ABSTRACT

This study proceeds according to seven meditations on being in the mood for suicide as being the mood of love. The first meditation is one of doctoral suicide as a meditation toward no doctoral future. The second meditation is one of authorial suicide within the field of philosophy of education that overcomes the fantasy of a better tomorrow toward an authorial path that leads nowhere at all. The third meditation is one of syntactical suicide as the word mapped and not mapped on to life and death. The fourth meditation is one of suicide according to the mood of method and the method of mood. The fifth meditation studies mood and method according to the mod of Anglo-Saxon literature as the interpenetration of love and care, sadness and joy, courage and violence, hospitality and murderousness. The sixth and penultimate meditation prepares endings as a study of metaphormorphosis: the transforming of being as the morphing of words. The seventh meditation means the morphing of being by way of mod as the transformation of a state of total war into one of infinite love that simply transforms itself into nothing at all.

Throughout the study, pandemonium — as the clamor of voices within and all around — will service as pedagogue and educator in the sense of leading into the fundamental question of life and death. Accordingly, pandemonium leads our meditations into the dangerous maybe as direction and misdirection, spiralization and interpenetration, alternate beginnings and, finally, a dead end.
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PREMEDITATIONS

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast made this journey to die for me with love unutterable and I have so many times unworthily abandoned Thee. But now I love Thee with my whole heart and because I love Thee I repent sincerely for I have offended Thee. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany thee on this journey. Though goest to die for love of me. I wish also, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of Thee. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to Thee.

—”Preparatory Prayer,” The Stations of the Cross According to the Method of St. Alphonsus Liguori

Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning?

—Isaiah 40:21
Blessed is the man who meditates on the word both day and night, says the Book of Psalms. Blessed is the man who prepares by praying, adds St. Alphonsus Liguori. We take them to heart and begin by praying upon ourselves. We proceed by meditating on being in the mood for suicide as being in the mood of love. Our thesis is pandemonium as anti-thesis as diathesis. Pandemonium is neither educational nor philosophical nor doctoral. Pandemonium is monstrous. Pandemonium is a monster deserving of fire.

We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of Descartes who offers his Meditatioes de prima philosophia in qua Dei existentia et animae immortalitas demonstratur — Meditations on first philosophy in which the existence of God and the eternal spirit are shown. Descartes meditates in order to destroy what needs destroying and to establish what needs establishing. “I needed — just once in my life — to demolish everything completely and start again from the foundations,” he explains.¹

We must, however, demolish meditation as demonstration as proof positive. Our meditations will demonstrate pandemonium as anti-proof, neither arguable nor defensible. We proceed in the manner of Descartes, who writes in his Meditations on First Philosophy, “Thus my design is not here to teach the Method which everyone should follow … but only to show in what manner I have endeavored to conduct my own.” Readers are invited, he continues, simply to regard the work “as a history, or, if you prefer it, a fable in which amongst certain things which may be imitated, there are possibly others also which it would not be right to follow …”² In this spirit, pandemonium will be absolutely fabulous in the strictest sense.

We proceed in the anti-manner of education, as educational theory, since virtually all educational theory, from Plato to the present day, shares an abiding concern for a better

¹ René Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, I, 66.
² René Descartes, Discourse on Method, I, 5.
tomorrow. Educational theory models and moves us out of a darkened past and the desperate present and toward the light of a new day. Pandemonium is anti-educational anti-theory that calls tomorrow into question. To do otherwise is to answer the question of suicide even before we truly ask it.

We proceed in the anti-manner of Descartes who demonstrates, in *The Passions of the Soul*, that passions are not, in truth, of the soul but are instead merely for or against the thinking soul. Descartes tell us that the utility of all the passions consists only in their strengthening thoughts which it is good that they should preserve and which could otherwise easily be effaced from it, and causing them to endure in the soul. So too all the evil they can cause consists either in their strengthening and preserving those thoughts more than necessary or in their strengthening and preserving others it is not good to dwell upon.  

Descartes instructs that we “separate within us the movements of blood and spirits from the thoughts to which they are usually joined.” Passions fortify or undermine the soul such that the soul is either master or servant to the very same. Accordingly, the task of philosophy is one of self-mastery by way of rationality in truth and being. We will, by contrast, undertake an anti-philosophy by mixing blood and spirit as a philosophy of mood.

We enter into a philosophy of mood by way of mystical meditation in the anti-manner of Descartes, whose *Meditations* could not be further from it. By his meditations, Descartes arrives at proof positive of Man and God by rooting out “falsity and error” and by arriving and a “clear and distinct understanding” so that truth is clearly known to him. Descartes declares, “Nor have I only learned today what I should avoid in order that I may not err, but also how I should act in

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4 Ibid., Article 211, 133.
order to arrive at a knowledge of the truth; for without doubt I shall arrive at this end if I devote my attention sufficiently to those things which I perfectly understand…” This truth in knowledge, he tells us, is “engraved deeply … so that I could never forget it.” The truth of method as the method toward truth ushers Descartes into the “greatest and principal perfection of man” as knowledge and being.\(^5\)

Unlike philosophy, which aspires to rigor and veracity and consistency, mood entails vagary and intransigence. Moods are fleeting while philosophical understanding is meant to endure. When we enter a philosophy of mood as a mystical endeavor we cross into a territory that one commentator calls “delusional looniness.”\(^6\) For the philosophical mind, mystics conjure up images of primitiveness and naiveté and righteous uncriticality and charlatanism. In place of looniness, however, we undertake mystics according loomings. Recall that Moby Dick begins as a suicidal endeavor.

Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people’s hats off — then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship.\(^7\)

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\(^7\) Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, “Loomings” (I), 11.
From the beginning, Ishmael proceeds under the sign of “Loomings” (chapter 1). In *The Sea-Mans Grammar and Dictionary* (1627), Captain John Smith explains that “The looming of a ship is her prospectiue, that is, as she doth shew great or little.” What looms is seen and unseen and known partly by what is unknown and unknown in light of what is known. What is unknown gives fuller shape to what is known even as what is known lacks for what is not known. A ship looms. A white whale looms. Suicide looms. Suicide is here and yon though she doth show only great or a little, and never all. In this respect, we proceed in the anti-manner Durkheim, who rejects what looms precisely because it looms. For the etiology of suicide — the positive science of causes — becomes known according to what is “objective enough to be recognized by all honest observers.” But suicide is also a question of intent and motive — factors “too intimate to be more than approximately interpreted by another.” “It even escapes self-observation,” Durkheim declares. What looms as suicide, according to Durkheim, cannot therefore be considered suicide since “this would define suicide by a characteristic which, whatever its interest and significance, would at least suffer from not being easily recognizable since it is not easily observed.” The causality of suicide is only a question of what doth shew itself — namely, collective affection. “Each society is predisposed to contribute a definite quota of voluntary deaths,” he concludes, and it is this accounting of human beans that Durkheim concerns himself with. By contrast, mystical meditation means loomings as we take quietly to ship.

We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of Descartes, who supposes a monster at work — “an evil and deceitful genius” (*genium malignum*, an evil spirit) — and who makes himself monstrous in reply. “I shall consider myself as having no hand, no eyes, no flesh, no

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9 Emile Durkheim, *Suicide*, 42–43.
10 Ibid., 51.
blood …,” he declares. From there he arrives at a clear and distinct understanding of what he truly is — pure being as pure thought, which Descartes calls “I.” By contrast, we begin and end as a monster brimming of hands and eyes and flesh and blood.

What is monster? Pure monster is pure impurity. In *Monsters and Marvels* (1573), the royal surgeon Ambroise Paré establishes that a monster exists outside and against Nature. Pure monster is purely unnatural as defiance and as an attack on what is pure and natural. How is a monster known? A monster does not know itself as such. Only the pure may know pure impurity or the purely impure. How so? By shock and horror. Monsters do not exist as mere curiosities viewed under glass. They pollute the pure. They defile and consume it. They make Nature monstrous too. The pure are shocked and horrified. This is how monsters become known.

Monsters may remain hidden and concealed. But these are not monsters since they do not shock or horrify. Paré observes that it is “not good that monsters live among us.” By “us” he must mean *we* who are Natural and pure. By “among” he must mean *against* us. By “live” he must mean *destroy*. Accordingly, monsters must not live among us since this would be its own misfortune. They must remain at a distance. Known but not among us. Shocking without the destructiveness. In this way monsters may become good monsters. But how may a monster truly be good?

Paré notes that monsters are “usually signs of some forthcoming misfortune.” What does this mean? We go to the tragedies of Seneca in order to go to “monster” as the word itself. Aeschylus gave us *ekplexis teratodes* to horrify our wits. Seneca gives us *monstra*, born of three sisters — *monster*, which shows (*monstrare*) itself as a *sign* and warning (*monere*) from the gods.

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11 Descartes, *Meditations*, I, 70.
13 Ibid., 9.
14 Ibid., 3.
so that we are moved (movere) from understanding into action.\textsuperscript{15} Good monsters do not merely show themselves by way of shock and horror. They are set “before the eyes” and call for “acts of divination in order to discover the truth …”\textsuperscript{16} Cicero assures that “signs do not often deceive the person who observes them properly”\textsuperscript{17} How then to observe monsters properly? How to read a monster well so it becomes good?

A bad monster is easy to read. It shows itself pure and simple by shock and horror. Good monsters, by contrast, are not so simple to read. Seneca’s Tiresias describes Oedipus as \textit{implicitum malum magisque monstrum Sphinge perplexum sua} — “an entangled evil, a monstrosity more enigmatic than his Sphinx.”\textsuperscript{18} A good monster shows itself in its concealment. It speaks a “mysterious language calling for decipherment.”\textsuperscript{19} How may a monster show itself so as to speak? A monster is not discursive — a \textit{magister ludi} or a \textit{rhetor} that lectures upon itself. A monster is a kataleptic impression — a \textit{phantasiai} that speaks the truth.\textsuperscript{20} A monster is a picture and a face and a presence. A monster is a countenance that puzzles by its presence. A monster truly is but what does it truly mean? A monster shows itself or is shown as a sign and the signal to interpret. Sometimes the monster is read for what else it says. This is called reading the monster. Sometimes the monster prompts a reading of entrails or stars or the dead. This is called a monster-prompted reading. Sometimes the sign of the sign is monstrous or the sign of the sign of the sign is monstrous. Sometimes a monstrous sign moves us to read another monstrous sign in order truly to show the true monster. A plague is upon Thebes and Tiresias reads the entrails

\textsuperscript{15} Gregory A. Staley, \textit{Seneca and Idea of Tragedy}, 96.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 104–106.
\textsuperscript{17} Cicero, \textit{De Divinatione} in Staley, \textit{Seneca}, 109.
\textsuperscript{18} Seneca, \textit{Oedipus} III 641, in \textit{Tragedies II}.
\textsuperscript{19} Carlin Barton, cited in Staley, \textit{Seneca}, 111.
\textsuperscript{20} Staley, \textit{Seneca}, 120.
of a heifer to discover the cause of it. The blood is black. The organs are rearranged. “The heart is diseased and wasted throughout and deeply hidden.”  

“...The whole order is changed and nothing lies in its proper place. Everything is turned around.” He reads fire but the flame itself disobey: “But oh! The combative flame is separating into two halves, the embers of a single ritual dividing in hostility.” Only by reading heart and fire may the plague be read in order to read Oedipus.

If monsters are to be read they must be written. The gods write in language that conceals and reveals monsters as signs and signs as monsters. Our part is to dissect and dismember with feasting eyes to learn the truth embodied within. As writing, monsters are words that paint pictures beyond what mere words can say or mean. How is this possible? We may learn from Kafka, who puts our man to the harrow.

Enlightenment comes to the most dull-witted. It begins around the eyes. From there it radiates. Nothing more happens than that the man begins to understand the inscription. He purses his mouth as if he were listening. You see how difficult it is to decipher the script with one’s eyes but our man deciphers it with his wounds.

If gods write monsters then Seneca writes gods who write monsters in which case Seneca writes monsters to be read. If Seneca writes stories of gods writing monsters we read the very same. But in these stories of gods and monsters what truth and meaning for us? Seneca writes Tiresias who reads Oedipus so that Oedipus may read himself so that we might read Tiresias reading Oedipus so that we might read Oedipus so that we might read ourselves. Why? Because we are monstrous. We are monsters too. We turn to Seneca’s Hercules Furens. In a mad rage

21 Seneca, Oedipus III 357, in Tragedies II, 49.
22 Ibid., 365.
23 Ibid., 320.
24 Franz Kafka, “In the Penal Colony,” in Complete Stories, 150.
Hercules murders his own children. He bashes their heads and splatters their brains. His wife cries out, “This is your son who mirrors your face and bearing.” Finally Hercules opens his eyes to see himself, _Iam nudum nihi monstrum impium saevumque et immite ac ferum oberrat_ — “An unnatural monster, savage merciless untamed, has long been ranging before me.” “Where shall I hide myself?” he cries. “In what land may I find oblivion?”

Seneca shows us Hercules as he sees himself as a sign and signal to act upon himself. Hercules shows himself to us as the signal to see and read and be moved by ourselves. Monsters are mirrors that reflect who we are in case we don’t know. Monsters invite us to please put down our hands because we see you.

If a monster is born of three sisters, monsters are begotten by two fathers. Thaeatetus is beset with wonder to know what things means. Socrates praises him and declares, “For this is an experience which is characteristic of a philosopher this wondering: this is where philosophy begins and nowhere else.” Aristotle traces philosophy to mythology, which begins in wonder, “For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize.” “The love of myth, he tells us, “is in a sense a love of Wisdom for the myth is composed of wonders.”

For the Greeks the state of wonder is a changed state as an endeavor of imagination and thinking. Wonder is a state of sublime puzzlement that moves us from blindness to enlightenment. In this way wonder is like Hermes, the messenger and wayfinder, as we deliver ourselves to ourselves as the embodiment of truth. For Seneca a monster begets terrified puzzlement that calls for deciphering. In the face of a monster most animals will fight or flee.

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26 Ibid., 1322, 156/157
27 Plato, _Theaetetus_ 155d, in _Complete Works_.
28 Aristotle, _Metaphysics_ 982b, in _Basic Works_.

For Seneca a monster moves us to reflect and study ourselves. Now monsters are the messengers of truth that show us the way — the way of the monster as it moves for and against itself.

As Hercules Furens tells us, monsters are often to be found concealing themselves as heroes. Was not St. Augustine, for instance, a monster who sent his beloved away\(^\text{29}\) and the Christian philosopher who reflected on the very same as a way of redemption. He recalls the Book of Isaiah — “Run, I will carry you, I will see you through to the end …” (46:4) — and he is comforted. And was not Augustine a pear thieving mini-monster and the Christian philosopher who meditated on the very same? “I loved the self-destruction,” he declares. “I became to myself a region of destitution,” he laments.\(^\text{30}\)

In his own Confessions, Rousseau wishes to “keep myself continually before my eyes.” To show without reserve “all the errors of my heart” and “all the secret corners of my life.”\(^\text{31}\) To unconceal all his capital crimes, such as petty jealousy, as well as misdemeanors like child abandonment. “The real object of my Confessions is to contribute to an accurate knowledge of my inner being in all the different situations of my life. What I have promised to relate is the history of my soul.”\(^\text{32}\) In Reveries of a Solitary Walker, Rousseau returns to the question of himself. In the eyes of man he is “a monster, a poisoner, an assassin.”\(^\text{33}\) He had lost sight of himself as well. “Wrenched somehow out of the natural order I have been plunged into an incomprehensible chaos where I can make nothing out, and the more I think about my present situation the less I can understand what has become of me.”\(^\text{34}\) Once again he is moved to self-

\(^{29}\) Augustine, Confessions 4.25, trans. Henry Chadwick.
\(^{30}\) Ibid., 2.29 and 2.34.
\(^{31}\) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Confessions, 60.
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 283.
\(^{33}\) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Reveries of a Solitary Walker, 27.
\(^{34}\) Ibid.
study, “Let me give myself over entirely to the pleasure of conversing with my soul,” he declares.  

Augustine implores us to “see me as I am and do not praise me for more than I am” and to “believe nothing else about me than my own testimony” and to “observe what I have been in myself and through myself.” But now we are faced with our own puzzlement about confessional philosophy as teaching and learning about the history of the soul. Are Augustine and Rousseau writing about their own monsters or are they monsters writing? Do the Confessions and Reveries show us monsters within or are they themselves monstrous signs to be studied and interpreted beyond what the monster truly wishes to show? Is Augustine or Rousseau purity that knows the impure within or is he always an entanglement of evil and a monster unto himself more enigmatic than the Sphinx? Now we must read the writing of writing monsters that read themselves as readers of monsters so that we may read ourselves as the writings of the monsters who read writing monsters that may or may not truly read or write themselves. We call this basic monster literacy. How to proceed?

Recall Ishmael’s treatise, “Of the Monstrous Pictures of Whales,” which entails its own kind of loomings, since whales are nothing if not “sea-monsters” and “great Leviathans.” What then is a monstrous picture of a monster since a picture of a monster would surely be monstrous? Pictures of whales abound, says Ishmael. But “such pictures of the whale are all wrong” — nothing more than “pictorial delusions” even among “scientific delineations.” “Most of the scientific drawings have been taken from the stranded fish,” he continues, “and these are about

35 Ibid., 32.
37 Herman Melville, Moby Dick (LV), 247–251.
as correct as a drawing of a wrecked ship, with broken back, would correctly represent the noble animal itself in all its undashed pride of hull and spars."

A picture of a whale that no longer looms is a picture made monstrous. How does one make monstrous pictures of whales? By drawing them from the perspective of dry land. Ishmael cites one example, in a *Natural History of Whales*, in which the author “gives what he calls a picture of a Sperm Whale.” But the picture of the “Sperm Whale is not a Sperm Whale,” he declares, “but a squash” — a gourd that grows above ground and that never looms.

The reason one pictures a gourd and not a whale is because the renderer “never had the benefit of a whaling voyage (such men seldom have) …” Ishmael concludes that “the great Leviathan is that one creature in the world which must remain unpainted to the last.” “So there is no earthly way of finding out precisely what the whale really looks like.”

This is true and not true. He continues, “And the only mode in which you can derive even a tolerable idea of his living contour, is by going a whaling yourself; but by so doing, you run no small risk of being eternally stove and sunk by him.” How to arrive at anything more than a tolerable picture, a loomless picture of a monster that no longer looms? Ahab rages, “Sink all coffins and all hearse to one common pool! and since neither can be mine, let me then tow to pieces, while still chasing thee, though tied to thee, thou damned whale! THUS, I give up the spear!”

The harpoon was darted; the stricken whale flew forward; with igniting velocity the line ran through the grooves — ran foul. Ahab stooped to clear it; he did clear it; but the flying turn caught him round the neck, and voicelessly as Turkish mutes bowstring their victim, he was shot out of the boat, ere the crew knew he was gone. Next instant, the
heavy eye-splice in the rope’s final end flew out of the stark-empty tub, knocked down an
oarsman, and smiting the sea, disappeared in its depths.\textsuperscript{38}

What ceases to loom entail \textit{agnosia} as darkness and unknowing or seeing in complete
darkness. We turn to the progenitor of Christian mysticism and his \textit{Mystical Theology}. In “Letter
1,” Pseudo-Dionysius writes of God, “His transcendent darkness remains hidden from all light
and conceals from all knowledge.”\textsuperscript{39} In “Letter 5,” he writes, “The divine darkness is that
‘unapproachable light’ where God is said to live. And if it is invisible because of a
superabundant clarity, if it cannot be approached because of the outpouring of its transcendent
gift of light, yet it is here that is found everyone worthy to know God and to look upon him.”\textsuperscript{40} In
truth, then, God is a monster in that God looms according to darkness more than light.

