

# The decolonisation of I

(A story in six chapters)

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My dear audience ...

The story I am going to tell is about a ghost. It is a ghost we know rather well because we keep it really close to ourselves, in fact we keep it at the very core of ourselves. If you get spooked by this ghost, which may happen, then remember this is just a story. Or perhaps it is not! You see, the thing with stories is we never quite know where they come from. They always begin with other stories. And so does this one.

## Chapter 1: The beginning of the story

In 1864 Jules Verne told the story of three travellers who embarked on a journey to the centre of the earth. The travellers were professor Otto Lidenbrock, his jittery nephew, Axel, and Hans Bjelke, their guide, who was a duck hunter from Iceland. They followed the tubes of a dormant volcano down into the earth for many miles, and along the way they encountered numerous adventures. When they finally arrived at the centre of the earth they discovered a cavern of unimaginable proportions. There was a subterranean sea, lined with petrified trees and giant mushrooms among which prehistoric creatures dwelt. If you find Verne's narrative too far from reality, and a bit too fantastical for your liking, then remember what we know about narratives. A narrative never simply represents it also constitutes. The narrative is never completely true, not even when it claims to be a report of real events. But it is also never purely fictive. There is always some truth in fiction, and something fictive about the truth. This happens because narratives are endlessly layered. They continuously retell other narratives. And so is Verne's story. Verne's story retells a tale actually told by his nephew Axel. Axel informed us that their expedition was inspired by yet another text, namely a cryptic note written by a 16<sup>th</sup> century alchemist and scholar, Arne Saknussemm, a note that professor Lidenbrock discovered in an old manuscript about Icelandic history, a manuscript written by yet another author, namely Snorri Sturluson. Saknussemm's note dropped, so to speak, from the pages of history when it floated to the floor in Lidenbrock's home. But it quickly gained more weight than the substantial historical text it dropped from. It did so for two reasons: It presented itself as an older text and also as an account of reality based on personal experience. For Lidenbrock and Axel, Saknussemm became the real purveyor of truth. Although the note Saknussemm left was encrypted, which obstructed access to the original truth, Lidenbrock and Axel did not find this to be an insurmountable problem. They proceeded to decrypt the note. The real problem, and a matter blissfully ignored by the two decryptors, was the fact that Saknussemm was persecuted for heresy long before Lidenbrock discovered his note. There was in fact little, if any, ground to believe Saknussemm. In the end the original truth, the truth of the

origin, slips away, and Verne's narrative is suspended somewhere between truth and fiction. This is the thing with stories: You never quite know.

## Chapter 2: The mystery of the ghost

Verne's story is a note from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a century marked by the brute mechanics and physicality of the industrial age, an age in which the mystery of the centre of the earth may well have personified the mystery at the centre of things. Our story is a note from a later age. It slips out and drops from the pages of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is a century of information and artificial intelligence. Our metaphor is not the machine born and bred in Newtonian force. Our metaphor is the quantum ghost in the machine, or perhaps more precisely the ghost of the quantum gap at the heart of the physical machine. Our journey is not to the centre of the earth. Ours is a journey that goes much deeper. It is a journey to the centre of reality. And, the characters in our story are much more complex than the ones in Verne's. Lidenbrock, Axel and Hans did not question their own humanity when they looked at the steam puffing machines around them. There were no ghosts in those machines, and also, there were no psychologists around to confuse them about themselves. They simply were who they were. Unlike us - we are so confused. The ghosts of intelligence glow in the machines that surround us, constantly confronting us with the question of our humanity. And more than a century of psychology did not do much to help us. It only served to fragment us into a bewildering array of motivations, emotions, cognitions, personalities and pathologies. Unlike Lidenbrock, Axel and Hans we cannot simply be. We are bound to ask: Who are we?

## Chapter 3: The characters in pursuit of the ghost

At the entrance to the dormant volcanic tubes of the mind, ready to undertake the journey to the centre of reality we find three strange characters. They introduce themselves as the traveller, the guide and the absent author.

