – was essential for the discriminatory exclusion by the Romanian authorities of rights for Jewish people, and for the psychological denial of the belonging of Jews, invalidating their

contribution to the country.[3] Many of Tzara's contemporaries addressed his personal background, often with suspicion and prejudice (Forcer, "Before They Were Famous"). Recent scholarship has shown interest in Tzara's background, notably in studies by Marius Hentea, Cosana Eram, Tom Sandqvist, and Milly Heyd.[4]

Giulio Caimi was the son of Moeses Chaïmis (Μωυσής Χαΐμης) and Fani Yiasoula (Φανή Γιασουλά). His father was a teacher of Greek and Italian in public schools and colleges and a journalist who wrote about the connections between Hellenism and Judaism. Caimi's father, a fluent self-taught speaker of Hebrew whose first language was Greek, taught him the biblical language. Giulio continued in his father's footsteps, combining Hellenic and Hebraic cultural components in his work. He studied fine art, and besides painting he wrote extensively on art from antiquity to his contemporaries (Faïs 10–24).

Being born into Jewish families and speaking and reading several languages are not the only things Tzara and Caimi had in common. Their avant-garde and Modernist circles, and principally their writings and critical thinking regarding aesthetics, art, poetry, language, ethnology, and ethnography, are prominent. Moreover, Caimi's affiliation with other artists and writers in Greece, known as the "Generation of the 30s," and with the rise of Greek Modernism is well documented (Konstantinidis). However, his writings and paintings are not as widely available or exhibited as those of his contemporaries. Some of his paintings are displayed in institutions in his hometown in Corfu and in the Jewish Museum of Greece, as well as in private collections, yet they are conspicuously absent from the National Gallery-Alexandros Soutsos Museum.

Both Tzara and Caimi were forerunners in integrating oral traditions into avant-garde circles. While Tzara was respected and sought after for his knowledge of sub–Saharan African art, Caimi was held in high esteem for his expertise in the shadow theater of Greece and the Middle East (Konstantinidou-Kloukina) and the study of Greek folk art. Scholars still use his comprehensive study of narrative, scenography, and material techniques in shadow theater. This embracing of aspects of Greek folk studies was pioneering at the time, like Tzara's early valorizing of ethnopoetics and artefacts from various African cultures not as ethnological or exoticized objects but for their aesthetics, equivalent to significant

[3] See Jacques Derrida's observation that from his expulsion from school after the October 1940 revocation of the Crémieux decree, as well as from other experiences during his youth in his native Algeria and later as a young adult in France, came "a feeling of non-belonging" (qtd. In Schep).

[4] The comprehensive studies on Tzara by these scholars are explored in my book, *Tristan Tzara and Mário de Andrade's Journeys from Ethnography to the Avant-garde* (2021).

Western counterparts. Tzara and Caimi deeply revered humanity and its bond to the world.

What is less frequently mentioned is that Tzara and Caimi were Holocaust survivors.[5] Tzara and Caimi survived the horrors, and both continued writing despite being silenced during this unspeakable period. Tzara was placed under house arrest in Saint-Tropez before a police employee recognized him and agreed to let him go. However, Tzara had to continue hiding in southern French villages until the end of the war (Buot 352).

On the other hand, testimonies claim that Caimi served in the Greek army at the beginning of the war. During the Nazi Occupation of Athens, however, he covered his tracks with the help of a specially issued identity card.[6] At the same time, in his native Corfu, most Jewish citizens were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau ("Greece"). Silencing, muting, quieting – or any other phrase for keeping someone from expressing oneself – does not equal only misanthropic persecution. It also manifests as subjects remaining unvoiced and what I will call "disremembered." Tristan Tzara and Giulio Caimi, their work, and their thoughts are certainly not forgotten. Still, silencing can mean ignoring their work, not contemplating it, and dismissing or attacking their heritage (Heyd 205–07).

Having established the significance of the authors' shared heritage, I will now look further into how their texts and experiences resonate with Lacan's concept of the littoral.

"Litura," Letter, Littoral

This section will build on the historical and cultural contexts previously established to explore how Lacan's concept of the littoral operates through Tzara's and Caimi's texts, reflecting and refracting the complexities of identity and place.

According to Lacan, the littoral is the gap between knowledge and *jouissance* (satisfaction/deep-seated pleasure) that holds them together. "Or, to put it in more

[5] See Grinberg.

[6] In 1943, Caimi acquired an identification card showing that he was Christian. Archbishop Damaskinos of Athens wrote a memorandum to the prime minister demanding that all Jewish citizens should be protected with fake identity cards. Damaskinos, Panagiotis Chaldezos, the general director of administrative services and head of the Registry of the Municipality of Athens, and Angelos Evert, the head of the Athens Police, set up an operation issuing new identity cards with Christian names, making up older dates of registration. Thus, unlike other cities, most of Athens's Jewish population was saved. The leftist resistance group National Liberation Army ("EAM" in Greek) also saved many Jewish citizens; some of its prominent resistance fighters were also of the Jewish faith (Magrizou).

formal terms: it is the very intersection between them that constitutes them" (Žižek, *Less Than Nothing* 819). Lacan "introduces us to the littoral as a space in which something of the real is grasped, without, notwithstanding, becoming a signifier, but in a material way, no longer unapprehensible or ineffable" (Vieira and De Felice 2). This way, through their writing, Tzara and Caimi are not distancing themselves from the reality they describe. Instead, they are engaging with it, becoming part of it through their work, which does not view the world as an external entity but rather as an internal reality interwoven with sense (meaning) and *jouissance*. They do not oppose this reality – they pursue it – and they add themselves to it, "not in a world conceived as exterior. . . . From this distinction where the real is not in opposition, is not exterior, a littoral is deduced: wholly interior, between the sense, the effect of sense and the place of jouissance" (Laurent 41).

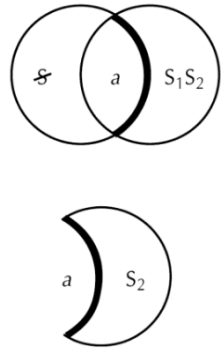

Figure1: (The littoral in bold) "The effect of sense, noted by S_2, and the place of jouissance" are not separated by a frontier; instead between them there is "a line [littoral] that is everywhere heterogenous. . . . [and] is not a frontier between an interior and an exterior" (Laurent 39).

