

Giambattista Vico on Language and Education

Tony Fahey

1. Introduction

Giambattista Vico's history of humankind is the history of human ideas:¹ the history of the evolution of human consciousness in which each level of consciousness is revealed in language. For Vico, the history of humankind consists of three different ages, three different levels of consciousness, and three different forms of linguistic expression. Language is the conduit through which human beings give shape to the thoughts that derive from sensory experience for, as Vico says, quoting Aristotle, "Nothing is found in the intellect which was not found first in the senses".² Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch, in their translation of *The New Science*, and David Marsh, in his translation of the same text, interpret the term "*favella*" in Vico's statement "[L'uomo] propriamente, che mente, corpe e favella, e la favella essendo come posta in mezzo alla mente ed al corpo", as "speech", and the entire passage as, "[a human being] properly consists of mind, body and speech, with the last as a sort of intermediate between mind and body".³ However, neither of these interpretations of the term "*favella*" adequately represents Vico's use term which should be understood a "myth" or "fable", for it is only in this context that Vico's approach to language can be properly understood. For Vico *all* language, whether mute or spoken, is myth, and all myths are metaphors: signs and expressions through which human beings bring forth into the public domain mental images drawn from empirical experience. This paper sets out to examine the role of language in Vico's *storia ideale eterna*. It will discuss the origin of myths; the development of language from metaphor to irony, and the development of grammar from the creation of nouns (the naming of things) to the more sophisticated use of sentences comprising of nouns, pronouns, prepositions and verbs. This paper will also consider the importance of language, as the art of rhetoric, in education.

2. Vico on Language

Human history, says Vico, passes through a cycle of three ages: the age of gods, the age of heroes, and the age of men. The age of gods is the most primitive age: it is the age when men are more beast than human, and it is the age when these primitive creatures believe that the world is shaped by supernatural forces with anthropomorphic characteristics. The age of heroes is the age when these anthropomorphic gods are replaced by human icons. It is the age when these icons or heroes are held to be divine, not only by the people at large but also by themselves. The age of men is the age of democracy: it is the age when men finally come to see all men as equals; and it is the age when men, intoxicated by their own powers of reasoning, see themselves as masters of the universe. Allied to each of these stages is a distinct language. The language of the age of gods is sacred or divine; the language of the age of heroes is symbolic, and the language of the age of men is vernacular.

During the age of gods the language was hieroglyphic or sacred; that is, it was first a mute or silent language through which early men communicated with each other by way of crude or simple signs. When they eventually began to speak, the first exclamations of these primitive beings referred to sacred mental images that arose spontaneously from their experiences with the natural world. Because these early makers of words looked at the world and saw all things as creations of unseen deities Vico called them theological poets.⁴ The verbal formulations of the

early poets he called “poetic logic”.⁵ However, while the term “formulation” might infer some degree of reflection, it should be noted that, for Vico, these men were essentially “stupid, insensate, and horrible beasts”,⁶ whose knowledge of things was not “rational and abstract”,⁷ but felt and imagined.⁸ That is, they were formulations which arose as an epiphany rather than in a reasoned or reflective way.

Vico explains that the term “logic” derives from the Greek word *logos*, which meant fable.⁹ Thus, when he talks about poetic logic, he is not using terms which are not mutually incompatible but terms which mean created myths: fantasies created by theological poets to explain animate substances. For Vico, all primary figures are corollaries of poetic logic¹⁰ and of these the metaphor is the most eminent in that it is through the use of metaphor that metaphysics is described.¹¹ Vico’s view that the first utterances of early men were “formed by feelings of passion and emotion [rather than]... reflection and reasoning”,¹² finds support in Professor Stephen Pinker’s claim that primitive man’s vocal calls were controlled not by the cerebral cortex but by “phylogenetically older neural structures in the brain stem and limbic system”.¹³ That is, the genealogical history of primitive men meant that their vocal skills were connected to structures of the brain concerned with basic emotions, rather than the cerebral cortex as is the case with the more advanced members of the human species.

3. Metaphor, Metonym, Synecdoche, and Irony

According to Vico, the first utterances or exclamations of the early people arose spontaneously, as living reactions and responses to their immediate surroundings. The divine ideas, or notions of deities, conceived by these people were formed, he says, “when they contemplated the heavens with the eyes of the body...rather than the eyes of the mind”.¹⁴ That is, the concept of a force greater than themselves was not something that the *bestioni* brought with them from a previous life, rather it was a concept that arose from their own direct experience with natural phenomena. For example, the imperative to understand the unseen force responsible for the sound of thunder led the theological poets to conceive an image of a fearsome god. The mental image that the sign or sound evoked, however, was not in itself a “thing”, but a mimesis or representation of a phenomenon that arose from the *sensus communis* – the spontaneous common sense response of the entire community to a phenomenon.

From these mental images, then, arose concepts, which, in turn, became poetic myths, and from poetic myths came words. Poetic myths were constructed from human imagination which attributed characteristics with which people were familiar to occurrences and forces with which they were unfamiliar. As Vico says, “when men are ignorant of the natural causes producing things, and cannot explain them by analogy, they attribute their own nature to them”.¹⁵ It should be mentioned that the notion of myth as language is not peculiar to Vico. Much of the Literature from the Renaissance to the 17th century had expounded similar theories. For example, Puero Valeriano’s *Hieroglyphics* interpreted “those things that are signified by the various images of gods” as “parts of a symbolic mode of expression”,¹⁶ while Abbé Alessandro Farra, in his *Settenario*, held that “most ancient wise men of Greece... began to use [fables] in place of hieroglyphics, so as to conceal by these means from common knowledge the venerable secrets of divine wisdom”.¹⁷

While these inventions of the imagination represent humankind’s attempt to understand the unknown, for Vico, the knowledge it acquires is always circumspect, always uncertain, for it is always knowledge invented by men. From the use of metaphors poets moved to metonym, from metonym to synecdoche, and finally from synecdoche to irony. That is, allied to each age was its own distinctive mode of expression. According to Vico all figures of speech can be reduced to these four tropes. The metaphor is the language of the age of gods; metonymy is the language of

the age of heroes; synecdoche is the language of the age of men, and irony relates to that period of the age of men when the age moves resolutely towards dissolution and chaos.