We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of mystics. The author of \textit{The Cloud of
Unknowing} writes, “For when I say ‘darkness’ I mean an absence of knowing in the sense that
everything you do not know or have forgotten is dark to you because you cannot see it with your
mind’s eye. And for this reason it is not called a cloud in the air but a cloud of unknowing that is
between you and God.”\textsuperscript{41} The cloud is not an object for understanding, but is a state of being or
not being as unknowing. John of the Cross enters the \textit{Dark Night of the Soul} (1619) as a double
descent, first as the senses are purged and darkened by the spirit, and then as the spirit is stripped
of itself “and made ready for the union of love with God.”\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., “The Chase — The Third Day” (CXXXV), 519–520.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., “Letter 5,” 263–265.
\textsuperscript{41} A. C. Spearing trans., \textit{Cloud of Unknowing}, 26.
\textsuperscript{42} John of the Cross, \textit{Dark Night of the Soul}, 20.
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We return to Pseudo-Dionysis to discover the birthplace of mystical darkness even beyond darkness as we know it. In *The Mystical Theology*, Pseudo-Dionysis writes of supreme Being

> It is not soul or mind, nor does it possess imagination, conviction, speech, or understanding. It cannot be spoke of and it cannot be grasped by understanding. It is not number or order, greatness or smallness, equality or inequality, similarity or dissimilarity. It is not immovable, moving, or at rest. It has not power, it is not power, nor is it light. It does not live nor is it life. It is not substance, nor is it eternity or time. It cannot be grasped by the understanding since it is neither knowledge nor truth. It is not kingship. It is not wisdom. It is neither one nor oneness, divinity nor goodness. Nor is it a spirit, in the sense in which we understand the term. It is not sonship or fatherhood and it is nothing known to us or to any other being. It falls neither within the predicate of nonbeing nor of being. Existing beings do not know it as it actually is and it does not know them as they are. There is no speaking of it, nor name nor knowledge of it. Darkness and light, error and truth — it is none of these. It is beyond assertion and denial.

We make assertions and denials of what is next to it, but it is both beyond every assertion, being the perfect and unique cause of all things, and, by virtue of its preeminently simple and absolute nature, free of every limitation, beyond every limitation; it is also beyond denial.43

Like the Supreme Being, suicide is not an object for understanding by way of a concept of the mind. It is understanding by way of complete darkness as a state of being or not being. We are not, however, expectant that any leap should end in union with God.

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Now we face the basic problem of literacy as writing. In *Discourse*, Descartes appears to himself fully and in truth as pure-thinking-being. “From that I knew that I was a substance the whole essence or nature of which is to think …”\(^{44}\) And in arriving at himself, Descartes puts himself on display by way of words for all to see. By contrast, Ahab disappears beneath the depths, while Ishmael can only bear witness from the surface of events. And if, for Ahab, the whale finally no longer looms, and if he reaches illumination in darkness — if he now truly fathoms — he is bounded by silence, caught round the neck and voiceless. As a study of the white whale, then, the whole of *Moby Dick* is a demonstration of silence amid a superabundant outpouring of words. Long before Wittgenstein, Augustine wrote, “if that is ineffable which cannot be spoken, then that is not ineffable which can be called ineffable. This contradiction is to be passed over in silence rather than resolved verbally” — *Quae pugna verborum silentio cavenda potius quam voce pacanda est*.\(^{45}\)

Suicide being a white whale, readers and writers on suicide most often want to raise the body above the water level by way of scientific delineations. One example is David Lester’s *Katie’s Diary*. Katie was a young college student who hanged herself in her dorm room after years of struggle with family, friendship, romance, body image, and failed aspirations. During her struggles she compiled a 200-page diary in five books. Lester’s volume first presents Katie’s reading and writing of her own life in searing clarity and, it would seem, as tragic distortion. The second part of the volume consists of readings of the diary and of Katie by others. The “Forward” captures the aim of the volume.

It is the rare document that captures the conflict and complexity of an individual’s stream of consciousness, as it alternately flows, is impeded, and torrentially cascades onward

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\(^{44}\) Descartes, *Discourse*, Part IV, 23.
toward an end that can be envisioned confidently only in retrospect. Katie’s diary charts this dramatic inner course, and it is into this often-turbulent current that Lester and his eight contributors wade into in an effort to understand the forces that give it its tragic momentum. In the course of their reflective and deep-going analysis, they draw on sociological, feminist, developmental, linguistic, cognitive, psychological, literary, psychiatric, archetypal, spiritual, and psychodynamic perspectives to reveal the dominant internal and external structures and processes with this Katie contends, and in doing so, reveal as much to the reader about the possible utility of these conceptual frameworks as they do about Katie’s ultimate suicide.46

The volume — subtitled, Unlocking the Mystery of a Suicide — falls into the subgenre of suicide literacy called the suicide autopsy. Katie’s Diary has a moral that Katie could not understand in her own life and toward her death. Understanding is made possible by a team of experts engaged in “reflective and deep-going analysis.” Through analysis, Katie’s life and death are unearthed according to “structures and processes” and “tragic momentum.” Katie was a victim of design and inertia within and all around her. Katie is the moral of the story that she never learned in life. Katie is what loomed unto herself though we may read her in the light of day. Clarity requires retrospection as post-mortem and evaluation by way of autopsia, which merely means self-optics (auto optos) as being seen by others since Katie could not truly see herself.

We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of Descartes’ Meditations, which are a curious animal. The Meditations are pure thought according to the wordly endeavor of writing. The Meditations are enacted and not merely thought and they are truly thought only in their

46 David Lester ed., Katie’s Diary.
enactment. Thought begets writing and writing lead to more thought as the *Meditations* unfold — day after day — as an endeavor of pure thought as wordly writing. Descartes offers writing as pure words as pure thought in a rational soul, over and against the taint of blood and spirit. By contrast, we borrow from Dante who hearkens to suicide as *parole e sangue* — the impure mixture of words and blood.

We proceed in the anti-manner of Descartes according to wordly monsters that mutate. Descartes declares that “words often impede me and I am almost deceived by the terms of ordinary language.” He continues, “A man who makes it his aim to raise his knowledge above the common should be ashamed to derive the occasion for doubting from forms of speech invented by the vulgar; I prefer to pass on and consider whether I had a more evident and perfection conception…”47 For Descartes, words as perfect concepts must orient according to an absolute Morning Star to keep from going astray.

We proceed in the anti-manner of Descartes and of mystics. For Jewish mystics, “Language in its purest form … reflects the fundamental spiritual nature of the world.” Accordingly, “Speech reaches God because it comes from God.”48 For the Christian mystics, the first verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of John testifies to the very same since the Word was with God and the Word was God. Our study, by contrast, disorients by way of words that mutate before our eyes. We proceed “discursively,” not as orderly thinking and writing but as discursiveness in that we wander by way of words.49

49 OED, “discourse.”
We proceed as pandemonium as being in a “state of utter confusion and uproar.” The Greeks gave us *aporia* and *thaumazein*. Pandemonium is nothing more than “noisy disorder.” For Milton, however, who coined the term, pandemonium meant structure and order amid chaos and dismay. *Pan-demon-i-um*, Milton tells us, is the place-of-all-demons. Pandemonium as the “high capital of Satan and his peers.” Pandemonium as the political and social and ethical in the absence of divine rule. By the hundreds and thousands they thronged and swarmed, the hiss of rustling wings, but when called to silence, the true deliberation begins.

As pandemonium we play upon the demonic as monstrous pictures of monsters. Socrates praises his *daimonion*, his little spirit, his divine voice, his inner conscience, his ethical and political guide. Aristotle gives us *Eudaimonian Ethics* or the ethics of *eu-daimonian* — of a good spirit. For happiness must surely entail a good spirit that is in good spirits. Behold, however, the mutation into a monster. Hebrew Scripture gives us *Šēdîm* as evil spirits and false gods, and *Eliîlîm* as worthless gods and idols, and *Qeṭeb* as demonic destruction. By way of translation, the Septuagint turns them into *daimonia*. By way of the Septuagint, the Greek New Testament gives us *daimonian* and *daimones* for demonic possession and the exorcism of evil spirits. To complete the metamorphosis, the Vulgate gives us *daemôn* throughout Holy Scripture, and Milton gives us *pandaemonim* as a demonic home away from home. This mutation in language helps to illuminate our loomings. This monstrous word helps to answer the question of who we are. We are not the royal *we*, nor are *we* as a school of fishes. Socrates in his singularity had one *daimon* and Descartes enjoyed his “rational soul.” We are demonic in that we are Legion. We are pandaemonium as the place of all daimons as our inner voices as what’s ethical and political and

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50 OED, “pandemonium.”

51 OED, “demon.”
social amid the din of our own *daimonia*. Heidegger gives us just one being-there. We are all within and all around.

Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed

In bigness to surpass Earths giant sons

Now less than smallest dwarfs in narrow room

Accordingly, our “demonstrations” will be the work of monstrations as demonic minstrations that show and warn and move us by way of what looms. But what is suicide?

To learn “suicide” in the fullness of language and according to Earth’s giant sons, we will encounter a noisy disorder as Plato and Aristotle, Seneca and Cicero, Augustine and Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, Locke and Hume, Durkheim and Freud, and many others, crammed into the narrow room of “suicide.” But if they all can’t be right, then “suicide” must surely be a pack of lies mixed in with truth. Or perhaps “suicide” entails just one common lie, which we call the definitive lie. If we ask the question, “what is suicide?,” a chorus will reply that “suicide is …”

In his “Extracts,” Ishmael warns

Therefore you must not, in every case at least, take the higgledy-piggledy whale statements, however authentic, in these extracts, for veritable gospel cetology. Far from it. As touching the ancient authors generally, as well as the poets here appearing, these extracts are solely valuable or entertaining, as affording a glancing bird’s eye view of what has been promiscuously said, thought, fancied, and sung of Leviathan, by many nations and generations, including our own.

Kant helps us to demonstrate the lie of “suicide” and the truth behind the lie. In *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant conceptualizes suicide according to reason, which gives to itself the

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53 *Moby Dick*, “Extracts. (Supplied by as Sub-Sub-Librarian),” I.
pure concept of “suicide.” What is suicide? Kant establishes that that suicide is “willful physical
death or killing oneself.”

To annihilate the subject of morality in one’s own person is to root out the existence of
morality itself from the world… Consequently, disposing of oneself as a mere means to
some discretionary end is debasing humanity in one’s person (homo noumenon), to which
man (homo phaenomenon) was nevertheless entrusted for preservation.”

Suicide is the annihilation of the subject of morality as the object of annihilation.
Annihilation roots out the very existence of morality. The rooting out is the debasing of one’s
humanity unto annihilation. Preserving one’s moral humanity is a moral duty. Suicide is the
immoral annihilation of the moral duty of preservation as the annihilation of the moral being. But
the answer begets the question. Suicide is, a priori, but what truly is suicide?

Kant proceeds in the manner and anti-manner of St. Augustine who establishes, in the
City of God and in his epistles, that suicide is self-murder according to the Sixth Commandment
— non occides — Thou shall not kill. Suicide is a sin against oneself: to murder one’s own
innocence and justice. Suicide is self-exile, expelling oneself “outside the church, separated
from its bond of unity, its chain of love.” Suicide defies the calling of love.

For Augustine, suicide is a sin against God’s commandment. For Kant, suicide is a sin
against one’s own ethical imperative. Augustine looks to God who revealed His command atop
Mt. Sinai. Kant digs down beneath the surface to bring our moral roots into full view. For both,
nothing is left to loom. Yet suicide looms. What of suicide in the Old Testament, Augustine
wonders? Samson, now shorn, blinded, and chained begs Yahweh for strength once more: “only

55 Augustine, The City of God, 1.20.
56 Augustine, “Epistle 162,” in Political Writings; and, City of God, 1.19, 24.
57 Augustine, “Epistle 155,” in Political Writings.
this once … that I may be avenged upon the Philistines …” Thus he prays, “Let me die with the Philistines.”58 This was not suicide, Augustine explains, for Samson was given “secret instructions” by the Holy Spirit.59 What of suicide in early Christianity? Augustine acknowledges that during the Roman persecution of Christians, “holy women escaped those who menaced them with outrage, by casting themselves into rivers which they knew would drown them; and having died in this manner, they are venerated by the church catholic as martyrs.”60 These were not suicides as sin, he concludes, since they acted upon “divine authority,” and because suicide is permitted “by general law and special commission.”61

Kant tells us that ethics as pure will establish a maxim as “imperfect duty” that “unavoidably leads to questions that call upon judgment to decide how a maxim is to be applied in a particular case, and indeed in such as way that judgment provides another (subordinate) maxim” on how the maxim shall be applied.62 Beneath one maxim resides another. Maxims loom. This leads us into the valley of casuistry, which is “neither a science nor part of a science,” but is “woven into ethics in a fragmentary way, not systematically.”63 What of the sailor who risks the tempest in the very act of sailing, Kant wonders? Ishmael put to sea but was it an endeavor of suicide or in place of it? What of suicide as patriotism or martyrdom or in light of terminal illness?64 What about simply bringing life to a close by way of death? Xenophon reports that even upon entering the trial, Socrates “had already decided that death was preferable to life.”

Socrates explains

58 In Judges 16:28–31, cited in Droge and Tabor, A Noble Death, 55.
59 Augustine, City of God, 1.21.27, 31.
60 Ibid., 1.26, 31.
61 Ibid., 1.21, 27. See also, Augustine, “Celebration of Martyrs,” in Political Writings.
63 Ibid. 169.
64 Ibid., 177–178.
Now, if my years are prolonged, I’m sure that I shall have to pay the penalties of old age: impaired vision and hearing, and increasing slowness at learning and forgetfulness of what I have learned. And if I am aware that I am deteriorating and find fault with myself, how could I live pleasantly then?

God in his kindness may even have my interests at heart and be arranging for me to be released from life not only exactly the right age, but also in the easiest way possible. I will be able to die … not only [with] the least discomfort, but also the least trouble to friends … For when a person leaves behind in the minds of those around him no blot or ache, but passes away with a sound body and a mind capable of happiness, then it is inevitable that such a person will be missed, isn’t it?65

In Plato’s account, Crito pleads with Socrates, now seventy, not to proceed with death just yet. “Do not hurry, there is still time,” he begs. Socrates replies that some may see a benefit from delaying. But “I do not expect any benefit from drinking the poison a little later, except to become ridiculous in my own eyes for clinging to life, and be sparing of it when there is none left.”66 In 2002, Sidney and Marjorie Croft wrote:

We have thought clearly of this for a long time and it has taken a long time to get the drugs needed. We are in our late 80s and 90 is on the horizon. At this stage, would it be wrong to expect no deterioration in our health? More importantly, would our mental state be bright and alert? In 1974 we both lost our partners whom we loved very dearly. For two and a half years Marjorie become a recluse with her grief, and Sid become an alcoholic. We would not like to go through that traumatic experience again. Hence we

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65 Xenophon, Socrates’ Defense, in Conversations of Socrates, 41–42.
decided we wanted to go together. Please don’t feel sad, or grieve for us. But feel glad in
your heart as we do.\textsuperscript{67}

In 1937 Germany, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “You were bought at a price: Christ’s
death.” And, “what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.” “Discipleship is not an offer that
man makes to Christ. We are bought by his sacrifice …” “When Christ calls a man, he bids him
come and die.”\textsuperscript{68} For Bonhoeffer, this is costly grace. It is \textit{The Cost of Discipleship}. He
continues, “The acts of the early Christian martyrs are full of evidence which shows how Christ
transfigures for his own the hour of their mortal agony by granting them the unspeakable
assurance of his presence.”\textsuperscript{69}

At Thermopylae, the epitaph is inscribed in rock. “Go tell the Spartans, stranger passing
by, that here obedient to their laws we lie.” On April 14, 2004, Corporal Dunham was killed in
action in Iraq. The Medal of Honor citation reads, in part:

As they approached the vehicles, an insurgent leaped out and attacked Corporal Dunham.
Corporal Dunham wrestled the insurgent to the ground and in the ensuing struggle saw
the insurgent release a grenade. Corporal Dunham immediately alerted his fellow
Marines to the threat. Aware of the imminent danger and without hesitation, Corporal
Dunham covered the grenade with his helmet and body, bearing the brunt of the
explosion and shielding his Marines from the blast. In an ultimate and selfless act of
bravery in which he was mortally wounded, he saved the lives of at least two fellow
Marines. By his undaunted courage, intrepid fighting spirit, and unwavering devotion to
duty, Corporal Dunham gallantly gave his life for his country, thereby reflecting great

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{67}Paul Nitschke and Fiona Stewart, \textit{The Peaceful Pill Handbook}, 29–30.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{68}Dietrich Bonhoeffer, \textit{The Cost of Discipleship}, 99–100.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{69}Ibid., 101.}
credit upon himself and upholding the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the
United States Naval Service.\textsuperscript{70}

Taken as one, “suicide” seems to be a higgledy-piggledy of promiscuity according to the
definitive lie. For suicide is self-murder. Or suicide is selflessness. Suicide is the destruction of
the ethical subject. Suicide is the fullness of ethics. Suicide is brought into full view by way of
definitions by way of concepts in order to know it, good or evil, and to proceed accordingly.
What suicide \emph{is} conceals what looms, which is suicide that “doth shew great or little” but never
all. In this spirit, and to borrow from Walt Whitman, we will not define suicide though it is so.
We merely meditate on suicide, which surpasses all understanding.

We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of Ishmael who boarded a Nantucket whaling
ship in search of adventure. By contrast, we embark on a Stygian raft of spirit guides and anti-
guides. When Dante first entered Hell a host of poets and philosophers and heroes gathered
around him. Odysseus entered Hades offering blood in return for conversation. To borrow from
the \textit{Book of St. Albans} we will proceed down a Babeling brook with a pandemonium of
parakeets.

Some might say that one guide should be enough. As a novice we must pick one study
and studier of suicide to study and understand and analyze and explicate on. Here are two
examples at the University of Illinois. In 1965, Ronald William Maris submitted a doctoral
dissertation in sociology, titled, “Suicide in Chicago: An Examination of Emile Durkheim’s
Theory of Suicide.” Maris writes, “it was my conviction that it would be a service to suicide
research, and to a lesser degree to social theory, to state carefully Durkheim’s theory of suicide,
to relate it to post-Durkheimian suicide theory and research, to test Durkheim’s hypotheses in a

\textsuperscript{70} Center for Military History, U.S. Army, “Medal of Honor Recipients: Iraq War,”
http://www.history.army.mil/moh/iraq.html#Dunham
research project of my own, and, finally, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Durkheim’s theory of suicide in the light of these investigations.”

In 1976, Diana Cornelia Kilpatrick submitted a doctoral dissertation in education, titled, “Tendencies Toward Suicide Among College Students.” Kilpatrick begins, “College students appear to be particularly vulnerable to suicide as it ranks as the second leading cause of death among adolescents in educational settings.” She continues, “This study is an attempt to assess the incidence of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts among students. It will attempt to determine if there are personality characteristics distinguishing undergraduates who experience suicidal thoughts and/or attempt suicide from their classmates who reportedly experience no suicidal thoughts.” Importantly, Kilpatrick writes, “Karen Horney’s theory of neurotic personality development [infant anxiety] will be utilized by the researcher to interpret findings regarding personality characteristics of suicidal students.” And “knowledge gained from this study will be applied in services provided to students.”

By contrast, we turn to Book IX of Quintilian’s *Institutes of Oratory* and his introduction of loomings into language as the weavings of words. A spider looms a web. The contours and patterns of tissue loom as composition and character. Time unravels and Hamlet longs that it be woven once more. The orator weaves (*texere*) words into texture (*textum*) and textile (*textus*). We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of Quintilian by way of Roland Barthes who proceeds in the manner and anti-manner of Levi-Strauss.

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72 Diana Cornelia Kilpatrick, “Tendencies Toward Suicide Among College Students” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1976), 1–2.
73 See, Quintilian, 9.4.13 and 9.4.17, in *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian with an English Translation*, vol. 3, 512–515. See also, Toivo Viljamaa, “‘Text’ as ‘hyphos’ in Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria* 9.4.3-23).”
In *The Savage Mind*, Levi-Strauss discovers similarity rather than difference between the primitive and mythical, and the rational and civilized, mind. “Myths and rites,” he declares, “are far from being the product of man’s ‘myth-making faculty,’ turning its back on reality.” “This science of the concrete was necessarily restricted by its essence to results other than those destined to be achieved by the exact natural sciences but it was no less scientific and its results no less genuine.” While scientific and mythological minds are similar, Levi-Strauss also sees a difference by way of bricolage. The scientist is “always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization…” Surpassing civilization requires expertise as mastery and command over the cosmos. By contrast, a *bricoleur’s* domain is bric-a-brac. His expertise is a “heterogeneous repertoire” that is limited to “whatever is at hand.” This is the condition of possibility for the *bricoleur*. Levi-Strauss concludes, “Mythical thought is therefore a kind of intellectual ‘bricolage.’” This is the domain and the upper limit of myth-making. Levi-Straus writes, “The elements which the *bricoleur* collects and uses are ‘pre-contrained’ like the constitutive units of myth, the possible combinations of which are restricted by the fact that they are drawn from the language where they already possess a sense which sets a limit on their freedom of maneuver.”