L'Égypte face à face (1954) is a combination of photographs by Étienne Sved, printed and presented to reflect its title, and text written by Tristan Tzara. In Tzara's own words: "Les images ici offertes, grâce à la pénétrante vision de Sved, présentent face à face l'Égypte ancienne et celle d'aujourd'hui" 'The images seen here, thanks to Sved's penetrating vision, present side by side ancient Egypt and today's Egypt' (*Œuvres complètes* 4: 543).[7] As expected for such a book, the cover's image spans its entire surface. It depicts an ancient pharaonic portrait in profile on

[7] Henceforth abbreviated as *OC*. Except where noted, translations are my own.

the first layer, and from the second emerges a modern Egyptian woman's portrait in profile (fig. 2).[8] The two faces in profile are presented cohesively to resemble an ancient Egyptian relief. The content comprises three parts; the first and third are solely Tzara's text, unlike the middle one, where the text is inserted at the bottom of the pages to accompany the photographs. The middle section follows a pattern where on each left side of the book is a photograph of an ancient Egyptian image and on the right a photograph of contemporary Egyptians and their life.

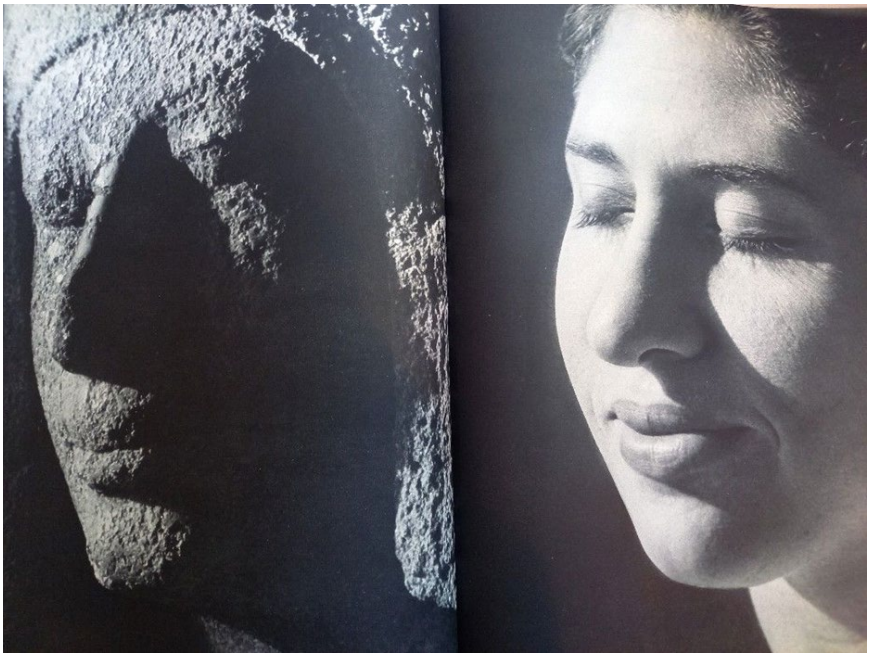

Figure 2: Étienne Sved. Photographs in *L'Égypte face à face* 20–21.

Relevant to the present discussion is the fact that Étienne Sved fled to Egypt from Hungary in 1938, following anti–Jewish propaganda by Kálmán Darányi's administration since 1936, and related legislation in April 1938 (Don 65). Sved lived in Egypt until 1946. He was not a tourist or a photojournalist who went, saw, used his camera, and left. He formed lasting friendships and collaborated with the

[8] Despite our best efforts, we have been unable to identify the owners of copyright in the images by Étienne Sved. If you are the copyright holder for these images, please contact the editors to arrange appropriate permissions.

Egyptian surrealist Georges Henein as well as other members of the group "Art et Liberté" (Marchi 44).

In the book, Tzara's text initially appears to have a fragmentary structure, indicated in the first part's title, "L'art et la vie aux sources intermittentes ou continues de l'Égypte" (Art and Life in Egypt's Intermittent or Continuous Sources), but let us see how and if these fragments, in combination with the "gestures" in the photographs that accompany them, are a littoral, that is to say a glimpse into the Real,[9] the unreachable understanding/knowledge, distanced from the exhaustively symbolic(-ized) Egypt, Egyptomania and even Egyptian kitsch, as well as the orientalist gaze of the Sinai peninsula, Egypt, and the land of Palestine-Israel.

In parallel, Caimi's article "Η χώρα των Προφητών. Φυλαί και ζωή εις την σημερινήν Παλαιστίνην" (Prophets' land: Tribes and life in today's Palestine) is a rare testimony, conveying his impressions of the land of Israel, Palestine in 1934 through the eyes of a Greek Jewish visitor.[10] That year, he journeyed for a few months to Yemen, Syria, Egypt, and what was then officially the British Palestine mandate. His is more of a travel article, observations from his periegesis. Such articles are not characteristic of Caimi as a writer[11]. Habitually, he wrote about folk and religious stories, architecture, and aesthetics.[12] Similarly, Tzara's text and its

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[9] See Lacan, "The real can only be inscribed on the basis of an impasse of formalization" (*Seminar* 20:93).

[10] Some paintings by Caimi made during his periegesis belong to private collections. I have seen them as part of the PhD thesis *Giulio Caimi As an Art Theoretician and Painter (1897–1982)* (official translation of the title from Greek) of Katerina Triantafyllopoulou (2015, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) about his paintings and texts on art. The thesis analyzes paintings aesthetically and provides biographical information. It only includes images of seven of these paintings; all are watercolors: three panoramic views of Jerusalem, one of Mount Hermon, one of the Jordan River, and two depictions of the Bikkurim ceremony during Shavuot. Otherwise, Caimi's paintings are mostly comprised of seashores in Greece, especially his birthplace of Corfu.

[11] Michel Faïs, the most informed scholar to date on Caimi's work, acknowledges that in his categorization of Caimi's articles, there is one that can be added under "travel writing"; however, as in my experience, he admits the difficulty in accessing and finding these writings in scarce old periodicals. The present text was consulted at the National Library of Greece. Nonetheless, Caimi produced such articles exceptionally infrequently, and three concerned the travel to Egypt and the land of Israel (Mandatory Palestine).