The dynamic of these modes of expression is explained by Nancy S. Struever where, in her essay “Vico, Valla, and the logic of Humanistic Inquiry”, she says, for Vico,

... metonymy, synecdoche, and metaphor successfully delineate language as plurisystematic and historical. Vico emphasises the temporal nature of the process: a primitive concept struggles to reach the next level of elaboration or sophistication. Language relates to a limited repertoire of modifications of the mind, a repertoire which has one privileged direction of usage.¹⁸

Vico’s thesis is that metaphors arose when early men, ignorant of the true nature of things, began to attribute bodily parts and human emotions to animate substances and physical bodies. That is, it was through the use of metaphor that the early poets came to project human characteristics onto natural objects and occurrences and create myths of them. Thus, for Vico, the “metaphor is a kind of primal (generic) trope, so that synecdoche and metonymy are viewed as special refinements of it, and irony is seen as its opposite”.¹⁹

The first metaphor was Jove, god of the heavens with a voice of thunder. However when the sound of thunder became conceived as anger it became a different mode of expression: it became metonymic. The trope metonymy means that the characteristic of a thing is substituted for the thing. In the case of thunder, the characteristic anger was understood to represent the mood of the god. Hence, Jove, when he roared was an angry deity. As Hayden White explains:

[by] metonymic reduction, the thunder is endowed with all the characteristics necessary to permit the conceptualisation of it as a powerful, wilful, and purposeful being, a great spirit which, because it is similar to man in some of its attributes, can be treated with, served and, placated.²⁰

However, once the trope Jove becomes a particular thing with distinct characteristics that allows him to be understood as a specific entity it becomes a synecdoche. That is, when the particular idea became conceived as a universal concept it became a synecdoche.

Irony, as a mode of expression, not only represents the transition from metaphysical language to a “consciously figurative language (and thus into literal and denotative, or prose, discourse)”,²¹ but it also represents that stage in Vico’s *storia ideale eterna* when men come to realise that language can be used to present false representations of reality. As Vico says:

Irony could clearly arise only in an age capable of reflection, because it consists of a falsehood which reflection disguises in a mark of truth... Since the pagan world’s earliest people were as simple as children, who are by nature truthful, they could invent nothing false in their early myths.²²

Thus, for Vico, irony does not represent reality in the way that metaphor, metonymy, or synecdoche does, rather it presents a falsehood in the guise of the real. It should be said that when Vico talks about early men presenting real or true images of reality he means images which, while firmly held to be real or true, were always imagined truths created by themselves. As he explains, “synecdoche became metaphor when people raised particulars to universals or united parts to form wholes”.²³ So, for the early poets, terms like “Jove” meant not only to the sky, but also to the “father of the Gods and the Universe, as well as the source of thunder, terror and duty”.²⁴ Hercules referred to both the individual and the class to which all heroes belong; Neptune is both the trident-bearing god of the deep as well as all the seas of the world, and Cybele is the symbol for earth and mother of all giants.²⁵ Other deities, such as Flora (flowers) and Pomono (fruit),²⁶ were used to signify subspecies of each major god. Each of these deities or sub-deities was responsible for the natural phenomena that fell under their particular domain.

Although they were gods they were believed to have the same passions and needs as mortal beings.

Thus, when it comes to describing the actions of these deities it comes as no surprise that the metaphors used were drawn from human passions and characteristics. These terms, then, represent the concepts or “imaginative universals” which formed in the minds of the early poets – the first creators of fables and myths. Isaiah Berlin reminds us that when Vico uses the terms “poet” or “poetic” he means the “modes of expression used by the unsophisticated mass of people in early years of the human race, not the children of its old age – self-conscious men of letters, experts or sages”.²⁷

For Vico, then, there is no such thing as a fixed, logically perfect language, nor are there any unaltering essences. This concept of concepts, so to speak, derives from the fact that early poets’ limited and undeveloped understanding compelled them to apply terms such as Justice, Goodness, and Truth, to a broad range of similar but plastic concepts. For example, the concept of Justice that we have today is not the same concept of Justice by early man; nor is it the same as it was twenty years ago; or is it the same in Ireland as it is in Iraq. Hence, while we employ the term “Justice” to refer to what we believe is the natural or God – given rights of people, this “umbrella” term is but a convenient label under which these “universals” are assembled.

Thus, for Vico, universal concepts are not given *a priori* from some Platonic realm of Ideal forms, but are concepts formed in men’s consciousness by common discourse. As Vico, in *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, says, “minds are formed by character of language, not language by the minds of those who speak it”.²⁸ Hence, what are to Cartesians, “clear and distinct” *a priori* ideas, for Vico are convenient terms of reference for roughly similar, but changeable, concepts which arise in virtue of the *sensus communis* at particular stages in the eternal ideal history of humankind – and which emerge from the actual circumstances in which men live.

The most valuable figure of speech, says Vico, is the metaphor, since it “confers sense and emotion on insensate objects”.²⁹ Each metaphor, he says, is a myth in microcosm. In all languages, Vico continues, nearly all expressions for inanimate objects use metaphors drawn from “the human and its parts, or from human senses and emotions”.³⁰ By way of example he reminds us that “head” is commonly used for top or beginning; “front” or “brow”, and “shoulders” or “back”, for before and behind, and “mouth” for opening and “lip” for rim.³¹ What this goes to show, adds Vico, is that “in his ignorance, man makes himself the measure of the universe”.³²

Implicit in this remark is a critique of rational metaphysics that says that man becomes all things through understanding. What should be said, says Vico, is that “man becomes all things by not understanding”.³³ For when a man understands, he extends his mind to comprehend things; but when he does not understand, “he makes them out of himself and, by transforming himself becomes them”.³⁴ What this means is that the man that extends his mind to understand things he becomes conceited and believes himself to be the master of that which he understands; whereas the man that does not understand, while he recreates himself, realises that he is never that which he creates, never his true self, which is ever beyond his understanding.

At the same time as the idea of Jove was forming in the mind of primitive men, the children of the history began to connect verbal utterances with animate substances onomatopoeically. In Latin, for example, the god Jupiter was first known as *Ious* – a sound that corresponds to the sound of thunder. In Greek, the same god was called Zeus which was nearer to the sound associated with lightning.³⁵ According to Vico, these early words were interjections or

exclamations caused by the stimulus of violent emotions.³⁶ The first of these words, which were monosyllabic in all languages, burst forth when the first lightning bolts awakened in early men a sense of wonder. It seems likely, says Vico, that the very first exclamation was the syllable *pa*: a syllable that was later doubled to become *pape*.³⁷

Because the imagined god to whom this exclamation was attributed was believed to be the father of men, all gods were called father, while all goddesses, presumably because the second monosyllable uttered by our primitive forefathers was *ma*, were called mother. While here Vico appears to take a different view of what the actual first word was it is worth drawing attention to Hayden White's comment that

...the important point is not whether Vico's theory of inventive language or even whether his characterisation of major tropes and the relation between them is valid, but the role the tropes play in his theory of primitive consciousness. For in fact his tropological conception of what he calls poetic logic serves him not merely as the basis of the method for interpreting the myths, fables, and legends of ancient Greek and Roman times and of relating them to the social institutions of which they are conceived to be reflections or characterisations, but also as a model by which to describe the structural characteristics of ancient societies and as a schema for relating the phases through which they pass in their evolutions.³⁸

Thus, the issue is not whether the first utterance was either *pa* or Jove, or even *Ious*, rather it is whether humankind's first monosyllabic utterances are representative of the first myths: the first "imagined universals" or whether they simply represent the first natural sounds made by humans when the mouth is opened or closed in certain ways; for what becomes clear in Vico's scheme of things is that he draws much of his conclusion regarding the origin of language from the development of linguistic skills in children.