In “Death of the Author,” Roland Barthes adopts a similar view. Barthes writes, “The writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them.” This view echoes Levi-Strauss, who declares, “The characteristic feature of mythical thought … is that it builds up structured sets, not directly with other structured sets, but by using

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75 Ibid. 16–19.
the remains and debris of events…” Accordingly, “Mythical thought for its part is imprisoned in
the events and experiences which it never tires of ordering and re-ordering in its search to find
them a meaning.”

On Levi-Strauss’ authority, then, Barthes would be the civilized mind that goes beyond a
particular state of civilization by declaring the death of the author, which is, in a sense, the mark
of civilization — the author as lawgiver and the author as singular ethical and political
subjectivity. And Barthes would seem to consign Ishmael to the fate of a scouring librarian. The
“Extracts” of Moby Dick are an exercise in bricolage as a collection of whales in words, from the
Book of Genesis to a “Nantucket Whaling Song.” Ishmael explains, “It will be seen that this
mere painstaking burrower and grub-worm of a poor devil of a Sub-Sub [Librarian] appears to
have gone through the long Vaticans and street-stalls of the earth, picking up whatever random
allusions to whales he could anyways find in any book whatsoever, sacred or profane.”

But Barthes proceeds in the anti-manner of Quintilian, who proceeds in the manner of the
musterion. For Quintilian, the true textile gathers and releases a “secret force” [tacita vis] of
words as composition [compositione] and arrangement [dictum]. The secret force is the texture of
the text. The true test of texture is text that is de-texturized. “If we break up and disarrange any
sentence that may have struck us as vigorous, charming, or elegant,” observes Quintilian, “we
shall find that all its force, attraction, and grace have disappeared.”

While Quintilian discovers the secret force of words in elocution, the science of oratory
echoes the meaning of language according to the Eleusian mysteries (musteria). Unlike Christian
mystics who entered the unknown as a singular endeavor, the Eleusian Mysteries were a social

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77 Levi-Strauss, Savage Mind, 22.
event. Above all was the high priest, the hierophant, who mediated between human questions and divine will. In this role, the hierophant was the *eumolpus*, the good-singer of sweet-melodies. In *The Eleusian Mysteries and Rites*, Dudley Wright writes, “It was essential that the formulae disclosed to the initiates at Eleusis should be pronounced with the proper intonation, for otherwise the words would have no efficacy. Correct pronunciation was of far greater importance than syllabic pronunciation.” Thus “the real value of an evocation lies in its text … and the tone in which it is enunciated.” This was the ‘true voice’ without which “words were merely dead sounds.”

Fortunately, Barthes strips mythology and mystery of its true power. “We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture.” “[R]efusing to assign a ‘secret,’ an ultimate meaning to the text,” he continues, “liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases — reason, science, law.” This new state of human life and civilization is one of anti-theology by way of bricolage, which was, in a mythopoetic sense, the first theology of a proto-civilization. Thus, Barthes combats theology — the science of divine truth — and theological literacy, by way of anti-mythology as the mythological art and science of bricolage. In this sense, he merely imitates a gesture anterior to him. But in this case, he is a savage mind as well — Queequeg for a new age as a civilized mind as a savage mind stripped of illusion.

We must, however, consider the true concern of this woof and warp. The text is no mere artifact or object to observe. For Levi-Strauss and Quintilian, a living life weaves a text as a life

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81 Barthes, “Death of the Author,” 147.
of its own in order to weave a living life. For Barthes, the textile looms life in ever fading patterns. “Life never does more than imitate the book and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitations that is lost, infinitely deferred.” Our reading and writing will be a mere endeavor of bricolage as the weaving of textured texts on the question of suicide. We will proceed in the anti-manner of connective tissue and in the manner of dis-connection and de-composition. “Time is out of joint,” laments Hamlet. “O cursed spite / That I was born to set it right.” And so Hamlet waits passively for anti-time as time anew to spin its own web. We proceed in the manner of Penelope who simply pulls apart what was woven together. But Penelope hopes that the events of life will overtake her loomings so that she can truly live again. We proceed according to the Fates, daughters of Erebus (darkness) and Nyx (night), who measure out (Lachesis) and weave (Clotho) the thread of life, and then cut it (Atropos) when the time is right. Our secret force will be loomings on what looms and weaving that unweaves as living that studies the ending of the Book of Life.

We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of the Meditations, which are an endeavor of readiness — finally “to make up our minds” in order to proceed in light of knowledge and not according to “the infirmity of our nature.” Here, Descartes proceed in the manner and anti-manner of Augustine, who writes in his Confessions, “But do Thou, O Lord my God, hear me and look upon me and see me and pity me and heal me, Thou in whose eyes I have become a question to myself, and that is my infirmity.” Augustine looks to God while Descartes looks to himself, yet both seek healing. Both are lost and wish to be found in truth and illumination.

82 Ibid.
83 Hamlet 1.5.91–92, in Complete Works.
84 See, Hesiod, Theogony, 221–225.
85 Descartes, Meditations IV, 121.
86 Augustine, Confessions 10.33, Sheed trans.
We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of mystics. For mystics, darkness means readiness for the light. In *Interior Castle* (1577), Teresa of Avila writes that although the “night brings darkness to the spirit, it does so only to give it light in everything, and although it humbles it and makes it miserable, it does so only to exalt it and raise it up, and although in impoverishes it and empties it of all natural affection and attachment, it does so only that it may enable it to stretch forward, divinely, and thus to have fruition and experience of all things…”\(^{87}\) Darkness is preparation by way of distillation. “So must the spirit be simple, pure and detached from all kinds of natural affections, whether actual or habitual, to the end that it may be able freely to share in the breadth of the spirit of the Divine Wisdom, wherein, through its purity, it has experience of all the sweetness of all things in a certain pre-eminently excellent way.”\(^{88}\) Teresa echoes Pseudo-Dionysis, who presages Dante, in the view that by way of infernal descending one can “climb higher” unto God.

The aim is immanence given transcendence as final union with God. For St. Teresa, union means safety and security. “His Majesty has revealed Himself to the soul and taken it with Him into a place where the devil will not enter, because the Lord will not allow him to do so …” Union means “rapture and ecstasy” as meta-physical experience. In “tranquilly and noiselessly does the Lord teach the soul,” toward the “deepest silence” and “peace of the soul.”\(^{89}\) Our meditations are an endeavor of readiness, though not as healing or as a movement into an ecstatic or serene light. Here we borrow from Mammon, in *Paradise Lost*, who counsels “hard liberty,”\(^{90}\) leading us, perhaps, simply into the darkest night. What then is hard liberty? Hard liberty takes up the question of suicide as a dangerous maybe in light of what looms and according to what

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87 Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle* II.ix, 60.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., VII.iii, 159.
mutates. The lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, declares Samuel (2 Sam 22:2). On the question of suicide, all definitive lies search for solid ground and deliverance from error and evil. For us there is no solid ground. There is only the stake. It is the stake that grounds.

We conclude our Premeditations with the basic question, what to do with you? Come now, invites Empedocles, “listen to my words, for learning increases wisdom”\(^91\) — writing for the reader in order to be heard and heeded as the reader takes it all to heart. Writers have the need for heed — even those who would exterminate authorship by way of writing. Barthes seems to wish to be listened to truly as a way truly not to be listened to. Barthes is the revolutionary anti-leader and anti-authority in order to empower the reader on the authority and guidance of Barthes. Come now, listen to my words and make your own meaning, he commands. Perhaps, however, the reader is too weak and too strong for this brand of revolution.

We can test this theory in light of authorial suicide. In *After Words: Suicide and Authorship in Twentieth Century Italy*, Elizabeth Leake examines Guido Morselli, Amelia Rosselli, Cesare Pavese, and Primo Levi, who share a distinction along with differences. She writes, “This study begins with a gunshot wound, an overdose of sleeping pills, and two falls from great heights.” Leake continues

This study investigates the interrelations between suicide and reading: both how the suicide of an author informs critical and popular interpretations of his or her writings, and how, after suicide, an author’s life becomes a text to be read. I will argue that suicide functions as a hermeneutical tool with which readers, critics, publicists, and the author him- or herself construct the author’s life.\(^92\)

\(^91\) Empedocles, “The Strasbourg Papyrus, ensemble a,” in *A Presocratic Reader*, 83.

\(^92\) Elizabeth Leake, *After Words: Suicide and Authorship in Twentieth-Century Italy*, 3.
The death of the author merely precedes a resurrection since the reader is too demanding and insatiable for the personality behind the pen. How, then, to dispose of the reader?

We start with a warning and command. The Cloud of Unknowing admonishes that “whoever you may be that have this book in your possession … that so far as you are able you do not willingly and deliberately read it, copy it, speak of it, or allow it to be read, copied, or spoken of, by anyone or to anyone …”93 This is merely bait, however. An enticement. A dare.

Maimonides begins Guide of the Perplexed with anti-medicine. “Our arguments will be all the more difficult for them to stomach, not only because they will not see any sense in them, but also because they demonstrate the falsehood of the trash they call their own, which is their stored-up wealth for the hour of need.”94 But this is still alluring in its own way.

Fichte seems to prescribe pure cyanide as what’s needed. He begins The Science of Knowledge by declaring, “I would be sorry if I were understood by people … and I hope that … these prefatory remarks will so confuse them that they will be unable to see anything beyond mere letters, in as much as what passes for spirit in their case will be yanked back and forth by the secret fury pent up within them.”95 The eumolphus sings sweet melodies that transform letters into words and words into truth. We will infuriate so that nothing makes sense. We turn to Prudentius and the Medieval allegory, Psychomachia — the war of the spirits — to devise a plan. In “The Combat Between Patience and Wrath” our hero patiently enrages Anger.

No limit now the monster’s rage restrain,
To see her hand a bladeless hilt retain;
Stung with remorse, she tosses it aside;

93 Cloud of Unknowing, 11.
94 Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed, 47.
95 J. G. Fichte, Introductions to Wissenschaftslehre, 6
A shameful monument of fallen pride;
Nor longer seeks the martial strife;
But seeks for means to end her wretched life.\textsuperscript{96}

We will patiently yank the reader back and forth as an endeavor of murder-suicide. But none of this will be necessary for a simple reason. Like Ishmael, the reader will always remain above the surface of events. Like Ishmael the reader will even cling to the debris of living coffins just to stay afloat, never seeing what truly looms. Recall that in the end Ishmael lived to tell a tale that only Ahab knew that truth of. Yes, the reader has already self-murdered by way of the love of life by simply hungering for a better tomorrow. In this respect, the reader is already done for.

\textsuperscript{96} Prudentius, \textit{Psychomachia}, 17.
FIRST MEDITATION ON DOCTORAL SUICIDE

Little Lamb who made thee
    Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.
By the stream & o’er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
    Little Lamb who made thee
    Dost thou know who made thee
—William Blake, “The Lamb”¹

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.
—Revelations 5:13

In our Premeditations, we showed that the present study is neither educational nor philosophical. In the First Meditation, we complete the thesis as anti-thesis by showing that the present study is not doctoral either. But what is the doctoral? The basic measure of the doctoral is the dissertation. But what is a doctoral dissertation? More importantly, what is a doctoral dissertation that is a dissertation that is doctoral? There is a difference. A doctoral dissertation is the work of a little lamb. In monastic schools a little lamb was called a novice. Novices often tried to soar to worldly heights. But Savonarola admonishes, “Elegance of language must give way before simplicity in preaching sound doctrine.”

Bonfires are fueled by doctoral dissertations that are not doctrinally sound or soundly doctrinal. What then is sound doctrine on the doctoral dissertation so that a doctoral dissertation might become a dissertation that is doctoral?

A doctoral dissertation begins with loomings — something that shows itself great or little but not all or not nearly enough. How then to proceed? The answer lies in the treatise, *Dissertation for Dummies*. A doctoral dissertation is a “logical dissertation,” explains *Dissertation for Dummies*. “Whatever your style of dissertation you must apply logic in building your argument toward a conclusion.” It’s that simple. Logical argumentation that leads to a logical conclusion. This means “logical links” that construct a chain of reasoning. It means avoiding “careless thinking” and overcoming counter arguments. It means using quotations to strengthen the argument. All because words are savages that run wild and words as logic must overawe and master them.

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3 Carrie Winstanley, *Writing a Dissertation for Dummies*, 209.
Why logic? Because in logic Aristotle promised a “demonstrative science” that produces “scientific knowledge.” And because the university of the Middle Ages embraced the mythical power of logic. Christianity was always pedagogical. In the beginning was the Word as God and from God-the-Word came Christ-the-Son-of-the-Word-as-God. From the body of Christ sprung his disciples who scattered throughout the land, preaching and letter writing to build up the body of Christ. As the centuries unfolded Holy Scripture was compiled and the monastic and cathedral schools carried on the task of teaching and learning. But Christianity was a scandal and a question unto itself since the Word was more enigmatic than the Sphinx.

By the middle of the twelfth century the “Old Logic” — Categories and Interpretation — and the “New Logic” — Topics and Prior and Posterior Analytics — had become known throughout Europe. If Holy Scripture was the Word of God, then Aristotle’s logic offered a way for men to divine the truth of words so that they were inwardly evident. Logic allowed Christianity to enter into questions of universals on the nature of God and Man in order to penetrate and systematize matters of faith. The Word of God begat logic so that logic could decipher the Word of God.

In the Medieval university the pedagogy of logic-training became the preparation for theology as the doctoral instrument of knowledge. In *Ars disserendi* Adam of Balsham begins to fashion Aristotle’s logic into the *disputatio* as *enuntio* and *interrogatio* — as a path of three steps toward truth and away from errors in thinking and speech. In *Metalogicon* John of Salisbury announces logic as the “science of verbal expression and reasoning.” Nature is wasteful in her

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4 Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* 24a (65); and, *Posterior Analytics* 71b.17 (112), in *Basic Works*.

efforts, he explains, and logic must “straighten out her circuitous wanderings.” In all, “reason pronounces true and accurate judgment.”

Aristotle’s logic soon became formalized as the disputatio and as the crucial praxis of a university education. In the morning was the lectio followed by the repetitio. In the afternoon the doctor as magister held forth with a thesis and bachelors would take up the question. The opponens would argue against the thesis and the respondens would argue against the argument. The master would conclude with the determinatio by demonstrating correct reasoning. The exercise developed a student’s quick and critical thinking and prepared him for the greater task at hand. At the University of Bologna disputation prepared students to become doctors of canon and civil law and effective advocates for church and state. At the University of Paris disputation prepared future doctors of theology to peer into the mind of God.

In time the disputatio became the supreme demonstration of the doctoral. In The Universities of the Middle Ages, Hastings Rashdall writes of Bologna

Shortly before the day appointed the candidate had ridden round the city to invite public officials or private friends to the ceremony or to the ensuring banquet, proceeded by the bedels of the archdeacon … The statutes indeed forbade on this occasion the blowing of trumpets or other instruments but on the actual day of the conventus no such sumptuary limitation was imposed. On that day the candidate was accompanied to the cathedral by the presenting doctor.

Arrived at the cathedral the licentiate delivered a speech and read a thesis on some point of law, which he defended against opponents who were selected from among the

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6 John of Salisbury, Metalogicon, 32–34.

7 Novikoff, Medieval Culture of Disputation, 141.
students, the candidate thus playing for the first time the part of a doctor in a university disputation. ⁸

He then received his licentia docendi — his license to teach anywhere in the land — and was “seated in the magisterial chair or cathedra.” And with a kiss and a biretta and a gold ring he entered the guild and noble rank of doctor. At Paris the inception followed a similar ceremonial path. “The new master had a cap placed upon his head” reminiscent of “the old Roman ceremony of manumission or emancipation from the subjection of pupillage.” The biretta meant mastery and acceptance by his peers. “Then seated in the magisterial cathedra he gave an exhibition of his professional capacity by delivering an inaugural lecture or holding an inaugural disputation.” ⁹

Within the professional guild and noble rank of doctor, Thomas Aquinas ascended above all others to become the Church Doctor of universal knowledge and the patron saint of students and universities. In Summa Theologica, St. Aquinas asks, Utrum liceat occides seisum — Whether it is lawful to kill oneself? ¹⁰ He begins as the opponens by offering five objections. It is in fact lawful to kill oneself because no man may do injustice to himself and because man may do justice to himself for an injustice by himself and because man may choose death as the lesser of two evils and because Holy Scripture gives us Samson and Razi as exemplars of suicide. Aquinas then offers St. Augustine as the counter authority (auctoritate) according to the Sixth Commandment — non occides — Thou shall not kill. And then the determinatio followed by a destruction of objections. In this way Aquinas settles the fundamental question of suicide by way of masterly doctoral disputation as a matter of faith and reason.

⁸ Hastings Rashdall, Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages vol. 1, 227–228.
⁹ Ibid., 285.
¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Part II of Part II Question 64 Article 5.
With a wrinkle of time we arrive in nineteenth century Germany to witness the establishment of the doctoral as we, in the United States, know it. In place of the doctor of theology or law we have, for the first time, the establishment of the doctor of philosophy. In the same moment, however, that Kant and Fichte and Schelling and Humboldt elevated philosophy to the doctoral, above all others, the doctor of philosophy came to mean as many things as the university means it to be, such as architecture, chemistry, and agriculture.\(^\text{11}\) Germany introduced another decisive change to the doctoral. Instead of the inaugural disputation the novice was made to submit an inaugural dissertation. Instead of a purely verbal demonstration, the doctoral thesis was now to be written.\(^\text{12}\) This practice spread throughout Europe. For example, in 1879 Max Planck submitted, “Über den zweiten Hauptsatz der mechanischen Wärmetheorie,” at München. In 1892, Émile Durkheim submitted, “Quid Secundatus politicae scientiae instituendae contulerit,” at Paris. In 1889, Henri Bergson submitted, “Quid Aristoteles de loco senserit: Essai sur les données immédiate de la conscience,” at Paris. In 1911, Niels Bohr submitted, “Studier over metallernes elektrontheori,” at København.\(^\text{13}\)

In 1876, Johns Hopkins University established the first doctoral program in the United States, which emulated the German university. At the inaugural address, President Gilman declared that the university “means a wish for less misery among the poor, less ignorance in the schools, less bigotry in the Temple, less suffering in the hospital, less fraud in business, less follow in politics… more security in property, more health in cities, more virtue in the country,

\(^\text{11}\) See, Henry Paulsen, *German Universities: Their Character and Historical Development.*

\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., 81; Keith Allan Noble, *Changing Doctoral Degrees*, 10.

more wisdom in legislation, more happiness, more religion”\textsuperscript{14} — doctoral education toward a better tomorrow.

By 1896, the University of Illinois — once styled the Illinois Industrial University, but renamed in 1885 “to avoid confusion with schools for delinquents”\textsuperscript{15} — had established its own doctoral program. In 1903, the university conferred its first two doctoral degrees, in chemistry and mathematics.\textsuperscript{16} Henry Livingstone Coar submitted a thesis titled, “Functions of Three Real Variables.” William Maurice Dehn’s thesis was titled “Primary Arsines.”


What of doctoral studies in philosophy of education or educational theory? Early on, research took place outside, as well as within, the College of Education and, seemingly, at the masters degree level. In 1910, Anna Mabel Ballans was awarded a Masters of Arts in Latin for her study on “The Educational Theories of Quintilian Discussed with Reference to the Doctrine of Interest.” In 1912, Flora Alice Denby was awarded a Masters of Arts in English for her analysis of “Lord Chesterfield’s Theory of Education.” In 1914, Edwin Rollin Spencer was

\textsuperscript{14} Bernard Berelson, \textit{Graduate Education in the United States}, 13.

\textsuperscript{15} John Milton Gregory, \textit{“West Point for the Working World.”}

\textsuperscript{16} Winton U. Solberg, \textit{“The University of Illinois 1894–1904: The Shaping of the University.”}
awarded a Masters of Arts in Education, perhaps one of the first in philosophy of education, for his thesis, “Daniel Defoe’s Contribution to Education.”

The doctoral dissertation in philosophy of education does not seem to have appeared until much later. The earliest example we discovered dates to 1959 — Joseph James Chambliss’ study, “The Development of Bode’s Pragmatism and Its Influence On His Philosophy of Education.” The next dissertation we discovered dates to 1967. In the appropriately titled, “Relevance Problem in Philosophy of Education,” Kenneth Robert Conklin begins with a barrage.