[12] To be precise, he did not use the term ethnographic and detested the term "folklore." Instead, he referred to people's art (*λαϊκή τέχνη*), which could be mistranslated as "laic art." In Greek, *λαϊκή* signifies the people, everyday people, including for instance anonymous or

publication format are not typical either. Moreover, Tzara, despite his extensive writing on non–European art and poetry, his references to mythology, and his well-informed socio-politics, rarely refers directly to the Bible as in this sentence: "La chaleur humaine dont est pénétrée cette civilisation, liée à la terre, au soleil, à l'eau, à la procréation, aux forces bienfaisantes ou maléfiques de la nature, a eu des répercussions, à travers le climat palestinien, sur le déroulement de la prodigieuse histoire figurée des mobiles humains qu'est la Bible" 'The human warmth with which this civilization is imbued, linked to the earth, to the sun, to water, to procreation, to the beneficent or malefic forces of nature, has had repercussions, through the Palestinian climate, on the unfolding of the prodigious figurative history of human motives that is the Bible' (*OC* 4: 554). Although Tzara had not travelled to Egypt, some notion of travelling is implicit in his text, be it Sved's escape to Egypt, the Exodus, or prophets, colonizers, foreign archaeologists, plunderers, early tourists, and so on.

When discussing his littoral in "Lituraterre" (1971), Lacan writes, "[t]he letter, isn't it more appropriately . . . littoral, that is to say creating the figure that an entire domain is frontier for the other, in that they are foreign, to the point of not being reciprocal? The edge of the hole in knowledge, isn't this what the letter outlines?" (329; ellipses in the original). First, to assert what he means (and what I mean in the present article) by "the letter," Amir renders the letter as an aspect of the signifier. She notes, "letter, as an image that is also a signifier, but also not entirely symbolic, inscribes a knowledge which is unattainable in the symbolic order" (196), adding that while the letter does not relate to signifying meaning, "it has a decisive sense-for a subject" (202). She states that "[T]he letter is an additional dimension that exists in the signifier by virtue of its appearance *as an image*" (202).

Lacan realized the littoral-letter effect when combining the action of Chinese calligraphers, Japanese writing, and seeing from above, from an airplane, the sunlit watercourses of Siberia, imperceptible in the absence of the sunlight. He emphasizes that he developed this thought process while travelling, thus combining the aerial view, like a map, of the watercourses' trace, or litura- which includes a notion of erasure, "-terre" (the land, earth, its territorial aspect), literature, the litter, the letter, and the littoral. All of these play a part in the dialogue of the present article. "In calligraphy, we see, there is a gesture that counts. . . . The calligrapher's gesture writes a letter that comprises a dimension unfit for communication yet is printed. Without dispensing the signifier, since nothing can be said outside the signifying order, an effect of real is realized on the littoral" (Vieira and De Felice 2).

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little-known members of the clergy, Orthodox priests-iconographers, and rabbis-poets or calligraphers.

What, then, is the connection with the concept of the littoral in Tzara's and Caimi's texts? The present article does not intend to take this notion of gesture "to the letter," pun intended. Instead, we will contemplate the "gesture" of Tzara's and Caimi's texts, their timing, and the connection of the literal littoral of the Red Sea and the Levantine Sea to perceptions of this region to the development of a Lacanian littoral-letter effect.

Egypt at the Instance of Its People, This Instant

Through the title of *L'Égypte face à face*'s first section, mentioned earlier, Tzara is already posing a question about whether the sources of art and life are intermittent or continuous in Egypt. Do they arise sporadically and in bursts, or do they flow steadily and without interruption? The text begins: "Happés par la démesure de la durée uniforme et lisse, les jours, s'ils se succèdent, il faut dire qu'au regard de l'immensité ils se confondent en une masse indéfinie" 'Caught up in the excessiveness of smooth and uniform duration even though the days succeed one another, it must be said that relative to immensity, they merge into an indistinct mass' (*OC* 4: 541), The writer then proceeds with a phrase related to the concept of spacetime. Tzara had already demonstrated his awareness of developments in physics in his 1935 *Grains et issues*, where he talks about the difficulty of language due to thought being dependent on the limits assigned to it, to articulate then recent notions of physics such as spacetime (*OC* 3: 122–23). Tzara's view can also be seen as an echo reminiscent of Heraclitus's reckoning of time: a perpetual ritual action in the cosmic cycle, an eternal dance without other power and authority. Heraclitus, a pre–Socratic philosopher, posited that the fundamental nature of reality is change, encapsulated in his doctrine that one can never cross the same river twice. This concept asserts that everything is in constant flux. Additionally, he proposed the unity of opposites, suggesting that opposing forces are interconnected and give rise to each other, and that fire is the primary substance, not in an abstract way, but rather as Hegel analyzes it, in a real way: fire, physical time, the passing away of others, but also of itself (Hegel 2: 243-49). Heraclitus's most famous quotation, which comes from his doctrine of *panta rhei*, is perhaps the assertion that "individual things 'always become and never really are'" (qtd. in Rosiak 4). As Rosiak explains, this doctrine implies that "[p]roperly speaking, nothing changes – there is only a perpetual process of universal metamorphosis."

The pre–Socratic philosopher connects time with the universe, a derivative of material energy and its movement (Heraclitus 480). The Ephesian's legacy has often been associated with Tzara's writings and the avant-garde circles he frequented (Béhar, "Usages poétiques" 574; Erickson 9). Tzara's text then proceeds to talk of infants growing up, forming a memory submissive to random fluctuations and, from there to adolescence, arriving at yet another Heraclitan

notion: "Rien n'est immuable, rien n'est définitif. Tout est solidaire d'un univers en mouvement" 'Nothing is static, nothing is final. Everything is in support of a universe in motion' (OC 4: 541).

This is important for the present argument since Heraclitus and his discourse will become a connecting point between Tzara, Caimi, and Lacan. For now, though, let us follow Tzara's text, where he takes us from the spatial and temporal compaction to the infant and the adolescent and finally arrives at the statement: "Il y a eu une enfance de l'humanité" 'there was an infancy of humanity.' Tzara proceeds carefully in his text to not idealize the past and to instead recognize the limitations of our knowledge of this distant "infancy of humanity." He emphasizes that the signification of what he calls the "infancy of humanity" through our "grossier jugement" 'coarse judgement' does not cease to grow a natural tenderness that augments our modes of knowing and feeling. He concentrates on encouraging feelings of hope, continuing despite all difficulties. If "they" (ancient humans in Egypt) persisted, conquered the obstacles of their environment, and made their mark in humanity, one wonders whether we in the modern world can aim to do likewise.