### *Part 1: The character of the traveller*

The traveller has a double-barrelled name. He is called Lidenbrock-Axel. His story begins with a lecture that the French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> International Psychoanalytical Congress in 1936. Lacan talked about an 18-month old child recognising itself in a mirror. The 18-month old was barely able to sit upright without help, wiggling its arms and legs to keep itself from toppling over, but jubilantly reaching out to itself in the mirror. The child in front of the mirror experienced its own body as a body it could hardly control, a *corpse morcelé*, a body in bits and pieces, said Lacan. This experience was in stark contrast to the image the child saw in the mirror. The image the child jubilantly tried to embrace was completely whole and integrated, a body in one piece. What the child saw in the mirror was what it will have become. What it will have become: Lacan's use of the future perfect tense is deliberate. The child does not see something that will occur in future. It sees a future, but one that has already been accomplished. It is here, said Lacan, in this relationship between the body in front of the mirror and the image in the mirror, in the relationship between the internal turmoil of a body in bits and pieces and the external image of a body in one piece, it is here that the I comes to be.

Such is the origin of Lidenbrock-Axel's I. But, typical of narratives, the truth of this I slips away through many layers of text. The original text of Lacan's 1936 lecture got lost. Or perhaps there was no text of

Lacan's initial lecture, or at least not one that preceded the text Lacan finally produced in 1949. But it is not only the original text itself that got lost, Lacan also displaced the original truth of the text. If Lidenbrock-Axel hoped to trace his I back to when he at 18 months of age began to reflect upon himself, to relate his inner experiences with external images of his own body he would be mistaken, because in later texts Lacan treated the child recognising itself in the mirror, as a metaphor rather than a real event, and the metaphor, we know, is a sneaky bloke. It aims to illuminate and clarify, but in doing so it takes the place of and displaces exactly that which it aims to explain. The metaphor conceals as much as it reveals. Captured in metaphor the truth of Lidenbrock-Axel's I is concealed as much as it is revealed. To muddy the waters even further, Lacan's work is often cited as poetically cryptic, his style of writing obscuring the true meaning of his texts. His work is known to be in need of deciphering and re-interpretation. The truth of Lidenbrock-Axel's I is difficult to come by, but since we have more than 100 years of psychology behind us, this difficulty, this obscurity of the fundamental truth centred in the I, does not stop us from psychoanalysing the traveller's character. Armed with our psychology we arrogantly push ahead despite the fact that we should know better, that we should have learned by now that an obscured truth always returns to haunt naive arrogance.

So we push ahead and nevertheless ask: Who is Lidenbrock-Axel, the traveller in search of the centre of reality? We know him as the interesting combination of Lidenbrock and Axel, a combination of the daring, feisty, adventurous Lidenbrock who enthusiastically embarks on his journey, and the cautious, hesitant, retreating Axel who opposes the journey and wishes only to return home. Lidenbrock-Axel clearly is a complex person. Two opposing forces counter each other in the depths of his character, namely anticipation and retroaction. In Lacan's mirror stage theory Lidenbrock personifies the anticipation of the child reaching out to embrace what it will have become. He is the traveller looking forward to the destination that he will have reached. Axel, on the other hand, typifies the retroaction, the reaching back to the past, to the origin, the *corpse morcelé*, to what had been the source of what it will have become. All of the anxieties Lidenbrock-Axel may experience, and all the aggressions he may commit to, come from the forces of anticipation and retroaction. But this dynamic is complex. The forces of anticipation and retroaction cannot be understood sequentially as one following on the other. Anticipation and retroaction interrupt the flow of time. It is here in reaching forward to the future while at the same time retreating backwards towards the past, it is in this simultaneity, that the I comes to be, according to Lacan. But there is a further complication that Lacan did not anticipate. Lacan views Lidenbrock-Axel's I as the sum of the Lidenbrock and the Axel components of his personality. Lacan sees the I as a combination of anticipation and retroaction. What Lacan did not anticipate was the difference between these two components. Lacan's calculation of the I does not contain the in-between interval, the ghostly interval between the two components, a tiny no man's land in which Lidenbrock-Axel is neither simply Lidenbrock nor simply Axel. Lacan's I is a word, a symbol, that combines different components into a unified person, while ignoring the difference between these components. But exactly here, in the foggy interior of this barely noticeable gap, the ghost appears. It rustles softly behind the I that Lacan pushes into place to cover the gap. Hence Lidenbrock-Axel can use I to refer to himself, whilst turning a blind eye to the ghost within himself. When he says: This is I, he uses the I as a symbol that takes the place not only of the name, Lidenbrock-Axel, but also of the entire character the name refers to.

