I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS: DOMESTICATION, DISABILITY, AND MORAL REPAIR

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Abstract

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Owing to the unique challenges posed by domestication, the literature on animal captivity has been trapped for years in a gridlock. On the one side, there have been the continued-use advocates, who urged that, were it not for their instrumental value, many domesticated animals would never have been bred. On the other side, there have been the vegan abolitionists, who argued that, contrariwise, non-existence would be preferable. Despite the newness of the topic, however, neither theoretical position was especially novel. Quite the opposite, the moral debate over domestication has in many ways paralleled the arguments from past social movements, ranging from eugenics to the emancipation of slavery. Therefore, in order to think of alternative possibilities, this project first endeavors to discover why the same theoretical dead-ends have recurred continuously. The primary thesis is that domestication is something humans did first to themselves, so that, by tracing the history of these intraspecies relations, an "edible complex" is revealed at the heart of the Western psyche. More importantly, however, rather than eschew the argument from marginal cases, this dissertation gestures towards new forms of alliance, where the liminal status of the oppressed, and most especially people with cognitive disabilities, turns out to be an epistemic boon.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project represents the culmination of years of education, both formal and informal. As such, perhaps there is no better place to begin than by expressing gratitude for my parents, without whose support, both material and figurative, none of this would have been possible. In particular, I would like to thank my father for instilling me early with a cosmopolitan sympathy that called no sorrow alien. The memories from my childhood can be found everywhere in these pages, from the golden afternoons spent sketching scenes from Wonderland to watching Willy the Sparrow. Had I not been raised by such a peculiarly sensitive man, who, despite his humble, midwestern beginnings, became widely traveled and widely read, I might never have my love of literature, let alone my love of animals. For his influence, I remain profoundly indebted and deeply, deeply grateful. I would like also to thank my mother, however, for her soldiering spirit, and for gifting me an unusual tenacity to keep going when times get tough. When I was a young, I was too inexperienced to appreciate the ways in which our cultural differences sometimes made us illegible to one another, and, perhaps, she was, too. My mother showed an extraordinary amount of courage to give up her family and her country to begin a new chapter someplace new, and to persevere and find new meaning even and most especially when things did not go as she had every reason to hope for. As such, while I tended to think of her as being quite traditional in my youth, my mother turned out to be one of the biggest rebels I have ever had the privilege of knowing, if only I knew how to look.

If anyone had told me as a child that the world was run by men, I wouldn't have believed it, and that was among the greatest mercies given to my formative mind; my mother was and remains a profoundly formidable woman, and I have to believe that some of my bullheadedness, my righteous indignation, came from watching her. Indeed, without those qualities, I might not have had the wherewithal to see my studies through, and I hope that my parents can both feel a sense of pride in

knowing how much they contributed. Nextly, I should thank my ex-boyfriend, Andrew Ziebarth, for bringing me to my first philosophy class all those many years ago. He couldn't have known then what an impact that experience would have on my life, but I knew from the moment that I sat down in that discussion circle that everything had changed for me. In fact, I attended every day for the rest of the semester despite that I was never actually enrolled, and so I must relay my thanks to Steve Bein for his overwhelming hospitality. Having completed his own graduate studies at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, Steve had worked extensively for many years in the Philosophy for Children program. Back then, however, I could not see how significantly that experience had informed his pedagogy, perhaps because I, like so many precocious minds, was in a hurry to grow up. As Cat Stevens said, "You are young, that's your fault. There's so much you have to learn." Although I was only sixteen at the time, Steve always treated me like a contender, praising the uniqueness of my insight and encouraging me in my studies. If it hadn't been for him, I might very well have dropped out during my first semester in graduate school when I was suddenly faced by a wealth of sexism with which I was previously unacquainted. In hindsight, Steve proved to be an excellent demonstration of one of the central tenets of my dissertation, namely that maternal nurturance can cross the boundaries of gender.

With respect to my doctoral work, it would, of course, be very remiss of me not to thank the faculty, most especially the members of my committee for their feedback and their time; it is a privilege to meet anyone who is passionate about learning, but to shoot the breeze and share ideas is a superlative experience. Specifically, I ought to thank Michael Blake for agreeing to chair my committee even though my work, at least superficially, so far removed from his. There was a day early on in the program when he and I were chatting about picking a dissertation topic, and when I floated my proposal to him, he told me (with a wide grin on his face) that I was "David Lewis crazy." I knew that his dig was actually a great compliment, and I could tell that Michael was the sort

who appreciated an unorthodox thinker, provided they had the chops to back it up. I felt immediately that he would make for an excellent advisor, as I knew that he would go to bat for me even when I went out on a limb; and, indeed, he did. In this way, he was not entirely alone, however, since all the faculty with whom I worked at UW were uncommonly willing to meet me on the terms of my interests, and I enjoyed the challenge of figuring out how their areas of research intersected with my own. I quite firmly believe that that exercise made me a stronger and more well-rounded philosopher, and also, perhaps equally importantly, made me a stronger and more well-rounded teacher. My department's emphasis on pedagogy, not to mention the liberty shown to graduate students in leading and designing their own courses, turned out to be hugely influential for my thinking about philosophy and how it should be practiced.

In closing, I would like to thank my friends for their infinite patience as I bumbled through this dissertation. There were often weeks at a time when no one would see or hear from me, but I was fortunate enough to have friends who understood the reasons for my absence and never took it to heart. On the contrary, they cheered me on from the sidelines, and often extended themselves to help keep me afloat when I was barely struggling through. In much the same vein, I should thank my partner, Valenteen, whose confidence in me has been one of the most meaningful and transformative experiences of my life. I suspect it is an extraordinarily rare thing to feel so well-loved by someone, and I am thankful every day to have my share in that paradise. For years, they have been one of my most favorite intellectual companions, and I find our disagreements are often even more delicious than the places where our minds meet. Indeed, they are a conversational virtuoso, and I've often said that keeping their favor is one of the highest compliments I have ever paid to myself. Simply through knowing them and sharing time, my mind has become more flexible, my perspective enlarged and more delicate, and I have learned an extraordinary kind of willingness to see both clearly and kindly. Thus, I want to thank the many curious creatures I've met along the way,

because they taught me better than anyone that the world really is a garden. I want to thank Luna, who, although she is several years gone now, remains enduringly as one of the great loves of my life, and who proved to me beyond a shadow of a doubt that even the smallest animals can touch the heart profoundly; and I want to thank Oscar, who appeared to me like a little miracle from the underside of a car, covered in fleas and with his silly tail like a birthday candle. I loved him from the moment I laid eyes on him, and even though he turned out to be a hellion, I wouldn't change a thing, because he taught me so much about "loving with" rather than "in spite of." Lastly, however, I want to thank myself, because in the course of seeing my dream through, I finally learned to trust myself as my great ally. "I'm not going to let you fail," I said — and I never did.

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"'Goodbye," said the fox. "And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

"What is essential is invisible to the eye," the little prince repeated, so that he would be sure to remember."

"It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important."

"It is the time I have wasted for my rose–" said the little prince, so that he would be sure to remember.

"Men have forgotten this truth," said the fox. "But you must not forget it. You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed. You are responsible for your rose . . ."

"I am responsible for my rose," the little prince repeated, so that he would be sure to remember.

— *The Little Prince*

CHAPTER ONE:
YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN

"While you are wasting your time on your enemies
Engulfed in a fever of spite
Beyond your tunnel vision reality fades
Like shadows into the night."

— Pink Floyd

Since its inception, the literature on domestication has been dominated by two views, each of which proposed, at least implicitly, to look to the wild for insight. The first, known as the "logic of the larder," proposed that domestication was a sort of bargain, a culturally contingent prop in the absence of which many species would collapse.[1] The second position, on the other hand, oftentimes called the abolitionism, maintained that domestication left animals constitutionally captive through a process of denaturalization. Hence, the only ethical solution was to phase domesticated animals out of existence.[2] Of course, between these poles, there were many shades of meaning, and alternative views which split the difference along this or the other dimension. What remained relatively unexplored, however, was the question of disability, which, when interjected, revealed these differences as two sides of the same coin. In that vein, perhaps the most prevalent defense of domestication was to be found in the writings of 19th century essayist Leslie Stephen, who argued that life, even when destined for slaughter, was preferable to nonexistence. As he framed the issue, "The pig has a stronger interest than anyone in the demand for bacon. If all the world were Jewish,

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[1] This is thought to be in contrast with wild animals. What is worth noting is that bargaining seems to involve two or more already existing parties. In the case of domestication, however, domesticated species do not preexist the bargain, whereas their ancestors do. Defenders of the logic of the larder do describe domestication in terms of a bargain, which, one might argue (as I intend to do) is one of the more disingenuous moves they make. I cannot give this critique its full due at present, but it will have its day at a later juncture.

[2] It is standard practice to categorize people and organizations advocating for animals according to their objectives, the most common division being that between animal abolitionists, who want an end to any and all use of nonhuman animals by humans, and welfarists, who want to keep these practices in place with improved living conditions for the animals involved. Although I see the objective of my project as being clearly abolitionist, this term is generally used in the literature to refer exclusively to the animal rightist Gary Francione and his ilk, who only call themselves abolitionists and regard most other people as welfarists. For reasons that will be enumerated shortly, my own position is importantly different from Francione's. In order to avoid a false conflation between his views and mine, I therefore refuse myself the abolitionist moniker in this work.

there would be no pigs at all."[3]

This argument was dubbed "the logic of the larder" by noted ethical vegetarian Henry S. Salt, namely for its implication "that the real lover of animals is he whose larder is fullest of them."[4] Thus, to many, Stephen's reasoning seemed jejune, like the retort of a child, who, when rebuked for bad manners, churlishly dug in his heels. However, the logic of the larder, despite seeming entirely too convenient, reflected a genuine fact: that were it not for the practices of domestication, "there would instead (perhaps) have been an entirely different population of wild animals."[5] Brought to the fore by Derek Parfit in his landmark *Reasons and Persons*, the heart of the non-identity problem was a conflict between two of the central-most intuitions about the structure of morality. The first of these was the person-affecting intuition, according to which "what is bad must be bad for someone."[6] By the second intuition, however, some acts eluded this kind of assessment precisely because they were existence-inducing.[7] Therefore, the remaining intuition was the one that non-identity cases were supposed to elicit: that a person's existence could be induced by an action whereby they at least appeared to have been wronged, even if not been made worse off, as might happen to a baby born with fetal alcohol syndrome, whose mother would not have become pregnant had she been sober. So long as life was worth living, the child oughtn't whinge about mummy's drinking, or so the argument went.

Although common parlance in the literature on intergenerational ethics, the non-identity problem has hardly registered with scholars working in animal ethics. Still, as demonstrated by Temple Grandin, many availed themselves of this metaphysical rose, if not by another name:

> I vividly remember the day after I had installed the first center-track conveyor restrainer in a plant in Nebraska, when I stood on an overhead catwalk,

[3] Stephen 1896: 236
[4] Salt 1914
[5] Palmer 2010: 61
[6] Sonny was criticized for sneaking around on Cher, for example, because he caused her undue hurt and embarrassment (Parfit 1986: 363).
[7] Carrying forward with the same example, if Cher had decided to postpone her divorce a little while longer, she might have conceived a second son with Sonny instead of her new rockstar husband, Greg Allman. Supposing that this was right, and that personal identity was sufficiently sensitive to things like paternity, Elijiah Blue couldn't have been anyone else but the spawn of Allman himself.

> overlooking vast herds of cattle in the stockyard below me. All these animals were going to their death in a system that I had designed. I started to cry and then a flash of insight came into my mind. None of the cattle that were at this slaughter plant would have been born if people had not bred and raised them. They would never have lived at all.[8]

As Grandin was eager to point out, the animals reared for consumption existed by design. However, this metaphysical issue notwithstanding, what was yet to be explained was why humans were entitled to their flesh and their labor once they were here. "When we argue that animals are dependent on their own slaughter for their very survival," Sunaura Taylor aptly remarked, "we need to remember that it is we human beings who are choosing each and every time to slaughter them. When we say that by killing them we are letting them live, we are declaring that these animals have only one purpose: to be used by us."[9] Whereas many animals, indeed, owed their lives to the system of animal agriculture, the benefit of existence was due to a historical fact, and not a continued one; after birth, this dependency consisted only in the provision of a rationale for care, a rationale which, Grandin seemed not to consider, might still have be sourced from elsewhere. In that vein, the logic of the larder was a paradigmatic example of what Sartre called bad faith. "What I attempt to realize is a being-in-itself of the cafe waiter," he wrote ,"as if it were not in my power to confer value and urgency upon my duties and the rights of my position, as if it were not my choice to get up each morning at five o'clock or to remain in bed."[10]

To the existentialist, the human condition was one of both inescapable freedom and, alongside it, ceaseless responsibility. Hence, bad faith was a form of self-deception, which, in the case of the cafe waiter, involved deferring to the authority of his position. This, however, was only

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[8] Grandin 2010: 297

[9] Taylor 2014: 119

[10] Sartre nerds will quibble about whether this is a genuine example of bad faith since all social identities, in the Sartrean view, involve performance. It may be argued that the waiter chooses himself authentically by throwing himself into his duties, with no intention of escaping the fact of his freedom. In the same way as a method actor, who tries to become a character by imaginatively inhabiting the character's inner life, the waiter might consciously impersonate a waiter in order to make table-waiting his second nature, all without believing himself to be only a waiter-thing. Although there are, from the external perspective, multiple possible motivations which we might attribute to the waiter in order to explain his behavior, I think the debate is settled by the first-personal accounting of the story given by Sartre quoted above. Based on this passage, it seems as though the waiter regards himself as a mere functionary of his waiter-role, his every action determined by the dictates of his job (Sartre 1992: 103).

another manifestation of his freedom, albeit one that prevented him from engaging honestly with the world; because he feared the truth, he hid from it, and embraced some pleasing untruth instead. Yet, the lie remained in the periphery, and, because he was both the deceiver and the deceived, the waiter required all the tools in his arsenal to keep from looking at it. So, too, then, for the logic of the larder, whose proponents represented themselves to themselves as being what they were not, as though killing were done as a favor to the animals, and not to gratify their own desires. This conceit was so widely affirmed because it satisfied the compulsory need to deny the truth of iniquity , and nowhere was this more evident than in the argument from marginal cases.[11] "Children would not exist if their parents did not bring them into existence, and yet this gives parents no right to exploit or otherwise violate the rights of their children," Sue Donaldson and William Kymlicka bristled. "The very fact that such rationalizations are contemplated for farm animals shows how little we value animals, and the extent to which much of domestication is premised on the denial of their moral dignity."[12]

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[11] There are many theories about what qualifies an agent as self-governing, but the main idea is that, to be self-governing, practical thought and action must be under the control of appropriate judgements about what is good, and what it means to live well.

[12] Here, it is worth acknowledging a point of opposition to what Donaldson and Kymlicka seem to take for granted, namely that death is bad for other animals (and, moreover, for children), such that we violate their rights by killing them. Theorists like Christopher Belshaw, however, argue that in order to be harmed by death, an individual must have categorical desires, which is to say desires that provide reasons to go on living. Most domesticated animals, according to Belshaw, haven't got desires of this kind, because they lack the relevant psychological connection to their future selves (Belshaw 2015). In response, I am inclined to say that animals' desires for the activities that satisfy them, such as rolling in the mud or playing fetch, endure dispositionally, even when they are not phenomenologically present. In this way, many animals could be said to have categorical desires, although I doubt that this would satisfy Belshaw. What's more, as Travis Timmerman cleverly observes, the problem with categorical desire views is not categorical desires per se but the expectation that such future-oriented desires be present at the time of death. To illustrate why this commitment yields counterintuitive implications, Timmerman gives the example of Louie, a man who has categorical desires when he goes into surgery but dies on the operating table. Presumably, the presence of his categorical desires at the time of his death made that death bad for Louie, but afterwards, Timmerman wonders, does Louie's doctor have a reason to resuscitate him, if she can? Being dead, Louie no longer has any categorical desires, and nor will he, if left to his own devices. Thus, Belshaw's view suggests that the doctor has no reason to revive Louie, but this seems absurd, given that Louie would again have categorical desires upon being resuscitated. Timmerman counts this as a mark in favor of "deprivation views" of the badness of death, and I am largely sympathetic (Timmerman : 24 - 25). I do think that a deprivation account of the badness of death requires some qualification, however, since it often seems as though a conflation between wronging and harming takes place with such accounts. I will tease out this distinction more thoroughly in later chapters, but I do want to make note, for the time being, that bringing about the death of some individual may be bad for them, in the sense of depriving them of future activities and thereby making them worse off, without necessarily wronging them. This distinction will be important for clarifying the moral dissimilarity between, say, abortion and infanticide. In the latter case, one is dealing with a moral patient, a being with interests that can be wrongly frustrated by their caretakers, and in the former, one is dealing with a life, undoubtedly, but not a seat of subjective experience. This patient-affecting restriction will not be acceptable to consequentialists who embrace totalism, or the view that the morally relevant outcome of an action is the possible world that would be actualized, were that action to be performed. On such a view,

Taken on its own merit, the logic of the larder seemed insufficient to the task of justifying domestication. Hence, the relevance of dignity, namely in the noble preference for death before dishonor. Owing to their neotenization, domesticated animals often bore only a distant resemblance to their wild ancestors, relative to whom, the acclaimed naturalist John Muir once opined, the former appeared "expressionless, like a dull bundle of something only half alive."[13] In this last remark, Sunaura Taylor observed the echo of a common sentiment "that disabled people are incomplete, or as Jerry Lewis famously described it, 'to be disabled is to be 'half a person.'"[14] This was the attitude of J. Baird Callicott, pioneering environmentalist, who, in his reductio against the animal liberation movement, repeatedly referred to domesticated animals as denatured artifacts:

> Domesticated animals are creations of man. They are living artifacts, but artifacts nonetheless. . . There is thus something incoherent (and insensitive as well) in the complaint of some animal liberationists that the "natural behavior" of chickens and bobby calves is cruelly frustrated on factory farms. It would make almost as much sense to speak of the natural behavior of tables and chairs.[15]

Most people, self-described animal lovers or not, would hesitate before comparing farm animals to furniture; and yet, many would doubtless sympathize with this romanticization, spearheaded by American conservationists, of the untapped wildness as the last bastion of primeval authenticity.[16] "If one saw the wild lands of the frontier as freer, truer, and more natural than other, more modern places," environmental historian William Cronon commented, "then one was also inclined to see the cities and factories of urban-industrial civilization as confining, false, and artificial." True to form, whereas he lamented the loss of dignity imposed on wild animals in zoos, Callicott excoriated

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the difference between infanticide and abortion is morally negligible. Myself, I am of the mind that what matters morally, in this case, is non-maleficence, and not a duty to realize the merely possible desires of future beings.
Donaldson & Kymlicka 2011: 76 - 77

[13] Muir 1907: 304

[14] Taylor 2014: 78

[15] Callicott 1989: 30

[16] Thank you to Michael Blake for observing that this valorization of the wild might have a theological basis. I find this idea compelling, and an analogy to Christian arguments about sex and procreativity helps to illustrate why: in the Catholic tradition, respect for how God made us, as sexually dimorphic beings whose genitals are directed towards each other in procreative collaboration, means that the procreativity of sex should be embodied in every act of genital intimacy, in meaning, at least, if not in function. Similarly, domestication might be said to usurp God as creator and supreme source of being and goodness by decoupling animals from their God-given constitutions.

domesticated species as having been bred "to docility, tractability, stupidity, and dependency."[17] Bereft of any natural state to which they might be restored, it was "literally meaningless to suggest that they be liberated. It is, to speak in hyperbole, a logical impossibility."[18]

Far from being a personal idiosyncrasy, Callicott's vituperation represented the culmination of an intellectual-historical trajectory as old as America itself. As the semiotician Emile Benveniste once quipped, "The whole history of modern thought and the principal intellectual achievements in the western world are connected with the creation and handling of a few dozen essential words which are all the common possession of the western European languages."[19] In North America, early European settlers saw the entire continent as pristine landscape waiting to be explored, despite that Native populations had already been living there for many millennia. How did they manage this? In the spirit of John Locke, America represented a distant place through which to imagine a distant past: civilization stopped precisely where the wild world ended, the former arising through conquest over the latter.[20] Therefore, in keeping with the biblical admonition, cultures were ranked by the degree to which they exerted dominion over the earth.[21] "It is difficult to even mention the concept of civilization without conjuring up images of Occidental hauteur," Ross Wolf writes. "One is

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[17] Callicott 1989: 30

[18] Ibid

[19] Benveniste 1971: 289

[20] "In the beginning," as John Locke put the issue, "all the world was America." Key to this idea is the now antiquated concept of 'waste' as unowned land. Before the social contract, Locke argued, there are only two moral stipulations where property ownership is concerned: 1) any property claim must leave "enough, and good enough" for others in the unclaimed wasteland, and 2) any property that would otherwise spoil reverts to a free-for-all, much like colloquium leftovers in a graduate student lounge. Thus, waste and property are negatively defined, the former arising wherever the latter goes unused. The problem, of course, is that while Locke imagined the Earth as inexhaustible, it is in fact finite, and so acquisition, on a sufficiently large scale, threatens the proviso of "enough, and good enough." By the seventeenth century, when Locke was writing, there was no more wasteland left for England's dispossessed masses, threatening the very legitimacy of private property on the Lockean picture. Cue America as an alibi for private property in England. (Tully 1993: 156).

[21] Despite stubborn narratives about Natives as wasteful and ignorant users of their land, the first White settlers to visit Yosemite, for instance, described it as a "cathedral," and remarked that "it presented the appearance of a well-kept park," rich with fruit trees and native grasses. In this description, the settlers were not wrong: as noted by the renowned ethnobotanist M. Kat Anderson, "much of the landscape in California that so impressed early writers, photographers, and landscape painters was in fact a cultural landscape, not the wilderness they imagined" (Anderson 2005: 158). Long before it became a national park in 1890, Yosemite had been managed for centuries by indigenous populations through the use of controlled burns, as well as the removal of highly combustible plants such as cottonwoods and willow trees. However, as environmental historian Miles A. Powell observes, "White America's entire justification for colonization lay in the notion that the continent required domestication. To admit that an Indian tribe had been civilized, or 'domesticated,' would be to forfeit claims over the group's territory…. Indian eradication often seemed the only possible outcome" (Powell 2016: 24).

immediately reminded of the so-called ‘civilizing mission’ undertaken by the great colonial powers of Europe.”[22]

Indeed, this conceptual association between colonial history and civilization was not coincidental; although its Latin origin ‘civilis,’ long predated the European colonial enterprise, ‘civilization,’ first arose in its modern sense in eighteenth century France, where, according to Benveniste, it meant “the original, collective process that made humanity emerge from barbarity, and this use was even then leading to the definition of civilisation as the state of civilized society.”[23] Members of the French court, believing that they had reached the pinnacle of culture, not only used the concept of civilization to justify colonial expansion but, further, saw expansion as part of the country’s humanitarian vocation.[24] Unsurprisingly, then, many domesticated species first came to fruition alongside colonialism, with its pseudo-scientific debates about racial exceptionalism.[25] With the rise of urbanization, liminal species threatened the otherwise tidy boundary between civilization and savagery. Therefore, as more and more animals fell became the targets of pest-control, others proliferated under the auspices of a genealogical ritual. “Starting primarily in England and exported out,” Claire Rasmussen wrote, “was the practice of determining the identity of a dog according to bloodlines. In the 1840s, breeders began the practice of ‘showing’ dogs, first according to their aesthetic appeal (seeking out the most beautiful or unusual) and then shifting to the contemporary model of confirmation shows, with the first official show held in England in 1859.”[26]

Despite their longtime cohabitation with humans, dogs were nonetheless animals, and

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[22] As quoted by Øyvind Holmstad.
[23] Benveniste 1971: 291
[24] Inasmuch as the natural world has been gendered as feminine, ‘woman’ became to ‘man’ what ‘nature’ became to ‘civilization.’ This bears out in historical accountings of the transition from “primitive” to “civilized” societies as a move from “cradle” (i.e. the matriarchal) to “maturity” (i.e. the patriarchal).
[25] The notion that nature is a unified entity separate from human beings is not a totally uncontroversial one, it is worth noting, and neither is the historical valuation of the civilized/artificial over and above the uncivilized/natural. Although I will elaborate on the former point in what follows, it is worth noting, for now, that theorists like Jean-Jacques Rousseau objected highly to the latter point, and regarded civilization, not as an obvious boon, but as a corruption of humanity’s natural innocence. For Rousseau, civilization imposed vice upon man’s otherwise amoral constitution; despite making them more sociable, civilization also made men more wicked, effecting such states of affairs as inequality, hierarchy, property, and exploitation. As compared with the “noble savage,” the civilized man suffers from what Rousseau calls ‘amour propre,’ or an acute self-awareness of oneself in relation to others. For more, see Rousseau 2009.
[26] Rasmussen 2016, p. 79

threatened the implosion of polite society by its lingering, primitive substratum.[27] Hence, practices aimed at making them regulable kept a pace with interventionism, so that consumers found mongrels, not only to be worse-looking than purebreds, but also dumber and more unyielding.[28] This discourse on canine imperialism was an obvious parable, namely for the asymmetry between colonized and colonizer in terms of civilization[29] At its peak, there would be nothing left of untrammeled nature, bringing the closure of that historical epoch elsewise known as the tabula rasa. Indeed, this was confirmed by the American frontier experience, which, since its inception, had received its license from the mythos of manifest destiny. However, as more and more settlements formed disjointedly along river banks and forests, so, too, did nostalgia creep more and more into the urban consciousness.[30] By the turn of the nineteenth century, American conservationists, like their peers across the Atlantic, began to worry that an over-civilized society produced an effete racial stock, namely through an excess reliance on technology and the indulgence of material comforts.[31]

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[27] They did this mainly by spreading disease and filth or by maiming other animals (humans included).

[28] The term 'mongrel' derives from the old English 'mong,' which means "to mix." It is also traced to the proto-Germanic 'mangjan," which means "to knead together." It is not difficult to see how this term lends itself to the racialized ideas about blood purity, with the application of the term to dogs whose lineage does not belong to a single breed. Not coincidentally, similar terms have been coined for mixed race humans, such as the outdated 'mulatto,' which comes from the Spanish or Portuguese 'mulato,' meaning "of mixed breed." More specifically (and derogatorily), the term 'mulatto' draws from the Latin origin 'mulus' or "mule," likely owing to the fact that mules arise from the breeding of a mare and a jackass. The association of people of color with nonhuman animals, however, especially "beasts of labor," makes the term all the more unseemly. Incidentally, it is also worth noting that purebred dogs were often not as intelligent as their mixed breed counterparts EXPAND

[29] As Rasumussen notes, this colonization could be both internal and external. In the latter case, colonization takes its familiar form as one nation subjugating another, often in the interest of exploiting the indigenous population while, at the same time, assimilating them into the culture of the metropole. The same sort of process can happen internally, however, with a dominant group conquering over another, more peripheral group within the polity. In Rasmussen's view, the logic of colonial expansion mirrored, albeit incompletely, the resistance to democratization in European countries, such as Great Britain, where the lower orders of society were reviled for their brutishness. The treatment, and moreover the management, of animals become a litmus test for one's fitness for civic life. Professions involving animal slaughter, for instance, earned poor wages and social disapprobation, and ownership of "mutts" belied the violent excitability of the lower classes. Meanwhile, the uppercrust's ownership over purebred dogs was taken as a sign of their unparalleled capacity for self-governance, as demonstrated in obedience competitions hosted by elite kennel clubs.

[30] This foreboding was, perhaps, even more intense in an increasingly crowded Europe, which did not boast so much wide-open space as did early America, and where the frontier began, quite evidently, at the . Fears of overpopulation and overuse of the land manifested in texts such as Thomas Malthus' seminal text, *On Population*, and arguments in favor of increased governmental oversight of food, shelter, water, and even reproduction became more prolific. In the States, conservationists like Aldo Leopold successfully campaigned for sterilization programs, which, again unsurprisingly, differentially affected different racial groups. Leopold and his colleagues were especially concerned with the influx of Asian immigrants to America, and with their "higher birth rates" relative to Whites, through which they threatened to "overrun the country." These activities are extensively detailed by environmental historian Miles A. Powell in his *Vanishing America: Species Extinction, Racial Peril, and the Origins of Conservation*.

[31] Pioneering men, such as Theodore Roosevelt and Ornsby, worried that civilization had made America's people, particularly its White men, soft, and so they sought to expunge their quasi-feminine domesticity, en masse, by seeking an

"To combat this decadence," historian Miles A. Powell writes, "civilized nations had to reinvigorate their stock through interactions with the 'savage,' be it by subduing the wilderness or conquering primitive peoples."[32]

Whereas the colonial era had privileged domesticated landscapes as the hallmark of national exceptionalism, the vanishing of the frontier transformed the wilderness from foe to mythological symbiont, the endangerment of the one furnishing a potent metaphor for the endangerment of the other. Therefore, as wildlife protection organizations sprang forth across the country, a new generation of Davey Crocketts led the charge for frontier manliness.[33] On the one hand, growing anxieties about westering progress motivated some of the nation's most enduring environmental protections, with conservationists rightly warning against the excesses of capitalism.[34] On the other hand, broader fears about racial suicide turned wild creatures into the living relics of a bygone masculinity. Hence, the clergyman Joseph K. Dixon, who described the indigenous tribesmen as being interred in their own grave. "He would not receive his salvation by surrender," Dixon wrote. "Rather would he choose oblivion, unknown darkness — the melting fires of extermination."[35]

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intimate encounter with the wild, the distinctive pleasure of which derived from the belief that the encounter was totally unmediated, countenanced by forces beyond their control.

[32] Powell 2016: 87

[33] This invocation of Crockett is not merely for effect; after his failed ambitions to become a cattle rancher, Roosevelt returned to New York and convened a meeting of sports hunters, writers, militarists, and political leaders to discuss what could be done to protect big game in the West. The Boone and Crockett Club was thus born, and focused on rifle hunting, wilderness exploration, and documenting the habits and natural histories of wild animals. The club was modeled after contemporary environmental protection groups, such as the New York Association for the Protection of Big Game, and it differed from existing conservation clubs with respect to its focus on big game and national parks, rather than wildlife refuges. (For more, see Taylor 2016.)

[34] Around this time, American entrepreneurs capitalized on the expanding railway system to integrate lumber and other natural goods into the global market, a practice which went largely unnoticed by consumers due to the fact that most of them only encountered American wildlife once it had been transmuted into consumables, like treated leather or wooden furniture. In a classic case of "out of sight, out of mind," deforestation went unabated because so few Americans were aware of just how badly the forests were being pilfered, let alone convinced of its negative consequences. At the same time, similar occurrences were taking place abroad. In British India, a gargantuan railway system, which was then in its embryonic phase, would not only facilitate colonial rule, both militarily and administratively, but also timber extraction, eventually leading to massive deforestation in the Punjab region. (For more, see Das 2015.)

[35] What is interesting, as Powell describes, is the stubborn inaccuracy of such descriptions. Powell considers, as an example, the case of Ishi, who was paraded in 1911 as the "last wild Indian." Ishi was a member of the Yahi tribe, a once prosperous people who lived in what would become Northern California. The tribe was nearly destroyed in the 19th century California genocide, where settlers set a bounty of $5 per Yahi scalp. The last remnants of the tribe were nearly decimated during Ishi's youth, first in the Three Knolls Massacre, and followed, shortly thereafter, by roving cattlemen. Although Ishi's immediate family survived the attacks, their numbers dwindled as they hid for forty-four years in the mountains. Eventually, once forest fires had devastated local vegetation, and surveyors had ransacked his family's campsite, Ishi found himself alone and starving, and he walked to Oroville, a nearby White settlement, in search of food. Ishi was immediately apprehended by the town's sheriff, but he was soon taken in by an anthropology professor at the U.

As these disparate threads became married in public discourse, domesticated animals took a hit from both sides of history. Fearing that they would soon be felled by the roving hand of modernity, White Americans frantically sought an encounter with authentic "Indians," whom they regarded as a pure and noble, and, tragically, disappearing race. Indeed, so eager was the desire to commemorate their passage into the annals of history that the Cincinnati Zoo recruited nearly one hundred Sicangu Lakota Sioux to reenact life as it had been lived "more than 100 years ago, when this country was being settled up." The unspoken subtext, which was made explicit by the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, was that these ancient peoples had been "rescued from oblivion and brought suddenly back to life."[36] With zoo officials having already been persuaded of the edifying and economic benefits, the exhibition of the Lakota Sioux paved the way for endangered species. The most notable of these was a passenger pigeon, who was described by the media in terms befitting the motif of the vanishing Indian. "Down in the pleasant valley of the Ohio," ornithologist Moritz Fischer wrote wistfully, "amidst patriarchs of the forest primeval, lives to this day a captive and lonely daughter of her gentle tribe, and its sole relict, awaiting the final summons which comes for all that breathe."[37] Once the most abundant bird species in North America, the passenger pigeon was driven to extinction by overhunting and deforestation. Thus, when she was found dead in September 1914, the nation mourned for Martha as though America herself had died, sad and alone, on the floor of her cage. "'Martha' is dead," read a eulogy from the *Maine Woods*. "In one great respect, she resembled Chincatgook, 'last of the Mohicans,' for she was the last of the passenger pigeons."[38]

C. Berkeley, who wanted, unsurprisingly, to study Ishi. The professor, Alfred L. Kroeber, was astonished by Ishi's intelligence, and commented that Ishi assimilated to "the ordeal of civilization" with great poise, a feat which led many to disavow his "last Indian" moniker, given how many people conflated Natives with savagery, the antithesis to civilization. The two developed a friendship, and Ishi, who lived at the university's anthropology museum, worked with linguists who were studying his language, and he taught survival skills, such as bow-making, to public audiences on the weekends. Despite the popular narrative of Ishi's previous isolation from civilized society, the Yahi had already encountered Euro-Americans, with the Spanish first settling the area centuries earlier. Indeed, as the California gold rush brought more White settlers into Yahi territory, and as bounties were set by municipal governments, the Yahi scraped by stealing food from settlements, evading militia, and using glass bottles to make arrowheads for deer-hunting. It is also worth noting, contrary to initial assumptions, that Ishi very probably was not full Yahi. Recent research, again at U.C Berkeley, suggests that the Yahi observed prohibitions against incest, and so, in order to perpetuate themselves, likely intermarried with the Wintu or Nomlaki. The techniques Ishi used in his crafts further substantiate this claim, with his arrowheads bearing a greater resemblance to those made by the latter tribes than by the Yahi. (Powell 2016, p. 145)

[36] Powell 2016: 144

[37] Ibid 130

[38] Maine Woods 1914: 2

In a time marked by rapid social and economic transition, it was perhaps unsurprising that many urbanites identified with Martha, who had become a symbol for their own fears and loss of primordial innocence. "As with the rise of the idea of the noble savage, Americans found it easier to celebrate the wilderness once it seemed safely vanquished," Miles A. Powell observed. "Before a full sea change in attitudes could unfold, Americans had both to see wild nature as imperiled *and* to see its loss as detrimental."[39] The 19th century had realized a wholesale marginalization of the wilderness from daily life, and in its place, had left its unsightly mirror twin. Early zoos thus served as a perverse kind of deathbed, showcasing both the spoils and costs of empire. "The zoo to which people go to meet animals, to observe them, to see them, is, in fact, a monument to the impossibility of such encounters," explained John Berger. Modern zoos are an epitaph to a relationship which was as old as man."[40] In Berger's view, animals had played an important symbolic function throughout human history, if only because they offered a blend both of psychic closeness and ineradicable distance. Indeed, that abyss of noncomprehension was precisely what made encounters with wild animals so riveting: in addition to their material existence, this convergence of separate but parallel lives confirmed men's subjectivity. The animal, in other words, was the quintessential embodiment of difference, a mystery out of which language was born and yet always unreciprocated. What were the secrets of the animal's likeness with, and unlikeness from man?" Berger wondered. "The secrets whose existence man recognized as soon as he intercepted an animal's look."[41]

In many ways, the Bergerian metaphor of zoos as epitaphs got straight to the heart of Callicott. "However you look at these animals," he said, "even if the animal is up against the bars, less than a foot from you, looking outwards in the public direction, *you are looking at something that has been rendered absolutely marginal*; and all the concentration you can muster will never be enough to centralise it."[42] Like strolling through a museum gallery, these visitations presumed upon their own curatedness. The zoo, therefore, could not help being a disappointment, because the creatures

[39] Powell 2016: 48
[40] Berger 2009: 21
[41] Ibid 6
[42] Ibid 24

gathered round the cages were equally as frustrated as those trapped with them. Therefore, as the totemic wild became a figurehead for the existential despair and neurotic boredom of an urbane humanity, the status of the animal domestic diminished appreciably. This rupture was initiated, according to Berger, by factory mechanization, which displaced familiar, pastoral relationships in the form of commodity fetishism.[43] As a consolation, however, for the loss of animals in reality, they were proliferated in an imaginary spectacle, whose singular attunement to the human gaze "invited us to regress, drew us into narcissistic contemplation."[44]

Without mutual autonomy, pets were left to form the paradoxical residue of an unreal animality. Indeed, for Berger, they were functionally mirrors, which, being too weak to assert themselves, left the gaze unchecked and unchallenged. As such, coming full circle, the idea that domesticated animals had been "co-opted into the family," as Berger put it, marked a bonafide polemic. Not unlike Baudelaire, who advised that women, by virtue of their domesticity, ought to be kept locked up in cages, Michael Pollan urged, in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, that "liberation is the last thing such a creature wants."[45] Stephen Budiansky, similarly, construed animal husbandry as a covenant, whereby formerly wild creatures, through excess kindness, "have become weak and ever more dependent on the crutch of human care."[46] Opining on the delusion that nature was a paradise, Budiansky urged that, in reality, it was red in tooth and claw. Hence, the opportunistic beasts, who had gladly renounced their independence in exchange for food and shelter. Generations later, and thanks to this Faustian pact, they were permanent juveniles, whose deliverance back into nature's maw would be the greatest height of cruelty.[47] However, despite his protestations, namely that

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[43] As Berger frames the issue, "a peasant becomes fond of his pig and is glad to salt away its pork." The peasant, in contrast to the urban stranger, "knows what he is eating and is glad to have known it" (Berger 2009: 7).
[44] Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 240
[45] Pollan 2007: 320
[46] Budiansky 1999: 123
[47] As evidence for this claim, Budiansky observes, for example, the way that house cats raise their tails when being fed by their owners, a kittenish behavior otherwise observed only in infant wildcats. Another example is the puppyish shape of the dog's skull, which, when compared to that of the wolf, is larger and rounder, relative to the muzzle. While the deal might initially appear rotten, Budiansky is quick to point out that domestication has been a huge evolutionary success; whereas their free-roaming cousins survive by the skin of their teeth, species in human custody are thriving. As Raymond Coppinger put it, "The King of Beasts [has] been out-competed by the cooperative strategy of the house cat," or, as Grandin might remark, the auroch by the cow, and so on.

liberationists, being almost categorically city-dwellers, had never had to kill for their supper, Budiansky's work also was suffused with sentimentalism."The nature of our relationship would change, but the relationship would not end," explained Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. "We would remain their custodians, with full moral responsibility for their welfare."[48]

Implicit in Whittingstall's observation was the idea that caring for animals, with no expectation to be compensated, put them in the highly embarrassing position of having to live on the rolls. It was in the context of this cultural logic, then, that the lives of domesticated animals, not unlike the lives of disabled people, came to be imaged as deficient. With the institutionalization of a social imaginary that equated dependency with indignity, acts of collective violence were transformed into the symbolism of a gift.[49] Indeed, this construction of otherness was so central to the governance of common life that even self-identified defenders of animals were mired in it. "That is the entire point of domestication – we *want* domesticated animals to depend on us," wrote Gary Francione. "We have bred them to be servile and compliant, or to have characteristics that are actually harmful to them but pleasing to us. We may make them happy in one sense, but the relationship can never be 'natural' or 'normal.' They do not belong in our world irrespective of how well we treat them."[50] In a departure from the historic movement from which vegan abolitionism took its name, Francione and his ilk saw the captivity of domesticated species as a more biological than legal convention.[51] Their proposal, therefore, was to prevent domesticated animals from reproducing, lest they should depend in perpetuity on the goodwill of a dominus. "It makes no sense to say that we have acted immorally in domesticating nonhuman animals but we are now committed to allowing them to continue to breed," Francione guffawed.[52] "We made a moral mistake by domesticating nonhumans in the first place; so what sense does it make to perpetuate it?"[53]

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48 Fearnley-Whittingstall 2007: 16

49 As Eva Kittay frames the issue, " . . . when individuals find themselves dependent on others (as many people with disabilities do) for self-care, economic security, and safety, the dignity which comes with autonomy appears threatened" (Kittay 2011: 50).

50 Francione 2007

51 "You can't say to a dog, 'You were once a domesticated animal. You are no longer a domesticated animal," he said. "It makes no sense" (Grimms 2014).

52 Francione 2007

53 Ibid

Francione's argument was reliant on an assumption, one often made by the non-disabled, namely that dependency "is objectively bad, and thus something to be pitied, a personal tragedy . . . to be prevented and, if possible, cured."[54] Adapting animals to the conditions of confinement has often actually meant enhancing certain characteristics to the point that they could easily be classified as deformities. Therefore, by recommending extinction as the most responsible solution to domestication, abolitionists wound up, albeit, perhaps unwittingly, urging the extinguishment of disability in its own right. Hence, the peculiar affinity between abolitionists and eugenicism, which resulted in policies to, not only institutionalize persons with disabilities, but also to sterilize them.[55] This was harrowingly demonstrated in the 1927 Supreme Court case of *Buck v. Bell*, which upheld a Virginia statute permitting the compulsory sterilization of the appellant, Carrie Buck, who, like her mother before her, had been deemed the probable potential parent of socially inadequate offspring.[56] "It is better for all the world if, instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind," explained Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, in defense of the majority decision.[57] He thereafter concluded, in one of the crueler and more ignominious lines in American juridical history, that "three generations of imbeciles are enough."[58]

Sentiments eerily similar have been expressed by Wayne Pacelle, the former president of the United States Humane Society. "One generation and out," he said, sounding very much like Holmes.[59] Despite arguing for markedly different ends, abolitionists thus appeared to share a conspicuous theoretical kernel with continued-use advocates, namely the myth of an authentic animality which, at least once upon a time, was free from human defilement.[60] "They're not

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54 Carlson 2010: 5
55 Carlson 2010: 45
56 Buck v. Bell 274 U.S. 207
57 Ibid
58 Buck's mother, Emma, had been committed to an institution on the grounds that she was sexually promiscuous, which, incidentally, is the same diagnosis that was given to Carrie when she became an unwed mother, having been raped at the age of seventeen by the nephew of her foster parents. Allegations about her daughter's abnormality were made several months after Carrie had given birth as part of the legal effort to support her forced sterilization.
59 As quoted in Smith 2012.
60 Francione has said as much himself in an extended interview with David Grimm. "In my ideal world," says Francione, "we have wild animals, which leave us alone, and us"' (as quoted in Grimm 2014).

supposed to be living with us," Francione insisted. "They exist in this netherworld between humans and animals, refugees from a life they can't get back anymore."[61] Whereas humanity in the colonial worldview marked the endpoint of nature, it was, for abolitionists, a Frankensteinian figure, a usurper of nature's god. It was important to remember, however, that in Mary Shelley's novel, Frankenstein's folly was not merely his hubris, but his refusal of responsibility. Indeed, that was what made *Frankenstein* such an enduring parable, because it seemed to capture the defining quandary by which modernism was plagued.

Although intended to serve as a testament to the genius of his creator, Frankenstein's monster became a chimerical figure, filling everyone he encountered with dread. What constituted his monstrosity, however, was not that he did bad things, except in response to his hysterical and often violent reception by humans. The problem was rather that he transgressed the borderwall nature and artifice, and, in so doing, revealed the permeability of the inner sanctum sanctorum; he was always inevitably neither merged nor separable from his father, and it was precisely that undecidability, which, to the Frankensteinian mind, was the stuff of nightmares. Hence, the compulsion to purification, which was rightly identified by Latour as the defining logic of Western thought. Despite their best efforts, zealots were continuously counteracted, from the underground, by the proliferation of monsters, of which Frankenstein's was merely a harbinger of things clawing their way up. Among the social movements of yesteryear, then, perhaps none more closely resembled vegan abolitionism than the American Colonization Society, which proposed to solve the problem of integration by sending freed slaves back to Africa. Yet, as James Forten, leader of Philadelphia's free Black community, sarcastically quipped:

> Here I have dwelt until I am nearly sixty years of age, and have brought up and educated a family . . . yet some ingenious gentlemen have recently discovered that I am still an African; that a continent three thousand miles, and more, from the place where I was born is my native country. And I am advised to go home . . . Perhaps if I should only be set on the shore of that

[61] Grimm 2014

> distant land, I should recognize all I might see there, and run at once to the old hut where my forefathers lived a hundred years ago.[62]

Although some Blacks supported the Society's mission, most were overwhelmingly opposed, the reason being that they, too, had built America, and had as much as right as anyone to count themselves as its citizens.[63] They were quite right, as the presence of Black Americans predated even the Puritans, with the first slave ship arriving in Jamestown as early as 1609; and from the very first minutes of the Revolutionary War, Black Americans had been in the thick of it, with Crispus Attucks, a man of Black and Wampanoag descent, being the first to take a bullet. The problem with the Colonization Society, in other words, was its absolute and utter failure to recognize how, through the institution of slavery, White and Black Americans had become inextricably linked. Precisely because there was no turning around, abolition called America's bluff in the great experiment of democracy. The work of reconstruction would not involve an amalgam of unrelated individuals coming together to reform the nation out of whole cloth, but a history in which the founding fathers, all of whom had professed to love liberty, nonetheless owned slaves. Racial integration thus posed a problem, not because the conditions of citizenry hadn't already been specified, but rather because they had been propped up by the edifice of slavery.

Throughout the nation's history, the racial hierarchy had been largely maintained through keeping Blacks in their place. Hence, in the aftermath of the 1739 Stono Rebellion, slaves were prohibited from learning to read through anti-literacy laws.[64] Education was a deathknell to slave-owners, who worried that Blacks would secure their own freedom by producing counterfeit documents. Still more important, however, was the fact literacy gave slaves a semblance of civility,

[62] As quoted by Gary Nash (Nash 2013: 189)

[63] There were, at the advent of emancipation, Black-led colonization movements; many Black people, as well as White sympathizers, believed that White racial prejudice would remain intractable for generations, hindering the realization of a social and economic climate in which freed Blacks could exercise their capacities for human development most fully. Thus, they envisioned African American settlers of Africa as being something like the Pilgrims who founded the Plymouth colonies. Colonization, to their minds, would foster Black nationalism, and give Black people a sense of purpose and hope. These movements were distinct, however, from the resettlement program advocated by the American Colonization Society, some of whom did not even believe that slavery should end, and rather thought that the mere presence of free Black people undermined the institution of slavery.

[64] This was the largest slave uprising in South Carolina's history.

which threatened the well-groomed ignorance that bulwarked the slavely mentality. From the beginning, then, the American mythos of freedom, having been traced from the Israelites, could progress no further than the deliverance of its chickens come home to roost. Indeed, this was the necessary and creative precondition for a new America, but, when faced with this crisis, like so many others, the Society's members ran. Thus, the democratic project was abandoned, once again, before it had even started. For many Black Americans, the prospect of returning to Africa represented, not a sacred journey home, but an expatriation from the only home they had ever known. "Until the moment comes when we, the Americans, we, the American people, are able to accept the fact that we are trying to forge a new identity," James Baldwin explained, "for which we need each other and that I am not a ward of America. I am not an object of missionary charity. I am one of the people who built the country, until this moment there is scarcely any hope for the American dream, because the people who are denied participation in it, by their very presence, will wreck it."[65]

Not unlike the Colonization Society, vegan abolitionists endeavored to rid themselves of the very populations who had been harmed in the course of domestication — except, for the animals, there quite literally was no Africa to return to. Regardless of how seductive these ideas appeared to be, they were both pipe dreams, because no one can erase the sins of the past. Still worse, the abolitionist proposal, again like the Colonization Society, seemed only to compound upon the original wrongs for which it purported to be a remedy; the idea that extermination somehow ameliorated injustice belied a deep and woeful misunderstanding about just what had made domestication so damnable in the first place, which was the monolithic imposition of vision upon a vulnerable other. Considered in this way, vegan abolitionism became complicit in the very same exercise of domination: it made no attempt to be responsive to other animals, to inquire about what they saw. Indeed, it consciously rejected those inputs, paying lip-service to the value of self-directedness while, at the same time, disappearing individual animals into their species being. In the face of such conservatism, the need to disentangle wronging from harming became all the more paramount. Supposing that animals were not themselves morally diminished for having been

[65] Baldwin 1965

domesticated, remediation, therefore, had to begin from the belly of the beast. Confronted with this double blackmail, as Zizek would say, "We are back at the great Leninist question: What is to be done?"[66]

As a warning to the wise, this project will not abide by the familiar dictates of academic writing, not least of all philosophy. There will be no numbered premises, nor the surgical explication, in order to save the connective tissue which was excised by Socratism.[67] Indeed, this work is a protest, an incivil disobedience, against the stiltifying divisions of thought that have made the mind a prison. Neither will it be utopian, however, because the master's tools will, indeed, be used to dismantle the master's house. The canon cannot be changed except from the interior, and while some would, doubtless, be perfectly content to leave well enough alone, I take myself for a philosopher, and I, too, was made in the love of wisdom. No matter how sympathetic, the refusal for connection, the desire for purity, is a form of naivete, which, precisely because there is so much at stake, I cannot be allowed. As such, I will pursue an unusual method, which, in my view, is a more honest way of describing argumentation. In these pages, there will be characters, plots, and intrigue, and one idea will flow into the next, without fanfare or formal disclosure. There will be puns, and wordplay, and repetitions that echo, but there will also, I hope, be a formidable rigor, if not a bit unconventional. Most especially, and most paradoxically, animals will tend to appear only sparingly, and not in the form of flesh and blood but in the form of texts. On a journey through seven solitudes, I shall act as your Virgil, and you, my dear Dante, will be brought face to face with the ghost of so many mothers — because that is what all of my spectres have in common: nothing. Abandon hope, all ye who enter here, if only to find it once more, with feeling.

[66] CITE
[67] I mean this in the Nietzschean sense of the term, namely as a pessimistic science that devitalized its objects.

CHAPTER TWO:
ANIMAL FARM

"Lord, it's a shameful display.
The overseers even got raped along the way;
Because the children can't escape from the pain,
And they're born with poisonous hatred in their veins."