What is the nature of the relationship between philosophy and education? What are the rules for making legitimate connections between the two? Does a given philosophical theory have consequences as prescriptions for education? If so, what are the correct ways of determining them? Does a given educational theory or practice have philosophical presuppositions”? If so, what are the correct ways of determining them? Can the same position in education be supported by conflicting philosophies? Can the same philosophy be used to generate conflicting prescriptions for education? Can philosophical theory adequately guide educational practice when action must be taken to deal with a novel problem whose urgency or complexity leaves insufficient time for adequate reflection? Can philosophical theory guide the unforeseen moment-to-moment activities of the educational practitioner (teacher, administrator) even though no conscious thought is given to philosophy? By what mechanisms, if any, does theoretical training affect practical conduct? 17

Philosophy and education loom as does philosophical education and educational philosophy. Everything, in fact, seems to loom, though Conklin is not deterred. “All of these questions,” he declares, “could be answered if the properties of relevance between philosophy and education were known.” In the spirit of Francis Bacon, we must analyze the native properties of the discipline in order to harness the species.

By the 1970s a flurry of dissertations on educational theory appeared at the university, taking up a range of questions on Rousseau and Eugenio Maria de Hostos, the philosophy of educational research, the philosophy of environmental education, and education as the dynamic of individual and society. Why are these relevant to the present study of suicide? Because they demonstrate doctoral dissertations in philosophy of education that are dissertation that are doctoral at the University of Illinois. Specific concerns about what looms do not matter here. Instead, it is the form that matters — the form of thetic argumentation. The author argues in order to demonstrate a thesis.

In “Rousseau, The Curriculum, and the Standards of Nature,” (1976) Jon Michael Barbour Fennel writes, “It shall be argued here that not only is education a theme of [The Social Contract], but that it is in fact an essential component of the political program and ideal society outlined therein.”18 In “The Educational Philosophy of Eugenio Maria de Hostos,” (1973), Leonides Santos Vargas writes, “It can be argued that, in such an island as Puerto Rico, with a population of less than 3 million people, the educational system should be organized around a philosophy of education that stresses the cultural values of Puerto Rico.”19 In “An Epistemological and Ethical Justification for Educational Research and Practice,” (1977) Russell

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19 Leonides Santos Vargas “The Educational Philosophy of Eugenio Maria de Hostos” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1973), 121.
Graham Oliver writes, “I wished to argue that [R.S.] Peter’s account of the intrinsic value of education was an inadequate account of what was of educational value for persons …” In “Philosophical Perspectives on Environmental Education,” (1976) Gary Allyn Storm writes, “A case will be made for the existence of unique kinds of consciousness, ‘environmental’ and ‘ecological’ consciousness, and it is argued here that a new curricular context will be required to teach these new modes of consciousness.” In “Collective and Individual Understanding of Education” (1978), Robert Earl Halstead writes, “I shall argue that an adequate account of collective and individual understanding must recognize the historical genesis of understanding and the dynamics of collective inquiry, and it must recognize that collective and individual understanding cannot be reduced one to another: they are distinct, yet interrelated.”

The proper form for philosophy of education as argumentation persists today. Among three recent dissertations at the university, some variation on the phrase “I argue” appears at least 153 times, for an average of fifty-one appearances per dissertation. On the one hand, the phrase appears only five times in Jane Blanken-Webb’s “Educating the Self Through Aesthetic Experience.” For instance, Blanken-Webb writes, “I argue that we need to cultivate this mode of aesthetic learning throughout all of education.” On the other hand, the phrase appears at least sixty-two times in Heather Greenhalgh-Spencer’s “A Complex-Orientation to Embodiment in Online Education”; and at least eighty-six times in James Geary’s “Questions of Spirituality in

Education.” The latter writes, “While language is my medium of expression, to articulate my suggestions and confusion, I also argue for silent contemplation as a vital learning experience.”

In the former, “This dissertation argues that, in order to create more engaging and socially just online educational spaces, a complex orientation to embodiment is needed.” Akin to legal training at Bologna, the present-day endeavor of dissertating is one of advocacy. The world is the case, as ignorance and injustice and suffering and wasted possibilities, and words must make the counter case — to project words into the world to model and move the world toward a better tomorrow. Greenhalgh-Spencer writes, “I advocate for an attention to details of embodiment and materiality; and call for an orientation to embodiment (the physicality, positionality, and material relationships of bodies) to ground praxis.” Blanken-Webb writes, “To make this case [for aesthetic learning], I lay out Winnicott’s theory of differentiation as I see it relating to the work of the Deweyan scholar, Elliot Eisner …” Geary writes, “While humans are continually engaged in constructing and communicating such essential meaning through language, as both Heidegger and Freire assert, I will argue later that silence is equally important in considerations of spirituality.” The case to make is that “Quiet, slow contemplation can be as equally powerful as the dialogic experience, and through a silent practice, one can arrive into dialogue more fully present, more ready to listen to alternative perspectives, as well as preparing oneself to engage in attempted articulation of those ideas that most elude language.”

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26 Ibid., ii.
Perhaps these three authors are outliers in contemporary philosophy of education. We can compare our sample with the general field by way of the _Philosophy of Education Yearbook_ — the annual documentation of research and researchers. Among forty-three primary essays in the 2015 volume of the _Yearbook_, twenty-nine (67%) take the explicit form of argumentation, using phrases such as “I argue,” “I would like to argue,” “I wish to argue,” “I explore and argue,” and “I have argued.” Twenty-six essays (60%) use kindred phrases including “I want to assert,” “I submit,” “I maintain,” and “I advocate.” In all, forty-two (97%) of forty-three essays advance some form of argumentation. They make the case. We might even argue that philosophy of education is positively Medieval by way of logical argumentation.

Now we know what the doctoral is. Now what does it mean? The question runs through the story of doctoral education in the United States. In _Graduate Education in the United States_, Bernard Berelson writes, “The recurrent character of the debate over graduate study can be perhaps best summarized by the frequent pleas for someone to settle the question of what the doctorate was for …” In 1919, Dean Woodbridge of Columbia wondered aloud, “for what does it essentially stand?” In 1928, Dean Heller of Washington University observed that a basic question on the doctorate has endured “since the end of the 16th century,” namely, “what does the degree really mean?” A 1957 report of the Association of American Universities states, “Current pressure forces us to exam our myth-enveloped Ph.D. with candor.” The “basic flaw,” the report continues, is that “we have never clearly defined this protean degree.”

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30 Berelson, _Graduate Education_, 19 (emphasis original).
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., emphasis original.
Like President Gilman of Johns Hopkins, some might reply that doctoral education means pursuit of a better tomorrow. Sometimes this is true, but not always. To discover the truth we need to burrow down and dig up the root cause and first principle of the doctorate.

For Aristotle, the virtuous man does not seek position and status and honor. Reward comes to the virtuous man according to virtue and almost in spite of himself. For Aristotle, the chief good and final end of ethics is happiness in the course of a virtuous life. What then of the chief good and final end of the curriculum vita, the course of a doctoral life? In 1912, Dean West of Princeton lamented that students pursue the doctorate “not because they must be scholars, but because they want a job” “It is beginning to be acknowledged,” he declared, to be “like a ‘union card’ for labor.”

Aristotle believed that the virtuous man was the rarest species. Viewed from Darwin’s perspective, a virtuous man is more like a variation or mutation on the species that is most energetic and most likely not to propagate. President Lowell of Harvard, by contrast, predicted that the incentive of employment would mean that “monstrous” hordes would enter school. “We are in danger,” he said, “of making the graduate school the easiest path for the good but docile scholar with little energy, independence or ambition.” In 1903 William James labeled the new graduate schools “The PhD Octopus” and described the bedazzled horde that feeds and is fed upon. James writes of doctors of philosophy that “their titles shine like the stars in the firmament … [and] bespangle the page as if they were sprinkled over it from a pepper caster.” Of graduate students he writes, “We dangle our three magic letters before the eye of these predestined victims, and they swarm to us like moths to an electric light…” Like savages in a savage time, or characters in an Edith Wharton novel, the doctoral species is tribal. James concludes, “No man of

33 Ibid., 19.
34 Ibid., 18.
science or letters will be accounted respectable unless some kind of badge or diploma is stamped upon him, and in which mere personality will be the mark of an outcast estate.”

Some might think that the PhD Octopus is an American invention or the offspring of German industrial manufacturing. Some might think that this mark of beastliness is a product of modern productivity — the mass production of doctoral value according to individual interests. Dean West identified the root “fallacy” of the doctorate in “the idea that every professor must be a producer, more or less irrespective of the value of what he produces.” The observation reveals two sorts of economies, one in which production has no use and the other in which production means printing currency to obtain to real objects of desire. We might call this the modern academic economy except that the economy is positively and existentially Medieval.

To encounter this academic economy we go back, not to the sixteenth century, as Dean Heller admonishes, but back 800 years, to the twelfth century and the origins of the university and the doctorate in Europe. Contrary to Dean West, the doctorate is not “like a union card.” The doctorate is and always has been a union card. In the beginning was the universitas — emblematic not of universal knowledge, but of an association and a guild. Rashdall writes, “At the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries, we find the word applied to corporations either of masters or of students; but it long continues to be applied to other corporations as well, particularity to the then newly formed guilds.” Accordingly, a newly minted doctor, or teacher, was merely a recognized member of a University of Scholars, a guild of masters who elect to make him one of their own.

36 Ibid., 28.
37 Rashdall, Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, vol. 1, 5.
Long before President Lowell’s concern, the fear of the doctoral was always the fear of a monstrous horde. Like a family, a universitas originally pointed to its members and not to the home they occupied. The home, the location, was the studium generale — the place of study. But even the location was vague since classes were held anywhere the master could find space. In truth, the studium generale did not mean a place of general studies as much as it meant a place of study for a general population. Unlike a family, which consists of birds of a feather, the studium generale was a conbobulation of noble youth from Germany and Italy and France and Spain who would descend on a town in the name of sports, banquets, and riots. In The Rise of the Universities, Charles Homer Haskins writes of students, “They quarrel among themselves over dogs, women, or what-not, slashing off one another’s fingers with their swords, or, with only knives in their hands and nothing to protect their tonsured pates, rush into conflicts from which armed knights would hold back.”

Paris in the year 1200 provides one example. “The riot began in a tavern,” Rashdall reports.

The servant of a noble German student was assaulted whereupon a concourse of his fellow countrymen took place and the host was severely beaten and “left half-dead.” The Provost of Paris at the head of an armed band of citizens in return attacked the hall of students of the same nationality. In the fight, which thereupon ensued, several students were killed including [the young nobleman].

By the fourteenth century, the universitas and the studium generale had coalesced into an institution — the university — marked by formal governance and administration. The models were Bologna and Paris, and virtually all other universities followed suit. Power came from within as the university became an engine of law and theology. The decisive power, however,

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39 Rashdall, Universities of Europe, vol. 1, 295.
came from the outside. Recall that in 1095, Pope Urban II legitimized the knightly class across Europe and emblazoned the initiated with a Red Cross as the license to wage war for Christendom. Recall that knights proceeded east under the pan-dominion of emperor and kings. In all, knights, once journeymen and hired labor, now joined bishops as a noble class and workers for a cause. Two centuries later, under the authority of imperial charter and papal bull, doctors and professors became yet another estate of nobility. The decisive principle was *ius ubique docendi* — the right to teach anywhere in the land — on the authority of the pope and the emperor. The effect was deep and profound. “In a very practical sense,” writes Keith Noble in *Changing Doctoral Degrees*, “the doctorate provided the holder with a means of deriving an income” Doctors could profoundly and deeply try to get a job. Hunger is what leads little lambs into temptation — the pursuit of a doctoral tomorrow by way of the doctoral degree as the desire to become well fed.

In the thetic sense, our doctoral dissertation is not a dissertation that is doctoral in that, in an acetic sense, we turn away from a doctoral tomorrow. In place of satiation, we turn to starvation. In place of doctoral aspirations, we begin by way of closing time. Our study is one of suicide that aims to produce nothing and acquire nothing within the academic economy. We borrow from Shakespeare to observe the danger of self-treachery

Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels
That knew’st the very bottom of my soul
That almost mightst have coined me into gold

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40 See, for example, Frances Gies, *The Knight in History.*
42 Henry V 2.2, in *Complete Works.*
We turn to Kafka for a fitting parable. In “A Hunger Artist,” Kafka follows the acetic as he travels from town to town, starving himself for all to see. The performance is one of discipline and severity only in order to receive attention and acclaim as his true nourishment. Kafka tells us that this particular hunger artist was one among many, however — a hunger artist traveling around Europe, and not the artist above all others. Forty-days and forty-nights was the industry standard, but this was not enough. To make a name for himself, he concludes, he must set the record for fasting. “Why should he be cheated of the fame he would get for fasting longer?” he reasoned. He would beat “his own record by a performance beyond human imagination.”

To achieve the fame he wanted he also needed more humans to bear witness. “So he took leave” of his private act “and hired himself to a large circus” in order to perform a true feat of hunger artistry. “It was exhilarating,” writes Kafka, “to watch the crowds come streaming his way…” But tastes were changing and he only had one act to perform. Soon the crowds started passing him by to witness lions and elephants in the big top. He was forgotten until a circus hand remembered him and opened the cage to find our man on the edge of life.

“Are you still fasting?” he asked. “When on earth do you mean to stop?”

“Forgive me,” said the hunger artist. “I always wanted you to admire my fasting.”

“We do admire it,” said the worker.

“But you shouldn’t admire it,” said the hunger artist.

“Well then we don’t admire it,” said the worker, “but why shouldn’t we admire it?”

“Because I have to fast, I can’t help it,” said the hunger artist. Because “I always wanted you to admire my fasting.”

How then to debase ourselves so that writing has no tangible value? We borrow from Ishmael, who declares, “For my part, I abominate all honorable respectable toils, trials, and tribulations of every kind whatsoever. I abandon the glory and distinction of such offices to those who like them.”44 We must go further. In her “Introduction” to Illuminations, Hannah Arendt describes Walter Benjamin — the little “hunchback” — according to his myriad failures. His Habilitation, she tells us, was “bound to end with catastrophe,” simply because it “consisted largely of quotations — the craziest mosaic technique imaginable.” He embraced “crude thinking.” He mounted attacks on prominent academics who would serve on his committee. He preferred “aimless strolling” to the “hurried, purpose activity” of the times. He never looked for “gainful employment” and met his end on this side of a better tomorrow.45 We borrow from Benjamin, who writes, “To do justice to the figure of Kafka in its purity and its peculiar beauty one must never lose sight of one thing: it is the purity and beauty of a failure. The circumstances of this failure are manifold. One is tempted to say: once he was certain of failure, everything worked out for him en route as in a dream.”46 We proceed beyond Benjamin’s description of Kafka to witness Kafka by way of another extreme. According to Max Brod, Kafka died of laryngeal tuberculosis. Brod notes, however, that he did not, strictly speaking, die of laryngeal tuberculosis, which ravaged his throat. He died from starvation in that he simply could no longer eat. During this time, he edited “A Hunger Artist,” and then instructed Brod to burn all of his writings. The command echoes Rousseau who gives us the history of his soul and then laments in Julie that he “published these letters … when I should have thrown them into the fire!”47 In any case, Brod promptly ignored Kafka. We move beyond Kafka by way of Bahktin who,  

47 Jean Jacques Rousseau, Julie, or The New Heloise, 3.
according to Michael Holquist, simply used the pages of *Dialogic Imagination* “as paper to roll his own cigarettes.”

He did not smoke nearly enough, however, and in any case if we turn to his study of Rabelais, we know that he all along hoped for the “many sparks of the carnival bonfire which renews the world.”

We turn to Ray Bradbury for the decisive event in the history of our soul.

With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history.

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49 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 17.

SECOND MEDITATION ON AUTHORIAL SUICIDE

Please let me feel an ever-encouraging life force in my everyday existence from the time I wake to the time I sleep. Let my voice become strong and defined along with my character — strong, warm, distinct, good, downright real.

—*Katie’s Diary* ¹

I am afraid of death … I stray through the wilderness and cannot rest.

—Gilgamesh

Dead men tell no tales.

—Pirates

¹Lester, *Katie’s Diary*, 37.
In the Second Meditation, we take up the question of authorial suicide. What is suicide that is authentically authorial? The study may seem redundant given doctoral suicide in the First Meditation. Recall, however, jazz soloist Sidney Bechet who tells his student, “I’m going to give you one note today. See how many ways you can play that note — growl it, smear it, flat it, sharp it, do anything you want to it.” Why? Because “that’s how you express your feelings in music,” he explains. “It’s like talking.”

Recall the Uncyclopedia, which offers step-by-step advice on “How to Commit Suicide.” Method 6 is called “Death by Great White Shark.” It requires a plane ticket, sunscreen, a boat, and a bucket of chum. Method 8 is called “Overkill” and requires a gun, a tall building, a portable pool, and a great white shark. The lesson is that sometimes overkill, or overdetermination as some would call it, is what’s called for. Durkheim called it des suicides mixtes.

If authority derives from authorship, then authorship is born of authentikos by way of autoentes and autocheir. Authentic authorship is self-acting and own-handed. Authentic authorship means that the words enacted are mine own by my hand. Within the university we know authentic authorship by way of the capital crime of plagiarism. Plagiarism as authorial suicide is the easy way out, however. We must find another way.

In 1969, Michel Foucault delivered a paper to the French Society of Philosophy, titled “What is an Author?” In it, Foucault declared

Writing has become linked to sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of life. It is now a voluntary effacement, which does not need to be represented in books since it is brought about in

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3 “How to Commit Suicide,” Uncyclopedia.
4 Émile Durkheim, Le Suicide, 325.
the writer’s very existence. The text, which once had the duty of providing immortality, now possess the right to kill, to be its author’s murderer …

He continues

Using all the contrivances that he sets up between himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels out the signs of his particular individuality. As a result, the mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing.\(^5\)

Two years earlier, in “Death of the Author,” Roland Barthes announced, “The birth of the reader must be at the death of the author.”\(^6\) Taken together, death becomes a triple operation as a kind of mutual massacre in which the text cancels out the author, the reader overwrites the text, and the author assists by killing himself. Presumably, only the reader is left standing.

In *Katie’s Diary*, we find the passage, “Please let me feel an ever-encouraging life force in my everyday existence from the time I wake to the time I sleep. Let my voice become strong and defined along with my character — strong, warm, distinct, good, downright real.” Now the author is dead in a double sense. Suicide made Katie dead, but on Foucault’s authority, Katie had already canceled out her true voice and individuality in the mere act of writing. Or rather, her writing canceled out her — authorial murder and not suicide. On the authority of Barthes, Katie’s death gave life to her writings in that she gave birth to the reader who would rewrite the text rather than reading for truth as the author’s own words. But the aim of an autopsy is to clearly see the author by way of the string of words she wrote — to read entrails that lead back to the truth of their embodiment. Recall Ahab, who commands, “speak, mighty head, and tell us the


\(^6\) Barthes, “Death of the Author,” 148.
secret thing that is in thee. Of all the divers, thou hast dived the deepest.” But now the author is both murdered and resurrected, overwritten truly to be read. It is a tangle of thorns. Perhaps we can understand authorial suicide differently.

In the late 1930s, Gregory Zilboorg published several psychiatric studies of suicide. In 1936 he transitioned from Freud’s theory of melancholy and to a diagnosis of schizophrenia. In 1937 Zilboorg studied the dimensions of suicide in youth. In 1938, he examined the ritualistic, and thus sociological, aspects of suicide. In the same year he published a related study in *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, titled “The Sense of Immortality.” In contrast to Freud, who viewed the death drive as the drive unto annihilation — in suicide and murder, as well as war — Zilboorg described the death wish in terms of fantasy. The controlling wish of the dying, he believed, is to remain in the world after death and to observe and even act upon those who are left behind. The meaning of death is immortality as no longer being yet being able to see what one means to those who remain. By way of authentic authorial suicide, we might call this hope and aspiration the better tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow as the hunger for immortality.

For our hunger artist, setting a true record is nothing less than a suicidal endeavor since reaching the true limit of starvation means going just beyond. And by going just beyond our man would deprive himself of the true nourishment of true starvation. Only when our hunger artist is dead as a dog can he truly find the honor and reward he longs for. Oh! but the pleasure he must have felt, as he sat in his cage, as the sounds and pictures of fame ran through his head and how he must have feasted on them. We can picture him picturing himself hovering over the masses and soaking up their acclaim. This must have been his deepest and truest hope, authorship of a true record as authorial immortality that he will always be able to enjoy. Recall Kierkegaard,

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who writes, “This life is dangerous, but one is intimate with the thoughts of losing it, for it is a real joy to vanish into the infinite in such a way that just enough remains so that one enjoys this vanishing.”

Some write with words. Our man writes with his mortal withering and pictures others reading it long after he is gone.