Lidenbrock-Axel's I looks like a master coloniser. It suppresses the ghost and occupies the name as well as the character of the traveller. But we should tread carefully here and not judge too quickly. This plot is thicker than we may think, because another character lurks in the wings. In the dark shadows beyond the spotlight an absent author pulls the strings. The traveller's I will not go unscathed by the sneaky manoeuvres of this absent author.

### *Part 2: The character of the absent author*

The name of the absent author, as we know, is Arne Saknussem. It is he who wrote the note that directed Lindenbrock-Axel to the centre of the earth. It was a destination and a truth that he said he already visited. Therefore, Saknussem already knew what Lindenbrock-Axel was still to find out. Compared to the traveller, the absent author is an authority, and he certainly does his best to present himself as such. He goes about this in quite a cunning way. Saknussem's note is left amongst pages of history, as if a history much older than the author could serve to authenticate the note. The note is also written in code, as if encryption could add more weight to the truth of the note. Furthermore, the note contained directions to a destination that the author said he already visited and personally experienced. But the greatest feat of the absent author is his absence. It was not he who inserted the note between the pages of history, and it was not he who deciphered the truth of the note. He cannot be held responsible for a truth that emerges from the pages of history, and is deciphered by others, by those who find it. The truth of the directions to a destination, and the truth of the destination itself are not Saknussem's, that is the author's, truths. But, should we care about the truthfulness of the author? Does it matter at all? Saknussem certainly did not have a good reputation. He was an alchemist and he was persecuted for hearsay. Heresy! This means the original truth of the note, a truth purported to be founded in personal experience, was in fact already a retelling of the original experience. But all of this does not matter. It does not matter so long as the author's signature appears on the note, because the signature is the official sign of the legitimacy of the note. By offering his signature Saknussem signs off on the personal account of a certain destination and how to get there. He signs off on a truth guaranteed in his name. But the signature, of course, is also the ultimate sign of the absence of the author. The presentation of the signature means Saknussem does not have to be present and to offer a personal account. The absent author signs off on an absence that exonerates him of any accountability for a truth that he guaranteed to begin with. And, if this sounds all too familiar, yes, the politician certainly displays the psychodynamics of the absent author.

Politic is a word that refers to managing, contriving or dealing with shrewdness. The absent-author shrewdly manages the character of Lindenbrock-Axel. In the true nature of a politician he shows Lindenbrock-Axel the destination that he will have reached. He shows him what he will have become. He guarantees a truth, but shrewdly refuses to be held accountable for this truth. When Lindenbrock-Axel jubilantly reaches out towards this truth, when he looks forward to reaching the centre of the earth, he finds that his anticipations were falsely guaranteed. He finds himself at constant risk of sliding back to what he was before. Lindenbrock-Axel realises that the retroaction to a body in bits and pieces, a *corpse morcelé*, constantly endangers the anticipation of what he will have become, namely a body in one piece. Lindenbrock-Axel realises that he will not have become what he anticipates to be without sufficient aggression to keep the anxieties of his retroactions at bay. The absent author plays a politic that locks Lindenbrock-Axel into a dynamic of aggression and anxiety.

But this is where things get really interesting. Lidenbrock-Axel is not at all an innocent victim of the shrewd manoeuvres of the absent author. He willingly participates in this politics. It is, after all, his own dynamic. His aggressions and anxieties are fuelled by his own desire for a body in one piece. And, this wholeness can be achieved only if he keeps the ghost within himself at bay, the ghost that threatens to surface from that barely perceptible interval between the Lidenbrock component and the Axel component of Lidenbrock-Axel's character. Lidenbrock-Axel does not want his I intruded by some ghostly figure that belongs to neither Lidenbrock nor Axel. Lidenbrock-Axel is a fundamentalist. His I comes to be in the closed relationship between his aggressions and anxieties. The fundamentalist's I can never escape the dynamic of the aggressions and anxieties he was locked into by the absent author. This I, as we know, is a master coloniser, capturing the entire character of Lidenbrock-Axel through the suppression of the ghost.