— Brother Ali

On January 1st, 1863, as the nation approached its third year of bloody civil war, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It declared that all persons held as slaves within the rebellious states were set free, but as students of American history well know, slavery did not end with Lincoln's proclamation, and neither with the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865. First and foremost, it was necessary to create a new American ethos, since the heart of a nation could not be commanded by mere judicial fiat. Indeed, this was the source of Lincoln's essential ambiguity, because, while he accepted the premises of abolitionism, he believed that they had to be filtered through the will of the people. Even in the north, however, where the growing movement for emancipation had pushed the country to war, there was often only a superficial difference between its supporters and detractors. This was especially evident in New York, where physicians proselytized over the gospel of scientific racism. "God has made the negro an inferior being," said John Van Envrie, "not in most cases, but in all cases."[68] Yet, his abolitionist counterpart, Samuel Gridley Howe, expressed much the same view, assured that slaves and their descendants "will dwindle and gradually disappear from the peoples of this continent, outstripped by more vigorous competitors in the struggle for life."[69]

The ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment marked the formal end of slavery, and remains the only constitutional amendment with a presidential signatory. "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude," it read, "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been

[68] Van Evrie 1868, p. 221
[69] Howe 1864, p. 33

duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."[70] These five words, however, "except as punishment for a crime," picked up where slavery had left off, replacing Lincoln's promised new freedom with the era of Jim Crow. Unsurprisingly, then, on the centenary of the Emancipation Proclamation, James Baldwin proclaimed that the country was celebrating one hundred years too soon:

> Now, my dear namesake, these innocent and well-meaning people, your countrymen, have caused you to be born under conditions not very far removed from those described for us by Charles Dickens in the London of more than a hundred years ago. (I hear the chorus of innocents screaming. 'No! This is not true! How *bitter* you are!' - but I am writing this letter to *you*, to try to tell you something about how to handle *them*, for most of them do not yet really know that you exist. I know the conditions under which you were born, for I was there. Your countrymen were not there, and haven't made it yet.)[71]

This statement concluded a letter to Baldwin's nephew, James, in which he spoke plainly about the realities of being Black in America. Although there was no constitutional basis for owning slaves, it had been, as Lincoln said, an economic necessity. A peculiar form of theology, then, had sprung from the White conscience. "They could recognize a man when they saw one," Baldwin wrote. "They knew he wasn't anything else but a man, but since they were Christian and since they had already decided that they came here to establish a free country, the only way to justify the role this chattel was playing in one's life was to say that he was not a man."[72] Imbibing this lie had induced a collective psychosis among the nation's children, who remained impaled, like a butterfly on a pin, under the weight of their own false history. Invoking the imagery of a plucky guerilla resistance, Baldwin announced his plan: a counter-insurgency aimed at shattering the shibboleth of racial purity. "We cannot be free until they are free," Baldwin said to his nephew. "God bless you James and Godspeed."[73]

For Baldwin, Black Americans had been condemned to an obscurity that was even darker

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[70] U.S. Const. amend. XIII
[71] Baldwin 1985, p. 5
[72] Baldwin 2011, p. 93
[73] Baldwin 1995(a), p. 8

than poverty, embodying the ontological nothingness at the heart of all being. "It has always been much easier," he said, "(because it has always seemed much safer) to give a name to the evil without than to locate the terror within."[74] A century before Baldwin, Friedrich Nietzsche explored this same psychological fundament as the basis of slave morality, arguing that "the reversal of the evaluating gaze, this necessary orientation outwards rather than inwards to the self – belongs characteristically to ressentiment."[75] Given his rather unsavory reputation as a proto-fascist thinker, the comparison of Nietzsche to Baldwin might seem more than ill-advised. However, the parallels between these two authors are too many to ignore, and profoundly germane for thinking through the psychical chains of the past; for the literature on domestication has, thus far, focused almost exclusively on the question of animals, whereas, indeed, a more novel approach should, mayhaps, start from the other end. That, therefore, will be the subject of this dissertation. "We do not regard the animals as moral beings," as Nietzsche said. "But do you suppose the animals regard us as moral beings? – An animal which could speak said: 'Humanity is a prejudice of which we animals at least are free.'"[76]

For Nietzsche, anything that produced a false sense of superiority was to be counted as prejudice. Hence, in the *Genealogy of Morals*, he asked whether moral values had so far been conducive to human flourishing, or whether they deluded men to will their lives away. "Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life?" he asked. "Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plentitude, force, and will of life, its courage, certainty, future?"[77] Nietzsche took moral values themselves to be an indicator of spiritual health, proclaiming that "the innermost parts, the 'entrails' of every soul are perceived by me — *smelled*."[78] This trait gave him, as he put it, the psychological antennae with which to locate the abundant dirt hidden at the bottom of many a character. Drawing attention to the hermeneutic dimension of his prognosticating, this same analytical strategy was presented even more vividly in another section of the *Genealogy*, when two characters, Mr. Rash and Curious, descend into morality's dark workshop to see how "whiteness,

[74] Baldwin 2021, p. 383
[75] Nietzsche 2003, p. 19
[76] Nietzsche 1997, p. 70
[77] Nietzsche 2003, p. 3
[78] Nietzsche 1911(a), p. 25

milk, and innocence" was made "of every blackness."[79] Nietzsche's aim, therefore, was to scrape the prettifying paint from morality, to reveal the hidden, spiritual rot beneath ardent airs of piety. "The weak and the botched shall perish," he said. "First principle of our charity."[80]

Much of the confusion identifying Nietzsche with National Socialism can be traced to the role which was played by his sister, Elisabeth Förster. She was married for several years to a prominent anti-semite, with whom she moved to Paraguay to found an Aryan colony. However, the enterprise failed, and her husband, Bernhardt, killed himself amidst the ensuing controversy. Thus, Elisabeth returned to Germany, where she served as a guardian to her brother after his mental collapse. Upon his death, in 1900, she secured the rights to his manuscripts, and these she edited without scruple to suit her own agenda. Yet, even in the depths of his illness, when his mind was enveloped in darkness, Nietzsche had scribbled on a notecard, "All anti-Semites ought to be shot."[81] Quite unlike his sister, Nietzsche consistently said that the Jews were victims of populist fervor. Thus, with prophetic clarity, he foresaw the misuse of his work, and took pains to point out the warning signs of impending genocide:

> By the way, the great problem of the *Jews* only exists within national states, inasmuch as their energy and higher intelligence, their intellectual and volitional capital, accumulated from generation to generation in tedious schools of suffering, must necessarily attain to universal supremacy, here, to an extent provocative of envy and hatred; so that the literary misconduct is becoming prevalent in almost all modern nations — and all the more so as they again set up to be national — of sacrificing Jews as the scapegoats of all possible public and private abuses . . . I should like to know how much must be excused in a nation which, not without blame on the part of all of us, has had the most mournful history of all nations, and to which we owe the most loving of men (Christ), the most upright of sages (Spinoza), the mightiest book, and the most effective moral law in all the world?[82]

[79] Nietzsche 2003, p. 28
[80] Nietzsche 1918, p. 43
[81] Indeed, in an 1887 letter to his sister, who was an early supporter of National Socialism and rubbed elbows with Hiter, Nietzsche wrote, "Your association with an anti-Semitic chief expresses a foreignness to my whole way of life which fills me ever again with ire or melancholy ...It is a matter of honor to me to be absolutely clean and unequivocal regarding anti-Semitism, namely opposed, as I am in all my writings ... that in every Anti-Semitic Correspondence sheet the name Zarathustra is used has already made me almost sick several times" (Kaufmann 2013, p. 45).
[82] Nietzsche 1924, p. 347

Unlike many of his early modern predecessors, Nietzsche was skeptical of the idea that society began with a compact. On the contrary, he believed that nature exploited the violent passions to further its incipient breeding program, culminating in an event known only as the slave revolt. At the outset, the psychological profile of the slaves was no different from that of the masters, those beasts of prey who acted according to the prerogatives of their instincts. "They are the most involuntary and unconscious artists in existence," Nietzsche wrote. "In them that terrible egoism of the artist is in control, which stares out like bronze and sees himself, in his work, eternally justified, just like a mother is in her child."[83] The first dispensations of punishment, then, were adventitious accidents, in which the procedure of predatory aggression served an unintended function. By means of this painful investiture, the slaves learned self-restraint, splitting the psyche into two parts, so that one half was checked by the other. "To breed an animal that is entitled to make promises," Nietzsche said, "surely that is the essence of the paradoxical task nature has set itself where human beings are concerned?" [84]

While the masters extracted repayment from hapless, pre-memorial debtors, a temporal delay was interposed between stimulus and response, and, there, in its contractile possibilities, the slaves found some measure of freedom. "I consider bad conscience the profound illness which human beings had to come down with," Nietzsche said, "under the pressure of the most fundamental of all the changes which they experienced — that change when they finally found themselves locked within the confines of society and peace."[85] In its raw state, bad conscience was the fount of all ideal and imaginative phenomena. This was the common possession of man insofar as he was socialized, the reason being that an instinct repressed was not deprived of its force. Instead, it turned inwards, and carved out the depths of what nowadays would be called the soul; but it needed to be channeled, harnessed to something, in order not to detonate. For the masters, this was only a minor problem, one that tended to quickly exhaust itself in an immediate reaction. Not so for the slaves, however, who were left to chew the bitter cud of their *ressentiment*, until, finally, the law redounded back upon

[83] Nietzsche 2003, p. 58
[84] Ibid, p. 34
[85] Ibid, p. 57

its purveyors.[86] "Morality is a menagerie," Nietzsche said. "Its premise, that iron bars are more useful than freedom, even for the captive; its other premise, that there are animal tamers who do not shrink from frightful means, who know how to handle red-hot iron. This horrific species, which accepts battle with the wild animal, calls itself 'priest.'"[87]

Since he was powerless to deliver the slaves from their oppressors, the priest devised the notion of guilt to deaden the pain of injury. In this way, he secured a liminal position among the masters, who used him to propagate their form-giving directives, but at the expense of their own authority. "In this inversion of valuations (in which is also included the use of the word 'poor' as synonymous with 'saint' and 'friend') the significance of the Jewish people is to be found; it is with them that the slave insurrection in morality commences," Nietzsche explained. "Their prophets fused into one the expressions 'rich,' 'godless,' 'evil,' 'violent,' and 'sensual,' and for the first time coined the word 'world' as a term of reproach."[88] Having actually been slaves in Egypt and then continually dominated by the more powerful nations around them, it was this grand style for which Nietzsche believed that the Jews were owed a debt. Here, the feeling of power was not the aftermath of revenge but preceded it, and enabled a true democracy of the intellect to thrive. The disparity, then, between Hebraism and Hellenism arose in Nietzsche's first work. "To put it vividly," he said, "the ascetic priest provided until the most modern times the repulsive and gloomy caterpillar form in which alone the philosopher could live and creep about."[89]

At least since Plato, philosophers have claimed that man's first duty was the transcendence of mundane nature. Hence the autonomist claim, in the Enlightenment, that reason itself was the highest tribunal for epistemic disputes. "We can no longer conceal from ourselves what is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the ascetic ideal," he said, "this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of

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[86] Nietzsche opted for the French term for the simple fact that there was no suitable German equivalent. One could just as easily substitute 'resentment' here, but I have elected to stay loyal to original, not simply because doing so has become an unquestioned dicta in the literature on Nietzsche, but also because I think that the pretentious of the French term is in better keeping with his style. Consider it as a light (and affectionate!) ribbing, if you will.
[87] Nietzsche 1968, p. 214
[88] Nietzsche 1909, p. 117
[89] Nietzsche 2003, p. 83

reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself.[90] Nietzsche's struggle against Platonism was sometimes complicated by the fact that he wasn't quite certain with whom he was fighting — Socrates, or Plato? But while his personification of his adversary may have shifted throughout his career, the thrust of Nietzsche's critique remained more or less consistent: that because the elenchus had the form of a contest, it held a certain allure for the Athenian nobles:

> In the case of every Greek artist, poet, or writer we must ask: What is the new constraint which he imposes upon himself and makes attractive to his contemporaries, so as to find imitators? For the thing called "invention" (in metre, for example) is always a self-imposed fetter of this kind. "Dancing in chains"— to make that hard for themselves and then to spread a false notion that it is easy — that is the trick that they wish to show us. Even in Homer we may perceive a wealth of inherited formulæ and laws of epic narration, within the circle of which he had to dance, and he himself created new conventions for them that came after. This was the discipline of the Greek poets: first to impose upon themselves a manifold constraint by means of the earlier poets; then to invent in addition a new constraint, to impose it upon themselves and cheerfully to overcome it, so that constraint and victory are perceived and admired.[91]

Used to be considered bad manners to go around questioning your betters, Nietzsche said, but the real trouble with the dialectic was not that it *offended* good taste but that it *defeated* good taste. "With Socrates, Greek taste changes in favor of logical argument. What really happened there?" he queried. "Above all, a noble taste is vanquished; with dialectics the plebs come to the top."[92] For Nietzsche, conventions were the chains governing aesthetic form; for if one's models were to excite envy and emulation, they needed also to foster the hope of being bested. Therefore, the phenomenon of Socrates was at once an expression of degeneracy and a protest against it. What mattered here was that there was something, some mystery, which the despotic logician refused to countenance because he could not understand it. "The impulses want to play the tyrant; one must invent a *counter-tyrant* who is stronger," Nietzsche explained. "When the physiognomist had revealed to Socrates who he was -- a cave of bad appetites -- the great master of irony let slip another word which is the key to

[90] Ibid, p. 118
[91] Nietzsche 1913, p. 246
[92] Nietzsche 1889, p. 12

his character. 'This is true,' he said, 'but I mastered them all.'"[93]

If Socrates won out over his rancorous lust, it was only a pyrrhic victory, proceeding on the strength of the conviction that any concession to the instincts, to the unconscious, would lead inescapably downwards. This was most clearly exemplified, in the *Phaedrus*, when he imagined the human soul as a winged chariot, drawn by black and white horses.[94] Whereas those souls steered by reason ascended to feast upon heavenly bodies, most were dragged back to earth by a dark horse, where they fell into the life of a beast. Unsurprisingly, then, the early church fathers called Socrates a Christian before Christ, on account of the resemblance between the elenchus and the sacrament of confession; what was being constructed across and through the dialectic was a form of thought which organized itself in the style of a generalized juridism. The pertinent who received his pardon had acquired a second nature, until he was able to recite the rules of discourse as if they were his own. The object of consensus was thus privatized, made virtual, while at the same time, through the mould of admissible rhetoric, the speech of the interior became supernaturally dull and hostile to foreign ideas. Hence, in the person of Socrates, Nietzsche beheld a pale horse, and his name that sat upon him was Death, and Hell followed him. "In every ascetic morality man worships a part of himself as God and for that he needs to diabolise the other part," he said. "No wonder that here we run into a fearful opponent . . . an opponent of the sort who fights against those who deny the ideal."[95]

Although the slave revolt originated with the Jews and their *ressentiment*, Nietzsche maintained that because of their exodus, it had not become malignant. "They all possess the liberality, including liberality of the soul, to which frequent changes of residence, of climate, of the customs of one's neighbors and oppressors educates men," Nietzsche said. "They possess by far the greatest experience of human society, and even in their passions they practice the caution taught by this experience."[96] Considered in this way, the issue was not with asceticism as such but rather the

[93] Ibid, p. 14
[94] I leave it as an exercise for the reader to determine which color corresponds to which quality.
[95] Nietzsche 1924, p. 140
[96] Nietzsche 1997, p. 124

pass to which it was led by the so-called "Jewish Pascal." It was Paul who established the necessary chiasmus between law and sin, sin and grace, and whose justification by faith alone had its roots in popular Hellenism. Therefore, when Nietzsche seemed simultaneously to indict and idealize Judaism, this equivocation reflected the antimony upon which his genealogical method was founded. Paul was both a Jew and the epistolary definer of evangelical Christianity, and where the former made power munificent, the latter made it petty. Hence, the claim that Dante made a blunder when he placed "I too was created by eternal love" above the gates of Hell:

> Over the gateway into the Christian paradise and its "eternal blessedness" it would, in any event, be more fitting to let the inscription stand "Eternal hate also created me"—provided it's all right to set a truth over the gateway to a lie! For what is the bliss of that paradise? Perhaps we might have guessed that already, but it is better for it to be expressly described for us by an authority we cannot underestimate in such matters, Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher and saint: "In the kingdom of heaven" he says as gently as a lamb, "the blessed will see the punishment of the damned, so that they will derive all the more pleasure from their heavenly bliss."[97]

In the aftermath of the Second World War, and amidst vows that the Nazis' atrocities should never again be repeated, familiar ideas about the sanctity of human life began to circulate. "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood," read the First Article of the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Whereas in ancient times, the term 'dignity' was used primarily to distinguish the high-born child from the low-born, it was the Roman philosopher Cicero who first gave 'dignity' its broader sense as a general feature of mankind, whose angelic countenance, he proclaimed in *De Officiis*, consisted in "being all alike endowed with reason and with that superiority which lifts us above the brute."[98] According to Cicero, the gods gave human beings, but not other animals, a share in thought, establishing a resemblance between the two from which "all morality and propriety are derived, and upon [which] depends the rational method of ascertaining our duty."[99] With that, he paved the way for *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which incorporated the idea of Imago Dei as central to its

[97] Nietzsche 2003, p. 29
[98] Cicero 1913, p. 109
[99] Ibid

conception of human dignity.

Although the word 'dignity' did not appear in the Bible, the idea was nonetheless present in the *Book of Genesis*, when God declared: "Let us make man in *our image*, after *our likeness*; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth."[100] Perhaps, therefore, the most important implication of Cicero's innovation was how it shifted humanity's value in the order of the cosmos. As an inheritor of Greek Stoicism, Cicero thought that human beings were obliged, by dignity, to overcome their beastly propensities. Thus, for the Church, the descendants of Adam were polluted by fleshly lust, the likes of which was only negated by freely assenting to Christ. "Of all the visible creatures only man is 'able to know and love his creator,'" the *Catechism* read. "He is the only creature on Earth that God has willed for its own sake, and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life."[101] However, even into the Enlightenment, when religious dogma was put to the test, some semblance of providential deism endured in the works of Kant. "If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer capable of service, he does not fail in his duty to the dog," Kant said, "for the dog cannot judge, but his act damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind."[102]

On September 11th, 1933, the wife of Edmund Forster found him dead on the bathroom floor. The official report of the cause of death was listed as suicide, but his family believed that he had been murdered by the Nazi secret police. Fifteen years prior, he had treated Hitler for hysterical amblyopia, often using draconian methods, for which he was criticized. Post-traumatic stress was not an unfamiliar condition to physicians at the time, yet the soldiers who were afflicted by it were pejoratively known as '*kriegszitterer*' or "war tremblers." Perhaps, therefore, it is unsurprising that in Hitler's Germany, the members of his inner circle showed evidence of avoidance. "Don't bugs, rats and other vermin have a purpose in life to fulfill?" asked Himmler. "But we humans are correct when we defend ourselves against vermin."[103] Speaking to the Einsatzkommandos, Himmler tried to

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[100] Genesis 1: 26
[101] CCC 1997, p. 93
[102] Kant 2001, p. 212
[103] Rhodes 2007, p. 153

keep face, for "they surely had noticed that even he was revolted by this bloody activity and had been aroused to the depth of his soul," Bach-Zelewski recalled. "But he too was obeying the highest law by doing his duty and he was operating from a deep understanding of the necessity of this operation."[104]

Himmler said that his men's discomfort was cause for congratulations; it proved they were civilized, "but it should not disturb their consciences in the slightest, since they were soldiers who were supposed to carry out orders unquestioningly."[105] Here, there was an uncomfortable likeness to Kant, who argued that man was intended by nature to pursue only those ends which were dictated to him by reason. "We do not achieve the perfection of humanity in the determination of animality," he wrote, "and if we want to achieve the perfection of humanity, then we must do violence to the determination of animality."[106] Although not evil, Kant believed man's instinctual nature was the seat of an indwelling sin, one that threatened to usurp his higher calling by mindless self-indulgence. The Janus-faced character of human animality thus played a crucial role in connecting the necessity of childhood education to the fact of racial difference:

> Now by nature the human being has such a powerful propensity towards [lawless] freedom that when he has grown accustomed to it for a while, he will sacrifice everything for it. ... if [early discipline] does not happen, it is difficult to change the human being later on. He then follows every whim. It is also observable in savage nations that, though they may be in the service of Europeans for a long time, they can never grow accustomed to the European way of life. But with them this is not a noble propensity towards freedom, as Rousseau and others believe; rather it is a certain raw state in that the animal in this case has so to speak not yet developed the humanity inside itself.[107]

To clarify this passage, one need only consider Caspar Hauser, who appeared mysteriously one morning, in Nuremberg, clutching a Bible in one hand and an anonymous letter in the other. Caspar, as the letter explained, had been held captive all his life, and was only recently and for reasons unknown released from his prison cell. After a brief stint as a sideshow attraction, Caspar was taken

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104 Ibid
105 Ibid
106 Kant 2007, p. 416
107 Ibid, p. 438

in by a psychologist, but, despite his best efforts at education, the boy remained strange, and was never fit to live alone. To this day, very little is known for certain about Caspar Hauser, although one fact is fairly well-established: he was prone to telling tall-tales, suggesting that much of the mystery surrounding his life was manufactured by none other than Kaspar himself. Be that as it may, the story of Caspar Hauser was nonetheless illuminating, namely because it illustrated the notion of dignity as a kind of beatitude, a continual striving towards the degree of perfection of which human creatures were capable. Hence, Anslem Ritter von Feuerbach, the legal scholar who first published about Kaspar Hauser, wrote that, "inasmuch as the whole earlier part of his life was thus taken from him, he may be said to have been the subject of a partial soul-murder."[108]

In being denied intercourse with other rational beings, Feuerbach opined, Kaspar had been deprived of "all the nourishment afforded by those spiritual substances which Nature has appointed for food to the human mind, that it may grow and flourish, and be instructed and developed and formed."[109] This crime – of interfering with the destiny of a man's soul – not only outweighed the crime of illegal imprisonment, Feuerbach said, but merged into it, damning Kaspar to an unnatural state of "animal stupidity."[110] Had he not been artificially isolated, Feurbach argued, Kaspar might have married, or had a family, or learned a trade; that he did not, because he could not, because he had been kept away from others who might have taught him how, was a bonafide tragedy. Indeed, for Kant, confronting this task was precisely what differentiated human beings from the rest of the animal kingdom. "It must be noted that with all the other animals left to themselves, each individual reaches its complete vocation," he said. "However, with the human being only the species, at best, reaches it; so that the human race can work its way up to its vocation only through progress in a series of innumerably many generations."[111] Dignity, then, was not just something one *had*, on account of being human, but something one *acquired*, with culture providing an individual point of

108 Feuerbach 1833, p. 74
109 Ibid, p. 72
110 Ibid, p. 69
111 Kant 2007, p. 419

entry into the species-level project of progressive enlightenment. "All human beings are equal to one another," Kant said, "and only he who is morally good has an inner worth superior to the rest."[112]

Thus came into focus a specifically Kantian form of animalization, for "many germs lie within humanity," he explained, "and now it is our business to develop them proportionally and to unfold humanity from its germs and to make it happen that the human being reaches his vocation."[113] Many of the discriminatory passages found in Kant's work were tactical moves within a broader debate, in which human differences were explained in terms of species differences. "The negro race is a species of men as different from ours," Voltaire once quipped, "as the breed of spaniels is from that of the greyhounds."[114] Kant, on the other hand, and on account of their ability to interbreed, insisted that both races were descended from a common lineal root genus in Europe. However, divergent environmental factors, such as heat and nomadism, had led them to inculcate differences in appearance and temperament which, in addition to being heritable, were also perdurable. "Only the phyletic formation can degenerate into a race," he said. "However, once a race has taken root and has suffocated the other germs, it resists all transformation just because the character of the race has then become prevailing in the generative power."[115]

In his *Anthropology*, Kant defined barbarism as force without freedom or law. At first blush, this definition seemed oxymoronic, since the latter, as a purely conceptual matter, implied external sanctions. For Kant, however, while savages enjoyed a certain kind of unrestraint, it was, ultimately, for the birds. Without a civil constitution, man was a wolf to man. Therefore, it was the self-centered character of reason that first drove humanity from the state of nature. Only by relinquishing lawless freedom could the lawful remainder be truly cultivated, marking the essential transformation from rationable to rational animal; whereas a culture of discipline liberated him from the thrall of his instincts, a culture of skill developed his talent for purposive activity, and a civilized culture, having both of these, was the trinity of governance. For Kant, liberal republicanism was unique in its

[112] Kant 2001, p. 213
[113] Kant 2007, p. 440
[114] Voltaire 1780, p. 227
[115] Kant 2007, p. 96

commitment to the principle of equal freedom, the first seeds of liberalism of which were sometimes traced to the signing of the Magna Carta in 13th century England.[116] However, as a comprehensive political doctrine, liberalism first arose during the period between the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution, as a project of peaceful coexistence among Christians whose rivaling interpretations of scripture had ended in the Thirty Years War.

Liberalism reconciled doctrinal disagreements by making individual autonomy the highest *political* good. Hence, Voltaire and his pithy adage about tending one's own garden. Yet, the tension was never quite resolved, for as Robert Frost once said, "there is something that doesn't love a wall." Unlike the visibly authoritarian regimes that arose in defense of communism and fascism, liberalism only surreptitiously remade the world in its own image. It did not so much dispense with religious orthodoxy as secularize it, and tended to kindle a similarly crusading spirit. Although historians continue to debate the causes of the Crusades, there is a general consensus that they marked a new ideological synthesis of violence and worship. Indeed, for anyone who joined the fight against Islam, Pope Urban II proclaimed the complete remission of the penalty of all sins. The notion of penitential warfare as devotional practice was further elaborated, in the twelfth century, by Abbott Bernard of Clairvaux, who was recruited by Eugene III to rally manpower for the Second Crusade. In a promotional pamphlet entitled *De Laude Novae Militiae* (*In Praise of a New Knighthood*), Clairvaux argued that crusaders were ministers of God's justice, "so, when he kills a criminal, it is not homicide but malecide, if I may express myself that way; he carries out Christ's vengeance to the letter to those who do evil, and acquires the title of defender of Christians."[117]

Like most eighteenth century liberals, Kant envisaged the future as a confederacy of independent nations, for while a republican constitution could ensure peace domestically, it would remain imperiled so long as illiberalism laid in wait. "The problem of establishing a perfect civil society is subordinate to the problem of a law-governed external relationship with other states," he said, "and cannot be solved unless the latter is also solved."[118] Kant's liberalism thus carried with it a

[116] This document enshrined the principle that the king and his officials were not above the law.
[117] Bernard 2011, p. 11
[118] Kant 2006, p. 9

secondary effect, what David Hume called "imprudent vehemence," which inverted the usual opposition between war and peace. Until civilization extended its mantle over everything that breathed, foreign intervention would be necessary to maintain order in a nation of devils. "If one starts from Greek history," he opined, "then one will discover a regular course of improvement of state constitutions in our part of the world (which will probably someday give laws to all the others)."[119] For Kant no less than Hegel, then, the progress of humanity was forged on history's slaughter bench. Hence, the grisly admonition of Frantz Fanon that "any colony tends to become one vast farmyard, one vast concentration camp where the only law is that of the knife."[120]

"Education from providence is harsh but stern," Kant warned. "Nature works it out by way of great hardships, to the extent of nearly destroying the whole race."[121] The enlightened peoples of Europe, however, having already become conscious of their species character, were ordained by nature to decide for themselves how best to carve up the remainder. These views were by no means uncontroversial, even in Kant's time, although the most visible criticism, perhaps, came in 1786 from Georg Forster. The inability of certain races to adapt was counter-purposive, he said, and ascribed a certain myopia to God as contradicted his very nature.[122] More than that, however, Forster doubted whether Kant's monogenism did anything at all to honor the sanctity of human life. "Has the thought that blacks are our brothers ever, anywhere, even once," he implored," caused the raised whip of the slave driver to be lowered?"[123]Although he sidestepped the question of slavery in his rebuttal to Forster, Kant did cite an anti-abolitionist text approvingly in *Perpetual Peace*, arguing that the same climate which occasions the development of dark skin also occasions the development of indolence. "All inhabitants of the hottest zones are, without exception, idle," he said. "With some, this laziness is offset by government and force."[124]

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[119] Ibid, p. 15
[120] Fanon 2007, p. 232
[121] Kant 2007, p. 423
[122] An acclaimed naturalist, Forster had spent three years sailing around the world with Captain Cook, giving him a firsthand experience with non-Europeans which Kant lacked. Thus, Forster accused Kant of being too preoccupied with teleology, and of trying to make non-Europeans fit his racial theory. Interestingly, Cook was more sympathetic to polygenesis, which ironically, in terms of practice, might have been preferable.
[123] Forster 2013, p. 165
[124] Kant 2012(b), p. 576

Since children first learned to humiliate their instincts under a regimen of fear, Kantian discipline, at least at the outset, was entirely motivational. If internalized, however, it formed the basis of a duteous conscience, which was why Kant insisted that education should be administered early, because savagery, being the consequence of lack of discipline, could not be taken away.[125] For that same reason, however, he condemned the genocide of indigenous Americans, insofar as such avarice was cruel, not only to the victims, but also to the perpetrators.[126] Thanks to the support of federal legislation, new territories were already being acquired at a breakneck speed, and as more and more land was taken from them, Kant predicted that the native tribes would die off on their own. "For we calculate that only a twentieth part of all the previous Americans are still there," he said. "Since they only retain a small part, since the Europeans take so much away from them, there will arise internal struggles between them, and they will be in friction with one another."[127] In this remark, Kant bore a striking parallel to Theodor Leutwein, the man who was arguably, at the risk of saying something sacrilegious, the closest Germany ever came to a moral conscience in Southwest Africa.

Leutwin inherited his position as imperial governor, in 1896, from the man most notoriously known for carrying out the Hoornkrans Massacre in German Southwest Africa. Although Curt von François reported a stunning military victory to his superiors back in Berlin, eye-witness testimony revealed that he and his men had butchered eighty Namaqua villagers, mostly women and children, while they slept in their beds.[128] Unsurprisingly, then, as the news about Hoornkrans began to

[125] Kant 2012(a), p. 274

[126] This wasn't exactly sympathy on Kant's part. He believed that Native Americans had degenerated into an obstinate and essentially ineducable race, which meant that their extinction was inevitable. Still, cruelty was unbecoming of civilized people, so the impatience of White settlers was bad *for them*.

[127] Indeed, President Jackson negotiated nearly seventy removal treaties over the course of his administration, declaring, at his annual message to Congress in 1830: "It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation… Rightly considered, the policy of the General Government toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous. He is unwilling to submit to the laws of the States and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home . . ." (Jackson 1830)

[128] Unable to defeat the Namaqua in open battle, François launched a surprise attack on Hoornkrans in the early hours of the morning, and although he reported a stunning military triumph to his superiors, eyewitness testimony told a different story; when Chief Hendrik and his men tried to draw them away, the German soldiers charged the village, killing those who had been left behind. In addition, they took nearly one hundred Namaqua women to be used as slaves in their garrison at Windhoek, including Hendrik's wife.

dominate international headlines, many opined that such duplicity was unbecoming of a civilized nation. "Either the German Empire makes a move to maintain its prestige, or it will have to abandon the territory it has gained," one editorial argued. "The current situation is one that should fill Germany with shame."[129] François was quickly replaced by Leutwein, who, because he favored diplomacy to brute force, was much more palatable to the German metropole.[130] His correspondences with Chief Hendrik Witbooi consisted mostly of polite conversations about protection treaties, with Witbooi blaming Leutwein's predecessor for the protracted nature of their negotiations. "Von François demanded from me what is mine, and I refused: for I alone have the right to dispose of what is mine," he wrote. "Such conduct by von François I never expected, because you White people are the most educated and civilized, and you teach us truth and justice."[131]

Witbooi hoped the inflection of his words might convince German authorities to extend him a free hand in Southwest Africa, but on the contrary, it only made them more anxious for immediate action. Consequently, Leutwein dropped all pretense, and on August 21st 1894, starkly made his final demand. "The fact that you do not want to submit to the German Empire is not a sin, nor does it make you guilty. But it is extremely dangerous for the stability of the territories currently under German protection," he said. "Therefore, my dear Captain, all further letters in which you do not offer your surrender are in vain. I do hope, however, that you will agree that the war we now face will be fought in a humane way."[132] In spite of his diplomatic overtures, Leutwein had maintained a sizable military presence in the colony, revealing just how little he cared about peace in the genuine article. Outgunned and outmaneuvered, the Namaqua, therefore, succumbed to the treaty in 1895. Their obedience paid handsome dividends, and for nearly a decade, Witbooi and his troops were accorded special privileges for their service.[133] But in spite of all this, Witbooi quietly chafed under Imperial domination, and when he joined the Herero Rebellion in 1905, the Germans indeed knew

[129] Blackler 2022, p. 122
[130] Incidentally, François had succeeded Heinrich Ernst Göring (the father of Hermann Wilhelm Göring), as governor. With a history so full of nepotism, a genealogical approach to morality appears more and more sensible.
[131] Witbooi 1996, p. 151
[132] Blackler 2022, p. 127
[133] Witbooi received seven hundred cattle during the division of the plunder from Seeis, and in 1898, Leutwein even created a reservation where the Namaqua were allowed to keep their weapons.

him by his fruits. "Don't lecture me like a schoolchild on your peace," he proclaimed. "You know very well that I was right there with you many times during your peace, and have come to see in it nothing but the destruction of all our people."[134]

Even when public opinion had turned fully against him, Leutwein continued his policy of austerity, urging the imperial government to preserve the Herero under conditions of penal labor. "Aside from the fact that a people numbering 60,000 to 70,000 cannot be so easily annihilated," he said, "I would have to argue that such a measure would be an economic error."[135] Unsurprisingly, he was soon replaced by Lothar Von Trotha, who had gained a reputation for ruthlessness during his previous assignments in East Africa and China. Unlike Leutwein, von Trotha had no patience for diplomacy, and his infamous extermination order marked the first genocide of the twentieth century. Any Herero found within German territory was to be shot on sight, with rewards being offered to those who captured the chiefs and their successors. "I shall destroy the rebellious tribes by shedding rivers of blood and money," Leutwein asserted. "Only thus will it be possible to sow the seeds of something new that will endure."[136] On the eve of the Second World War, Hitler issued a similarly icy pronouncement to the Wehrmacht. "Close your hearts to pity," he said. "Act brutally."[137]

Although he came down on the side of his countrymen, Leutwein was unusually clear-eyed about the nature of colonialism, and as he stood among the ruins of his false peace, this awareness conferred upon him a near tragic status. "What is impossible is on the one hand to take land from the natives on the basis of questionable treaties and risk the life and health of one's countrymen to this end," he said, "and on the other hand to enthuse about humanitarian principles in the *Reichstag*."[138] Unlike most other German officials, Leutwein understood that dehumanization was necessary to bolster European conquest, giving new meaning to the imperial parliament as the "diet of the realm."[139] In the end, however, Leutwein failed to prove his quality, for while may have

[134] Witbooi 1996, p. 195
[135] Bridgman 2023, p. 86
[136] Meredith 2014, p. 484
[137] Rich 1973, p. 129
[138] Bly 1996, p. 68
[139] The term 'reichstag' quite literally translates to "national diet" or the "diet of the realm."

abhorred the means of genocide, his end was much the same. "He had a cold, logical mind," wrote Leonhard Harding, "trained and sophisticated, self-assured but not over-confident, versed in Hegel and Moltke, silent in seven languages, and yet with an amazing store of political naivety."[140]

Since its first publication, one of the most enduring confusions about Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has been whether the title referred to Victor or to the creature brought to life on his laboratory table. There was something rather ironic about this mistake, which struck at the central question of the novel: which came first, the featherless biped or his rotten egg? Indeed, much of the dialogue in *Frankenstein* was built around the recurrence of one term contrasted artfully against itself: 'man' as a species being and 'man' as an aspiration of what every individual can become, if given the opportunity. With the introduction of a post-human creature, then, which Frankenstein conspicuously described as a new race, the novel instantiated a critical dilemma for postmodern politics. After all, the monster belonged to the brotherhood of man, if not de jure then at least de facto; he was highly articulate, a reader of Plutarch no less, and when he confronted his creator, he did so with careful reasoning, powerful emotional appeals, and well-wrought figural language. It was precisely the voicing of his particular claim, however, that brought Victor Frankenstein's paranoia to a violent fever pitch:

> Listen to my tale: when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate me, as you shall judge that I deserve. But hear me. The guilty are allowed, by human laws, bloody as they are, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned. Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder; and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man![141]

When the monster detailed the development and history of his criminality, a contradiction emerged, namely that, although he stood accused of murder, it was only under the laws of a society from which, as experience had taught him, he had been debarred. Hence, by playing with syntactic ambiguity, the creature insinuated that it was not only the guilty but potentially also the laws that were bloody. "I allowed my thoughts, unchecked by reason, to ramble in the fields of Paradise," he

[140] Ibid, p. XIV
[141] Shelley 1846, p. 85

recounted, "and dared to fancy amiable and lovely creatures sympathizing with my feelings and cheering my gloom; their angelic countenances breathed smiles of consolation. But it was all a dream: no Eve soothed my sorrows, or shared my thoughts; I was alone."[142] After parading all of the animals in Eden before him, God plucked a rib from Adam's side, and fashioned him a companion who would be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Indeed, the creation of Adam was not finished until there was an Eve, since man, in God's plan, was never intended to live alone. However, Victor was all pride and no providence, and to his misbegotten son, he bequeathed loneliness as his sole birthright.

During the Victorian period when Shelley was writing, 'monomania' was a well-known form of melancholia, conceived as a single psychological obsession in an otherwise sound mind. The man of genius was supposed to be especially susceptible to monomania, because an overtaxed brain was prone to drawing false associations. This affliction notwithstanding, the monomaniacal individual was not, however, deprived of the use of reason. On the contrary, it was the affects that had seized upon a false principle, making the monomaniac a great erotic, as Nietzsche once called Socrates. "The gay and expansive passions react upon the understanding and the will," proclaimed the French psychiatrist Jean Etienne Esquirol. "The monomaniac lives without himself, and diffuses among others the excess of his emotions."[143] The types of monomania were thus named according to the subject of the delirium: religious monomania, hypochondriacal monomania, and even homicidal monomania. Of this last type, Victor Frankenstein was a paradigmatic example, since the spirit of discovery, in the making of his progeny, was subservient to his ego. This became especially evident during his medical studies at the University of Ingolstadt, where he was converted into an ardent proselyte of the new science of galvanism.

Harkening a rebuke from his father, who had dismissed Victor's boyhood idol, the occultist Cornelius Agrippa, as sad trash, Victor was warned by his chemistry professor not to waste time on the alchemists. Unlike his father, however, who fobbed him off with ridicule, Professor Waldman

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[142] Ibid, p. 113
[143] Esquirol 1845, p. 320

promised his pupil the real philosopher's stone. In a world increasingly reduced to configurations of inert matter, Victor derived a new sense of pride through his mastery over nature. "A new species would bless me as its creator and source, many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me," he said. "No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs."[144] The will to power was undoubtedly the most central concept to Nietzsche's thinking, since he regarded the striving for dominance as the single pivotal activity, not only of human beings, but of all life. Against the idea that life had a telos, however, morality, for Nietzsche, was as chartless as the sea, and every man a bridge over troubled water. It was, therefore, appropriate that Frankenstein was so lacking in physical substance: he was modernity's priest par excellence, in whom that great Baconian dictum, "knowledge is power," assumed an embodied form. Indeed, it was his scorn for the Gnostics that led Bacon to formulate his scientific method, to remove the subjective vestiges from the objects of rational inquiry. Having accepted this Faustian pact, Frankenstein's monster became the repository for his own discarded flesh.

When he saw himself reflected, naked, in the eyes of his cat, the French philosopher Jacques Derrida found himself awash with shame. "Ashamed of what and before whom?" he asked. "Ashamed of being as naked as a beast."[145] In *L'Animal Que Donc Je Suis* (*The Animal I Therefore Am*), Derrida used this pivotal moment, of looking at himself being looked at, to explore how the animal was simultaneously included and disavowed within the definition of the human being as *homo sapiens*. Within this binomial nomenclature, the human was always already related to some heterogeneous content, and only arose, secondarily, by way of this mediation. The title of the book, therefore, had an obvious double meaning: "*je suis*" as both "I am" and "I follow," suggesting that the human comes into being by chasing, or, rather, hunting, by hunting, *l'animot*. "Men would be, first and foremost," Derrida opined, "those creatures who have given themselves the word that enables them to speak of the animal with a single voice and to designate it as the single being that remains without a response, without a word with which to respond."[146] His use of the neologism '*animot*,' as opposed

[144] Shelley 1846, p. 40
[145] Derrida 2008, p. 4
[146] Ibid, p. 32

to '*animaux*,' underlined his awareness that, in the presence of his cat, he was on the linguistic defensive. '*Mot*,' after all, deriving from the Latin '*mutum*,' meaning "to mutter," was used in French to refer to a clever remark or a witty rejoinder. Hence, in a moment of painful self-awareness reminiscent of the Fall, Derrida had the sudden epiphany, "I am the animal that my cat sees."[147]

There were laughable similarities between Derrida's story and the one told by Hans Christian Anderson, the latter of which began when two swindlers arrived in the Emperor's city, only to proclaim that they were capable of weaving a cloth so fine, so extraordinary, that anyone who failed to see it was either stupid or negligent. In his arrogance, the Emperor immediately thought that he could use this cloth to separate the chaff from the wheat, and he paid the swindlers handsomely in exchange for his new robes. Having heard rumors of the cloth's fictitious properties, none of the Emperor's subjects want to admit that he was naked —- except, of course, for one small child, who cried out, "But the Emperor has no clothes!" Supposing that Kant, too, was cut from a priestly cloth, Nietzsche said that his theories were similarly self-serving; and indeed, this was most clearly conveyed by his accusation that Kant was the guardian of a secret path.[148] There was no such thing as disinterested intellectual compulsion, for Nietzsche, which meant that every philosopher was, in reality, the cunning advocate of his own prejudices. Hence, he called Kant a theologian, whose supersensible postulate was the guise for a bloated narcissism:

> It is a subjectively necessary transcendental presupposition that this unlimited diversity of empirical laws and heterogeneity of natural forms, of which we otherwise might be afraid, actually does not occur in nature. We must presuppose, on the contrary, that nature, through the affinity of particular laws which stand under more general laws, provides itself with the qualities necessary for it to become experienced as an empirical system.[149]

Having been awakened from his dogmatic slumber by the atheist David Hume, Kant suggested that science adopted the model of the aesthetic, in order to achieve a systematic knowledge of nature; for whereas determinant judgment operated within the boundaries of established laws, reflective

[147] Ibid, p. 118
[148] Nietzsche 2003, p. 50
[149] Kant 2000, p. 14

judgment was obliged to ascend from the particular to the universal, and, therefore, required the use of a principle like the one involved in aesthetics. “The principle of judgment, in respect of the order of the nature of things under empirical laws generally, is the *purposiveness of nature* in its variety,” he proposed. “That is, nature is represented by means of this concept as if an understanding contained the ground of the unity of the variety of its empirical laws.”[150] Kant reasoned that if the aim of fine art was the production of a beautiful appearance, then beauty would bear a logical relationship to its perfection, and could be cited as a reason, nay, *the* reason, for its being considered as good. Similarly, the free beauties of nature were pleasing, for Kant, because they appeared *as if* they were designed for the understanding of man. Nature, as Dante once said, was God’s art.

Common feeling became the basis of collective agreement, even in spite of the fact that feeling, in Kant’s view, was valid for only one person. His solution to this apparent contradiction was to argue that common feeling was posited by aesthetic judgment as the condition of possibility for arriving at a collective agreement. “We regard this underlying feeling as a common rather than a private feeling,” he said. “But if we are to use this common sense in such a way, we cannot base it on experience; for it seeks to justify us in making agreements that contain an ought: it does not say that everyone *will* agree with my judgment, but that he *ought* to.”[151] The principle of purposiveness, therefore, enabled Kant to think about freedom in a new way, arguing that human beings had access in their minds to an a priori concept, the categorical imperative, which controlled the form of moral judgment while voiding all pathological content. Such a principle demanded universality, for just as the assumption of natural ends was indispensable to scientific practice, Kant urged that, since they were not at liberty to do otherwise, human beings ought to pursue their possibly discordant ambitions according to the form that freedom required.

According to this picture, the vocation of the human being was purely practical. Therefore, what was at stake in the struggle for civilization was the cultivation of the exercise of freedom. Nietzsche, on the other hand, arrived at completely different conclusions, and was concerned about

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[150] Kant 1914, p. 17
[151] Ibid, p. 76

how such universalizing demands were inimical to life. Thus, in a short series of propositions, he dismantled Kant's distinction between the noumenal world of things and the phenomenal world of appearances, arguing that any reality but the empirical world was entirely undemonstrable. "The 'true world' has been erected upon a contradiction of the real world," he wrote, "and it is indeed an apparent world, seeing that it is merely a *moralo-optical* delusion."[152] The categorical imperative, consequently, had little value for Nietzsche, not only on account of its inadequate referent, but also because he saw it as an egotistical projection of Kant's own philosophical beliefs. "For it is selfish to experience one's own judgment as a universal law," he said, "and this selfishness is blind, petty, and frugal because it betrays that you have not yet discovered yourself nor created for yourself an ideal of your own, your very own—for that could never be somebody else's and much less that of all, all!"[153]

The novelty of Kant's approach was, in Nietzsche's view, precisely what made it vulnerable to contingency; each concrete instance of judgment, being unable to achieve the horizon of universality, would be forced to plead its case in the court of public opinion, whereas common interest could masquerade itself *as if* it were disinterested. "This condition of things actually exists in Europe at present--I call it the moral hypocrisy of the commanding class," he said. "They know no other way of protecting themselves from their bad conscience than by playing the role of executors of older and higher orders (of predecessors, of the constitution, of justice, of the law, or of God himself), or they even justify themselves by maxims from the current opinions of the herd, as 'first servants of their people,' or 'instruments of the public weal.'"[154] Considered in this way, it seemed entirely appropriate that Shelley's novel ended in an arctic tundra, since Baldwin said that there was no heavier curtain under Heaven than the curtain of White guilt. Indeed, in Dante, the lowest level of Hell was not made from fire but from ice, and that was where Satan resided: in the middle of a lake of blood, over which his wings beat a cool tempo. "What is this man?" Nietzsche asked. "A ball of wild snakes which seldom have peace together — so they go forth alone and seek prey in the

[152] Nietzsche 1889, p. 19
[153] Nietzsche 2001, p. 188-189
[154] Nietzsche 1907, p. 121

world."[155]

In 1935, the mayor of New York City, Fiorello La Guardia, commissioned an investigation to discover the cause of Harlem's first race riot.[156] The committee's findings were unequivocal: that in order to ensure future harmony, police misconduct, as well the wider racial disparities affecting his constituents, needed to be addressed. Because he was up for re-election, La Guardia concealed the report from the public, but he was not alone among northern liberals in prioritizing his own interests at the expense of Black Harlemites. Even in the 1940s, the *Times* was still emphasizing the race of alleged criminals, provided, of course, that they were Black; and after a series of three minor robberies was reported as a "crime wave," the city's police commissioner, Lewis J. Valentine, received a flood of letters from angry citizens, demanding him to crack down on Harlem's "Negro thugs."[157] Yet, the increased presence of law enforcement only heightened simmering tensions, turning the projects into a prison ward on the brink of a rebellion. Indeed, when he returned home for his father's funeral in 1943, Baldwin remarked that "I had never been so aware of policemen, on foot, on horseback, on corners, everywhere." Tragically, however, before he could even commit his father to the ground, Harlem saw its second ghetto uprising.

Things had come to a head on the evening of August 1st, when a young Black soldier was shot for interfering with the arrest of Margie Polite.[158] Amidst the ensuing chaos, Walter White, the NAACP dignitary, was allied with Mayor La Guardia, both of whom rode in their soundtrucks through Harlem, reminding everyone, rather obtusely, that Robert Brandy had not died. The irony was not lost on Baldwin that a woman named Polite had turned out to be such a livewire, and

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[155] Nietzsche 2005, p. 34

[156] It has been so described because it was committed primarily against property rather than persons. The incident began on March 19th of that year, when a Black Puerto Rican boy, Lino Rivera, bit the hand of a Harlem shop employee who had accused him of stealing a penknife. A manager intervened and the police were called, but outside, a crowd gathered around a woman who shouted that Rivera had been beaten. When an ambulance arrived to treat the wounds of the man who had been bitten, medics appeared to confirm the woman's story, and when a hearse was spotted outside the store later that day, rumors began to circulate that Rivera had been murdered. Although the woman who had raised the alarm was arrested for disorderly conduct and police dispersed the crowd, a demonstration was held outside the store that same evening, and after someone threw a rock through the window, more general destruction of the store and other White-owned businesses ensued; three people died, hundreds were wounded, and an estimated two million in damages was caused to properties throughout the district.

[157] Purnell et. al 2019, p. 44

[158] The soldier's name was Robert Bandy, and Polite was being arrested on charges of disorderly conduct.

although his feelings were somewhat conflicted, he refused to condemn the rioters who so embarrassed his more image-conscious peers. "This is why those pious calls to respect the law,' always to be heard from prominent citizens each time the ghetto explodes, are so obscene," he explained. "The law is meant to be my servant and not my master, still less my torturer and my murderer. To respect the law, in the context in which the American Negro finds himself, is simply to surrender his self-respect."[159] Baldwin's frankness was startling, but even more startling, perhaps, was his willingness to exploit the riot's symbolic significance in order to wrest some political insight from the passing of his father. "He had lived and died in an intolerable spirit of bitterness and it frightened me, as we drove him to the graveyard through those quiet, ruined streets," Baldwin recalled, "to see how powerful and overflowing this bitterness could be and to realize this bitterness now was mine."[160]

To the young Baldwin, the riot seemed like a chastisement devised by God to punish him for having dismissed his father's apocalyptic vision. Although he was no stranger to racism, Baldwin had grown up in the predominantly Black projects of Harlem, and, therefore, had much less acquaintance with segregation than did his father, who was a preacher-man from New Orleans. It was only once he moved away from home during the war, however, to work at a defense plant in New Jersey, that Baldwin discovered his father's cynicism was not entirely without basis; he became notorious for his persistent, one-man attempts at integration, and after several dismissals and reinstatements at his job, Baldwin was finally fired for good. "I acted in New Jersey in the way I had always acted," he said, "that is, as though I thought a great deal of myself, with results that were, simply, unbelievable."[161] Faced with such recalcitrance, and at a loss for what else to do, Baldwin snapped when, for the umpteenth time, he was refused service at the American Diner. "We don't serve Negroes here," the waitress said:

> Somehow, with the repetition of that phrase, which was already ringing in my head like a thousand bells of a nightmare, I realized that she would never come any closer

[159] Baldwin 1966
[160] Baldwin 2021, p. 129
[161] Ibid, p. 132

> and that I would have to strike from a distance. There was nothing on the table but an ordinary water-mug half full of water, and I picked this up and hurled it with all my strength at her. She ducked and it missed her and shattered against the mirror behind the bar. And, with that sound, my frozen blood abruptly thawed, I returned from wherever I had been, I saw, for the first time, the restaurant, the people with their mouths open, already, as it seemed to me, rising as one man, and I realized what I had done, and where I was, and I was frightened.[162]

In his romantic reading of *Paradise Lost,* Mary Shelley's husband, Percy, saw heroism in Satan's indefatigable rebellion, because God had condemned him, not in order to induce his repentance, but rather to exasperate him to sin. Nietzsche argued similarly, that if a man followed his passions far enough, he would inevitably come face to face with the primordial evil within himself. "You aspire to the free heights, your soul thirsts for the stars," he wrote. "But your wicked instincts, too, thirst for freedom. Your wild dogs want freedom; they bark with joy in their cellar when your spirit plans to open all prisons."[163] In criminal transgression, the old instincts avenged themselves against civilization, and in guilt, civilization avenged itself back. The pale criminal, then, was a kind of cautionary tale, about someone who invented reasons in retrospect of his deeds, because he could not stomach them; but the mark of the beast was indelible. Hence, the many storefront churches, in which the ghetto's congregants wore their chains as golden mesh.

Baldwin, like his father, had close affiliations with Protestantism, having spent several years as a teenage preacher at the Fireside Pentecostal. The mean streets of Harlem gave him plenty of material for his sermons, "for the wages of sin were visible everywhere," but in the end, Baldwin was unable to reconcile himself with the hypocrisies of organized religion, and left the pulpit after only three years. "I really mean that there was no love in the church," he said. "It was a mask for hatred and self-hatred and despair."[164] Despite his religious disaffiliation, however, Baldwin's upbringing left marks that no amount of apostasy could erase, so that when he quit the ministry, the gift of tongues went with him:

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[162] Ibid, p. 134
[163] Nietzsche 2005, p. 38
[164] Baldwin 2021, p. 348

> The American triumph—in which the American tragedy has always been implicit—was to make Black people despise themselves. When I was little I despised myself; I did not know any better. And this meant, albeit unconsciously, or against my will, or in great pain, that I also despised my father. *And* my mother. *And* my brothers. *And* my sisters. Black people were killing each other every Saturday night out on Lenox Avenue, when I was growing up; and no one explained to them, or to me, that it was *intended* that they should; that they were penned where they were, like animals, in order that they should consider themselves no better than animals. Everything supported this sense of reality, nothing denied it: and so one was ready, when it came time to go to work, to be treated as a slave. So one was ready, when human terrors came, to bow before a white God and beg Jesus for salvation—this same white God who was unable to raise a finger to do so little as to help you pay your rent, unable to be awakened in time to help you save your child![165]

In the sixth grade, an all-Black production of *Macbeth* left its mark on the mind of Baldwin, who recounted being struck by the physical presence of the cast, and by the curious mixture of real and imaginary that constituted the essence of the theater. When he found himself on the church floor crying holy unto the Lord, it was the memory of this performance that occupied his mind. "We are all each other's flesh and blood," Baldwin said. "This is a truth which it is very difficult for the theater to deny, and when it attempts to do so the same thing happens to the theater as happens to the church; it becomes sterile and irrelevant, a blasphemy, and the true believer goes elsewhere, carrying, as it happens, the church and the theater with him."[166] In this way, Baldwin represented his defection from the church as being not just inevitable but salutary, for if he identified with the figure of Christ, it was as the word made flesh. "So, in my case, in order to become a moral human being, whatever that may be," he explained, "I have to hang out with publicans and sinners, whores and junkies, and stay out of the temple where they told us nothing but lies anyway."[167] Of course, his interlocutor, Margaret Mead, agreed, having given voice throughout her career to a peculiarly firebrand liberalism. "This is, of course, what Jesus did, too," she said. "Yes," Baldwin replied, "it is only in this sense that I can be called a Christian."[168]

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[165] Baldwin 2011, p. 256

[166] Baldwin 2013, p. 31

[167] Baldwin & Mead 1972, p. 89

[168] Ibid

In the winter of 1951, during a self-imposed exile in Paris, Baldwin suffered a nervous breakdown while attempting to write his first novel. Indeed, he became so deeply depressed that his lover, Lucien Happersberger, rushed him off to his family's chateau, nestled deep in the heart of the Alps. Anchored in these cold and alien surroundings by some old recordings of Bessie Smith, Baldwin described his time in Leukerbad as a bizarre sojourn to some seemingly prelapsarian moment in Europe before race became institutionalized; the village residents had never seen anyone like him, and their only awareness of Black people came through the annual giving campaign in which the local Catholic church "bought" Africans to convert them to Christianity. "I tried not to think of these so lately baptized kinsmen, of the price paid for them, or the peculiar price they themselves would pay," Baldwin wrote, "and said nothing about my father, who having taken his own conversion too literally never, at bottom, forgave the white world (which he described as heathen) for having saddled him with a Christ in whom, to judge at least from their treatment of him, they themselves no longer believed."[169]

With an effortless discursivity which would become his signature style, Baldwin swept back and forth throughout history, wherein 'X' marked that diasporic space, which he elsewise called "time now." Indeed, this was the focal point in his descriptions of Malcolm, whose urgency stemmed from the sense that his life was always already half over. "I had a jungle mind," he told his biographer. "I was living in a jungle, and everything I did was done by instinct to survive."[170] Because of this swift but stagnant present, the ghetto was yoked to a nonhuman temporality, in which every moment coincided perfectly with itself. Hence, if Malcolm dilated in prison, so, too, did Baldwin in Europe, but the intensifying struggle for civil rights soon contracted his vision again. "There is a dreadful abyss between the streets of this village and the streets of the city in which I was born," he said, "between the children who shout Neger! today and those who shouted Nigger! yesterday — the abyss is experience, the American experience."[171] This fragmented ancestry triggered an aesthetic crisis for Baldwin, who struggled to feel at home with cultural artifacts he admired most. Therefore,

169 Baldwin 2011, p. 82
170 X 1992, p. 450
171 Baldwin 2011, p. 85

whatever sense of superiority had initially possessed him, it was quickly dissipated upon finding himself in a reverse colonial encounter:

> These people cannot be, from the point of view of power, strangers anywhere in the world; they have made the modern world, in effect, even if they do not know it. The most illiterate among them is related, in a way that I am not, to Dante, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Aeschylus, Da Vinci, Rembrandt, and Racine; the cathedral at Chartres says something to them which it cannot say to me, as indeed would New York's Empire State Building, should anyone here ever see it. Out of their hymns and dances come Beethoven and Bach. Go back a few centuries and they are in their full glory—but I am in Africa, watching the conquerors arrive.[172]

Here, Fanon's metaphor of the bastard aristocracy had a particular resonance with Baldwin, because it indicated a kind of textual miscegenation, even rape, between the African pagan, on the one hand, and the alabaster cross, on the other. "The problem is rooted in how one treats one's flesh and blood, especially one's children," said. "The blacks are the despised and slaughtered children of the great Western house — nameless and unnamable bastards."[173] Extending this riff on alienation, Baldwin argued that America was in the grips of a profound lack of intimacy, which, precisely because it had lost its spectacular exceptionality, made genuine interracial contact nearly impossible. This was evidenced, for Baldwin, by an experience of sexual assault, in which he was groped by one of the South's most powerful segregationist politicians. "When the man grabbed my cock," he said, "I watched his eyes, thinking, with great sorrow, *The un- examined life is not worth living*."[174]

Baldwin's tenacity to this idea was at once impressive and heart-wrenching, for although he defended it with great eloquence, he also knew that, for most people, terror, and not love, was the secret companion of scrutiny. Unsurprisingly, then, when he was asked, in a 1961 interview, whether King was the future Black activism, Baldwin rejected the premise entirely. "There are lots of people, lots of black people I mean, now, who don't go to church no more, and don't listen to Martin, you know, and anyway are themselves produced by a civilization which has always glorified violence — unless the Negro had the gun," he said. "So that Martin is undercut by the performance of the

[172] Ibid, p. 83
[173] Baldwin 1998, p. 468
[174] Baldwin 2013, p. 63

country."[175] It was obvious to Baldwin that King was brought up in order to invest him with a moral authority over Malcolm and the Black Panthers. Thus, with his retort, Baldwin implicated both his host, as well as the people watching safely behind their televisions, in the bloody pageantry about which he was being called to testify. Black children had been fed on the American Dream only to awaken into its racial nightmare, for which they paid "a terrible price in discipline, in moral discipline, and interior effort and courage which the country cannot imagine."[176] Therefore, when the interviewer pressed the issue, Baldwin held the line. "What is happening to Martin, for example, what is happening to all those children in Birmingham is being done in your name," he implored. "You have no right, *no right* not to know that."[177]

Baldwin had a habit of speaking about violence with a candour and clarity of conscience that outraged modern liberals. Hence, his disinvitation by King from the March on Washington; and although he was notoriously ambivalent about the Nation of Islam, neither could he deny the appeal of its leader, Elijah Muhammad. "I paid very little attention to what I heard, because the burden of the message did not strike me as being very original; I had been hearing variations of it all my life," Baldwin said. "Its emotional tone is as familiar to me as my own skin; it is but another way of saying that sinners shall be bound in Hell a thousand years."[178] However, the key was not what was being articulated on the corner of 125th street, but the ongoing set of negotiations which was playing out with law enforcement. Instead of dragging the speaker from his dias, they did nothing, not because they had grown a conscience but because they were afraid. "And, indeed, they were," Baldwin said, "and I was delighted to see it."[179] These facts notwithstanding, the Nation's Manicheanism, its politics of fear, led Baldwin to emphasize mutual kinship over ideology. Thus, he resigned from *Liberator*, which had been steadily growing towards antisemitism throughout the civil rights movement. This was largely because, in Harlem, Blacks primarily encountered Jews as landlords and collectors. "I knew that these people were Jews — God knows I had been told often enough,"

[175] "Perspectives" 1963
[176] Ibid
[177] McWilliams 2017, p. 344
[178] Baldwin 1995, p. 39
[179] Ibid, p. 40

Baldwin said. "But I only thought of them as white. Jews, as such, until I got to high school, were all incarcerated in the Old Testament."[180]

These economic relations in themselves were a source of ambivalence. On the one hand, Jews had been willing to do business with Blacks at a time when others refused. However, they also had more upward mobility, which proved that antisemitism was not a racial prejudice — or, at least, that was how it seemed, especially when Jews pointed to their own history of persecution, and advised their Black neighbors to wait. It was this strangely irrational notion, as if there were something in the very flow of time that inevitably cured all ills, which, for Baldwin, was the chronic failure of Enlightenment progressivism. Indeed, after so many deaths, he even called himself the last witness, and, hence, he was struck by a further thought as he reflected on the diner. "I saw nothing very clearly but I did see this: that my life, my real life, was in danger," he said, "and not from anything other people might do but from the hatred I carried in my own heart."[181] With that, Baldwin was returned to the day of the funeral, and to the momentous sight of his father's skin equivocated by powder. What had been intended by the undertaker to dignify the corpse, in truth, was a confession, by which the singular exigency of the present moment became infected with other times. "You can only be destroyed by believing that you really are what the white world calls a nigger," Baldwin wrote his nephew. "I tell you this because I love you, and please don't forget it."[182]

[180] Ibid, p. 30
[181] Baldwin 2021, p. 135
[182] Ibid, p. 333

CHAPTER THREE:
STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

"And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water
And he spent a long time watching from his lonely wooden tower
And when he knew for certain only drowning men could see him
He said all men will be sailors then until the sea shall free them
But he himself was broken, long before the sky would open
Forsaken, almost human, he sank beneath your wisdom like a stone."