Foucault demonstrates a different kind of authorial immortality as authorial suicide as textual murder by way of the author. The History of Sexuality consists of three published volumes, and an unpublished fourth, titled Les Aveux de la chair (Confessions of the Flesh). Volumes two, three, and four were in fact written all together and were to be published in quick succession. Volume four is extant and is locked away for good. For the purposes of being read it does not exist. Pierre Nora — historian and friend — explains, “In a private letter that dates from before his illness, he expressed his wish that there be no ‘posthumous publication.’ Michel Foucault’s heirs, knowing how much he cared for perfection, are therefore extremely hesitant” to publish the work. Nora goes on to describe the volume.

It is part of Histoire de la sexualité, even the key to it, and it is obviously the part most important to Foucault…[W]ith a minimum of editorial tidying up … the manuscript exists and reflects Foucault’s thought, one that is perfectly coherent. In this case it seems to me that it is a heavy responsibility not to publish it. But I have no choice but to respect it.

To understand this version of authorial immortality as authorial suicide as authorial murder, we turn to Giambattista Vico, whom Foucault was fond of. In The New Science, Vico writes

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9 Søren Kierkegaard, Either/Or Part II, 84.

Then, in the course of human desires, the plebeians went on to secure from the fathers [patriarchs and aristocrats] the communication of all those institutions of private law which depended upon the auspices: as paternal power, direct heirs ... and in consequence of these, the further institutions of legitimate succession, the making of testaments, and guardianship.¹¹

Unlike slaves, who had no personhood or legal status, the plebeians became legal subjects who could possess property and enjoy the right to dispense with it as they would, even and especially upon death. In “What Is an Author?,” Foucault endeavors to “reexamine the privileges of the subject.” He “call back into question the absolute character and founding role of the subject.”¹²

In volume one of History, he borrows from Hume by invoking the phrase the “fiction of unity.” Ideas like the subject are mere multiplicities as fictions of unity.¹³ But is not the private letter an invocation of privilege, a private law, relying on distinctly public juridical applications and functions? The final test would be a disputation over publishing, which would become a matter for the courts to settle. Here, authorship of a private letter, as a command by the author of the work, is no mere gesture. It is the invocation of ethical subjectively and legal personhood. It marks out and claims its own property, and enunciates the imperative of guardianship, controlled by the singularity and unity of will and testament. It is the act through which the dead author controls the text by placing it in cryogenic freeze. It is the will of Foucault over his writing that endures upon his death in perpetuity, such that the text may not ever tell its own story specifically because the author is dead. The author of the text has erased himself by murdering

¹² Foucault, “What Is an Author?,” 117–118
¹³ See Ibid., 103, for a reference to the “curious unity” of the text; and Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality vol. 1, 154. Perhaps borrowed from David Hume’s “fiction of unity” in Treatise on Human Nature.
the text by invoking authorial immortality as a species of apotheosis. The author is dead, long live the author.

Hamlet introduces a different brand of immortality. Recall that Hamlet is afflicted by moral outrage and moral lassitude. Unlike Juliet and Brutus, Ophelia and Othello, Lady Macbeth and Cleopatra, Portia and Romeo, Cassius and Antony, Hamlet spends himself on words instead of deeds. His famous soliloquy merely shows Hamlet protesting too much. Thereafter, *Hamlet* becomes a bloody farce and comedy of errors with a final act of mutual massacre. In truth, however, *Hamlet* is a play about authorial immorality as the less sublime question, “How to be read and not read long after I die?” O good Horatio, cries Hamlet, what a wounded name shall live behind me!

> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story

Even before the play is over the performance is set to begin. Enter Fortinbras and to him Hortatio implores

> And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
> How these things came about. So shall you hear
> Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts;
> Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
> Of deaths put on by cunning and forc’d cause;
> And, in this upshot, purposes mistook

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14 *Hamlet* 5.2.
Fall’n on th’ inventors’ heads. All this can I

Truly deliver.

In truth, we might re-title the play the *Autobiography of Hamlet as told to Horatio as told by Shakespeare*. But the meaning is not merely in the telling merely to be remembered, for what’s in a mere name? Meaning is in the teaching.

And from his mouth whose voice will draw no more

But let this same be presently perform’d,

Even while men’s minds are wild, lest more mischance

On plots and errors happen.

What is *Hamlet* as a question of being? *Hamlet* is a lesson. This is its meaning. Let my life and death speak to you, declares Hamlet, so that I might mean something by way of *Hamlet*. And readers have ever since wondered what *Hamlet* means. The true lesson is almost meaningless. If you are, perchance, a prince of Denmark whose father is murdered by his brother, who marries your mother, whom you adore perhaps too much, do not go down this road. Murder your uncle and kill yourself and be quick about it. A play in one act is all you need. Brevity is the soul of will. Less art and more on what truly matters. Nevertheless, *Hamlet* is a court jester that speaks a kind of truth, at least in the realm of philosophical education or educational philosophy — that the aspiration of authorial immortality is at heart pedagogical and transformational. By my hand I write this book, and from the book I speak to your heart and mind as you enter into and against this world of ours.

Perhaps we can picture authorial immortality mythologically. For Aristotle mythology begot philosophy by way of wonder and philosophy superseded mythology by way of true thinking. Education is then training for philosophy and philosophy is the imperative for
education in order to overthrow the mythological as its own kind of monster. Perhaps however philosophy and education never overcame the mythological and firmly remain within its grasp. If monsters are their own misfortune and signs of what’s to come then battling them is a calling. Only heroes are called to battle monsters. Overthrowing monsters is a hero’s task. How so? According to the *cosmogonic cycle of monomyth*. What then is monomyth? Now picture the monster as pure destruction. It defiles and consumes. And it is a message to mythology itself—the sign of what’s to come and what must be done. In reply mythology begets the hero. Mythology calls upon the hero and sends him into the wilderness. He undergoes trials and tribulations. He receives succor and guidance from a wizard or a small talking frog. Finally he is ready. He returns to face the monster. He shows himself. He warns. He attacks. The monster is defeated. The hero boons humanity and humanity is booned with knowledge or peace or plenty. Monomyth follows the path of tragedy as assured destruction. This is *kathados* as a descent into the abyss for the hero and the world. Then monomyth follows the path of comedy as *anodos* as the story ascends to meet the dawn with her fingertips of rose. Monomyth falls into the darkest night and ends in a better tomorrow.

How is this possible? The possibility is in mythology itself. Joseph Campbell explains, “Myth is the secret opening through which inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation.” Energy finds its expression and realization in the hero. “The effect of the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release of the flow of life into the body of the world.” Energy pours into the hero as he hearkens to the call and finds the strength within. Energy burst forth as the hero overpowers the monster. Energy returns the world to the

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15 Joseph Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces.*
16 Ibid., 28.
17 Ibid., 3.
18 Ibid., 40.
original source of energy as the cosmic egg or the world navel or the tree of life. Energy writes mythology even as mythology moves energy from within.

The task of philosophy and education is to overthrow monsters. Philosopher educators are mythopoets and characters in their own monomyth. Sometimes philosopher educators are the heroes and sometimes they are talking frogs. Sometimes philosopher educators write the myth itself. Sometimes the philosopher educator is the mythopoet as talking frog and hero combined. Sometimes monsters are tyrants. Sometimes monsters are corporations or institutions or systems or structures. Marx showed that history itself is monstrous in that it produces monsters and that monsters enter into us and force us to beget monsters anew. Sometimes philosopher educators divide the labor among themselves. Some describe the monster in all its strength and circuitry. Now the monster is unconcealed and shown. It is a sign that warns. Some interpret the signs for what’s to come and what must be done. Some picture the heroes who see the signs and read the warnings and move against monsters. When philosopher educators are talking frogs then the hero is the king or the prince or the orphan or the People themselves. Sometimes the philosopher educator writes for the People so that they might become heroic. Sometimes the philosopher educator writes about the People writing themselves as heroes. They show monsters in order to show the history of the soul of man toward a better tomorrow. And together or singlehandedly philosopher educators search out secret openings in order to tap into and harness and unleash inexhaustible energies that breathe new life into the body of the world. This is philosophical educational monomyth.

The philosophical educational monomyth shows itself clearly by reading Bakhtin’s readings of the epic. Monomyth in the epic style pictures a primordial past in which the story has always already played itself out. The monster is always already defeated. The hero “has already
become everything that he could become, and he could become only that which he has already become.” He is “absolutely equal to himself” in that he is always already full and complete and unchanging. “His internal world and all his external characteristics … all lie on a single plane,”19 which remains “walled off absolutely” from the present.20

Philosophical education is monomyth in the epic style only more so. Mere monomyth in the epic style may hope for a better tomorrow by way of wistfulness about a better past. It shows an absolute yesterday to have been a better tomorrow once upon a time. Philosophical educational monomyth surpasses mere monomyth by way of an epic future. Philosophical educational monomyth envisions an actual potential better tomorrow and works it out in epic and absolute terms: the just city-state or a new Roman empire or a return to nature as civil society or perpetual peace or the absolute state or democratic society. The boon is not mythical and locked way in the inaccessible past. The primordial gives way to the promise of a new reality sub species aeternitatis. The boon is yet to come. If we were expelled from the garden we may finally build one anew as comedy begets tragedy begets comedy once again. Heidegger entered into a mythical anthropological Dasein in order to discern Dasein in historical Greece in order to point the way for the Beyng as the destiny of the German People — primordial Dasein as the new reality sub species aeternitatis.

What then is the path to an epic future? Bakhtin shows us that the path to an epic future proceeds by way of the novel. Perhaps monsters truly become when they no longer shock or horrify. Monsters are most dangerous when they live among us and write themselves as the heroes of an absolute past present and future. The most dangerous monsters are purified on the altar while remaining monstrous at heart. Now monsters are heroes that require heroes to be

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19 Bakhtin, Dialogical Imagination, 34.
20 Ibid., 16.
monsters. By way of the novel monstrous heroes wage war against heroic monsters. Battles are not fought on the fields of Illium. The hero is not the warrior-king or the half-immortal. The monstrous hero of the novel plays the fool and the clown. Words are his weapons as he puts the fun back into a “fundamentally new attitude toward language.”\(^{21}\) He accosts heroic monsters on street corners and in the gymnasium and in repose. He lures them away from fathers and teachers and leads them to the bank of a stream beyond the city walls. He creates a “special little world” as a “zone of crude contact.”\(^{22}\) He is the talking frog with a sharp tongue. His words come with laughter and irony and travesty.\(^{23}\) He assumes the “liberty to crudely degrade.”\(^{24}\) He obtains the “right to confuse and to tease and to hyperbolize life; the right to parody others while talking the right to not be taken literally, not ‘to be oneself.’”\(^{25}\) And by playing along, the heroic monsters grant him the very same and lose before they even begin. For what kind of fool really knows nothing?

Bakhtin tells us that “under such conditions man is in a state of allegory.”\(^{26}\) The story is not tragedy or comedy. It is an opening up of real mythical energy. “Internal man” is “laid bare only with the help of the clown and the fool.”\(^{27}\) Seneca’s Theseus has murdered his son Hippolytus and cut him all to pieces. “What is this ugly formless thing that multiple wounds have severed on every side?”\(^{28}\) He is shocked and horrified at what he has done. He is commanded, “Arrange in order his torn body’s sundered limbs and put back in place the straying

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 21.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., 159.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., 7.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., 26.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., 164.
\(^{26}\) Ibid., 162.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 164.
\(^{28}\) Seneca, *Phaedra* V.1265, in *Tragedies I*, 551.
parts.” Socrates eviscerates and dismembers heroic monsters with the language of the fool. Read your own entrails, he smirks, and put yourself back together again.

Recall, however, that Socrates is also the midwife that encourages heavings and rebirth. The epic hero is trapped in amber in all his glory and shame. Achilles, the great runner, will forever sulk and be destined to die. Hektor, the tamer of horses, is eternally moved by Zeus to his own cruel death. Even Socrates proceeds to his death each and every time. The novel pictures the individual who “acquires the ideological and linguistic initiative necessary to change the nature of his own image.”

The boon of the novel is an unfolding present and an inconclusive future that is open and free of monsters within and all around. It is an erasing and rewriting of the history of the soul. In this way novelistic heroes fight an epic battle against monsters toward a better tomorrow.

While the monstrous hero battles heroic monsters the philosopher educator furiously scribbles it all down. Why? Because monsters are not merely words. They abound in the world. But words are weapons in the world. Accordingly, the novel enters the time and space of “developing reality” that draws together story and reader. Bakhtin explains,

The shift of the temporal center of artistic orientation which placed on the same temporally valorized plane the author and his readers (on the one hand) and the world and heroes described by him (on the other) making them contemporaries possible acquaintances friends familiarizing their relations permits the author in all his various masks and faces to move freely onto the field of his represented world a field that in the epic had been absolutely inaccessible and closed.

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29 Bakhtin, *Dialogical Imagination*, 38.
30 Ibid. 27.
The novel is “the spontaneity of the inclusive present.” Now workers enter the word and the word tells workers the story of their developing world. In novel writing the mythopoetical philosopher educators declares that we have nothing to lose but monsters ourselves. Cassiodorus calls this “fighting the Devil with pen and ink.”

Like Aslan, however, a novel is no tame beast. Sometimes the novelistic character finds truth through courage and self-knowledge. The Underground Man declares, “I have in my own life merely carried to the extreme that which you have never ventured to carry even halfway and what’s more you’ve regarded your cowardice as prudence and found comfort in deceiving yourselves. So that in fact I may be even more ‘alive’ than you are.” Other times the character is pure evil. Huck Finn resolves, “All right then I’ll go to hell.” And he revels in it.

It was awful thoughts and awful words but they was said. And I let them stay said and never thought no more about reforming. I shoved the whole thing out of my head and said I would take up wickedness again which was in my line, being brung up to it, and the other warn’t. And for a starter I would go to work and steal Jim out of slavery again and if I could think up anything worse I would do that too because as long as I was in and in for good I might as well go the whole hog.

Sometimes the heroine exits the scene with resounding thunder. Sometimes she tosses herself under a train. The path of the hero may be Quixotic or Tralfamadorian or Yossarianian. He may simply sit and wait and wait and wait. Kafka turns monomyth inside out and upside down. A small furry hero hordes instead of boons. An acetic coins himself into gold as a carnival act. A man morphs into a big fat smelly bug. A castle keep remains forever unreachable. A doorman simply bars the way to a better tomorrow. And the trial of our man that ends in death like a dog.

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31 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 130.
The Sorrows of Young Werther announced young Goethe just as Goethe announced himself as the novelistic young man. Through Werther we enter into the pastoral setting. We meet the unattainable Charlotte. The sensitive artist records his days and nights of bliss and torment and oh! the frequent weeping. And finally an opened vein and a bullet over the right eye and just before, “I say amen. Charlotte, Charlotte! Farewell! Farewell!”33 So it goes.

But then the reader enters the spontaneous plane of the writing. History unfolds beyond the pages. Goethe declares, “My friends thought that they must transform poetry into reality and imitate a novel like this in real life and in any case shoot themselves. And what occurred at first among a few took place later among the general public.” It is known as the “Werther Effect.”34

For philosophical educational monomyth novelistic reality is too dangerous and too volatile and too unpredictable. Not all may be profaned. Some characters may not be made into fools or fool’s fodder. We may not mock freedom or parody justice. We may not eviscerate peace or dismember democracy. Most importantly, the educational-philosophical author may play with the word, but authors are seldom willing to play with themselves. The task is too important since the aim is absolutely epical

What is broken up by the novel must be put back together again and better by way of epic wholeness and completeness. While the epic past is closed off from reality the epic future must open up entirely and absolutely. In Christian Doctrine Augustine acknowledges the challenge of translating Holy Scripture from one language to another. The Scripture of Christ aims to translate flesh and blood into words. To retain and pass on divine truth even though “men supply His

33 Johann Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther, 87.
word to men.”\textsuperscript{35} Philosophical educational monomyth faces a translating problem of the third kind. How to translate words into flesh and blood? How to turn pages that truly leads us to a better tomorrow. Glaucon admits that a better tomorrow “would be the greatest good if indeed it is possible.” “But I think that there would be a lot of disagreement about whether or not it is possible.”\textsuperscript{36} Socrates demurs and rambles on about the just society. Glaucon intervenes.

But I think Socrates that if we let you go on speaking about this subject you’ll never remember the one you set aside in order to say all this namely whether it’s possible for this constitution to come into being and in what way it could be brought about. I agree that if it existed all things we’ve mentioned would be good for the city in which they occurred … But rather let’s now try to convince ourselves that it is possible and how it is possible and let the rest go.\textsuperscript{37}

Philosophical educational monomyth assumes its greatest task by showing us how to do so that it is done. Socrates gives us the philosopher-king. Plato gives us the Athenian who gives us the lawgiver who gives us the law. Machiavelli gives us the prince of prudence and power. Kant gives us ethical nations and individuals as perpetual peace. Dewey gives us the duo-dynamic of democracy and education. Rawls gives us the veil of ignorance toward a justice society. Freire writes pedagogy for the unbecoming of the oppressed. Philosopher educators write novelistic history that ends in an epic and better tomorrow. How to translate words into a world that truly becomes according to the word? For this task a new hero emerges. The Book.

\textsuperscript{36} Plato, \textit{Republic}, 457d, 1085, in \textit{Complete Works}.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 471c-e, 1098.
In *Emile*, Rousseau the governor deploys Emile the boy into the world as the best kind of education. “Your example will serve them better than all our books,” he ordains.\(^\text{38}\) This riddles the reader of course. For Emile may enter the world only as *Emile* the book just as Rousseau in his confessional “inner being” may remain in the world only in book form since Rousseau, the man, merely molders in the ground. In *Emile*, Emile is the hero and Rousseau the governor is the talking frog. But in truth Rousseau the writer is the talking frog that deploys *Emile* the book into the world as the story of Emile the boy and Rousseau the governor as his talking frog. Emile is not the hero. *Emile* is the hero where it matters most. *Emile* is the hero in the world. Just as the hero moves through the world of monomyth the book as hero moves through the worldly world so that the world may truly become according to the word. The true hero is not the hero in the book but the book in the world. Rousseau declares, “It is enough for me that wherever men are born what I propose can be done with them and that having done with them what I propose what is best both for themselves and for others will have been done.”\(^\text{39}\) The Book in the world aims to translate words into flesh and blood as a better tomorrow.

Like monsters, however, books are always already thrown and fallen. Like monsters books must show themselves if they are to be books at all. They are signs that must be read so that they move the reader. To that end books are deployed. But in truth books are never deployed. They enter the world but never as they please. Books are thrown to the world as martyrs are thrown to the lions. Like monsters, heroes are often dismembered and devoured or “scattered over land or sea.”\(^\text{40}\) But in monomyth this is only always as the completion of their task. Sometimes the hero must disfigure and dismember himself in order to purge monsters that

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\(^{39}\) Ibid., 35.

\(^{40}\) Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 92.
are all around. Christ, crowned with thorns and crucified and pierced in the side, invites us to cut him to pieces and consume him in remembrance of the very same. By contrast, the book is always eaten by worms that eat the words. Unlike the hero of monomyth the philosophical educational book in the world never truly fulfills its task before it is dismembered or before it simply molders. We do not consume books as remembrance. We devour them as predators. Not all of them by everyone but every one by somebody. Like a new Prometheus, the book is sometimes reassembled simply so that after a time the vultures can feed again.

Christ was thrown into the world but without sin. The book is thrown and always fallen with no true salvation. It collapses upon itself according to its own expanse. The vision of philosophical educational monomyth is a better tomorrow as a better world. How then to show a better world? In Lewis Carroll’s *Sylvie and Bruno*, Mein Herr offers the solution. “We actually made a map of the country on the scale of a mile to a mile!” “The farmers objected. They said it would cover the whole country and shut out the sunlight! So we now use the country itself as its own map and I assure you it does nearly as well.”

To show a better world the philosopher educator must show the world that is better. Jorge Luis describes how precisely the world must be shown.

In that Empire the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City and the map of the Empire the entirety of a Province. In time those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire and which coincided point for point with it.

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41 Lewis Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, 169.
By way of the book, the philosopher educator must map the real world into and as a
better tomorrow. Epical and novelistic space and time must become space and time point for
point as lives that are lived in the world. But even the Book of Plato and the Book of Kant and
the Book of Marx and the Book of Dewey and the Book of Heidegger and the Book of Freire as
volume upon volume of philosophical educational monomyth cannot truly map the world. And
what if they try? Borges replies that the road to a better tomorrow is paved with the “tattered
ruins of that Map.”