In the same way that children use names of people and things with which they are familiar to people and things they later encounter, says Vico, so did the early poets, in their ignorance, attach the names of things they had known first to others that bore a resemblance or relation to these things.³⁹ Vico goes so far as to say that it was in the light of his studies of the nature of children, as well as the history of Egyptians, that led him to conclude that the "notion of poetic speech, with its poetic archetypes offers... many important discoveries of the ancient world".⁴⁰

While Vico offers a comprehensive and seemingly convincing account of origin of myths, to suggest that all early conscious experiences, either of children or of the first men, result in images being implanted in the mind so powerful that they evoke impassioned exclamations that are associated with those experiences seems unlikely. While it seems plausible to suggest that natural sounds such as the "whoose" of lightning or the sounds of animals may be repeated onomatopoeically, to suggest that utterances such as "papa" or even "mama" or "baba" are anything other than natural sounds an infant makes when opening and closing its mouth – utterances to which meaning is attached retrospectively – seems a step too far.

4. Nouns, Pronouns, Preposition and Verbs

The naming of things began gradually, says Vico. Initially all the names, or nouns, were monosyllabic exclamations. In the same way that children today begin to speak only in monosyllables, so it must have been for the early men "whose vocal organs were rigid and who had not yet heard human speech".⁴¹ However as their lexicon grew the early poets began use pronouns.⁴² As was the case with the nouns, most pronouns were, at the outset at least, monosyllabic. One of the first of these must have been the Latin term *hoc*, this, "which occurs in Ennius' golden verse, *Aspice hoc sublime cadens, quem omnes invocant Iovem*: 'Look at this which falls from the above, which all invoke as Jupiter'" (*che n'è rimasto quel luogo d'oro d'Ennio: Aspice hoc sublime cadens, quem omnes invocant Iovem [Guarda quest sublime... risplendente, che tutti chiamano Giove]*).⁴³

In this sentence Ennius uses the pronoun *hoc* in place of *coelum*, heaven.⁴⁴ In time prepositions were introduced, and then verbs. According to Vico, verbs came last because they are the least necessary. Just as children express themselves by using only nouns and prepositions, says Vico, so too could the early poets manage, up to a point, without verbs.⁴⁵

Central to Vico's *New Science* is the view that there is within the nature of all institutions a conceptual language common to all nations which "uniformly grasps the substance of all the elements of human society, but expresses them differently according to their different aspects".⁴⁶ Thus, while individual minds do not contain innate clear and distinct ideas, the nature of human society is such that, regardless of where, or at what time in the history of humankind, such societies are formed, certain basic priorities for civil life emerge which are strikingly similar. While, as shown above, the concepts which arise in virtue of these priorities has more to do with the limitations of human understanding than it has to do with the fact that these priorities are fixed concepts, and arise more as a result of humankind's collective spontaneous responses to its basic and immediate needs, these priorities arise because they are an essential part of the pattern of the eternal ideal history as ordained by divine providence.

5. Language and the Making of Universal Ideas

To have true knowledge of something, says Vico, is to know how a thing comes into existence. To explain how universal concepts come to be is the distinguishing mark of new science. For Vico there are two kinds of universals: (1) the universals bequeathed to the Jews through revelation, and (2) the universals of the pagans which arise in virtue of the *sensus communis*. These Vico calls "divine archetypes" or "imaginative universals".⁴⁷ Imaginative universals derive from Vico's claim that "[t]he nature of human institutions presupposes a conceptual language which is common to all nations".⁴⁸ These universals, says Vico, arose ultimately through the use of primal and primal metaphors which, although expressed "differently according to their different aspects",⁴⁹ were universally recognised and preceded verbal communication.

The first "divine archetypes", says Vico, was the myth of Jupiter.⁵⁰ The concept of a fearful deity arose, he continues, when the theological poets created a metaphor in response to the pressing emotional needs of the *sensus communis*. As James Mancuso, in his essay 'Claiming Giambattista Vico as a Narrativist/Constructionist' says:

[For Vico]...poetic wisdom, the first wisdom of the gentile world, must have begun with a metaphysics not rational and abstract like that of learned men now, but felt and imagined as these first men must have been, who, without power of ratiocination [the ability to reason formally and logically], were all robust sense and vigorous imagination. This metaphysics was their poetry, a faculty born with them (for they were furnished by nature with these senses and imaginations); born of their ignorance of causes, for ignorance, the mother of wonder, made everything wonderful to men who were ignorant of everything.⁵¹

In short, the first sensation led to the first "divine archetype" of "imaginative universal".

Imaginative universals, then, are sensible images formed by the imagination into an allegory – and the metaphor is "the most luminous and hence the most basic and common"⁵² use of allegory. However, in the speech of the first humans, the metaphor was more than an allegorical term based on likeness and analogy, rather, it was the power to create human truths through identity. Thus, a metaphor was not an analogy based on abstraction, but, as J.R. Goetsch Jr. explains in his essay 'Expecting the unexpected in Vico', "an act of original or archaic making".⁵³

These images, then, were images through which or in terms of which early poets made a certain kind of sense of events in their natural surroundings – a certain kind of sense of things that was shared by others. They were able to do this because the images, concepts and ideas did not arise

from within their individual minds, but images, concepts and ideas which were expressed collectively, and involuntarily, as human responses and reactions to the world around them. Vico calls the mytho-peotic images, concepts and ideas, the *sensus communis* of a group or community: a shared sense which, he suggests, affords the people the possibility of co-ordinating their activities in terms of a shared form of judgement without reflection.⁵⁴ That is, a set of unpremeditated practical responses to shared experiences.

Psychologist Stephen Pinker agrees that the use of language began spontaneously. Language, he says, is not a cultural artefact that we learn the way we learn to tell the time or other skills; rather it is a distinct and specialised skill that develops in the brain “without conscious effort or formal instruction, [and] is developed without awareness of its underlying logic”.⁵⁵ While some cognitive scientists describe language as a “psychological faculty, a mental organ, a neural system, a computational module”⁵⁶, like Vico, Pinker sees language more as an instinctive reaction by humankind to the needs of their surroundings.

6. Language and Divine Providence

What is important to understand is that, for Vico, although common judgements were created by men, and thus worked to relate to human necessities and utilities,⁵⁷ their making was clearly not a matter of choice, nor were they a matter of chance or necessity, but something that operated without human discernment or counsel, and often against the designs of men.⁵⁸ Noting the unintentional but nonetheless human character of the creative process at work in human praxis, Vico called them the workings of divine providence – by divine he means that hidden within humankind’s own practical social activities were natural provisions for their own development. As he points out, the term divine is a derivative of the Latin term *divinare* which means to imagine, to divine, or to predict – which is “to understand either what is hidden from men, meaning their future, or what is hidden in them, meaning their conscience”.⁵⁹

Although Vico insists that humankind creates its own laws and values, implicit in this view is the fact that he believes that the human will is powerless against the unrelenting will of an unseen force. For example, he says, when people, “like so many beasts, have fallen into the custom of each man thinking only of his own private interests... providence brings back among them the piety, faith and truth which are the natural foundations of justice...”.⁶⁰ Thus, regardless of the concepts that arise in virtue of the desires, needs, and even realisations of humankind, in the final analysis they are determined by a force greater than that of the general will of the people.