But the absent author has another ace up his sleeve. With ingenious shrewdness he promises Lidenbrock-Axel the destination of the decolonised. He tells Lidenbrock-Axel that what he will have become is the decolonised, and what he should fear and guard against is being colonised. The absent author locks Lidenbrock-Axel into the most dangerous dynamics of the fundamentalist I, namely the dynamics that allow the master coloniser to masquerade as the master of decolonisation. The danger is not the fundamentalist I turned extremist, because the dynamics, the anxieties and aggressions, of the extremist are obvious. No, the fundamentalist I is most dangerous when it masquerades as being politically correct. The politically correct decoloniser is a master coloniser in disguise. But he does not see himself as fraudulent or without integrity. He lives in self-denial, the coloniser cancelled by the decoloniser within himself.

What a mess! Our psychoanalysis of Lidenbrock-Axel and his relationship with the absent author ends with a character, an I that is fundamentalist and living in self-denial. Could this really be who we are? Is this the reality of the I at the core of our being? We knew that the truth of Lidenbrock-Axel was difficult to come by, but we nevertheless pushed ahead with psychoanalysing him since we trusted the more than 100 years of psychology that so many absent authors left behind in the notes that slip out from between the pages of history, the notes that we eagerly pick up to decipher and reinterpret in our attempts to find the truth. If we were willing to pause for a while and consider the anticipations and retroactions in the story of psychology and the various analyses of the psyche it affords us, we would run into similar fundamentalisms and self-denials. For example, there is no psychology of the I. In psychology the I has been occupied and suppressed by an entire psychology of the self. The I has been denied by the self. Psychology is eager to present an answer when we ask: 'Who am I', but absolutely mute when we want to know: 'What am I'.

We need guidance to get us out of this mess. We need someone to disentangle us from the lofty reflections of the psyche. To be more precise, we need a guide to untangle the internal relations of Lidenbrock-Axel and the external relationship between him and the absent author. We need a guide who is good at managing relationships, for example, someone with the kind of earthy values we can expect of an Icelandic duck hunter.

### *Part 3: The character of the guide*

Hans Bjelke, as Vernes tells us, is a tall man, robustly built and of unusual strength, but subtle in his movements and calm in nature. His philosophy of life cannot be astonished or disturbed by anything

in this world. He is dependable, resourceful, imperturbable and a man of few words. The guide, unlike the absent author, does not promise an ultimate destination, and he offers no directions to get there. He does not sign off on anything. He does not depart. His presence is his guarantee. He travels with the traveller. The only task he sets himself is to manage and maintain the balance between Lidenbrock's anticipations and Axel's fears.

But, as we already know, it is here, within this delicate balance, in between Lidenbrock's anticipations and Axel's retroactions, in this barely perceptible interval within Lidenbrock-Axel's I that the ghost lurks. But Hans Bjelke is not afraid of the ghost, because Hans Bjelke is a master of symmetry. In fact, he is a ghost whisperer. He knows that there are numerous Lidenbrock anticipations and Axel retroactions, and he knows these anticipations and retroactions differ widely. He sees that some are stronger than others, that Lidenbrock sometimes wins Axel over, but that the opposite also occurs. However, it is not his empirical knowledge, the knowledge obtained from his observation of Lidenbrock-Axel's behaviour, that shows Hans Bjelke's real genius. Hans Bjelke's real genius lies in the fact that he figured out that for every Lidenbrock anticipation there is at least one Axel retroaction strong enough to revoke the anticipation, and that the opposite is also true: For every Axel retroaction there is at least one Lidenbrock anticipation that can be used to repeal the retroaction. The ghost reveals itself in the delicate balance between these revoked anticipations and abolished retroactions.