Then Tzara twists things up, stating "une nouvelle enfance se manifeste" 'a new infancy appears' (542). In his editorial note, Béhar here mentions Tzara's evocation of a Marxist approach to history (678). Indeed, Tzara reaffirms this a few paragraphs later: "Les civilisations naissent et grandissent, mais il serait erroné de croire que leur croissance s'opère d'une manière rigoureuse et rectiligne" 'Civilizations are born and grow, but it would be erroneous to believe that their development happens in a rigorous and rectilinear way' (543). Beyond that, however, Béhar also sees that Tzara implements a structural recipe of appreciating the art of a given civilization. He even characterizes it as innovative since Levi-Strauss's *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté* (1949) would only become known to the public later with *Tristes tropiques* (1955) (*OC* 4: 679). Still, Tzara's text does not operate in binaries; instead, he offers an open, dynamic reading. To paraphrase Mambrol, although art and ideas can have no independent history, they are also a part of history in the sense that they, too, are a causal agency in subsequent economic and superstructural developments. Here, Tzara the poet and Tzara the activist are in concert. At the end of part one, Tzara calls attention to the present work's partiality. Even though Sved's photographs are presented in pairs, the subject matter is not about dualism or opposites. That is a view also shared by Caimi, who articulates the transcendence of dualism in a unity of the beautiful and the utilitarian (*Ελληνικά Τοπία*). He even gives the title "Το Ωραίο από το Χρήσιμο" (The Beautiful by the Purposive) to his chapter that comments on Cycladic architecture, which does not resemble natural forms around it. Instead, it is invented by the anonymous architects-islanders to be practical, to conquer its

environment with simple or rather minimalistic pulchritude (*Ελληνικά Τοπία* 35–41). Tzara writes about Egyptian art:

> Toutefois, ce n'est pas à la manière d'un miroir que l'art égyptien présente la projection de la vie; saisie au centre même de son mouvement, la synthèse à nous offerte résulte d'une interprétation, d'une transposition sur un plan supérieur, de la réalité du monde perceptible. La prise de connaissance de cette réalité s'effectuant par la totalité de nos sens en un seul moment donné, la reproduction photographique de son apparence visible ne saurait se révéler que sommaire, forcément démunie du courant vital qui imbrique chaque élément de la nature dans son ambiance organique. Ce n'est que par le biais d'une conception du monde que la traduction de cette réalité en un langage approprié, celui de la plastique, est rendue possible, sinon valable et efficace.
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> However, it is not by mirroring that Egyptian art projects life; seized at the center of its movement, the synthesis offered to us results from an interpretation, a transposition on a higher plane, of the reality of the perceptible world. As the awareness of this reality is produced by combining our senses at a single given moment, the photographic reproduction of the visible appearance of reality can only be summary, necessarily devoid of the vital current that interweaves each element of nature in its organic atmosphere. It is only through a particular conception of the world that the translation of this reality into an appropriate language, that of the plastic, is made possible, if not valid and effective. (*OC* 4: 545)

The materiality mentioned here can be compared to Caimi's tribute to Cycladic architecture made by the people for the people. Tzara acknowledges the materiality of art, Egyptian art, his writing, and the plasticity of the photographs, and these affinities cannot be discounted:

> Même au-delà de l'exemple égyptien, le présent ouvrage pourrait contribuer à éclaircir les rapports entre l'art et la vie, ne serait-ce qu'en apportant la prévue que, pour être représentatif d'une civilisation, l'art ne saurait se contenter de la gratuité. Quoique d'un tout autre ordre que celui de la servilité imitative, ces rapports prennent ici un relief singulier par la nature des matériaux mis en balance. Qu'une telle confrontation puisse avoir lieu grâce à des documents produits à des milliers d'années d'intervalle, il n'est que trop évident que cela est dû à l'humanité riche et diversifiée qui naît sous nos yeux, humanité d'autant plus émouvante que, prise sur le vif, elle semble, dans ces pages, palpiter d'une vie renouvelée.

> Even beyond the Egyptian example, this book could contribute to clarifying the relationships between art and life, if only by providing proof that, in order to be representative of a civilization, art cannot settle for gratuity. Although of a completely different order than imitative servility, these relationships here take on a singular relief by the nature of the material put together in this volume. It is only too clear that such an encounter can take place thanks to documents produced thousands of years apart, and because of the rich and diversified humanity born before our eyes. That humanity is even more moving when, captured in these pages, it seems to pulse with renewed life.

Tzara makes the point that this presentation of Sved's photographs in pairs is, in fact, a singular relief; the contemporary Egyptian subject is not subservient to the ancient one and is not meant to imitate it. If anything, the same materials – the photographs, the ancient structures, artifacts, contemporary objects, the clothes of the people, the people themselves – emote. In Lacan's example of the calligrapher's gesture, "there is a singularity apprehended in its materiality." Thus, in Sved's relief, this singularity is littoral, "a space in which something of the real is grasped" (Vieira and De Felice 2). In addition, Tzara's text manages to go beyond the topos, the land, the simultaneously particular, territorial Egypt and imaginary Egypt, and reaches the people living in the country. In a way, the text as a whole, its three parts considered, also serves as littoral. The epilogue of the entire text, the third part entitled "L'expérience humaine à l'échelle de l'Égypte" is indicative:

> A l'orée d'un monde en gestation, la lointaine voix de l'Égypte ancienne vient s'accorder à celle du Prophète, et le fellah, dont j'incline à croire que la situation n'a pas pu dans le passé être plus mauvaise qu'aujourd'hui, finira par trouver dans le trésor de l'expérience millénaire la force qu'il aura à mettre en œuvre pour que le produit de sa légendaire sagesse s'épanouisse à nouveau sur les rives du Nil.
>
> At the dawn of a world in gestation, the distant voice of ancient Egypt comes to agree with that of the Prophet, and the fellah – whose situation I am inclined to believe could not in the past have been worse than today – will end up finding in the treasure of millennial experience the strength that he will have to unlock in order for the product of his fabled wisdom to blossom once more on the banks of the Nile. (*OC* 4: 556)

The third part, however, presents itself as an opinion piece while maintaining Tzarian lyricism, unlike the first part, which is more a contemplative narrative, and the second part which is poetic. The reference above comes from a section that alludes to the realities of modern Egypt, its Arabic and Islamic influences, and the native laborers of the land, hindering the enduring colonial establishment and

military dictatorship, both taking advantage of labor.[13] Tzara's text and the photographs by Sved concentrate on the working people and everyday life without romanticizing the past or the present. Regarding these themes, Hentea highlights that it was Tzara's sensitivity to imperialism, colonialism, and issues of racial superiority that prompted this collaboration with Sved on Egypt (278). Hentea also highlights the text's "long paean to human hands and riffs on street life . . . drawing attention to brute reality can jolt consciousness into political action" (279). The part he characterizes as paean-like is the second, entitled "Soleil." Nonetheless, the focus in the present article is the attempt to erupt, even partially, from the order of structures to the impossibility of knowledge, to energetically materialize something as littoral. The plasticity of the relief that the text points out and Lacan's energetic drive of the calligrapher's action is depicted in the photograph on page thirty-one (fig. 3).