Notwithstanding what we deem to be our achievements, whether in medicine, science, psychology, or philosophy, all must end in chaos and dissolution. If there is a moral in Vico’s philosophy it is that in spite of all that befalls us we have within us the ability to begin again. However, in a philosophy that holds that the immortality of the soul is a construct of the human imagination, for many the virtue of human resilience may offer little comfort.

For Vico, the human evolutionary change that takes place under the governance of the silent hand of providence occurs against to the general will of humankind.⁶¹ Indeed it could be argued that Vico’s view that pagan civilisation began when early people ceased their wandering and “took shelter in *certain* places” and “settled down with *certain* women”,⁶² with whom they produced *certain* children”... a process which he calls “human generation”,⁶³ bears a striking resemblance to the theory of human evolution espoused by neo-Darwinism. This theory asserts that human evolution takes place because the changing environment exerts selection pressure on those within the environment.⁶⁵ Over time the general make-up of the population changes as people evolve to the next stage of development. Thus, it can be said that what for determined by natural selection or “generic drift” by neo-Darwinism, is governed by providence by Vico. It

should be noted that the notion of continuous evolution dates back to the poet Lucretius (*ca.* 96-55 BC): a poet whose work Vico was well acquainted.⁶⁶

Thus, where Vico sees providence organising human evolution according to an eternal order that decrees that those whose minds are strongest govern,⁶⁷ neo-Darwinists see the most fertile and vigorous of the species as the principal beneficiaries of evolutionary change. What should be understood is that while Vico's speciality subjects were jurisprudence, philosophy, history, and rhetoric, he was not a biologist. Therefore, when it came to formulating his theory of human evolution he was forced to understand it within the context, not only of those disciplines with which he was most familiar, but also to express it in the kind of language with which he was most familiar. That is, his mode of language and his level of awareness were determined by the particular place and time in the history of humankind within which he was located. That is, in a period and an atmosphere that was almost entirely Christian and God-fearing, it is apposite that Vico should see the dynamic of evolutionary change as divinely ordained. It might be said that what Darwin did for organic matter, Vico did for human ideas.

The subliminal theme, then, of Vico's thesis is the view that humankind is not free. While it appears that we are free to choose whether we live within the loop of orthodox tradition or outside it, this choice is always dependent on the social environment within which we are submerged, which in turn is governed by providence. Not alone that, but it is also the case that the values and laws that we live by, while constructed in accordance with the general will of the people, depend on the level of consciousness that our place in history allows. In the same way that a farmer's choices are constrained by his own level of intelligence and the cycle of the seasons, so are the choices of humankind subject to the level of consciousness of the people during that period of history that these choices are made, and by the cyclical historical process itself – as ordained by providence.

It is important to realise is that, for Vico, there is never a time when any one state of consciousness is all-pervasive. Rather it is that all three states: religious, heroic, and rational, prevail but always with one as dominant. According to Vico's scheme of things, as a consequence of a chain of events following the great Flood, the dominant state of consciousness was the most primitive. This state caused Noah's children to reject their father's tradition and to wander in the forests of the world. In time the descendants of Noah's issue became so detached from their roots that they even lost their power of speech.⁶⁸ This simple state of consciousness allowed for the belief in transcendent deities to arise.

Thus, in order for Vico's philosophy to hold true, that is, in order for humankind to return to this state of fundamentalism, the world would have to undergo a catastrophe or series of catastrophes as globally destructive as that of the Flood. That is, not only would the world have to suffer a disaster or disasters where the majority of those who survived were of the lowest level of consciousness, but the language skills of the same majority would also have to be the same as the earliest men. While it may be argued that this concept is inconceivable, even now the world is concerned with the threat of nuclear disaster, and even now the production of greenhouse gases has already changed the ecosystem irreversibly. If we allow that the concern imposed by the threats to human life are valid, it must also be allowed that it is conceivable that the world as we know it could undergo changes so great that it could render all but a few extinct. Should it be that the majority of those who survive are those of the lowest level of intelligence, we are left with a situation that mirrors Vico's concept of historical recurrence.

7. Vico's "Endgame"

Lest it be thought that Vico's vision of a world in which people become so entrenched in their own individual lives that community life breaks down is inconceivable, it is worth considering the scenario set out by Samuel Beckett, in his own favourite play *Endgame*. That Beckett was familiar with Vico's *magnum opus* the *New Science* is indubitable, for his very first published work, written at Joyce's request, was an essay entitled "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce". In this essay Samuel Beckett goes to some lengths to summarise Vico's *New Science* and to show this work was taken by Joyce as a structure for his *Work in Progress*.⁶⁹ However, one can go further and argue that Beckett's interest in Vico was not simply to explain his influence on Joyce, and argue that in his own work it is also possible to see how Beckett borrowed from the Italian philosopher to present with a vision of a postmodern and post-nuclear world – a world that is that bears a striking resemblance to Vico's period of dissolution.

As we have seen, for Vico the history of humankind is not lineal: it is not a process in which each phase succeeds the other in as a gradual but ever improving process which culminates in the ideal, rather it is a cyclical process which inevitably dissolves in chaos before returning to its original, barbaric state. At which point the entire process begins anew. The beginning of the end, that is, the point or phase in history where regression begins – what might be called Vico's "Endgame", is during the age of men, which is also the age of reason. In this age, which begins with such faith in the power of reason to know and control not only the natural world, but also the self, religion is gradually replaced by secularism and communal responsibility by egoism. During this period societies become fragmented and.

In time, people develop a sense of isolation, alienation, and fear – Vico calls this state of human existence "rational barbarism". In short, the age inevitably moves towards a state of chaos and dissolution. In his play *Endgame* Samuel Beckett, borrowing from Vico, presents us with such a concept of the state of the affairs of men. That is, he presents a scene in which the protagonists, Hamm, Clov, Nag and Nell, are not only isolated from the world, but also, for the most part, from each other. In other words, in their world they too have been reduced to exist in a state of fear and alienation – a state of chaos.

For Giambattista Vico mythical gods and heroes such as Jove or Hercules were not simply literary devices "employed to impress in coded form the teachings of philosophers on such subjects as ethics, physics, or politics",⁷⁰ nor did he hold that they were once real men upon whom these myths were built. Rather, for Vico, these "poetic characters" were concrete manifestations of abstract ideas.⁷¹ That is, they represented true "examples of a primitive, concrete, anthropomorphic mode of thought".⁷² In other words, these myths represent, in poetic form, the customs and beliefs of the primitive people of all nations. Thus, in the same way that Vico's theological poets used poetic characters to represent the customs, behaviour and beliefs of real people at a particular place and time in the ideal eternal history of humankind, so too does Samuel Beckett, in his *Endgame*, employ the same method to represent the nature, customs, and behaviour of human beings in the post-atomic age.