Hans Bjelke keeps his eye on the ghost. So long as he can whisper to the ghost and hear the whispers of the ghost, he knows that the interval within Lidenbrock-Axel's I has not closed off. He knows Lidenbrock-Axel has not surrendered to the absent author, and has not sunk into fundamentalism and self-denial. Hans Bjelke keeps his eye on the ghost. However, it does not matter how hard he stares, he does not manage to see the ghost. Hans is not clairvoyant. No figure materialises in the misty interior of the I, not even a ghostly figure. All Hans Bjelke can see is an interlude, a moment of otherness that belongs to neither Lidenbrock nor Axel, a moment that relates the I to what it is not. The ghost is an absence in the present, a quantum gap that intrudes into the present. The ghost is something that cannot be accounted for in the present.

This guide is a clever decoloniser. Without many words, and without persuasion he guides us towards an I that resists the colonising effects of the decolonised destinations promised by the absent author. He simply encourages us to counter our anticipations with our fears, and our fears with anticipations, and to face the ghost of otherness that surfaces within ourselves. In the delicate balance of countered anticipations and anxieties we find ourselves relating to an otherness that cannot be calculated and understood in terms of the anticipations and anxieties that we endlessly circulate and repurpose in the names of so many absent authors.

This is the genius of Hans Bjelke. In fact, it is the ingenious technique of every successful guide, and perhaps in brackets we should add, especially those guides who go by the name of psychotherapist, or those who simply call themselves a friend. This is the secret: Do not use many words, do not try to convince, do not take guidance from an absent author. Simply counter and balance the traveller's own anticipations and retroactions as you journey with the traveller. And all along, keep your eye on the invisible ghost.

## Chapter 4: Eye to eye with the ghost

This is where things get truly spooky. Spooky notes have been slipping out from between the pages of 20<sup>th</sup> century history and floated to the floors of laboratories and offices at academic institutions. They are notes signed by different authors we see as we stoop down to pick them up. They are written in different codes also we realise as we unfold the paper they are written on. One is coded in the language of psychoanalysis, another in the precise formulations of physics, and yet another showing the squiggly symbols of mathematics.

The psychoanalytic note is quite scary we realise after deciphering it. This note, signed by an author called Sigmund Freud, maps a journey to our inner selves and reveals a centre that consists of an Id, Ego and Superego. Of the three the Id is the one to be concerned about, because he is not a nice guy. But the really scary part is where the author informs us that there is a significant part of ourselves that we cannot know. The unconscious part of ourselves apparently is a boiling pot of repressed desires. If it were not for the Ego and Superego we would explode. It is a bit of a wakeup call to realise that there is a gap, quite a dangerous one it seems, in how we see ourselves, especially because our self-image does not contain any gaps as far as we can see!

The mathematical note does not offer any comfort either. It describes something much more dangerous than a threatening explosion of repressed desires. A little madness in ourselves we can deal with, but when the very foundation of our existence is rattled we have serious reason for concern. The mathematical note actually consists of three notes stapled together. The first is signed by Georg Cantor, and dated 1874. Cantor defined any collection of objects as a set, and then performed a powerful trick to lay the foundation for most of mathematics. The trick was to allow any set to be a member of itself. This was a foundation not only for most of mathematics, it was a foundation also for rational reasoning. But there is a next note, one signed by Bertrand Russell, dated 1901. Russell shows that Cantor's formulation contains a paradox. It simply is not possible to bootstrap rational reasoning from an idea containing itself within itself. Knowledge does not generate itself from within itself. One has to begin with one or more presuppositions, and build knowledge from these presuppositions. But then there is the note signed by Kurt Gödel in 1931 in which he states that no system can demonstrate its own consistency. In other words, the knowledge built up from an initial set of presuppositions cannot be used to prove the truth of the presuppositions. What the three stapled notes tell us is that the truths we arrive at by means of rational reasoning always contain unbridgeable gaps. And here is the real scary part: You may know of another note, quite a dusty one by now, already signed in 1637 by an author called René Descartes. He wrote: "I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am". This is the statement most associated with the origin of Western thinking. Reasonable as it may have seemed for a long time, it is a statement now undermined by the unbridgeable gap in rational reasoning. An entire Western philosophy and an entire science are rattled by notes slipping out from between the pages of 20<sup>th</sup> century history. Even more scary: If the fact that I am, if the truth of my existence cannot be justified rationally, not even by doubting it, I am facing a very scary ghost.