— Leonard Cohen

On January 3rd, 1889, Friedrich Nietzsche was walking through a piazza in Turin when he spotted a merchant beating his horse with a whip. Crying out for his brother, the professor threw his arms around the horse's neck, from whom he could only be torn away by the combined strength of two policemen. He was admitted to a psychiatric hospital in Basel several days later, but not before he penned a series of madness letters, in which he wrote, "I am every name in history," and which he signed, alternately, "Dionysus" and "The Crucified."[183] A similar scene, found in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, provides an almost exact script for the Turin event, the veracity of which continues to be debated among Nietzsche scholars. Be that as it may, the story does have a ring of truth to it; for it was Nietzsche who said that Dostoevsky was the only psychologist from whom he had anything to learn. Supposing that Nietzsche was right, then, that humanity was the meager product of a slavery that hides from itself, perhaps the road to liberation was neither true nor false but a duplexity, originating from the grounding theatrical principle of the "as if."

When Dostoevsky was arrested, in 1849, for his involvement in the Petrashevsky Circle, he was sentenced to death by firing squad. At the last moment, however, the sentence was stayed, and he was instead shown the mercy of a Siberian prison camp (although, one suspects that the bullet would have been kinder). Dostoevsky served four grueling years in Siberia, and this allowed him to describe the conditions of prison life with great authenticity; the "House of the Dead," he called it. In the camp, he saw guards gleefully beating prisoners, and convicts killing each other without a

[183] Young 2010, p. 530

shred of remorse, and yet, having been thrown into this den of thieves, the unusually sensitive Dostoevsky saved his scorn. "Remember particularly that you cannot be a judge of anyone," he said. "For no one can judge a criminal until he recognizes that he is just such a criminal as the man standing before him, and that he perhaps is more than all men to blame for that crime. When he understands that, he will be able to be a judge."[184] Dostoevsky was not alone in reaching this conclusion, however. Another of history's most famous political prisoners, Nelson Mandela, said that no one truly knows a nation until he's been inside its jails; but Mandela also said there was no keener revelation of a society's soul than how it treated children, not unlike the verklempt professor, by whom the two roles were interpolated. "Our crime against criminals," he said, "lies in the fact that we treat them like rascals."[185]

This single sentence, contained in an aphorism entitled "Punishable, Never Punished," was Nietzsche's first direct remark about criminality. The previous aphorism, however, entitled, "Where Honesty Can Lead," clarified its connection to the precarious position of the child. "The lack of reticence concerning the general secret," he wrote, "and the irresponsible propensity for seeing what no one wants to see — oneself —- brought him to prison and a premature death."[186] For Nietzsche, the human being was, initially, like any other animal, and consisted of diverse drives of varying strengths, which often competed for dominance. With the emergence of a conscience, however, they began to experience this internal discord as a threat to their well-being, and to identify themselves with the mirror image of a falsely unified self. This unity, represented by the image of the whole body, was at once enchanting and beguiling; its nether face was a Frankensteinian monster, held together with naught but spit and baling wire. Even so, the fact that humans became attached to the notion of a self-image through their reflection in the dimension of appearances figured something important, for Nietzsche, about the general nature of art. "We possess art," he said, "lest we perish of the truth."[187]

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[184] Dostoevsky 2002, p. 320
[185] Nietzsche 1878, p. 79
[186] Ibid
[187] Nietzsche 1968, p. 435

It is a well-known fact that in his youth, Nietzsche was attracted to Schopenhauer's pessimism, which is no doubt why *The Birth of Tragedy* began with the story of Silenus, the Dionysian votary. When, at long last, King Midas managed to capture the satyr, he asked what was the best and most desirable thing for man. Silenus maintained a surly silence until, goaded by the King, he burst out with piteous laughter and said, "Oh, wretched ephemeral race, children of chance and misery, why do you compel me to tell you what it would be most expedient for you not to hear? What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. But the second best for you is—to die soon."[188] Writing in the decades immediately preceding Nietzsche, Schopenhauer characterized life as an incessant and painful willing; man's default mode of existence was to want, and to experience want was to suffer, as each desire satisfied was followed, rank and file, by another, and so on unto death. Hence, on balance, Schopenhauer concluded that non-existence was to be preferred, although mankind was tricked by some biological imperative into believing differently. In agreement with Schopenhauer, then, Nietzsche expanded on this idea: that throughout its history, humanity had devised a number of illusions to mask the horror of existence, the Apollonian drive to beauty being key among them.

The Apollonian and the Dionysian were key terms in Nietzsche's philosophy of aesthetics, referring to two opposing energies within art. Implicit in Apollonian sculpture was Schopenhauer's *principium individuationis*, which carved its subject and made it distinctive from the immediacy of nature; but just when it seemed as though mind had triumphed over matter, an ancient wine cult arrived from the East, and pierced the Apollonian veil. In contrast to the Greeks, these revelers believed that Dionysus freed humanity from the shackles of the self through the inebriating effects of alcohol, which they called '*enthousiasmos*,' or "being filled with god." Beyond mere drunkenness, however, Dionysian intoxication was supposed to be a state of lucidity, in which seeing double meant seeing clearly. "Thus, through this gulf of oblivion, the worlds of everyday and Dionysian

[188] Nietzsche 1995, p. 8

reality become separated," Nietzsche explained. "But when one once more becomes aware of this everyday reality, it becomes repellent."[189]

No longer content to pursue Apollonian art, the Greeks were saved from Dionysian pessimism through the invention of tragic theater. Nietzsche accounted for the birth of tragedy out of the spirit of music, because the pathos rendered by the choral dithyramb was made manifest in the hero. "In this enchantment, the Dionysian reveler sees himself as a satyr, and then, in turn, as a satyr, he looks at his god," Nietzsche explained. "That is, in his transformed state, he sees a new vision outside himself as an Apollonian fulfillment of his condition."[190] Playing on the double-meaning of the word 'proposon' as both "face" and "mask," the hero of the tragedy was none other than Dionysus experiencing in himself the agonies of Apollonian individuation; each god served metonymically as a substitute for the other, and as they watched the drama unfold, the Greeks developed a perceptual optimism towards suffering, which they encountered as the aesthetic condition of a beautiful, Janus-faced whole. "For a brief moment we really become the primal essence itself, and feel its unbounded lust for existence and delight in existence," Nietzsche wrote. "Now we see the struggles, the torment, the destruction of phenomena as necessary, given the constant proliferation of forms of existence forcing and pushing their way into life, the exuberant fertility of the world will."[191]

For Nietzsche, the death throes of tragedy were fought by Euripides, who was the first Greek dramatist to bring the spectator to the stage as a deus ex machina. In the end, however, Euripides was only a footsoldier for someone much more profound, which, perhaps, explains the significance of Silenus to the peculiar dialectic that is *The Birth of Tragedy*.[192] Whereas Silenus was wisest when he was drunkest, Socrates, canonically, never succumbed to drink. Through his alleged influence on Euripides, then, Socrates expropriated tragedy's erotic center, so that the dialogue, as the chorus retreated, became sterile and deformed. Nietzsche's point was not the obvious one,

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[189] Ibid, p. 23
[190] Ibid, p. 27
[191] Ibid, p. 60
[192] "Socrates emerges as the perfect pattern of the non-mystic, in whom the logical side has become, through superfetation, as overdeveloped as has the instinctual side in the mystic" (Ibid, p. 54).

however, that Socrates quit Dionysian intoxication for Apollonian sobriety; it was, rather, that by demanding everything beautiful should also be rationally intelligible, he lost sight of the compact between them. Without the Dionysian drives, the Apollonian elements could not give birth to art, and this, for Nietzsche, was a refutation in itself. The Socratic exodus beyond the cave was, therefore, a kind of exorcism, representing the repulsion of man's intuitional aspect from the philosophical enterprise. "Wherever Socratism turns its searching eyes it sees lack of insight and the power of illusion," he wrote, "and from this lack it infers the essential perversity and reprehensibility of what exists."[193]

Teratology, or the study of human abnormality, derived its name from the Greek word '*teras*,' which referred to both a "monster" and a "marvel." In the disenchanted world of modern science, this translated to freak shows, where evolutionary missing links were put on display like court jesters, until the rediscovery of Mendelian genetics gave rise to Social Darwinism. The theory of natural selection required a mechanism for heredity which Darwin never furnished. Therefore, Mendel's principles of genetic inheritance not only completed Darwin's theory, but also laid the scientific seedbed to improve the human race. Although Plato might have been the first person to promote the idea, the term 'eugenics' was first coined by Darwin's cousin, Sir Francis Galton, in 1883, as a name for the form of politicized biology more commonly known as "good breeding." In its inception, eugenics was quite popular among the British intelligentsia, who believed that parents of noble stock produced healthier, happier citizens. Among them, policies of racial hygiene enjoyed almost universal support, including by such godfathers of American liberalism as the novelist H.G. Wells. "The nation that most resolutely picks over, educates, sterilizes, exports, or poisons its people of the abyss," he said, "will certainly be the ascendant or dominant nation before the year 2,000."[194]

In the early days of the Third Reich, when Germany's sterilizations were accelerating beyond five thousand per month, American scientists proudly acknowledged their influence on Nazi legislation. Indeed, in 1934, an exhibition on Hitler's eugenics program was shown at the Los

[193] Ibid, p. 47
[194] Wells 1902, p. 212

Angeles County Museum during the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association. "You will be interested to know that your work has played a powerful part in shaping the opinions of the group of intellectuals who are behind Hitler in this epoch-making program," announced C.M. Goethe, founder of the Eugenics Society of Northern California. "Everywhere I sensed that their opinions have been tremendously stimulated by American thought."[195] After the country joined the war, however, American eugenicists were forced to widely denounce the Nazis in order to distance their own practices from those that contributed to the Holocaust; but decades before they turned to the Jews, many of the Nazis atrocities had already been prefigured during Germany's colonial period, when Lothar Von Trotha archetypally asserted that a humane war could not be fought against vermin. His statement reflected a sentiment, common among eugenicists at the time, that Africans were more ape than human, which is no doubt why, while the last remnants of the Herero were being subjugated by the Germans, a Mbuti man named Ota Benga was being displayed at the Bronx Zoo Monkey House.

Benga's wife and children were killed by the Belgian Force Publique sometime around 1902, and although he survived the attack, he himself was captured and traded by Bashilele slavers. They sold Benga to an American entrepreneur named Samuel Verner, who was commissioned to collect Congolese pygmies for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition. Once the fair was over, however, Verner rehomed Benga to the Bronx Zoo, where he developed a bond with Dohong, the orangutan, and taught him to perform tricks. With support from Madison Grant, a then-prominent racial anthropologist, the zoo's director arranged for the pair to be displayed together at the Monkey House. However, a scandal flared almost immediately, fueled by the indignation of J.H. Gordon of the Colored Baptist Ministers Conference. "Our race, we think, is depressed enough, without exhibiting one of us with the apes," he said. "We think we are worthy of being considered human beings, with souls."[196] Understandably, the clergymen found Benga's treatment abhorrent, but they

[195] Kühl 1994, p. 58
[196] Gordon, for his part, was opposed to public demonstrations of Darwinian theory, not least of all because they were opposed to the teachings of the church. In response, Dr. Hornaday, the zoo's director, said that, while he was a believer in evolution, he did not believe that the missing link would ever be found alive. In spite of what he claimed to the press, however, Hornaday's writings very clearly suggested that he saw Benga as being, if not subhuman, then at least further

also emphasized that, because he had development potential, he should be Christianized. Thus, they successfully petitioned the mayor for Benga's release, and for a while, his situation seemed to improve. Once his English was good enough, Benga was able to get a job at a tobacco factory in Lynchburg, and began saving money for a return ticket to Africa. However, when passenger ship traffic was ended by the outbreak of the First World War, Benga fell into a terrible depression. He died by suicide two years later, when he chipped the caps off his sharpened teeth, and shot himself in the heart.

The Wildlife Conservation Society has since apologized for what happened to Benga, and for the scientific racism perpetuated by its founder, Madison Grant, whose work was cited by the defense during the infamous Nuremberg trials. Interestingly enough, however, Heinrich Himmler was the first European leader to ban human zoos. He said that freak shows were cruel, and tried to turn a profit from human misery, which might have seemed paradoxical were it not for the peculiar interrelationship between animality, disability, and race in Hitler's Reich. Soon after they came to power in 1933, the Nazis passed the Animal Protection Act, which not only met the requirements of organizational efficiency but was also a way of bringing nature under totalized central control. Therefore, after an extensive section on specific provisions for animal experimentation, the document ended by outlining the punishments for animal abusers, who faced up to two years imprisonment and heavy fines for violations. There was also a provision for euthanasia, which required animals to be put down once their lives became a burden. The wording of the provision was vague, however, and it was unclear how such quality of life assessments were to be made. Hence one binding commentary, which mandated uncertain cases to be decided by party-appointed experts.[197]

down on the evolutionary scale. Indeed, in his book, *The Minds and Manners of Wild Animals*, he said, "Some sensitive minds shrink from the idea that man has 'descended' from apes. I never for a moment shared that feeling. I would rather descend from a clean, capable and bright minded genus of apes than from any unclean, repulsive race of the genus *Homo*" (Churchill 2010, p. 138

[197] The law's authors, which included the veterinarian Clemens Giese and the jurist Waldemar Kahler, were very clear that animal cruelty was to be punished, not because it offended human sensibility but for the sake of animals themselves. Troublingly, then, the Nazis moved beyond the traditional, Kantian approach of animal welfarism, and embraced a pathocentric legislation that enshrined both negative and positive duties to animals under human care. Pain, for example, was not understood merely in the scientific sense of physical sensation but included psychological suffering, such as might be caused by fear or neglect. This was astonishingly progressive, but it also made the Nazis' crimes that much

Derived from two Greek roots meaning "a gentle and easy death," euthanasia originally referred to the deliberate termination of a patient's life, in order to save them from the ravages of disease. A second meaning came into use, however, when technological advances made it possible to prolong the lives of the terminally ill, so that the withholding of life-sustaining treatment became known as passive euthanasia. Thereafter, the division of euthanasia into active and passive forms gave rise to four distinct subcategories, which hinged decisively on whether the patient's death was consensual; if the patient's life was terminated upon the patient's own request, then the act was called voluntary, and if not, then the act was called involuntary, and almost universally condemned as murder. However, definitional problems arise at the margins, which was precisely why the Nazis harnessed the power of cinema to obfuscate the difference. Indeed, in 1937, Hitler ordered *Opfer der Vergangenheit (Victims of the Past)*, a sound documentary on neuropsychiatric illness, to be played in theaters across the country. "The German people know nothing about the oppressive spirit in those institutions where thousands of the babbling feeble-minded, who are lower than any animal, have to be fed and artificially cared for," boomed the voice of the narrator. "Anyone who has seen such creatures cannot continue to maintain that it would not be humane to prevent the creation of such creatures."

Opfer presented the overarching theme that human ballast should not be allowed to procreate, contrasting the expense of modern asylums with limited therapeutic results. Therefore, as rows of disfigured faces were followed by a single man thrashing his arms in a field of wildflowers, the unequivocal subtext was the necessity of pulling weeds. Under the Nazi government, every aspect of German life was coordinated into a single, hierarchical structure, ensuring a top-down chain of command in a process referred to as "*gleichschaltung*." The communications media thus stood in a circular interrelationship, supplying one another with themes dictated by the principles of the Party. This control was of paramount importance to Joseph Goebbels, the Reich Minister for Propaganda, who recognized its potential value as a source of populist appeal. "The Führer praises

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more insidious, not because animals mattered less, but precisely because this valuation, being so at odds with the standards of their day, was an achieved position (Pluda 2019, p. 42).

the superiority of our systems compared with liberal-democratic ones," he said. "We educate our people according to a common worldview (*Weltanschauung*), with the aid of films, radio and the press, which the Führer sees as the most important tools of popular leadership."[198] Unlike Hitler, however, Goebbels believed that propaganda worked best when it operated subliminally. He, therefore, encouraged the production of feature films to reflect the ambience of National Socialism but without announcing its intentions.

During the postwar era of the 1920s, the newly founded Weimar Republic was in a state of emergency. As banknotes were printed at a fever pitch to keep up with a currency that was quickly plummeting in value, hyperinflation made day-to-day survival arduous for working-class Germans.[199] The revolutionary spirit, then, emerged throughout the country, as the people struggled to afford even basic necessities, like a simple loaf of bread. Indeed, Germany's road to the Second World War began just two months after the first, when it was subjected, through the Treaty of Versailles, to punitive measures so severe, the economist John Maynard Keynes even quit his post with the British delegation in protest. For others, however, the treaty was too lenient, and they worried that it would not be enough to prevent future German aggression. "This is not peace," declared French army general Marshal Ferdinand Foch. "It is an armistice for twenty years." In the end, both men were right, as a conspiracy started circulating among German citizens that they had been stabbed in the back by internal forces. Initially, there was no consensus about who was to blame, until the new Nazi Party accused Jewish Bolshevists of undermining the war effort. Thereafter, they began referring to members of the liberal government as the "November Criminals," and swore to tear up the Treaty of Versailles if Hitler was elected. Between the parliamentary elections of 1928 and 1932, popular support for the Nazi Party surged from just three percent to thirty-seven, and yet, when Hitler was appointed as chancellor the following year, many of the political elite thought they could control him. Alas, in the famous words of Mike Tyson, "everyone has a plan until they get punched in the

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[198] Welch 2008, p. 57

[199]

mouth."[200]

A key Nazi criticism of Weimar democracy was that it had duped ethnic Germans into relinquishing their natural race consciousness. In their resolve to reeducate the German people, therefore, Hitler's political opponents were the first to be persecuted. In 1933 alone, approximately two hundred thousand political prisoners were detained in empty factories and warehouses across the country, under the exclusive jurisdiction of Hermann Göring, whose father, conspicuously, had been the first governor-general in German Southwest Africa. One of Göring's first acts as cabinet minister was to oversee the creation of the Gestapo, for which he ceded responsibility in 1934 to Heinrich Himmler. Himmler was both an army veteran and early convert to Nazism, whose unassuming manner and pince-nez glasses cloaked a ruthless personality. Within a few short years, he transformed Göring's brown-shirted elite from a few dozen of Hitler's personal bodyguards to a vast organization of hundreds of thousands of men, thanks, in no small part, to his expertise farming chickens in Bavaria. In high density environments, hens establish dominance-hierarchies by snapping their beaks at one another, giving rise to the colloquial expression of a pecking order. What Himmler saw in the Gestapo, then, were the germs of a new civilization: two hundred unique German specimens with only a single thought between them — "Honor thy Führer."

Göring's makeshift detention centers were not meant for long-term use, and most of them were replaced with more permanent fixtures before the end of the war. One notable exception, however, was Dachau. The provisions of the camp included periodic behavioral assessments, so that inmates who proved their loyalty to the Party could become eligible for release. Thus, to newly arriving prisoners, an iron gate with the phrase "*Arbeit macht frei*" seemed to point the way back out. Throughout the existence of the camp, however, authorities there treated Jews to an almost refined cruelty, and to the greatest possible extent, they were led to death from exhaustion and disease. "We Germans, who are the only people in the world who have a decent attitude to animals, will also adopt a decent attitude toward these human animals," Himmler said. "But it is a crime against our

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[200] This quote came from an interview in which Tyson was asked whether he was worried about fighting Evander Holyfield.

own blood to worry about them."[201] There should have been no doubt, therefore, as to Hitler's true intentions, which were only made explicit once he deemed the time as right. Writing under instructions from Hitler, Göring solicited a plan from Himmler, in 1941, for carrying out the final solution of the so-called "Jewish question," wherein all Jews still living in German-occupied territories were ordered to present themselves at assembly points, for what Nazi officials euphemistically described as residence transfers.[202] The majority, however, were sent to Auschwitz, where the morgue at the crematorium was adapted for use as a gas chamber.

In just four-and-a-half years, the Nazis murdered nearly one million Jews at Auschwitz, most of them immediately upon arrival. The situation changed, however, when manpower reserves began to run low, and special measures had to be taken to make up for the shortage of replacements. It was to the obvious benefit of the Nazis to prioritize the exploitation of Jewish labor, and so many prisoners wagered a bet with the sole asset at their disposal. With an intake of fewer than one thousand calories per day, however, most were doomed to a slow starvation, from which death was practically the only effective relief. This was domestication taken to its logical extreme as a form of forced self-selection: in a bid for survival, the inmates at Auschwitz directed the value-ethics dictated by the Nazis against themselves, until the originally rational and forestalling aspect of their behavior, namely the intention to ward off the worst outcome by choosing the lesser of two evils, was successively shifted and reversed. In truth, the exploitation of Jewish labor was only ever a secondary interest to the Nazis, subordinate to the ultimate goal of total extermination. The expendability of the camp's inmates, therefore, not only echoed the plight the colonized, but also served, to the likes of James Baldwin, as an eerie portent for the future:

> White people were, and are, astounded by the Holocaust in Germany. They did not know that they could act that way. But I very much doubt whether black people were astounded - at least, in the same way. For my part, the fate of the Jews, and the

[201] Welch 2013, p. 95

[202] While there, they had to hand over the keys to their flats and relinquish whatever property could not be carried in a suitcase. The theft of this property was legalized by the 11th implementing degree for the Nuremberg Laws, published on the 25th of November 1941, which among other things stated that Jews who went abroad lost German state citizenship and their property fell to the Reich.

> world's indifference to it, frightened me very much. I could not but feel, in those sorrowful years, that this human indifference, concerning which I knew so much already, would be my portion on the day that the United States decided to murder its Negroes systematically instead of little by little and catch-as-catch-can.[203]

In the unstable Weimar Republic, the masses of disabled veterans returning home from the war presented a new challenge to the nation's democratic ideals. Since they had been injured in service to the fatherland, these young men seemed to have a legitimate claim to the moral and financial support necessary for reintegrating them into society. However, the onset of Germany's economic crisis gave a strong impetus to advocates of eugenics, who opposed squandering the nation's precious resources on caring for the unfit. In their 1920 book, *Die Freigabe der Vernichtung Lebensunwerten Lebens* (*Allowing the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life*), the professors Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche even argued that such persons should be humanely killed, "out of respect for everyone's will to live." Although Binding and Hoche were not racist in any explicit sense, their argument was easily assimilated into the framework of *Mein Kampf*, where it was used to designate those segments of the population who were deemed to be parasitic. Unsurprisingly, for Hitler, this was the nature of the Jewish race, which he described as the mightiest counterpart to the health of the Aryan people. The idea that moneylenders and middlemen made no positive contribution to the nation's welfare was, of course, economically illiterate, but it was held in common by a great many people, including geneticists. Therefore, pitched into a battle between good and evil, the Holocaust was, in the final analysis, an attempted physicianship.

Shortly after he came to power, Hitler approved the 1933 Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases, which mandated forcible sterilization for people with disabilities, including congenital idiocy. The policy of forced sterilization helped acclimate the German medical field to eugenic beliefs, and laid the foundation for the eventual transition to mass murder. When a request arrived on Hitler's desk, therefore, sent by a father asking permission to euthanize his disabled newborn, Hitler dispatched his escort physician, Karl Brandt, to evaluate the

[203] Baldwin 1962

child's condition. Brandt concurred with local doctors that the boy should be put down, and with Hitler's approval, he became the first victim of a secret campaign, codenamed "Aktion T4." Although the killings had already started when Hitler authorized his physicians to administer the program, he predated the official decree to September 1st, 1939, to give it the appearance of a wartime necessity. As the logic of racial hygiene crystallized around hospitals and sanitoria, patients were taken by the thousands to transit institutions. They were then loaded on buses to one of six killing centers, from which their relatives typically received an urn, and a certificate of natural death.[204]

Along with Phillip Bouhler, the head of Hitler's Chancellery, Brandt expanded the pool of eligible patients in 1941 to include anyone who was incapable of working. Therefore, the majority of T4 deaths were female, since women were discouraged from having any profession except in their role as mothers. Much like culled dairy beef, however, their dismembered bodies were useful, since histopathological specimens were highly coveted. Indeed, whole bones and tissue removed from the "Rabbits of Ravensbrück" were sent to military personnel for experimental transplants. Hence, as they stood huddled together outside the doors of the operating theater, their predicament raised a most peculiar question: animal, woman, or vegetable? Desperate to escape, the Rabbits found ways to smuggle out messages, with one woman even going so far as to write letters with her own urine.[205] These eventually made their way to the Red Cross through an underground radio network, which broadcasted the story to the rest of Europe across the BBC. Sadly, however, the International Committee did nothing to intervene because its president, Max Huber, was a friend of the camp's

[204] The Nazi euthanasia program was first carried out in the part of Poland annexed to the Reich, where victims were murdered by lethal injection. When this method proved too slow, however, experimental gassings were tested at Brandt's behest by Dr. Albert Widmann, chief chemist of the Kripo.

[205] This was Krystynz Czyz, who had the ingenious idea to write between the lines (literally) of the official letters she was allowed to send her family. She recounted a children's book to her brother, who remembered that it had been about a very clever young girl who solved mysteries, one of which had involved invisible ink. Putting two and two together, he soon deciphered his sister's secret messages, but when the Nazis heard details of their experiments on the radio, the Rabbits were set to be executed in February of 1945. The details of their escape are, sadly, beyond the scope of this footnote, but suffice it to say, the story deserves to be told more often. For more on this, see Wallach 2020.

lead surgeon.[206]

For very practical reasons, Hitler's genocidal program had to remain unwritten, because international public opinion might otherwise have turned more quickly against him. The only language to which his cabinet members would condescend, therefore, in order to transmit his orders, was a bureaucratic-style of discourse known colloquially as the "Amtssprache." The rule was to remake what had once been called a lie, under common civil agreements, into the form of a specially-honored secret. To that end, the Nazis used films like *Ich klage an*, to represent involuntary euthanasia as a sacrifice done for the benefit of the victim. When a beautiful, young woman named Hanna was diagnosed with multiple scleorsis, she begged her friend and physician, Bernhardt Lang, to help her commit suicide. On ethical grounds, he refused, but his mind started to change when he learned that Trude, a child whose life he saved from meningitis, had since become deaf, blind, and dumb. Trude's parents blamed Dr. Lang for their daughter's misfortune, and, indeed, her condition was so horrid that he wondered how the nurses could stand to look at her. Thus, when Hanna was surreptitiously killed by her husband, Paul and Christ finally meet on the road to Damascus. "She asked me, too, but because I love her, I didn't do it," Bernhardt said. "Because I loved her more, I did it," Thomas replied. "Because her suffering was inhumane, because man must be above death, that's why I set her free."

After Hanna's brother brought an action against Thomas for murder, a public trial ensued in which the usual arguments both for and against euthanasia were rehearsed. "There must be proof that she stated an express wish to die," one juror said. "And then?" another asked. "It would be mercy-killing," he replied, "not murder." This scene played an important ideological function in bookending Hanna's predicament with that of Trude's parents since, at the outset of the film, viewers saw Thomas's research assistant euthanizing a paralyzed lab rat. As she poured the fatal liquid into a beaker filled with cotton balls, Dr. Buckhardt demonstrated her good bedside manner. "Poor animal," she cooed. "I haven't forgotten you." The scene then faded to a closeup of Lang's

[206] This was Himmler's childhood friend Dr. Karl Gebhardt, who worked at both Auschwitz and Ravensbrück. During the trials at Nuremberg, he admitted to performing sixty vivisections on women, but survivor testimony placed the number closer to one hundred.

hands, as he, too, dispensed liquid morphine to his ailing patient. "Promise me that you'll spare Thomas and me," Hanna asked. "If the doctor's mercy is good for the mouse, why not for the beloved friend?" The film ended before a verdict was announced, but the final stitch of this synthesized narrative found expression in the words of a retired Major, who said that the state which demanded the duty to die needed also to provide the right. Hence his analogy to the elderly hunting dog to whom he had administered the mercy shot only weeks prior. "But those are animals!" a young man objected. "Yes," the Major tutted knowingly, "but are people to be treated worse than animals?"

In an ironic twist of fate, T4 was canceled in the summer of 1941, just five days before *Ich klage an* premiered. As rumors began to circulate about the killing centers, which were supposed to be secret, but where everyone knew that euthanasia was taking place, a Catholic bishop, Clemens August Graf von Galen, spearheaded the resistance. "If one may forcibly eliminate unproductive humans," he declared, "then woe to our brave soldiers who return home seriously wounded in war, as cripples, as invalids!"[207] Von Galen's inference was a powerful one, and it spread through Germany like wildfire, so that soon, copies of his sermons were being rushed to soldiers at the front. Had he not already taken control of the central government, Hitler's murderous machinations might have ended there, but by the time T4 was suspended among civilians, the ruling elite had already decided to reinstate the program against concentration camp prisoners.[208] There, too, the Nazis transgressed the laws of God and nature, but few parishioners got involved, since neither they nor their congregants were the ones being taken. The link between the euthanasia campaign and the Shoah, however, was closer than any of them cared to admit — except, that is, for Martin Niemöller, who confessed his own complicity with early Naziism in a series of 1946 lectures. "First they came for the socialists," he said, "and I did not speak out, because I was not a socialist."

At different times and in different combinations, Niemöller listed the groups of people for whom he had failed to advocate before, like cattle in a chute, the regime attempted to seize control

[207] Burleigh 1994, p. 178
[208] Countless many more were also killed in what came to be known as "wild euthanasia."

of the Protestant Church. "And then, they came for me," he would say, "and there was no one left to speak for me." Niemöller was arrested in 1937, and tried by a Special Court for his activities against the state. He received a two-thousand Reichsmark fine and seven months' imprisonment, but as he had been detained before the trial for longer than his jail term, Niemöller was released by the judge shortly after his sentencing. He was immediately rearrested, however, on the orders of Rudolf Hess, who decided to make an example of Niemöller for other would-be resisters. Niemöller was, consequently, interned at Dachau until the end of the war, from which he emerged as a controversial figure: an unrepentant nationalist to some, and a modern Luther to others. Perhaps the truth was more nuanced, however, as the repetition of the words 'I' and 'speak' framed the haunting silence of all the things that Niemöller had left unsaid. Therefore, although few people today remember his name, his voice still cries out from the annals of history with the same incessant question: "What would you have done?"

Already a cause célèbre in the United States, the German-Jewish exile Hannah Arendt stirred controversy in 1963 with the publication of her book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Before the killing machine was in effect, Eichmann's job had been to move Jews out of German-occupied territories, and after, it was to send them to their deaths. When he was ordered by Himmler, therefore, to mastermind the evacuation of Hungarian Jews, Eichmann saw it as an opportunity to streamline the annihilation process. The operation "went like a dream," he told his aide, thanks to a new rail spur at Auschwitz, which allowed the trains to arrive within a couple hundred yards of the gas chambers; and, indeed, between May and June of 1944, the camp's commandment was forced to run his crematoria twenty-four hours a day, in order to accommodate the sheer influx of people totaling more than four hundred thirty-seven thousand.[209] No one was more dedicated to the elimination of European Jews than Eichmann (except, perhaps, Hitler himself), but after the war, he obtained a certificate of indulgence from the Vatican, which enabled him to sail clandestinely from Italy under the alias of "Ricardo Klement." These escape routes, known euphemistically to the Nazis as "ratlines," were established by Argentine President Juan Perón, who had become a sympathizer

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[209] Herzberger 2006, p. 142

while serving as a military attaché to Mussolini.

When Eichmann was finally captured by an Israeli taskforce after nearly a decade in hiding, Arendt contacted the *New Yorker* about covering his trial, which she did the following year. Like many people, Arendt was struck by the utter ordinariness of Eichmann; his demeanor was bland, his bespectacled face unmemorable, and his brown hair slightly balding. She, therefore, adopted a sardonic tone, therefore, to describe how it felt when the infamous Eichmann turned out to be nothing but a glorified desk jockey, more concerned with the managerial hows of his work than with the existential whys. "There is a need to draw a line between the leaders responsible and the people like me forced to serve as mere instruments in the hands of the leaders," he pleaded. "I was not a responsible leader, and as such do not feel myself guilty."[210]Arendt's emphatic and paradoxical thesis, which earned her both lavish praise and no small amount of damnation, was that Eichmann had acted, not with malicious aforethought, but with hardly any thought at all to the people whose deaths he helped engineer. This enabled Eichmann to stage his own absence from the scene of the crime, she said, because in a non-trivial sense, his mind was elsewhere. "It was as though in those last minutes he was summing up the lesson that this long course in human wickedness had taught us," Arendt wrote, "*the lesson of the fearsome, word-and-thought-denying banality of evil.*"[211]

To counter Eichmann's defense, the prosecution brought evidence that he had disobeyed orders from Himmler to stop the death marches when it was clear that the war was lost. They said that Eichmann's insubordination proved he had acted out of base motives, and in full knowledge of the criminal nature of his acts, but to each count, Eichmann pleaded not guilty. On the contrary, he claimed that he had always tried to live by Kant's ethics, and even supplied an approximately correct definition of the categorical imperative. "The principle of my will," he recited, "must always be such that it can become the principle of general laws."[212] Although she evinced a healthy skepticism at Eichmann's own explanations for his behavior, Arendt tended to believe him when he said that he had nothing personally against the Jews. The body count was so high that it rendered any intention,

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[210] *Letters for the Ages*, p. 100
[211] Arendt 2006, p. 252
[212] Ibid, p. 136

no matter how malignant, moot, but if Eichmann was telling the truth, then his invocation of Kant was all the more outrageous, because[213] he had allowed the euphoric flows of murder to travel through him unimpeded. A barely perceptible thread, therefore, began to emerge, between Kant's moral philosophy, on the one hand, and, on the other, the absolute emptiness at the center of Eichmann's thought. In the words of Juliet MacCannell, "by evacuating 'content' from the Law, while avoiding recognition of the new, 'non-pathological' object, Kant founded ethics on a non-pathological basis — and unwittingly empowered the *Thing*."[214]

For Kant, there was only one legitimate pleasure that attended the categorical imperative as surplus: the sublime pleasure felt by a man who did his duty for duty's sake. In this sense, Eichmann was utterly Kantian, although the object of his sublime pleasure was concealed by an elaborate paper trail which was also his insurance for war crimes. Regarding the Wannsee Conference, Eichmann said that he felt a sense of relief at its conclusion; a clear decision to exterminate had been made by his superiors, and the matter was out of his hands. With this, Eichmann confessed to abandoning Kant's principle, but as his excuse, he claimed to have been overpowered by a will far greater than his own. Although he distorted the categorical imperative, however, Arendt did not believe that Eichmann's use of Kant had totally failed. On the contrary, she said, it was consistent with a version of Kant "for the household use of the little man." Under Hitler's Reign of Terror, the demand that a man identify his will with the principle behind the law had been rendered almost redundant. All that remained of Kant's spirit, then, was the demand that a man act consistently from a sense of duty. "The sad and very uncomfortable truth," she said, "probably was that it was not his fanaticism but his very conscience that prompted Eichmann to adopt his uncompromising attitude during the last year of the war. Eichmann knew that Himmler's orders ran directly counter to the Führer's order."[215]

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[213] Oiejwhhoiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii (This comment has been brought to you by my beloved Oscar, and, in honor of the long tradition of academics cohabitating with cats, I have elected to retain his contribution to this text; for other animals have always been intimately bound up in every sector of society, as evidenced by the inky paw-prints on old skins of parchment from the abbeys.)

[214] MacCannell 1996, p. 72

[215] Arendt 2006, p. 146

Eichmann was more than an empirical report, for Arendt; it was a work of political theory, in which she exposed a fault line among the survivors of the camps. Throughout the 1950s, the argument over Jewish collaboration had been gathering steam in response to grassroots pressure from survivors, not to punish Nazis, but to punish those Jews who abetted their efforts. What Arendt attempted to do, therefore, was to distill the haunting specter of cooperation felt by judges and juries alike. "The whole truth," she said, "was that if the Jewish people had really been unorganized and leaderless, there would have been chaos and plenty of misery but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four and a half and six million people."[216] It was a sentence for which Arendt would not be easily forgiven, but it illuminated the Gordian knot between power and responsibility. One of Eichmann's signature moves in organizing the transports had been to delegate decisions to the Judenräte, an administrative body which was tasked with representing ghettoized Jews in their dealings with Nazi authorities. Although these councils, ultimately, had little choice about whether to comply with his demands, their failure to protest did bolster Eichmann's sense that they served a common interest. "The Gods I worshipped demanded the dance of death," he said. "I had no choice, and whoever claims otherwise is a liar."[217]

Very few social theorists have reflected on the relationship between Kant and Nazism, but this was precisely the theme of Arendt's diagnostic philosophy. Of course, any ethical doctrine can be misused, and to suggest that Kant's work led directly to the Holocaust would be absurd. Still, Arendt found Eichmann's distortion instructive, because it illuminated the boundaries within which reason can operate free of aporias. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant argued that consciousness of the moral law, or what he otherwise called the "humanity within persons," was a transcendental element of the structure of reason itself. To demonstrate this, he offered a thought experiment in which a man asserts that the object of his (presumably immoral) lust is irresistible to him:

> Ask him whether, if a gallows were erected in front of the house where he finds this opportunity, in order that he should be hanged thereon immediately after the gratification of his lust, whether he could not then control his passion; we need not

[216] Ibid, p. 125
[217] *TIME* 1980, p. 47

> be long in doubt what he would reply. Ask him, however- if his sovereign ordered him, on pain of the same immediate execution, to bear false witness against an honourable man, whom the prince might wish to destroy under a plausible pretext, would he consider it possible in that case to overcome his love of life, however great it may be. He would perhaps not venture to affirm whether he would do so or not, but he must unhesitatingly admit that it is possible to do so. He judges, therefore, that he can do a certain thing because he is conscious that he ought, and he recognizes that he is free — a fact which but for the moral law he would never have known.[218]

This point was worth laboring over since, in listening to his testimony from the pathological perspective, the Jerusalem judges imagined that Eichmann's continual recourse to Amtssprache was symptomatic of a guilty conscience. For Arendt, on the other hand, the presumption of savage passions was inconsistent with Eichmann's verbal demeanor. If he showed any uplift at all, it was only when he managed to link his mood with its catchphrase, which he referred to by the German term '*geflügelte worte*,' meaning "winged words." The scene of his execution, then, served as a summary of the lesson taught by the trial: that what typified Eichmann's thoughtlessness was this constant, anacoluthon shift from the first person to the third. "Long live Germany, long live Austria, long live Argentina," he shouted. "I shall not forget them."[219]

In order to diagnose Eichmann's unusual manner of speaking, Arendt turned to Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment in the third *Critique*. While recognizing the subjective nature of aesthetic judgment, Kant nevertheless held that the experience from which such judgments were made was held in common by all. His theory, therefore, addressed criticisms from both the objective and subjective views of aesthetics, each of which on its own Arendt found troublingly anti-political. Since judgments of taste were grounded in pleasure, Kant maintained, they were necessarily private, which meant that truth and falsity, contra the objectivists, did not enter into aesthetics. The fact that there was no grounded truth, however, did not entail that all aesthetic judgments were equally good, for just as scientific inquiry assumed that the world formed a systematic unity where all events could be subsumed under causal laws, Kant argued that aesthetic judgments were a perfectly normal

[218] Kant 2015, p. 27
[219] Arendt 2006, p. 252

function of the same faculties of cognition. The "sensus communis," therefore, was that postulate of aesthetic judgment which allowed for a merely subjective pleasure to be made universal.[220]

Appropriating this argument, Arendt concluded that Eichmann, although he had not lied in court, had demonstrated a certain lack of imagination for which he needed to give an account. This was especially evident during the trial in his description of Berthold Storfer, one of the Jewish leaders with whom he had worked closely in Vienna:

> With Storfer afterward, well, it was normal and human; we had a normal, human encounter. He told me all his grief and sorrow. I said, "Well, my dear old friend, we certainly got it! What rotten luck!" And I also said, "Look, I really cannot help you, because according to the orders of the *Reichsführer* nobody can get you out. I can't get you out. Dr. Ebner can't get you out. I hear you made a mistake, that you went into hiding or wanted to bolt, which, after all, you did not need to do." And then I asked him how he was. And he said, yes, he wondered if he couldn't be let off work; it was heavy work. And then I said to Höss, "Work—Storfer won't have to work!" Höss said, "Everyone works here." So I said, "O.K. I'll make out a chit to the effect that Storfer has to keep the gravel paths in order with a broom"— there were little gravel paths there — "and that he has the right to sit down with his broom on one of the benches." I said, "Will that be all right, Mr. Storfer? Will that suit you?" Whereupon he was very pleased, and we shook hands, and then he was given the broom and sat down on the bench. It was a great inner joy to me that I could at least see the man with whom I had worked for so many long years, and that we could speak with each other.[221]

As one of the last Jews to escape from German-occupied France, Arendt was not a victim of the camps. In fact, she left Germany abruptly, in 1933, after she was detained for her work with a Zionist organization, of which she later became critical. From that moment on, however, she described herself as feeling responsible for the fate of her European brethren. During her first year in America alone, Arendt published no fewer than fifty-three articles in *Der Aufbau*, which was an important forum of communication for German-speaking exiles. She only learned about Auschwitz, however, in 1943, just as information was beginning to surface about slave labor installations in the

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[220] It was precisely because aesthetic judgments lacked an objective foundation, he said, that they invited commentary and interpretation, making communicability the necessary precondition for commonality. Valid judgments of taste, then, while they lacked the necessity of truth claims, were never alone in their autonomy; they demanded a kind of universal assent for which a disinterested posture alone was insufficient. The primary effect of Kant's aesthetic theory was to move the axiological issue away from the dichotomy between subject and object to focus on the act of judging itself.

[221] Ibid, p. 51

Soviet Gulag. Observing the structural similarities between these institutions, Arendt put forward her famous "boomerang thesis," namely that totalitarianism, as a form of continental empire, did not allow for a distinction between the methods of colony and nation. The twin tendency which complemented totalitarian expansionism, then, was an equally strong impulse towards isolationism, from which the demand for purification seemed naturally to flow.

Having explored these themes in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt returned to them in *Eichmann*, to expose the risks for moral evil in the loneliness of the modern subject. More than Kant, Arendt saw the bases of human judgment as open to dispute, likening the activity of thinking to a Penelope's web which needed, every morning, to be reenacted from the start. This had vital implications for her political work, because if the sensus communis was in some sense compelled, as Nietzsche argued, then the danger of radical subjectivities once more reared its ugly head. It was obvious that Nietzsche, like Arendt, was deeply indebted to Kant; for both philosophers, aesthetic experience was at the heart of the very nature of commonality, and, indeed, Nietzsche even considered writing a volume on Kant's theory of organic aesthetics. The most visible difference, however, was the emphasis that Nietzsche placed on the relationship between the artist and the audience. Simultaneous to the artist's primacy over the audience, for Nietzsche, was the act's primacy over the actor. "There is no 'being' behind the 'doing,' acting, becoming," he said. "'The doer' has simply been added to the deed by the imagination — the doing is everything."[222] His foremost objection to Kant, therefore, was not that aesthetic consensus was inherently pernicious, but rather that it appeared to be free when it was, in fact, cloaked in the swaddling clothes supplied by the apprehending mind. "Why did humanity have to take the brain disease of sick cobweb-weavers so seriously?" Nietzsche implored. "It has certainly paid the price!"[223]

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[222] Nietzsche 2003, p. 26

[223] The idea, here, was that all philosophical concepts, no matter how individual they seemed to be, unknowingly unfolded the metaphysical grammar which was presupposed by human language. Hence the depiction of the philosopher as a spider, which belonged to a system just as much as all the other types of fauna. Interestingly, this links up nicely with Wittgenstein's rather idiosyncratic claim that philosophical problems arose when language went on holiday. The problem, then, was to "show the fly the way out of the bottle." I will return to this point in the final chapter.

Kant's aesthetic regime was self-perpetuating, for Nietzsche, because as its historicity was lost, the preservation of the status quo became a moral imperative. The generous exercise of coercive control, therefore, was only minimally considered, although it was evident in society's treatment of the criminal element. "It is society," he said, "our tame, mediocre, castrated society, in which an untutored son of nature who comes to us from his mountains or from his adventures at sea, must necessarily degenerate into a criminal."[224] In Nietzsche's view, the delinquent type was the type of the strong person under disfavorable conditions; he paid for his virtues in the form of danger and persecution, until finally, under the depressing influence of fear, he himself became anemic. Against this practice, therefore, which Nietzsche called "a recipe for physiological degeneration," he proposed a transvaluation of values not only from weakness to strength, but also from from menschlich (man) to übermenschlich (superman), turning once more to Dostoevsky for guidance. "This profound man," Nietzsche said, "who was right ten times over in esteeming the superficial Germans low, found the Siberian convicts among whom he lived for many years, —those thoroughly hopeless criminals for whom no road back to society stood open—very different from what even he had expected,—that is to say carved from about the best, hardest and most valuable material that grows on Russian soil."[225]

Published in the journal *Time* in 1861, Nietzsche read Dostoevsky's *The Insulted and the Injured* on the recommendation of a friend. The book was a popular success, but its major themes, namely Christian forgiveness, pity, and martyrdom, were of such a kind that one might have expected Nietzsche to be more critical. On the contrary, however, he claimed to have read the novel with the utmost respect for Dostoevsky, and allegedly described him as an artist who "cried truth from the blood." Likely, it was the representation of a sordid love affair that drew Nietzsche's attention, because it corroborated his view that a holy and healthy selfishness belonged to the nature of the noble soul. During a conversation with the novel's protagonist, Vanya, the villainous Prince Valkovsky recounted the story of a woman he had once seduced, robbed, and finally abandoned. "I

[224] Nietzsche 1889, p. 27
[225] Ibid, p. 62

reflected that by giving her the money back, I would perhaps make her unhappy," Valkovsky said. "I would have deprived her of the pleasure of being unhappy entirely owing to me, and of cursing me for it all her life."[226] As the cynical character in *The Insulted and the Injured*, the Prince exemplifies a kind of ethical egoism reminiscent of Thrasymachus from Plato's *Republic*. What must have piqued Nietzsche's interest, then, surely, was this "jouissance," as Lacan was known to have called it; this enjoyment beyond the pleasure principle awarded by moral masochism. "Believe me, my young friend," Valkovsky warned, "there is positively a lofty ecstasy in unhappiness of that kind, in feeling oneself magnanimous and absolutely right, and in having every right to call one's offender a scoundrel."[227]

Much like Freud, Lacan posited an intrinsic connection between masochism and sadism, both of which located themselves as the object of the invocatory drive. Whereas Freud argued that sadism was primary, however, Lacan had it the other way around, so that the masochist inflicted pain upon himself, not in order to punish, but rather to exert influence over others and establish a sense of control. The first thought that imposed itself here, then, was the similarity between the masochist's attitude and the dutiful Kantian agent. For Lacan, Kant's moral law was haunted by a desire made all the more monstrous for its having no object. Indeed, it was desire in its purest form, because, once everything had been sacrificed to the universal quality of the law, all that was left was the "thing-in-itself," and a boot, as George Orwell once said, stamping on a human face forever:

> Suppose such an incarnate will to contradiction and antinaturalness is induced to philosophize: upon what will it vent its innermost contrariness? Upon what is felt, most certainly to be real and actual: it will look for error precisely where the instinct of life most unconditionally posits truth. It will, for example, like Vedanta philosophy, downgrade physicality to an illusion; likewise pain, multiplicity, the entire conceptual antithesis "subject" and "object" — errors, nothing but errors! To renounce belief in one's ego, to deny one's own "reality" — what a triumph! not merely over the senses, over appearance, but a much higher kind of triumph, a violation and cruelty against *reason* — a voluptuous pleasure that reaches its height when the ascetic self-contempt and self-mockery of reason declares: "*there is* a realm of truth and being, but reason is *excluded* from it![228]

[226] Dostoevsky 1915, p. 248
[227] Ibid, p. 249
[228] Nietzsche 2003, p. 85

This potentially obscene dimension added to the noble concept of duty was overlooked by Kant, but it was made manifest in Eichmann's perversion, as Arendt and others described it. The fundamental feature of Eichmann's subjective position, she said, was an attitude of self-instrumentalization, of deferring his desire to a foreign and inaccessible authority which desired instead of him. It was the experience of his own inadequacy, therefore, to live in full compliance with the moral law, which guaranteed that, at least in the theater of his mind, Eichmann remained an ethical subject. 'The proper moral worth of an absolutely good will. . . ." Kant declared, "lies in precisely this — that the principle of action is free from all influence by contingent grounds."[229] Indeed, inclinations which only happened to support morality were supposed to be the greatest hindrance to the influence of the moral law on the human heart, because they tempted a man to waver between acting on moral and nonmoral motives. Therefore, in subordinating his will to the impersonal cruelty of a superegoic imperative, Eichmann was free to enjoy the nugatory remainder. "The perfect idealist, like everybody else, had of course his own personal feelings and emotions," Arendt wrote, "but he would never permit them to interfere with his actions, if they came into conflict with his 'idea.'"[230]

When Kant inquired into the realm of the beautiful, what he discovered was that judgments of taste, because they lacked the necessity of truth claims, were never alone in their autonomy. Arendt, therefore, drew on an idea stretching back to the Ancient Greeks: that the world opened up differently to every man based on his unique location in history, resulting in innumerable conflicting wills from which the problem of disagreement seemed naturally to arise. The fact of human plurality generated an ethical injunction to take others' perspectives into account, and this, for Kant, was the golden rule of the categorical imperative. The presence of this maxim testified to the quality of one's will, since, by refusing to adopt it for himself, the moral egoist became isolated within his own judgment, and enacted an entirely private sense which Kant, in his *Anthropology*, described as a kind of madness. The problem identified by Arendt, however, was that the overriding of plurality was potentially built into the logic of universalization as a guide to moral judgment, and thus foreclosed

[229] Kant 2013, p. 64
[230] Arendt 2006, p. 42

upon the full range of human feelings from which a truly democratic politics was built. It was here, therefore, that, despite her close affinities with Kant, Arendt struck a decisive alliance with Nietzsche and his philosophies. "One person's solitude is the fleeing of an invalid," he said. "Another person's solitude is a fleeing *from* the invalids."[231]

The main division of rights, for Kant, was between innate and acquired rights, the former of which belonged to man by nature, independent of any juridical act. Of this sort of right, moreover, there was only the single right to freedom, which civil society, through its laws, had the function to protect. When millions of people lost their nationality, however, due to the events of the Second World War, no authority remained to guarantee this right except for the grace of strangers. In the mobius logicality of his confession, then, Eichmann revealed that he had not strayed far in his thoughts from Kant, who argued with considerable vigor that there could be no juridical right to disobedience. "To punish the ruler would mean that the highest executive authority would be subject to coercion," he said, "which [since he alone can carry out punishments] is a self-contradiction."[232] Given the division of rights, and given that the right to revolt fitted into neither subdivision, it became conceptually true, for Eichmann, that Storfer had willed himself out of the unified Volkswille in the antisocial maxim of his actions. He was, therefore, excluded from all rights in the area of his violation, and that exclusion was his punishment; six weeks after their "normal and human" encounter, Berthold Storfer was dead.