8. Language and its Origins

According to Vico, each age has its own distinct language. During the age of gods, humankind communicated by signs. During the age of heroes language was symbolic and "used signs and heroic emblems".⁷³ In the third age language became epistolary, or vernacular, in that it was written in vernacular letters. Epistolary language was the conventional language, and must have been "created by the free agreement of the common people".⁷⁴ The language of the age of the gods, says Vico, "was almost entirely mute, or wordless, and only slightly articulate",⁷⁵ and was created by the theological poets in response to the *sensus communis*. That is, they invented signs

that represented images of the gods that the people feared and revered. Heroic language “was an equal mixture of mute and articulate speech; which means that it was mixed vernacular speech with heroic characters...”.⁷⁶ The language of men was “almost entirely articulate and only slightly mute”.⁷⁷

Before his “new science”, says Vico, philologists had been too eager to entertain the view that the meaning of words in vernacular languages was purely arbitrary and conventional.⁷⁸ In reality, he goes on to say, these languages contain “natural meanings by virtue of their natural origins.”⁷⁹ For example, in Latin, the term *lex*, which means law, originally meant a collection or gathering of acorns. Only much later did it become associated with a collection of citizens or public parliament.⁸⁰ It must be said that what Vico does not allow for is the fact that initially the term *lex* must have been arisen arbitrarily. That is, even as a spontaneous exclamation it must have arisen as an arbitrary metaphor for a particular phenomenon which then became conventional by tradition. To argue, as Vico does, that indigenous expressions contain the natural meaning of things is to defeat his own argument that the true nature of things themselves cannot be known by the human mind.

Vico borrows the three ages of human history from the Egyptians. As shown above, the languages which corresponds to each are, first, the mute language of signs and physical objects; second, the language of symbols, comparisons, images and metaphors. The third is vernacular or epistolary language. For Vico, however, the aim is not just to identify the languages that were peculiar to each age, but to identify the origin, not only of language, but also of the history of humankind. Only by discovering the natural state within which language arose can philologists say that they understand the origins of the history of humanity.⁸¹ Thus, the history of language is concerned not only with the origin of signs, symbols and speech, but also of the whole history of human relations.⁸²

Vico held that, while the origins of a great many “words seem to have arisen not from common usage but from inner learning”,⁸³ in fact these terms were taken over from some other learned race such as the Etruscans.⁸⁴ In his *On the Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* (1710), Vico sets out to develop the thesis expounded in the *New Science* that earlier Italian philosophers thought with their hearts, whereas the modern scholars thought with their heads. Since their conclusions led them to believe that “what is made cannot be unmade” and that “created things are God’s words”,⁸⁵ these early philosophers believed that they were discovering words that had originated from God rather than from empirical experience.

Native language, says Vico, originated when the founders of the nations, after roaming the seas along the western Mediterranean coastline in search of vacant lands, finally ended their brutish wanderings and became settled. Over time, the native languages mixed with the Near Eastern, Egyptian and Greek languages along the shore of the Mediterranean. Hence, in the etymology of native words can be identified the history of the things they signify following a natural order of ideas. According to Vico, signifiers or words used to describe “things” arise by virtue of *sensus communis* or common consent.

However, for Vico, these signifiers are neither arbitrary nor conventional. That is, not only do signifiers arise by virtue divine providence and in accordance with the natural historical evolution of mankind, but many words are so scholarly that they appear to have arisen from some inner learning. By abstracting from those words/signifiers found in other languages, we can, says Vico, distinguish those words which are peculiar to the native language from those which are common to all. Thus, for Vico, etymological evolution is an integral part of human evolution as divined by providence.

The first language, the language of primitives, says Vico, was mute and communicated by gesture. In time gesture was replaced by the word. The root of any word is found in its mute precedent from an earlier age. In virtue of their limited powers of reason, people of this age, incapable of abstracting the general from the particular, attributed the names of the first familiar objects they encountered to other strange but similar objects. As Samuel Beckett explains, “The first men, unable to conceive the abstract idea of “poet” or “hero”, named every hero after the first hero, every poet after the first poet”.⁸⁶

For Vico, the individual’s concept of self is not one chosen in isolation, but arises and is formed at a communal level: through such constitutive activities as religion, politics and other instances of collective enterprise. For Vico, it is through language that we engage with one another. Through language we challenge the limits of meaning; and through language the notion that there are predicable givens comes into question. Like language itself, the ‘universals’ that arise from it can never be absolutely fixed. While Vico is circumspect about notions of absolute truth it should be noted that he does not hold that there is no such thing as truth; rather that there can be many, each with its own rationality; and each, as the need arises, coming to predominate during a particular age. However, while Vico agrees that ideas and concepts have their origins, first in institutions, the consequences of these institutional influences follow an historical law which is cyclical, common to all nations, and ordained by divine providence.

For Vico discourse is more than verbal communication: it is a discipline which deals with bodies of knowledge in a scholarly way, – as with medicine, science and so on, and it is a discipline which is imposed from institutions of social control such as religious, political and educational bodies. Discourse reveals the historically specific relations between the different disciplines (bodies of knowledge) and disciplinary practices (forms of social control and social possibility). In other words, discourse is a kind of Vichean *sensus communis*: it refers not to specific language or social interaction *per se* but to relatively well-bounded areas of social knowledge. The language of each stage in history is different from that of others at other periods. For Vico the language which arises from the *sensus communis* is specific (that is, symbolic, metaphorical, and vernacular) as well as an integral part of an historical cyclical process.

By identifying those words which are clearly foreign from native words, says Vico, it is possible to “trace the history of nations which succeeded each other in colonising foreign lands”.⁸⁷ By way of example he explains how his own native city of Naples was originally called Sirena – a derivative of the Syriac or Syrian word for Siren. And since Syrian means Phoenician, we can conclude that the Phoenicians were the first colonisers of Naples. Later, when taken over by the Greeks, it became Parthenope, then it became Neapolis, from the Greek for new town, and eventually Napoli. Thus, the Neapolitan language contains a many words of Phoenician and Greek which the history of the regions colonising nations to be traced. “Any language of an ancient nation which has developed with complete autonomy”, says Vico, “provides an important witness to the customs of the world’s earliest ages”.⁸⁸ The nature of human institutions, he continues, presupposes a conceptual language which is common to all nations. “This language uniformly grasps the substance of all the elements of society, but expresses them differently according to their different aspects”.⁸⁹

To understand what Vico means by a “conceptual language which is common to all nations” it might help to consider the Italian philosopher’s approach against Noam Chomsky’s concept of universal grammar – which is essentially an endorsement of Descartes’ approach to language. For Chomsky each individual mind possesses the ability to structure language grammatically. That is, like Descartes, Chomsky espouses the view that human reason was a universal

instrument which can serve all contingencies. The central thesis posited by Descartes is that there is a significant difference between the sort of utterances triggered by external stimuli or passionate responses and that of the stimulus-free language which is species-specific to human beings for the express purpose of free expression of human thought.