But maybe mapping the entire world is not needed. Mein Herr asks, “What is the smallest
world you would care to inhabit?” “I know!” cried Bruno. “I’d like a little teeny-tiny world just
big enough for Sylvie and me.” Echoing the teeny-tiny world that Rousseau built for Emile,
now philosophical educational monomyth builds teeny-tiny local worlds in words just big
enough for the Sylvies and Brunos of the world. But Foucault wonders whether “always partial
and local” mapping lets “ourselves be determined by more general structures … over which we
may have no control.” By a proper reading of entrails we know that monsters abound. How
then to map the entire world or at least, in Scholastic terms, to make men as angels to fit on the
heads of pins? In epics the hero prevails by dismembering the body of the monster or consigning
it to the abyss. The monster puts up a fight but it might as well stand still. Its fate is already
sealed. In the world the book is frozen in amber while monsters roam the earth. Marx wrote the
world but the world moved beyond while Marx forever remains the same. “Between the word
and the body there was an immeasurable abyss,” declares Bakhtin.

43 Carroll, Sylvia and Bruno, 169.
44 Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?,” in The Foucault Reader, 47.
45 Bakhtin, DIALOGICAL IMAGINATION, 171.
As a question of literacy, the philosophical educational monomythical problem is the problem of power as force as mythical energy. In Mein Kampf, Hitler writes:

It is not enough to know how a folkish state should look. Far more important is the programme for its creation. We may not expect the present parties, which after all are primarily beneficiaries of the present state, to arrive of their own accord at a change in orientation and of their own free will to modify their present attitude.

He continues:

And so if we wish to transform the ideal image of a folkish state into practical reality, we must, independent of the powers that have thus far ruled public life, seek a new force that is willing and able to take up the struggle for such an idea. For it will take a struggle, in view of the fact that the first task is not the creation of folkish state conception, but above all the elimination of the existing Jewish one.  

Problems of power unconceal the problem of power since a little mythical power is never enough and enough mythical power always too much. Now the book as hero-in-the-world is estranged from itself — too weak by nature according to its monomythical mapping and too strong by necessity if monomyth is to galvanize the world according to its own image. Now, authorial immortality takes on a new meaning according to the cosmogonic cycle. Monsters abound and philosopher educators must become heroes. When faced with The Plague, Tarrou declares, “a fight must be put up in this way or that and there must be no bowing down.” But the road to a better tomorrow is littered with philosophical educational monomyth. Plato’s Socrates played and lost the dangerous game of education while the Athenian merely played house by imagining Magnesia. Dewey showed us the rot of schooling and the tyranny of

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46 Adolph Hitler, Mein Kampf, 411.
47 Albert Camus, The Plague, 133.
industrial society and he prescribed a mix of democracy and education as the remedy. But monsters that plague us do not sit idly and heroes must find the real cure. Dewey’s cure is one of “piece-meal work” — dismembered and scattered — that progresses “a step at a time.” Dewey concluded of his vision, “we are far from such a social state … we may never arrive at it.” Freire concurs, “given the fact that every country on the planet is becoming more and more suffocated by the ethics of the market, it seems to me that whatever we do to promote a universal human ethic is very little compared with what needs to be done.”

Monsters abound so there are always heroes for a new age — authorial immortality as the immortal author as the book of heroes, wizards, and talking frogs. Take Tolstoy, who gives us young Nikolenka and the very ending of *War and Peace*. With the feats of past heroes in mind he declares, “someday I shall have finished learning and then I will do something. I will act as they did. I will do better.” Recall one novice of world renown, who declared, “So much has been done — more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.”

Philosophical educational mythopoets are plagued by a positive attitude — Greek cheerfulness which is positively primitive. They will always learn and they will always do better. This is authorial immortality as the immortal author of heroic books as a never-ending queue of little lambs lined up to fight and be slain by monsters.

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49 Ibid., 326.
51 Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 1410.
52 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 18.
We are not a philosopher educator. We will not do better. We will only do worse by way of authorial suicide in the double degree. Bakhtin shows us the way by way of novel writing. Camus and Sartre gave us the philosophical novel as freedom that is cardboard and predetermined. In *Nausea*, Roquentin vomits in the presence of a tree and we vomit in the presence of Roquentin. Rieux declares that *The Plague* does not merely kill, “ultimately it breaks down all defenses.” Events seem to confirm this. Rieux records an unleashing of arson and gunplay and looting and riots and smuggling. Civil law erodes and gives up. People succumb to illusion and superstition, despair, renunciation, and despondency. In all, however, no mass suicide and no suicide at all in the pages of *The Plague*. The screams and sirens and buboes and terrors lead no one to self-murder. Of all the gunshots that accent the days and months and with certain death all around none speaks of self-infliction. Defenses seem to have broken down all but the defense against suicide, which seems to have held firm in Oran. So much for dangerous freedom amid existential anarchy.

Instead of the philosophical novel we turn to novelized philosophy, which is no philosophy at all. Instead monomyth as language that teaches and shows the way, we speak in heteroglossia\(^{53}\) — language that is “entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents.”\(^{54}\) Bakhtin names this the “*universum* of mutually illuminating languages.”\(^{55}\) It defies purity and unity according to “spectral diffusion in an atmosphere filled with alien words.”\(^{56}\) Here “the novelistic word registers with extreme subtlety

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\(^{53}\) Mikhail Bakhtin, *Dialogical Imagination*, 331.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 276.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 367.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 27.
the tiniest shifts and oscillations of the social atmosphere.” The writer does not command language but is caught up in it.

The prose writer does not purge words of intentions and tones that are alien to him, he does not destroy the seeds of social heteroglossia embedded in words, he does not eliminate those language characterizations and speech mannerisms glimmering behind the words and forms, each at a different distance from the ultimate semantic nucleus of his word, that is, the center of his own personal intentions.

We are immersed as our own linguistic universum that is riddled and refracted through and through. This is the “rich soil of novelistic prose” in “its dialogized ambiguity.” Fertile and wild as “organic energy and open-endedness.” Socrates hearkens to his daimonon, “It is a voice which, when it makes itself heard, deters me from what I am about to do and never urges me on.” Already Socrates dwells on the singular plane of poetics. For Bakthin novelistic “consciousness finds itself inevitably facing the necessity of having to choose a language” It is the sine non qua of “authentic novelistic” writing and reading as words and blood more enigmatic than the Sphinx. It is the death of the author not by way of forgoing authority but according to giving over the ending to the writing itself as the place of all demons.

Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed

In bigness to surpass Earths giant sons

Now less than smallest dwarfs in narrow room

Throng numberless — like the pygmean race …

57 Ibid., 301
58 Ibid., 298
59 Ibid., 325
60 Ibid., 361
61 Ibid.
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats

Frequent and full. After short silence then

And summons read the great consult began.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{62} Paradise Lost, 1 777–798.
THIRD MEDITATION ON SYNTACTICAL SUICIDE

Since this sense is everywhere the same, it is plain that it is not the mere phoneme, but rather the true and complete word, endowed on all occasions with the constant character sense.

—Husserl, “Fourth Investigation”

Each victim of suicide gives his act a personal stamp, which expresses his temperament, the special conditions in which he is involved, and which consequently cannot be explained by the social and general causes of the phenomenon. But these causes in turn must stamp the suicides they determine with a shade of their own, a special mark expressive of them. This collective mark we must find.

—Durkheim, Suicide

I opened the matchbox and struck one match and it would not light. It was soaked with gas and I sort of smiled to myself thinking, “Well, I’ll have to try a second one.”

—Ariel Wilson

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2 Durkheim, Suicide, 278.
3 Edwin Shneidman, The Suicidal Mind, 43.
In the Third Meditation, we take up the most basic question of all. What is “suicide”? To get to the heart of “suicide” we must travel in circles.

The Oxford English Dictionary reports that “suicide” first occurred in 1656, in Thomas Blount’s *Glossographia, or a dictionary interpreting hard words*. This is incorrect. In the *Glossographia*, Blount defines “suicide” as “the slaying or murdering of himself; self-murder.”

A century later, the first edition of Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary (1756) would define “suicide” similarly, as “self-murder; the horrid crime of destroying oneself.” But Blount did not coin the term.


Daube offers a précis on the birth of sui-cide, the offspring of satire:

There lived at Ephesus a happily married young couple. Alas, the husband died; and his wife was so disconsolate that when they had placed him to rest in the mausoleum, she stayed behind there, without food or drink, determined to follow him. Near the cemetery was the public gibbet, where a fine soldier stood guard over a hanged criminal, lest the relatives should cut down the body and give it honorable burial. As the night grew cold, the soldier stepped into the vault to warm himself for a few minutes. Fancy his surprise when he found there a beautiful girl in tears. What ensued I am at a loss how to tell my well-bred public. Let me say that they came to an understanding. But when, finally, the

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4 Blount, *Glossographia*.

5 Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, vol. 2.

sentry returned to the gibbet, the corpse had indeed disappeared. Unwilling to await his inevitable execution for dereliction of duty, he made up his mind to kill himself there and then. The young widow, however, did not wish to face a second loss so soon after her first. She hit on the idea that nobody would notice the difference if they strung up her late husband in the place of the missing criminal. With combined efforts they managed, nobody did notice, and all ended well.7

The story concludes with the crucial line and reasoning: “To vindicate oneself from extreme and otherwise inevitable calamity by sui-cide is not (certainly) a crime.”8 “Sui-cide” was born of comedy, it turns out, though this is incorrect.

Daube notes that although the word first appeared in English, the English did not embrace the “suicide” since they already had numerous ways to “self-destruct” in the sixteenth century, and “self-assassinate” in the next. Shakespeare gave Hamlet thoughts of “self-slaughter” having used “self-slaughtered” in “The Rape of Lucrece,” and then using the term once more in Cymbeline. Early French translations of Hamlet offer meurtre de soi-meme as the equivalent of self-slaughtering.9 In Biathanatos, written between 1607 and 1608, circulated among friends, and finally published in 1644, John Donne coined the term “self-homicide” as a corrective to Augustine’s formulation of “self-murder.” In those days, homicide, in itself was not condemnable. Chaucer’s “Parson’s Tale,” for instance, reports on, “Another homicide that is done for necessity,” so we may have justifiable homicide, most often as self-defense.10

Daube reports that France was midwife to “suicide” by way of the Abbe Pierre Francois Guyot Desfontaines, a French Jesuit, who was a “connoisseur” of obscure English words.

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7 Ibid., 421–422,
8 Ibid., 423 (emphases added).
9 Ibid., 413-414.
10 Ibid., 402n.
Desfontaines discovered “suicide” in the *Glossographia* and included an entry on *le suicide* in his 1726 volume, *Dictionnaire neologique a l’usage des beaux-esprits*. Although Desfontaines did not popularize the word he inspired Voltaire, who used term in his 1739 essay on “*Suicide, ou homicide de soi meme*” and later, in the *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764). And while the *Dictionnaire neologique* circulated in small circles, Voltaire was read throughout Europe.

Within France, *le suicide* became the norm. In volume fifteen of the *Encyclopédie*, published in 1765, Diderot includes an entry on “suicide,” which emulates Voltaire’s treatment. By that time, the word had already appeared in the fourth edition of *Le Dictionnaire de l’Académie françoise* (1762) and received greater and greater elaboration in the next four editions, including the seventh edition (1879), which appeared on the eve of Durkheim’s monograph. In fact, in *Le Suicide*, Durkheim he felt compelled to define the term not because of its obscurity but because of its commonness. “Suicide,” he writes, needs definition because it is too much a part of “everyday language” (*les mots de la langue usuelle*).¹¹

From this French rebirth, Daube reports, the term “affected the rest of the Romance world” and inspired adaptions in Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese.¹² In 1761, for example, Agatopisto Cromaziano published *Istoria del suicidio* and noted that the term had replaced Roman and Medieval Italian terms, such as *uccisione de se medesimo*. A century later, in 1879, Enrico Morselli would publish, *Il suicidio: Saggio di statistica Morale comparata* (*A study of suicide according to moral statistics*), which would be a touchstone for Durkheim’s own work.

Daube also notes that the French adoption of an English word led the English to adopt the French word. He writes, “What is more intriguing is the impact of the French development

¹¹ See Durkheim, *Suicide*, 41; *Le Suicide*, 1.

on England. As we have seen, ‘suicide,’ though originating there, had remained neglected. Now, however, the continental vogue rendered it popular in English too.”\textsuperscript{13} This is incorrect.

“Suicide” did not first appear in England in 1651. The word first appeared in 1643, in the first authorized edition of Thomas Browne’s \textit{Religio Medici}, a widely popular confessional and meditation by the surgeon, scholar, botanist, archaeologist, and literary stylist. In 1635, Browne wrote a personal confession on his faith and beliefs, which he titled, \textit{Religio Medici}. Despite the Latin title, Browne composed in his native English. Over the years, the self-study circulated among his friends and beyond, until 1642, when it was published by Andrew Crooke without the author’s consent. The work inspired excitement and admiration. Samuel Johnson praised “the novelty of paradoxes, the dignity of sentiment, the quick succession of images, the multitude of abstruse allusions, the subtly of disquisitions, and the strength of language.”\textsuperscript{14} Browne was dismayed by the unauthorized publication, which suffered from additions and omissions, and decided to publish a complete and authorized edition. This appeared the following year.

In the 1642 edition, the key passage on suicide does not speak of “suicide. In it, Browne praises the Roman poet Lucan and then turns to a more general assessment of Stoical philosophy.

There be many excellent strains in that Poet, wherewith his Stoicall Genius hath liberally supplied him; and truly there are singular pieces of Philosophy of Zeno, and the doctrine of the Stoickes, which I perceive, delivered in a Pulpit, passe for current Divinity, yet herein are they extreame that can allow a man to be his own Assasine, and so highly extoll the end of Cato, this is indeed not to feare death, but yet to be afraid of life.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 428.
\textsuperscript{14} John Addington Symonds, “Introduction,” in \textit{Sir Thomas Browne’s Religio Medici}, xii.
\textsuperscript{15} Thomas Browne, \textit{Religio Medici} (London: Andrew Crooke, 1642), 81
In the 1643 edition, Browne corrects that passage to read, “yet herein are they extreame that can allow a man to be his own Assasine, and so highly extoll the end and suicide of Cato…”\(^{16}\)

Regardless of its precise English origins, by the eighteenth century, “suicide” had became the norm in England. In 1769, Blackstone entered “suicide” into Common Law with the passage: “The suicide is guilty of a double offence: one spiritual, in invading the prerogative of the Almighty… the other temporal, against the king.”\(^{17}\) In his “Essay on Suicide and the Immortality of the Soul” (1783), Hume entered “suicide” into the philosophical sphere, by turning to the authority of the individual, even against God and king. By the Victorian Era, “suicide” seems to have supplanted other terms in sermons and courtrooms, medicine and academia, literature and general conversation. There are exceptions. For example, the popular ballad, “The Rat-Catcher’s Daughter,” includes the lines

‘Twas a haccident they all agreed,
And nuffkin like self slaughter.
But rhyme seems to have been reason for self-slaughter since the next two lines read

So not guilty o fell in the sea
They brough in the rat-catcher’s daughter.\(^ {18}\)

The origin of “suicide” in England does not ring true, however. Is suicide not Latin in origin? In *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), for instance, Kant equates the German term *selbstmord* with *suicidium* to formulate his prohibition. Did *suicidium* not beget “suicide? Daube reports that until the mid-seventeen century *suicidium* did not exist.

\(^{16}\) Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (London: Andrew Crooke, 1643), 98.


Most authorities who have ventured to guess at all assume “suicide” to be of Medieval Latin provenance. This, however, is to fly in the face of the evidence. Not a single work of the Middle Ages contains *suicidium*. For once, the Latin form is later than the corresponding English and French: *suicidium* appears in learned dissertations from the last quarter of the eighteenth century.\(^{19}\) Daube declares that *suicidium* was begotten by “suicide,” which was begotten by Charleton in 1651. “I am sure this is in fact its moment of birth.”\(^{20}\) We know that part of this claim is incorrect. The other part is incorrect as well, or at least incorrectly correct.

In *From Autothanasia to Suicide*, Anton van Hooff attributes the Latin term to the Spanish theologian, Caramuel. He reports that Caramuel coined the term in the third edition of *Theologia moralis fundamentalis*, published in 1656.\(^{21}\) The authority that van Hooff cites is a 1956 article, titled *De suicidii nomine et quibusdam eius definitionibus*, in which Bernardus Aliamo writes, “primus qui, quantum hodie scitur, vocem *suicidium* cum respectiva *suicida* usurpavit fuit Caramuel,” which says, in essence, that Caramuel coined the term. This is incorrect and incorrect though it may be correct as well.

In the 1656 edition, Caramuel takes up the question of *homicidio*, and then turns to the *Quaestio de Suicidio*. Caramuel writes, *Est quaesto grauis, An detur casus in quo aliquis licite se possit occidere* — It is an important question to determine a case in which it is permissible to kill oneself.\(^{22}\) He continues, “*Suicida dicitur qui se ipsum interimit*” — by suicide we mean one who ends himself. In the fourth edition of *Theologia moralis* (1675), Caramuel adds important

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\(^{19}\) Daube, “Linguistics of Suicide,” 428.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 422.


\(^{22}\) Caramvelis, *Theologia Moralis Fundamentalis* (Laurentii Anisson, 1657), 463.
dimensions to his study, including an addition to the title of his section. His study now concerns the *Quaestio de Suicidio, quod Graci autocheir appellant* — which the Greeks called *autocheir*.

This is all true. But Caramuel did not coin the Latin in 1656. He coined it in 1652, in the second edition of the *Theologia Moralis*, in which he studies a range of questions including “Homocidium, Castratione, Abortu, Suicidio.” Caramuel begins by declaring, “*Consulio hoc dubium de suicidio propono; quoniam multi sunt casus, in quibus alium possit licite occidere*”\(^{23}\) — I propose a resolution to this problem of suicide; since there are many cases in which it is lawful to kill one another.

Perhaps Caramuel did use the term novelly within the genre of speculative theology. But did he not borrow it from the Romans? In *Le suicide dans la Rome antique*, Yolande Grise catalogues the suicide used by Pliny, Livy, Cicero, Lucan, Seneca, Tacitus, Ovid and Vergil.\(^{24}\) The Romans employed a range of terms, among them *mors voluntaria, mortem sibi consciscere*, and *se ipse occidere*, but never *suicidium*. In early Christianity, Augustine borrowed from the Romans, and Aquinas borrowed from Augustine so that in Caramuel’s day, the same terms had been used for centuries. In *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, Alexander Murray offers a broader view of the formulas in use in Roman and canon law, as well as early Christian writings and penitentials.\(^{25}\) In all, *suicidium* seems never to have appeared.

A work by the Italian theologian, Thomasae Tamburini, offers a helpful confirmation of Caramuel’s novelty. In 1655, Tamurini published *Theologica Moralis*, in the tradition of systematic theology. His study is especially helpful in that Caramuel spends a great deal of time

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\(^{23}\) Joannis Caramuelis Lobkowiz, *Theologia Moralis* (Ioan-Gottfridi Schonvvetteri, 1652), 541.

\(^{24}\) Yolande Grise, *Le suicide dans la Rome antique*; see “Liste des principales formules employées dans les textes Latins pour exprimer l’idée de suicide,” 291–297. See also, Timothy D. Hill, *Ambitious Mors: Suicide and Self in Roman Thought and Literature*, which helps to confirm Roman Latin without *suicidium*.

\(^{25}\) See, Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, vol. 2: *The Curse on Self-Murder*. 
refuting Tamurini in his 1656 edition. Tamurini does not, however, take up the *Quaestio de Suicidio*. Instead, his study is one of *De Homicidio Sui Ipsius*, divided into two parts: *occisio sui directa* and *indirecta sui occisio*. Caramuel seems to have changed the terms of the disputation.

The *Religio Medici* helps to support this view, as well. The unauthorized and authorized editions were popular in England and throughout Europe. The following year, 1644, the work was translated into French, German and Italian. That same year, John Merryweather of Cambridge University translated and annotated *Religio Medici* into Latin, with simultaneous publications in Paris and Leiden. How did Merryweather translate Browne’s “suicide”? The question is especially relevant since Browne was scholar of Greek and Latin and is credited with coining over 700 words — fewer than Shakespeare but more than John Milton — including “hallucination” and “electricity,” “incisor” and even “medical.”

One of his specialties seems to be new words built on Greek and Latin roots and prefixes, including the words “antediluvian,” “insecurity,” and “prefix.” OED Editor, Denny Hilton, explains, “It’s not just neologistic showmanships — his works are complicated, minutely detailed, and lovingly created.”