For Arendt, stateless people were the most symptomatic group in modern politics precisely because they were beyond the pale. Without the right to residence or work, they lived in a strange state of superposition, where the only country that the world had to offer them was the inside of a jail cell. This was, therefore, one of the criteria used by Arendt to determine whether someone was stateless: "If a small burglary is likely to improve his legal position, at least temporarily," she said, "one may be sure that he has been deprived of human rights."[233] Arendt's thesis was that statelessness was a necessary condition for rightlessness, and that rightlessness, ultimately, was a

[231] Nietzsche 2005, p. 151
[232] Kant 2017, p. 102
[233] Arendt 1973, p. 286

precondition for totalitarian annihilation. Under the tutelage of Jim Crow, Hitler's solution to the "Jewish problem" was, firstly, to reduce German Jews to the status of second-class citizens. They were deported shortly thereafter to ghettos in Eastern Europe, and ordered to relinquish whatever property could not be carried in a suitcase. The theft of this property was legalized by the eleventh implementing degree of the Nuremberg Laws, which stated, among other things, that Jews who abandoned their place of residence also forfeited their citizenship. Therefore, forced to wander beggard and broke throughout Europe, these refugees acted as a kind of factual propaganda, which disinclined other countries to help them. Arendt's comparison of the criminal and stateless person, therefore, drew her attention to the multiple exceptions created by the sovereign state.

Following the Protestant Reformation, the European wars of religion gave rise to the philosophy liberalism, Arendt said, so that the idea of natural rights became a central concern to the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment. This, in turn, laid the foundation for a series of republican revolutions, as demonstrated by the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens* set in 1789. The radical nature of this document was made manifest, for Arendt, against France's backdrop of feudalism, where sovereignty was the divine right of kings who were preordained to wear the crown. With the advent of human rights, however, this hierarchical plane was made horizontal, which not only changed the basis of state power, but also how people understood themselves in relation to one another. "The problem," as Arendt explained, "was indeed how 'to bring twenty-five millions of Frenchmen who had never known or thought of any law but the King's will to rally round any free constitution at all,' as John Adams once remarked."[234] Yet, while the rule of one man over many was, perhaps, the simplest way of getting around human plurality, Arendt considered that Rousseau;s was another; by setting up a general will, which articulated the common interest shared by all citizens against everything specific to the individual, Rousseau had devised a clever way of putting the multitude in the place of a single person. What was at stake, therefore, in the horrors of the twentieth century, was the end of history as such.

In many ways, Arendt's account of the Boer Wars in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* served as a

[234] Arendt 1970, p. 77

genealogy of the antagonisms between instrumental notions of rationality, on the one hand, and the foundations of the racial state. Rather than accept their position at the bottom of the economic heap, a mob in alliance with some wealthy merchants transformed themselves into masters, namely by means of the violent creation of a racial underclass. Deploying a Hegelian conception of history, then, Arendt put a new spin on a familiar trope: race and imperialism had become intertwined, partly because it justified the displacement and exploitation of natives. At the same time, however, it was a barely conscious reaction to tribesmen whose humanity the settlers were loath to admit:

> Race was the emergency explanation of human beings whom no European or civilized man could understand and whose humanity so frightened and humiliated the immigrants that they no longer cared to belong to the same human species. Race was the Boers' answer to the overwhelming monstrosity of Africa—a whole continent populated and overpopulated by savages—an explanation of the madness which grasped and illuminated them like "a flash of lightning in a serene sky: 'Exterminate all the brutes.'"[235]

The rhetoric of racial determinism evoked the deep abyss of time, in which greater historical advancement connoted an indisputably higher value to human culture. Under the banner of universality, then, Europeans denied alternative articulations of humanity from operating on their own terms, removing some tribal peoples to the darkest recesses of the past; they appeared in the guise of avatars, as prehistoric beings jumped suddenly forward into the nineteenth century. Thus, it was precisely the threat of uncanniness suggested by their kinship, however remote, which drew Africans into the realm of a shared humanity from which they were quickly expelled. "We could not understand," Arendt explained," because we were too far."[236] While the first 'we' was a disoriented, amnesiac subject, the latter was distinctly modern; racial neuroses, then, were the result of a psychic splitting, to protect the Boers' pre-colonial identity from the new, self-endangering experience of the colonized. "The world of native savages was a perfect setting for men who had escaped the reality of civilization,"Arendt wrote. "Under a merciless sun, surrounded by an entirely hostile nature, they were confronted with human beings who, living without the future of a purpose and the past of an

[235] Arendt 1973, p. 185
[236] Ibid, p. 190

accomplishment, were as incomprehensible as the inmates of a madhouse."[237]

Such terminology reveals the metaphorical paths along which Arendt's theory traversed, where a primitivist notion of Africans passed first to continental imperialists in Europe, and finally to the perpetrators in totalitarian camps. What the Nazis had attempted to effect, therefore, was a real-life lord of the flies, and the regression of European Jewry to a bestial human nature. "Ghastly marionettes with human faces, which all behave like the dog in Pavlov's experiments," she wrote, "which all react with perfect reliability even when going to their own death."[238] For Arendt, what the camps revealed in a microcosm was that man's emergence into humanity was a fragile victory; when reduced to a sum of organic reactions to stimuli, all that remained was life in a purely biological sense. It was in this context, therefore, that her fascination with the mystery of natality grew. Any hope for some culminating point in history, for some final day of judgment like the one postulated by Christian eschatology, was undermined by the latent facticity of birth, "this reviving, threatening, and promising Eternal Return."[239] It was her vision of natality as a transfiguring power that Arendt shared in common with Nietzsche, for whom Dionysian creativity was a means towards cultural rebirth. Although he was skeptical about democratic politics, then, Nietzsche's reflections on truth and power can be interpreted as a defense of the political necessity of plurality which, for Arendt, was so closely associated with natality.

In Arendt's analysis, the indeterminate teleological promise of totalitarianism was bound up with its reductive rationality. This one-dimensional picture of the world effaced discursive difference, submitting all possible modes of thinking to the narrative of history's end. People tended not to object to this progressive shrinking of the world, however, because of the unparalleled comforts that such shrinking yielded; opposites were unified and tensions dissolved in a superficial harmony, "as though their plurality had disappeared into One Man of gigantic dimensions."[240] Perhaps that is why Arendt moved from natality to its expression in love for the world, which she called "amor mundi."

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[237] Ibid

[238] Ibid, p. 455

[239] Kristeva 2001, p. 44

[240] Arendt 1973, p. 465

When lovers were interrupted by the advent of a child, an isolated and self-occupied situation was no longer possible. The self of the maternal body, therefore, appeared as a viable metaphor, mediating the profoundly messy, multilateral state of a world in which every entity was, at the most basic level, simultaneously expressive of two registers:

> With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance. This insertion is not forced upon us by necessity, like labor, and it is not prompted by utility, like work. It may be stimulated by the presence of others whose company we may wish to join, but it is never conditioned by them; its impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we responded by beginning something new on our own initiative.[241]

Given this emphasis on beginnings, one might have expected Arendt to locate action within the realm of the family. Relying on the classical distinction, however, between the public and private spheres, she located action instead within the polis and its agora. The distinctive trait of the former was that in it, men were driven to live together mostly by necessity. The Penates were, therefore, as Plutarch once described them, "the gods who make us live and nourish our body."[242] The realm of the polls, on the other hand, was the locus of human freedom, where men disclosed their unique identities through being in the world together; everything else that fulfilled a function was excluded from public life, so that politics ended where patriarchal authority began: at the door to the family house. In the modern world, however, families lost their original relation to necessity, even as the public sphere ceased to provide a space for the free expression of plurality. Henceforth, freedom was defined negatively as freedom from the violence of the state, which, for Arendt, reached its apotheosis under the sign of the banality of evil.

Expanding on Heidegger's assertion that man lived in the habitation of language, Arendt noted the profound ethical association between the idea of forming households and the medieval concept of the common good. During the High Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church became

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[241] Arendt 2019, p. 176

[242] Ibid, p. 30

organized into an elaborate institutional hierarchy in which the Pope was the head of Europe. Every king, knight, and serf, therefore, dwelt in the house of the Lord, having been drawn together in the spirit of brotherhood through the sacrament of communion. "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body," as the apostle Paul once said, "for we all share one loaf."[243] For Arendt, the modeling of all human relationships upon biblical covenants had far-reaching consequences, as the original joint household seemed to be indicated by the very word 'corporation.' What she argued, in effect, was that an essentially Christian attitude towards politics created an analogical imagination, in which businesses and trade associations straddled the spheres of public power and private interest. Arendt did not draw this parallel in order to praise it, however, but in order to highlight its limitations. "Are you aware that centuries will pass, and that mankind will proclaim with the lips of its wisdom and science that there is no crime and consequently no sin either, but only the hungry?" asked Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor. "'Feed them, and then ask them of virtue! — that is what will be inscribed upon the banner they will raise against you and before which your temple will come crashing down."[244]

The First World War was, in many ways, a moment of hypermodernity, accentuating the disenchantment of European culture upon which Nietzsche had reflected decades earlier. Whereas his most notorious soundbite — "God is dead" — had often been read as a pithy statement about the victory of reason over revelation, what immediately jarred with this interpretation was that the aphorism was spoken neither by a bishop nor a priest but by a madman who, in a clear allusion to Diogenes of Sinope, ran into the marketplace with his lantern lit at midday. Proceeding beyond this declaration, then, Nietzsche painted a grim rhetorical picture, in which absolute truth, as the last remaining vestige of supernaturalism, was thrown out with the religious bathwater. For her part, Arendt believed that 'ideology' was a far better concept than secular religion with which to understand the totalitarian mindset, but she never denied that a relationship between the two existed; on the contrary, she affirmed it. "Which was the religious element in the past so politically relevant

[243] 1 Corinthians 10:17
[244] Dostoevsky 2002, p. 253

that its loss had an immediate impact on our political life?" she asked. "Or, to put the same question in another way, Which was the specifically political element in traditional religion?"[245] Arendt's answer was that the loss of belief in a transworldly hereafter was *the* chief political factor which distinguished the modern age from all prior history. By insisting that a sphere of eternal agony waited beyond the grave, the doctrine of Hell had given force to the idea that there were, indeed, worse fates than death. Therefore, in that vision of horror and its associated hold on the human conscience, laid the seeds of a deterrent which, for most people, no longer existed.

For Arendt, the reality of the concentration camps resembled nothing so much as the medieval pictures of Hell most graphically represented in Dante's *Inferno*. Indeed, in the thirty-third canto, the pilgrim found Count Ugolino from Pisa gnawing insatiably upon the neckbone of another sinner, whom he called "neighbor" because they were locked together for all eternity. As Ugolino told the story, he and the Archbishop Ruggierri made a pact, but Ruggierri betrayed him, and imprisoned him in the Tower Muda along with his sons and grandsons. "And I began, already blind, to grope over their bodies, and two days called them, though they were dead," Ugolino said. "Then, fasting had more power than grief."[246] In an interview with the historian Joachim Fest, Arendt said that the banality of Eichmann's evil was made manifest precisely by the cynical blatancy with which he told the truth. "Let me tell you what I mean by banality," she interjected, "since in Jerusalem I remembered a story that Ernst Jünger once told and that I'd forgotten."[247] During the war, Jünger, a highly decorated soldier and entomologist, came across some farmers in the countryside, one of whom had taken in a group of prisoners from the Russian camps. Alluding to numerous and gruesome reports of cannibalism, he told Jünger that these escapees were less than human. "There's something outrageously stupid about this story. I mean, the story itself is stupid," Arendt said. "The man doesn't see that this is what starving people do . . ."[248]

Eichmann was rather intelligent, Arendt went on to say, but he was stupid in this respect;

[245] Arendt 2005, p. 379
[246] Dante 2012, p. 339
[247] Arendt 2018, p. XXVI
[248] Ibid, p. XXVII

because he did not appreciate the imminent danger, he could think of nothing better than to instruct Rudolf Höss that Storfer should only be required to sweep gravel. The biblical metaphor of hard-heartedness, then, seemed to aptly describe his condition, which is perhaps why, in the final analysis, Arendt simply quoted Scripture: "It would have been better *for that man* if he had not been born."[249] Many have insisted that with these ominous words, Christ was casting an eternal curse upon Judas, who betrayed him to the Sanhedrin in exchange for thirty silver. As the verbs were in the past tense, however, they were likelier an expression of grief for the condemnation which Judas had unwittingly brought upon himself, believing that, by some miraculous exertion, Christ would once again deliver himself from the fury of his enemies.[250] *That* was the wickedness of Eichmann, whose sincere acceptance of a moral theory that stressed human dignity was no prophylactic against becoming one of the most notorious figures in all of human history. "And if this is 'banal' and even funny," Arendt said, "if with the best will in the world one cannot extract any diabolical or demonic profundity from Eichmann, this is still far from calling it commonplace."[251]

Shortly after the adoption of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, an English translation of Arendt's critique was published under the title "The Rights of Man: What Are They?" This essay was later incorporated into the ninth chapter of her book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and became one of the century's most influential commentaries on the rhetoric of human rights. In this text, Arendt claimed that the Declaration itself embodied a contradiction, requiring states, which were grounded on the principle of national sovereignty, to protect the universal and inalienable rights of all human beings. Since the conferral of citizenship was a precondition for what the courts termed "juridical personality," the only way to resolve this paradox was to combat the arbitrary deprivations of statelessness with a so-called "right to have rights." Here, too, the Eichmann trial, and in particular the question of reconciliation, pointed the way to the most challenging part of Arendt's late work on

[249] Matthew 26: 24

[250] With more than a whimper, therefore, but considerably less than a bang, the drama of the Christian story fell away from its climax, as one by one, each of the twelve apostles dipped his bread into a bowl, and denied that he was the betrayer about whom Jesus spoke.

[251] Arendt 2006, p. 288

Kant.[252]

In defending its jurisdiction over Eichmann, the Jerusalem Court put forth a universal theory according to which every nation, as a delegate for the international community, was authorized to try crimes against humanity. For Arendt, by way of contrast, the legitimacy of the Jerusalem Court rested on territorial (rather than universal) jurisdiction; it was appropriate to try Eichmann in Israel, she said, because that was where many of his victims lived, establishing a meaningful link between a third party court and an aggrieved political community. Her key insight, therefore, was that criminal law was embedded simultaneously in two orders of the moral community, and that its task was to show the contingency of this border through the promise that "never again" meant "now." Hence the porosity of the pregnant body, which enabled her to mobilize natality for a political ethics of living —- a point made especially by Julia Kristeva in her work on the semiotic dimensions of law as a signifying process:

> If ethics amounts to not avoiding the embarrassing and inevitable problematics of the law but giving it flesh, language, and jouissance – in that case its reformulation demands the contribution of women. Of women who harbour the desire to reproduce (to have stability). Of women who are available so that our speaking species, which knows it is mortal, might withstand death. Of mothers. For an heretical ethics separated from morality, an herethics, is perhaps no more than that which in life makes bonds, thoughts, and therefore the thought of death, bearable: herethics is undeath [a-mort], love.

For Arendt, political reconciliation was predicated on an alliance, which not only constituted peace but established a new unity between conflicting parties in a pluralistic encounter. Conceiving the child as an authorial act, therefore, one of the most distinctive ways in which Kristeva theorized this idea was through her reconfiguration of Lacan's tripartite model of infantile development. For her, like Lacan, the "symbolic" was the order of discursive practices within which the geographical accident of

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What had traditionally been considered as the voice of conscience was, for Arendt, the actualization of consciousness in the activity of thinking. In the silent dialogue of thought, she said, the ego split itself in two, providing an intense and ineluctable experience of plurality within an apparent unity. Thinking, therefore, had a theatrical dimension, and relied on a mise-en-scene in which the self was imaginatively evoked as an opening to the other. Indeed, Arendt grounded the law of noncontradiction in the congeniality of these "two-in-ones," remarking how Socrates, the great gadfly of Athens, preferred to die rather than live life unexamined.

birth transformed individuals into the subjects of a collectively held history. Her concept of the "semiotic," on the other hand, suggested the interpellation into signification of elements of corporeality. Indeed, speech had its genesis, for Kristeva, in the experience of abjection — that fundamental, necessary, and unrepresentable moment of separation from the mother's body wherein the child's sense of self was first structured and destabilized. In a piece called "Stabat Mater," therefore, Kristeva formulated the double function of the Word as both *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus*, because the divine itself was ineffable, and its names were inexhaustible.

Although Kristeva glorified neither motherhood nor Mariology, she found, in the latter, a rare instance of maternal discourse in the Western history of the letter. Her essay, then, split typographically between two columns, contrasted two styles of prose, one of which was impressionistic, the other academic; as the right-hand side interleaved with the left, however, the columns grew to be more and more resemblant, dramatizing that creative interplay in which the two natures of Christ, divine and human, came together in Mary's womb to be united in one flesh. The structuring of the text, therefore, hinted at an analogy to the miraculous nature of action which, for Arendt, was grounded in natality. "A woman or mother is a conflict," Kristeva wrote, " — the incarnation of the split of the complete subject, a passion."[253] Christianity made theophagy explicit in ritual and theology, through the symbolism provided by the bread of the paschal meal, and elaborated in the metaphysical concept of transubstantiation. Similarly, for Kristeva, the affectual vocal and bodily rhythms of the mother and her environment were brought to life in poetry as a musical arrangement. I believe that this is what Kierkegaard had in mind when he said that the notion of God as love had a primitive lyrical validity; at issue in this Christian thought was the prerogative of God to reconcile *auctoritas* and *potestas* — power and authority. Returning to Arendt, therefore, the Christalogical task of the poet was to accept as a possibility that which by definition was excluded from the symbolic. "Poets are the only people to whom love is not only a crucial, but an indispensable experience," she said, "which entitles them to mistake it for a universal one."[254]

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[253] Kristeva 2002, p. 332
[254] Arendt 2019, p. 242

It was in the milieu of the stranger that Arendt asked what it meant to love, citing approvingly the words of Saint Augustine, "Amo: volo ut sis" ("I love you: I want you to be"). Here, the urge to appear which pushed every living surface into visibility and monstrability was met by a symmetrical urge to live and let live in the habitation of language. The truly singular poetic idiom, therefore, realized *amor mundi* in a maieutic nursing of the sacred plural which, for Arendt, was also the profane. "The earth," she said, "is the very quintessence of the human condition."[255] It was in precisely this sense that Kristeva described Arendt's choice of faith as a rarified expression of atheism; after the demise of God, she explained, it was not this world which returned to the fore so much as the inner machinations of the human mind. The great irony, then, was that the Nazis modeled themselves after the conspiracy they ostensibly hoped to eradicate and, in so doing, unmasked the psychological projection which had all along formed the basis of their racial hatred. Indeed, this was nowhere made more evident than in *Mein Kampf*, when Hitler perversely argued that even if the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* turned out to be a forgery, that did not mean that its contents were untrue.

This, for Arendt, was what Freud meant when he said that the unconscious knew no negation: within the fantasmic domain, it was not the facts which were in dispute but the subject of enunciation, and the devil had many advocates. Framed in this way, the Grand Inquisitor's monologue can, perhaps, be read as an even more damning critique of pure reason than the one proferred by Kant. In the Orthodox tradition, the act of a holy kiss occurred between priests during the Eucharist as a sign of peace. Here, the sacraments were viewed as signs by which God communicated to persons who they already were in Christ. By emphasizing the centrality of touch, therefore, Dostoevsky revealed the aesthetic as a field of sensual relationships which gave lie to the abstractions used to paper over them. Underneath his priestly mantle, the Inquisitor harbors a secret resentment for the burdens of the shepherd. In the face of recrimination, then, Christ's mournful act of listening highlights the compulsion of the nihilist to subject to rational argumentation that which cannot be encompassed by it; it is the poetic revelation of a sickly soul, which has created the illusion of an irrefutable truth in order to escape the lash of that self-condemnation which would otherwise disturb

[255] Ibid, p. 2

his conscience. "The old man would have liked him to say something, even something bitter, terrible," Dostoevsky wrote. "But suddenly he approaches the old man in silence and gently kisses him on his bloodless, ninety-year-old lips. That was all his answer."[256]

[256] Dostoevsky 2002, p. 262

CHAPTER FOUR:
ARE *YOU* MY MOTHER?

"When you leave me alone in this old palace of yours,
it starts to get to me; I take to walking.
What a woman does is open doors.
It is not a question of locking or unlocking."

— Joanna Newsom

"How can we know the dancer from the dance?" Yeats once queried.[257] Perhaps, in actuality, we cannot: the dancer *is* the dance, but in the same way that a dance can be danced differently, depending who's doing the dancing, so, too, can monsters be differently incarnated by different creators — a possibility which was given, in *Frankenstein,* through the nameless elder De Lacey. "My voice, although harsh, had nothing terrible in it," the creature explained. "I thought, therefore, that if, in the absence of his children, I could gain the good-will and mediation of the old De Lacey, I might, by his means, be tolerated by my younger protectors."[258] In a way, De Lacey is an archetypal seer; precisely because he could not see, he was able to move words against themselves, to reveal the power of the imagination that lies behind every language. His intercourse with Frankenstein's monster, then, was a powerful manifesto for the reintroduction of the abjected body into public life. Stitched together from both human and animal parts, the creature was at once the most ontologically displaced character in the novel, and, for that very reason, the one best positioned to represent the moral challenge of natality. Perhaps the most radical theme, therefore, of which Shelley's novel provided an inkling, was the possibility of a transcendence that moved not only vertically but horizontally, too.

Doubtless, the most famous seer among the ancient Greeks was Tiresias, the Apollonian prophet, who lost his vision as punishment for spotting Athena naked. As recompense, however, he was gifted the power of second-sight, which was why Liriope called upon him to reveal the fate of her son. The prophet responded cryptically that, so long as he never recognized himself, Narcissus

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[257] Yeats 1928, p. 60
[258] Shelley 1846, p. 114

would live a long life, but years later, while hunting stag in the woods, he became lost from the rest of his party. When he cried out in dismay, Echo called back the same word, so that Narcissus, dumbfounded, replied, “Come here, and let us get together!” Thus burned with passion, Echo rushed to throw her arms around him, but Narcissus spurned her, and in his flight exclaimed, “I would die before I let you possess me!” Echo, thereafter, withdrew into a cave, and withered away until there was naught left but her voice, which endlessly pleaded, “Possess me!” Observing his callousness, Nemesis intervened, and led Narcissus to a pool where he, too, fell into an unrequited love, and eventually drowned himself. Saddened by this pitiful spectacle, the gods decided that he should return as a flower, and, there, on that very spot, a daffodil grew, with its bright bloom and bowed neck. “Art saves him,” as Nietzsche would say. “And through art — life.”[259]

Victor Frankenstein prided himself on becoming a modern Prometheus, yet he demanded his progeny not to be seen, as if visuality were the sole source of his hideous appearance. Hence, the fireside chat was a more interesting experiment than galvanism, if only for the preternatural insight it promised to unearth. “I am blind, and cannot judge of your countenance,” De Lacey said, “but there is something in your words which persuades me that you are sincere. I am poor, and an exile, but it will afford me true pleasure to be in any way serviceable to a human creature.”[260] What brutified the creature was the burden, ever weighing on his heart, that he, like Grendel, had been abjected from the interior of the domicile. This uncanny locus of alterity, called into being by architecture itself, was just as powerful as the legal apparatus, but often much less visible. Perhaps, therefore, the monster was a woman in disguise: the literary beard of an authoress, who, in her fulgurating light, might have looked like a man. “Woman wants to become independent,” as Nietzsche wrote, “and for that reason she is beginning to enlighten men about ‘woman as such’ - *that* is among the most deleterious developments in the general *process of making Europe ugly* .”[261]

Malwida von Meysenbug was one of the earliest campaigners for women’s emancipation in Germany, from which she was expelled during the revolution for smuggling letters across the

[259] Nietzsche 2024, p. 26
[260] Shelley 1846, p. 116
[261] Nietzsche 1907, p. 182

border. She had sharpened her democratic beliefs in concert with Theodor Althaus, a radical theologian, who denounced the church and became an adherent of the newly emerging Free Thought movement. After Althaus broke off their engagement, Meysenbug resolved never to marry, but she longed, nevertheless, to have a child of her own. This, precisely, was what endeared her to the young Nietzsche, and the two made plans to found a school beneath the caves of Sorrento: "Give me something of this love, *meine hochverehrte Freundin*, and look upon me as one who, as a son, needs such a mother, needs her so much!"[262] Although the school never materialised, Nietzsche's friendship with Meysenbug brought him into the fold of her feminist circle, including the Russian psychoanalyst, Lou Andreas-Salomé, with whom he was immediately smitten. "Nietzsche's nature is like an old castle," she said, "[and] conceals within it many a dark dungeon and hidden basement room not apparent at first glance and yet likely to contain all the essentials. It is strange, but recently the idea suddenly struck me that we could wind up facing each other as enemies someday."[263]

Meysenbug did not ignore the misogyny of Nietzsche's early work any more than Salomé did, although she tended to blame the segregated educational systems in which he had been brought up. Perhaps, this is why, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* a wise old crone forgives the titular philosopher for even the silliest pleasantries spoken about women. "It is strange Zarathustra knows women so little, and yet he is right about them," she purred. "Is this because with woman nothing is impossible?"[264] As the scion of a long line of Lutheran ministers, Nietzsche only ever pointed his barbs at the church and not at the essential teachings of Christ. The first thing to make note of, then, was how he echoed the Gospel of Matthew, in which a young man professed to keep the commandments but refused to make himself poor. When Christ told his disciples that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven, they asked whether this obstinate boy, who brought his fate upon himself, could be saved. "With men, this is impossible," Jesus explained, "but with God, all things are possible."[265] Here, the

[262] Nietzsche 1996, p. 143
[263] Safranski 2002, p. 254
[264] Nietzsche 2005, p. 58
[265]Mark 10:25

figuration of the philosopher as mother was linked to a scene of convalescence, in which the ressentiment nursed by herd conformity needed to be overcome. To that end, Nietzsche availed himself of the metaphorics of pregnancy, the better to effect a strategic parody of sexual dimorphism. When the old crone asked Zarathustra what he knew about women, the deception she employed was to indulge his boyish pomp. Her true objective, however, was to sow the seeds of doubt, and she, therefore, dispensed a pearl of wisdom in the form of a jailhouse joke:

> "So, now, take as thanks a little truth! I am certainly old enough for it! Wrap it up and hold its mouth shut: otherwise it will cry too loudly, this little truth!" "Give me, old woman, your little truth!" I said. And thus spoke the little old woman: "You are going to women? Then don't forget your whip!"[266]

Although he fancied women as dangerous play-things, Zarathustra failed to recognize the actual threat they posed, namely that they would steal his tongue by shutting their delicate ears. The old crone's admonition, then, linked two profoundly affecting existential situations, as Life admonished Zarathustra, in "The Other Dance Song," for trying to set her pace. "Oh, Zarathustra, don't crack your whip so frightfully!" she says. "You know well: noise murders thought; and now such tender thoughts are coming to me."[267] At an allegorical level, Zarathusa's encounter with the old crone paralleled the story of the resurrection, in which Christ appeared before Mary Magdalene, who mistook him for a gardener. "Touch me not," he warned, "for I am yet ascended to the Father."[268] Both narrative frames specified the time of day as twilight, symbolizing a period of transition or liminality in which familiar lines were crossed. After his encounter with the old crone, therefore, Zarathustra tucked her truth under his tunic, giving himself the appearance of a mother whose belly was swollen with child. It took seven days for him to fully ripen and clean the afterbirth, anticipating Nietzsche's later idea of the "fermata," in which the tempo of a musical piece became slow and thick, like honey.[269]

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[266] Nietzsche 2005, p. 58

[267] Ibid, p. 198

[268] John 10:27

[269] It takes seven days for him to fully ripen and clean the afterbirth, anticipating Nietzsche's later idea of the "fermata," in which the tempo of a musical piece becomes slow and thick like honey. Finally, the mourner becomes a missionary, and the drama of *Zarathustra* unfolds around the task of becoming a teacher.

Not only was hunger a fundamental instinctive activity for Nietzsche, but it was *the* mode by which instinctual willing was defined. Hence, in naturalizing teleology, he also naturalized a kind of biological intentionality whereby a*mor fati* became the pinnacle of this-worldly religiousness.[270] "It is part of this state to perceive not merely the necessity of those sides of existence hitherto denied, but their desirability," Nietzsche said, "and not only their desirability in relation to the sides hitherto affirmed (perhaps as their complement or precondition), but for their own sake, as the more powerful, more fruitful, *truer* sides of existence"[271] This passage was reminiscent of a now infamous exchange, which occurred between three philosophers, in 2008, at a Stony Brook conference on disability. Using intelligence as the relevant criterion, the professors Jeff McMahan and Peter Singer attempted to demonstrate how many animals had more moral worth than even some human beings, namely those who had either lost the capacity for rational agency or otherwise never possessed it. "How can I begin to tell you," asked Eva Feder Kittay, "what it feels like to read texts in which one's child is compared, in all seriousness and with philosophical authority, to a dog, pig, rat, and most flatteringly a chimp; how corrosive these comparisons are, how they mock those relationships that affirm who we are and why we care?"[272]

Having been born with cerebral palsy, Kittay's own daughter, Sesha, was called developmentally delayed by childhood doctors. As a young woman in her early thirties, however, the jury was no longer out; she would never walk the hallowed halls of academia, and neither could she survive without the constant support of her parents. Perhaps the most pivotal moment, then, to occur at the Stony Brook conference was when Kittay invited her interlocutors to visit her daughter's care home. "I would like you to tell me what it is – just in terms of the argument that I presented," Singer answered, "what it is that I would see there that would challenge the argument

[270] For Nietzsche, the organic process itself presupposed a continuous interpretive activity, because even amongst amoebas and protoplasms, the appetitive drive involved a dispositional responsiveness to seek its own advantage. These basic levels of directedness, then, were present in all her children, due to environmental pressures, which, over time, sedimented newer structures atop older ones. Because previous drive-capacities were retained, however, evolutionary development was considered to be cumulative. And by virtue of this, too, Nietzsche said it was hierarchical, pushing the curious paradox that the higher the monkey climbs, the more he shows his tail.

[271] Nietzsche 1968, p. 537

[272]Kittay 2009, p. 610

that I presented."[273] At the time of their meeting, Kittay was aware that Singer had recently taken his students to visit a neonatal intensive care unit in New Brunswick. While there, the class came upon a baby who was only two hours old, and, having been born fourteen weeks early, weighed barely more than a pound. Children born so prematurely were at risk for long-term health defects, which was why, for Singer, the girl's parents should have been given a choice about whether to keep her on life-support. Horrified, the Director of Neonatal Medicine, Mark Hiatt, rejected Singer's views, arguing that the promise not to do harm, although not included in the Oath, was irrevocably bound up with the Hippocratic principle of the sanctity of life. "This is a child, somebody's daughter!" he implored. "Hopefully she'll be with us for many weeks, and eventually go home with her mother and father."[274]

For Singer, in keeping with his utilitarian forebears, sentience was the insuperable line that traced his moral thought. Yet, while he defended animals' welfare, Jeremy Bentham felt no qualms about killing them to eat. "They have none of those long-protracted anticipations of future misery that we have," Bentham wrote. "And the death they suffer at our hands usually is and always could be speedier and thus less painful than what would await them in the inevitable course of nature."[275] What jarred against such idyllic notions was the advent of industrialization, when the sight of animal production facilities became one of unmatched squalor. Hence, the remark by Upton Sinclair in the aftermath of *The Jungle*. "I aimed at the public's heart," he said, "and by accident I hit it in the stomach."[276] Sinclair never intended to become the forefather of all future meat-writers; he merely considered the Chicago stockyards to be a sufficiently ominous backdrop for his novel about wage-laboring immigrants.[277] The drama of the plot, however, was overwhelmed by its setting, and

[273] Ibid, p. 618
[274] Catholic News Agency, 2004
[275] Bentham 1823, p. 311
[276] Sinclair 1920, p. 47
[277] The main plot of Sinclair's novel follows a man named Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant laboring in Chicago's meatpacking industry; it was first serialized in the socialist magazine, *Appeal to Reason*, in 1905, before the installments were collected and published as a book, which appeared the following year. Although it was intended as a manifesto on capitalism, *The Jungle* sparked public outrage, instead, over the unsanitary processes by which animals were turned into meat. Soon, the White House began receiving hundreds of letters a day, inspiring a congressional debate over the possibility of new legislation. After extensive and often heated communications, the 1906 meat inspection bill, not yet passed by either the House or the Senate, arrived on the president's desk for his preliminary review. It was then that

by the fetid stench that confronted the Allies as they liberated the camps. Indeed, the gaschammers were modeled after the assembly lines at Ford, which themselves were inspired by the beef rail trolleys at the Swift & Company slaughterhouse. Hitler admired Ford for his industrial success no less than his antisemitism, about which he published frequently in his *Dearborn Independent*. "You can tell Herr Ford that I am a great admirer of his," Hitler said. "I shall do my best to put his theories into practice in Germany."[278]

Peter Singer has been called many things by his critics: "the most dangerous man in the world," "a public advocate of genocide," and he has even been compared to Josef Mengele, the Nazi "Angel of Death" — an impressive feat for a man who lost three grandparents in the Shoah, and yet, that was the contradictory world which surrounded Peter Singer. Like Hegel, he paid significant tribute to the brotherhood of man, and to the ideas of liberty and equality espoused by the French Revolution, but it was only when he noticed an affinity between himself and his maternal grandfather that Singer started to take an interest in his own Jewish ancestry. David Oppenheim had been a member of Vienna's Psychoanalytic Society, where he and Freud co-authored a manuscript on fire and sexual symbolism. He died tragically, however, in 1943, from a shortage of insulin, after he and his wife were transported to the infamous Theresienstadt Ghetto. "Did my grandfather perhaps have too much confidence in human reason and the humanist values to which he had dedicated his life?" Singer asked. "Did this render him unable to conceive that they could be so completely trodden underfoot as to allow barbarism once again to hold sway across Europe?"[279]

Rather than Jeremy Bentham, it was likely his protégé, John Stuart Mill, whose work had the most decisive influence on Singer's ethical stance. As demonstrated by his relationship with his wife and co-author, Harriet Taylor, Mill believed strongly in the equality of the sexes. Thus, amidst the sooty fog of nineteenth century London, he presented the first mass petition for women's suffrage

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Roosevelt decided to meet with Sinclair, and even appointed two investigators to verify his allegations. Sinclair took every opportunity to harangue the Beef Trust, and sent a stream of telegrams to the White House demanding federal reform. Roosevelt soon tired of Sinclair's outspokenness, however, and in a note to the author's publisher, wrote, "Tell Sinclair to go home and let me run the country for a while" (CITE).

[278] Lee 1980, p. 58

[279] Singer 2004, p. 11

before the House of Commons. In Mill's telling, the habits of a primitive age, when might was above right, had been unthinkingly institutionalized in modern civilization. All truly progressive nations were, therefore, throwing off their shackles, and inviting women to cooperate with men to the benefit of all. "Under an idle notion that the beauties of character of the two sexes are mutually incompatible, men are afraid of manly women," he wrote, "but those who have considered the nature and power of social influences well know, that unless there are manly women, there will no longer be manly men."[280] Unsurprisingly, Mill's argument convinced neither the majority of parliamentarians nor British society at large, but it did stir up a curious debate about whether women were persons. "My friends, in many things women are cleverer than men," Professor Barnowl said. "They have intuitions which transcend reason, but that same reason is the one thing needful for the free and independent voter. No reason, no vote."[281]

Presaging the feminist mantra, therefore, that "the personal is political," Mill drew out the parallels between the tyranny of kings and a husband's rule over his wife. "Some will object that a comparison cannot fairly be made between the government of the male sex and the forms of unjust power which I have adduced in illustration of it, since these are arbitrary, and the effect of mere usurpation, while it on the contrary is natural," Mill wrote. "But was there ever any domination which did not appear natural to those who possessed it?"[282] Because society had not made an experiment of living, any opinions regarding women's potential were, according to Mill, based merely upon conjecture. He hoped, therefore, that his laissez-faire wager would circumvent a clash — between his personally-held beliefs, on the one hand, and, on the other, his methodological convictions. "What women by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing," he said. "What they can do, but not so well as the men who are their competitors, competition suffices to exclude them from."[283] Being a disciple of both Bentham and Hume, Mill skirted the rim of the empiricist drain by insisting that experience needed to be vetted scientifically before it was

[280] Mill 1867, p. 10
[281] Punch, p. 220
[282] Mill 1869, p. 20
[283] Mill 1895, p .254

admitted into evidence. A moment, therefore, emerged with the potential to disrupt his argument, since the very same history which had excluded women from competition with men also forestalled their success.

The "new woman" who first emerged in the late nineteenth century, was considered to be less constrained than previous generations by Victorian norms of domesticity, and her increased presence in the labor market, consequently, became the focus of an anxious polemic. Whereas conservative forces, like the Roman Catholic Church, vehemently opposed women's suffrage, many progressivists only paid lip-service to gender equality, as evidenced by one subscription advertisement, from 1927, which called upon socialist men to help cure women of their mental halitosis. "Specialists tell her that with care and a monthly dose of NEW MASSES she will someday be able to think for herself," it read. "And the entire treatment, for a whole year, cost her only $2.00. Subscribe NOW!"[284] It was this same bemused condescension which was detected by Kittay when McMahan and Singer both expressed regret that their words had caused her pain. In so doing, they missed her little truth with a perfection nearly as excruciating when they picked her up as when they knocked her down, because it was not Kittay's hurt feelings that mattered but rather what they revealed about her social situation:

> Peter, you asked me how is Sesha different from a — what did you say — a pig? And [when I shook my head] you said, well, it's a factual question, "put up or shut up." The first thing I have to do when you ask me that question, is I have to get over . . . a feeling of nausea. It's not that I'm not able to answer it intellectually, it's that I can't even get to the point emotionally where I can answer that question. (Pause) Most of the time. When I say you can't just wave your hand and say "and so on," it's because there's *so much* to being human. There's the touch, there's the feel, there's the hug, there's the smile . . . there are so many ways of interacting. I don't think you need philosophy for this. You need a *very good writer*.[285]

In the first section of "The Convalescent," Zarathustra was beset by the spirit of gravity — a club-footed dwarf who clung to his back and taunted him without mercy: "'O Zarathustra,' he whispered mockingly, syllable by syllable, 'you philosopher's stone! You threw yourself up high, but

[284] New Masses, p. 2
[285] Kittay 2009, p. 621

every stone that is thrown must fall!"[286] This encounter precipitated the central crisis of the book, as Zarathustra gestured towards an archway which pointed simultaneously in two directions; the long lane back continued on for an eternity, as did the long lane forward. Zarathustra, then, engaged the dwarf with a question, and asked whether the two paths contradicted one another. "All that is straight lies," the dwarf murmurs contemptuously. "All truth is crooked: time itself is a circle."[287] At first glance, it appeared as though Zarathustra endorsed a linear conception of history against the dwarf's more cyclical picture. One reading dissolved into another, however, wherein what returned eternally was this dissonant conjunction."Must not whatever can happen of all things have already happened, resulted, and gone by? And, if everything has already been," Zarathustra asked, "what do you think, dwarf, of this Moment? Must this gateway, too, not already have been?"[288]

The once sanctimonious dwarf grew suddenly quiet as a dog howled out in the distance, and a young shepherd appeared with a snake in his mouth, which was choking him to death. Zarathustra said nothing about the transition, although the general meaning was clear: it represented the iron ring of recurrence, in which history, coiling back upon itself, was forced to bite its own tail. "I am the door," as Jesus said. "If anyone enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and will find pasture."[289] Yet, as the teller of the vision, Zarathustra was the loneliest man of all, because his life was perpetual death, and his death perpetual life. The depths of his solitude were, therefore, expressed in a long-winded metaphor about his journey from Hyperborea and the fierce winds of the north. Staying off the main roads, Zarathustra arrived unexpectedly at the gates of a great city, outside of which stood a foaming fool who barred the way with his hands. "Why would you wade through this mire?" he implored. "Have pity upon your foot! Spit rather on the gate of the city, and — turn back!"[290] The fool was a grotesque caricature who nonetheless had some bite, since the prophet's own rhetoric was sufficiently perfervid to give rise to imitation. "They call you my ape, you frothing fool: but I call you a grunting swine — with your grunting spoils even my praise of folly,"

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[286] Nietzsche 2005, p. 135
[287] Ibid, p. 136
[288] Ibid
[289] John 10:9
[290] Nietzsche 2005, p. 152

Zarathustra said. "What was it, then, that made you begin to grunt?"[291]

This was an odd passage, one that played on familiar metaphysical distinctions between appearance and reality, interiority and exteriority, and the necessary versus the accidental. However, it also touched upon the issue of anthropomorphism, and that penchant for superficial mimicry that Nietzsche ascribed to actors. "Let us never forget that the actor is no more than an ideal ape," he said, "and so much so that he is incapable of believing in 'essence' or the 'essential': with him everything becomes play, word, gesture, stage, scenery and public."[292] Children, for Nietzsche, were natural apes, who only later became conscious of the intimations of their behavior. Perhaps this was why, in his early writings, he gestured towards the cercopes, a pair of mischievous forest creatures transformed into monkeys by Zeus. They famously stole from Heracles, who, despite capturing them, he found their antics amusing and decided to let them live. Pregnant with great works, he had maternal instincts, and these prevented him from thinking too narrowly on self-interested rationality. "On the rough stones she bore the youngest of her children," Zarathustra said. "Now she runs foolishly in the arid wilderness, and seeks and seeks the soft meadow—my old, Wild Wisdom!"[293]

Drawing on this principle of animal psychology, Zarathustra espoused a cheerful asceticism, in which the leonine figure of the mother was both fully-fledged and divine. The fool's affective potency, then, was in his unblushing greed, which threatened to draw Zarathustra's gift back under the horizon of exchange. "You love your virtue as a mother does her child;" Zarathustra said, "but when have you ever heard of a mother who wanted to be paid for her love?"[294] This was the profound and irresolvable conundrum at the heart of moral philosophy: whether it was really better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. "And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion," Mill said, "it is only because they only know their own side of the question.[295] Being a dyed-in-the-wool empiricist, Mill believed that the only way to determine the differences between pleasures was to find someone who enjoyed the lot,

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[291] Ibid, p. 154
[292] Nietzsche 1997, p. 323
[293] Nietzsche 2005, p. 73
[294] Ibid, 81
[295] Mill 1879, p. 14

and ask which of them was best. If people who were competently acquainted with two pleasures showed a decided preference for one, he said, and especially if they would not resign it for any quantity of the other, then it was legitimate to regard that pleasure as superior, at least in terms of quality. Mill, of course, recognized that there was room for disagreement, and stated that, in such cases, the question should be put to a vote — but that, according to Plato, was precisely how democracy passed into despotism. "It would, it seems, be a delightful form of government, anarchic and motley," he said, "assigning a kind of equality indiscriminately to equals and unequals alike!"[296]

An argument for the need to have an aristocratic bulwark against popular encroachment can be found at the very beginnings of the Western moral tradition, when Plato argued that philosopher kings were the only ones fit to rule. In a rather humorous and metaphorically rich retort, Nietzsche, therefore, warned against trusting scholars. "They have cold, withered eyes; before them every bird lies unfeathered," Zarathustra says. "Such boast that they do not lie: but powerlessness to lie is far from being love of the truth."[297] To mock Plato's definition of man as a featherless biped, Diogenes of Sinope plucked a chicken and brought it to the Academy. "Behold," he exclaimed, "a man!" For the Cynic, walking through Athens with a lamp lit in daylight was no more ridiculous a way of finding human beings than trying to define them. He who laughed last laughed best, therefore, as a room full of students, looked up from their notes and started making their revisions. As a philosopher who prized freedom of thought above all else, Diogenes was not afraid of making a scene in public. Indeed, Plato himself described Diogenes as the maddened form of his teacher, but if there was some praise buried in that description, it was only grudgingly admitted. Perhaps, one of the most telling passages, then, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, began when the prophet stopped to preach in the town of Motley Cow. "What can be loved in the human," he declared, "is that it is a going-over and a going-under."[298]

Mistaking him for a ringmaster, a crowd soon gathered to hear Zarathustra introduce a funambulist. No sooner did the acrobat commence his performance, however, than he was knocked

[296] Plato 1994, p. 291, 558c
[297] Nietzsche 2005, p. 253
[298] Nietzsche 2005, p. 13

off balance by a devilish figure leaping over his head. "On you go," the jester cried, "else I shall tickle you with my heel! . . .You belong in the tower, and you should be locked up; you are blocking the way to one who is better than you!"[299] True to form, Zarathustra did not perform any miracles; instead, he comforted the dying man by converting him to atheism, in a manner strangely reminiscent of a priest performing last rites. "You made danger your vocation," he said. "There is nothing in that to despise. Now, your calling has brought you down: therefore, I will bury you with my own hands."[300] These words seemed to secure a deathbed conversion, and Zarathustra buried the corpse in the trunk of a tree, under which he then fell asleep. The resulting image was evocative, for although Zarathustra avoided saying what the good consisted in, he did suggest that the wisest men were a cross between plant and ghost. Considered against the incident in Turin, therefore, the philosopher's mental collapse might not have been what it seemed. Indeed, one of the strangest episodes from this period involved Julius Langbehn, an early figure in the Völkisch movement who blamed Jews for decadent art. When he learned that Nietzsche was in a mental institution, Langbehn proposed to cure the philosopher by worshipping him as a king. Nietzsche, however, hated Langbehn, and the two men nearly came to blows during one of their afternoon walks.

In a retaliatory countermove, Langbehn converted to Roman Catholicism, and purported a hatred for Nietzschean's aesthetics, which he had previously espoused. The reason for this flexibility of ressentiment was that whichever values were embraced from these motives, they were embraced reactively, and this, in turn, produced an intentional resistance to disambiguation. "His soul squints," as Nietzsche said. "His spirit loves hiding places, secret paths and back doors, everything covert entices him as his world, his security, his refreshment."[301] There was something deliciously ironic, then, about Singer's own myopia, and what he learned from his time in Zurich, when protestors ran him off stage:

> When I rose to speak, a section of the audience — perhaps a quarter or a third — began to chant: "Singer raus, Singer raus!" As I heard this chanted, in German, by

[299] Ibid, p. 17
[300] Ibid
[301] Nietzsche 2003, p. 21

> people so lacking in respect for the tradition of reasoned debate that they were unwilling even to allow me to be heard, I had an overwhelming feeling that this is what it must have been like to attempt to reason against the rising tide of Nazism in the declining Weimar Republic. An overhead projector was still functioning, and I began to write on it, to point out this parallel that I was feeling so strongly. At that point, one of the protestors came up behind me and tore my glasses from my face, throwing them on the floor and stamping on them so they shattered.[302]

At the turn of the nineteenth century, many British thinkers were propagating a form of liberalism based on Adam Smith's belief that the free market in commodities was the main engine of economic progress. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that John Stuart Mill and other intellectuals of his day thought of knowledge as something which emerged from the collision of truth and error; but while the so-called marketplace of ideas was capable of incorporating a welter of diverse opinions, the viability of each was haunted by a crude cultural monetarism. Marginal perspectives, in particular, were fragile, because they were not well enough manned to ward off the endless expansion of consumerism. Appropriating this argument, Singer, therefore, cast himself as a martyr, and dramatized his performative failure as a mark of superiority. "Most ethicists, arriving at the conclusion that a pig is more valuable than a human baby, would probably re-examine their premises and think about framing a somewhat less repellant argument," wrote the Catholic reporter John Leo, of the *U.S. News & World Report*. "But Singer is supremely confident in his coldly abstract line of reasoning."[303]

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche imagined Socrates as a one-eyed giant who was denied the pleasure of gazing into Dionysian abysses. Singer's own optical deficiency, then, becomes a literal metaphor for that tragic unfolding of intellectual hubris that entered the stage with Plato. "True, I have but one eye in the middle of my forehead, but it is as big as a good-sized shield," Polyphemus opined. "And what of it? Doesn't the great sun see everything here on earth from his heavens?"[304] 'Outis,' the name Odysseus used to introduce himself to the cyclops, was the negation of the

[302] Singer 2001, p. 317
[303] Leo 1999, p. 17
[304] This quote actually comes from a retelling in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but I am using it here to draw a connection, namely to do with the recurrence of the shield as a metaphor for the eye throughout ancient Greek literature (Ovid 1926, p. 289).

indefinite pronoun 'tis,' which was used to refer to some unspecified person or thing. Homer, therefore, made use of a grammatical peculiarity of the Greek language in order to extend his epic poem with homophonic words. "No One is killing me by fraud," Polyphemus told his neighbors, "No One is killing me by force." "If no one is doing you violence, if you are alone," they said, "then this is a malady sent by almighty Zeus from which there is no escape."[305] In some constructions, but especially in conditional clauses, the negation 'ou' was replaced by 'mê,' which, when pronounced as a single word, sounded indistinguishable from Metis, the cunning titaness who was swallowed by Zeus out of fear that she would give birth to a son more powerful than himself. The cyclopes' rejoinder, then, turned into a play of words, wherein they themselves named the trick to which they had fallen prey.