So, we may not be able to trust our reasoning, but fortunately we have physical reality to hang on to. What can be more real than the physical world we live in? Alas, the physics notes slipping from the pages of 20<sup>th</sup> century history, bring no good news. There are quite a number of these notes, and many authors scribbled their signatures in the corners, some crossing the names of others, but when

properly sorted and stapled together they add up to a single message. They tell us that the physical world is very different from what it seems. A thing does not exist at the same place and the same time for everybody observing that thing. In fact, it is not even possible to think of a thing as an existing thing before it is observed, and even more bizarre, what the thing turns out to be, what it really is, is a function of the way it is observed. The ghost, we see, is very persistent. It happily emerges and settles in the physical world, mockingly tormenting natural and human scientists alike. Natural scientists try to eject the ghost together with the observer. Physicists do not require an observer to conduct an observation. The observation is conducted by any device that executes a measurement, and these devices are physical apparatuses - no place for the nasty ghosts of subjectivity. Human scientists try to expel the ghost through the structure of reflection. The physical world is reflected in the content of the psyche. The more accurate the reflection, the less space for the ghost. But despite all these attempts the ghost persists. On one of the notes in our stapled pack the author, who signed his name as Albert Einstein, scribbled the words, *spooky action at a distance*. He was frustrated by the work of the ghost. What Einstein objected to was the entanglement between the measuring device and the object being measured. He refused to accept that the properties of the observer and the properties of the observed emerge from the relationship between them, as much as the relationship between them emerge from their respective properties. The ghost settles snugly into the barely perceptible difference between things that create relationships, and relationships that create things.

The ghost is a constant and close companion on our journey to the centre of reality. We see it in our psyche, in our rationality and in our physicality.

#### Chapter 5: Dancing I to I with the ghost

They say that when the clock strikes twelve on a moonless night one can dance with ghosts in a graveyard cote. But this is not an easy dance. To dance with the ghost is to dance with ourselves, and more specifically to dance with the gap, with the unknowable, within ourselves. Something must come from nothing. It is a dance of desire, the desire for an answer to the question: What am I? The journey to the centre of this reality is a dance, and the traveller a dancer.

The movements of this dance are quite complicated. It is not a dance that moves through space and time. It is a dance with space and time. It is dance that spatialise and a dance that temporalise. Its movements consist of differentiations and deferments. The name of the dance is *différance*. We find this name in a note signed by an author called, Jacques Derrida. The note is coded in the French language, but deciphering is made difficult by the fact that the word does not appear in the code of French vocabulary and grammar. There is no such word in French. The author signed off on directions to a destination that cannot be deciphered, not because the code is too complicated, but because the directions to the destination are indecipherable in principle.

The destination may be indecipherable, but the dance it not. We know the movements, and we understand the desire that fuels the dance. We know how to spatialise and temporalise, how to differentiate and defer, and we understand the desire to know the deeper meaning of our existence. We know the dance is complicated, and that we are in for some mind bending and physical contortions. We know that this is a matter of the interplay between things that create relationships, and relationships that create things.