Did Browne coin “suicide” or borrow it from the Latin? In English the passage reads: “yet herein are they extreame that can allow a man to be his own Assasine, and so highly extoll the end and suicide of Cato…” Unfortunately, the 1644 edition is unavailable so we must turn to the 1652 edition. The Latin translation is, *Sunt tamen hanc in partem vehementiores isti, qui mortem fibi consciscentes laudant & Catonem autophantio tantopere extollunt.*

The translation is triply curious. Throughout the *Religio* and its extensive annotation, this seems to be the only instance where Merryweather chooses a Greek term over a Latin word.

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28 Ibid., 14.
Moreover, his annotations suggest a deep reading of Lucan, Cicero, and Seneca. Latin offered numerous choices but Merryweather opted for the Greek, when *suicidium* would be the most direct route and one that Browne would have supported if it is what he had in mind. Finally, *autophantio*, which is printed in Greek characters, is not a word.

Though it is curious that Caramuel, a Spanish Jesuit, would have coined a new term while working in the centuries-old tradition of systematic theology, he seems to have coined the Latin *suicidium* in 1652. The OED traces the origins of “suicide” to modern Latin, which supports this view, except that the English word appeared in at least two different works and genres before the Latin. None of this matters, however, since *suicidium* did not originate with Caramuel, nor is its true origin in modern Latin.

Daube notes that the term would be grammatically incorrect, compared to Roman and Medieval terms such as *occidere se*, *homicidium sui*, and *occisio sui*. Daube speculates that Charleton’s invention was something of a joke, fitting for his satire, since Latin grammar and vocabulary would indicate that sui-cide amounts to “the killing of a pig”$^{30}$ (*sus, suis*). Daube declares, “Not a single work of the Middle Ages contains *suicidium*.”$^{31}$ This is incorrect, as van Hooff later admits in his article, “A Longer Life for ‘Suicide’: When was the Latin word for self-murderer invented?”$^{32}$

The truth is that *suicidium*, or *suicida*, is positively Medieval. The work, titled *Contra Quarto Labyrinthos Galliae* (1177) was composed by Gauthier de St. Victor, an Augustinian mystic. *Contra Quarto* is not Augustinian or mystical, however. Unlike Augustine’s writings, *Contra Quarto* is not a careful theological study. Unlike Pseudo-Dionysius, it is not a careful

$^{30}$ Daube, “Linguistics of Suicide,” 422.

$^{31}$ Ibid., 428.

$^{32}$ Anton van Hooff, “A Longer Life for ‘Suicide’: When was the Latin word for self-murderer invented?,” *Romanische Forschungen* 102, 2/3 (1990): 255–259.
mystical journey either. It is a polemic and a broadside against the logical excesses of Parisian Scholastics such as Abelard and Peter Lombard.

Late in the work Gauthier turns to the pagan roots of Scholasticism and proceeds to the final moments of Seneca. He scorns Seneca for dying *tamquam puerulus* (like a child) in a warm and perfumed bath. The criticism is that he lived life professing Stoicism, but died an Epicurean immersed in pleasure. *Iste igitur non quidem fratricida sed peior suicida*, declares Gauthier.33 That man is worse than a fratricide. He is nothing but a *suicida* who ranks among the ignominous deaths of Socrates, Nero, and Cato.

But now we have traveled in circle upon circle. Did Browne borrow from Gauthier or coin a new word entire, a second birth? Did Charleston adapt sui-cide from Browne, or did he coin the word as well? Did Caramuel coin *suicidio* as a kind of third birth, or borrow it from Browne, or even less likely, from Charlton, or did he know of the *Contra Quarto*? Was the Italian *il suicida*, for instance, influenced by Voltaire or perhaps by Carameul instead, and was Voltaire influenced by Desfontaines by way of Blount, or more directly from an English edition of *Religio*, which circulated throughout France? Did “suicide” make its way back to England from France or did Browne in fact popularize it so that it never needed to take the long and winding road back home? Perhaps most importantly, what happened to *suicida* in the five centuries between *Contra Quarto* and the springing up of “suicide” in England, France, and Spain — all at about the same time? Gaulthier uses the term in a derogatory way, almost as slang, and the term appears in a work directed against the establishment of Scholasticism. It is not surprising that the word did not gain admirers in religious or legal or philosophical writings. But as slang did it endure, or even perhaps originate prior to Gaulthier, in the language of insult

or gossip or humor? Did it endure, just below the surface of literature, yet in plain sight — as “laughter in the marketplace,” to borrow from Bakhtin, a word that floats through “unpublicized spheres” — only to reemergerespectably and literally in the sixteenth century? In all, once “suicide” became, it seems to have become and become again and again, all the while morphing and elevating itself from the gutter to religious confession and systematic theology and philosophy and history and sociology and psychology and upward. From inauspicious birth and rebirth, “suicide” is now the technical and controlling term, across languages; and all, perhaps, because Seneca took a warm bath *tamquam puerulus*.

We traveled back in time to discover the true and complete word, but by going in circles we have really gone nowhere and discovered nothing. We might go a little farther to see that the Romans did not invent *mors voluntaria* or *se occides* as much as borrow from the Greek of playwrights and historians and philosophers. In particular, the Greeks gave the Romans *autocheir* as own-handed destruction and *autoentes* as self-acting killing. In *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles describes the murder of Laius as *autoentes cheiri* — self-acting with his own hand. In *Helen*, Euripides turns the hand against its master as *autocheiri thneisko* — to die by one’s own hand. The playwright uses a similar formulation in *Orestes*, who aims to quit life *autocheiri sphagei* — “as slaughter with his own hand.”

In the *Laws*, Plato gives us *autocheiria* as a criminalization of own-handedness in an ideal society.

> Whosoever of deliberate intent and unjustly slays with his own hand any of the tribesmen shall, in the first place, be debarred from the lawful assemblies, and shall not defile either temples or market or harbors or any other place of meeting, whether or not any person warns off the doer of such deeds—for he is warned off by the law, which is, and always

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34 Daube, “Linguistics of Suicide,” 404.
will continue, warning him thus publicly, on behalf of the whole State; and the man who fails to prosecute him when he ought.35

Similarly, the Greek of early Christianity equated own-handed killing with self-murder (autophonos). In the early fourth century, Eusebius reports that Pontius Pilate become autophoneutes heauton kai timoros autocheir — “his own self-murderer and own-handed avenger.”36

But now we encounter a more basic problem than origins. We hoped to arrive at suicide, “endowed on all occasions with the constant character sense.” But there are innumerable senses that do not make sense when taken to be a whole and complete meaning. Among the Greeks, suicide was noble or cowardly, criminal or virtuous. In the mid-seventeenth century, Browne contemplates suicide, Caramuel forbids it, and Charleton mocks it. We can proceed through the centuries into the present day and continue to encounter a word that defies a constant and common sense. We wanted the true meaning of “suicide” and we only discovered that “suicide” is, in a sense, a question unto itself. Suicide is, but what is “suicide”? We know that “suicide” is, but what is “suicide” if not Suicide, the Word, which at heart is syntax rather than sense. Recall the poem “Death & Co.”

The frost makes a flower,
The dew makes a start,
The dead bell,
The dead bell.

Somebody’s done for.37

35 Plato, Laws IX 871a, in Complete Works.
Sylvia Plath announces that somebody’s done for, and this is a good start. When somebody’s done for somebody is not-yet a Suicide though surely they are close. If we survey the Word, however, from autocheir to se ipse occidere to meurtre de soi-meme to selbstmord and onward, the syntax of Suicide emerges naturally. The syntax of Suicide requires the doing-self and the self-done-in. For Suicide to be the case the self-done-in truly needs to be done and dusted. There is no other way. And Suicide is the case if and only if the doing-self does the self-done-for so that the done-for-self is truly done-in. Syntactically speaking, the doing-self and the self-done-in go hand in hand.

But Suicide is syntax more enigmatic than the Sphinx. Recall that the Sphinical riddle was one of numbers as a question of being. Four becomes two becomes three as one, in and over time. By comparison, the syntax of Suicide would seem to be child’s play. One minus one becomes zero. The truth is in the opposite, however. The Sphinx was not enigmatic but merely clever and it deserved the fate it got for such a petty insight. With Suicide, the riddle is in syntax itself. What one and one and what do they truly become?

We begin by joining authenes and autocheir as “authentic authorial Suicide” — self-acting own-handed self-killing — which is both pure syntax and mongrel etymologically. The purest example of the pure syntax of Suicide is the death of Socrates, in which we are able to witness the identity and unity and totality of the doing-self and the self-same self-done-in. We can even name the true self by way of the daimonion as the self that is just and wise and virtuous and brave. And we must believe that the self-same true self was the self-done-in since only the doing-in of the just self-done-in could mean what it needs to mean in the face of an unjust sentence. And we know that justice is a unified singular totality of being if it is anything at all. In
the case of Socrates, the syntax of Suicide as justice itself requires the just doing-self that does-in the self-same just self-done-in. This is the syntax of Suicide pure and simple.

By turning to the *Hagakure*, the eighteenth century *Book of the Samurai*, we can observe pure syntax in another way, as the absence of self as the doing-self and the self-done in. The *Hagakure* establishes, “The Way of the Samurai is found in death. When it comes to either/or [life or death], there is only the quick choice of death. It is not particularly difficult. Be determined and advance.”\(^{38}\) How to advance? Advance “as though his body were already dead.”\(^{39}\) How is one already dead? By emptying the self of the self. By being always already done for.

Every morning, the samurai … would bathe, shave their foreheads, put lotion on their hair, cut their finger nails and toenails, rubbing them with pumice and then with wood sorrel, and without fail, pay attention to their personal appearance. It goes without saying that their armor in general was kept free from rust, that is was dusted, shined, and arranged.

Although it seems that taking special care of one’s appearance is similar to showiness, it is nothing akin to elegance. Even if you are aware that you may be struck down today and are firmly resolved to an inevitable death, if you are slain with an unseemly appearance, you will show your lack of previous resolve, will be despised by your enemy, and will appear unclean…

It is neither busy-work nor time-consuming. In hardening one’s resolution to die in battle, deliberately becoming as one already dead … there will be no shame.\(^{40}\)

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39 Ibid., 26.
40 Ibid., 39.
What then of Suicide? The ritual of seppuku consists of three cuts: one cut to the belly with a short-sword, left to right; a second cut to the belly, if the samurai wishes to demonstrate extraordinary bravery and control; and then the kaishaku, the beheading by a samurai’s second. Each cut requires skill, precision, and absolute commitment. A female from a samurai family assumes a dignified kneeling position and with a short-blade she slits her throat. Through discipline she wishes upon death to become statuesque in her pose. How is one truly to Suicide in this manner? Yukio Mishima, who Suicided to illustrate, explains that Suicide requires a “purity of action”\(^{41}\) in that one and one have already become none.

Sometimes the syntax of Suicide requires solving the riddle of the Sphinx taken to its logical ending. Heidegger believed that death frames Being merely as a question of living. We know, however, that living with death frames the question of Being as Not Being far beyond where Heidegger was willing to go. Seneca admonishes that mere living is not the good, but rather the good is living well. Accordingly, “to die well is to escape the danger of living ill.” Some hold that “while there is life there is hope.” “Even still,” he continues, “life is not to be bought at all costs.” “The wise man therefore lives as long as he should, not as long as he can.”\(^{42}\) Cicero establishes, “When a man’s circumstances contain a preponderance of things in accordance with nature, it is appropriate for him to remain alive; when he possesses or sees in prospect a majority of the contrary things, it is appropriate for him to depart from life.” He continues, “when life’s last act, old age, has become wearisome, when we have had enough, the time has come to go.”\(^{43}\)

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\(^{41}\) Yukio Mishima, *The Way of the Samurai*, 104.


\(^{43}\) Cicero, *De Finibus* III, 60–61.
In *Biathanatos*, Donne responds to the natural, ethical, theological, and political dogma that denies the self the authority to do the self in.

No law is so primary and simple that it does not preconceive a reason upon which it was founded, and hardly any reason is too constant for circumstances to alter it. In that case, a private man is emperor over himself … He whose conscience, well-tempered and dispassionate, assures him that the reason of self-preservation ceases for him may also presume that the law ceases too, and may do what otherwise would be against the law.44

The reasons for living change because reason itself changes in relation to life and death. Suicide is fitting when reason begins to fail the reasonable. It is the endeavor of an already fading reason, extinguishing itself according to its last remaining powers. Now the doing-self and the self-done-in are distributed over time as Being and what one must surely Become.

We might view time from the other end. Angelique Flowers was diagnosed with Crohn’s Disease at age fifteen. In May 2008, at age thirty-one, she was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer. Soon after, she entered palliative care, which concedes and awaits death. She wished to die with dignity, but could not find a way. In August of that year, “Angelique Flowers died vomiting faecal matter after an acute bowel blockage. As her doctors had warned, her death was simply awful and there was nothing to be done. They told her that her death could be shocking, and it was.”45 In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle treats of events in one’s life that “crush and maim,” “for they both bring pain with them and hinder many activities.” He continues, “Yet even in these nobility shines through, when a man bears with resignation many great misfortunes, not through insensibility to pain but through nobility and greatness of soul.”46 Perhaps Aristotle is

44 John Donne, *Suicide* [Biathanatos], 17.
correct, though perhaps he never vomited fecal matter as the final period to a death sentence as the virtuous activity in an ethical state of being toward the final end of happiness.

We can return to Sylvia Plath to re-picture the syntax as one minus one so that somebody’s done for in a different manner of speaking. In 1984, Colorado Governor Richard Lamm declared that elderly people who are terminally ill “have a duty to die.” He explains in half-hearted half-poetry half-policy, “Like leaves which fall off a tree forming the humus in which other plants can grow, we’ve got a duty to die and get out of the way with all of our machines and artificial hearts, so that our kids can build a reasonable life.”47 This little Lamm was not without reason, however. Margaret Battin begins her essay, “Age Rationing and the Just Distribution of Health Care: Is There a Duty to Die?,” with an ancient authority, Euripides, who addressed “those who patiently endure long illnesses.”

I hate the men who would prolong their lives
By foods and drinks and charms of magic art
Perverting nature’s course to keep off death
They ought, when they no longer serve the land
To quit this life, and clear the way for youth.48

We add to this Utopia, where Thomas More envisions that

when any is taken with a torturing and lingering pain, so that there isn’t hope, either of recovery or ease, the priests and magistrates come and exhort them, that since they are now unable to go on with the business of life, are become a burden to themselves and to all about them, and they have really outlived themselves, they should not longer nourish

such as rooted distemper, but rather choose to die, since they cannot live but in much 
misery: being assured that if they thus deliver themselves from torture, or are willing that 
others should do it, they shall be happy after death.\textsuperscript{49}

In the essay on Suicide, Hume merely echoes this sentiment when he writes, “Suppose that it is 
no longer in my power to promote the interest of the public. Suppose, that I am a burthen to it. 
Suppose, they my life hinders some person from being much more useful to the public. In such 
cases my resignation of life must not only be innocent but laudable.”\textsuperscript{50}

Battin begins her essay with the irrationality of health care. The elderly consume the most 
resources — cancer treatments, coronary procedures, hip replacements, and nursing care — and 
benefit the least. By contrast, those who would benefit most, the young, have the fewest 
resources to access care. We must “look the circumstances of death squarely in the face,” 
admonishes Battin, to devise a just solution. The answer resided behind the veil of ignorance. 
The problem of present decision-making is that age groups compete with one another from the 
position of their present conditions and circumstances. Behind the veil of ignorance, an 
individual would choose the fairest and most just distribution of resources without knowing their 
specific position. The new structure and distributive arrangements of society would increase the 
effectiveness of health care resources. Ten units of care, which would extend one elderly life by 
two years, would go instead to a child, allowing her to live another sixty-four years.

On behalf of society, Battin writes, “I wish to argue that rational self-interest maximizers 
in the original position would prefer the direct-killing practices which are the contemporary 
analogues of the historical and primitive practices of senicide, early euthanasia, and culturally

\textsuperscript{49} Thomas More, \textit{Utopia}, 58 (emphasis added).
encouraged suicide to those which involve allowing to die. Now, somebody’s done for in a double sense. According to Battin’s original position the infirm are surely done for, and must, accordingly, do themselves in. But now the doing-self and the self-done-in enact justice as doing for others what should not be done for oneself. Now, somebody’s done for in life by way of somebody being done for as death.

Sometimes, however, the doing-self demands justice for the self-done-in. What was not done for them in life must be done in death. In Crime and Custom in Savage Society, Malinowski describes Suicide among the Trobrianders as a “complex embracing the desire of self-punishment, revenge, re-habilitation, and sentimental grievance.” Accused of incest, Kima’i, a boy of sixteen, Suicided in one of the traditional ways: leaping from the top of a coconut tree.

Next morning he put on festive attire and ornamentation, climbed a coco-nut palm and addressed the community, speaking from among the palm leaves and bidding them farewell. He explained the reasons for his desperate deed and also launched forth a veiled accusation against the man who had driven him to his death, upon which it became the duty of his clansmen to avenge him. Then he wailed aloud, as is the custom, jumped from a palm some sixty feet high and was killed on the spot.

Sometimes the syntax of Suicide is pure in that it purifies the self. It is total in that it totally transforms the self. It is identity in that the self identifies the true self by way of Suicide. It is unity in that it re-unifies the self with what was lost in the self. Recall that when Christ calls, the bidding is to come and die. Perpetua is led into the amphitheater of Carthage. Are you a Christian? asks the Roman governor. Christiana sum, she replies. The night before the spectacle

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52 Bronislaw Malinkowski, Crime and Custom in Savage Society, 95.
53 Ibid., 78.
Saturus, condemned as well, has a vision. “We had died and put off the flesh, and we began to be carried to the east by four angels … And when we were free of the world, we first saw an intense light. And I said to Perpetua: This is what the Lord promised us … Thanks be to God because I am happier here now than I was in the flesh.” And “when the day of their victory dawned, they marched from the prison to the amphitheater joyfully as though they were going to heaven, with calm faces, trembling, if at all, with joy rather than fear.”

In “The Suicidal Life Space,” Kresten Bjerg reproduces Suicide notes, some of which read

“I believe we will meet later under much more favorable circumstances.”

“I hope one day we will meet in heaven.”

“I am going to meet my dad.”

This is merely reminiscent of Socrates, who explains in the Apology that he will either enter into eternity as an unending dreamless night, or that he will achieve immortality as the eternal search for knowledge in the company of friends.

Often, however, the syntax of Suicide is pure impurity in the warring spirit of Cain against Abel as a monstrous mix of the doing-self and the self-done in. In *City of God*, Augustine established the decisive syntax of Suicide as self-murder. Now the self-done-in is the innocent self, done-in by the doing-self, the self as murderer. Suicide murders one’s own innocence and justice, Augustine explains. Suicide, according to Augustine, defies the calling of love —

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56 Plato, *Apology 40c-42a*, in *Complete Works*.
58 Augustine “Letter 155,” in *Political Writings*. 
Love of God and the Church and oneself. Augustine establishes that Suicides will “perish eternally and be tormented in the fires that last for ever”\textsuperscript{59} and that Suicides will burn “in fires they had chosen for themselves.”\textsuperscript{60} The defect seems to be that the murdering-doing-self and the innocent-self-done-in both seem hell-bound. In any case, the verdict of Suicide as self-murder begat the more precise judicial practice in the Middle Ages known as \textit{saevitai contra cadavere} — “raging against the corpse.”\textsuperscript{61} If a Suicide was by hanging, society would hang the Suicide again. If by stabbing, the Suicide would be stabbed again and again. In virtually all cases, the Suicide would be dragged through town by a horse, then hung or stabbed. George Minois reports that in 1288 in Paris the Abbey hung a Suicide but then realized he was not dragged first. He was taken down, dragged, and then hanged again.\textsuperscript{62} In 1257 a “Parisian jumped into the river Seine. When he was rescued, he took communion before he died. His family claimed the body, arguing that he had died in a state of grace, but because he had attempted suicide and had been in his right mind, as shown by his repentance, the court sentenced his corpse to torture.”\textsuperscript{63} In \textit{The Savage God, A. Alvarez} reproduces a letter the reports the following London event

\begin{quote}
A man was hanged who had cut his throat, but who had been brought back to life. They hanged him for suicide. The doctor had warned them that it was impossible to hang him as the throat would burst open and he would breath through the aperture. They did not listen to his advice and hanged their man. The wound in the neck immediately opened and the man came back to life again although he was hanged. It took time to convoke the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{59} Augustine, “Letter 193”; see also, “Letter 154” and “Letter 155,” in \textit{Political Writings}.