Originating in the linguistic paradox of speaking the ineffable, a mode of discourse called apophasis emerged in Ancient Greece. As a rhetorical device, apophasis involved the denial of one's intention to speak about a subject which was, thereby, insinuated; but 'apophasis' also emerged as a theological term, motivated by an awareness of the limits of language to predicate anything about the divine. The culmination of the cyclops episode, then, was that supremely ironic moment when Odysseus saved his own life by making himself disappear. In Book II of the *Republic*, Socrates said that Homer's models bore no resemblance to their portraits. What he failed to realize, however, was that figuration in poetry was a textual prosthesis, giving a tensed but supple expression to the relational dimension of depth. Every eye has a scotoma, an area of partial or total blindness within the visual field. Therefore, in this insurgent genre, binocularity was not merely the sum total of two monocular perspectives. Rather, the images from each eye combined synergistically, bringing objects seen at a distance into greater relief. Hence, the masks, the narrative displacements, and the signifying silences, each of which redounded back upon the speculating spectator. "I wish I could be as sure of killing you outright and sending you down to the house of Hades," Odysseus lamented, "as I am that it will take more than Neptune to cure that eye of yours."[306]

[305] Homer 1900, p. 188, § 407-409
[306] Ibid, p. 122, § 522

During his own visit to the underworld, Odysseus set out in front of him all the chief nutriments of life: honey and milk, water and wine, and above all, the blood of a lamb, which conferred a substance on the shades of the dead and enabled them to speak. The first ghost to appear before Odysseus was his fallen comrades, Elpenor, who had not yet received the habitation of the dead because his body remained unburied. Next to Elpenor, however, was the ghost of Odysseus's mother, who died of grief when her only son went to fight in the Trojan War. The visual, haptic, verbal, and vocal were all at play in this scene, as Odysseus' repeated attempts to embrace Anticlea contrasted her ethereal body with his more physical one; for within the womb, the voice of the mother is strangely acousmatic, displaying something of an effect emancipated from its cause. As the parallax shifted, therefore, with the progress of poetry, language seeped into that penumbra where the gaze was bereft of words. "The sinews no longer hold the flesh and bones together," she says. "These perish in the fierceness of consuming as soon as life has left the body, and the flits away as though it were a dream. Now, however, go back to the light of day as soon as you can, and note all these things that you might tell them to your wife hereafter."[307]

By overlaying the affliction of loss upon the maternal body, Homer portrayed her absent presence in strictly corporeal terms. The yellow skin of the creature, therefore, in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, becomes particularly interesting for two related reasons. On the basis of papers found in Victor's coat pocket, the creature discovered that his own patchwork body took four months to build. By obstetric definition, that made him an abortion, but it also hinted at the polysemic function of language as a signifying process. In medical circles during the 1800s, 'abortion' was the preferred term for early pregnancy loss, and was often used interchangeably with the more colloquial 'miscarriage.' Drawing on her own experiences of trauma, then, Shelley pushed the epistolary form of her novel beyond its breaking point. After eloping to Europe with Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary's first daughter, Clara, was born two months early, and died after only ten days. Owing to the immature excretory function in the fetal liver, it is likely that she would have been born with

[307] Ibid, p. 114, §215

neonatal jaundice, a harmless condition which, nonetheless, gave the false impression of illness.[308] "Dreamt that my little baby came to life again; that it had been cold, and that we rubbed it before the fire, and it lived," Shelley wrote in her journal. "Awake and find no baby. I think about the little thing all day. Not in good spirits."[309]

In *The Black Sun*, Kristeva described melancholia as a problem of differentiation, where a lack of separation from the maternal body implied an inadequate integration into the symbolic realm. Hence her use of fictional writing as an aesthetic mode of therapy. "For those who are racked by melancholia, writing about it would only have meaning if writing sprang out of that very melancholia," she said. "Within depression, if my existence is on the verge of collapsing, its lack of meaning is not tragic — it appears obvious to me, glaring and inescapable."[310] If such a refiguring is possible, then, perhaps this is precisely what pushed Shelley's imagination beyond its limits to a single negative presentation of inaccessibility and pain. "Where they ought to see a kind and feeling friend, they behold only a detestable monster," the creature says. "That is indeed unfortunate," De Lacey replied, "but if you are really blameless, cannot you undeceive them?"[311] So long as there were no means to express the mother-daughter relation, Shelley's grief was doomed, inevitably, to a pathological form. The dream held out by De Lacey, then, was left as the negative imprint of that paradise lost which was riven by her entry into the symbolic register:

> At that instant the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted, and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father, to whose knees I clung; in a transport of fury, he dashed me to the ground and struck me violently with a stick. I could have torn him limb from limb, as the lion rends the antelope. But my heart sank within me as with bitter sickness, and I refrained.[312]

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[308] Neonatal jaundice is most often caused by an excess of bilirubin known as hyperbilirubinemia. Bilirubin, which is circulated naturally through the placenta during pregnancy, is a waste product formed by the breakdown of hemoglobin in red blood cells. In most cases, infant jaundice resolves itself naturally within a few weeks, but in the Victorian era, physicians speculated that it, along with other physical deformities, was caused by an emotional disturbance in the mother during pregnancy.
[309] Shelley 1995, p. 70
[310] Kristeva 1989, p. 3
[311] Shelley 1846, p. 116
[312] Ibid, p. 117

Early in the creature's interpolated narrative, he curled his eight-foot frame to fit inside the hovel which was annexed to the De Lacey's cottage. Peering through a hole in the wall, he learned that the family was exiled from France for abetting a fugitive: a Turkish merchant, who was wrongfully imprisoned on account of ethnic prejudices. Incensed by this injustice, and in love with the Mahometan's daughter, it was the eldest son, Felix, who had orchestrated the escape for which his father and sister were also convicted. Thus, while the family settled in Germany, the Turk absconded to Italy and awaited a favourable opportunity to return to his native country. Having resolved to stay with her father until the moment of his departure, Safie solicited the help of a translator to write to her betrothed, who, in reading her words aloud to the rest of the family, unknowingly offered the creature his first and, perhaps, only experience of maternal affection. Therefore, although these letters remained opaque, they nonetheless served an important textual function, bringing to halt a potentially infinite regress of masculine testimonies. "I have copies of these letters," the creature told Frankenstein, "for I found means, during my residence in the hovel, to procure the implements of writing; and the letters were often in the hands of Felix or Agatha. Before I depart, I will give them to you, they will prove the truth of my tale."[313]

When she first arrived at the De Lacey cottage, Safie's hijab was a conspicuous marker of her racial difference. However, her voice was alluringly musical, and in a sweet accent, she spoke her lover's name. "On hearing this word, Felix came up hastily to the lady; who, when she saw him, threw up her veil, and I beheld a countenance of angelic beauty and expression," the creature recalled. "Her hair of a shining raven black, and curiously braided; her eyes were dark, but gentle, although animated; her features of a regular proportion, and her complexion wondrously fair, each cheek tinged with a lovely pink."[314] The word 'fair,' in this description, created a fruitful ambiguity; it was the very same word that Victor used to describe his adoptive sister, who was gifted to him by his mother from a local orphanage. Elizabeth was the silent cipher of her brother's narrative, and any praise bestowed upon her, he claimed as his own possessions. This one word connection, therefore,

[313] Ibid, p. 106
[314] Ibid, p. 106

assumed a heightened significance, since the Turkish merchant offered his daughter in exchange for his deliverance. "Felix rejected his offers with contempt," the creature said, "yet when he saw the lovely Safie, who was allowed to visit her father and who by her gestures expressed her lively gratitude, the youth could not help owning to his own mind, that the captive possessed a treasure which would fully reward his toil and hazard."[315]

In "On Narcissism," Freud articulated the relationship between the masculine need to idealize women and social organization. In order for the male subject to idealize the nation and its women, Freud said, it was necessary, firstly, to repress his desire for the members of his own sex. This repression was never fully realized, however, and it tended to leave a residue which haunted him like a ghost. "The want of satisfaction that arises from the non-fulfillment of this ideal liberates the homosexual libido," Freud wrote, "is transformed into a sense of guilt and this is social anxiety."[316] In *Frankenstein*, Shelley tied this cultural homophobia to linguistic masochism, so that submission to the signifying chain was what triggered the creature's anguish. Though no darling of cherubic stature, the creature began, initially, as a feminine child of nature; he wandered through the forest at night, and was delighted by its winged creatures and the brightness of the moon. As Felix read to Safie, however, from Volney's *Ruins of Empire*, the creature learned for the very first time about the rudiments of prejudice. "Yes, ignorance and cupidity! These are the twin sources of all the torments of man!" he says. "Biased by these into false ideas of happiness, he has mistaken or broken the laws of nature in his own relation with external objects; and injuring his own existence, has violated individual morality; shutting through these his heart to compassion and his mind to justice, he has injured and afflicted his equal, and violated social morality."[317]

While the creature was learning the science of the letters, Frankenstein was convalescing under the care of his childhood friend, Henry Clerval, who had arrived at the University of Ingolstadt with the design of making himself the complete master of Eastern languages. "I felt great relief in being the fellow-pupil with my friend, and found not only instruction but consolation in the

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[315] Ibid, p. 105
[316] Freud 1957, p. 102
[317] Volney 1866, p. 40

works of the orientalists," Victor said. "Their melancholy is soothing, and their joy elevating to a degree I never experienced in studying the authors of any other country."[318] This, perhaps, was the comfort which Felix sought in Safie, in whom many commentators have seen a deliberate rebirth of Mary Wollstonecraft. Safie's mother, a Christian Arab, was seized and enslaved by the Turks, and was recommended by her beauty to the Mahometan. He restricted the soul of his wife, however, by imposing his religion over hers, underlining both her captive state and the strangeness of their relationship. "This lady died," the creature said, "but her lessons were indelibly impressed on the mind of Safie, who sickened at the prospect of again returning to Asia, and the being immured within the walls of a harem, allowed only to occupy herself with puerile amusements, ill suited to the temper of her soul, now accustomed to grand ideas and a noble emulation for virtue."[319]

Wollstonecraft's first political work was a response to Edmund Burke, who expressed lamentations for the late Marie Antoinette. "I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards, to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult," he said. "But the age of chivalry is gone; that of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever."[320] Meeting Burke on his own grounds, Wollstonecraft called him a coward, and accused him of hiding his misogyny behind a lady's skirt. This was an idea to which she returned in her later work, where she sketched the so-called "Mahometan style" of European literature. In particular, she took issue with Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Adam's tracing of his death to Eve's inabstinence: "Immediately a place before his eyes appear'd, sad, noisesome, dark; a lazar-house it seem'd, wherein were laid numbers of all diseased, all maladies of ghastly spasm or racking torture, qualms of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds."[321] The word 'fev'rous,' for Wollstonecraft, would have better fit the pentameter, and was, therefore, indicative of a pun in which women were blamed for sin. "The conduct and manners of women, in fact, evidently prove that their minds are not in a healthy state," she said, "for, like the flowers that are planted in too rich a

318 Shelley 1846, p. 54
319 Ibid, p. 106
320 Ibid
321 Burke 1999, p. 76

soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty; and the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity."[322]

The actual lives of Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter, Mary Shelley, intersected only briefly, the former having died tragically of septicemia shortly after giving birth; the precipitating incident was a complication in the delivery of the placenta, and doctors feared that breastfeeding would contagiously pass the infection in her blood. For her own protection, then, Shelley was denied the breast, while her mother submitted to the suckling of puppies — in order to stimulate her uterus to contract and expel the remaining tissue. Although she initially appeared to recover, Wollstonecraft was overtaken several days later by intense shivering, leading one of her most virulent detractors, the Reverend Richard Polwhele, to remark that the hand of providence had been involved in her death. A prolific writer whose works have largely been forgotten, Richard Polwhele was fiercely opposed to the assumption of masculine prerogatives by women; his most famous poem, therefore, *The Unsex'd Females*, was a polemical intervention into nationalist discourse and politics. Polwhele was primarily concerned with what he saw as the encroachment of radical French politics into British society. These subjects came together, then, in the person of Mary Wollstonecraft, whose nursing of puppies proved easy fodder for his claims of feminine impropriety. "She died a death that strongly marked the distinction of the sexes," he opined, "by pointing out the destiny of women, and the diseases to which they are liable."[323]

As Polwhele was doubtless aware, the "incorruptible milk" of the Republican mother functioned figuratively, during the French Revolution, to purify the disordered soul of the Ancien Régime.[324] Thus, did he pillory Wollstonecraft as chief among the Blue Stockings. As an informal

[322] Wollstonecraft 1891, p. xxxi
[323] Polwhele 1798, p. 30
[324] The concept was concretized by a commemorative coin, wherein Nature, represented by the Egyptian goddess, Isis, dispensed a regenerative water from her breasts to the National Assembly. The coin was nicknamed "Robespierre," but it actually depicted the-then President, Marie-Jean Hérault de Séchelles. Despite being one of the chief authors of the 1793 constitution, Hérault was, in many ways, the quintessential French aristocrat; by the time the five décime coins started to circulate, therefore, heads had already rolled. The declaration of terror as "the order of the day" on September 5th, 1793, signaled the beginning of the rule of the Comité de Salut Public. The ostensible purpose of this legislative body was to root out disloyalists and save the body politic. In the spirit of such patriotic amputation, the Comité enacted the "Law of

movement aimed at women's education, the members of the Blue Stockings Society were, in many ways, the unsung heroes of early British feminism; their salons, which stressed civility and conversation, stood opposed to the brooding and solitary culture of academia, and were vital to the promotion of female intellect in the public sphere of letters. To the mind of Richard Polwhele, however, radicalism was for Jacobins just what it was for the Blue Stockings: a kind of mad-dog virus, which infected everyone it touched. "Survey with me, what ne'er our fathers saw, a female band despising NATURE's law," he quipped. "As 'proud defiance' flashes from their arms, and vengeance smothers all their softer charms."[325] In Polwhele's view, women did not possess reason enough for independent thought; let loose, therefore, they appeared like maenads in the blood orgies of the French Revolution. Concerning Mary Wollstonecraft, however, perhaps, there is more to her story than meets the jaundiced eye, because she did succeed, as she had hoped, in creating a new genus of literature.

Mary Wollstonecraft was often read as a would-be rationalist who struggled unsuccessfully with a torrid emotional life. In this view, then, which was espoused by Richard Polwhele, 'fever' stood as a synonym for Kantian inclination. As a key figure of the Enlightenment, Kant defined it as humanity's emergence from a self-incurred immaturity. Thus, the improvement in the use of reason suggested by Kant's famous motto, seemed, at least initially, to apply to all rational beings:"Have the courage," he said, "to use your own understanding!" As suggested by this preamble, Kant believed that some forms of immaturity, like those due to age, lifted naturally over time, whereas self-incurred immaturity was attributable to cowardice. To go against the common opinion required a strong moral fiber, as each man was left to discern for himself what was the right thing to do. This incitement to think for oneself was a powerful clarion call, one that no doubt influenced Wollstonecraft to publish her landmark treatise; for while the virtues of Kant's idealism were rightly celebrated, its blind spots were still too often summarily dismissed:

Suspects" on September 17th, which led to the arrest of hundreds of thousands of people nation-wide. The Jacobins, thus, consolidated power by killing off their rivals, but as the pile of bodies mounted, the Revolution ground to a halt. For the famously self-righteous Robespierre, moralistic virtue was the most important quality of a healthy French republic. No one was safe from the guillotine, then; not even its instigator.

[325] Polwhele 1798, p. 6

> The (natural or legal) incapacity of an otherwise sound human being to use his *own* understanding in civil affairs is called immaturity. If this is based on immaturity of age, then it is called *nonage* (being a minor); but if it rests on legal arrangements with regard to civil affairs, it can then be called *legal* or *civil* immaturity. *Children* are naturally immature and their parents are their natural guardians. *Woman* regardless of age is declared to be immature in civil matters; her husband is her natural curator.[326]

Kant's conception of independence was, ultimately, more civil than material, but property-ownership nonetheless formed its theoretical bedrock. "The only quality required for [citizenship]," Kant said, "besides the *natural* one (that it is neither woman nor child) is: that one is *one's own master* (*sui iuris*), and thus that one has some *property* (which also includes any skill, trade, fine art, or science) that provides for one."[327] Because they depended on others for their livelihood, Kant believed that the laboring class would either be too eager to please their masters or else too susceptible to pressure, especially in an open ballot system, for their votes to truly count. The peculiar immaturity of women, then, was easily cast in these terms: it was sensual delight which first drove men to female companionship. Therefore, women developed modesty as the chief content of their virtue. "Now one finds that the masculine sex is inclined to prove itself to be pleasing to the feminine sex," he said, "and to relieve them of all troubles and discomforts, and take them upon itself, and the more the feminine sex needs such, and the masculine sex can render it, all the more does the man like it."[328]

As epitomized by Eve and her fig leaf, women's reticence functioned, here, as a kind of feminine lure, leading men from purely animal excitations over to rational ones. Imagining the hidden sex-object, thus, was the anthropological precursor to imagining a hidden, transcendental object of perfection. "The veiled goddess before whom we of both parties bend our knees is the moral law in us, in its invulnerable majesty," Kant said. "We do indeed perceive her voice and also understand very well her command. But when we listen we doubt whether it comes from man, from the perfected power of his own reason, or whether it comes from an other, whose essence is

326 Kant 2006, p. 103
327 Kant 2006, p. 49
328 Kant 2012(a), p. 241

unknown to us and speaks to man through this, his own reason."[329] This fall into perception, which Kant called the sublime, was an aesthetic experience characterized by a negative form of pleasure. Rather than the content, it was the form of expression which was beautiful, because it set the imagination in motion by promising infinite mysteries. "Perhaps nothing more sublime was ever said and no sublimer thought ever expressed," Kant said, "than the famous inscription on the Temple of Isis (Mother Nature): 'I am all that is, and that was, and that shall be, and no mortal hath lifted my veil.'"[330]

That the figure of Isis was chosen by Kant as an analogue for the law, permitted, inversely, a better comprehension of her feminine mystique. In order to hear that ringing voice which demanded resistance to passion, men needed, also, the fascination of a beautiful, finite form. Hence, Kant's proscription against educating women, lest they lose their sensual charms. "Just as it does not belong to women to go to war," he said, "so women cannot personally defend their rights or pursue civil affairs for themselves."[331] In this oscillating movement, then, between reason and the imagination, each one vied against the other like a sailing ship tossed in the tempest. Indeed, the sadomasochistic nature of this theory is striking, and bears allusions to the rape of Circe in Homer's *Odyssey*. Fearing her use of witchcraft, Zeus banished Circe to the island of Aeaea, where she weaved a silk so fine, so soft, and so alluring in color that no man could conceive it. The ambient activity of craftsmanship remained at play throughout this passage, infusing the lyric of poetry with the rhythm of Circe's movements. As for her voice, it was twice described: first by Odysseus, and then by Polites. "There is someone inside," he said, "and singing most beautifully; the whole floor resounds with it, let us call her and see whether she is a woman or goddess."[332]

It is notable, here, that the verb for 'resound' was 'amphimemuken' — a playfully onomatopoetic term, which nodded at mooing cows. Circe, after all, was a powerful sorceress, whose haunt was guarded by the solicitous lions and wolves whom she enchanted. Being the

[329] Kant 1993, p. 71
[330] Kant 1914, p. 201
[331] Kant 2004, p. 78
[332] Homer 1900, p. 130

daughter of Helios, she was taller than mortal women, and had piercing yellow eyes that shone with an otherworldly light. She, therefore, tricked Odysseus's men with the promise of a feast, until one by one, they ran headlong into pleasure, and turned themselves into swine. However, he himself was fortified by a mysterious herb called moly, and demanded Circe to restore his crew from their pitiful, porcine state. Charmed by this cleverness, she obliged, and the men frisked like calves in the barnyard about their mothers, for it felt "as though they had got back to Ithaca, where they had been born and bred."[333] The ontological divisions between men and women, animals and the divine, all became blurred in this scene, suggesting an implicit commentary on what vocal music conveyed. Indeed, it recalled a scene from *The Lives of Animals,* in which the protagonist, Elizabeth Costello, opined on the plight of cattle. "If I do not convince you," she said, "that is because my words, here, lack the power to bring home to you the wholeness, the unabstracted, unintellectual nature, of that animal being. That is why I urge you to read the poets who return the living, electric being to language; and if poets do not move you, I urge you to walk, flank to flank, beside the beast who is prodded down the chute to his executioner."[334]

When Mary Wollstonecraft first met her husband, William Godwin, in 1791, it was at the home of their mutual publisher, who was hosting a dinner party. "I had not read her *Rights of Women*," Godwin recalled. "I had barely looked into her answer to Burke, and been displeased, as literary men are apt to be with a few offences against grammar and other minute points of composition. I had therefore little curiosity to see Mrs. Wollstonecraft, and a very great curiosity to see Thomas Paine."[335] After reading her *Letters from Sweden*, however, Godwin changed his tune. "If ever there was a book calculated to make a man fall in love with its author," he said, "this appears to me to be the book."[336] One notable aspect of Godwin's statement was his use of the word 'calculation,' suggesting, as it did, a rather androgynous element of seduction. In eighteenth century conduct books, which Wollstonecraft rejected, women were taught to guard their feelings before the

[333] Ibid p. 134
[334] Coetzee 2016, p. 66
[335] Godwin 1798, p. 94
[336] Ibid p. 129

gentleman's love was declared. In *Letters from Sweden*, therefore, she began to play a discursive game which she publicly refused. "Eleven days of weariness on board a vessel not intended for the accommodation of passengers have so exhausted my spirits," she said, "to say nothing of the other causes, with which you are already sufficiently acquainted, that it is with some difficulty I adhere to my determination of giving you my observations, as I travel through new scenes, whist warmed with the impression they have made on me."[337]

Invited into Wollstonecraft's letters by apparently open advertisement, readers were not, then, permitted to learn the context in which they were written. A failed relationship with an American expat had left her in dire straits: unmarried and with child, she, therefore, made a vain attempt at suicide by laudanum. Her lover, Gilbert Imlay, had taken up with another woman, and after nursing Mary back to health, he devised a clever plan: he sent her to Scandinavia under the pretense of investigating a missing silver ship, but as most of Europe was at war with France, Imlay, doubtless, secretly hoped to be rid of Mary forever. Nevertheless, she persisted, writing one unrequited letter after another; but as imagination substituted what reality failed to supply, the beloved 'you' became as moorless as the authorial 'I.' Wollstonecraft found little to like in Scandinavian society, and complained that it reeked of the same hidebound mores which were warp and woof in England.[338] "I have mentioned before that the men are domestic tyrants, considering them as fathers, brothers, or husbands," she remarked, "but there is a kind of interregnum between the reign of the father and husband which is the only period of freedom and pleasure which the women enjoy."[339]

Whenever the cities failed her, Mary walked the rocky shores, and, under her pen, the sublime in nature transcended over itself; images of a crackling fire intertwined with roaring cascades, giving shape to the unspeakable excess of her experience as a woman. "I cannot tell why," she said, "but death, under every form, appears to me like something getting free — to expand in I

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[337] Wollstonecraft 2009, p. 5
[338] Here, she said, women emerged from their homes like galley slaves: unfailingly polite but lacking imagination — and because of this, entrusted power was easily abused for personal gain.
[339] Ibid p. 107

know not what element; nay I feel that this conscious being must be as unfettered, have the wings of thought, before it can be happy."[340] By pretending to remark upon her own passing as on the passing of genius, Wollstonecraft quietly drew attention to a feminine self-elegy. Only the belated audience was left to infer her meaning, transforming her letters to Gilbert Imlay into a kind of sapphic lovesong. At the end of her return journey, however, there was no one to welcome her home, and Mary, inconsolable, plunged herself into the Thames. Death, here, and paradoxically, became an emblematic experience, "for all the regret which follows those from whom fate separates us, seems to be something torn from ourselves."[341] After she was rescued, then, by a boatful of fishermen, Mary cast her Wordsworthian pearls in a portrait of the muse:

> This mistake occasioned much vexation; for the child, at last, began to cry so bitterly . . . that fancy conjured up before me the wretched Ugolino, with his famished children; and I, literally speaking, enveloped myself in sympathetic horrors, augmented by every tear my babe shed, from which I could not escape till we landed, and a luncheon of bread and basin of milk routed the spectres of fancy.[342]

In eighteenth century France, the word 'exotic' was confined almost exclusively to the classification of plants. A rapidly growing population had strained the nation's resources, leading to increased deforestation to create more arable land. Equally alarming, however, was that successive timbering over the centuries had caused desertification, which threatened the viability of indigenous trees and shrubs. Owing to the French presence in Canada and Louisiana, the New World had long since been identified as a source for regenerative seeds, but beyond the matter of acquiring such specimens was the question of cultivation. An amateur botanist himself, Louis XV commissioned a study by the century's foremost agronome, emphasizing the importance of climate and winter survivability. Progress was cut tragically short, however, in 1792, when insurgents from the Paris Commune stormed the Tuileries. "Architecture is reprehensible . . . " said Heurtault-Lamerville, "for having given itself to tastelessly overturning, for no good reason, our productive gardens, with no object but

[340] Ibid p. 88
[341] Ibid p. 118
[342] Ibid

to amuse some bored men with a painstaking variety, with complex views and with fictions whose only merit is the difficulties overcome to achieve it."[343]

Originally from Turkey, the hyacinth was high fashion at Louis XV's court, where his mistress, Madame de Pompadour, was known for her passion for gardening; she ordered the flowers to be moved indoors and kept in porcelain vases, an imitation of their Chinese antecedents which were then flooding the French market. As a symbol of monarchist decadence, this complex was nearly destroyed, leading the Abbé Henri Grégoire to coin the term 'vandalism.' "I created the word to kill the thing," he famously wrote in his memoirs, comparing the exploits of Robespierre to the burning of Alexandria.[344] Himself a Catholic prelate, Grégoire believed that the body of Christ was a free-floating synthesis, both deconstructed and reconstructed in the Eucharistic rite. Therefore, the Tuileries, much like the Sacred host, offered a certain mobility to the mind of contemplation; the two were connected through the theological topos of fulfillment, an Enlightenment doctrine according to which the Church was God's true Israel. In this salvation narrative, time had an hourglass shape, and its two contiguous vessels met in that place where the Word became flesh. It was here, therefore, that history played its cruelest trick on Grégoire, for although the worst of the revolutionary iconoclasm abated, it did so under the circumstances of the Bourbon Restoration. "Since that moment, a nostalgia for unknown lands is in her," wrote Judith Gautier. "A desire for exoticism rules her like a tyrant; wearing turkish slippers no longer satisfies her love of oriental colour."[345]

Owing largely to the finance minister, Jean Baptiste Colbert, travel writing was popular in seventeenth century France. Through his efforts, a large expansion of the royal library took place, both through the acquisition of private collections and through expeditions to locate and purchase manuscripts in the Ottoman territories. This was the context in which Antoine Galland compiled *Arabian Nights*, the commercial success of which marked the beginnings of "oriental fashion." Aside from lewd books, its main literary offshoot was the philosophic novel, which used narrative as a

[343] As quoted by Livesey (2001, p. 90).
[344] Grégoire 1837, p. 346
[345] Chandler et. al 1990, 146

vehicle for explicating ideas. However, many of these works fell into a strangely hybrid category, most especially *Les Bijoux Indiscrets*, which featured talking vaginas.[346] Published anonymously in 1748 by Denis Diderot, this licentious romance was a thinly veiled parody of Louis XV of France. Bored with his life at court, the Sultan, Mangogul, began to suspect his concubine of infidelity. Happily for him, however, the genie Cucufa provided him a ring, which, when rubbed, enabled him to extract confessions from women's genitals. Taken together, these thirty-one trials were a gladsomely sexist tale, one that opened the doors of Enlightenment thought to a fleshly hermeneutics.

Even in Diderot's day, it was not scientific, or even popular to extend the concept of consciousness beyond the species line. "But what is a sensible being?" he asked. "A being abandoned to the discretion of the diaphragm."[347] For Diderot, the natural cry was located at the heart of primitive language, and originated in man's powerful desire to communicate his passions. It was, therefore, correlated with sympathy and the powers of imagination, which combined to swell that mass of feeling also known as the moral sense. This aspect of his vital materialism, the "lignes immenses," served to assimilate the spiritual principle of a dualist metaphysics. Indeed, both meanings were already implicit in the Latin word 'anima,' a feminine noun which was used to describe the life-giving force of breath. Perhaps the most interesting voyage, then, "to the region of hypothesis," took place when Mangogul told Mirzoza that woman was but an animal. By turning his ring against the royal mare, the Sultan wagered that she, too, could be made to talk about her sordid affairs. When he was commanded to dictate this oral history, however, Ziguezague protested that he did not know how to spell the words of her sex. "Accordingly," said the narrator, "Gulliver read and interpreted the mare's discourse off-hand, notwithstanding the orthographical errors, with which it abounded. Nay, it is the only good translation of it in all Congo."[348]

Throughout the novel, the problem confronting Mangogul was that he could only get behind the veil of representation by having recourse to *more* representation. This doubly-fictional

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[346] In its original, proto-sociological meaning, 'pornography' described the conditions under which sex workers plied their trade. As popular literature, however, pornography served as a projection surface for the sexual imagination. Hence, the continued conflation of eroticism and the exotic.
[347] Diderot 2015, p. 141
[348] Diderot 1749, p. 252

intervention, then, by Lemuel Gulliver, was in many ways representative of the novel's central conceit. "The need of reason is not inspired by the quest for truth but by the quest for meaning," as Hannah Arendt once said. "And truth and meaning are not the same."[349] This point was expounded, elsewhere, by the case of the polyglot bijou, and also by Zelais's muzzled jewel, "le bijou suffoqué." In each of these examples, a gap once again insinuated itself between the object signified and the signifying subject, drawing attention, as it were, to the ghost of feminine pleasure. "So, there was nothing," Diderot said, "but how can we conceive it? We must conceive nothing. He who says nothing declares by his language that he removes all reality."[350] One of the earliest distinct uses of the French word for 'nothing' was made manifest in the guise of an ism by Léger Marie Deschamps. Riénisme, as he called it, was a kind of abstentionist gesture, a way of saving the name of God by not naming God at all. Here, the messianic hope expressed in theological texts was translated into an expectation of the arrival of a stranger; and atheism, contrarily, was a salutary warning against the idolatrous fusion of the self with the totality of being. "The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old world is dying, and the new cannot be born," Gramsci said. "In this interregnum, a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."[351]

In its original meaning, the term 'subaltern' was British jargon for a junior military officer, and that was how it was used by Antonio Gramsci in the first of his *Prison Notebooks*. Later, however, the scope of his theory was expanded by assimilating new bodies of knowledge to it. Out of literary censorship, then, 'subaltern' became a figurative term for the proletarian masses — or, at least, that was how many Leninist scholars interpreted his work. However, Gramsci was not only concerned with class emancipation; he also wrote about women's struggles and the plight of colonized nations. The "Southern Question," therefore, was a better representation of Gramsci's account of the darker sides of bourgeois hegemony. Castigating the Italian Socialist Party for its orientalism à la lettre, Gramsci lambasted the industrialist hangovers of the northern literati. "If the South is backward," he parodied, "the fault is not to be found in the capitalist system or in any other historical cause, but is

349 Arendt 1981, p. 15
350 Gramsci 1996, p. 276
351 Gramsci 1971, p. 276

the fault of nature which made the southerner lazy, incapable, criminal, barbarous, moderating his stepmother's fate by the purely individual outburst of great geniuses, who are like solitary palms in an arid and sterile desert."[352] For Gramsci, the regeneration of these oppositions, through which bourgeois rule was maintained, was, in theoretical terms, essentially coercive in the sense of being divisive; the task of the socialist author, then, was to form an organic link, and from this doubled positionality to voice the excluded middle. "Pessimism of the intellect," he said, "optimism of the will."[353]

Using language drawn from Gramsci and the British response to *sati*, the feminist thinker Gayatri Spivak made a poignant observation. "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears," she said, "not into pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling, which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' between tradition and modernity."[354] In India, the justification given for sati, or the sacrificial burning of widows, was two-fold; not only did it symbolize the unbreakable bond of matrimony, but it also freed society from the burden of caring for spinsters; and although the British banned the practice in the early nineteenth century, it continued to take place in territories outside their jurisdiction.[355] Sati, therefore, became a flashpoint of anti-colonial struggle, giving rise to the nativist line that these women *wanted* to die. It was out of this theoretical lacuna that Spivak gave her proposal: to understand the subaltern voice as a kind of grapheme or mimicry. "Where was Echo, the woman in Narcissus's story?" she asked. "My essay is an attempt to 'give woman' to Echo, to deconstruct her out of traditional and deconstructive representation and (non)representation, however imperfectly."[356]

In his work, Freud allowed himself to speculate about a feminine archetype who achieved a

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[352] Gramsci 2005, p. 33
[353] This was Gramsci's famous motto and recurrent theme throughout his works, to which I will return in the following chapter.
[354] Spivak 1988, p. 306
[355] When Ranjit Singh died, for instance, in 1839, four of his wives and seven concubines ascended the funeral pyre; as a result of this and other incidents, the British banned sati in the Punjab nearly a decade later, when the region was annexed to the royal crown after the Second Anglo-Sikh War.
[356] Spivak 1993, p. 17

certain self-sufficiency by loving only herself. Such women exercised a special allure, he said, not only for aesthetic reasons, since they, as a rule, were most beautiful, but also for an interesting combination of psychological factors. "For it seems very evident that another person's narcissism has a great attraction for those who have renounced part of their own narcissism," Freud observed, ". . . just as does the charm of certain animals which seem not to concern themselves about us, such as cats and the large beasts of prey."[357] No psychic encounter was possible, however, between the feminine self-admirer and her masculine counterpart; they remained forever out of phase, caught in the non-equivalence of their respective object choices. For whereas men more often manifested an anaclitic love, Freud maintained that women's tendency was towards autoeroticism. Of course, Freud was not the first to identify Narcissus as a woman — in *Paradise Lost*, Eve, similarly, had to be called away from the reflection of her own image in the water. Thus, by giving her creature a vision so clearly an inversion of Eve's, Shelley expanded into narrative her mother's feminist moral.

As Wollstonecraft argued, a lovely woman cooped up in the house was liable to become a more irrational monster than some of the Roman emperors. The agony of this entrapment, then, was personified by Shelly in a creature whose excessive bodiliness makes him literally unhomely. "His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God!" Victor cried.[358] Here, a maxim attributed to Virginia Woolf comes to mind, one made all the more conspicuous by the fact of her father's name: Leslie Stephen. "Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses," she opined, "possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size."[359] For Wollstonecraft, women were forced to present themselves attractively because they were exhibits on the slave market. Thus, the bourgeois male got woman as he wanted her, only to rationalize his superior virtue by insisting that hers was superficial. Indeed, it was precisely this sort of strategy which was demonstrated by Diderot when Mangogul said that women's jewels were more honest than their mouths. "A chimera of honour, prejudices!"

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[357] Freud 1957, p. 86
[358] Shelley 1846, p. 43
[359] Woolf 1991, p. 38

cried his mistress, Mirzoza. "If your highness had been exposed to the same inconveniences with us, you would become sensible, that whatever touches virtue, is far from being chimerical."[360]

Among the Victorians, melancholia was considered to be the privileged complaint of genius. This made the illness fashionable for enterprising young men, and yet, women with the very same symptoms were diagnosed as hysterical. This double-standard was first introduced by such luminaries as Plato, who believed that the uterus became dislodged and compressed the diaphragm, or the septum that kept the lower soul from disturbing its better half. "The animal within them is desirous of procreating children, and when remaining unfruitful long beyond its proper time," he said, "gets discontented and angry, and wandering in every direction through the body, closes up the passages of the breath, and by obstructing respiration, drives them to extremity, causing all varieties of diseases."[361] Aristotle, elaborating on this idea, thought that heat played a critical role in male spermatogenesis, concocting the blood into a more refined state, which was crucial for reproduction. Thus, the characteristics of the mother were inherited, not as the result of any formal principle on her part, but rather as the result of an absence or ablation of the sperm's individuating power. "The female is, as it were, a deformed male," he said, "and the catamenia are semen, only not pure; for there is only one thing they have not in them, the principle of the soul."[362]

Nature had tossed women a dash of reason, Aristotle maintained — enough to possess the same deliberative faculties as men, but not enough to overcome their emotional constraints. Hence, his insistence that courage and justice looked differently for both sexes. "And were we to enumerate, after the example of Gorgias, each particular excellence," he wrote, "instead of contenting ourselves with vague definitions of virtue in general, we should clearly perceive that what the poet says concerning silence is universally applicable to all qualities whatever: 'In woman, silence is an ornament, but the same silence adds no grace to man.'"[363] With respect to this quotation from Sophocles's *Ajax*, however, Aristotle seemed impervious to its original, dramatic context. Set during

[360] Diderot 1749, p. 49
[361] Plato 2012, p. 99
[362] Aristotle 1910, p. 737
[363] Aristotle 1757, p. 50

the tenth year of the Trojan war, the play's central conflict concerned the panoply of the fallen hero, Achilles. Owing to his battlefield prowess, Ajax assumed that the armor would be his, but Odysseus won the minds of the judges by cunning and grandiloquence. Incensed by this snub, Ajax plotted his vengeance, but Athena led him to murder sheep instead of the Greek commanders. Hence, the sardonic quip by Ovid that "the sword which has often reeked with Phrygian blood will now reek with its masters, lest any man save Ajax ever conquer Ajax!"[364]

No longer a great warrior but a laughingstock, Hades brooded over Ajax from the first moment of the tragedy. He believed death was the only means to recover his stolen valor, and yet, had he allowed himself a day to cool off, "he would probably have snapped his fingers at the terrible whisperings of wounded vanity, and said to himself, 'Who has not already, in my circumstances, mistaken a fool for a hero?'"[365] But his passion did not want to wait, and because her belief did not coincide with his, Ajax, therefore, became insensate to even the most humble supplications of his concubine. "O, by thy child, by heaven, I implore thee, fail us not" Tecmessa pleaded. "Speak to ears that hear," Ajax said. "I have heard from thee too much."[366] In the ancient Greek household, something rather like the purdah system of classical Islam prevailed, so that women were confined almost exclusively to the second-story gynaikon. The structure of Athenian society, therefore, and, in particular, the principle of domestic tyranny, reinforced and maintained an ethos wherein women themselves were cowed. "In sooth woman is a tearful thing," Ajax complained, recalling the words of Socrates on his deathbed to his wife.[367] Having been convicted of impiety and corrupting the youth of Athens, Socrates was condemned to die by drinking the poison hemlock. However, given the opportunity, he refused to flee, and employed his final hours in entertaining his friends, from which conversation Plato's dialogue, the *Phaedo*, was wholly taken.

The scene was set in the town of Phlius, where Echecrates asked the dialogue's namesake for news of their teacher's death. One small detail in his recollection, however, which was easily

[364] Ovid 1926, p. 257
[365] Nietzsche 1924, p. 77
[366] Sophocles 1929, p. 53
[367] Ibid p. 51

overlooked, perhaps, revealed the common thread between seemingly disjointed texts. "When we went inside we found Socrates just released from his chains, and Xanthippe — you know her! — sitting by him with the little boy on her knee," Phaedo said. "As soon as Xanthippe saw us she broke out into the sort of remark you would expect from a woman, 'Oh, Socrates, this is the last time that you and your friends will be able to talk together!'"[368] Socrates objected to this piteous outburst like a discordant note which marred the whole of his philosophic swan song. In a final gesture, then, and as if to shell its kernel, Xanthippe wailed and pounded her breast like a percussive instrument. Her expulsion dramatized a familiar association, as the walls of the jail cell resounded with her echoed lamentations. Socrates usurped his wife as leader of the dirge, and, in so doing, appropriated her didactic authority:

> Thus, you are poets, and we are also poets in the same style, rival artists and rival actors, and that in the finest of all dramas, one which indeed can be produced only by a code of true law — or at least that is our faith. So you must not expect that we shall light-heartedly permit you to pitch your booths in our marketsquare with a troupe of actors whose melodious voices will drown our own.[369]

With Xanthippe sequestered, Socrates observed how pain, like the fetter on his leg, brought the pleasure of its removal, and suggested that death might likewise cure the soul of disease. The etymological game, here, was obvious, as the literal meaning of his wife's name was a fair or flaxen-haired horse. "I think that if Aesop had noticed this he would have composed a fable that a god wished to reconcile their opposition," Socrates remarked, "but he could not do so, so he joined their two heads together; and therefore when a man has the one, the other follows later."[370] This remark prompted Cebes to speak, for it reminded him of a question which Evenus, the poet, had asked him the day before; he wanted to know why Socrates had been composing hymns to Apollo, having elsewhere decried the ambivalent powers of the discursive pharmakon.[371] "Tell him the truth,

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[368] Plato 1977, p. 8
[369] Plato 1934, p. 203
[370] Plato 1977, p. 8
[371] Meaning both cure and disease, 'pharmakon,' here, referred to writing as a dead simulation of speech, a mnemonic device which parasitized the animation of voice.

Cebes," Socrates replied, "that I do not do this with the idea of rivaling him or his poems, for I knew that would not be easy, but I tried to find out the meaning of certain dreams and to satisfy my conscience."[372] Admonished by a daimon to make music, Socrates had always presumed that this was the elenchus. Only now had a different reading occurred to him, and being under the sentence of death, he thought it safer to satisfy the scruple by writing poems in obedience to the dream.

In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates poeticized that the wolf loved the lamb by eating it. With his reference to Asclepius, then, as the patron god of physicians, Socrates betrayed the secret of his prodigious cleverness. "Socrates *wanted* to die," Nietzsche said. "But it was *he* who handed himself the poison cup, who compelled Athens to hand him the poison cup."[373] By enshrining the eidos in dialogue as that which can always be repeated the same, Socrates paved the way for its simulacrous appropriation: canonization via negativa.[374] Hence, the use of Freudian pun in Atwood's *Handmaid's Tale*: "I envy the Commander his pen. It's one more thing I would like to steal."[375] Having no protuberant genitalia, Freud believed that little girls were fated to a secondary Oedipus-complex: first, they blamed their mothers for this deficiency, and then, switching affection to their fathers, showed symbolic gratification for the coveted male appendage. Even in his own time, however, Freud's theory was heavily criticised, most especially by Karen Horney, the German psychoanalyst. She believed that many men resented female pregnancy, and that this, in turn, was the primary impetus behind *his story-making*. "It is inevitable that the man's position of advantage should cause objective validity to be attributed to his subjective, affective relations to the woman," Horney wrote, "and according to Delius the psychology of women hitherto does actually represent a deposit of the desires and disappointments of men."[376]

A propos of this issue, one might recall the fort/da game which was played by Freud's little

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[372] Ibid
[373] Nietzsche 1889, p. 15
[374] This interpretation, which was shared by Derrida, is not the one that Nietzsche offered in his polemics against Socratism. Indeed, Nietzsche had surprisingly little to say about the pharmakon as writing, and focused more narrowly on rationality as benumbing the instincts. If I am correct, however, these interpretations are not just complementary but, in a way, coterminous, since the inaugural gesture of logic effected a sterility of prose. This is an idea to which I will return at the end of the chapter.
[375] Atwood 2011, p. 215
[376] Horney 1993, p. 56

grandson. After throwing a spool of thread through the veil of his curtained cot, Ernst would next utter an appreciative noise that sounded like a purr. "The meaning of the game was then not far to seek," Freud declared. "It was connected with the child's remarkable cultural achievement — the foregoing of the satisfaction of an instinct — as the result of which he could let his mother go away without making any fuss."[377] The more Freud wrote about this incident, however, the more unsettling it appeared, as the infant subject seemed to enter into a tacit conspiracy; like Zeus swallowing Metis, his consciousness became organized around a signifier of lack, which, in turn, represented his desire for his mother as the signifier of his own lacking. "When the child was five and three-quarters years old," he said, "his mother died. Now, when she was really 'gone' ('o-o-o'), the boy showed no grief for her.'"[378] That the woman in question was Freud's own child and most cherished daughter, Sophie, only added to the psychological density of this apparently off-hand remark. As if in response to this passage, then, Luce Irigaray wrote, "no one must ever see that, by means of the male twosome (i.e., the spiritual father and the priest son), *it is she who is being offered in partial oblation*, she who manages the communion between them and among the other men and women present."[379]

As the remnant of a lost umbilical connection, Freud's forward slash marked the "navel of dreams" as the starting point of all psychical organization; thought did not come from nowhere, and the gap between symbols and the things they represented entailed a whole set of material conditions that, once unveiled, cast doubt upon the universality of Western logocentrism. Thus, Irigaray spoke of organs without bodies and the invisible of the visible, which, being nothing other than it, was also the other of it. "Re-semblance cannot do without red blood," she explained. "Mother-matter nature must go on forever, nourishing speculation, but this resource is also rejected as the waste product of reflection, cast outside as what resists it: as madness. Besides the ambivalence that the nourishing phallic mother attracts to herself, this function leaves woman's sexual pleasure aside."[380] Hence, the

[377] Freud 1922, p. 13
[378] Ibid, p. 14
[379] Irigaray 1993, p. 26
[380] Irigaray 1985, p. 77

neologic term 'hommosexual,' as a tongue-in-cheek approximation for self-same desires among men; it was *they* who took refuge in secrecy, demanding at length all the masquerades of women's dissimulation. "They all have the same phantom-like reality," Irigaray remarked. "Metamorphosed in identical sublimations, samples of the same indistinguishable work, all these objects now manifest just one thing, namely, that in their production a force of human labor has been expended, that labor has accumulated in them."[381]

For Irigaray, this transmutation of female bodies into exchangeable signifiers was itself the matricidal core of symbolic mediation. Indeed, it was epitaphic, because the word, insofar as it took the place of the thing it designated, announced nothing more than the emptiness upon which it was founded, "[an] infinite series of one plus one plus one . . . parts of a broken whole."[382] This image of dereliction, then, recalled her to Freud's own admission: that by thirty, the difficult development to femininity had so exhausted many of his female patients that they frightened him with their obstinance and psychical rigidity. "She is like a still-living tissue connected to the production of his language [sa lange] — to his tongue's issue," Irigaray remarked, "and feeding this language, but herself being used in line with a project that is his own, and, by passing through his technology, losing the movement and breath of life."[383] Here, the feminine risk of Oedipalization signaled exactly the paradox that Freud refused to see: walled up in the crypt of inexpressible affect, the mother returned like an animate corpse to haunt her daughter's psyche. This was hysteria as the breaking point of language, the mute and painful dramatization of a tortured metaphor. "We seek for words," as Nietzsche said. "[But] we seek perhaps also for ears. After all, who are we?"[384]

Freud's Wednesday Evening Society was established in 1902, probably on the initiative of his student, Wilhelm Stekel. It was, perforce, an old boys club and remained that way for nine years, until Paul Federn proposed to admit Dr. Margarete Hilferding. Sadger objected on principle, as did his nephew Wittels, for whom suffragism had threatened to dry the creative wellspring of genius. "It

[381] Ibid, p. 175
[382] Irigaray 2004, p. 55
[383] Irigaray 1999, p. 92
[384] Nietzsche 2012, p. 159

is suppressed eroticism which puts the weapon in the hand of these women," he said. "Every act of hate issues from erotic tendencies."[385] Freud, to his credit, criticized Wittels for being misogynistic, but was caught on record as saying that women had nothing to gain by their studies. Thus, it was that he found himself in a classic Ovidian scene, when one female figure hewn by his chisel sprang suddenly to life. Fresh from obstetric practice, she articulated the sense of loss that some women felt in giving birth, which manifested in a diminution of pleasure and, consequently, rejection of the infant. "If we assume an oedipal complex in the child, it finds its origin in sexual excitation by way of the mother," she said, "the prerequisite for which is an equally erotic feeling on the mother's part. It follows, then, that at certain times, the child does represent for the mother a natural sex object; this period coincides with the need of the infant for care."[386]

For Hilferding, attuned bodily interactions met the child at the somatic level, and provided congruence for the earliest senses of an embodied self. The provision of touch was not, therefore, just one more thing mothers did: it kindled a spark between her and her child, a subtle dance of desire that deepened with each new self-revelation. After hearing her presentation, however, Freud held himself aloof. "It is praiseworthy that the speaker undertook a psychoanalytic investigation into a topic that, as the result of the convention that we maintain, had been held back from investigation," he said. "[But] those explanations she arrived at before she came to psychoanalysis are the ones that are most estimable, being original and independent."[387] Freud deigned to impart his knowledge, but if ever they dared to disagree with him, he crushed the pride of his students. This was a telling habit about which nearly everyone in the circle had a story to tell, but most especially Alfred Adler, with his theory of masculine protest. Perhaps influenced by the socialist feminism of his day, Adler interpreted penis envy figuratively rather than literally. It was not, therefore, women's genital organs which made them prone to neurosis, but their immurement within the domestic sphere under the bitter laws of coverture. "The most important question," Adler said, "which women should ask their prospective husbands before marriage: 'What is your attitude towards

385 Wittels 1995, p. 174
386 Hilferding 1974, p. 115
387 Ibid, p. 118

masculine domination, particularly in family life?' is usually never answered."[388]

Freud vehemently rejected this theory as a gross oversimplification, and, judging that he no longer needed their support, forced Adler and his followers out of the psychoanalytic movement.[389] "With all this nonsense, analysis has nothing to do," he demurred. "This is not psychoanalysis."[390] For Adler, however, such protestations only proved the point: that insofar as silence, the closed mouth, had been made a sign of chastity, a woman could hardly speak her mind without prejudice to her person. The doors of the house, therefore, took on a peculiar, oneiric significance, as evidenced by the case of Dora in *Fragments of an Analysis*. She was brought to Freud at seventeen with an inexplicable cough, which he believed was indicative of a classic, Oedipal conflict. Dora's father was having an affair with the wife of a family friend, who, in an effort to placate her husband, had offered the girl up as bait. The man had twice assaulted Dora and maybe even raped her, but when confronted, he accused her of reading too many erotic novels. Not wanting to upset their delicate ménage à trois, Dora's father was only too happy to accept this explanation, at which point his daughter become despondent and, eventually, suicidal; and while Freud, for his part, did not doubt the veracity of her claims, even Dora's slapping of her assailant was seen as a sign of repression. "I should without question consider a person hysterical," he said, "in whom an occasion for sexual excitement elicited feelings that were preponderantly or exclusively unpleasurable."[391]

Having subjected Dora's dreams to a retrograde analysis, Freud concluded that her symptoms were a form of somatic compliance.[392] In the first dream, Dora was awakened by her father because the house was on fire, and while the mother wanted to save her jewel-case, her husband refused to wait. Dora told Freud that the dream reminded her of a spat between her parents. "Mother wanted to be given a particular thing," she said, "— pearl drops to wear in her ears.

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[388] Adler 1981, p. 106

[389] Hilferding did not comment on Adler's theories, and neither did she participate in the discussions that led to his resignation, but she did sign a letter that criticized his indecorous treatment by Freud. After being forced to choose, therefore, between Adler and Freud, Hilferding left the group, for which she was accused of masochism in a letter by Freud to Jung.

[390] Freud 1917, p. 35

[391] Freud 1963, p. 44

[392] This was the manifestation of a psychic conflict as bodily symptoms, or what nowadays might be called psychosomaticism.

But father does not like that kind of thing, and he bought her a bracelet instead of the drops."[393] Dora's dream appeared to Freud like a wishful fantasy. "It means," he said, "that you were ready to give your father what your mother withheld from him; and the thing in question was connected to jewelry."[394] In the second dream, on the other hand, Dora's father had died, and she traversed a forest to catch a train home that was always "five more minutes." Freud believed that Dora's dream divulged the truth in opposites, revealing a hidden fantasy of revenge and defloration. The proof, he surmised, was that when she arrived and discovered the house was empty, Dora went calmly to her room and read from the book on her desk. "The question whether a woman is 'open' or 'shut' can naturally not be a matter of indifference," as Freud said. "It is well known, too, what sort of 'key' effects the opening in such a case."[395]

Towards the end of this section, Freud speculated that Dora's extensive knowledgeability about sexual matters may have had an oral source. Although her father was a wealthy industrialist with textile mills in Bohemia, he maintained his family in an unpretentious, middle-class neighborhood. This was intriguing because, while Dora had described her father as "a man of modest means," she added "that there was more than one way of obtaining sexual gratification."[396] Freud took for granted that Dora, here, was referring to fellatio, but she very well might have had cunnilingus in mind, "for behind Dora's supervalent train of thought which was concerned with her father's relations with Frau K., there lay concealed a feeling of jealousy which had that lady as its *object* — a feeling, that is, which could only be based upon an affection on Dora's part for one of her own sex."[397] Freud noted how amorously Dora spoke about her father's mistress, a woman whose bed she had often shared, along with her confidences. It was not simply that she disapproved of the affair: she seemed to be obsessed by it, laboring over visions of Frau, with "her adorable, white body."[398] This homoerotic current, however, was almost completely ignored, as Freud browbeat his

393 Ibid, p. 86
394 Ibid, p. 87
395 Ibid, p. 84
396 As her father was a quite successful merchant, she clearly meant to suggest that he was impotent (Ibid, p. 64).
397 Ibid, p. 77
398 Ibid, p. 79

patient into accepting his preferred hypothesis. "Her breaking off so unexpectedly," he said, "just when my hopes of a successful termination were at their highest, and her thus bringing those hopes to nothing — this was an unmistakable act of vengeance on her part."[399]

By 1938, the Gestapo were circling like buzzards around Freud's office at Berggasse 19. They had no interest in his theories, which they deemed degenerate, but they were very much interested in his private collection of Greco-Roman idols. Freud had amassed more than two thousand such objects since the eighteen-nineties, which represented, as he called it, "the splendid diversity of human life."[400] Thus, whereas Oedipus had answered the riddle of the Sphinx, Freud had solved it indefinitely. "In the face of the incompleteness of my analytic results," he wrote, "I had no choice but to follow the example of those discoverers whose good fortune it is to bring to light of day after their long burial the priceless though mutilated relics of antiquity."[401] Having been dismissed by Dora as her therapist, Freud, paradoxically, turned castration into the symbolic condition of his success: it consisted, firstly, of fragments uncovered piecemeal, over time, but also of supplements drawn from other cases of hysteria which had, presumably, been constructed in exactly the same way — and so on, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Indeed, this recalls a pivotal moment in which Dora recounted her visit to the Old Masters Picture Gallery. "She remained two hours in front of the Sistine Madonna," Freud wrote, "rapt in silent admiration. When I asked her what had pleased her so much about the picture she could find no clear answer to make. At last, she said: 'The Madonna.'"[402]

Especially in medieval eschatology, the torso of the Virgin Mary represented transcendence, since she alone was preserved by God's grace from the stain of original sin. This singular privilege was given to her by the merits of her son, the irony being that Dora's name was derived from the Greek word for 'gift.' "At the time she was telling me the dream I was still unaware . . .that we had only two hours more work before us," Freud said. "This was the same length of time which she had spent in front of the Sistine Madonna."[403]After Longinus used his lance to pierce the side of Christ,

399 Ibid, p. 131
400 Freud 1957, p. 52
401 Freud 1963, p. 27
402 Ibid, p. 116
403 Ibid, p. 141

the scripture describes how, immediately, both blood and water flowed out. It is curious, then, that in Freud's retelling, Promethean fire was liquid: it was the control of micturition which led to greater cultural conquest. "Woman," he said, "had been appointed guardian of the fire, which was held captive on the domestic hearth because her anatomy made it impossible for her to yield to the temptation of this desire."[404] The foremost reason for Christ's descent, as stated in Peter's sermon, was to deliver the souls of the righteous from the Limbo of the Fathers.[405] Indeed, it was during this harrowing that Dante's *Inferno* was rended, in an earthquake of such great magnitude that the universe felt love. "And at that moment, this ancient rock, here and elsewhere, fell broken into pieces. But fix your eyes below," Virgil said, "for we draw near the river of blood that scalds those who by violence do injury to others."[406]

Here, at the precise moment when Dante was most threatened by demons, the landslide of Christ's martyrdom arrests his forward passage. From the workshop of filthy creation, then, emerged a stroke of genius, like the probative finger of Thomas inching its way towards a vulvar wound. Hence, Victor's dream of Elizabeth, who, when they kissed, transformed into the worm-addled corpse of his mother:

> I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed: when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs.[407]

This occulting of the sexual object harkens back to Kant, but also to Freud, for whom the mother's genitals aroused a fear of castration. Predictably, then, this textual opening does not do away with

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[404] Freud 2005, p. 74

[405] This first circle of Hell is where Adam and Eve reside, along with the other good pagan souls who died after the Fall but before the time of Christ.

[406] Dante 2012, p. 221

[407] Shelley 1846, p. 44

the conflict, but it literalizes the Gordian knot of Milton's "myself am Hell."[408] Far into medieval Christian imagery, the serpent in paradise was often depicted with breasts and a woman's head. The strong insinuation, then, if not the explicit claim, was that Eve was seduced by her predecessor to join a phallic cult. Lilith first appeared as Adam's wife in the *Alphabet of Sirach*, wherein she refused to lie beneath him during sexual intercourse. "We are both equal," she said, "for both of us are of the earth." Finally, Lilith uttered the tetragrammaton, and fled to the Red Sea, where she gave birth to abominations. Indeed, that was where God's angels found her in a cave, and punished her obstinance by daily killing hundreds of her children.[409] The Bible only mentioned her once as a dweller in the waste, reflecting her name's Akkadian origin as a 'lilītu' or "screech owl." Together, these were a class of wind demons that, in ancient Mesopotamia, were thought to seduce men in their dreams and steal their nightly emissions. In the *Zohar*, therefore, the language applied to Lilith grew lush and inflammatory, as she became the obverse form of God in his maternal aspect. "And this is the secret of children's smiling when they are small," it said, "because of Lilith who plays with them."[410]

Arguably, Goethe's was the first depiction of Lilith to transcend religious texts, but from there she grew to embody a host of psychosexual anxieties.[411] The clearest example, perhaps, can be seen in a painting by Dante Rossetti, the frame of which was inscribed with a sonnet to produce a doublework. "The picture is called 'Lady Lilith' by rights," he said, "and represents a 'Modern Lilith' combing out her abundant golden hair and gazing on herself in the glass with that complete self-absorption by whose fascination such natures draw others within their circle."[412] This synthesis united the public with a private metaphor, and, in so doing, brought its subject into the nineteenth century. Here, a boudoir filled with poppies and roses, as the symbols of deadened passion, was

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[408] Milton 1972, p. 40

[409] Represented as 'YHWH,' this four-letter Hebrew theonym derives from the verb 'to be,' and represents the sound of breath with its aspirated consonants.

[410] Patai 1990, p. 235

[411] Her charms were invoked by the poet Keats in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," and also in Westall's festival of witches in the Hartz Mountains.