For Chomsky, as it was for Descartes, it is the human mind's "ability to form new statements which express new thoughts and which are appropriate to new situations"⁹⁰ that separates human beings from other animals. The Cartesian view is that human language does not have its origins in imitation of nature but is a natural property of the human mind. There are, it argues, certain language universals that set limits to the variety of human language. As Chomsky explains:

Such universals... are not learned; rather, they provide the organising principles that make language learning possible, that must exist if data is to lead to knowledge. By attributing such principles to the mind, as an innate property, it becomes possible to account for the quite obvious fact that the speaker of a language knows a great deal more than he has learned.⁹¹

Vico rejects the Cartesian suggestion that the individual mind possesses such innate principles. Conceptual language, he argues, arises out of the collective mind of a community, social order, or nation. Whereas Chomsky makes the case that for all human beings have a genetic language programme which encodes linguistic principles, Vico argues that language, by its very nature, is communal and arises in virtue of the nature of human institutions, and not in virtue of the nature of the individual. By studying language, says Vico, scholars can not only "compile a conceptual dictionary embracing all the different languages",⁹² but they can show how each language expresses the same concepts or meanings differently according to their different aspects.

However, although there are changes in language which cause words in one age to mean something else in another age, there are, says Vico, "laws of social development, ...group memories, ...and...a spiritual affinity between us all, so that what one generation did or suffered, another can 'enter into' and comprehend as part of its own autobiography".⁹³ It is in virtue of this fact that, with "great effort" of the imagination, we can enter, through that window of opportunity bequeathed to us in the form of ancient myths and legends, into the world, ways, and minds of the earliest members of the human race. Myths and legends which until the introduction of his new science have been erroneously interpreted by the "enlightened" scholars who have attempted to view the past through the spectacles of their own contemporaneous values and understanding - their own world view.

9. Vico on Education

For Giambattista Vico, the consciousness of individuals unfolds or develops in the same manner as the consciousness of humankind. That is, in the same way that humankind progress from primitivism to civilisation, so too does the individual progress from infancy to adulthood. As Elio Gianturco says, "the single individual recapitulates the entire process of the development of the species".⁹⁴ According to Vico, the minds of the young should not be exposed to philosophical criticism until their "natural inclination to the arts in which imagination and memory (or a combination of both)"⁹⁵ had been developed. To educate adolescents in philosophy before they had been grounded in the common sense faculties of imagination and memory is to engender in them a sense of oddity and arrogance that manifests itself in adulthood and leaves them unfit for the practice of eloquence.⁹⁶ For Vico, while imagination and memory are not exactly the same they are effectively the two sides of the same "common sense" coin.

Because the ancients understood that certain concepts could not be "grasped without a vivid capacity to form images"⁹⁷ these concepts should be introduced "gradually and gently and in step with the mental capacities of their age".⁹⁸ Gianturco draws our attention to the fact that Vico's

“psychogenetic” approach to education: the view that the individual develops through a sequential order that is immutably fixed in nature, sets him out as a forerunner of educational, particularly child-educational, psychology.⁹⁹ At a time when children were looked on more as adults in infantile form rather than human beings with their “own sensations, perceptions and feelings”,¹⁰⁰ Vico pioneered an approach to education and children that would later be taken up by people such as Rousseau, Dewey and Piaget,¹⁰¹ to name but a few.

The art of eloquence, maintained Vico, was not a platform from which the orator could strut his intellectual stuff (such a misuse only occurred with adults who had been introduced to philosophy too early in their education), rather it was an art which should be employed to allow the orator to be “in tune with the opinions of the audience”.¹⁰² It is only when the educator can adapt his or her language in such a way that it allows him or her to engage with the listeners at their level of understanding that the listeners “can be jolted from their apathy, and made to change their minds by means of... argument”.¹⁰³ In other words, unless the educator/orator has had the opportunity, during adolescence, to develop the faculty of imagination in advance of philosophical criticism, he or she cannot hope to “touch the soul-strings”¹⁰⁴ of his or her listeners.

Eloquence, then, is central to Vico’s approach to education. In both *On the Study Methods of Our Time* and the *New Science*, he makes the case that in order to turn the immature and crude mind into something dignified and noble it must be schooled in this art. The purpose of education, he held, is to dissolve the falsehoods of earlier philosophies so that young minds might be moved from the base to the refined and the central weapon in Vico’s educational arsenal is eloquence: the art of speaking elegantly and persuasively. However, this art, once held in such high regard in the Renaissance humanist tradition – a tradition with which Vico himself was aligned – had, by the time of Vico, “emerged from the Renaissance impoverished”.¹⁰⁵ Renaissance humanists believed that man was born incomplete. The ambition of humanist education was to finish the work that nature had started, to change the individual’s perspective of himself and to produce the complete human being: the Renaissance man, the *uomo universale*.¹⁰⁶ However, humanist education was also concerned with educating young men for careers as royal courtiers, i.e. for political life.

To this end the purpose of eloquence had become a means, not necessarily of communicating truth, but of persuading others that what was being said appeared to be true. For Vico, such use of eloquence was, in reality, an abuse.¹⁰⁷ However, while he is concerned with the potential harm of this approach, he *does* agree that eloquence is an essential part of the educator’s armoury. He sees it as a derivative of common sense judgements and a prerequisite for the development of the imagination. Moreover, he understands eloquence to be wisdom put into language, and holds that to be eloquent is to be truthful and dignified, for “of these two parts is wisdom composed”.¹⁰⁸ He believes that wisdom and piety are synonymous: that “he who is not pious is not wise”,¹⁰⁹ and that piety, in turn, is a synonym for humility: the surrendering of the conceit that we know that which we cannot know.

The role of eloquence *is* to persuade, says Vico. However, rather than coercing the listener with “eloquent allurements, by blazes of oratorical fire which, as soon as they are extinguished, cause him to revert to his original disposition”,¹¹⁰ educators should be concerned with leading the underdeveloped mind to truth. Against those who argue that this approach was concerned more with preparing young minds for political life than it was with setting them in the search of truth, Vico says,

I would have no such intention. Instead, I should like to have them act as philosophers, even at court; to care for truth that both is and has the appearance of truth, and follow that which is morally good and which everybody approves.¹¹¹

For Vico, eloquence should evoke in young minds the desire to transform the base passions into virtues. It should be used, in education, to furnish young minds with those values necessary to live heroic or dignified lives.

It should be noted that, for Vico, there is no transcendental ego or a Socratic *daemon* whispering personal directions to the subconscious or conscious mind. Direction, instead, comes via the *sensus communis* – the common sense judgements of the whole community, as ordained by divine providence. It should also be noted that when Vico talks about “common sense”, he does not mean common sense as we are accustomed to think of it, but “communal sense” – the sense of knowing how to live well within a community. As Harold Samuel Stone says, Vico, “...instead of emphasising the claims of individualism, accepted the importance of public trust”.¹¹² Thus, for Vico, the concept that human beings should treat one another as equals is not *a priori*, nor is it determined by the Cartesian *esprit* or by the Hobbesian monarchist, but by “communal sense”.