Notably, this is a photograph of a young girl in front of an opening, an entrance without the actual door, resting her right arm on a gigantic tire. Her fingers interlock an object that appears to be a charcoal stick, and the wall behind her is full of drawings. Some appear naïve, like a child's drawing of a train or palm trees, and some are symbols, appearing as ideograms. However, this is not a simplistic case of *scripta manent*. The girl is the scribe, the calligrapher; it is her action of scribing and tracing that means that the tire left on the sand is smudged by new traces. Ultimately, Tzara's text says the fellaheen will find it within them to make their own brush stroke. As Laurent explains, "there is no longer a frontier but a line that is everywhere heterogenous." This line, "the littoral enters the interior of psychic reality. This is not a frontier between the interior and the exterior – it is within the subject" (39). The Subject is no longer seen as represented in the Other; instead, it can draw its brushstroke inwardly. That is to make an eruption of the Real into the Symbolic; let us call it, into the established order of things.

Furthermore, in its entirety, *L'Égypte face à face* is, to use another of Lacan's favorite terms, a furrowing on the essence of the pseudo-pharaonic décor of Cairo's English–owned Shepheard's Hotel (Wilson 73). As Wilson mentions, "in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, a trip to Egypt was 'the thing to do.' Europeans could spend the earlier winter months in southern France or Italy, cross over to Alexandria, have a time of vigorous pleasure in and around Cairo, then hire a houseboat or join a party for a leisurely trip up the Nile.

[13] See Warriner.

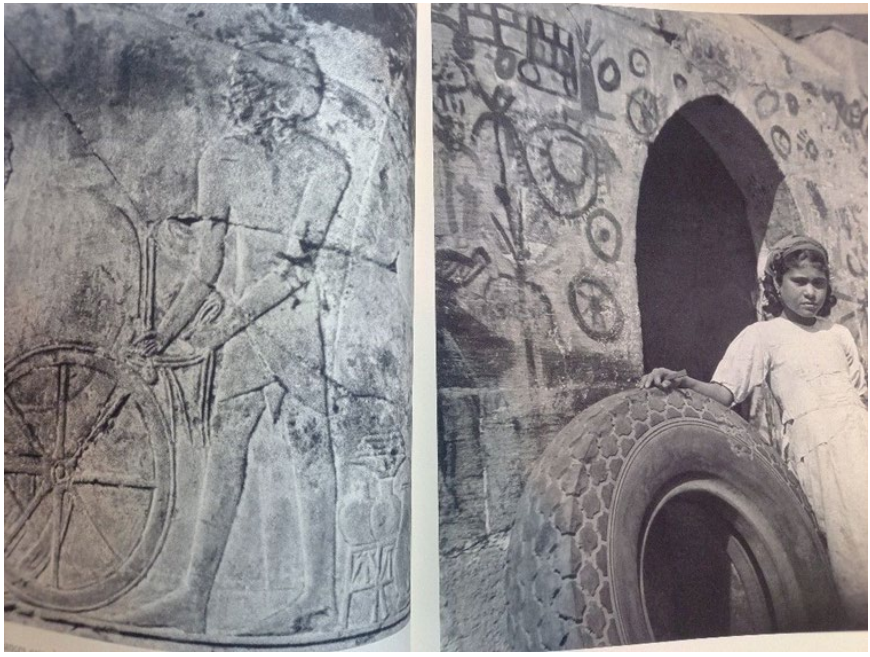

Figure 3: Étienne Sved. Photographs in *L'Égypte face à face* 31.

The more adventurous might then go to the Holy Land for Easter, but Palestine under the Turks was not as luxurious as the Egyptian sojourn" (72). The idea of "Europeans" going to southern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean refers more precisely to wealthier inhabitants of the then-colonial powers of Northern Europe. Arguably, the signifier "Prophet" chosen by Tzara is a Lacanian signifier, one which "[does not supposedly point to] but exists in relation to a combination, to the 'battery of signifiers' found at the other's disposal" (Amir 211–12). Radwan sees that Sved's photographs, with their juxtaposition, "become [an] instrument interrogating the familiar" away from Orientalist agendas, and a "no-man's-land is brought to the fore" (261). However, Tzara's accompanying text argues for, or foresees, fellaheen sovereignty as Béhar mentions Tzara's good judgement given that the nationalization of the Suez Canal took place two years after this text (*OC* 4: 679). This is not a no-man's-land.

Before considering Caimi's article, reference should be made to his other writings where it is evident that he uses the term European to address northern and western European elements. Caimi often refers to a Mediterranean civilization, one whose embodiment was himself; his texts are filled with expressions such as "we who belong to the Mediterranean civilizations" and "we

in the East" (*Γύρω στο Αίσθημα* 92, 43). We encounter a close apposition in Tzara's text:

> Le fonds intime et primordial de notre culture commune est à mettre au crédit des civilisations orientales anciennes et, bien plus qu'à la formation des mœurs, je pense à cet héritage ayant trait aux permanences affectives qui, entre la naissance et la mort, accompagnent la connaissance de la vie, de l'amour et de la nature.
>
> The intimate and primordial basis of our shared culture is to be credited to ancient Eastern civilizations and, much more than the formation of mores, I think of this heritage as relating to the affective permanencies which, between birth and death, accompany knowledge of life, love, and nature. (*OC* 4: 554)

Compared to Caimi, Tzara takes a more lilting approach, perhaps to serve the specificity of the "relief" mentioned earlier. The main difference between the two writers is that Caimi expressed in many of his writings a sacred devotion to his faith, unassuming, as his contemporaries described it, and deeply personal. Caimi summons the goddess Mnemosyne, for imagination is her virtue, and he combines it in his texts with Talmudic era literature (*Γύρω στο Αίσθημα* 72). He weaves perceptions of light of the *sefirot* (the ten attributes of God in Kabbalah) and impressions of Byzantine icons. That is not to say that he forgets, for instance, Syrian or Egyptian culture. Michael notes that Caimi is always interested in the dialectics between the Hellenic and the Jewish, and in the Mediterranean culture which, according to the latter, "in Europe is elapsed" (Michael 27). Caimi's attributing of imagination to Mnemosyne can be interpreted by her giving birth to the nine muses of poetry and astronomy, including Polymnia, the muse of sacred poetry and hymns (Hesiod 62–63). In addition, Mnemosyne does not simply equal memory or remembering in general; the meaning and even the translation of the word is not exactly memory. Rather, it refers to remembering something, an impression. The rest is up to us.[14] With this examination of how Tzara engages with Egypt, our attention turns to Caimi's similar yet distinct approach to Israel and Palestine.