[412] Rossetti 1965, p. 850

linked with "the perilous principle of the world being female in the first."[413] An impossible mirror, on the other hand, reflected a woodland scene, and produced a brooding paradox on the "angel in the house."[414] Out of this oscillation, then, between the sister arts, the tragic shape of Dora's relation to Lilith made itself known. "I never made her mother's acquaintance," Freud wrote. "From the accounts given to me by the girl and her father, I was led to imagine her as an uncultivated woman and above all a foolish one, who had concentrated all her interests upon domestic affairs, especially since her husband's illness and the estrangement to which it had led."[415]

Having contracted her gonorrhea from her husband, Dora's mother was suffering from an acute obsessional neurosis. However, Freud dismissively diagnosed her with some kind of housewife's psychosis. "It is clear," said a family friend, "that a wife and mother, who dwelled under this compulsion, was never in the position of giving her husband or children joy, or indeed, any warmth."[416] Ever since the crucible of her married experience, Käthe had resigned herself to maintaining the illusion of her husband's moral scrupulousness. Perhaps, to protect her happiness, then, or, at least, her reputation, the woman seemed bent on engaging her daughter in a share of the household chores. For Dora, however, it was far easier to resent her mother than to see her as a victim, fulfilling the Soellerian dictum that "a mother who stays in her place *is* the Law."[417] The scene with the *Sistine Madonna*, then, had an obvious double-charge, as evidenced by her sojourn abroad at the start of her second dream. "I come into a house where I live, go to my room, and find Mama's letter lying there," Dora said. "She writes: since I [Dora] am away from home without my parents' knowledge, she didn't wish to write to me that Papa took ill. 'Now, he has died, and if you [Dora] want, you can *come*.'"[418]

Seated at the crossroads of public and private interest, marriage was a recurring theme

[413] This was a narrative poem by Coventry Patmore, first published in 1854, which described the kind of feminine ideal who was worshipped in an almost cult-like fashion at the time: a wife and mother who was selflessly devoted to her family and submissive to her husband.
[414] Freud 1963, p. 34
[415] Freud 1963, p. 34
[416] Decker 1991, p. 54
[417] This idea, which was exemplified by Philippe Sollers in his book *Femmes*, received a fuller treatment by Susan Rubin Suleiman, who connected the quote to the mother's function as a repressive authority (Suleiman 1994).
[418] Freud 1963, p. 114

among the tragedians. Therefore, Sophocles played on a parapraxis between 'thalamos' as a place of rest and 'thanatos' as death. His titular heroine, Antigone, was the daughter of Oedipus, a man whose incestuous marriage led to his mother's suicide. After his death, a battle was waged at the seventh gate of Thebes, with each of his two sons fatally wounding the other in single-hand combat. Their uncle, Creon, thus became the undisputed king, and resolved to punish his eldest nephew for having fought against him; he prohibited the burial of Polyneices, and when she defied him, he ordered his niece to be buried alive in a cave. Even more shocking than her willingness to die, however, was the temerity with which Antigone defended herself. Her rhetoric was bold and masculine, so much so that her uncle cried out, "Now I am no man, but she is a man if power lies with her with impunity."[419] Creon's edict was emblematic of a polluted sexual economy, where the dead went unburied and a woman was left to defend her brother's honor. In response to his father's charge, therefore, that he allied himself with a woman, Haemon snapped back pointedly, "If you are a woman. I care only for you."[420]

By going to her grave willingly, Antigone inverted the pattern of patrilocal marriage, and sang for herself the wedding hymn that Creon had denied her. This act, which generated a new and surprisingly free selfhood as epiphenomenon or blossom, also laid bare the interpenetration of *érōs* and philia. Hence, the spasmodic impotence of Creon's final taunt. "It is excessive work to love the dead," he said.[421] It was precisely this tidal advance on society which, in the brilliant economy of Sophocles, was foreshadowed by the malodorousness of Polynices's corpse. Therefore, more and more, the hospitality of Hades reached irresistibly into the daylight, as Antigone beckoned her bridegroom to join her by the need of a friendly bosom. In an hysterical parody of gallantry, Haemon defended her corpse and, lunging wildly at his father, completed the sepulchral bedding ceremony. Driving the sword into his own body, he embraced the maiden softly, and panted for breath as a droplet of blood painted blush on her sallow cheeks. The instrument of her hanging, then, which was elsewhere called a windsheet, held in its folds the same liquifying power as belonged

[419] Sophocles 2005, p. 30
[420] Ibid, p. 40
[421] Ibid, p. 43

to the author's pen. "Women are considered deep — why?" Nietzsche asked. "Because one can never discover any bottom to them. Women are not even shallow."[422]

In Imperial Rome, the flammeum, perhaps, was,the most symbolic feature of the bride's dress; it was a deep and brilliant saffron color, like a flame, from which circumstance the name arose, and was worn over the head to shield the downcast looks of virgin modesty. Given the similarity of the ceremonies in both countries, however, it is strongly presumable that the Roman custom was adopted from ancient Greece, where it was said that Icarius, having married his daughter to Odysseus, wished to engage his son-in-law to fix his residence at Sparta. Disappointed in these hopes, he turned next to Penelope, whose only answer was to pull a veil over her face, which, in imitation of her, every bride has done since. This, precisely, is what mimicry consists in: recognition of the represented in the representation, and without any advertence to a radical non-identity between them. Considered in this way, the entire visual field is teeming with language, and the truth that appears before the eye is based primarily on the activity that inscribes it. "It is this life of the memory that the pharmakon of writing would come to hypnotize: fascinating it," Derrida said, "taking it out of itself by putting it to sleep in a monument."[423]

Touched by her shamefacedness, Icarius urged his daughter no longer, but had her image consecrated in a statue of the goddess Aidos. As the counterpart to Nemesis, Aidos was consistently linked to Prometheus as her father, and personified the humility that attached itself to poverty. Plato considered that every man and legislator worthy of the name held this fear in the greatest esteem, calling it respect, and yet, paradoxically, Aristotle said that *aidōs* was not a virtue. Instead, he described it as a preventative affect, one that countered hubris to produce *sôphrosunê*, or a balanced state of mind.[424] Hence, *aidōs* was useful for educating children, and often manifested in physical symptoms, such as blushing or turning pale. *Aischune*, by way of contrast, was inappropriate to adults, who were expected to navigate more thoughtfully through interpersonal challenges. Indeed, this was,

[422] Nietzsche 1889, p. 8
[423] Derrida 2021, p. 105
[424] To evolve within this matrix, it was imperative to heed that Delphic imperative which was so important to Socrates: "Know thyself."

perhaps, the closest thing that the Athenians had to a concept of rights, since to be a citizen, at least in theory, was to possess an equal share of *tîmê* to everyone else. Hence, *atimia*, or 'dishonor,' was not simply a matter of personal embarrassment; it meant death if the offender stayed within the city-state, and exile without return for so long as the sentence was in effect.

Since women were already disenfranchised in ancient Greece, *atimia* did not apply to them except indirectly through men. The *krēdemnon*, then, was as much a literal as metaphorical stopper.[425] This shawl was *de rigueur* when a matron walked the streets, and protected her from the kinds of harassment to which female slaves were subjected. However, it also kept her miasma contained, since a woman's head, and especially her mouth, was intimately tied with her sexuality. Thus, Socrates rebuked his wife for refusing to wear his cloak. "You see," he said, "you are not going as a spectator but in order to be the object of attention."[426] Such promiscuous behavior was considered offensive to a husband's honor, and yet, in the case of Socrates, it satisfied his ends; for if there had been less marital discord, he might not have cause to harangue all in the marketplace with his students. Therefore, the same elenchus that turned Protagoras sulky and Thrasymachus into a beast, when used in the domestic sphere, turned a woman into a harpy. "But I am used to it," Socrates said, "just as if I was continually hearing a windlass working: and can you bear the sound of cackling geese?" To which Alcibiades replied, "Yes, but they bring me eggs and goslings." "Well," rejoined Socrates, "and Xanthippe brings me children."[427]

Of all the slings and arrows endured by Xanthippe, perhaps the cruelest was that they were inflicted through a false pretense. Since he used poverty as insurance to prove he was not a sophist, no one, not even the loyalest admirer of Socrates, has ever imagined that he was a good provider. In the faint historic background, then, against which his genius stands in relief, Xanthippe lived by the sword of her husband: the stinging torpedo fish. While he had not to do his work for anything but love, his wife was obliged to keep the house on the same commodity, including their children, two of

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[425] This word was assimilated metaphorically to refer to chastity, as demonstrated by such phrases as *krēdemnon eluse*, or "to undo a stopper."
[426] Aelian 1997, p. 253
[427] Sophocles 1912, p. 53

whom were only toddlers when he died. This Ajax was at his most pigheaded, leaving his son with naught but a broadshield as his sole inheritance. Tecmessa, therefore, begged him to yield, to which her husband parried, "fond simplicity if at this hour thou think'st to mould my mood."[428] Considered in this way, it seems astonishing that Xanthippe has had so few champions, since her mental defects were not congenital, surely, but the abortive creations of a philosopher who was playing the midwife badly. Alas, in the hour of his suffering, it was Xanthippe who wept:

> And there you have it, Gentlemen, that is why your daughters are dumb. Even if they chatter, proliferate pythically in works that only signify their aphasia, or the mimetic underside of your desire. And interpreting them only where they exhibit their muteness means subjecting them to a language that exiles them at an ever increasing distance from what perhaps they would have said to you, were already whispering to you. If only.[429]

A.N. Whitehead once said that the whole history of Western philosophy consists in a series of footnotes to Plato. With her parodic twist on the Socratic apologia, Irigaray, therefore, revealed 'diagnosis' as a verdictive term. "Now tell me," he asks, "is there not another kind of speech, or word, which shows itself to be the legitimate brother of this bastard one, both in the manner of its begetting and in its better and more powerful nature?"[430] Since no text on its face was registerable as part of the ratio scripta, truth maneuvered through a paternal function as the genitality of thought. Both sexes equally were inscribed by this logic, the refusal of which came at a heavy price, for it had a significant and unhealthy side effect on juridical personality. Hence, the sobriquet 'maniac' for the weeping Apollodorus, because there was something decidedly unanalytical in his passion for disquisition. His tears ~~or tears?~~, which cut through the *Phaedo*, shed a light on its errant margins, and pointed to a sound that was nothing else but the lack of silence itself. "Perhaps, in your turn, you think I'm a failure, and believe me, I think that what you think is true," he says. "But as for all of you, I don't just *think* you are failures—I know it for a fact."[431]

[428] This story was told by Diogenes (*The Culture of Athens* 2023, p. 60).
[429] Irigaray 1985, p. 115
[430] Plato 1919, p. 567
[431] Plato 1989, p. 2

In the Oedipal drama of Western civilization, the phallic organ was not simply male but a symbol of generative power. Hence, the inclusion of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, to develop an understanding of *érōs* as contemplative ascent. Socrates devoted his life to plumbing the Delphic imperative, but since a man cannot give birth, he needed a woman inside him. In this sense, Diotima's gender was a condition of her discourse, which was then displaced onto a model of rational poiesis. "'Love' is the name for our pursuit of wholeness," she explained, "for our desire to be complete."[432] In the same way as Nietzsche's bad conscience, pregnancy, here, preceded the act of sex, through which mortal creatures aimed at a permanent conjunction with the good as they conceived of it. Thus, all human activity was fecundity, but only for those who climbed the steps did it have salvitic value. "Don't you realize," she admonished Socrates, "that it's only in that kind of life, when someone sees beauty with the part that can see it, that he'll be able to give birth not just to images of virtue . . . but to true virtue?"[433]

In the eleventh hour, Socrates walked big-bellied around the room, and mimicked another of the social roles afforded to women in Athens. The climax, of course, was the child's ascent as the hemlock reached his groin, a moment of crowning which, colloquially, is known as the "ring of fire." Except, in this narrative, Socrates felt a chill, and once his legs began to stiffen, the physician had him lie down. After a short interval, the man examined his feet, remarking that when his heart was reached, Socrates would depart. Here, Plato's choice of the verb '*epháptō'* introduced a clever inversion, since Homer had used "laying hands" to mean both "doing harm" and "taking possession."[434] Except for the genitals themselves, the foot was, perhaps, the most phallic symbol in the ancient Greek imaginary. Hence, the erotic undertone of this intellectual coterie. The son of Apollo, in the Delphic tradition, was cut from his mother's womb, from which Ascelpius had his

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432 Ibid, p. 29
433 Ibid, p. 60
434 Indeed, in Jewish antiquity, was a ceremonial rite, which signified the transfer of guilt to the sacrificial animal. However, Moses used it to indicate his spiritual successor, to whom the spirit of wisdom was transferred laying of the hands. Yehoshua, the son of Nun, was a prefiguration of Christ, whose most common practice in healing was touch, and the means of giving his blessing. "These signs will accompany those who believe," Christ said, "in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them" (Mark 16:17).

name as the first caesarean section. To practitioners of theurgic medicine, he appeared in the form of a snake, providing miraculous cures for death and also for infertility. The untimely demise of Socrates, then, marked the ending of a story, which, with Plato's retrospective narration, became a masculine birth myth. "Crito," he said, "we owe a cock to Asclepius. Pay it, and don't forget."[435]

These final words have proved the source of endless consternation, but rhetorical weight should be placed on the rooster as a symbol of levity. As a joyous fowl and summoner from the sepulchrous dark of Hades, its inclusion reflects the comedic structure of martyrological literature. "I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that the Socrates who is now conversing and arranging the details of his argument is really I," the philosopher mused. "He thinks I am the one whom he will presently see as a corpse, and he asks how to bury me."[436] The *Phaedo*, with its constant emphasis on writing as an ersatz for speech, revealed the problematics of exile meta-discursively. It was Crito who accused his teacher of deserting his children to "such treatment as generally comes to orphans in their destitution."[437] For Socrates, however, it was better to suffer than requite an injury with retaliation, and since all religious legislation resided with Apollo, his flesh became a palimpsest in the making of a new covenant. The link, here, was the pharmakós, or the purificatory offering of a human scapegoat on the first day of the Theralgia. "I think that I am myself a fellow-servant of the swans," Socrates said, "and am consecrated to the same God, and have received from our master a gift of prophecy no whit inferior to theirs."[438]

In his seventy years, Socrates never left Athens except once, to attend a festival in Corinth, and also on military service. The *Phaedrus*, therefore, was unique in the sense that it drew him out of the city, "as people lead hungry animals by shaking in front of them a branch of leaves or some fruit."[439] Having just confessed himself as a kind of addict, as a man sick with passion for hearing speeches, what aroused Socrates was the skin of parchment hidden under Phaedrus' cloak. This was the seduction manual of Lysias, which sang the praises of the erastēs as a loveless lover. "I suspect

[435] Plato 1919, p. 403
[436] Ibid, p. 393
[437] Ibid, p. 159
[438] Ibid, p. 295
[439] Ibid, p. 425

you have the actual discourse," said Socrates, "and if that is the case, believe this of me, that I am very fond of you, but when Lysias is here I have not the slightest intention of lending you my ears to practice on."[440] Since Socrates did not care for Phaedrus so much as the phallic object, Lysias acted *in absentia* upon his erômenos. The couple thus walked the Ilissos River in search of a place to read, while Phaedrus inquired about the rape of Oreithiya, which had taken place nearby. "Then I might give a rational explanation," offered Socrates, "that a blast of Boreas, the north wind, pushed her off the neighboring rocks as she was playing with Pharmacea."[441]

Socrates yawned once the speech was concluded, remarking that he had heard better. Thus, Phaedrus was prompted to turn the tables to sinister effect. "We are alone in a solitary spot," he said, "and I am stronger and younger than you; so, under these circumstances, take my meaning, and speak voluntarily, rather than under compulsion."[442] Although these words were spoken in jest, they belonged to the language of violence. Socrates, therefore, invoked the Muses, and pastiched upon Lysias.[443] "I'm going to keep my head wrapped up while I talk," he said, "that I may get through my discourse as quickly as possible, and that I may not look at you and become embarrassed."[444] Socrates feigned that the lover was mad, so that he, like Boreas, sacrificed truth on the altar of pleasure, and at the expense of the good. Just then, however, the philosopher stopped, for his daimon had made itself felt. "Where is the youth to whom I was speaking?" he asked. "He must hear this also, lest, if he do not hear it, he accept a non-lover before we can stop him."[445] Socrates claimed that his mouth had been drugged into speaking dreadful words, which were fathered upon him, perhaps by Lysias, through his writing of oratory.[446] "Now I, my friend, must

[440] Ibid, p. 421
[441] Ibid, p. 419
[442] Ibid, p. 441
[443] This was an odd gesture for a man who had said only moments prior that he had a secularized explanation for the myth about Oreithyia. As always, however, it is important to bear in mind the ironism of Socratic rhetoric, whose false starts were characteristically tongue-in-cheek.
[444] Ibid, p. 443
[445] Ibid, p. 465
[446] The adjective used was '*deinos,'* a notoriously ambiguous term along the lines of "clever," or "terrific," or, even, "dreadful." This is conspicuous, firstly, on account of the potentially anti-semitic insinuations of the term 'clever,' but also, secondly, because of the Adonis festival (which will be explained shortly), which was a recent import to Greek society, has also been thought to have Jewish origins associated with grieving.

purify myself," he said, "and for those who have sinned in matters of mythology, there is an ancient purification unknown to Homer, but known to Stesichorus. For when he was stricken with blindness for speaking ill of Helen, he was not, like Homer, ignorant of the reason."[447]

In Greek antiquity, the so-called choirmaster, Stesichorus, was famous for adapting Homeric rhapsodies to a three-stanza choral metre.[448] Legend had it that Helen punished him for repeating her abuse in the *Iliad*, and that this prompted him to create the palinode as a means of rhetorical expiation. It implied that Helen's *eidôlon* eloped with Paris to Troy, and that the war, therefore, had been fought over a false image "out of ignorance of the truth."[449] Hence the philosophical aura surrounding Stesichorus, whose musical quality was, conversely, considered as dialectical. "There is no truth in that story," he said. "You made no journey in the well-decked ships, nor voyaged to the citadel of Troy."[450] By invoking the Stesichorean triad, the *Phaedrus* itself was insinuated as a ternary composition. Indeed, in the *Laws*, Plato had repeatedly traced the corruption of Athens to the innovations of modern music, in which modes were mixed and *pathos* repeatedly got the better of *logos*. Thus, Stesichorus, with his reputation for austere and sober melodies, helped to set the epochal stage for justice as a form of harmony. "Now I will be wiser than they in just this point: before suffering any punishment for speaking ill of Love," Socrates explained, "I will try to atone by my recantation, with my head bare this time, not, as before, covered through shame."[451]

This palliative, of course, was the myth of the charioteer, wherein Socrates tried to rehabilitate erōs as a desire for spiritual nourishment. However, since the apotreptic message of the daimon was made meaningful only by the *mise en discours* of Socrates, his theatricism also was illuminated as an interpretative act. "But the region above the heavens was never worthily sung by

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[447] Ibid, p. 461

[448] His city, moreover, was named for Himeros, the unruly aspect of Eros, although both of these brothers arose from the sea foam together with Aphrodite. All of the fixings, then, were in place for the myth of the charioteer, the crowning jewel of which was Euphemus as the name of the poet's father. Alongside Asclepius, Euphemus served as deputy helmsman aboard the Argos Navis, and, owing to his divine parentage, was possessed of the unique ability to walk across the water. By means of this patronymic, then, Socrates made a pun, in which he set the proverbial stage for justice as harmony.

[449] These were the words of Socrates when he mentioned Stesichorus in the *Republic*.

[450] These were the key verses in question.

[451] Ibid, p. 463

any earthly poet, nor will it ever be" he said. "It is, however, as I shall tell, for I must dare to speak the truth, especially as truth is my theme. For the colorless, shapeless, and intangible essence, with which all true knowledge is concerned, holds this region and is visible only to the mind, the pilot of the soul"[452] By reviving the opposition between lyric and epic, Lysias was represented, like Homer, as being notionally blind; he unwittingly slandered a deity with his impious speech, as did Socrates when he gratified Phaedrus, albeit under duress. Thus, he struck a Stesichorean chord, in which lovers reclaimed the memory of their heavenly origins by means of one another's beauty. "Since he separates himself from human interests and turns his attention toward the divine," Socrates said, "he is rebuked by the vulgar, who consider him mad and do not know that he is inspired."[453]

The remainder of the dialogue was not a condemnation of writing per se so much as a preference for one style of writing over another. Hence, the reference to the Adonia, in which small, potted plants were exposed to the sun before they came to maturity. "Now, tell me this," Socrates asked Phaedrus, "would a sensible husbandman, who has seeds which he cares for and wishes to bear fruit, sow them with a serious purpose in the heat of summer in some garden of Adonis, and delight in seeing their beauty in eight days, or would he do that sort of thing, when he did it at all, only in play and for amusement?"[454] Since the soul was a more durable medium than papyrus, what distinguished the philosopher from other authors was his ability to prove, through oral demonstration, that what had been written "in black water" was immaterial. Just as the bust took precedence over the marble, Socrates said that the soul was a form impressed into the flesh, so that as the events experienced in contact with the surrounding world were recorded, every trace that was left abided in a living memory image. What this meant, however, was that female embodiment was an acquired condition, one that manifested, according to the cosmology in the *Timaeus*, as a punishment for those cowardly men who dropped their shields in battle. Thus, by using the Adonia to make his argument, Socrates also said something, inadvertently, about women's authorship.

This unofficial festival, which took place each year in July, was a way for women to share in

[452] Ibid, p. 477
[453] Ibid, p. 483
[454] Ibid, p. 567

the catharsis of mourning as a group. Thus, they gathered their potshard gardens and flung them into the sea, along with other *eidôlon*, in a ceremonial burial. Some of the mourners wore black, while others wore saffron-dyed robes, and at the head of the procession, incense was burned to honor the mother, Myrrha. She had conceived an incestuous passion for her father, King Cinyras of Cyprus, from whom she hid in the form of a tree before giving birth to his bastard. This was Adonis, the mortal lover of Aphrodite, from whose blood sprang a fragile desert flower after he was gored by a boar. In Arabic, these plants were called '*Shaqa'iq An-Nu'man*' or "the wounds of Nea'man," a Phonecian epithet for the Mesopotamian deity whose cult had spread from the east. As the spirit of spring vegetation, Dumuzid was associated with the hot, dry summers that brought the death of wheat. Hence, during the month which bore his name, women throughout the Levantine region ground his bones in a mill, and scattered them to the wind as they wailed and prayed for winter rains. Conspicuously, then, the earliest known Greek reference to Adonis came from Sappho, whose poetry was notable for its uncommon use of first-person singular pronouns: "Cytherea, thy dainty Adonis is dying! Ah, what shall we do? O Nymphs, let it echo, the voice of your crying, the greenwood through!"[455]

Like those aporetic dialogues that ended in proverbial wind-eggs, the red anemone was all that remained after the death of Adonis. Its name, in Greek, was derived from '*anemos*,' which meant a "gust" or "gale," and also from the feminine patronymic '*ōnē*' for "I am." In this way, the two terms shared a conceptual heritage, one that signified the patriarchal impossibility of understanding women's experiences. "Words begin to fail her. She senses that something remains to be said that resists all speech that can, at best, be stammered out," as Irigaray said. "So, the best plan is to abstain from all discourse, to keep quiet or else utter only a sound so inarticulate that it barely forms a song, while all the while keeping an attentive ear open for any hint or tremor coming back."[456] Irigaray shared Nietzsche's view that the perfecting of grammar, while having enabled the progress of reason, also deprived language of that vital, passionate quality that made it so singable. Therefore,

[455] This was Sappho's Lament for Adonis.
[456] Irigaray 1985, p. 193

she turned his genealogical method back upon mimesis, in order to develop a feminine notion of god, not as an empty signifier, but as a receding line that ran parallel with the surface of the earth. *That* was the furtive power of the Adonia, a ceremony so inscrutable to the men of the city that the classicist John Winkler, in a memorable phrase, called it "the laughter of the oppressed."[457]

Unlike most historic revolutions, the Adonia did not commandeer the agora, or the Pynx, or any other bastion of masculine power. Instead, it transformed an oft-neglected space into a divine afflatus, which, despite its somber theme, was a funeral in name only. As they wandered from rooftop to rooftop, beckoned by voices calling to them in the darkness, women from every social climb blasphemed, if only for a fleeting moment, against every respectability demanded of them by Athenian society. There was drinking, and debauchery, and a raucous laughter, which lost its timbre in the early morning hours when they snuck quietly back to their homes. Those stolen moments of joy were not nothing, however, anymore than Eros, who fled from Psyche when she raised a lamp to his face. Thus, by learning to engage her mother in a ghostly dialogue, Shelley's novel was among the greatest stories *never told*. In a world where women's only power was in silence, in refusal, closure and death, paradoxically, became yet a spatiality for opening into the future "How much you see is also what you bring to the situation," Kittay told Singer. "I'm not sure what you'd see. But it would at least be a beginning."[458]

[457] Winkler 1990
[458] Kittay 2009, p. 618

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE COLOR PURPLE

"Is this the sweet sound that calls to young sailors?
The voice might be one and the same.
I've heard it too many times to ignore it;
It's something that I'm supposed to be."

— Paul Williams & Kenny Ascher

When he returned to the De Lacey cottage, the creature saw Felix terminating the family's lease with their landlord. Overcome with despair, he, therefore, set the place ablaze before making for Geneva, to demand a bride from Frankenstein as a cure for his loneliness. In a way, this choice of setting was prophetic, because after the creation of the Red Cross in 1863, Geneva became a focal point for international peace efforts. Its founder, Henry Dunant, was a key figure in promoting humanitarian principles during armed conflict, and played a crucial role in the development of the First Geneva Convention.[459] His experiences in the Battle of Solferino, in particular, had drawn him into the theater of blood, and despite lacking any medical knowledge, Dunant managed to persuade a number of local women to help. At first, they were reluctant, fearing reprisal by the Austrians for assisting enemy troops. However, Dunant reminded them pleadingly that suffering knew no borders, so that soon, the women were repeating his words: "*Tutti fratelli*" — brothers all.[460] Yet, in addition to compassion, Dunant felt indignation that the army doctors were so understaffed as to be practically non-existent. Thus, back in Paris, Dunant resumed the struggle, inveighing against the inertia he met with everywhere in government offices. By his late thirties, however, the once wealthy businessman was reduced to abject poverty, subsisting off bread crusts and, on occasion, being forced to sleep in the streets.

Two years went by in this way, as Dunant moved from antechamber to antechamber, haunted by the memories of what he had seen in Italy. Indeed, they pursued him with an almost

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[459] The first of these was signed by twelve countries in 1864, and focused on the "Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick of Armies in the Field."

[460] This was also the motto of the recently deceased Pope Francis, which is telling, given that Dunant was a Protestant and Francis, obviously, was Catholic. What united these men, doubtless, was a kind of cosmopolitan impulse, and the sense that God's kingdom stretched from every corner of the globe.

supernatural compulsion, until, finally, he could stand it no longer and returned to his native Geneva. There, he wrote *Un Souvenir de Solferino*, to relay the stories of the wounded soldiers forsaken on the battlefield. "Led like simple cattle," he said, "they are sent in a crowd, with a strong guard, to Brescia, where they at last find repose, if not a kind welcome."[461] Countless letters from all across Europe proved that Dunant had plucked a responsive chord, as his book was hailed by literary critics as an exemplary work of Romanticism. Starting in the late eighteenth century, this artistic movement was a reaction against Enlightenment classicism, with its perceived limitations in capturing the full spectrum of human experience — or, in the case of Mary Shelley, the more than human experience, because if dehumanization was the logical, albeit often tacit, corollary to abuse, the question that resounded continuously was the question of the animal. "My companion must be of the same species and have the same defects," the creature implored. "This being you must create."[462]

Neither subject nor object, the destruction of the feminine corpus elicited a confluence of agential materialities that Victor, in all of his hubristic eagerness, had not the wit to see. Therefore, trembling with passion, he tore her limb from limb, and threw the pieces into the sea like the arms of Venus de Milo; for she, too, was a surrealist masterpiece, one that perfectly signified Victor's sins by her very incompleteness. "Even if they were to leave Europe, and inhabit the deserts of the new world," Victor said, "yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the dæmon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth, who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations?"[463] Victor's reasoning was logical, even utilitarian, but it wildly missed the extent of the problem posed by the creature's entreaty. Every encounter with difference was a potentially monstrous birth, because motherhood and reproduction did not always occur in tandem. As such, by the end of the novel, the creature enacted sati. "Neither

[461] Dunant 1911, p. 23
[462] Shelley 1846, p. 126
[463] Ibid, p. 146

yours nor any man's death is needed to consummate the series of my being and accomplish that which must be done," he told Victor, "but it requires my own."[464]

If *Frankenstein* was, as many scholars have alleged, a referendum on the French Revolution, then it seemed to align its politics with those of Edmund Burke. "In viewing this monstrous tragicomic scene," he said, "the most opposite passions necessarily succeed, and sometimes mix with each other in the mind; alternate contempt and indignation; alternate laughter and tears; alternate scorn and horror."[465] Unlike the polemicists who assailed her mother, however, Shelley's novel was elegiac of her own radical heritage. Less than a year after the founding of the Abolition Committee, Wollstonecraft's publisher, Joseph Johnson, confounded a new periodical. This was the *Analytical Review,* for which Mary critiqued *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano.* It offered a graphic, firsthand account of slavery's cruelties, including the process of being kidnapped and the horrors of the Middle Passage. Thus, as the gendered dimensions of racial abuse were ushered into view, Mary developed a budding awareness towards intersectionality. "It was almost a constant practice with our clerks, and other whites, to commit violent depredations on the chastity of female slaves," Equiano said. "And these I was, though with reluctance, obliged to submit to at all times, being unable to help them."[466]

Wollstonecraft lamented bourgeois femininity because, rather than the substance of virtue, it privileged the veneer. Reputation was the coin of the realm, so that women were enchained to the vanities of their station by the threat of infamy. Unsurprisingly, then, when *Frankenstein* was first published, Shelley left off her name, not least out of fear that she might lose custody of her children if her authorship was discovered. Thus, writing for Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine* in 1818, Sir Walter Scott praised the original genius of this "anonymous androdaemon."[467] As the father of the historical novel, Scott's positive assessment helped elevate *Frankenstein* into a classic work of

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[464] Ibid, p. 201
[465] Burke 1999, p. 10
[466] Equaino 2017, p. 54
[467] On account of the prefatory remarks he had written for the introduction, many people believed that the author was Mary's husband, Percy Byshhe Shelley. Curiously, however, this afforded Shelley a very candid response to her work, which elicited outrage from conservative readers, but also a great deal of praise, from literary critics, for its direct and forceful prose.

literature, but the creature's acquisition of language seemed to strain his credulity. "That he should have not only learned to speak, but to read, and, for aught we know, to write," Scott opined, "— that he should have become acquainted with *Werter*, with Plutarch's *Lives*, and with *Paradise Lost*, by listening through a hole in a wall, seems as unlikely as that he should have acquired, in the same way, the problems of Euclid, or the art of book-keeping by single and double entry."[468]

The same year that *Frankenstein* was published, Frederick Douglass was born into slavery in Talbot County, Maryland. His mother, Harriet Bailey, was a fieldhand, from whom he was separated during his infancy, and while he never knew for certain, he suspected his father was Aaron Anthony, who died in 1826.[469] Thereafter, he was sent by Anthony's daughter, Lucretia, to live in Baltimore, where he developed an unlikely companionship with the wife of his new master. "My new mistress proved to be all she appeared when I first met her at the door," Douglass said, "— a woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings."[470] Sophia Auld had never owned a slave before, and, prior to her marriage, was dependent for wages on her own industriousness. She was a masterful weaver, and saw to it that Douglass was properly fed and slept in a bed with clean linens. She even started to teach him the alphabet, but her husband disapproved of their lessons, feeling that literacy encouraged slaves to become disobedient. Douglass agreed, and later referred to this incident as his first lecture in abolitionism. "'Knowledge unfits a child to be a slave,'" he said. "I instinctively assented to the proposition, and from that moment, I understood the direct pathway from slavery to freedom."[471]

After his tutoring was so unceremoniously ended, Douglass carried a book with him whenever he went out. He then employed various strategies, compelling White children to help him learn in exchange for scraps of food. "This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins," he said, "who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge."[472] Through these efforts, Douglass realized his political condition at a young age, most especially while reading the

[468] Scott 1838, p. 339
[469] Douglass' mother had been sold to another plantation, and to see her son required that, after her day's work, she walk twelve miles there and twelve miles back to work again without rest. Sadly, she passed when Douglass was still a child, but he later learned that she, too, had been literate, and credited her with his love of learning.
[470] Douglass 2008, p. 19
[471] Douglass 1857, p. 146
[472] Douglass 2008, p. 23

"Dialogue Between a Master and Slave" in *The Columbian Orator*. The latter, having been caught several times trying to escape, engaged his master in a debate whereby he won his freedom. Thus, Douglass learned the power of rhetoric, and began to copy the letters inscribed into timber at the ship-yard. He was not only clever but resourceful, returning again to the city's White children, who he challenged to spelling contests. "In this way," he said, "I got a good many lessons in writing, which it is quite possible I should never have gotten in any other way."[473] It wasn't enough, however, that Douglass had taught himself these valuable skills; at great personal risk, he started a Sabbath school, for which he was sold to Edward Covey, the notorious "nigger breaker." "My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died," Douglass said. "The dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute!"[474]

For the first theatrical production of *Frankenstein*, the creature was listed on the playbill as nothing other than "——." Shelley was tickled, especially since her name was itself an assemblage of parts and the sum of her own relations. "This nameless mode of naming the unnameable is rather good," she remarked.[475] Although Britain had already enacted a law abolishing the importation of slaves in 1807, the debate continued until emancipation in 1833. The creature on stage, therefore, appeared less as dead than as *colored*, as evidenced by his invocation during a parliamentary session.[476] Tellingly, it was the Foreign Secretary, George Canning, who connected the two together, using the cultural figuration of African slaves as children.[477] "To turn him loose in the manhood of his physical strength," he said, "in the maturity of his physical passions, but in the infancy of his uninstructed reason, would be to raise up a creature resembling the splendid fiction of a recent romance."[478] Shelley neither confirmed nor denied this reading, but if any man inspired her novel, it was her

[473] Ibid, p. 26
[474] Ibid, p. 38
[475] Mellor 2003, p. 22
[476] I use this term intentionally, knowing its political implications, because in some of the earliest productions of the play, the actor playing —— was painted blue instead of yellow. To my mind, this clearly suggests that many directors were reading Shelley's novel as a racial commentary about Africans, although plenty of critics have pointed out, quite rightly, that his canonically yellow skin aligned him as well with Asiatic people (and/or also Middle Easterners and Arabs).
[477] Notably, Canning was an abolitionist.
[478] Stapleton 1831, p. 106

father, William Godwin, for whom rational perfectibility was one of the most unequivocal characteristics of the human species.[479] Thus, through scientific and educational advance, he speculated about the possibility of overcoming death. "If over matter at ever so great a distance, why not over matter which, however ignorant we may be over the tie that connects it with the thinking principle, we always carry about with us," Godwin inquired, "and which is in all cases the medium of communication between that principle and the external universal? In a word, why may not man one day be immortal?"[480]

As a philosophical anarchist, Godwin believed that the feudal spirit endured in the landed gentry. Thus, linking coverture to property, he favored a more individualistic approach in which romantic relationships were based upon consent and mutual affection between partners. Despite the idealism of his principles, however, Godwin singularly failed to live up to them, and condemned his daughter when she eloped with his already-married student. Therefore, although she dedicated her novel to Godwin, the move was also potentially invidious, since his hypocrisy was parodied in the figure of Victor Frankenstein. "He never caressed me; if ever he stroked my head or drew me on his knee, I felt a mingled alarm and delight difficult to describe," Shelley wrote. "Yet, strange to say, my father loved me almost to idolatry."[481] His failures as a parent notwithstanding, Godwin ensured that his daughter inherited her mother's brilliant legacy. As she grew older, therefore, Mary read Wollstonecraft's work, honing in on an overlooked insight into women's subordination. "The laws of her country — if women have a country — afford her no protection or redress from the oppressor, unless she have the plea of bodily fear; yet how many ways are there of goading the soul almost to madness," Wollstonecraft wondered, "equally unmanly, though not so mean?"[482]

Appearing six years after the *Rights of Woman*, *The Wrongs of Woman; or, Maria* was its novelistic counterpart, which, despite remaining unfinished, marked the difficulty of bringing any creation to term in a society where women were denied control over their own fertility. This shared oppression

[479] As an interesting factoid, Godwin's editor was none other than one Henry S. Salt.
[480] Godwin 1949, p. 116
[481] Sunstein 1991, p. 33
[482] Wollstonecraft 2012, p. 81

was articulated in the contrast between two characters, Maria and Jemima, the former of whom was a *feme covert*, the latter of whom was a prostitute.[483] By inscribing the gruesome details of Jemima's life, however, Wollstonecraft broke with convention, which claimed that poverty was too disgusting to be represented aesthetically. On the contrary, drawing inspiration from the more sensationalist *Chronicles of Newgate* , Wollstonecraft guided her readers to see a portrait in feminine courage.[484] Born as a bastard to a woman who died in labor, Jemima was, henceforth, consigned by her father to the cheapest available wetnurse. "Poverty, and the habit of seeing children die off her hands, had so hardened her heart," Jemima said, "that the office of a mother did not awaken the tenderness of a woman; nor were the feminine caresses which seem a part of the rearing of a child, ever bestowed on me."[485]

Left in the dirt to cry with cold and hunger, Jemima survived her cruel upbringing only to be raped, at sixteen, by her Methodist master. He dealt with the subsequent pregnancy by plying her with an abortifacient, an "infernal potion," which she was forced to take before she was thrown out on the streets. There, she experienced the entire gamut of possibilities in sex work, being subjected to brutish treatment until, finally, she won the exclusive companionship of a libertine philosopher. No longer forced to steal from necessity, Jemima taught herself to read, and became keenly aware of the discrepancies between theory and experience. "I began to consider the rich and poor as natural enemies," she said, "and became a thief from principle."[486] Her lawless freedom, and the economic security she built for herself, were predicated upon her exclusion from the social compact; and this made her quite unlike Maria, whose husband imprisoned her in an asylum in order to steal her inheritance. Obsessed with commerce and other gross relaxations, he had even offered to sell her sex in exchange for a small loan. Sadly, however, because they were legally considered as one person, Maria was unable to pursue a divorce except at her husband's discretion. "In my haste to escape

[483] This was the legalese term for a married woman under the doctrine of coverture.
[484] This book explored the history of London's Newgate Prison, and included accounts of its most infamous inmates, as told from the perspective of an inspector named Arthur Griffin.
[485] Wollstonecraft 2012, p. 29
[486] Ibid, p. 43

from a temporary dependence," she said, "I had been caught in a trap, and caged for life."[487]

When another prisoner, Henry Danford, befriended Maria, Wollstonecraft again flirted with the possibility of a persuadable man. He repeatedly demonstrated his respect for Maria, to whom he swore himself as her protector and eternal friend. Not coincidentally, however, since her husband sued for adultery, the couple fared better inside the asylum than they did once they were released. Although Wollstonecraft stopped writing before the resolution of the case, her notes indicated that George would win damages, leading Henry to abandon Maria, but not before they conceived. "If I am unfortunately united to an unprincipled man," she asked, "am I forever to be shut out from fulfilling the duties of a wife and mother?"[488] In several of the possible endings, Maria died by suicide, but in the most detailed version, Jemima saved her, and they raised her daughter together. This narrative shift, therefore, from heterosexuality to homosociality, hinted at a radical new vision of the conjugal family, in which, the penis, insofar as it became a means to pleasure, ceased to symbolize the phallus, in the pejorative sense of the term.[489] "Don't make yourself erect, you'll leave us. The sky isn't up there: it's between us. And don't worry about the 'right' word," Irigaray said. "There isn't any. No truth between our lips. There is room enough for everything to exist."[490]

Because mothering was never simply biological, Wollstonecraft's novel served as an exemplum of its contradictory impulses. Maternal instinct drove her to write, but she also wanted to save her daughter from the threat of illegibility. "I dread to unfold her mind, lest it should render her unfit for the world — Hapless woman!" she cried, "What a fate is thine!"[491] Wollstonecraft knew better than anyone how, in a system that equated intimacy with psychical penetration, the

[487] Ibid, p. 65-66

[488] Ibid, p. 120

[489] For her writings about the phallus and its role in the masculine symbolic, Irigaray was regularly accused of homophobia. However, while her work was in many ways reductive, particularly with respect to issues of class and race, I suspect that she was less susceptible to the former charge than many of her critics wanted to believe. Since homosexuality and femininity were both marked by castration, at least with respect to Freud's original Oedipal framework, gay men were no less present to the symbolic than heterosexual men, albeit as phallic impostures. In a way, this made them quite similar to women, whose mastery of weaving first arose, in Freud's view, precisely because they needed to disguise the fact that they had no phallus in the first place. Because this left homosexual men in the precarious position of having to hide like women, it also potentially made them more virulent misogynists than many heterosexual men. Contrariwise, it had the potential to make homosexual men excellent allies to women against the violence of the masculine symbolic. This is a point to which I will return later.

[490] Irigaray 1985, p. 213

[491] Wollstonecraft 2009, p. 36

discoursing subject became skeptical of its body and guilty of its sexuality. From the inside, exteriority appeared as the fugitive limit of an epistemological solipsism, but from the outside, it was the condition of immersion, the fold within immanence from which the possibility of ethical contact first arose. This passage, then, in which Wollstonecraft reflected about her daughter, pointed more clearly to the significance of her engagement with abolitionist discourse:

> Rousseau, and numerous other male writers, insist that she [woman] should all her life be subjected to a severe restraint, that of propriety. Why subject her to proprietary — blind propriety, if she be capable of acting from a nobler spring, if she be an heir of immortality? Is sugar always to be produced by vital blood? Is one half of the human species, like the poor African slaves, to be subject to prejudices that brutalize them, when principles would be a surer guard, only to sweeten the cup of man?[492]

Wollstonecraft's ideas about slavery, including the more orthodox conception familiar to women's literature, gained a sense of urgency from the revolt in San Domingue. However, she herself was alert to the differences, at least insofar as she saw conflict between the Black Jacobins and the planters' wives. "Where is the dignity," she implored, "the infallibility of sensibility, in the fair ladies, whom, if the voice of rumor is to be credited, the captive negroes curse in all the agony of bodily pain, for the unheard of tortures they invent?"[493] For Wollstonecraft, the French Constitution of 1791 was marred by a false universalism, as made evident by the revolutionary diplomat, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord. In an otherwise visionary report, he argued against public education for women, which Mary, in her dedicatory epistle, described as paternal despotism. Although fraught with the seeds of returning vice, the apparent loveliness of the Republican style hid an inward rottenness. "You mourn for the empty pageant of a name," Wollstonecraft said, "when slavery flaps her wing, and the sick heart retires to die in the lonely wilds, far from the abodes of men."[494]

For all of Wollstonecraft's progressivism, she slipped occasionally into the wistful nostalgia

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492 Wollstonecraft 1891, p. 218
493 Wollstonecraft 1893, p. 256
494 Ibid, p. 262

of eighteenth century arcadianism. The language of cultivation derived, therefore, from an agricultural register, and suggested a model by which the state of nature was itself subject nurture.[495] "The good effects resulting from attention to private education will ever be very confined, and the parent who really puts his own hand to the plow, will always, in some degree be disappointed, till education becomes a grand national concern," Wollstonecraft maintained.[496] Yet, for every retrospective glance, there was also a refusal to romanticize pastoralism or else condemn urbanity. Quite the contrary, Mary appreciated how the unpredictable mingling that came with city-life imbued the fabric of social relations with a rich, kinesthetic energy. Hence, the aleatory materialism of Louis Althusser, which was governed less by dialectical necessity than by concrete contingency. "Epicurus tells us that, before the formation of the world, an infinity of atoms were falling parallel to each other in the void. They still are," Althusser said. "This implies both that, before the formation of the world, there was nothing, and also that all the elements of the world existed from all eternity, before any world ever was."[497]

Althusser drew his inspiration from a famous Latin phrase "*alea iacta est*," which was often associated with Julius Caesar and the crossing of the Rubicon.[498] Against the teleological penchant of Marx, therefore, he echoed the pragmatic wager advanced by Blaise Pascal. "Without realizing it, I had already borrowed a few philosophical ideas from him," Althusser explained. "The whole theory of ideology, of misrecognition and recognition, is to be found in Pascal."[499] Because the advent of the world was the result of a chance encounter which, for no reason, brought about a collision of gigantic potential energies, aleatory materialism began from the mere acceptance that contingency effected necessity, and not the other way around. Thus, the notion of the void acquired a more general significance, since the event, in the first case, represented an exception from the laws of ontology, rather than their stabilization. What followed, then, was a double series developing on two

[495] Arcadianism was a literary movement inspired by the classical ideal of Arcadia, a region in Greece which was believed to be a pastoral paradise. It began, in 1690, with the founding of a reformist school of poetry in Italy.
[496] Wollstonecraft 1891, p. 236
[497] Althusser 2006, p. 168
[498] This, of course, meant, "The die has been cast."
[499] Quoted in Sotiris 2016, p. 164

planes — the non-representative explication of becoming expressively:

> How else could the class-divided popular masses (proletarians, peasants, petty bourgeois) throw themselves *together*, consciously or unconsciously, into a general assault on the existing regime? And how else could the ruling classes (aristocrats, big bourgeois, industrial bourgeois, finance bourgeois, etc.), who have learnt by long experience and sure instinct to seal between themselves, despite their class differences, a holy alliance against the exploited, find themselves reduced to impotence, divided at the decisive moment, with neither new political solutions nor new political leaders, deprived of foreign class support, disarmed in the very citadel of their State machine, and suddenly overwhelmed by the people they had so long kept in leash and respectful by exploitation, violence and deceit?[500]

Whereas Pascal's wager was always, in the last instance, about the agony of faith, Althusser was attempting to theorize history as a process without a subject. Indeed, by returning to Machiavelli, he renewed the age-old Marxist question about how ideas became active; for while *The Prince* developed an undeniably rigorous political theory, it was ultimately based around a central point that endlessly escaped detection. "This is how, in this dark night of fascism, Machiavelli spoke to Gramsci," Althusser said. "In the future tense."[501] Treating the act of authorship as an interventionist strategy, Machiavelli calculated how best to shift the relations of force through writing. This central point, therefore, around which the incompleteness of the discursive whole was structured, was the necessarily vacant space for the political task, or, in Leninist terms, *the fact that had to be done*. "It can be only an organism, a social element in which the becoming concrete of a collective will, partially recognised and affirmed in action, has already begun," Gramsci said. "This organism is already given by historical development; it is the political party, the modern form in which the partial, collective wills that tend to become universal and total are gathered together."[502]

For Gramsci's original editors, the modern Prince was, like so many other terms, a mythological euphemism, employed to evade the prying eyes of censorious prison officers. Mussolini had published his *Prelude to Machiavelli* in 1924, in which the masses were subordinate to a demagogic leader. Of course, this reading was challenged by the socialist politician Giacomo Matteotti, who

[500] Althusser 2005, p. 99
[501] Althusser 1999, p. 13
[502] Gramsci 1971, p. 129

accused the Fascists of voter intimidation in front of the Chamber of Deputies. Eleven days later, however, while walking beside the Tiber, Matteotti was murdered by a gang of *squadristi*, and his body left in a culvert. Gramsci followed these events closely, since the ensuing outrage threatened to destroy Mussolini's political stronghold. Even moderate Fascists were appalled, and many members tore their party flashes from their sleeves. However, with the opposition out of parliament, Mussolini was more easily able to obtain results favourable to the establishment of a dictatorship. Thus, Gramsci was arrested in 1926, but even still, his Machiavellian metaphor was more than a mere codeword. "In men's consciences," he said, "the Prince takes the place of the divinity or the categorical imperative, and becomes the basis of a modern secularism and a complete secularization of all aspects of life and of all customary relations."[503]

Clearly, this was not a pluralistic perspective, since, in order to be organizationally total, the party needed to achieve a coherent and, therefore, unitary consciousness.[504] Hence the distinction between the reactionary and progressive phases of totalitarian politics, both of which aimed to establish a hegemony over civil society.[505] "Does the given party carry out its policing function in order to conserve an outward, extrinsic order which is a fetter on the vital forces of history," Gramsci asked, "or does it carry it out in the sense of tending to raise the people to a new level of civilisation expressed programmatically in its political and legal order?"[506] For Gramsci, Italy's political instability was a direct result of the way in which liberals had come to power during the Risorgimento. An absence of agrarian reform allowed the Southern nobility to survive alongside a weak middle class, and to establish an alliance or historical bloc with the Northern industrialists. Thus, a temporary dictatorship was established, in order to quell the discontented peasantry, who

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[503] Rather than a positive comparison, Gramsci was really drawing a contrast, so that the party functioned as a kind of humdrum substitute for Kant's empty formalism (Ibid, p. 133).

[504] Weltanschauung, here, referred to a comprehensive worldview that shaped an individual's understanding and interpretation of material life. Gramsci used this concept in tandem with 'cultural hegemony' to explain how the ruling class maintained its dominance not just through force but also through ideas.

[505] In Gramsci's theory, hegemony referred to the dominance of one group over another, not solely through force, but by achieving a cultural and ideological leadership. This process, which occurred through both the state, as a coercive apparatus, and through social institutions, like the media, was neither intrinsically negative nor positive for Gramsci; everything depended on the will of the governed, a point to which I will return shortly.

[506] Ibid, p. 155

wished to free themselves from feudal rights. Due to this failure of democratic leadership, the country's unity had been built on the basis of a quasi-authoritarian state, in which military force was a particularly blunt instrument of control. Therefore, as a necessary and legitimate component, an effective socialist politics needed to have the objective of mobilizing support on a national-popular basis. "The modern Prince must have a part dealing with Jacobinism," Gramsci insisted, "in the integral meaning which this notion has had historically and must have conceptually."[507]

Through the Machiavellian vein of his work, Gramsci extended a metaphor introduced by Vladimir Lenin, for whom the socialist consciousness was an elite phenomenon. In a flagrant break with orthodox Marxism, his leadership conceived itself as an intellectual vanguard, which marked the revival of Hegelian idealism in the pre-war period.[508] "The bourgeois historians see in Jacobinism a downfall," Lenin said. "The proletarian historians regard Jacobinism as the greatest expression of an oppressed class in its struggle for liberation."[509] These judgments were repeated throughout *The Prison Notebooks*, albeit with a few modifications to suit different situations. Here, Gramsci took over from Machiavelli the image of power as a centaur: an admixture of coercion and consent which, in his mind, was typical of the great republic under Robespierre. Indeed, Machiavelli himself was described as a precocious Jacobin, intent upon the radical project which was suited to his epoch. Hence the significance of the end of *The Prince*, when he called for a unified Italy to restore the grandeur of Rome. What Machiavelli detailed was a dialectic in which *fortuna* provided the opportunity for *virtù* to manifest. The latter was, therefore, located, not in the ability to replicate precise patterns of behavior, nor even to actualize specific, concrete ends, but in a certain type of spiritual resolve that proved itself in an encounter with the world. "If a prince conducts himself with patience and caution," Machiavelli wrote, "and the times and circumstances are favorable to those

507 Ibid, p. 130
508 This idea, which was first introduced in 1905 in *Two Tactics of Social Democracy* , was in direct contrast with the classical reading in which class-consciousness was an epiphenomenon of capitalist property relations. By substituting politics for the primacy of economism, Lenin, therefore, reversed the long-standing premises of Marx and Engels. He justified this shift in the context of tsarist Russia, which he described as a form of military-feudal imperialism. Statecraft was consequently enshrined in the Bolshevik party, in order to counter the bourgeois logic of pluralist fragmentation — more on this shortly.
509 Lenin 1929, p. 278

qualities, he will flourish; but if times and circumstances change, he will come to his ruin unless he changes his method of proceeding."[510]

The specifically creative nature of such virtuous self-expression was revealed through a continual emphasis on improvisation.[511] Thus *fortuna*, in Gramsci, became an "organic crisis," which arose when the ruling class governed on the premise that nothing was owed to the public. The task for communists, therefore, was not simply to plow the land for revolution, but to criticize ideas whose progressive function had already been surpassed. "That all political party members must be considered intellectuals is a statement that lends itself to joking or caricature," Gramsci said, "but if one thinks about it, there is nothing more accurate."[512] For Machiavelli, the republic endured through the preservation of virtue among its citizens, who were prepared to advance the good of the whole at their own, personal expense. Under such conditions, all men were princes, but their patriotism was neither selfless nor indiscriminate; they needed to be reasonably satisfied, or else adapt themselves to the hard conditions imposed upon them by tyrants. "All those who are dissatisfied with their ruler should take a lesson from [the] example of Brutus," Machiavelli said. "They should measure and weigh well their strength, and if sufficiently powerful to be able to declare themselves his enemies, and to make open war against the prince, then they should take that course as the least dangerous and most honorable."[513]

While elaborating his criticism of Caesare Borgia, Machiavelli introduced the notion of necessity, which he repeatedly insisted had the power to transform the impermissible into the unavoidable.[514] This earned him a reputation as an immoralist, "but what Machiavelli does do is

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[510] Machiavelli 1988, p. 54

[511] For Machiavelli, only weak individuals mistook their good luck for personal merit, failing to recognize the dyadic interplay that existed between these two terms.

[512] Gramsci 1971, p. 13

[513] Machiavelli 1882, p. 324

[514] In Machiavelli's view, Brutus was a man of integrity and principle, and someone deeply concerned with the good of Rome. Having correctly recognized that Caesar's spirit was corrupt, Brutus completed an evil yet forgivable act, which was, namely, to plot the death of his ruler, and even, eventually, his own sons. This same theme was taken up by Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar*, which was, incidentally, Nietzsche's favorite play. Like Machiavelli, Nietzsche admired Brutus' cunning, and for his willingness to betray his master, which he described as a perfect demonstration of that same will to power initially at work in Hebraism. "That is what Shakespeare must have felt," Nietzsche wrote. "The height at which he places Caesar is the finest honor that he could bestow on Brutus: that is how be raises beyond measure Brutus's inner problem as well as the spiritual strength that was able to cut this knot" (CITE).

bring everything back to politics," Gramsci said, "to the art of governing men, of securing their permanent consent, and hence of founding great states."[515] For Lenin, the proletariat did not gravitate themselves naturally to socialism, if only because the demands of survival kept them constantly preoccupied. In this way, he paralleled Wollstonecraft, for whom the mind was hampered both by too little and too much material concern.[516] Yet, the Bolshevik Revolution, which Gramsci himself had lauded as "the decisive turning point in history," did not so much displace the tsar as give him a new title; the promised democratization of political institutions never manifested, because conformity, as the price of admission, provided little opportunity to realize those aspirations. "'Dogmatism, doctrinairism,' 'ossification of the party – the inevitable retribution that follows the violent strait-lacing of thought,'" Lenin said, "these are the enemies against which the knightly champions of 'freedom of criticism' . . . rise up in arms. We are very glad that this question has been placed on the order of the day and we would only propose to add to it one other: And who are the judges?"[517]

The Leninist dissociation from Marx made a lasting impression on Gramsci, who readily accepted the rejection of economism as a linchpin of his thought. At the core of their divergence, however, was Gramsci's dual perspective, which revolved around the key distinction between force and consent in politics. "Their conclusions had a purely theoretical, abstract, and bureaucratic aspect," he said. "Behind their high-sounding phrases lay the desire to keep the masses from participating directly in the revolutionary struggle."[518] Since politics had been grafted directly onto the economy, Gramsci argued that the modern Prince no longer had a choice between being loved

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[515] Gramsci 1971, p. 378

[516] He, therefore, criticized spontaneists, who were blamed for restricting the labor movement to its lowest stage of development. As the name suggests, the spontaneist faction in Marxism were those theorists who thought that class consciousness sprang directly, *ex nihilo*, from workers through the unfolding of material processes. This was a recurring theme in classical Marxism, and problematic in that Marx himself was not a member of the proletariat. Indeed, neither was Lenin, which no doubt explains his propensity towards Jacobin intellectualism. In this telling of history, the Jacobins sacrificed their short-term class interests in order to unify urban and rural interests in France. Hence the displacement of the monarchy, which, while short-lived, became a model for similar uprisings in other European countries.