In *On the Heroic Mind*, an oration he presented to the Royal Academy of Naples in October 1732, Vico clearly sets out his ideas on education and stresses the near-divine nature of the mind as he urges his students to

...bend your efforts toward your studies... exert yourselves in studies in order to manifest the heroic mind you possess and to lay foundations of learning and wisdom for the blessings of the race.¹¹³

This statement encapsulates Vico’s humanist approach to self-knowledge: that is, for Vico, education, rather than being focused on such egocentric enterprises as self-advancement and self-aggrandisement, should be directed beyond the self to that “Self” which is other than man, and to the benefit of all humankind. For Vico, Solon’s *dictum* “know thyself” is not an invitation to the intellectually gifted or academically privileged to embark on a journey of egoistic introspection. Rather it is a call to ordinary people to shake off the shackles of ignorance and realise that “they were made of the same stuff as the nobles”.¹¹⁴ The self that Vico wants education to develop is the self that is an integral part of society, and the heroic or dignified mind is the mind that strives to overcome its lower self and work for the wellbeing of the entire community.

In the *New Science* Vico further develops this approach when he explains that each person is composed of two parts: the mind that is noble, and the body, which is vile.¹¹⁵ While within the body lies the seed of corruption, within the mind lays the seed of justice. It should be noted that, for Vico, justice, as is the case with all concepts, is not a fully-formed concept that exists *a priori* in the mind, but a seed that is buried within mankind.¹¹⁶ In other words, although the elements constituting the seed that allows humankind to develop ‘a natural sense of justice’¹¹⁷ may be eternal, the system or form of justice that arises within each society, community or nation, arises in virtue of the *sensus communis*, the common sense judgements of the community. It arises to meet the needs or utilities of the people at a particular place and time in the ideal eternal history of humankind.

According to Vico, the source of power that fuels the moral effort, or *conatus*,¹¹⁸ that is required to enable man to propagate this seed of justice is found neither in the mind nor in the body, but in divine providence. As Mark Lilla explains, “[i]n the *New Science*, he [Vico] will claim that God helps man to turn his passions to virtues, supernaturally through divine grace, and naturally in history through divine providence”.¹¹⁹ This means that although each person may create an

image of his or her own ideal self in his or her own mind, and each moves towards the realisation of that ideal, the notion of the ideal person does not emanate from some innate concept but from the community.

We become, says Vico, that which society determines we should become. However, while the concept of self is shaped by the community, the dynamic behind this *corso* (or movement towards the ideal), is *conatus*, a moral force through which divine providence impels humankind towards its destiny. Thus, although we may apprehend ourselves as independent agents free from forces whether natural or supernatural, for Vico we are always agents of providence, and agents within whom *conatus* is operating to remind us of our potential to move from the base to the refined.

10. Conclusion

In his *magnum opus*, the *New Science*, Giambattista Vico presents us with a concept of history that sees humankind working its way to its inevitable dissolution: a dissolution, that is, that is driven by a force that is other than that of man. However, this dissolution is not its absolute demise for out of the ashes of chaos there emerge, phoenix-like, survivors who initiate a renaissance of primitive religious belief. In order for Vico's vision of history to hold true the level of intelligence of these born-again theological poets would have to be reduced to the same level of the first poets. That is, a level of intelligence that allows them to see the world only as manifestations of deities, while unseen, with human characteristics, and a level of intelligence or consciousness that allows them to utter their anthropomorphic realisations in monosyllabic metaphors.

Thus, for Vico to assert that the period of history that moves from rational barbarism and chaos to a new age of religion is to assert that the consciousness of those of the new age must understand the world in much the same way as the first men. It is also to assert that the language of the new age must move from the sophisticated vernacular of the age of reason to the monosyllabic language of children. Hence, it can be said that if Vico's concept of language, as an integral part of his eternally recurring historical events, fails to convince it is because it does not account for the fact that the language of those of the new age of religion does not arise spontaneously in those who are ignorant and mute, as in the case of the first men, but is carried over from an age during which language is most sophisticated and refined.

In the *New Science* Vico explains the anomaly of the two histories of humankind by maintaining that since the Hebrews origins dated back to Adam, whom he claims was associated with the world since its creation, their history is not subject to the same process as the gentiles. For Vico, the view of scholars that the world was older than it states in the Bible was a conceit.¹²⁰ He could not conceive of a time when humankind had not been on earth, nor could he conceive of a time when it would cease to exist. That is, for Vico, the world, which was no older than Adam,¹²¹ was not only that in which human beings had always been a part, but it was also a world in which it would always be a part.

What Vico could not have suspected at the time is that, as a species, human beings might well be described as the dinosaurs of the modern era. That is, as relative newcomers to the planet (the scientific view is that while the world has existed for about 4.56 billion years, humankind has only been around for 5 million years)¹²² there was a time when the world managed perfectly well without us, and there will be a time, sooner or later, when it will do so again. Thus, we see that, in fact, the history of humankind is neither cyclical nor eternal. Rather it is the story of a species that, upon reaching the stage where it has outlived its usefulness in the evolutionary scheme of things, instead of reverting to its original state, will, like the dinosaur, become extinct. Since the belief in immortality of the soul is but a concept made by man, ultimately, Vico presents us with

a concept of history in which human life has no significant meaning. In such a scheme of things it seems the most we can reasonably hope for is that for some relatively short period of our lives, with the aid of education, we can live with some degree of dignity. However, in time, even this period must pass.

¹ see Vico, NS, para, 347

² *ibid.*, para, 363

³ see Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*. 1970, para 1045. Cornell University Press. Ithaca and London, and David Marsh, *Giambattista Vico: New Science*, with introduction by Anthony Grafton, 1999, para, 1045, Penguin Books. London

⁴ see *ibid.*, para,7

⁵ *ibid.*, para, 400

⁶ *ibid.*, para, 374

⁷ *ibid.*, para 375

⁸ see *ibid.*

⁹ see *ibid.*, para 401

¹⁰ see *ibid.*, para 404

¹¹ see *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*, para, 219

¹³ Stephen Pinker. *The Language Instinct*. 1994, p. 334. Penguin Books. London

¹⁴ Vico Op.cit, (*ibid.*, para , 391)

¹⁵ *ibid.*, para, 180

¹⁶ Gianfranco Cantelli “Myth and Language in Vico” in *Giambattista Vico’s Science of Humanity* edited by Tagliacozzo and Donald Phillip Verene. 1976, p. 58. The John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore and London

¹⁷ A. Farra . *Del Settenario*. Venice 1594 p. 320 cited by Cantelli *ibid.*

¹⁸ Nancy. S. Struever. “Vico, Valla, and the logic of Humanistic Inquiry”, in *Giambattista Vico’s Science of Humanity*. Edited by Giorgio Tagliacozzo and Donald Phillip Verene. 1976, p. 180. The John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore and London).

