

HOW TO UNDO THINGS WITH WORDS

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And then came the day when languages became confused, not as a result of an improvised Babel, but as a result of the continuation of a vicious tower game that forces the execrable choice of plummeting down all those who not only utter the right line at the wrong time, but who are ready to trade their sense of freedom

for the disgusting and lucrative price of deference to horrid common sense.

The performative power of words, more than ever, exhausts its provocative stature, wearily tests the resistance of the usual norm of current thought, and finally surrenders before the need to survive itself.

We are witnessing the slow and inexorable shipwreck of the world as we knew it, that is, Western-driven, and even if we pretend not to notice, the clearest evidence



of this bleak sinking comes from the annihilation to which we subject ourselves, to the certainty that we must retract ourselves, emend without irony with respect to the more or less glorious past for which we serve an obscure guilt.

Cancel Culture is only the final telltale of a long-running process that has much to do with modernity, understood as a Western ideological category: a cloyingly optimistic Moloch that has ended up swallowing itself, that is, us with all the trappings of the centripetal measure of our criterion of judgment. The overcoming of our obscurantism, according to the magnificent fates, coincides with a new obscurantism on which they will cast new light when it is too late and we will not be there.

In the meantime, we establish increasingly sophisticated relativisms that only serve to create more refined dissatisfactions, more resolute frustrations, splitting hairs on our stomachs with the effect of finding ourselves more and more mousy, less and less willing to acknowledge the spaces of others.

J. L. Austin, in a brilliant posthumous essay more than sixty years ago (*How to Do Things with Words*), pointed to the agentive path of expressions designed to trigger actions, rituals, anthropoietic constructions.

In today's crumbling reality, words make their solid contribution so that everything goes down the drain, both when their meaning echoes in the empty halls of contemporary consciousness and when they fall silent, silenced by general idiosyncrasy.

In the general opinion, today to invoke peace seems to be too often synonymous with a suspicious trade with the evil forces and likewise to state horror at any genocide, an act of lese majesty, just to give two examples.

But If the actions of men, in their brutality, meet with general indifference, why should *voces clamantes in deserto* sow a new flowering of collective consciousness?

That is why we are speechless.

We are so busy smothering each other with the best intentions with which our hell is paved, that when the floor will collapse under our feet we will welcome it as a form of relief, perhaps.