[517] Lenin 1969, p. 24

[518] Gramsci was not referring to Lenin, here, as he never had the opportunity to formulate a systematic account of Soviet development. Indeed, he died in prison in 1937, after which time his writings were smuggled out of the country. This reference, therefore, was to the Italian Socialist Party and trade unions, whose condescension towards the factory councils from Turin, in 1919, had assisted capitalists in forestalling a national movement for workers' rights (Quoted in Germino 1990, p. 105).

and feared; the state, understood as the exercise of power, did not embody the whole of the defenses. Indeed, it was only an outer ditch, behind which stood a powerful system of earthworks and fortifications. Therefore, by neglecting the imbrication of power and subjectivity along the continuum of culture, the Leninist strategy, the "war of maneuver," missed the forest for the trees. As *homo faber* and *homo sapiens* were one and the very same animal, Gramsci insisted that physical labor had its own form of mental activity. Therefore, as a new class developed within the world of economic production, it tended to create a strata of organic intellectuals, as opposed to the professional kind, who were "the dominant group's 'deputies,' exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony."[519] As such, before usurping the governmental power of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat needed to win the "war of position" in the trenches of civil society, "for if you possess fortresses and the people hate you, having fortresses will not save you."[520]

Against the ascendent movement of the bourgeoisie, the most powerful ally to the aristocracy, for Gramsci, had been the Church, with whom it shared the exercise of feudal land ownership, as well as the use of state privileges. Hence, the assimilation of the clergy, which, because it was not organically linked to the rising class, persisted through the transition of power as the *noblesse de robe*. "Since these various categories of intellectuals experience through an 'esprit de corps' their uninterrupted historical continuity and their special qualification," Gramsci said, "they thus put themselves forward as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group."[521] Within this schema, a very thin stratum of the population, which was relatively cushioned from the caprice of the market, was responsible for educating the entire culture in which the conflictual labor process operated.[522] The idea of a contradictory consciousness, therefore, marked an important theoretical contribution to the problem of proletarian self-liberation, namely that "the coexistence of two

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519 Gramsci 1971, p. 12
520 Machiavelli 1988, p. 75
521 Gramsci 1971, p. 7
522 This, again, was the noblesse, which, because of its limited autonomy from production, tended to think of itself as economically transcendent, leading to the dissemination of ahistorical and idealist philosophies. Within Gramsci's functional framework, however, any labor at all was to be understood in terms of productive discipline. The noblesse were not, therefore, unfettered from the chains of the economy, but played a rather parasitic, albeit vital, role as the ideologues of the bourgeois.

conceptions of the world, one affirmed in word and the other expressed in effective action, is not simply a product of self-deception . . . It signifies that the social group in question may have its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic."[523]

For Gramsci, the rise of a common urban language progressively but unevenly displaced the self-enclosed, dialectal plurality of the European peasantry, so that speaking assumed the character of mass communication, both orally and in writing. Among the working class, however, certain intriguing discrepancies emerged between behavior and consciousness, which he saw as ruptures in the constant hegemony of bourgeois rule. In order to realize the revolution, then, it was necessary to "stimulate the formation of homogeneous, compact social blocs, which will give birth to their own intellectuals, their own commandos, their own vanguard — who, in turn, will react upon those in order to develop them, and not merely so as to perpetuate their gypsy domination."[524] Indeed, in his first published article, Gramsci described the socialist party as consisting of a mass constituency, a leadership council, and "an intermediate element, which articulates the first element and the second and maintains contact between them, not only physically but intellectually and morally as well."[525] Contra Lenin, the role of the new intelligentsia was to foster solidarity, without which these two bodies would remain in ignorance of one another's activities and, eventually, strike out in opposite directions. In this sense, *The Prince* had the characteristics of a political manifesto, creating terrain for the subsequent development of a new Renaissance ideal of rulership. However, it was also analogous to what Gramsci called translation, in which the wit was sharpened by empathy and given a proper direction. "One cannot make politics-history without this passion, without this sentimental connection between intellectuals and people-nation," he said. "In the absence of such a nexus the relations between the intellectual and the people-nation are, or are reduced to, relationships of a purely bureaucratic and formal order."[526]

It was, perhaps, from this premise that Althusser derived his thesis: that Machiavelli had

[523] Ibid, p. 326-327
[524] Ibid, p. 204-205
[525] Ibid, p. 153
[526] Ibid, p. 418

sponsored an unprecedented approach to political writing, in which the author was aware, not only of the singularities of each conjuncture, but how they transformed a general and abstract formulation into a peculiar one. “I say empty, to mark the vacillation of theory at this point,” Althusser said, “because it is necessary for this place to be filled.”[527] In the Machiavellian project, there was an ineluctable distance between the people and the state, which led him to search for an apparatus that was capable of linking them together. However, its advent was unpredictable, which meant that the ‘Prince,’ if it denoted anything at all, was first and foremost a signifier on the move. Indeed, that was why Gramsci had been so fascinated with Machiavelli, because in this type of dispositive, the identity of the subject was left open to interpretation. Therefore, Althusser hastened to add, “I say empty, though it is always occupied.”[528] Just as the body contained orifices without which existence would be impossible, *The Prince* was devoted to a caesura in the continuum of time. This, then, was the crucial point of the theory, where politics presented itself in the form of a determinate absence. “Machiavelli leaves the names of the protagonists in this encounter completely blank,” Althusser said, “he provides them with no identity.”[529]

In the thirteenth century, many statues of the Madonna were designed with hollow cavities called “glories,” often to house religious relics or even fragments of manuscripts. These shrines were supposed to be idyllic, representing the meeting of the earthly and divine in the miracle of the Incarnation. Yet, this depiction almost rendered motherhood as its own possession, as if Mary were a stranger to herself. In this context, Victor’s complaint about being a slave to his creation made perfect sense. “I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life,” he said. “I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain.”[530] More than mere embodiments of death, these maggots were children: the emergence of life from decay into growth. Hence, Victor’s persecutory feelings of invasion and dissipation, because his invention, like pregnancy, was a particularly visceral way of figuring the

[527] Althusser 1999, p. 20
[528] Ibid
[529] Ibid, p. 76
[530] Shelley 1846, p. 38

enormous responsibility of power. Political themes were thus translated into psychological terms, since the success of abolition, while it augured the end of the slave trade, did not relieve the master's burden for having created a new kind of Black subject. "The monster was brought to its birth, by pride, lust and cruelty which could not brook the sober restraints of law, order and justice," Douglass said. "The monster publishes its own parentage."[531]

In the same way as a baby can become a repository for the mother and her unconscious fantasies, so, too, did Victor do battle with what he found in his monster. His tendency to relate his experience in military terms, therefore, was unsurprising, and reminiscent of Gramsci, at least insofar as the first-time mother had to achieve a new adaptive position. "Do not return to your families with the stigma of disgrace marked on your brows," Victor implored. "Return as heroes who have fought and conquered, and who know not what it is to turn their backs on the foe."[532] As the unseen fetus recalled a woman to her own pre-Oedipal mother, pregnancy marked a point of crisis in the long search for feminine identity. Indeed, in Irigaray, it heralded a return to the cave, whose uterine walls functioned less like glass than a speculum, which had been introjected into the very fabric of myth. Hence, her allusion to Lewis Carroll, for whom *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, as well as the subsequent *Through the Looking Glass*, bared the mysterious paradox of an infinite whispering gallery.[533] "But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked. "Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat. "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad." "How do you know I'm mad?" said Alice. "You must be," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."[534]

Right from the off, Alice found herself in a topsy-turvy world of ambiguity, nonsense, and contradiction, where she bled before she pricked her finger, and she remembered best what was just

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531 Douglass 2016, p. 166

532 Shelley 1846, p. 194

533 Originally, Carroll intended to title his book *Behind the Looking Glass*, but, after further deliberation, he thought better of it. This makes good sense given the familiar problem of perception, raised by Plato more than two millennia ago, in which material reality was only the reflection of a higher truth. Carroll was obviously interested in this theme of exiting our world for a truer one; the final poem of *Through the Looking Glass*, for example, expounded upon the difficulty of distinguishing the waking and dreaming world, suggesting, in the words of Plato's *Theaetetus*, that "the resemblance of the two states is quite astonishing." There was, consequently, some speculation that Carroll was himself a Platonist, for whom this difficulty posed a real dilemma, but a more interesting interpretation of this story, at least to my mind, remains to be unearthed.

534 Carroll 1920, p. 90

about to happen. Thus, while her unsuspecting tumble lacked the gravitas of Dante, it provided an opportunity to think freely about language. This was hilariously illustrated during Alice's encounter with the melancholy Gnat. "You may observe," he remarked of the Bread-and-Butter Fly, "that its wings are thin slices of bread-and-butter, its body is a crust, and its head is a lump of sugar."[535] What had started as a bit of word play, a movement of the mind beyond the limits of language, made these fantastical insects so unhappy, the Gnat explained, not only because, in this Wonderland world, jokes had the opposite of their usual effect, but also because their forms were a function of antonomasia. This spoof on the taxonomical impulse endemic to scholarship, therefore, pointed both to the generative and destructive potential of cross-cultural contact, since the Bread-and-Butterfly, who could only subsist on tea with weak cream, was practically doomed to starvation. "But that must happen very often," Alice remarked thoughtfully. "It always happens," the Gnat sighed loudly, and thus punned himself out of existence; but he left behind the beard of a goat as a clue to his secret name: *o-o-o*.[536]

Perhaps second only to Athena, who emerged fully formed from her father's skull, Dionysus had one of the most peculiar origin stories in the whole of the ancient Greek corpus. As the illegitimate son of Zeus and Semele, a Thebean princess, Hera lured the baby away and fed him to the Titans. By the time his abduction was discovered, everything had already eaten except for the child's heart, which Athena saved and returned to Zeus, who sewed it into his thigh. Hence, the epithet *Dimetor* or "twice-born," because Dionysus not only returned from the dead but brought back his mother with him. For the god of a thousand names, however, this was but one among many such honorifics. Also known as "the bull-horned," his maenads were rumored to nurse ailing animals, and also to rend men's flesh. Yet, Dionysus, having lived his childhood as a girl, was himself an effeminate man. Owing to this contradictory nature, he and Eros were both called "Liberator," for they freed men from false separations, and Adonis, unsurprisingly, was his lover as well as his eidōlon. "Under the magic of the Dionysian, not only does the bond between man and man lock

[535] Carroll 1998, p. 58
[536] Ibid, p. 59

itself in place once more, but also nature itself, no matter how alienated, hostile, or subjugated, rejoices again in her festival of reconciliation with her prodigal son, man," Nietzsche said. "The earth freely offers up her gifts, and the beasts of prey from the rocks and the desert approach in peace. The wagon of Dionysus is covered with flowers and wreaths; under his yolk stride panthers and tigers.[537]

When they first met, the Gnat had asked Alice whether on her side of the looking glass insects responded to their names. "I never knew them to do it," Alice said, turning the dialogue into a thinly-veiled commentary about interpellation. "What's the use of their having names if they won't answer to them?" the Gnat asked. "No use to *them*," retorted Alice, "but it's useful to the people naming them, I suppose. If not, why do things have names at all?"[538] In the Althusserian rendering, words were like police batons, which dragged their pre-symbolic suspects into the discursive domain. Indeed, that was what Alice discovered when, having eaten too much from one side of a mushroom, her neck grew suddenly and vertiginously, striking the nest of a pigeon-hen, who began to flap her wings violently:

> "But I'm *not* a serpent, I tell you!" said Alice. "I'm a — I'm a —" "Well, *what* are you?" said the Pigeon. "I can see you're trying to invent something!" "I--I'm a little girl," said Alice, rather doubtfully, as she remembered the number of changes she had gone through that day. "A likely story indeed!" said the Pigeon in a tone of the deepest contempt. "I've seen a good many little girls in my time, but never *one* with such a neck as that! No, no! You're a serpent; and there's no use denying it. I suppose you'll be telling me next that you never tasted an egg!" "I *have* tasted eggs, certainly," said Alice, who was a very truthful child; "but little girls eat eggs quite as much as serpents do, you know." "I don't believe it," said the Pigeon; "but if they do, why then they're a kind of serpent, that's all I can say."[539]

For Nietzsche, names were decidedly not reflections of their extra-linguistic objects. They were rather, and more complicatedly, coins, the faces of which faded the more often they were exchanged, until they only mattered as metal. "The designation fits nothing but the sinuosity (the serpere)," he

537 Nietzsche 1995, p. 55
538 Carroll 1998, p. 55
539 Carroll 1920, p. 71

said, "and could therefore appertain also equally to the worm. What arbitrary demarcations! What one-sided preferences given sometimes to this, sometimes to that quality of a thing!"[540] This very same idea was expounded by Alfred Adler, for whom the schema of apperception was generally self-reinforcing. "It has the same effect on me," he said, "whether a poisonous snake is actually approaching my foot or whether I merely believe that it is a poisonous snake."[541] Alas, so long as Pigeon-logic reigned supreme, Alice remained a serpent, since the term was merely a synecdoche for her conspicuous long-neckedness. "And what does it matter to me," the Pigeon asked, "whether you're a little girl or a serpent?"[542]

In the upside-down world of the medieval carnival, some lowly individual, usually a serf, was crowned as king in an irreverent pitch of humor against hauter. Similarly, during her sojourn through the looking glass, which Alice mistakenly believed to be located in the "antipathies" rather than the "antipodes," the small things of the world achieved ascendant power, each of them using their own frame of reference to determine what she was; for as Nietzsche said, "for the creator himself to be the child new-born, he must be willing to be the mother and endure the mother's pain."[543] To exist in the eyes of others was to be subject to a series of stories in which truth and rumor, fact and fiction, became indistinguishable registers. Therefore, upon seeing her disheveled dress, the flowers in the living garden decided Alice was wilting. "But that's not YOUR fault," the Rose added kindly. "You're beginning to fade, you know -- and then one can't help one's petals getting a little untidy."[544] Despite being naked themselves, the flowers hadn't the slightest inkling of being so, and yet, modesty remained as a social currency in the form of rank and file. Indeed, in this aristocratic biome, the flatteries of the ego were themselves at play, which meant that the rarer specimen, the higher the social class. Consequently, when Alice failed to affiliate herself with any known varietal, the Snap-Dragon declared that she must have been a common mobile vulgaris; *un bijou indiscret*! The truth, however, was that Alice really was a flower: "[S]he's a goddamn hothouse flower, that's [her]

[540] Nietzsche 1911(a), p. 178
[541] Adler 1998, p. 23
[542] Carroll 1920, p. 73
[543] Nietzsche 2005, p. 74
[544] Carroll 1998, p. 33

problem!"'[545]

To Alice, it was quite inconceivable that in the underground, her name might not find a body to inhabit. Therefore, taking respite from the heat, her anxiety reached a fever pitch in the prelapsarian grove. "What do you call yourself?" asked the Fawn inquisitively, but Alice could not remember. "L!" she insisted, "I know it begins with an L!"[546] Despite lacking any singular designations, the pair was not much disturbed, and so they walked happily side-by-side, enjoying the greenery. "It has no name," said Alice dreamily, pressing her hand to a tree, but when the woods gave way to an open field, this harmony was destroyed. "You're a fawn!" she proclaimed excitedly. "And dear me, you're a human child!"[547] A look of alarm then filled the Fawn's eyes, and he quickly darted away. Alice nearly cried with vexation, for the Fawn was much less companionable than the giant puppy had been. Thus, paradoxically, the more things changed, the more they stayed the same. "This, too, is something you will discover in dogs, and which is worth our wonder in the creature," Socrates said. "That the sight of an unknown person angers him before he has suffered an injury, but an acquaintance he will fawn upon though he has never received any kindness from him. Have you never marvelled at that?"[548]

Notwithstanding their difference in size, Alice had spoken diminutively of Dash, who was the only creature in Wonderland not to be rendered anthropomorphically. "Poor little thing," she said dotingly, recalling the use of simile in Homer's epic poems. Indeed, in his first conversation with Polyphemus, Odysseus stated truthfully that he and his crew were from Troy. However, he did not immediately identify himself, but first supplicated the cyclops for hospitality, as was the custom Greece upon receiving guests; but Polyphemus had respect neither for Zeus nor for the protection of strangers. "You are a fool" he said, "or else you know nothing of this country. Talk to me, indeed, about fearing the gods or shunning their anger."[549] Thus, Odysseus was forced to watch as two of his

545 This is, indeed, a reference to *The Sopranos*.
546 Carroll 1998, p. 62
547 Ibid
548 Plato 1930, p. 173
549 Homer 1900, p. 115

men were dashed against the earth like puppies, "so their brains ran out upon the ground."[550] This equation, namely between the Homeric dog and hero, was reminiscent of the parting gift given to him by his wife: a brooch, on which was depicted the scene of a bitch holding a spotted fawn beneath her forepaws. Its decoration symbolized the erotic chase, perhaps even the initial capture of Penelope by Odysseus, but within this twisting, literary landscape, there was no such thing as a simple hunt, for "the labyrinthine man never seeks the truth," as Nietzsche said, "but always and only his Ariadne."[551]

The allegation of cannibalism has been the currency of most, if not all, colonial encounters, but in Equiano's narrative, where the scales were reversed, it became a sign of plantocracy. "We were conducted immediately to the merchant's yard, where we were all pent up together like so many sheep in a fold, without regard to sex or age," he said. "We thought by this we should be eaten by these ugly men, as they appeared to us; and, when soon after we were all put down under the deck again, there was much dread and trembling among us, and nothing but bitter cries to be heard all the night from these apprehensions, insomuch as at last the white people got some old slaves from the land to pacify us."[552] As the biological prosthetics of White racism, Black people in general, but especially African Americans, have tended to have a complicated relationship with dogs.[553] Yet, in spite of that history, or, rather, precisely because of it, new strains of interspecies affection emerged from within the diaspora:

> I was a slave, sold seventeen times, parted from my family four times, and remained in bondage forty-three years. I made my escape by being a house servant, and by

550 Ibid

551 Quoted in Hollingdale 2001, p. 175

552 Equiano 2017, p. 27

553 This issue was covered brilliantly by Bénédicte Boisseron in *Afro Dogs*, but I also addressed the issue in "Beastly Boys: The Racial-Sexual Politics of Meat." In this essay, I used bell hooks' concept of plantation patriarchy to explore the discourse on cannibalism as it pertained to Marvel's *Black Panther*. Specifically, I was interested in the Jabari chief, M'Baku, who comically insinuated the threat of cannibalism only to subvert it: "One more word, and I'll feed you to my children." Then, in response to the horrified face of his American counterpart, he laughed heartily and said, "I'm only kidding! We are vegetarians." The punchline, of course, was that viewers, having been taught to equate Africans with savagery, were primed to accept that M'Baku ate flesh when, in fact, he probably ate less than they did. There is a well-documented history of plant-based eating among many African tribes, although, precisely because of colonialism, there has been a tendency amongst anti-colonialists to consume *more* meat, in order to achieve parity with their oppressors. However, this dynamic, which is at once tragic and fascinating, remains beyond the purview of this project.

> learning to win the affections of the savage hounds. I was seventeen days on my way to a land of freedom, without food except when I occasionally obtained fruit, nuts, and so forth. I was often pursued by the hounds, but could quell them immediately. They would quietly guide me on my journey some ways, then wagging their tails would seem to bid me good- bye. Thank Heaven, through the assistance of God and the hounds I gained my freedom. It has been my fervent desire ever since I could remember that some means might be taken to protect the poor animals from cruel treatment. I treat my animals as I desire to be treated, and hope every humane soul will pursue the same course. May God bless your efforts.[554]

The welfarist magazine, *Our Dumb Animals*, was founded in Boston, Massachusetts in 1868. Its contents included local news about anti-cruelty laws, but there was also a focus on humane education in the form of morality tales. Otherwise known as "beast fables," these were parables in which animals talked and imparted a valuable lesson.[555] In this case, however, the roles were reversed; the work was nonfiction, and the humanism was not figurative but fugitive.[556] In the same way that bondage marred the human-animal relationship, the vulgar herd stooped to depths more loathsome than their masters cared to acknowledge. Therefore, by simulating folly, Odysseus not only inherited *virtu*, but, like Brutus, he enhanced it. He and his men rode back to their ship on the belly of a ram, who, for all his familiarity, was yet a stranger to the cyclops. Considered thusly, the power of '*outis*' was not one but two principles of being. Hence, Irigaray's glorification of female anatomy. "Sexual difference is probably the issue in our time which could be our 'salvation,' if we thought it through," she said. "But, whether I turn to philosophy, to science, or to religion, I find this underlying issue still cries out in vain for our attention."[557]

In 1962, Arendt wrote to James Baldwin, whose "Letter from a Region of My Mind" had been published in the *New Yorker*. She began by expressing her admiration for the essay, which she described as a political event of the highest order. However, she also shared a few words of caution, particularly about the collusion between love and jurisprudence. "All the characteristics you stress in the Negro people: their beauty, their capacity for joy, their warmth, and their humanity, are

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554 Quoted in Johnson 2017, p. 17

555 The most obvious of these were *Aesop's Fables*, but more contemporary examples include the *Frog and Toad* series, as well as long-form stories such as *The Wind and the Willow*, *Watership Down*, and even *Animal Farm*.

556 Perhaps for reasons of safety, this man was only ever designated as "J.G.T."

557 Irigaray 1993, p. 5

well-known characteristics of all oppressed people," she said. "They grow out of suffering and they are the proudest possession of all pariahs. Unfortunately, they have never survived the hour of liberation by even five minutes."[558] It was this unforgiving logic which, according to Arendt, made Robespierre and the Jacobins fall prey to interminable suspicion. Therefore, bearing constantly in mind the evils she had witnessed firsthand in Israel, Arendt stressed the advantages of the liar in the domain of politics. Against Kant, for whom the duty to tell the truth was evoked with no consideration for consequences or mitigating factors, Arendt understood the imperative need to avoid attracting attention. "Hence, when we talk about lying," she said, "let us remember that the lie did not creep into politics by some accident of human sinfulness. Moral outrage, for this reason alone, is not likely to make it disappear."[559]

Writing from the perspective both of a journalist and a philosopher, Arendt could not help noticing that modernity had witnessed something new and horrific. Beyond the obvious cruelty of the Holocaust, there was the fact that lying, for the Jews and their allies, had become a necessity; none of these people had, in bad faith, sought to deceive anyone else. No, that mutation was symptomatic of "a hyperbolic growth of the lie, its hypertrophy, its passage to the extreme, in short the absolute lie: not absolute knowledge as the end of history, but history as conversion to the absolute lie."[560] In this, as in so many other respects, Nazism and Bolshevism arrived at the same organizational result from very different angles; there were arrests, examinanions by torture, confessions, all the paraphernalia of a secret society, except this time in broad daylight. The resulting artifactuality of images, which were appearances all the way down, had the effect of transforming discernment into an act of subterfuge. Thus, quoting the chilling testimony of David Rousset, Arendt concluded that this skepticism was the real masterpiece of the S.S.. "They have corrupted human solidarity. Here, the night has fallen on the future," he said. "When no witnesses are left, there can be no testimony."[561]

558 Quoted in Campbell 2002, p. 162
559 Arendt 1972, p. 6
560 Derrida 2002, p. 40
561 Arendt 1973, p. 451

Arendt may have been a pessimist, but she was unusually clear-eyed, and willing to grant that honesty was compatible with lying. The crux of the thing was its pretense, its order of operations conceived in psychological terms. "It was not as though deception ended with self-deception," she said. "The deceivers started with self-deception."[562] This principle was, in fact, implicitly postulated by Arendt wherever she described the relation of truth to politics. Indeed, the Platonic idea that rule should be vested exclusively in the hands of philosophers was, to her mind, not so very different from the one defended by modern totalitarians. Her argument against the latter, then, was also, by implication, an argument against the former, and a defense of those forms of popular government whose validity they denied. Of greater concern to Arendt, however, than the fate of democracy, was the preservation of human plurality and its expression, both of which were called into question where conceptions of monological truth gained primacy. Considered in this way, the theory that evil had no depth, that it was a merely superficial phenomenon, was also strangely progressive, redeeming the household and its shadowy interior as more than a place of privation. Indeed, it bore allusions to Ino, the sea goddess, whose umbilicus veil kept Odysseus safe from the vengeance of Poseidon:

> A characteristic of human action is that it always begins something new, and this does not mean that it is ever permitted to start *ab ovo*, to create *ex nihilo*. In order to make room for one's own action, something that was there before must be removed or destroyed, and things as they were before are changed. Such change would be impossible if we could not mentally remove ourselves from where we physically are located and *imagine* that things might as well be different from what they actually are. In other words, the deliberate denial of factual truth — the ability to lie — and the capacity to change facts — the ability to act — are interconnected; they owe their existence to the same source: imagination.[563]

In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill argued that the truth of a claim was part of its utility. Arendt, however, made the opposite case, as Nietzsche did before her. "Without untruth, there can be neither society nor culture. The tragic conflict," he said. "Everything that is good and beautiful depends on illusion: truth kills — indeed, it kills itself, insofar as it recognizes that its foundation is

[562] Arendt 1972, p. 35
[563] Ibid, p. 5

error."[564] Such was the mortician's touch of philosophy, for which Carroll's novel once again proved a highly instructive text. After several long moments spent looking languidly down at Alice, the Caterpillar removed the hookah from his mouth and asked her, "Who are you?" "I — I hardly know, Sir, just at present," she offered shyly. "At least, I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then."[565] Predictably, the Caterpillar was unhappy with this answer, and so he reiterated his stern demand: "What do you mean by that? Explain yourself!"[566] The exchange of social niceties, which made conversation an art, were either lost on the Caterpillar or else neglected deliberately. Nonetheless, in spite of his terse rejoinders, his failure to follow Alice's meaning did not entail that there was none. "I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, Sir," she said, "because I am not myself, you see." "I do not see," he replied.[567]

In Arendt's view, Socrates wanted his fellow citizens to discover their own *doxa*, but, because it posed a danger to the polis, his philosophical enterprise became a source of conflict. "It is obvious that many of his listeners must have gone away, not with a more truthful opinion," Arendt said, "but with no opinion at all. The inconclusiveness of many Platonic dialogues, mentioned before, can also be seen in this light: all opinions are destroyed, but no truth is given in their stead. And did not Socrates himself admit that he had no doxa of his own, but was 'sterile'?"[568] The problem was not so much the content of philosophical thinking as its ascetic origin, that pathos of not knowing which, in the extreme, shifted the center of gravity out of life into the beyond. Hence, from the Socratic perspective, Nietzsche's entreaty might have sounded a lot like nonsense. "Remain true to the earth, my brethren," he said, "with the power of your virtue!"[569] With regard to this conception of Dionysus, Arendt remained ever faithful; he conveyed a kind of wonderment, before which all resentment of what was, all wanting anything different, even opinion itself, disappeared. As such, he was, indeed, *no thing* but an experience, a sensibility, possessed in common by all. "It comes from the

564 Nietzsche 1999, p. 190
565 Carroll 1920, p. 58
566 Ibid
567 Ibid
568 Arendt 2007, p. 25
569 Nietzsche 2005, p. 66

primeval," she rhapsodized, "and what it leaves behind is something perfect, something which, like everything perfect (in Rilke's words), falls back to where it came from."[570]

Although his profundity was self-evident, from Arendt's perspective, Nietzsche could hardly be said to have lost his humility before theology; for whatever else may be said about him, Nietzsche's power as a teacher, his ability to attract those who were dissatisfied with the current state of things, was also clearly not a public affair. "I would not know how better to say to whom at bottom alone I speak than Zarathustra has said it: to *whom* alone does he want to narrate his riddle?" Nietzsche asked. "To you, the bold venturers and adventurers, and whoever has embarked with cunning sails upon dreadful seas, to you who are intoxicated with riddles, who take pleasure in twilight, whose soul is lured with flutes to every treacherous abyss — for you do not desire to feel for a rope with cowardly hand; and for where you can *guess* to hate to *calculate*."[571] In this solitude, there dwelt something unutterable to a tongue of flesh, and which Nietzsche, therefore, could not articulate except with such puzzling verses. Thus, by summoning up Rilke, Arendt linked poetry, not merely to Nietzsche, but to something beyond good and evil. "We all know, some even know from experience, what a long ears is. Very well," Nietzsche said. "I dare to assert that I possess the smallest ears. This is of no little interest to women — it seems to me they feel themselves better understood by me?"[572]

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt argued that love, by reason of being a passion, collapsed the subjective in-between wherein words forgot their own shadows. This absence of an external referent, this so-called "worldlessness," gave language a sing-song quality with its own intrinsic form. Indeed, the only thing that distinguished the two, in her view, was their ontological status, for in love human beings themselves became what poets aspired to be: the voice of the ineffable. Perhaps nowhere, then, was Socrates more profoundly embraced, than when Nietzsche took up the impetus which was left behind on his deathbed. "The spirits of my book themselves pounce upon me, pull me by the ears, and call me to order," he said. "'We cannot endure it any longer,' they shout to me,

570 Quoted in Hansen 2013, p. 228
571 Nietzsche 1911(b), p. 62
572 Ibid, p. 60

'away, away with this raven-black music! Is it not clear morning round about us? And green, soft ground and turf, the domain of the dance? Was there ever a better hour in which to be joyful?'"[573] This was a lyrical conceptualization of natality as the rainbow connecting the sky with the earth and bringing its message to ground. Hence, the reference to the *Theaetetus*, in which a Thracian servant girl laughed at Thales who, too preoccupied with looking at the stars, fell into a well. "Men have obviously not yet discovered what laughter is good for," Arendt mused, "perhaps because their thinkers, who have always been ill-disposed towards laughter, have let them down in this respect, even though a few of them have racked their brains over the question of what makes us laugh."[574]

From Plato onwards, the Thracian girl became a metaphor for the philistines, who, with bowed backs, had always upheld the world of letters and art. With respect to these matters, then, Arendt offered a brief statement about the meaning of *humanitas* as a universal quality. To become cultured, in this sense, was to acquire a certain skill, which was rightly conceived as being importantly different from propositional knowledge. One could not go without the other, however, and changing the former necessarily left traces on the latter. Therefore, once again, Alice summed up the problem smartly:

> "Have you guessed the riddle yet?" the Hatter said, turning to Alice again. "No, I give it up," Alice replied: "what's the answer?" "I haven't the slightest idea," said the Hatter. "Nor I," said the March Hare. Alice sighed wearily. "I think you might do something better with the time," she said, "than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers." "If you knew Time as well as I do," said the Hatter, "you wouldn't talk about wasting it. It's *him*." "I don't know what you mean," said Alice. "Of course you don't!" the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. "I dare say you never even spoke to Time!"[575]

Carroll saw how the intended import of an utterance could be obscured even when it was drawn from a common vocabulary. However, he also maintained that lexical gibberish, through the power of syntax, could be given the illusion of sense. Hence, in the Leninist, eschatological version of Babel, history had divided the world into two ontologically opposed classes which, as its resolved

[573] Nietzsche 2001, p. 247
[574] Quoted in Hansen 2013, p. 229
[575] Carroll 1920, p. 100-101

itself through a higher and higher dialectic, would eventuate in that revolution, which, for Malcolm, was "time now." Gramsci, on the other hand, by emphasizing the erotic and aesthetic dimensions of language, shifted the dominant trope of praxis towards Baldwinian Pentecostalism. Whichever instruments brought him about, when the Prince arrived, as Althusser said, he always arrived on time. This, therefore, was the polyglottal heritage of the new left, which exploited the pithy *traduttore, traditore* to speak with a double-tongue.[576] "You see, you are committed to these concepts, whether you acknowledge it or not," Spivak remarked. "I think it's absolutely on target not to be rhetorically committed to it, and I think it's absolutely on target to take a stand against the discourses of essentialism. But strategically we cannot."[577]

Rather than a failure to work a pure theory, Spivak saw this struggle, this tension, as a salutary part of coalitionary politics. Hence, in her view, "woman" was a conceptual nomad, whose chronotopic identity was perennially in flux. The main point for consideration, then, was to refuse the either/or, namely by letting them stand together as a conflictual, positional network.[578] This irresolvability, however, while also beneficial, was painful and precarious, which, indeed, was why Alice expected more sympathy in her dealings with the Caterpillar. "When you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will someday, you know – and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel a little queer, won't you?" she asked. "Not a bit," replied the Caterpillar.[579] If signifiers were merely a babble and battle among competing factions, so too, said Nietzsche, for the first philosophers, who endured in a warlike age of men by wearing a priestly mantle. "God is the truth and that truth is divine," he remarked. "But what if precisely *this* becomes increasingly incredible and nothing any longer proves to be divine except error and blindness and lies – when God himself proves to be only our most consistent lie?"[580]

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576 This Italian proverb, which meant "translator, traitor," belied a fear that polyglots, especially in official positions, would betray their originary cultural allegiances and, as it were, "go native."
577 Spivak 2014, p. 11
578 Spivak's strategic essentialism was, of course, not uniquely about women; it applied just as well to any nounal politics, which the French philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy called "being with," or the "singular plural." This was a way of visualizing the signified/signifier relationship, in order to impress the idea that unifying language, while indispensable to communication and, therefore, to action, was always already exceeded by the objects it purported to represent.
579 Carroll 1920, p. 60
580 Nietzsche 2001, p. 201

For Nietzsche, philosophical dogmatism would only be overcome when it wielded asceticism against itself in an act of self-overcoming. Therefore, where the revenant pointed towards the distant presence of a transcendental beyond, Nietzsche foregrounded the spatialization through which the eternal recurred. "If this thought gained possession of you," he said, "it would change you as you are, or perhaps crush you."[581] Within the chrysalis, as a symbol of interior exodus, something took shape and was bodied forth which received its sign from the sea. Hence, the narrow frame of twilight, to evade the familiar trappings of thought in the lavender folds of the mind. "This enlightenment we must now carry forward," Nietzsche implored. "Let us not worry about the 'great revolution' and the 'great reaction' against it which have now taken place — they are nothing more than sporting waves in comparison with the truly great flooding which bears us along."[582] None of the social movements of his day ever made hay with Nietzsche, if only because they were all too timely, and thus too conservative. As such, if politics meant anything at all, it was not the lot of petty states, but the greater climbs of culture. "I too speak of a return to nature," Nietzsche said, "although it is not really a going-back but a *going-up* — up into a high, free, even frightful nature and naturalness, such as plays with great tasks, is *permitted* to play with them."[583]

Nietzsche saw the protocols of social morality everywhere, even down to the deepest depths of the protean animal world. This included the drive to truth, as well as other values which were normally thought to be quintessentially human. "The beginnings of justice, as well as of prudence, moderation, valor — in short, of all we designate as the *Socratic virtues*, are *animal* in nature," he said. "It is not improper to describe the entire phenomenon of morality as animal."[584] This conception of knowledge as instinctual had far-reaching consequences, the foremost of which was that other animals were also possessed of self-consciousness; as they observed the effects of their behavior, they learned to not only reflect upon their environments, but adapt themselves accordingly. Thus, they were capable of emotionality and phenomenal agency, which combined to endow them with

[581] Ibid, p. 194
[582] Nietzsche 1997, p. 118
[583] Nietzsche 1889, p. 71
[584] Nietzsche 1997, p. 21

human-like traits, elsewise known as a personality. Mechanomorphism, then, despite being lauded for its metaphysical chastity, was in fact a defensive externalization, and a form of magical thinking. Hence, the exhortation by Donna Haraway, who was with Derrida, but not all the way. "He came right to the edge of respect, of the move to *respecere*, but he was sidetracked," she complained, "by his textual canon of Western philosophy and literature, and by his own linked worries about being naked in front of his cat."[585]

As Derrida noted, the entire penultimate looking-glass chapter consisted in a single, nay, a partial sentence: "— and it really *was* a kitten after all."[586] Dinah was one of the very few objects, whether people, places, or things, towards which Alice showed any conscious nostalgia during her sojourn in Wonderland. "She is such a dear, quiet thing," Alice relayed to the Dormouse, "and she sits purring so nicely by the fire, licking her paws and washing her face — and she is such a soft, nice thing to nurse —and she's such a capital one for catching mice — oh, I beg your pardon!"[587] As the real Dinah was associated with hunting and saucers of milk, her displaced image, the Cheshire Cat, was literally all mouth. More importantly, however, much like the Dormouse, his presence made Alice bristle. As a toothy, free-floating grin, the Cat was completely impervious either to verbal reprimand or to the threat of corporeal discipline. Thus, when the Queen sentenced him to a beheading, the executioner flatly refused. "He had never had to do such a thing before," Alice explained, "and he wasn't going to begin at *his* time in life."[588]

This headiness was essential because, while it existed in an absolute way, it did so without signifying the vehicle to which it was attached. Such intrigue, among other things, made the Cheshire Cat unsettling, but it also, in his absurdist way, made him transcendent within immanence. "The King's argument was that anything that had a head could be beheaded, and you weren't to talk nonsense," recounted Alice. "The Queen's argument was that if something wasn't done about it in less than no time, she'd have everybody executed all around."[589] Obviously, it was this last remark

[585] Haraway 2013, p. 20
[586] Carroll 1920, p. 216
[587] Carroll 1998, p. 26
[588] Ibid, p. 127
[589] Ibid

that had the whole party looking so grave and nervous, and which suddenly prompted the Leninist question that had vexed so many minds. Indeed, it spelled the end of a friendship between Sartre and Albert Camus, who were initially drawn together by the closeness of their starting points: they had both been involved in the French Resistance during the Nazi occupation, but, in the postwar theoretical boom, Sartre's Marxism grew to be militant. Hence, with respect to the war for Algerian independence, Sartre wrote that "in the first days of the revolt you must kill. To shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man, and a free man."[590] With the publication of *The Rebel*, then, things finally came to a head, as Camus revealed how the majority of revolutions were not liberatory but homicidal. "The French Revolution gave birth to no artists," he wrote, "but only to a great journalist, Desmoulins, and to an under-the-counter writer, Sade. The only poet of the times was the guillotine."[591]

Whereas the law distinguished between crimes of passion and logic, to Camus, the boundary seemed porous, and mostly dependent upon whose helmsmen commanded the ship of the state. As such, with Robespierre as their spokesman, the utopian Jacobins whetted their bloodlust under the banner of the people. "Chamfort, the moralist of the rebellion had already provided the formula: 'One must be just before being generous, as one must have bread before having cake,'" Camus explained. "Thus the ethic of luxury [was] renounced in favor of the bitter morality of the empire-builders."[592] During the summer of 1793, Paris was so poorly stocked with flour that every day, in one district or another of the city, violent scuffles broke out in the bakeries. Therefore, to prevent further such incidents, commissioners declared that distribution should begin at three in the morning. Scarcely awake, scores of women then gathered in the middle of the night, doing their best to keep in good spirits and secure their daily rations. Indeed, the bread lines, even if forced, became sites of conviviality, so much so that the neighbors complained of the awful racket outside. "Misery, to reach your heart, I perceive, must have its caps and bells," said Wollstonecraft. "But the distress of

590 In the preface to Fanon 1963, p. 22
591 Camus 2012, p. 253
592 Ibid, p. 103

many industrious mothers, whose helpmates have been torn from them, and the hungry cry of helpless babes, were vulgar sorrows that could not move your commiseration, though they might extort an alms."[593]

In Wollstonecraft's theory, the respect paid to property had a corrupting influence on the have and have-nots alike, the former of whom had too little necessity, the latter of whom too much. Thus, again, there was an undeniable resonance with the theme of innocent suffering in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Perhaps, the most memorable instance was the scene of the little serf boy, who struck the paw of a general's hound while playing catch with a stone. Thereafter, he was shut up in a kennel, only to be summoned the following morning by a mounted hunting party:

> The general orders the child to be undressed; the child is stripped naked. He shivers, numb with terror, not daring to cry. "Make him run," commands the general. "Run! run!" shout the dog-boys. The boy runs. "At him!" yells the general, and he sets the whole pack of hounds on the child. The hounds catch him, and tear him to pieces before his mother's eyes! I believe the general was afterwards declared incapable of administering his estates. Well — what did he deserve? To be shot? To be shot for the satisfaction of our moral feelings? Speak, Alyosha!"

Ivan refused to hear any Euclidean nonsense about there being no freedom, for he saw quite clearly that, if there was freedom, there could also be no forgiveness. Even here, however, Arendt detected an economic notion: the moral worth of a human life as an irrecoverable asset. "If civil society were to be dissolved by the consent of all its members," Kant said, "the last murderer remaining in prison would first have to be executed, so that each has done to him what his deeds deserve and blood guilt does not cling to the people for not having insisted upon this punishment."[594] The problem, as Arendt saw it, was that politics had its own dignity, wherein actors were judged, not by their motives, but by their heroism. Hence, her critique of Henry David Thoreau, who spent a single night in jail, in 1846, for refusing to pay his poll tax. "Witness the present Mexican war," he said, "the work of comparatively few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure. Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least

[593] Wollstonecraft 1790, p. 25
[594] Kant 2017, p. 116

degree, resign conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience, then?"[595]

Arendt was hardly in a position to disagree, given that, by her own argument, a lack of genuine introspection enabled the Holocaust. Yet, as she looked out upon her new country with all of its racism, its anti-intellectualism, and its willful ignorance of death, she repeated the Machiavellian refrain: that unless there was fire, then such clarity of conscience, no matter how unimpeachable, was only so much smoke. "And thus these wicked rulers do as much evil as they please," he said, "because they do not fear a punishment which they do not see nor believe."[596] Without a creature through whom it passed, time itself, for Arendt, was unthinkable, which meant that "the people" did not precede, but, on the contrary, succeeded the act of founding. Thus, she left a clue that the nature of authority derived from the continued augmentation of the republic's founding principles; for the light of the world arrived late, and the stars that shined on that spangled banner were already dead on arrival. "Perhaps, the political genius of the American people," Arendt concluded, "or the great good fortune that smiled upon the American republic, consisted precisely in this blindness, or, to put it another way, consisted in the extraordinary capacity to look upon yesterday with the eyes of centuries to come."[597]

This uncanny admixture was nowhere better expressed than in the *Declaration of Independence*, at least from Arendt's perspective. By conjoining the relative and absolute into a single claim of validity, Jefferson opened a nexus of space which arrested the flow of time. Hence, the title of Baldwin's book, *Nobody Knows My Name*; this mysterious "we," this roving jewel, was the ghost of a future anterior, which unfolded itself from the inside out like a Matryoshka doll. "I don't know what you mean by '*glory*,'" Alice said, at which Humpty Dumpty smirked. "Of course you don't — till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knockdown argument for you.'"[598] Humpty Dumpty really was a curious fellow, known internationally as the main figure of a children's nursery rhyme. Due to his fragility, he was often portrayed as an egg, but the name referred originally to the cannon at Saint Mary's Tower.

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[595] Thoreau 1993, p. 1
[596] Machiavelli 1882, p. 322
[597] Arendt 1990, p. 198
[598] Carroll 1998, p. 124

During the Siege of Colchester in 1648, a one-eyed gunner used Humpty Dumpty against the parliamentary forces, until the pair were dislodged by return cannon fire, and he, therefore, had a great fall. "The question," she asked, "is whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," replied Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master, that's all."[599]

This conversation was funny, but it underscored something crucial, namely that thinking came into its own when there were no more bannisters to lean on, to borrow the Arendtian phraseology. Language, hence, became the site of a conflict, leading Alice back to the universe of the other's desirability. "I never ask advice about growing," she said. "Too proud?" asked Humpty Dumpty. "I mean," Alice bristled, "that one can't help growing older." "*One* can't, perhaps," he agreed, "but *two* can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven."[600] As demonstrated by this dialogue, the primary unit was still a shared language since, in order to make himself understood, Humpty Dumpty required translation. Therefore, despite his stubborn insistence to the contrary, he either spoke with a tongue in his cheek, or else with egg on his face. Indeed, it was precisely this portmanteau quality which led Wittgenstein to declare, with some amusement, that "philosophical problems arise when our language goes on holiday."[601] For Wittgenstein, to know the meaning of a word was to know how it could be moved, which implied that language, much like a game, was governed by rules and context. Hence, in Wonderland, Alice was a pawn, on account of this maddening complexity of different possible openings. "Aren't you feeling grief now," Wittgenstein asked, "but aren't you now playing chess?"[602]

Just as the significance of the queen did not come from its being wooden, there was something about sensation-talk that made its meaning sensible. This point was made with great ardor, purportedly, in a heated exchange with Karl Popper, when Wittgenstein brandished a fireplace poker and waved it at him menacingly. "'*Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain*,'" he said mockingly. "'*Another person can only surmise it*.' In one way this is wrong, and in another nonsense."[603]

599 Ibid
600 Ibid, p. 120
601 Wittgenstein 2009, p. LXIX
602 Ibid, p. 123
603 Ibid, p. 19

This was not merely a tantrum, but a clever demonstration that feelings were not a private peepshow in the theatre of the mind. At some point, doubt became untenable, and justification, likewise, absurd. "I said I would 'combat' the man, but wouldn't I give him reasons?" Wittgenstein asked. "Certainly: but how far do they go? At the end of reason comes *persuasion*. (Think of what happens when missionaries convert natives."[604] This remark earned Wittgenstein an accusation of relativism, but such a reading, again, and ironically, was conditioned by the very dichotomy that he was concerned to undermine: a proposition either compelled by rational demonstration or else by emotional posture. His own methods, however, fell someplace in the middle, and these certainly represented a robust form of thought. "'I see nobody on the road," said Alice. "'I only wish I had such eyes!" the King remarked in a fretful tone. "To be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too! Why, it's as much as I can do to see real people by this light!"'[605]

In one of his rare engagements with the canon, Wittgenstein warned against that long tradition, going back to Socrates, according to which the only adequate definition of a word was analytic. "If a person has not yet got the concepts," he said, "I shall teach him by means of examples and practice — and when I do this, I do not communicate less to him than I know myself."[606] To account for ostensive gestures, Wittgenstein did something radical: he denied inner evidence, which meant that reason was irreducibly social. Indeed, it was this Tulgey Wood, this hurly-burly weave, wherein things took on their normative force, as it were, in the thick of it. Hence, the metaphor of games, because the point at which the spade turned to judgment implied an internal unevenness. Unlike cards, however, chessmen had more dimensionality, so that, once this was discovered by Alice, she transformed dialectically from an *infans* to a conversationalist; having learned the rules the hard way, she came to accept them, not merely begrudgingly and as painful impositions, but instead as something necessary. Yet, if that were the climax of the story, it would overshadow subversion, which, for Wittgenstein, no less than for Carroll, was the surest proof of fluency. "Don't, for heaven's sake, be afraid of talking nonsense!" he said. "But you must pay attention to your

[604] Wittgenstein 1969, p. 81
[605] Carroll 1998, p. 139-140
[606] Wittgenstein 2009, p. CCI

nonsense!"[607]

In the history of culture, the names of philosophers were primarily metonymies, used to indicate the flows of thought that their authors intercepted. Therefore, 'Nietzsche' marked the beginning of an epoch, often dubbed the "linguistic turn," to which Wittgenstein himself belonged, at least in his later career. This was a pivotal moment in his philosophical journey, one that led him from truth as self-evident purity to a kind of animal certainty. Not unlike Kant with his synthetic a priori, these were the enabling conditions, the hinges, which enabled the epistemic practices to function."But it isn't that the situation is like this," Wittgenstein urged. "We just *can't* investigate everything, and for that reason, we are forced to rest content with assumptions."[608] Hinges, although logically indubitable, were not necessarily true; they had no truck with justification, if only for the simple fact that the grounds were groundless by nature. In some cases, then, within this modified foundationalism, what looked like doubt was only behavior, and not the genuine article. To utter a basic certainty arrested the flow of the game, the rules of which were made manifest in action rather than words. Thus, all hinges were nonsense, not in the sense of being unintelligible, but in the sense of being regulative. "Two days wrong," the Hatter sighed as he looked at his pocket watch. "I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!" he added, looking angrily at his companion. "It was the best butter," the March Hare responded sheepishly. [609]

On offer, here, was a knock-down argument, in which radical skepticism hinged on the very certainties it purported to dismiss. Indeed, that was what made it so silly, because the nonpropositional nature of hinges put an end to an infinite regress. "That is to say," Wittgenstein explained, "it belongs to the nature of our scientific investigations that certain things are in *deed* not doubted."[610] This was neither an empirical finding nor a hypothetical assertion; it was rather, for Wittgenstein, a grammatical truth, one that stood against the relentless straitjacket of an atomistic reductionism; were it not for certain constantly recurring patterns of behavior, even the most

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[607] Wittgenstein 1998, p. 64
[608] Wittgenstein 1969, p. 44
[609] Carroll 1920, p. 99
[610] Wittgenstein 1969, p. 44

rudimentary concepts would fail to get a grip.[611] "What we are supplying are really remarks on the natural history of human beings," Wittgenstein remarked, "not curiosities, however, but facts that no one has doubted, which have escaped notice only because they are always before our eyes."[612] To participate in a language, more broadly, was to participate in a culture, conceived as a sum of constantly shifting and incommensurable games. Hence, the expression of a "form of life," which denoted the tempo or constitutive rhythm that gave face to its different modalities. On this level, too, Wittgenstein registered something insightful about Wonderland, namely in an elaboration to one of his most quoted phrases. "If a lion could talk," Wittgenstein said, "we could not understand him."[613]

With the exception of the black kitten shown before Alice traversed the looking-glass, nearly all of the animals with whom she met wore articles of clothing. Indeed, the Lion had spectacles, which he put on before blinking lazily at Alice, asking, "Are you animal — mineral — or vegetable?"[614] "It's a fabulous monster!" the Unicorn cried before Alice could reply. "Then hand round the plumcake, Monster," the Lion answered wearily, yawning between each word. Where there was grammar, a use could be taught, and where there was not, it was futile. Considered in this way, then, the donning of glasses pointed not only to a pause, an intersentential ellipsis, but to the possibility of translating from one creatural perspective to another. In fact, that was the lovely thing about Wittgenstein: he did not say that the lion had no language, only that he was not talking, and that was a level of profundity such as philosophers rarely achieved. "One thinks that one is tracing the outline of the thing's nature over and over again," he said, "when one is merely tracing the frame through which we look at it."[615] As such, if Wittgenstein meant to give a second diagnosis of philosophical problems, the solution proposed was what he called "perspicuous representation,"

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[611] Many of the constraints under which people acted, such as the force of gravity, were beyond their control, and so they were indubitable for very obvious and practical reasons. Although a person could leave the house by the second story, it would be terribly foolish. Other constraints, however, such as the gendering of clothing, were imposed by society upon itself, meaning that the hinges governing these sorts of practices were negotiable, at least after a fashion — pun intended.

[612] Wittgenstein 2009, p. 21

[613] Ibid, p. 227

[614] Carroll 1998, p. 153

[615] Wittgenstein 2009, p. CXXIX

namely something that drew the colonized gaze from what held its attention:

> We also say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions; and, what is more, even given a mastery of the country's language. We do not *understand* the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find our feet with them.[616]

At the turn of the twentieth century, more than half of the nation's clothes were made in a small wedge of Manhattan. This was the Germant District, and the sweatshops, which mostly employed immigrant women, were no less crowded and unsanitary than the tenement houses they lived in. Indeed, working conditions in the garment industry had been atrocious from the start, with more than a third of seamstresses dying before the age twenty-five; and while labor organizers had a presence in the city, many felt that the cultural barriers were too great to be surmounted — that is, until a new wave of Jewish immigrants arrived from Eastern Europe. Among them was Clara Lemlich, whose family had fled from persecution in their small, Ukrainian village. She involved herself immediately in the local socialist chapters, where, at a 1909 convention, she interrupted as several speakers mused on the plight of the needlewomen. "I am a working girl," she said in Yiddish, "one of those striking against intolerable conditions. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in generalities. What we are here for is to decide whether or not to strike. I make a motion that we go out in a general strike."[617]

As it happened, the conditions were perfect, and the absence of a common language, strictly speaking, did nothing to stop solidarity. Quite the opposite, on the first day of the protest, nearly twenty thousand workers showed up to the picket lines, and since the overwhelming majority were women, they drew support from the suffragettes. Soon after, the American Federation of Labor joined the cause, and within two weeks, the strike had extended all the way from New York to Pennsylvania. Therefore, as more and more factories ground to a halt, the textile bosses sent word to

[616] Ibid, p. 227
[617] "Women in Labor History" 2025

the strikers that they were prepared to negotiate. These efforts were mostly successful, save for one important condition, namely ending the policy of locking the factory doors. As the ALF argued their case for compromise, the needlewomen yelled, "Send it back! We will not consider it!" At this point, tragically, the threads began to fray, and the wealthier suffragettes warned their sisters that they were being too demanding. Without that critical pillar of support, the coalition fractured, and the seamstresses found themselves forced to accede to the terms of the agreement. It was a critical mistake, as not one year later, in Greenwich Village, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, and nearly two hundred women were burned alive because they could not escape the building. Therefore, at a memorial meeting in the Metropolitan Opera House, Rose Schneiderman testified to her disappointment in her erstwhile allies. "I would be a traitor to these poor burned bodies," she said, "if I came here to talk good fellowship. We have tried you good people of the public and we have found you wanting."[618]

Along with Clara, Rose had been one of the key engineers behind the textile strike, and although she was not even five feet tall, her ferocity was unmatched. Her talent for oratory, in particular, made her famous, and in 1911, she spoke the words that sealed her place in history. "The worker must have bread," Schneiderman implored, "but she must have roses, too!" This slogan gained widespread recognition the following year in Lawrence Massachusetts, where seamstresses at the Everett Cotton Mill walked out from the job. Their employer was cutting wages in response to a new work hours law, and this, not being an uncommon strategy at the time, prompted the women at the Washington Mill to call for a general strike. They, too, were ethnically diverse, and once again, as had happened in Manhattan, they got no support from the trade unionists. The difference, however, in the Lawrence Strike, was that women were calling the shots, so that even in the face of brutal repression, they held the line for months. There were mass beatings, and firehoses, and mothers were dragged by the hair from their children, but still, they did not relent; and under the watchful eyes of the public, their banners read "Bread and Roses." Thus, after nine long weeks, the needlewomen won their demands: a fifteen-percent wage hike, and an increase in overtime

[618] "Remembering the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire" 2018

compensation.