Eastern Mediterranean, or Where the Muses and Chokhmah Reside

Caimi's article about his time in Eretz Israel commences with the following sentence: "Ευθύς μόλις πατήση κανείς στην Παλαιστίνη θα αισθανθή ότι

[14] In Greek, the word *αειμνηστία* means eternal or perpetual remembering.

βρίσκεται σε χώρα παράξενη" 'As soon as one sets foot in Palestine one will feel that one is in a strange land' (Η χώρα 356). He notes how many different ethnicities, customs, and religious practices one will witness there. A paragraph is dedicated to the Arabs' treatment of the street "αποτελούν είδη κέντρων όπου Άραβες ξαπλωμένοι ή διπλοπόδι καθισμένοι συζητούν, σαν να ευρισκόνταν στα σπίτια τους" 'as a kind of center where the men lying down or sitting cross-legged converse for hours as if they were at home.' Tzara also mentions the street and the road as such. Caimi describes the beauty of Arabic clothing, the copiousness of fabric, and its plications that recall "Βιβλικούς τύπους" 'Biblical types.' Other characteristics mentioned include their stature, dark hair, and faces partially covered by fabric. The Greek writer sees them as what "φανερώνουν καθαρά το σημιτικό τύπο" 'a Semite looks like in popular perception.' Moreover, he observes that "κατ'αντίθεση με τους Εβραίους, που ενώ είναι κι αυτοί καθαροί Σημίτες, φαίνονται γνήσιοι Ευρωπαίοι" 'although the Jewish population is also wholly Semitic, they look like true Europeans.'

> Αλλά η ζωή των Αράβων δεν έχει τίποτε να κάνει με τη ζωή των αρχαίων Σύρων, Ιουδαίων, ή άλλων αρχαίων σημιτικών φυλών. Όσο για τους Εβραίους της Παλαιστίνης αυτοί για τους ιθαγενείς αντιπροσωπεύουν τους Ευρωπαίους και τον πολιτισμό τους. Αν λάβη κανείς υπ'όψη ότι στην Ευρώπη οι Εβραίοι λογαριάζονται για Σημίτες, τότε καταλαβαίνει τι σύγχηση υπάρχει στο ζήτημα της διακρίσεως της πραγματικής Εβραϊκής φυλής. Γιατί αλήθεια, να σχηματίσει κανείς μια ιδέα για το πραγματικό εβραϊκό τόπο είναι αδύνατο, αφού στη χώρα του Ισραήλ οι τύποι αυτοί είναι τελείως διαφορετικοί μεταξύ τους. Από τον Εβραίο Υεμενίτη που είναι πραγματικός Αραβικός τύπος, έως τον Σκανδιναυόν Εβραίο υπάρχει άβυσσος.
>
> But the life of the Arabs has nothing to do with the life of the ancient Syrians, Jews, or other ancient Semitic tribes. As for the Jews of Palestine, they represent the Europeans and their culture to the natives. If one considers that in Europe, the Jews are seen as the Semites, then one understands what confusion there is in the matter of distinguishing the true Jewish race. Because really, to form an idea of the real Jewish place is impossible since these types look completely different in the land of Israel. From the Yemeni Jew, who is a true Arab type, to the Scandinavian Jew, there is an abyss.

While Caimi begins describing the variety and differences of the population, the common elements come to the forefront, especially the Hebrew language that, even if not understood by all, is the language of law, education, philology,

literature, and poetry. Printed as a double spread in the A5-size periodical *Ήλιος* (Sun), the article focuses on various contemporary topics in a range of disciplines including natural history, archaeology, and the arts. It includes three photographs that were most likely supplied by Caimi.[15] Much of the article is dedicated to the prominent role of women. The focus is on the city of Tel Aviv with its own heading, "Τελ-Αβίβ, Η πόλις των Εβραίων" (Tel Aviv, The City of the Jews).

Figure 4: Giulio Caimi. "Ιερουσαλήμ" (Jerusalem), 1938. With permission of the Nikos Gazepis Private Collection (Συλλογή Νίκου Γαζέπη).

[15] On the left there is a wide shot of two Tel Aviv streets with the caption "Το εμπορικόν κέντρον του Τελ-Αβίβ, της νέας εβραϊκής μεγαλουπόλεως" 'The commercial centre of Tel Aviv — The new Jewish metropolis.' The exact location is not cited, it appears to be somewhere along Allenby Street.

Figure 5: Giulio Caimi. "Ιορδάνης" (Jordan River), 1938. With permission of the Nikos Gazepis Private Collection (Συλλογή Νίκου Γαζέπη).

In contrast to Arabic settings, Caimi notes that shops are run almost exclusively by women so flawless and polite that they seem to be "αριστοκράτισσες κυρίες" 'aristocratic ladies' while at the same time having unadorned attire. He highlights that "women have equal rights with men and, this way, they contribute greatly to founding institutions." Caimi observes that women's equality is not found in Arab neighborhoods nor, for that matter, in his native Greece:[16]

> Άλλωστε, οι περισσότεροι είναι πρόσφυγες από την Ευρώπη όπου οι άνδρες ή οι γονείς τους ήταν καθηγητές, φιλόλογοι, καλλιτέχνες, επιστήμονες, υπηρετούσαν σε δημόσια γραφεία. Οι άνδρες, άλλωστε που κάνουν διάφορες δουλειές, μπακάληδες και γκαρσόνια, κουρείς, εφημεριδοπώληδες, κτίστες, είχαν άλλοτε ανώτερες θέσεις στην Ευρωπαϊκή κοινωνία. Όλα τα σπίτια και τα μηχανήματα ακόμα έχουν κατασκευαστεί στην πλειονότητα από αυτούς τους πρόσφυγες.

[16] See Chronaki (8). In 1935 the Metaxas government Law of Collective Labor Agreements further degraded women's work by legitimizing their reduced wages in the industrial and agricultural sector.

> Besides, most of them are refugees from Europe where their husbands or parents were professors, philologists, artists, scientists, and served in public offices. The men, after all, who do various jobs, grocers and waiters, barbers, news agents, and masons, once had higher positions in European society. All the houses and even machinery are built in the majority by these refugees.