¹⁹ Hayden White “The Tropics of History” in *Giambattista Vico’s Science of Humanity*. Edited by Tagliacozzo and Donald Phillip Verene. 1976, p. 72. The John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore and London

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 74

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 72

²² Vico Op.cit (*ibid.*, para, 408)

²³ *ibid.*, para, 407

²⁴ Isaiah Berlin *Three Critics of the Enlightenment: Vico, Hamann, Herder*. 2000, p.64 Princeton University Press. New Jersey

²⁵ Vico, Op.cit. (*ibid.*, paras, 401/402)

²⁶ see *ibid.*

²⁷ Berlin. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, p.63)

²⁸ Vico *On the Study Methods of Our Time*. 1990, p.40 Translated by Elio Gianturco. Cornell University Press. Ithaca and London

²⁹ Vico. NS. Op.cit (*ibid.*, para 404)

³⁰ *ibid.*, para, 405

³¹ see *ibid.*, paras, 159/160

³² *ibid.*, para, 405

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ see *ibid.*, para447

³⁶ see *ibid.*, para 448

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ White. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, p.76)

³⁹ Vico. NS. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, para, 412)

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, para, 413

⁴¹ *ibid.*, para, 454

⁴² see *ibid.*, para, 450

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- ⁴³ *ibid.*
⁴⁴ *see ibid.*
⁴⁵ *see ibid.*, para, 453
⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 161
⁴⁷ *see ibid.*, para, 381
⁴⁸ *ibid.*, para, 161
⁴⁹ *ibid.*
⁵⁰ *see ibid.*, para, 379
⁵¹ James C. Mancuso. "Claiming Giambattista Vico as a Narrativist/Constructivist". October 2000. University at Albany. Albany, New York
⁵² Vico NS. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, para, 404)
⁵³ James Robert Goetsch Jr. "Expecting the Unexpected in Vico". CLIO: a journal of literature, history, and the philosophy of history. Summer 1994, pp409-412.. Indiana Univ.-Purdue Univ., Fort Wayne
⁵⁴ Vico.NS. Op.cit. (*ibid.*,para,142)
⁵⁵ Pinker. Op.cit. (*ibid.*,p.18)
⁵⁶ *ibid.*
⁵⁷ Vico. NS. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, para, 141)
⁵⁸ *ibid.*, para 342
⁵⁹ *ibid.*
⁶⁰ *ibid.*, para 1106
⁶¹ *see ibid.*, para, 342
⁶² *ibid.*, para 13
⁶³ *ibid.*
⁶⁴ *ibid.*
⁶⁵ *see* "Evolution" in *The Hutchinson Multimedia Encyclopedia*. 1996 ff. Helicon Publishing Ltd.
⁶⁶ *see* Vico, NS, op.cit., *ibid.*, paras, 191, 634, 968
⁶⁷ *see ibid.*, para, 18
⁶⁸ *see ibid.*, para, 370
⁶⁹ Samuel Beckett. "Dante...Bruno.Vico.. Joyce" in *Disjecta. Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*. 1983, p.19. John Calder (Publishers) Ltd. London
⁷⁰ Peter Burke. *Vico*, 1985, p. 45. Oxford University Press. Oxford. New York. Toronto.
⁷¹ *see ibid.*
⁷² *ibid.*
⁷³ Vico. NS. op.cit. (*ibid.*, para, 432)
⁷⁴ *ibid.*, para, 439
⁷⁵ *ibid.*, para 446
⁷⁶ *ibid.*
⁷⁷ *ibid.*
⁷⁸ *see para*, 181
⁷⁹ *see ibid.*
⁸⁰ *see para*, 239
⁸¹ *see* Jeff Robbins. "The Enlightenment at the Margins: Giving Place to William Blake and Giambattista Vico". *Quadibet Journal*. Volume 3. Number 3. Summer 2001i
⁸² Vico, NS. Op.cit (*ibid.*, para432)
⁸³ Burke. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, p. 23)
⁸⁴ *see ibid.*
⁸⁵ *ibid.*
⁸⁶ Beckett. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, p. 25)
⁸⁷ Vico.NS. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, para304
⁸⁸ *ibid.*, para, 152
⁸⁹ *ibid.*, para, 162
⁹⁰ *see* Noam Chomsky. *Cartesian linguistics. A Chapter in the History of Rationalist Thought*. 1966. University Press of America Inc. Lanham. MD 20706
⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 6
⁹² *ibid.*, p. 84
⁹³ Berlin. Op.cit. (*ibid.*, p. 80)
⁹⁴ Elio Gianturco in his introduction to *On the Study Methods of our Time*. Op.cit (*ibid.*, p. xxxix)
⁹⁵ Vico. *On the Study Methods of Our Time*. Op. cit. (*ibid.*, 14)
⁹⁶ *see* Vico. *On the Study Methods of our Time*, p. 13

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- ⁹⁷ Vico. *On the Study Methods* p. 14
- ⁹⁸ Vico. *On the Study Methods* p. 14
- ⁹⁹ Gianturco. Op.cit (ibid.)
- ¹⁰⁰ ibid. xli)
- ¹⁰¹ see George Mora. "Vico, Piaget, and Gentic Epistemology" in *Giambattista Vico's Science of Humanity*. 1976. Edited By Taglicozzo and Verene. The John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore and London.
- ¹⁰² Vico. *On the Study Methods*, p. 15
- ¹⁰³ Vico *On the Study Methods*, p. 15
- ¹⁰⁴ Vico *On the Study Methods*, p. 15
- ¹⁰⁵ Alessandro Giuliani. 'Vico's Rhetorical Philosophy and the New Rhetoric' p. 32 in *Giambattista Vico's Science of Humanity*. 1976. Tagliacozzo/Verene. The John Hopkins University Press. Baltimore and London.
- ¹⁰⁶ Britannica online advises us that "The concept of the *uomo universale*, or Renaissance man came into play during the Renaissance... the Renaissance man is the embodiment of the educated man", <http://www.eb.com:180/egi-bin?DocF=206/79.html>. [Accessed 09 April 1998]
- ¹⁰⁷ Giuliani. Op.cit. (ibid.)
- ¹⁰⁸ see Vico. 1990, Op.cit. (ibid., p. 78)
Press. Ithaca and London.
- ¹⁰⁹ Vico. NS, para, 1112
- ¹¹⁰ Vico. 1990 Op.cit. (ibid., p.38)
- ¹¹¹ ibid., pp, 37/8
- ¹¹² Harold Samuel Stone. *Vico's Cultural History*. 1997, p 251. E.J.Brill. Leiden
- ¹¹³ Vico. "On the Heroic Mind". In *Vico and Contemporary Thought*, ed. Tagliacozzo, Mooney, and Verene. 1979, pp. 229/230. Humanities Press, vol.2: 228-45. Atlantic Heights, N.J.
- ¹¹⁴ Stone. *Vico's Cultural History*. 1997, p. 256
- ¹¹⁵ see Vico. NS, para, 18
- ¹¹⁶ see Mark Lilla. *G.B. Vico. The Making of an Anti-Modern*. 1993. p. 37. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Mass. London.
- ¹¹⁷ ibid.
- ¹¹⁸ see Vico. NS, para, 340.
- ¹¹⁹ Lilla. Op.cit. (ibid., p. 450)
- ¹²⁰ see Vico, NS, para, 126
- ¹²¹ see ibid.
- ¹²² see R.H. Brown. "The Biblical Perspective on the Age of the World", www.grisda.org/resources/MS_rb-bibch.2004