This victory, far from being inevitable, had, in fact, been very conditional, and dependent upon the resolve of a community to take a stand together; neighbors had set up soup kitchens, doctors volunteered medical care, and funds were raised across the country to support the women's families. Hence, these efforts were emblematic of Arendt's *amor mundi*, which was no mere sentiment but a critical engagement with the world and its fragility. More than that, however, they revealed something crucial about the power of the witness, which, as Baldwin himself had learned, was also the role of the author. Indeed, nowhere was this more evident than in the works of James Oppenheim, who, in the aftermath of the Lawrence Strike, immediately put pen to paper. This passage, then, was the first to grace the pages of Sinclair's anthology on protest literature, entitled *The Cry for Justice*:

> As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
> A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill-lofts gray
> Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
> For the people hear us singing, "Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses."
>
> As we come marching, marching, we battle, too, for men —
> For they are women's children and we mother them again.
> Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes —
> Hearts starve as well as bodies: Give us Bread, but give us Roses!
>
> As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
> Go crying through our singing their ancient song of Bread;
> Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew —
> Yes, it's bread we fight for — but we fight for Roses, too.
>
> As we come marching, marching, we bring the Greater Days —
> The rising of the women means the rising of the race —
> No more the drudge and idler — ten that toil where one reposes —
> But sharing of life's glories: Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses!

For Arendt, the secrets of the human heart were to be fathomed, not in politics, but in literature. Hence, her review of Bertolt Brecht, the German poet and playwright. His exile was driven by fear of persecution for his antifascist writings, which brought him to America, in 1941, where he crossed paths with Sidney Hook. As they were both Marxists, Hook invited Brecht to attend a small

gathering of the politically like-minded; Brecht happily accepted, but, as the evening wore on, the discourse grew so acrimonious that further discussion seemed futile. A series of show trials was taking place in the Soviet Union, where Stalin was forcing the old Bolsheviks to confess to fantastical crimes: conspiring to murder Lenin, conniving with foreign powers, all of which had been folded into a language of elaborate fury by the veteran prosecutor, Andrey Vyshinsky. "Our people are demanding one thing," he said. "The traitors and spies who are selling our country to the enemy must be shot like dirty dogs." By these means, the fictionalism of the courtroom had reached its apogee, but when asked for his thoughts, Brecht replied chucklingly, "As for them, the more innocent they are, the more they deserve to be shot."[619] Suffice it to say, the two men never saw each other again, as Hook immediately fetched Brecht's coat and saw him out the door. Still more baffling, however, than the words of Brecht were the ones that came from Arendt. "Brecht, I am afraid, might have sighed with relief when he found himself on the street," she said. "His luck had not yet left him."[620]

Tellingly, Arendt placed in the epigraph to her essay another poem by W. H. Auden, who was also quoted in the second-to-last chapter of her book, *The Life of the Mind*. "O, plunge your hands in water, plunge them in up to the wrist; stare and stare into that basin, and wonder what you've missed." The piece from which this excerpt was drawn had a very conspicuous title, and, being quite famous, would have struck anyone familiar with Auden's work: *As I Walked Out One Evening*. The poem resonated with readers because it addressed a basic emotional predicament, namely that after someone died, the world kept on spinning without them. Against the backdrop of an ever-flowing river, the voice of time reminded lovers of the transient nature of life, showcasing the beauty of its fleeting moments as the hours were fled and gone. The verses remembered what had disappeared, and, indeed, *that*, for Arendt, was the special preserve of poets; it required a kind of untimeliness on which Brecht had failed to make good. "The poet's real sins," she said, "are avenged by the gods of

[619] Hook 1987, p. 493
[620] Arendt 1968, p. 227

poetry."[621] Whereas Auden remembered his solemn duty and staggered joyously onward, Brecht, because he was ashamed of the world, turned instead to ideology. "There were some who threw away their last dignity," said Nietzsche, "when they threw away their servitude."[622]

Arendt seemed to venture the scandalous claim that bad men were also bad writers, which, incidentally, was the same idea explored in Shelley's *Valperga*. It was written in Italy before the country had become a unified nation, and was heavily based on historical sources, such as Dante and Machiavelli. Although the main plot was about the coming of age and power of Castruccio, the Prince of Lucca, it also concerned his impossible romance with the countess, Euthanasia. "She felt as if, bound to him by an indissoluble chain," Shelley wrote, "it was her business to follow, like an angel, in his track, to heal the wounds that he inflicted. Dressed in a coarse garb, and endeavouring to throw aside those feelings of delicacy which were as a part of her, she visited the houses of the poor, aided the sick, fed the hungry, and would perform offices that even wives and mothers shrunk from with disgust and fear."[623] If Castruccio stood in for the arty spirit, Euthanasia was cosmopolitan, for while the peasantry starved during his military campaign, it was she who palliated their suffering. Through this character, then, Shelley reflected on her faltering hopes for a democratic future. "The private chronicles," she concluded, "from which the foregoing relation has been collected, end with the death of Euthanasia. It is therefore in public histories alone that we find an account of the last years of the life of Castruccio."[624]

Perhaps fittingly, Euthanasia, whose soul was a deep well of love, met her end in a watery grave. There was neither reward for the virtuous, nor punishment for the wicked: the earth felt no change, and the stage was left open for the hollow conquests of men. Indeed, all that was left of Euthanasia was a single white handkerchief, which, having washed to shore with the wreckage from her ship, still contained a few golden hairs. Yet, while the historical impasse of the novel made its

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621 Ibid, p. 242
622 Nietzsche 2005, p. 55
623 Shelley 1998, p. 400
624 Ibid, p. 439

central relationship barren, her death was not in vain; something survived beyond actuality, and that was its own kind of justice. "The children are always ours," Baldwin said, "every single one of them all over the globe; and I am beginning to suspect that whoever is incapable of recognizing this may be incapable of morality."[625] If philosophy was, as Socrates said, a practice in dying well, what was known to the poets, the lovers, the dreamers, was how to be born again; bread *and* roses. The worldless witness of the artist did not transcend appearances, nor repose in a realm of contemplation which mortified the flesh. To produce something beautiful was, in fact, a much more radical departure, where the conditions of thought themselves were made alien to the act of consciousness. Hence, the artist emerged as sheer presence, at once stood apart and at once possessed by the earth in all of its resplendance:

> Oh my animals, chatter on like this and let me listen. It is so refreshing for me to hear you chattering: where there is chattering, there the world lies before me like a garden. How lovely it is that there are words and sounds! Are not words and sounds rainbows and elusive bridges between things which are eternally apart? To every soul there belongs another world; for every soul, every other soul is an afterworld. Precisely between what is most similar, illusion lies most beautifully; for the smallest cleft is the hardest to bridge.[626]

This passage from "The Convalescent" was one of Nietzsche's most articulate and comprehensive accounts of the eternal recurrence. The theme became explicit in a conversation with the animals by whom Zarathustra was roused from his solitude after seven days spent in silence. Although highly compressed and symbolic, this parodic recasting of the Adamic myth reached its climax with an announcement: a great noontime, when men would carry into all abysses the blessings of their yes-saying. Indeed, Zarathustra's first act upon waking was to smell the scent of a rose-apple, which prompted his animals to sing a song reminiscent of children's playing. "To those who think like us," they cried, "things all dance themselves: they come and hold out the hand and laugh and flee and return. Everything goeth, everything returneth; eternally rolleth the wheel of existence. Everything

[625] Baldwin 2021, p. 676
[626] Nietzsche 2005, p. 190

dieth, everything blossometh forth again; eternally runneth on the year of existence."[627] The dialectical point, for Nietzsche, within this ebb and flow, was that the terrestrial faculty of miracle-working was, in fact, a kind of bird wisdom. Here, the Enlightenment itself was enlightened, since poetic idiom, through its avian mimicry, countermeasured the spirit of gravity; images and concepts, being weighted with abstraction, were leavened by musicality, in which every life-force had its own voice, and also its own form of grammar. "Did my loathing itself create for me wings and water-divining powers?" Zarathustra asked. "Verily, to the loftiest height had I to fly, to find again the well of delight!"[628]

In Carroll's novel, the trick played on the oysters by the Walrus was not only heartless but fatal, except for the eldest, who at least knew enough not to leave the oyster bed. In a mockery of empathy, even while eating them, the Walrus held a handkerchief before his streaming eyes. "O, Oysters," said the Carpenter. "You've had a pleasant run! Shall we be trotting home again?" "But answer came there none," the narrator continued, "and that was scarcely odd, because they'd been eaten, every one."[629] Whereas the killing of innocents, in most religions, was the ultimate act of evil, considered beyond this singular axis, another picture emerged. Indeed, Nietzsche, too, said that his delicate stomach had a taste for little lambs, yet, in spite of his violent imagery, the theme was a tender passion: "'We must educate men better,' said the wise man, and made a sign for the youth to follow him. The youth, however, did not follow him."[630] If the stomach was a place of absorption, of intermingling, then love, for Nietzsche, was the genuinely transformative element expressed in sublimation. Hence, his talk of predation and innocence, because the extension of play cracked a hardened soul open to reveal the pearlescent interior. "Almost in the cradle are we apportioned with heavy words and worths," he said. "For the sake of it we are forgiven for living. And therefore suffereth one little children to come unto one, to forbid them betimes to love themselves — so causeth the spirit of gravity."[631]

[627] Ibid
[628] Ibid, p. 84
[629] Carroll 1998, p. 79
[630] Nietzsche 2001, p. 73
[631] Nietzsche 2005, p. 167

At the end of the novel, when Alice's sister found her asleep by the side of a riverbank, it was she who equated the story of Wonderland to the sounds of the rural scene; the rattling teacups were sheep bells, the Queen's shrill voice a shepherd, and the lowing of cattle in the distance replaced the sounds of the Mock Turtle's sobs. "Lastly," the narrator said, "she pictured to herself how this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman; and how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood."[632] In a way, the scene bore a queer likeness to the "Honey Sacrifice," in which Zarathustra, whose hair has whitened, stared out across the sea. In response to his animals, who asked what he saw, and whether he searched for his happiness, Zarathustra was only concerned with his work, and yet, he was deeply joyful. Indeed, he was turning yellow, as a symbol of the generous nature with which he was overflowing. Thus, in a parallelism to bees, honey itself was the treacle sweetness that came from overcoming; just as so much of the world was its own punishment, love was a beautiful labor, which offered a broadened comprehension to the prophet and his teachings. Here was the new fisher of souls, and an almost liturgical delectation of the bounty with which he abounded. "I do not teach you the neighbor," he said, "but the friend. Let the friend be the festival of the earth to you, and a foretaste of the Overman."[633]

For Nietzsche, the gift of friendship was the gift of a completed world, as in life there were many goings-under when the mind came apart at the seams. Hence, the value of a good conversationalist, someone affable, like a truffle pig, who helped set the stage for a going-over by rooting out the loose ends. In this frogdance, Dionysus and Apollo were once again rejoined, launching over each other's heads in a cycle of "yes" and "once more." "In a friend, one should have one's best enemy," Zarathustra said. "You should be closest to him with your heart when you resist him."[634] Initially, it might have appeared as though Nietzsche's prophet was playing the part of the brain-leech, which was, of course, yet another pejorative for the Socratic form of midwifery. To the extent, however, that the former's friendship was impertinent to the latter, it much more resembled

[632] Carroll 1920, p. 192
[633] Nietzsche 2005, p. 54
[634] Ibid, p. 49

Carroll's White Knight, who was laughably on-the-nose. Indeed, this scene did a skirmish between the adult who wanted to capture the child and the one who helped her move forward. "I don't want to be anyone's prisoner," Alice insisted. "I want to be a Queen!"[635] The Knight, although chivalrous, was also progressive, and not content to give merely what was demanded of him in the old days. As such, he renounced his claim, and, seeing her safely through the woods, left Alice to tend her affairs. "Suppose truth is a woman, what then?" Nietzsche asked. "Wouldn't we have good reason to suspect that all philosophers, insofar as they were dogmatists, had a poor understanding of women, that the dreadful seriousness and the awkward pushiness with which they so far have habitually approached truth were clumsy and inappropriate ways to win over a woman?"[636]

The reasons for Nietzsche's suspicion were two-fold, as evidenced, again, by Zarathustra. "Are you a slave?" he asked. "Then you cannot be a friend. Are you a tyrant? Then you cannot have friends."[637] At first blush, this might have sounded like textbook misogyny, according to which woman, the natural slave, could not be equal to men. This interpretation was made less plausible, however, by Zarathustra's lamentation that "all-too-long have a slave and a tyrant been concealed in woman."[638] As to the former, woman was rendered by her station as an instrument of man, the object of his lust, perhaps, but rarely of his love. Therefore, as to the latter, because of these same conditions, women were stronger in willingness which remained to be requited. "But tell me, you men, who among you is capable of friendship?" Zarathustra implored. "Alas, behold your poverty, you men, and the meanness of your souls!"[639] Through an equation of magnanimity and joying-with, Nietzsche indicated that the talent for friendship was the mark of a higher character. Hence, in the place of a ladder, Zarathustra had a circle, by means of which he bequeathed his bride with her new marital name. "Oh, how should I not lust after Eternity and after the nuptial ring of rings, the ring of recurrence?" he asked. "Never yet have I found the woman from whom I wanted children, unless it

[635] Nietzsche 1907, p. xv
[636] Carroll 1998, p. 161
[637] Nietzsche 2005, p. 50
[638] Ibid
[639] Ibid

be this woman whom I love: for I love you, O Eternity."[640]

The birth of the child was not just one but *the* issue in *Zarathustra*, to which everything else was subordinated. Therefore, at this critical juncture, Nietzsche pointed to something, not beyond the power, yet hitherto beyond the imagination of men. "Our artists are only too closely related to little hysterical women," he said. "But this is to speak against 'today' and not the 'artist.'"[641] With the conspicuous exception of his animals, the only characters to whom Zarathustra ever listened throughout his journey were women. Their bewildering lessons, which set him adrift and also to dizzying heights, enabled a form of ennoblement, which he called "inoculation." Hence, the parabolic structure of Zarathustra's narrative, which, harking back to the Cheshire Cat, grinned mischievously up from the page. "This crown of laughter, the rosary crown: to you, my brothers, I throw this crown!" he proclaimed. "I pronounced laughter holy: you higher men, learn — to laugh!"[642] In much the same manner as Carroll, for whom Alice was right to resist arrest, Nietzsche insisted that every good gift had at one time been disobedient. The question, therefore, was whether this truth could withstand incorporation, and for that, what was needed was a new mot m'ordre: maternal love as knowledge. "The moral earth, too, is round," Nietzsche declared. "The moral earth, too, has its antipodes! The antipodes, too, have their right to exist. There is another world to be discovered — and more than one! On to the ships, you philosophers!"[643]

In an aphorism aimed at the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Nietzsche poked fun at the idea that men were paradigmatically human. Whereas a great soul had a good-sized body, Aristotle maintained that a diminutive stature was the sign of a spiritual ugliness. Therefore, in "The Third Sex," Nietzsche rotated this frame, which revealed the mind of Aristotle as ploddingly methodical. "'A small man is a paradox but still a man,'" he said, "'but small females seem to me to belong to another sex than tall women,' said an old dancing master. A small woman is never beautiful — said old Aristotle."[644] By means of this admittedly unsympathetic paraphrasing, Nietzsche was indicating that, as much as any

[640] Ibid, p. 202
[641] Nietzsche 1968, p. 430
[642] Nietzsche 2005, p. 259
[643] Nietzsche 2001, p. 163
[644] Nietzsche 2001, p. 76

philosopher, Aristotle's perspective reflected the contingencies of his own physiology. His mirth, consequently, recurred in a later passage, when Nietzsche suggested that, behind a "big man," there was often a little psyche. If height was in the eye of the beholder, then what made sexist jokes so decidedly unfunny was precisely their tediousness. The medium was ill-suited to do justice to women's experience, and, indeed, that was partly why Nietzsche warned women against education: the question was not about capability so much as plurality, because a genuine meeting of the minds required the free reign of difference. "To be sure, there are enough imbecilic friends and corrupters among the scholarly asses of the male sex who advise woman to defeminize herself in this way," Nietzsche said, "and to intimate all of the stupidities with which 'man,' European 'manliness,' is sick."[645]

In *The Subjection of Women*, John Stuart Mill implied that in every movement, women must pass through three developmental phases: ridicule, discussion, and adoption. So, too, then, for animal rights, which, despite being mostly represented by men, has been driven historically by women. The reasons why were so obvious as to scarcely be worth mentioning, but they boiled down to the usual dichotomy between reason and emotion. Indeed, this was made patently clear by Peter Singer, who, in his own Platonic dialogue, rehearsed these ideas to his daughter. "I prefer to keep truth and fiction clearly separate," he said, "truth being the purview of philosophy and not of literature."[646] This not so subtle dig was in reference to J.M. Coetzee, who, in the *Lives of Animals*, had accused philosophers of mental masturbation. The scene itself was organized around a central question, one that seemed to come at the expense of embodied and experiential evidence. "'Can we,' said this philosopher, 'strictly speaking, say that the veal calf misses its mother?'" Elizabeth Costello summarized. "'Does the veal-calf have enough grasp of the meaning of maternal absence, does the veal calf, finally, know enough about missing to know that the feeling it has is the feeling of missing?' . . . What sort of philosophy is this? Throw it out, I say. What use do its piddling distinctions do?"[647] Costello was hardly exaggerating, as the feminist approach has proved enigmatic

[645] Nietzsche 1907, p. 189
[646] In Coetzee 2016, p. 86
[647] Ibid, p. 65

to many male academics. It was, therefore, worth noting that the rise of reason was not incidentally related to oppression. Because animals shared the same bodily assignment as so many subaltern humans, they served as a kind of training foil to the pure exercise of rationality. Hence, against the messiness of the slaughterhouse, both literal and figurative, the surest proof of an austere mind was to keep an even temper.

This idea was captured well by Singer's utilitarian arguments, which, instead of contending with real suffering, blithely compared different units of pain, to weigh them all equally. Thus, he assured his daughter that, in the case of a housefire, he would save her instead of Max, the beloved family dog. "Normal humans have capacities that far exceed those of nonhuman animals," he explained, "and some of those capacities are morally significant in particular contexts."[648] This was hardly the stuff that Pulitzer's were made of, let alone avuncular intimacy. Quite the opposite, this way of formulating things seemed nearly to be an insult, one that left behind a moral remainder which his thinking could not dissolve. Yet, while Singer himself had observed this White Rabbit, he failed to follow it through, and, in this respect, he was late, late, late, to a party that started without him:

> You cannot write objectively about the experiments of the Nazi concentration camp 'doctors' on those they considered 'subhuman' without stirring up emotions; and the same is true of a description of some of the experiments performed today in laboratories in America, Britain, and elsewhere. The ultimate justification for opposition to both of these kinds of experiments, though, its not emotional. It is an appeal to basic moral principles which we all accept, and the application of these principles to the victims of both kinds of experiments is demanded by reason, not emotion.[649]

Singer was very intelligent, but, to borrow the words of Arendt, he was stupid in this respect: if the whole phenomenon of morality had its source in the search for prey, then to suspend the heart was precisely to punish the animals themselves. Indeed, that was the crux of the matter, in which Singer failed to plunge into the Sophoclean depths. This was demonstrated again, ironically, on the very

[648] Singer 2000, p. 41
[649] Ibid, p. 23

same day the Supreme Court convened to discuss the legacy of the Voting Rights Act. "If we were to compare attitudes about speciesism today with past racist attitudes," Singer said, "we would have to say that we are back in the days in which the slave trade was still legal, although under challenge by some enlightened voices."[650] After significant prodding by George Yancy, Singer conceded that racial equality had not yet been achieved, but there was at least widespread acceptance that such discrimination was wrong, he insisted, unlike with nonhuman animals. "If we think that simply being a member of the species homo sapiens justifies us in giving more weight to the interests of members of our own species than we give to members of other species," he asked, "what are we to say to the racists or sexists who make the same claim on behalf of their race or sex?"[651]

Singer's question to Yancy was the same one he made to Kittay, namely that he should supply, in advance, the kind of illumination that sometimes came through an excursion to someplace else. Hence, the insistence of Wittgenstein, that "the proposition determines reality to this extent, that one only needs to say 'yes' or 'no.'"[652] What was at stake in such encounters was not mere disagreement but the fact that, even within a single soul, a thousand blossoms bloomed. Each friend represented a new world, one not possible before the meeting, where an exposure to the loss of words impressed their sensitivity. Not for nothing, then, in her mediation on normalcy, Kittay invoked the words of Camus, for whom suicide was the only serious philosophial problem. "Rebellion alone," he said, "in the blind alley in which we live, allows us to hope for the future of which Nietzsche dreamed: 'Instead of the judge and the oppressor, the creator.'"[653]Ahead of such maladies as alcoholism or syphilis, Nietzsche identified the ascetic ideal as the surest sign of disease. Consequently, in a chapter entitled, "Redemption," Zarathustra refused to heal the cripples who blocked his path on a bridge. "It matters little to me that there is one arm here and one leg there," he said, "I see and have seen worse things, and divers things so hideous, that I should neither like to speak of all matters, nor even keep silent about some of them: namely, men who lack everything,

[650] Yancy & Singer 2015
[651] Ibid
[652] Wittgenstein 1922, p. 67
[653] Camus 2012, p. 181

except that they have too much of one thing."[654]

Within this allegory, Zarathustra speculated that history had become a butcherfield, whereupon the ruined fragments were found less in fact than in theory. As such, when the prophet was supplicated by a hunchback for his hump to be removed, Zarathustra replied that to do such a thing would come at the cost of his soul. The problem, then, was aptly summarized by Peter Schaffer's *Equus*, which entrenched the protagonist, Martin Dysart, in a psychological who-dunnit:

> The Normal is the good smile in a child's eyes- all right. It is also the dead stare in a million adults. It both sustains and kills- like a God. It is the Ordinary made beautiful; it is also the Average made lethal. The Normal is the indispensable, murderous God of Health, and I am his priest.[655]

Sesha will likely already be known to readers familiar with Kittay's work, especially her most recent book, *Learning From My Daughter*. In the title alone, Kittay acknowledged the enormous debt she felt, and how utterly transformative the experience of mothering had been to her thinking about her career. The idealized world of philosophers made little room for people like Sesha, which was why disability had long been in search of an ethics to call its own. Indeed, hardly a single school of normative ethics had not, from time to time, condoned the disposal of unwanted babies, albeit for different reasons. In ancient Greece, where infanticide was a father's right, both Plato and Aristotle defended the practice on eugenic grounds.[656] Jeremy Bentham, on the other hand, and more contemporarily, said the law should show mercy towards mothers who killed, on humanitarian grounds. Even Kant, notoriously, condoned infanticide, if only in cases where the baby was born outside of coverture. "A child that comes into the world apart from marriage is born outside the law (for the law is marriage) and therefore outside the protection of the law," he said. "It has, as it were, stolen into the commonwealth (like contraband merchandise), so that the commonwealth can ignore

[654] Nietzsche 2005, p. 120
[655] Schaffer 1973, p. 56
[656] In the ancient world, interestingly, Judaism was perhaps the most hospitable to people with disabilities, since it was expressly forbidden to mistreat or to otherwise exploit them. Islam made similar protections, as did early Christianity. However, despite the tenet to protect the sick and the suffering, religious leaders during the Reformation linked disease to punishment. Since, according to the Scriptures, God created man in his image, then deformity, being the work of the Devil, was undeserving of charity. The more lasting influence of Jesus, however, was the provider-receiver relationship, which endured into the modern world in the works of Bentham and Kant.

its existence (since it rightly should not have come to exist in this way), and can therefore also ignore its annihilation."[657]

Much of Kittay's book was a reflection on this struggle, in which learning to stretch her mind happened first by learning to stretch her heart. This problem, then, was parallel to the one for Zarathustra, who was over eager to spill his guts and be rid of the spirit of gravity. Hence, the Stillest Hour then said, "O, Zarathustra, your fruits are ripe but you are not yet ripe for your fruits. So, you must go back into solitude: for you still have to grow mellow."[658] This episode was yet another stage in Zarathustra's struggle to transform the eternal recurrence into something no longer abysmal. In order to play with Stillest Hour, she commanded enunciation: before the strippings of form and self-consciousness, what was it that broke the silence? As the dialogue continued, the Stillest Hour tried voicelessly to persuade Zarathustra to speak; but he was still too proud, and too ashamed, to let his answer be known. Thus, as he considered it, he began to shake, and to stamp his feet stubbornly, "No!" The demands of the Stillest Hour, however, were most unusual: to blaspheme the sacred by effing the ineffable, and thus, to whore the Madonna.[659] Indeed, it was in this way that she discovered that "that which we believed we valued, what we—I—thought was at the center of humanity, the capacity for thought, for reason, was not it, not it at all."[660]

Indeed, lovers often told stories together; "*We* loved that restaurant;" "*We* bought a house;" "*We(!)* got pregnant;" and so it appeared that the first-personal narrative somehow was also plural. This transition, namely from "me-stories" to "we-stories," was the antidote to the clemency which Nietzsche described as priestly. The "problem of speaking for others," as it has come to be known, was first coined by Linda Martin Alcoff in her seminal work on feminist research methods, in which

[657] Kant 2017, p. 118
[658] Nietzsche 2005, p. 128
[659] *Pun intended.* In most religious traditions, the only way to honor the awesomeness of God has been to maintain a fearful silence. One of my foremost preoccupations in the last several years, therefore, has been to reconceptualize divinity as something to be touched, and, in so doing, to reveal these two figures as one and the same woman. Not for nothing, la petite mort has been often described as "seeing the face of God." Hence, playing on the Narcissus myth, in which Liriope's name quite literally meant "the face of Narcissus," my endeavor has been to reconfigure sexuality as a kind of maternal worship, one that acknowledges not only women's suffering but, instead, shifts the priority to women's joy in the cycle of reproduction — whoring the Madonna, if you will.
[660] Kittay 2019, p. 5

she cautioned that, where disparities in power provided a rationale to speak on another's behalf, they also conditioned the social positions from that speaking took place. "Not only is location epistemically salient," she wrote, "but certain privileged locations are discursively dangerous."[661] In a society where power accrued to those with a monopoly on words, the battle of words, therefore, became a battle *with* words themselves. Hence, Kittay's preference for care, because, if the dialogue was, in principle, unfinalizable, then the method of inquiry needed to possess enough perceptual sensitivity to pursue its subject across an uneven epistemic terrain. "At our home, listening to the Emperor's Concerto," Kittay remarked of Sesha, "she gazes out the window enthralled, occasionally turning to us with a twinkle in her eye when she anticipates some really good parts."[662]

Operating from the premise that the self was relationally constituted and, for that reason, never fully formed, its ethico-political being born out in a continual process of becoming, care theory was abundantly hospitable to the relatedness of persons, and saw moral responsibility , not as something freely entered into, but as emerging from the accidents of fate. "It never occurred to me to . . . think of her in any other terms than my own beloved child," Kittay said. "She was my daughter. I was her mother. That was fundamental."[663] Indeed, much of the early work in care ethics took the mother-child relationship as *the* quintessential moral relationship, wherein one person was in a position of power vis-à-vis a vulnerable other. Therefore, with respect to Kittay, it seemed poetic that her treatise was one that arose from her relationship with her own daughter. However, being Sesha's mother meant more, for Kittay, than attending to her custodially; it meant learning to love without expectations, which enabled a kind of cathexis. Perhaps the single-most definitive theme of poetry, then, was how love transformed the mere fact of existence into a gratuitous gift; the beloved's idiosyncrasies became hidden treasures, which were troved with adoring attention, and whose happiness became a bounty, tended with careful hands. As such, from the outside looking in, it would have been easy to look at Sesha's life and to see a family condemned, "but even in the midst

[661] Alcoff 1991, p. 6-7
[662] "Learning to listen effectively to others," Fiona Robinson writes, "especially those who -- at that particular moment in time and space -- may be more vulnerable to the outcomes of dialogue than you are, requires the cultivation of moral attitudes of patience, attentiveness, and trust" (Quoted in Heathcote & Otto 2014).
[663] Kittay 2019, p. 5

of pain," Kittay said, "there's a terror we will lose this child."[664]

There were occasions when Sesha was sick or had seizures, and she could not tell her mother where it hurt. Yet, these failures of intersubjectivity became a positive force, wherein, paradoxically, nothing was made clear, but everything was communicated. "If I see someone writhing in pain without evident cause," Wittgenstein said, "I do not think to myself: all the same, his feelings are hidden from me."[665] Indeed, this was the connective tissue that fleshed the mind to the body, not merely as a geometrical assemblage, but as the bearer of a soul; for the interpretive ear could not abide nouns when applied to parts of the body. "If someone has a pain in his hand, then the hand does not say so," Wittgenstein said, "and one does not comfort the hand but the sufferer: one looks into his face."[666] Thus, in the mother's embrace of the child, or, even a horse in Turin, there was a sensual sort of knowingness in the movement towards *that pain there*. This was what accounted for the mystery, special feeling, of the first look between lovers, the prehistory of which seemed to always be narrated as a foregone conclusion. Indeed, when Sesha was four years old, and when the demands of her own career made a health aid necessary, Kittay described meeting a woman named Peggy, who became a surrogate mother. After an interview with Sesha, she initially turned down the job, fearing the kind of thick involvement that she knew it would make inevitable. At the behest of her agency, however, Peggy agreed to a weeklong trial, and by the time it was over, as so often happened, it was too late already to quit:

> I had been with Sesha in Central Park and I was working on some walking exercises that folks at Rusk [Rusk Institute at New York University Medical Center, Sesha's early intervention program] had assigned. I was working terribly hard trying to get Sesha to cooperate and do what I was supposed to get her to do. I sat her down in her stroller and sat down on a park bench. I realized I was simply exhausted from the effort. I thought, how am I going to do this? How can I possibly do this job, when I looked down at Sesha and saw her little head pushed back against her stroller moving first to one side and then to another. I couldn't figure out what she was doing. Until I traced what her eyes were fixed on. She had spotted a leaf falling, and she was

[664] Ibid, p. 53
[665] Wittgenstein 2009, p. CCXXXII
[666] Ibid, p. 227

> following its descent. I said "Thank you for being my teacher, Sesha. I see now. Not my way. Your way. Slowly."[667]

It was a dangerous business walking out her front door, and, because she did not look at her feet, Peggy danced it bravely; for it was only by surrendering herself to this "relationship with no name," as Kittay's son once called it, that Peggy learned how to travel by the beat of a different drummer.[668] In the alchemy of love, there was freedom *and* there was struggle, whereby Ivan, unable to square the two, was forced to the dead end of nihilism. Hence, for him, to die was a noble act, and a martyr's crown most glorious in the face of senseless violence. "Pain and suffering are always inevitable for a large intelligence and a deep heart," Dostoevsky said. "The really great men must, I think, have great sadness on earth."[669] The whole of the "Grand Inquisitor" was the soliloquy of a man who, unable to reconcile himself to God, therefore, hastened to return the ticket. Perhaps, that man had once been Dostoevsky, whose hosanna, he said, was not like a child's, but forged in the crucible of doubt. Finding nothing in Ivan's negations, he forged his own kind of faith, which was not the Christ who dwelt in the temple but the one who walked away. Hence, the significance of Alyosha's kiss; for where one brother told the story, the other one saw what it meant. "Without God," he said, "everything is permitted."[670]

This claim was much more ambiguous than it might have appeared, for if freedom was the gift of Christ, then the burden was the crown; without roses, men turned bread into stones. "But if

[667] Kittay 2013, p. 157

[668] That was, indeed, a reference to *The Hobbit*. In fact, I would go so far as to maintain that the entirety of the Lord of the Rings was an exercise in precisely this kind of artistry. For readers unfamiliar with Tolkien's universe, Middle Earth was born from the sounds of music, and each of its various deities inflected a different note. Therefore, while the dissonant note of Morgoth may have seemed evil, it was actually an integral part of the beauty of the whole. Indeed, that was precisely what made some of Tolkien's characters so inspiring; Bilbo was not a vicious man, and yet, because of his actions, his nephew was landed with an immensely heavy burden. His task, consequently, was to carry it to the end, which was only possible through the bonds of the fellowship. Unsurprisingly, Tolkien's books were inspired by his time spent in the trenches. "I wish the ring had never come to me. I wish none of this had happened," said Frodo. "So do all who live to see such times," said Gandalf, "but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us."

[669] Dostoevsky 2015, p. 311

[670] Dostoevsky 2002

this is true," Arendt said, "then it is secularization itself, and not the contents of Christian teachings, which constitutes the origin of revolution."[671] Just like Nietzsche, Arendt disputed the absolute justification and self-foundation of Enlightenment rationality, namely by unmasking the essentially substitutional quandary in which Christ was held over, not inadvertently, but in the spirit of service. As the signature event of modern politics, revolution marked that transitory phase wherefrom something new emerged. Indeed, it was the only possible successor to religion, not merely in the sense of the Church, but in the sense of ossification. "This ghost that runs after you, my brother, is more beautiful than you; why do you not give him your flesh and your bones?" the prophet asked. "Because you are afraid, and run to your neighbor."[672] Nietzsche associated *Zarathustra* with the joy in which he composed it, and in which were contained his most precious truths in a veiled or symbolic form. As such, the structure of the book itself was a threefold pedagogy; man's purpose stirred in his laughter, and revealed itself in his smile. Far from rejecting compassion, then, Nietzsche probed its depths, even to the bittersweet end, in which pity was the last sin. While he ran after the voluntary beggar, whose legs were longer than his, Zarathustra turned quickly and beheld his shadow, which was nearly knocked to the ground. "Who are you?" he demanded furiously. "What are you doing here? And why do you call yourself my shadow? I do not like you."[673]

As if by an apparition, the prophet was terrified, for the figure behind him was so thin, so haggard, so death-weary, that he seemed nearly like a corpse. Unbeknownst to Zarathustra, this follower had pursued with him the coldest climbs like a ghost. He, too, had overthrown boundaries, and unlearned the faith in words, yet the trial which consumed him was to find a home in a world which forever fled. "Your danger is no small one, you free spirit and wanderer! You have had a bad day," Zarathustra softened. "See to it that an even worse evening does not come to you! To restless ones such as you, even prison seems blessed in the end."[674] Not surprisingly, the shadow described himself as an Eternal Jew — except that he was neither Jewish nor eternal. On the contrary, he

671 Arendt 1990, p. 26
672 Nietzsche 2005, p. 53
673 Ibid, p. 238
674 Ibid

represented the repressed parts of the self, which, not unlike the spirit of gravity, were in need of affirmation. Therefore, in place of this prison of sleep, where the beggar chewed his bitter cud and renewed his anathemas, Zarathustra embraced the shadow, who was invited to join with the rest of his guests for an evening dance in the cave. "You poor rover, roamer, you weary butterfly" the prophet said tenderly, "Would you like repose and a home tonight?"[675] This was Nietzsche's personal sense of salvation, where, in each distressed cry, there was a petal of the self, which was waiting to be unfurled. Hence, the danger of Narcissus, whose reflective fascination became an obsessive need for physical conquest. This had nothing to do with vanity, however, but was rather a means of entering into the world through the doorway of an image. "Love does not begin and end the way we seem to think it does," as Baldwin said. "Love is a battle, love is a war; love is a growing up."[676]

Having finally gone there and back again, a few words remain to be said about dignity and domestication, which, to those without sufficient curiosity, can only be of a cursory interest. As to the former, perhaps it can be best described as a kind of relational aptitude, in which life itself is the condition of knowing, and error the condition of life. Therefore, in trying times, the artful souls have always been the dodgers, the ones, like Alice, eschewing trodden paths and setting out to give new interpretations to a classic text. "Beauty, no doubt, does not make revolutions," Camus said. "But a day will come when revolutions will have need of beauty."[677] Each life made its own revelation in its own way, and from all together, there grew up in the imagination, with more or less adequacy and completeness, the given character of an age, and this was the song which so often was sung through the medium of history's greatest writers. When they touched upon the world, it lit up with a new kind of vividness, wherein all at once, as if by magic, new heroes came into view. What disability offered to animal studies, then, were alternative ethical maps, namely for exposing the ruse of a sovereignty that cared naught but for itself. To see this, however, required a most unlikely translator; for who should know better about lions in wardrobes than the homosexual male? Indeed, according to Freud, how a boy identified with his mother determined his orientation, so that, out of

[675] Ibid, p. 237
[676] Baldwin 2021, p. 241
[677] Camus 2012, p. 276

fear of his father's punishment, he refused the castrated female. Thus it was for at least one man that a woman endured in the penhand; one must imagine Sisyphus not merely as happy but flaming.

In early 1945, as part of the post-war reconstruction effort, Russia demanded Romanian Germans be deported to labor camps. Fifty odd years later, Herta Müller met one of the victims of that decree; he was a poet named Oskar Pastior, and the pair worked jointly on a novel until his death in 2006. The German title, *Atemschaukel*, meant "breath swing," in reference to the mechanical motion of air moving through the body: "The sky lifted my eyes up, and the roll call pulled them down. Then my bones just hung inside me, with nothing to hold on to."[678] The book told the story of Leo Auberg, who was seventeen when the Nazis were defeated. Grappling with his homosexuality and trapped in a repressive environment, he initially, albeit, with a tragic naivety, looked forward to deportation. His queerness, however, was also a narrative vehicle, namely for the expression of something that defied all cultural divisions: desperation, hope, and the amoral drives birthed by a starving man's hunger. In that sense, Leo's narrative was not merely about one man, but about the existential torture felt by a people seized out of their own lives. Yet, what deserved special attention, and what was easily overlooked, was the little girl who had no notion of what a command was, nor a quota, nor a punishment. "By summer, she had stopped going to any barrack but ours," Leo said, "because she liked the cuckoo clock, although she didn't know how to tell time. She'd spend the night sitting under the light, arms crossed, waiting for the rubber worm to come out of his little door."[679]

Kati was not suited to prison labor because she had a cognitive disability, which made her the target of much cruelty, especially from the kapo. Indeed, on one occasion, for falling asleep at her sentry post, Tur Prikulitsch ordered Kati's braid to be shorn from her head. "That evening, Kati came into the mess hall with her cut-off braid and laid it on the table like a snake," recounted Leo. "She dunked the upper end in her soup, and held it to her bare head so it would take root."[680] Due to her disability, and perhaps mercifully, Kati was immunized from her own abasement. Yet, for Leo,

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[678] Müller 2012, p. 20
[679] Ibid, p. 92
[680] Ibid

that was precisely what made it so excruciating to watch: the kapo treated her humiliatingly even though it served no expediency to the purposes of the camp. Implicit in this scene, therefore, was a relational notion of dignity, wherein Leo, in his role as a witness, had a significant stake in Kati. In much the same way as Auden, who, in his poem, had captured the beauty of love's effusive ephemera, so, too, did Leo, in the synecdochic details, find the clues to society's ills. Kati had no tincture for camp life, which, while it made her vulnerable, also made her precious, at least to those who, through the powers of imagination, were able to see her true height; she represented something the prisoners needed in order to survive, a revelation which was entwined, for Leo, with the memories of his own fascist upbringing. Recalling the gramophone his father brought home in 1936, Leo remembered the Berlin Olympics, and the countries by whom they were boycotted. However, a number of nations, including the United States, had chosen to participate, and four gold medals had been awarded to African American men, much to Hitler's embarrassment. Hence, even in the form of the gramophone suitcase, there was some sort of synchronicity; for in the words of Leonard Cohen, "that's how the light gets in."

In addition to the games, a "gymnastic for cripples" was broadcast, which Leo's parents wanted him to attend in order to be more soldierly; the mere invocation of the term 'cripples' thus implicated his body as being out of compliance with the dictates of National Socialism. However, Leo, being highly perceptive, was inspired to disobedience, which involved skipping class when the children were made to practice military drills. "If you tore the thread off an enemy you had killed him," he recalled. "The person with the most threads was decorated as a hero, a blood-red rose hip serving as a medal."[681] To his befuddlement, Leo discovered that the more he resisted, the more strongly he felt himself crippled. Hence, Carroll's illustration of painting the roses, which suggested itself as an analogue to totalitarian politics; guilt, the affect overrun and striated by the Queen, was literally inscribed on the bodies of the indebted, and all in the name of good depth. Something more was needed, then, in order to break free, and that was the kind of transversive maneuver provided by the White Queen:

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[681] Ibid, p. 46

> "Consider what a great girl you are. Consider what a long way you've come to-day. Consider what o'clock it is. Consider anything, only don't cry!" Alice could not help laughing at this, even in the midst of her tears. "Can you keep from crying by considering things?" she asked. "That's the way it's done," the Queen said with great decision. "Nobody can do two things at once, you know. Let's consider your age to begin with — how old are you?" "I'm seven and a half, exactly." "You needn't say 'exactly,'" the Queen remarked. "I can believe it without that. Now I'll give you something to believe. I'm just one hundred and one, five months and a day." "I can't believe that!" said Alice. "Can't you?" the Queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes." Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said, "one can't believe impossible things." "I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast. There goes the shawl again! The brooch had come undone as she spoke, and a sudden gust of wind blew the Queen's shawl across a little brook."[682]

Unlike the architectural features, which often echoed an asylum, the outdoor spaces in Wonderland were freer from social constraints. This was not to say, however, that Carroll saw them as binary. On the contrary, he revealed the porosity between the two in the form of a funhouse hallway. As it was for Alice, then, so, too, it was for Leo, for whom the camp "stretched on and on, bigger and bigger, from my left temple to my right."[683] With its incessant wonderings-why, the human psyche was often confounded by life's endless saga of happenings. Yet, restored to the game at the surface, there was counterforce in learning to play, not against the rules but with them. In this way, Leo became exemplary of a morally dubious type, an unsettling hybrid of reason *and* madness, which Jünger described as anarchic.[684] "Little is changed when he strips off a uniform that he wore partly as fool's motley, partly as camouflage," Jünger explained. "It covers his spiritual freedom, which he will objectivate during such transitions. This distinguishes him from the anarchist, who, objectively

682 Carroll 1998, p. 99-100

683 Müller 2012, p. 282

684 A self-styled villain of German literature, Jünger was to the political right what Orwell was to the left: a kind of black, whose propensity for going against the grain was as annoying as it was fascinating. Thus, while he served the German military during the occupation of France, Jünger also facilitated the escape Jewish families. Deriving his philosophical outlook from Nietzsche, he was a deeply enigmatic character, who insisted that each individual had an anarchic core, albeit usually unknown to the one who carried it. Jünger identified the anarch as the figure best-suited to withstand the burgeoning totalitarianism of the postmodern world on account of their relationship to authority; having appropriated authority, not in retaliation against the mercurial powers of fate, but in light of them, the anarch remains sovereign.

unfree, starts raging until he is thrust into a more rigorous straitjacket."[685] Precisely because Kati was insensate to discipline, she also laid low its authority, and this was the axis around which Leo distinguished himself from Tur Prikulitsch. The greenest of herbage and the choicest of grass were at the control of this jackass. Thus, where the lion cub saw the way forward, the latter dug in his heels. "Tur Prikulitsch could order us around as he wished," decided Leo, "but he disgraced himself with his coarse treatment of Kati Sentry."[686]

Much like an overbearing father, Prikulitsch always seemed to be contriving new reasons to punish his children, but whichever appetites were whetted by his machinations, they were always and regrettably short-lived. Indeed, he was a sadistic little torturer, which, at once, made him more and less gruesome to consider than the big-dogs who employed him. Like Eichmann, he did not work for himself, but he issued the commands; and, again, like Eichmann, but, unlike the hounds, his crime was in thought itself. "I thought that you remained in the S.S. throughout the years of the War, despite your pangs of conscience, because you knew perfectly well that there was no possibility of getting out of the S.S.," said judge Raveh. "Now, I read your words here, and that must be interpreted as follows: 'I remained a member of the S.S. and the Party of my own free will." "Yes, well," said Eichmann, "I could not have done this even if I had wanted to."[687] Eichmann was not merely following orders — he was touching the hand of his God. His double-mask was a particular feature of the theater, in which the abject joy of complicity became all the more significant. Indeed, in a way, he was a perfect demonstration of one of Freud's favorite gags, wherein Louis XV wanted to test the wit of one of his courtiers. At the first opportunity, he commanded the gentleman to make a joke of which he, the king, should be the subject. Thus, the courtier made the clever reply, "The King is not a subject." With his appeal to non-sovereignty, ironically, Eichmann told on himself; if everyone was guilty, then so was no one. This was the omnipresent fact at the core of the state, and the potential site of an upward rupture at the faultline of politics. "We all commit our crimes," as Baldwin said. "The thing is to not lie about them -- to try to understand what you have

685 Jünger 1993, p. 114
686 Müller 2012, p. 93
687 Quoted in State of Israel 1993, p. 1831

done, why you have done it."[688]

For Baldwin, the paradigm of the closet was not only or merely a metaphor for privacy, on the one hand, or liberation on the other. It was also, and more complicatedly, the site of an illusory control, where many men struggled against being dressed down and, therefore, feminized. Hence, the paradox of denial, where the very thing that was disavowed was already implicitly known. "You are a woman with a man inside watching a woman," said Atwood. "You are your own voyeur."[689] When men assumed a submissive position, at least symbolically-speaking, the implied fluidity of gendered behavior betrayed an open secret. As such, the closet and its apertures as a homosexual discourse gave lie to the gaping self-deception of the human as *homo sapiens*. "Man himself is to the discerning one: the animal with red cheeks," Zarathustra said. "How hath that happened unto him? Is it not because he hath had to be ashamed too oft?"[690] The continuity between these thoughts was the continual paranoia that, within the self, the presence of something unseemly would be glimpsed. In this sense, the blush was physiological, because values were expressed in, and betrayed through, the body, which opened them for inspection; without the fantasy of exposure, shame had no currency. Hence, the return of the ejected thought was experienced, not as a source of insight, but as an assault on the unbridgeable difference which had been authorized by the theoretical as-if. "The bread court does not deliberate, it punishes," Leo said. "It knows no mitigation, it needs no legal code. It is a law unto itself, because the hunger angel is also a thief who steals the brain."[691]

If memory was a mnemonic device and the correlate of inscription, then the fleshly discourse between real bodies exposed its psychical imprint. Indeed, this was something that Leo had learned when he discovered a newborn kitten, blind and very weak, hidden in his family's washroom. "I picked it up and stroked its belly. It hissed and bit my little finger and wouldn't let go," he said. "I saw blood. I squeezed back with my thumb and index finger. My heart was pounding, like

[688] Baldwin 2013, p. 79
[689] Atwood 1993, p. 392
[690] Nietzsche 2005, p. 75
[691] Müller 2012, p. 103-104

after a fight. Because it died, the kitten caught me in the act of killing."[692] This memory haunted Leo, not only because his compassion was tested, but, worse, because it had failed. These, then, were the wages of an edible complex, which, when confronted honestly, exposed a colonial archive: it was the pedagogy of prey animals, handed down for generations as a matter of survival. Considered in this light, Arendt's response to Baldwin was all the more striking, for where the former equated the public and table, the latter just couldn't get served.[693] "It demands great spiritual resilience," he said, "not to hate the hater whose foot is on your neck, and an even greater miracle of perception and charity not to teach your child to hate. The Negro boys and girls who are facing mobs today come out of a long line of improbable aristocrats—the only genuine aristocrats this country has produced."[694]

As a hostile environment, American life had an affective dimension, which, for Baldwin, made anything so uncomplicated as pure hatred impossible to maintain. It was here, however, that he and Arendt were of a shared mind. "The self-deceiver loses all contact with not only his audience but the real world," she said, "which will catch up to him, because he can remove his mind from it, but not his body."[695] For both of these writers, the illusion of immortality was just that: an all-too-human evasion of death and its irremediable presence. So, too, then, for Leo, for whom time

[692] Ibid, p. 71

[693] The idea here was that Arendt and Baldwin had both overlapping and different conceptions of the public/private relation, which, for all their similarities, stymied their communication. For Arendt, the public was the place where individuals emerged out of the private sphere to disclose their identities through action. For Baldwin, however, the identities had already been assigned by the time a man got to the table, as evidenced by his experience at the American Diner. To my mind, both of these authors were right in the sense that, as Baldwin said, it was sometimes necessary to "force the world to deal with you." This was itself a kind of disclosive action, but it happened through an already established framework of identities, with all of the normative implications that came with it. Indeed, there was an endless traffic between the public and private spheres, wherein the two retroacted upon one another. After all, were it not for the oft-neglected work of women and domestic servants, there would be no meal to sit down to. Hence, there were little publics and counterpublics happening everywhere, not unlike belly hooks' concept of a constellatory system: all of these things made up the whole nexus of societal relationships. However, Arendt was surely correct to insist upon the maintenance of some kind of privacy — not the antiquated sort which kept women barefoot and pregnant in their kitchens, but as a place of reprieve from the vision of others, which was essential for anything new to gestate and emerge into the shared world. Incidentally, this view squares up nicely with the two competing views on animal dignity that I have found to be most compelling, namely Elizabeth Anderson's view, wherein dignity means making animals fit for society, and Lori Gruen's view, wherein dignity meant making society fit for animals and their potentially disagreeable wildness. The problem with these views, to my mind, is that each one needs what the other lacks: the division between domestic and wilderness spaces, like the division between public and private, is porous, and any adequate account of dignity must account for that fact.

[694] Baldwin 2021, p. 384

[695] Arendt 1972, p. 36

contracted to its shortest possible unit when his rage cut him off at the neck. The violence, while unintentional, was unshakeable in its intimacy, and when he approached it with a fateful trembling, it started to look like motherhood. "Sometimes, things acquire a tenderness," he said, "a monstrous tenderness we don't expect from them."[696] Unbeknownst to Leo, he had stumbled upon the central dilemma in making knowledge instinctive, which was namely how to retain the object without losing its vitality — mum's the word. Indeed, for Nietzsche, philosophy was maternal precisely because children were such a complicated kind of other; at once alien and materially dependent, to become a mother, in the fullest sense, was to fall in love with a stranger. Yet, the foremost issue, to Nietzsche's mind, was not merely biological, but rather the way in which intimate labor created forms of boundedness. After all, even Freud had hired a wet nurse, and to his children, her milk was unique, notwithstanding the fact of the contract. "Once you start to squeeze," said Leo, "there is no going back."[697]

Observing the etymological similarities between the words 'kind' and 'kindred,' Donna Haraway said that care itself was a form of species-being Hence, her use of the term 'noninnocence,' to describe the obligate mutualisms that arose where the wires were crossed. "If you have a kin, a kin has you," she explained. "It reaches into the past, it reaches into the future. It's generational. Kinship has to loop through time."[698] This symbolism of belonging, this familial resemblance, was affirmed and created through the invitation to share in a common world. A positive power, therefore, resided with signs in the sense of comportment, and in laughter as a knotting point between the heart and the mind. "We all held our breath," recounted Leo, "and Tur let out a hollow laugh like a big turkey-cock. Three times, Kati Sentry managed to polish his shoes and became a dove. After that, she was no longer allowed at roll call."[699] Many urbanites would be surprised to learn that pigeons were among the first domesticated animals. In the fifth Egyptian dynasty, they were part of a messenger system, but their emergency use continued well into the twentieth century, when they

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696 Müller 2012, p. 70
697 Ibid, p. 71
698 "On Staying With Trouble" 2025
699 Müller 2012, p. 94

guided missiles towards German U-boats for the Allied powers. Indeed, pigeons proved so integral to the war effort that they were awarded thirty-two of Britain's Dickens Medals for heroism. Sadly, however, their veneration faded with advancements in technology, and under their new moniker as "pests," architects worked tirelessly to eradicate pigeons from the very habitats where they and humans co-evolved — a feat which, despite their ostensible stupidity, required a great deal of craftiness.[700] "She didn't have to invent illusions, because her mind wasn't in the camp to begin with," Leo said. The way she behaved didn't conform to camp regulations, but it did fit the circumstances. There was something elemental about her that we envied. Even the hunger angel was baffled when faced with her instincts."[701]

Already, here, the smile was a subtle sentence, the deciphering of which, being etched with customs, was a question of exegesis. Yet, in the case of Tur Prikulitsch, all it was was a kind of machinism; it abided the social expectations, but without any genuine nurturance. Quite the opposite, it was a cold laughter, one that barely concealed his contempt for the bird-brained, over whom he felt superior. "The trouble with a secret life," Baldwin observed, "is that it is very frequently a secret from the person who lives it and not at all a secret for the people he encounters."[702] This was the import of morality as a sign-language of the affects, namely that the paranoid mind, being the most ascetic, demanded the least from its object. Indeed, it was characterized by a distinctly Oedipal repetitiveness and regularity, in which no sooner were abject possibilities raised than they were subjected to a methodical uprooting. The temporal progress and regress of paranoia, therefore, were potentially infinite, because what mattered mostly was that there were no surprises, and nothing new to discover. Hence, from this anticipatory framework, it would be nigh impossible to consider, let alone believe, another competing and perhaps more venerable idea. "Her hair grew back so sparse that you saw more lice bites than hair," Leo said. "But that didn't stop her from falling asleep on duty, until Tur Prikulitsch finally understood that you can put any

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[700] The final stake being a baseless article, in the *New York Times*, in which pigeons were linked to two human deaths in 1963.
[701] Müller 2012, p. 94
[702] Baldwin 2013, p. 199

human being to the drill, no matter how wretched, but you can't bend a feeble mind to your will."[703]

Whether or not they endorsed such ugly behaviors, what tended to mark the paranoid impulse of so many academics in these pages was that their ideas were nonetheless structured *as if* they behaved that way. Where, then, does this project leave the issue of domestication, in particular? Hopefully, in a better position to rethink history *as if* other animals mattered, not merely with respect to our convenience but, perhaps, and even more importantly, in spite of it. With enough room to breathe, the reparatively positioned author begins to see that the future is being born into a present which, at any rate, we are not at liberty to escape, and to entertain the painful and yet profoundly relieving thought that the past might have happened differently. As such, while the two-fold dimensions of event and experience never perfectly coalesce, there is also a heightened awareness that, at any moment, one might be put to the test; because love is not given to us in the fixity of its object but in the heart's Sisyphean movement towards some vast unfolding of places, most as of yet unknown, but which answer to the same name. Most importantly, therefore, I hope that we can afford to waste time, to sit with the small things and notice the ways they show forth an un-at-home presence. Mayhaps by a subtle wag of the tail, or an inquisitive tilt of the ears, we, too, can build a new Jerusalem through a leap of imagination. "I have always loved the desert," explained the pilot. "One sits down on a desert sand dune, sees nothing, hears nothing. Yet one can feel a silent radiation . . ." "What makes the desert so beautiful," the little prince interrupted, "is that it hides a well, somewhere."[704]

703 Müller 2012, p. 93
704 Saint-Exupéry 1995, p. 89

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