The emphasis on Tel Aviv's residents and environment, buildings, streets, and its "newness" demonstrates a littoral condition, though this is certainly not due to newness itself. Instead, the littoral relates to Caimi's concept of art (τέχνη, in Greek) as chokhmah ("חָכְמָה" in Hebrew) from his other writings. Thus, he says, "Τέχνη (χοχμά), όρος σημιτικής προέλευσης, θα πει σοφία της ζωής" 'art (chokhmah), a term of Semitic origin, means the wisdom of life.' He continues by evoking the Lacanian littoral found in the action of the calligrapher. Caimi says that art comes from the Hebrew word for wisdom since "περιέχει μια πράξη μας οποιαδήποτε ή ένα έργο που εκφράζει την πράξη αυτή. . . . Αλλά επειδή πάλι η λαχτάρα του να περατώσουμε το έργο μάς προκαλεί εντός μας κάποια μυστική ηδονή, έπεται εκ τούτου ότι η τέχνη δεν είναι μονάχα δουλειά" 'it contains an action-praxis (*πράξη*) of ours or a work-ergon (*έργο*) that expresses this action. . . . However, since some longing for our work to be fulfilled provokes inside us some kind of mystical pleasure, it must be that art is not just labor (*δουλειά*)' (*Γύρω στο Αίσθημα* 41). He combines this with the concept of eros (seeing it derive from ancient Greece), which he sees as the pleasure of creation, mentally and physically. Caimi was from a Romaniote (one of the oldest Greek speaking Jewish peoples) background, and although he did not experience being a refugee himself he had befriended Greek refugees from the 1922 destruction of Smyrna (Faïs 94). Witnessing Tel Aviv in 1934, at least as the text shows it, there is a *littorality* about it, a creative, physical animosity.

By comparison, a large section of Tzara's first text from his Egypt triptych is a quotation of the harpist's mournful yet adoring song-poem for his dead wife. Both Tzara and Caimi, in their collective writings, have advocated people's art (utilitarian and decorative) and people's stories, songs, and poetry. Caimi mentions that even though Jerusalem feels imposing due to its nature and historical and religious monuments, the simplicity of its houses is friendly and genial.[17] This impression can supplement Tzara's statement that "[M]algré ses moyens précaires, mais riche de montagnes de patience, l'homme a bâti de sa main

[17] Caimi writes in another article: "Today Jerusalem lies parallel to Delphi in magnificence of natural location. She marches with a sure step to her destination. And it will become a center of peace and prayer for the world, as Isaiah says. And Delphi, that simultaneously contributes to this, will be the spiritual and educational center of the world" (Το νόημα 144).

d'immenses monuments" 'despite his precarious means, but rich in mountains of patience, man has built immense monuments with his own hands' (*OC* 4: 550–51).[18] Tzara comments on the ancient Egyptian poem for its human aspect, contrary to the more common despotism associated with that society: "Je connais peu de textes aussi émouvants que celui où, lettre réellement écrite ou fiction littéraire, peu importe, un homme qui a perdu sa femme, lui demande grâce, tant l'insistance de l'amour disparu hante son souvenir" 'I know few texts as moving as the one in which – whether the text be an actual letter or literary fiction, it does not matter – a man who has lost his wife asks her for mercy, so insistently does his lost love haunt his memory' (555). Not only does the ancient Egyptian poet immortalize his dead wife, but our point of view also memorializes him. However, Tzara's commentary on the poem is stripped of academicism, viewing it instead for its human and poetic value. It is no coincidence that Lacan[19] and Heidegger, whom the former translated, assign to the pre-Socratics a poetic pliancy as acquittal from logocentrism (Žižek, *Lacan* 149). Forcer also mentions the associations between dadaist use of language, performance and, in particular, Tzara's association with Lacan, including the latter's realization late in life (and well after Tzara's death) of Dada's influence (69). Tzara acknowledges the poet-harpist here, akin to Lacan in an earlier Seminar acknowledging Tzara and demonstrating his respect for poets, before whom "il n'y a vraiment qu'à courber la tête" 'one can really only bow one's head' (*Non-dupes* 77), even though Tzara was apparently left indifferent by Lacan gifting him a copy of *L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient* (Forcer 69). It is that text in which, coincidentally, Lacan introduces the "letter," its materiality and locality, and where he famously wrote that the unconscious is structured like a language through chains of signification. In the culmination of Tzara's *L'Égypte*, it is the poet and the poem whose outcry for meaning is elevated above everything. In another example, in Seminar XX, Lacan says "the real . . . is the mystery of the speaking body, the mystery of the unconscious" (131). In *L'Égypte,* Tzara the poet implies that in creating and evolving language, humans are primarily concerned with how efficiently language can serve its purpose, the utility of language: "Si le langage est une continuelle création de l'homme, celui-ci s'efforce de lui assigner toute sa valeur sous l'angle de l'efficacité" 'If language is a continual creation of man, he strives

[18] Editors' note: While in some cases references in French to "l'homme" might reasonably be translated into "humankind" or some other gender neutral phrase, Tzara's reference to "l'homme" has been rendered as "man" as to do otherwise would be to confer a gender inclusivity that is not implied in the original.

[19] See also Lacan's statement in Seminar XI's preface of the English edition: "I am not a poet, but a poem. A poem that is being written, even if it looks like a subject." (11: viii)

to assign language all its value from the perspective of efficiency' (*OC* 4: 551–52). Language, as a human construct, encompasses more than just the mechanics of cognition (Bassols 15).

In the end, we are reminded of Lacan's remark that Parmenides was wrong and Heraclitus right in the context of the latter's remark: "[Apollo] neither avows nor hides, he signifies" (qtd. in *Seminar* 20: 114). However, my focus here is not on the context of this specific seminar but on the littoral condition in Tzara's and Caimi's texts. As Tor notes of Heraclitus's statement, what Apollo tells you is not the proper answer; in speaking through the oracle, Apollo tells you something else, which gestures towards the answer (96). The oracle of Delphi operates to have *sense*, not necessarily to make sense or have a particular meaning. Heraclitus "is *also* keenly aware of the distinction and, indeed, the gap . . . between that *logos* which is his words and the cosmic *logos* which is the unseen measures and structures of unity and attunement inherent in things" (Tor 106-07). According to Badiou, Lacan's appeal to Heraclitus is that the former comes from the latter's anti-philosophy lineage. The same could be argued for Tzara and Caimi's preference for the pre-Socratic Ephesian. After all, Tzara created the persona of monsieur Aa l'antiphilosophe, and Michalis Katsaros, the militant poet who knew Caimi since they were children, wrote that Caimi lived "ζούσε σαν παρίας ενώ ήταν ο Πάρις" 'like a pariah while he was Paris [the Trojan prince],' a modest sage, a worldly eremite. Caimi preferred to say about himself that he was an anarchist (Faïs 21). These defiant self-perceptions and self-portraitures align with Heraclitus's philosophy, which emphasizes sensory experience as expressed through a more creative language than the norm.

