

Some four hundred and fifty years ago, the land of Gesbor witnessed the peculiar practice with which its name continues to be linked: synecdoching. From recently discovered pamphlets, we know that the political movement had its roots in the esoteric philosophical doctrine of solipsism. As thinkers down the ages have recognised, it is surprisingly hard to refute the thesis that the thinker is the totality of existence. Descartes, Hume, and Wittgenstein can be numbered amongst those who have taken quite seriously the proposition that 'all the world is I'.

The Gesborgian thinkers supplied a fresh twist to this ancient doctrine. They reasoned that, if all the world could be regarded as being concentrated in one place - I - then why not another? Why, not, for example, in 'the pink rose growing from the thicket, dew quivering upon its unfurled petals'? This was the decisive move to synecdoching, exploited most fully by the great philosopher-politician Jose Babylonius. To solipsism, Babylonius added choice; the ability to choose one's own world. Such choice became the central aim of the long journey within Gesborgian education, a system rightly famed the world over, and still extensively drawn upon by our own schools today. At age 22, the new adult would draw on their bodily meditation and intellectual learning to make their momentous decision, realised in a wordless act of ostension towards their synecdoche.

Thus arose 'a being who could choose his own standpoint in the world' (Wittgenstein), giving those free-men enormous power: 'If you become a master in any place, wherever you stand is true' (Rinzai).

The common objection to synecdoching concerns destruction. For the genius of straightforward solipsism is that it is irrefutable; the conclusive falsification of the doctrine requiring the continuation of the world after the supposed solipsistic subject dies. But though everyone else could appreciate this line of argument, for obvious reasons the subject in question cannot. And so it goes for any and all solipsists. Not so, however, for synecdoching: it is indeed quite possible for the synecdoche object to be destroyed, for the world to remain, and for the subject to be alive to witness this conjunction. Such refutation is possible, and even (the modern mind assumes) to be expected. Yet if ancient records are to be believed, such disconfirming experiences were not common. The modern mind underestimates the intense practical dimension of synecdoching, the deep mental and physical links between subject and object. Put simply, the destruction of synecdoche tended to be accompanied by the death of attached subject. And in the rare occasions where that was not the case, the quite reasonable explanation was that the original choice of synecdoche had been mistaken: a refutation of the particular choice, not of the wider doctrine.

Given these very real links between person and synecdoche, the political and military consequences are not hard to appreciate. The 'Wars of the Roses' have been well documented, so we shall pass over them here. Suffice to say that after twenty two years of increasing turmoil, and with a fatality rate surpassing any other war of modern times, Gesbor was conquered by the neighbouring nation of Materialus, our own forefathers. All traces of synecdoching were ruthlessly suppressed; and so knowledge of the practice was confined to oral historians. Prior, that is, to these most tantalising recent discoveries.