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Généalogie et limite de la rhétorique des nombres

Genealogy and Limits of the Rhetoric of Numbers

*« L'algorithme, le projet d'une langue universelle, c'est la révolte contre le langage donné. On ne veut pas dépendre de ses confusions, on veut le refaire à la mesure de la vérité, le redéfinir selon la pensée de Dieu, recommencer à zéro l'histoire de la parole, ou plutôt arracher la parole à l'histoire. » Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *La prose du monde* (1969, 10)*

Abstract: The numbers play a conspicuous role in the European philosophy due to the permanence of the Pythagorean doctrine. This view expressed in terms of a rhetoric of numbers is exercising its strength in the same manner as a new religion. The genealogy of this method of argumentation based on the use of numbers underlines its power to serve the political rhetoric and the scientific administration of modern societies. Drawing on this genealogy, we can also notice the limits of the language-as-calculation paradigm, which rejects the rhetoric of ethos or pathos. These forms of rhetoric explain the contemporary opposition between technocratic language and populist language.

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