The People's Mark

Lacan illustrates that as an element of the real, the letter is meaningless in itself by referring (as did Freud) to ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, which were indecipherable to Europeans for so long (Evans 102). Perhaps Lacan paraphrases Heraclitus when he says it all depends with what kind of ear we read things. *L'Égypte face à face* and "Prophets' Land" present a littoral condition because the littoral is not a border, constantly shifting between land and sea: "the littoral as an image has a necessarily momentary and fluid existence. Therefore, the difference between the two regions, the sea and the land, has realness. This topology clarifies well the uniqueness of the letter's function as a form of inscribing image-knowledge" (Amir 223). At the same time, the littoral is best perceived when each subject senses it on its own as it is in constant flow, evoking the well-known Heraclitan notion of discord. The exceptional dedication to carriers of all kinds of goods and their constant shifting is characteristic in *L'Égypte face à face*, like the hustle and bustle of Tel Aviv:

> Aussi nombreuses que les vagues de la mer, je vous vois apparaître uniques et différentes et, comme les vagues de la mer, vous passez et revenez, semblables à vous-mêmes mais jamais pareilles, semant autour de vous la graine de votre perpétuel renouvellement.
>
> As numerous as the waves of the sea, I see you appearing unique and different, and, like the waves of the sea, you come and go, similar to yourselves but never the same, sowing around you the seed of your perpetual renewal. (*OC* 4: 550)

One carrier is "taken for another"; their desires their pains undulate with their steps and leave traces because asymmetry is introduced to nature by humans.[20] That is Tzara's poetic elaboration of the letter-littoral, the women carriers of goods in pots on their heads coming and going like sea waves, and why Caimi mentions that people irrigate, carve earth and stone.[21] In both texts, there is a shift in the places to which they refer, which is very much physical and material, and which at the same time can be metaphorical but without being only metaphorical. The inward effect of the littoral, of that instantaneous bursting, can be arguably transcendent to another letter. The letter inside all letters, esoteric and cultural, unites them. At the same time, as Tzara suggests, we humans live and leave our traces not just in monuments, artifacts, and glyphs but also in the form of our emotions. In "Lituraterre," Lacan thanks Aristophanes for having started his thought process while being among the clouds. Undoubtedly, the psychoanalyst was aware that in the ancient comic playwright's *The Clouds* (*Νεφέλαι*" feminine in Greek), the chorus-Clouds are the sensible ones, the ones whose mind was not in the clouds.

The ambiguity of Aristophanes's play – whether it leans toward a tragedy – lies in its locality, the crisis of the then Athenian society. While the Clouds gather to scold the individual and Athenian citizens for lack of responsibility, for Lacan when clouds disperse rays of the sun hit the ground and he begins conceiving

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[20] See Lacan on "le mot pris pour un autre," in Seminar III, The Pscychoses and in Seminar II, The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, "[a]symmetry in nature is neither symmetrical, nor asymmetrical — it is what it is" (2:38).

[21] Hamutal Shapira proposes that Micha Ullman's "artistic act touches upon something that has to do with the repetition of inscribing a littoral condition." She refers to his subterranean artworks that involve digging and quotes the artist: "I've been attracted to digging for decades. . . . This emptiness of the hole, the more you deepen it, the more space you get, the more sky. . . . My first diggings were as a child joining my father. He ran away from Berlin in 1933 and, arriving in Palestine, wanted to become an agriculturist 'to work the land.' He dug pits in order to turn kurkar into more fertile soil, so things will grow."

ideas. As Josiane Paccaud-Huguet notes, there is a mode of possible social thinking in Lacan's littoral since "the edge/littoral of sense connected to the body's energetic drives, confirms the move in the direction of the material part of the signifier: toward the private letter which constitutes both our most real reality and a mark of recognition in the eyes of others" (287). Tzara's and Caimi's texts sketch the sun as both heart-warming and harsh; the sun nurtures life and burns, it makes things visible, and its absence is a shadow among holed earth. In these texts, the individuals within their respective societies do not share the ancient Athenians' disorientation.

The signifier here can also be considered the wider region (land of Israel, Palestine, Egypt), its historical and cultural compactness, and its status as, at the same time, a dynamic, alluring, and deceiving source of discourse. What is at stake here is conveyed by the way in which Saint Blanquat and Baitinger develop their thought: "the *littoral condition* is what in Lacan's *Siberiethic* calls for a *literal reading* that does not presuppose, as a primary inscription, the pure order of the signifier but, on the contrary, 'the blotting out of no trace whatsoever that might be beforehand.' A blotting out that also 'turns the littoral to terrain'" (218). However, this is not a case of a tabula rasa: "'the first architectural gesture acted upon the earth: it is our grave or our foundation'" (221; quoting Elizabeth Grosz). This brings us back to how Lacan himself arrived at the idea of the littoral through the sight of the natural erosions on the landscape, which have a past and are moldable: the traces did not pre-exist but were created. Auspiciously, he calls the sight of the landscape "a relief." It is indeed a relief that natural phenomena and humans form and deform on the earth, a relief that is addressed by Tzara's (and Sved's) relief, and one that Caimi witnesses.

This dynamic is not one about erasure of the past, but rather an effort to blot out the layout of the litter, of the rubbish, of the exoticisms, of the idea of a mythical land that shall remain wrapped in mystery. The littoral is not a barrier that only a few heroes can cross. Rather, in the littoral Lacan advances towards a conception of *jouissance* which is no longer the jouissance "forbidden to whoever speaks as such" (Marret-Maleval 94). In Tzara's and Caimi's text, it is the people, let us say the "every day" or "ordinary" people, that can make the leap. Like Lacan's assertion of the Hellenization of French terms, inspired by Joyce (*Seminar* 23:3), from the Greek "λείτος" for people, as in *leitourgia* (*λειτουργία*, in Latin 'liturgia,' an organized community where personal service applies to solidarity), perhaps what Tzara and Caimi are writing here is *leituraterre.*

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