So let the dance begin, the dance we dance with ourselves, the dance in which I dance with me. The first step in this dance is to reflect. It is to differentiate I from I, and to defer the moment I would collapse into one again. This is step 1. The next step is to move into the space and time created by the differentiation between I and me, and the deferment of I as me. This is a difficult step, and easy to get wrong. It is easy but certainly wrong to imagine I and me moving through space and time. There is no space and time for I and me to move through. There is space and time only between I and me, the space and time created by the differentiation and the deferment of I to me. If step 2 is a bit of a mind bender, the real spooky stuff comes with step 3, with the realisation that the two figures dancing here are two ghosts. The indecipherable, the ghostly figure of the unknown, was differentiated and deferred from itself. A relationship was created between two things that did not exist, and exist now only because they are related. Therefore it is important to keep this relationship intact and to manage it from both sides. Thus step 3 is to dance the part of both figures. Again, a difficult step and one that is easy to get wrong. To dance the part of both figures means the one is mirrored by the other. They are separate figures, yet intimately related. The relationship is a separation but also a connection. I am not exactly me, and yet I am. It is easy to view this as two figures related in some way. But this view is not sufficient. Dancing both parts at the same time and dancing a dance that both separates and connects require a different view. It requires the view of the inside of a figure being related to its outside. Me is I seen from the outside. Me is the outside of I. This is what it means to self-reflect, and it is something we understand well as a function of the psyche and of our rationality. But here comes the spooky part: The ghost does not exist only in our psyche and in our rationality. The relationship between I and me is not limited to the psychological and the rational, it is also physical. The separation between I and me and the continuation of I as me is also physical. In the physical world the word for me is you. Thus what we normally see as I reflected as me, actually is I reflected as you. In the physical world you are I seen from the outside. You are the outside of I. What is more, you and I are not *in* the physical world. The physical world is the relationship between you and I. It is the entanglement of you and I. This is the kind of conclusion that Einstein objected to in his 'spooky action at a distance' note. You are I differed and deferred from myself, and I am you differed and deferred from yourself. So you see, the traveller always has a double-barrelled name. You and I are Lidenbrock-Axel in its generic form.

## Chapter 6: The beginning of another story

We had been travelling to the centre of ourselves, and arrived at a very strange place. We expected a solid I in which we could anchor ourselves. But already at the beginning of the journey we realised that truths were impossible to come by, and that we had to rely on accounts that might mislead us. We nevertheless pressed ahead, only to find ourselves colonised and trapped in anticipations and fears fuelled by expert advisors who walk away without responsibility. Only when we started to give up on being victims, when we started to revoke our anticipations and fears, when we became willing to face the ghost within ourselves, only then could we begin the dance to the centre of ourselves. But instead of arriving at a solid I in which we could anchor ourselves, we arrived at an I that is a ghostlike figure, a figure that the present world cannot account for, not even as a psyche or a spirit. It is an absence in the presence, a figure that relates the present world to what it is not, to what is not known, to what cannot be deciphered. Yet, it is an I that is more fundamental than the world, because the entire world comes to be through the self-reflections of this I.

So once again we arrive at an I of which we must ask: Is this I not a master coloniser? In fact, if the entire world comes to be in the self-reflections of this I is it not then the master of all colonisers? The answer is no, but to see why we must slip a note from the guidebook of Hans Bjelke. Hans Bjelke is the master of symmetry. He understands that symmetry is the grounding principle of existence. There are many instances in which you are me differed and deferred from myself, and there are many instances in which I am you differed and deferred from yourself. But for most of these cases the differing and deferring from me to you are not equal to the differing and deferring from you to me. But Hans Bjelke understands that you and I cannot mirror each other if there is not at least one instance in which the differing and deferring from I to you are equal to the differing and deferring from you to I. In other words, Hans Bjelke understands that to dance the part of both figures (Step 3) requires at least one instance of a symmetric relationship between you and I. Hans Bjelke also understands that the ghost returns to nestle in this symmetry, in the barely perceptible difference between a relationship of I to you that equals the relationship of you to I. But Hans Bjelke's most ingenious insight is that this is the structure of the decolonised I. The decolonised I is the one that surfaces in symmetric relationships.

I will end my story with the beginning of another story. Some believe that the story of the decolonised I begins with two individuals, you and I, and that the relationship between you and I is a function of who I am and who you are. According to this belief the journey to the decolonised I is one in which you and I grow closer, to become more similar, till hopefully one day we become like one. Others believe that the story of the decolonised I begins with a relationship from which both you and I are born. According to this belief the journey to the decolonised I is one in which the relationship grows stronger and becomes more clearly expressed, till hopefully one day we are both reborn as decolonised I's.

Hans Bjelke writes a note and quietly slips it in between the pages of history. On the note he wrote: The story of the postcolonial I begins in the barely perceptible difference between two beliefs ...

The End