\textsuperscript{60} Augustine, “Letter 185,” in \textit{Political Writings}.

\textsuperscript{61} Murray, \textit{Suicide in the Middle Ages}, vol. 2, 30

\textsuperscript{62} Georges Minois, \textit{History of Suicide}, 7.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
aldermen to decide the question of what was to be done. At length the aldermen
assembled and bound up the neck below the wound until he died.64

The practice may seem savage except that there is truth in the practice according to the syntax of
self-murder.

“Vengeance on a dumb brute?” cried Starbuck. “To be enraged with a dumb thing,
Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous.”

“All visible objects are but as pasteboard masks…. If man will strike, strike through the mask!”

What then lies behind the mask of the white whale?

“I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable
thing is chiefly what I hate … and I will wreak that hate upon him.”65

What then lies behind the corpse? What conceals itself behind a brutish mask if not the
murderous malice of the doing-self that has hung and stabbed and severed from itself the self-
done-in?

We can witness this very same syntax, now in a good light, by turning the Augustinian
syntax of self-murder back against itself. In fashioning the ideal city-state of Magnesia, the
Athenian of Plato’s Laws turns to the problem of temple robbery. The preamble, the model for
building a law, begins by exhorting the criminal to give up his wickedness. The preamble
continues, “If … you find that your disease abates somewhat, well and good; if not, then you
should look upon death as the preferable alternative, and rid yourself of life.”66

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64 A. Alvarez, The Savage God, 45.
66 Plato, Laws 854c, in Complete Works.
Suicide, Hume agrees that even a criminal may do a final public service by “ridding [society] of a pernicious member.”  

Now the doing-self is justice embodied by doing-in the wicked and criminal self, the self of malice and murder. This is justice that the Bible revels in. Suicide is Old Testament justice for Abimelech whose crime was for fratricide. (Judges 9:54) Samson disobeyed God and begged for death and the walls came tumbling down. (Judges 16:28–31) Ahithophel betrayed his king and fell upon his sword. (2 Sam 17) Zimri killed the king and burned the house down upon himself.  

(1 Kings 16) In the New Testament, Matthew reports

Then Judas, who had betrayed Him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,  

Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood … And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. (Matt 27:3–5)  

Now the doing-self rages against the self-done-in as righteous indignation and the demand for self-justice such that somebody truly must be done for.

In the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas adopts the syntax of self-murder and adds the syntax of self-destruction. Self-murder is a crime against self-innocence. Self-destruction, by contrast, defies the law of self-preservation. For “everything naturally loves itself,” writes Aquinas, “and consequently everything naturally preserves itself in being…” “Therefore, for anyone to kill himself is against natural inclination, and against the charity wherewith he ought to love himself.”  

The self-done-in does not wish to be done for. The self-done-in is the self that longs

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to endure and to flourish. The doing-self destroys what makes the self the self, which is at heart self-preservation.

In his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke echoes Aquinas when he writes that man has liberty but not the license to destroy himself.\(^{70}\) “For man is called, by right and imperative, to the divine and fundamental command of self-preservation,” says Locke.\(^{71}\) Locke concludes that the “freedom of nature” is to be restrained by the “law of nature.”\(^{72}\) Man’s freedom as the doing-self of self-license thus violates the imperative of living so that nothing less than Nature is overthrown.\(^{73}\) From the laws of God and Nature, Kant turns to the self-legisitating self by way of the moral self — the self *auto nomos*, a law unto itself. The law of the self is not one of mere nature as preservation as persistence. The law is one of ethical existence. “To annihilate the subject of morality in one’s own person is to root out the existence of morality itself from the world… Consequently, disposing of oneself … is debasing humanity in one’s person …”\(^{74}\) Now the ethical self, the *homo noumenon*, is the self-done-in as the supreme revolt of the doing-self as the self-debased and debasing, such that it roots out what is good in the world.

In “Mourning and Melancholy,” Freud takes up the question of Suicide to discern how self-preservation, now as the consuming drive for life, could be overthrown.\(^{75}\) Freud tells us that Suicide is homicide turned inward, the drive to kill another redirected upon oneself. Suicide is self-murder as the next best thing. The dynamics entail a complex sequence. Love-hate of another and a murderous ambivalence about the very same. The object of love-hate internalized,

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\(^{70}\) Locke, *Second Treatise*, §6, 102, in *Two Treatises of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 102.

\(^{71}\) Locke, *First Treatise* §86, in Ibid., 56.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., §22, 110.

\(^{73}\) Locke, *Second Treatise*, §23, 110.


identified as oneself (introjection). Murder turned inward. Murder against the object without. Murder against the object now within. Suicide as murder, murder as suicide.

Freud’s reading was pioneering, except that it was not new. Augustine writes of the Donatists, “Moreover, they delight in murder so much that they inflict it on themselves when they cannot inflict it on others!” In the fifth century, the Psychomachia describes how Ira seeks to destroy Patientia, yet blow after blow, spear and sword, all are in vain. Patience is unscathed. With each attack, Ira is further enraged. Faced with futility, Ira plunges the sword into his own body. Patience pronounces and mourns that anger is the enemy of itself, it is self-destruction embodied.

In “Sigmund Freud on Suicide,” Robert Litman laments that beyond brief analysis, Freud never fully developed his thinking on Suicide. Thus, “Mourning and Melancholy,” whose central question is not even Suicide, becomes central to psychoanalysis on the crucial question of Suicide. Litman establishes, however, that Freud did express his thinking in many instances. For Freud, Suicide as a war against oneself, and war itself, are inextricable according to the very same dynamics. For Freud, Suicide and war were a “unitary problem.” In “Why War?,” for instance, Freud marks the complex interplay of self-love and death in outward expressions of violence as the war between peoples and nations. In “The Disillusion of War,” and in a letter to Einstein, Freud reflects on the power and promise of “civilization” and the illusion it fashions and promulgates: that civilized man has supplanted and surpassed the natural and biological drive to war. Freud observes, however, that the drive of war — self-love mixed with death —

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77 Robert Litman, “Sigmund Freud on Suicide,” in Essential Papers on Suicide, 324.
remains an inevitable spark as well as its own accelerator. It remains within “civilization” and holds itself up as mirror to the very same.\textsuperscript{78}

The element of Suicide runs through many of his early and famous studies such as Dora and the Rat Man. Freud begins to theorize a connection between love and self-destruction: that the love object overwhelms the ego. Love as self-preservation is an abundance and an overflow of fulfillment of the promise sex and of procreation. And love is dangerous as catheisis into hatred, ambivalence, sorrow, guilt, revenge, and self-love mixed with ego renunciation: a war against another and against oneself, all in the name of love. Once again, this has been demonstrated since time immemorial by way of the Lover with a thousand faces who shows us that love is more war than peace of mind, and less heaven and more like hell. Love is a burning thing, sings the prophet, and it makes a fiery ring. We go down, down, down, and the flames climb higher.

In “Psychoanalytic Aspects of Suicide,” (1933) Karl Menninger formulates the self as a \textit{ménage à trois} of the self against the self. Menninger will later title this promiscuity \textit{Man Against Himself}, the self, which is self-consuming and self-consumed in an overabundance of wishfulness. The \textit{wish to kill}, murderous destruction and creation through the very same. The \textit{wish to be killed}, as self-punishment, a symbolic act of parricide, the symbolism of method: passive erotic submission, drowning phantasies, messianic crucifixion, violent fellatio. The \textit{wish to die}, to return to the womb, to be obliterated.\textsuperscript{79}

In \textit{Man Against Himself}, Menninger formulates these powerful drives at work and their subtle and often hidden manifestations. Some live a life of self-destruction toward self-preservation — ascetics and prisoners of conscience among them. Some die a slow death by way

\textsuperscript{78} For essays on war, see Sigmund Freud, \textit{On Murder, Mourning and Melancholy}.

\textsuperscript{79} Karl Menninger, “Psychoanalytic Aspects of Suicide,” in \textit{Essential Papers on Suicide}, 20–35.
of living through alcoholism or drug use, among others. Compared with Freud, Menninger
establishes Suicidal tendency as both softer and more manifest. Self-destructiveness is not
merely to be found in living exceptionally, as sadomasochism or extreme narcissism. It is to be
found in everyday life in myriad ways and along a range of intensities: working, resting,
socializing, simply moving through the hours of the day. Zarathustra explains,

Yes, a death for many has here been devised that glorifies itself as life: truly, a heart-felt
service to all preachers of death! I call it the state where everyone, good and bad, is a
poison-drinker: the state where everyone, good and bad, loses himself: the state where
universal slow suicide is called — life.80

To borrow from John of Salisbury, we might say of these poison-drinkers non vivorum, sed iam
mortuorum mors — that they are the unliving living as the already dead.81 All that is left, writes
Yukio Mishima, is the final ignoble death, which is merely “dying grandly in a hard hospital bed,
an item to be disposed of as quickly as possible.”82

In this riddle of Suicide we start to witness syntax holding fast only according to the self
that takes leave of itself so that the riddle now becomes whether in Suicide there is truly a self in
the syntax? Xenophon reflects on Socrates, “When I consider how wise the man was, and how
high-minded, I am bound to remember him; and when I remember him I am bound to admire
him”83 — he as the exemplar of the doing-self and the self-done in. By contrast, the self of Freud
in Selbstmord is always already not so much the self as pipefittings that are liable to blow. The
riddle of Suicide, then, is really a case of mistaken identity in the optical illusion of subject for
object. The self takes leave of itself by thinking that someone else is really here.

81 See Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, vol. 2, 210; and John of Salisbury, *Politicratus* II.xxvii, 158.
Long before Freud, Socrates describes the most mild form of the self-leave taking by way of dereliction. There is the soldier at his post, he explains in *Crito*, the dutiful self who is betrayed and abandoned by the self that leaves its post. Augustine formulates this dereliction in the extreme as the leave-taking self takes leave of its very humanity. “Suicide is sin,” he explains, “in that destroys what makes us human: namely reason.” “Suicide is deplorable madness,” he concludes self that takes leave of its good sense. For Luther and Calvin, Suicide is deceit with a proper name. Suicide is the Devil who whispers doubt, questions divine mercy, and leads one into spiritual despair. Martin Luther preached that Suicides “do not wish to kill themselves but are overcome by the power of the devil.” For John Calvin, suicide is demon possession not as despair but as a pure state of fury. “We cannot help but conclude,” he writes, “that the devil has put such a rage in him that such a man is no longer himself and no longer knows what he is doing and what he is saying.” The cure if possible is a “drop of natural sense.”

If Suicide is the spirit of madness or demonic possession or a drop of natural sense, then, Suicide requires legal analysis to adjudicate. Medieval legal doctrine established a distinction between *felo de se* and *non compos mentis*. If one committed Suicide *felo de se* all the punishments applied to the felon that Suicide was. If one was determined to have been *non compos mentis*, the treatment of the corpse and the estate was more generous for one simply being out of their mind. If one Suicides with a feloniously sound mind he was denied funeral

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84 Plato, *Crito* 50c-e, in *Complete Works*, 44.
85 Augustine, *City of God*, 1.20, 26.
86 Augustine, “Letter 158.”
87 Martin Luther, *Works*, vol. 54, 29.
rites. The only defense for suicide was in fact madness or the devil.⁸⁹ If a Suicide Suicides with a sound mind his property would be confiscated since Suiciding with a sound mind showed Suicide to be murderous. To protect a Suicide from punishment and to lay claim to an estate, the family must prove that he was clearly mad even if he was sane.⁹⁰ In a landmark case before the U.S. Supreme Court, which is positively Medieval in spirit, Mary Terry sued the Mutual Life Insurance Company after failing to receive a settlement following her husband’s Suicide. The policy contained a provision that “If the said person, whose life is hereby insured ... shall die by his own hand [autocheir] this policy shall be null and void.” In reviewing the case, the Supreme Court permitted the life insurance payment if insanity contributed to the suicide. Justice Hunt writes

That form of insanity called impulsive insanity, by which the person is irresistibly impelled to the commission of an act, is recognized by writers on this subject. It is sometimes accompanied by delusions, and sometimes exists without them. The insanity may be patent in many ways, or it may be concealed. We speak of the impulses of persons of unsound mind. They are manifested in every form, -- breaking of windows, destruction of furniture, tearing of clothes, firing of houses, assaults, murders, and suicides. The cases are to be carefully distinguished from those where persons in the possession of their reasoning faculties are impelled by passion, merely, in the same direction.

If the death is caused by the voluntary act of the assured, he knowing and intending that his death shall be the result of his act, but when his reasoning faculties are so far impaired that he is not able to understand the moral character, the general nature,

consequences, and effect of the act he is about to commit, or when he is impelled thereto by an insane impulse, which he has not the power to resist, such death is not within the contemplation of the parties to the contract, and the insurer is liable.\textsuperscript{91}

For some, Suicide is madness by way of demons and delusion. For Durkheim the syntax of Suicide is social. The true self in Suicide is the social self as the Self he calls Society. Society is the doing-self while Suicides are the selves-done-in. Durkheim did not invent this reading. Instead, he echoes Enrico Morselli, who writes

Suicide is not an act depending on the personal spontaneity of man but … is a social fact.

Laws, universal and constant, and necessary, restrain within the narrowest limits the path of action assigned to each individual and show that the psychical activities are obedient to the same influences and slow transformations of time and space to which all the other activities of living organism and species are subject …\textsuperscript{92}

Now Suicide is the slow turning of nothing less than space and time. How then to confront what he calls an “epidemic” and the “fatal disease of civilized people”? Is Suicide nothing but a rampant plague that will run its course like a Camusian plague? What then of the prophylactic and therapeutic to which Morselli refers? By volume, the analytic is lengthy, running 350 pages. The corrective, by contrast, spans twenty-two. Of these pages, nineteen establish the etiology of suicide — the very source of the phenomenon. Where the savage dies by homicide, the civilized man or woman dies by Suicide. Yet the root is the same: individual weakness. Savage and social environments are essentially the same, built on the competition to survive and thrive and filled with frailty. Or perhaps they are different, Morselli observes, in that the civilized man or woman is filled with wild needs and desires far beyond the savage. Only some will realize their

\textsuperscript{91} Life Insurance Company v. Terry, 82 U.S. 580 (1872).

\textsuperscript{92} Enrico Morselli, \textit{Suicide: An Essay on Comparative Moral Statistics}, 353.
aspirations, however. The others — the weak minded and weak-spirited — end up as Suicides, as well as the poor, criminals, prostitutes, and the insane.\(^{93}\) Four decades before Freud, Morselli advanced the thesis that civilization itself maims and kills. Freud, however, suggests in civilization a kind of social neurosis. Morselli seems to differ. Suicide is not the mark of a diseased civilization. It is an evolutionary function, nothing but the physics of the psychic struggle and the failure to stay alive.

In the final three pages Morselli conveys one lesson: moral fortitude through moral education — not simply of individuals, but of society as a whole. In moral and political philosophy, from Plato to Machiavelli to Rousseau onward, society is or becomes healthy because healthy individuals help to make it so. The science of moral statistics achieves a reversal. Now, only a healthy society can fashion healthy individuals and therein lies the true evolution. The body social must become morally strong to cure its social disease in order to cure the individual. How this self-doing self-healing social self comes about Morselli does not say, nor could he in a manner of speaking.

In more recent times, Suicide is not the work of physics or psychodynamics. Suicide is more like what oozes within. In *Essential Papers on Suicide*, Goldblatt and Maltserber introduce the field of biochemical study with the following:

Plasma cortisol levels, the dexamethasone suppression test, imipramine binding on platelets, thyroid function tests, dopamine, and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis are all under examination. No avenue has aroused greater interest or shown greater promise, however, than the investigation of the serotonin system.\(^{94}\)

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\(^{93}\) Ibid., 362.

\(^{94}\) Goldblatt and Maltserber, *Essential Papers on Suicide*, 342.
In 1976, Marie Asberg, Lil Traskman, and Peter Thoren advanced one of the first biochemical readings of Suicide in “5-HIAA in the Cerebrospinal Fluid: A Biochemical Suicide Predictor.” Asberg begins with a puzzle. “The frequency of suicide is high in psychiatric patients, particularly in those suffering from depressive illness. But only a minority of depressed patients commit or attempt suicide.” Asberg wishes to know what accounts for the Suicidal impetus and exception. Why Suicide in some depressives but not others? She observes, “Additional risk factors have mainly been sought among demographic, sociocultural, and psychological variables.” Asberg pursues a different line of inquiry and offers her findings. “Evidence for the role of this neurotransmitter [serotonin] in depressive illness is derived, inter alia, from findings of low levels of serotonin in brains from suicide victims and low levels of its metabolite, 5-hydroxyindoleacetic acid (5-HIAA), in the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) of depressed patients.” She concludes, “This suggested the existence of a biochemical subgroup within the depressive disorders, characterized by a lower level of 5-HIAA in the CSF.” A pot only boils foully because there is foul water boiling.

In a doctoral dissertation at the University of Illinois, titled “2-Pyranones as Suicide Inhibitors for Alpha-Chymotrypsin: I. A structure-Activity Study of the 6-Halo-2-Pyranoes; II. 5-Halomethyl-2-Pyranones as Inhibitors of Chymotrypsin,” William Allen Boulanger writes, “The recent development of the concept of mechanism-based or ‘suicide’ substrate inhibitors has opened an entirely new avenue of drug design, where specific enzymes may be targeted for irreversible inhibition to the exclusion of other, similar enzymes.”

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In “Family History of Suicide,” first published in 1984, Alec Roy delves even deeper, into one’s very stars. Maltzberger and Goldblatt note that a patient with a family history of Suicide is twice as likely to attempt suicide, compared to those without such a history. Roy’s study finds possible connections between Suicide and genetic makeup in first- and second-degree relatives: parents, twins, adoptees, and the like.97

In a more recent study, “Serotonin 1A Receptor Genetic Variations, Suicide, and Life Events in the Iranian Population,” Bahram Samadi Rad et al. draw the biochemical and genetic paths together to observe that if serotonin levels enter individuals into a suicide sub-group, as Asberg indicates, then genetic polymorphism as genotype help to explain serotonin levels, which help to explain Suicide as the genetic to the biochemical to the phenomenal as a chain reaction98 — and Boom. But of course bombs can be defused. The Neurobiology of Suicide, edited by David Stoff and J. John Mann, explains how to dispose of Suicide by way of a “Clinical-Biochemical Model” or “Antidepressants” or “Lithium Maintenance on Suicidal Behavior in Major Mood Disorders” among others.99

Now the doing-self of Suicide is reduced to existential ooze. But ooze does not take the trouble to study itself to prolong its existence. Ooze merely oozes. By contrast, ooze matters to us because we matter to ourselves and in this way we recover ourselves from the ooze. We can illustrate the recovery by analogy by way of love. The earliest known expression of love dates to the twentieth century BCE. The “Shu-Sin” is a poetic dialogue between two lovers, husband and wife, king and queen.

Bridegroom, dear to my heart,

97 Alec Roy, “Family History of Suicide,” in Essential Papers on Suicide, 442-456.
99 David Stoff and J. John Mann, The Neurobiology of Suicide: From the Bench to the Clinic.
Goodly is your pleasure, honey-sweet;
Lion, dear to my heart,
Goodly is your pleasure, honey-sweet.
You have captivated me, I stand trembling before you …

In reply

My god, of the wine-maid, sweet is her drink,
Like her drink sweet is her vulva, sweet is her drink,
Sweet is her mixed drink, her drink.  

If we advance 4,000 years we can extract and examine the ooze we call love. In The Chemistry of Love, Michael Liebowitz explains, “There is growing evidence that the differences in how people react to positive and negative romantic experiences are determined by differences in the way they respond biologically to these situations.” Liebowitz continues, “The highs we feel when falling in love … and the pain we suffer when feeling rejected, abandoned or isolated, are in part due to changes in brain activity and body chemistry that are triggered by what we are experiencing.” In truth, then, love is “biochemical processes.” Another researcher reports, “In several species, including rodents and fish, it has been shown that the Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC) influences mating preferences and, in some cases, that this may be mediated by preferences based on body odour.” The report continues, “Here, we report analyses of genome-wide genotype data (from the HapMap II dataset) and HLA types in African and European American couples to test whether humans tend to choose MHC-dissimilar mates.” The

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100 Samuel Noah Kramer, History Begins at Sumer, 246–248.
conclusion, “This study thus supports the hypothesis that the MHC influences mate choice in some human populations.”

Why do these studies matter? Because what matters is not the ooze the makes us, but we who are made of more than mere ooze. Leibowitz writes that love is “crucial to personal happiness and successful relationships,” but that “We live in a society that tells us a lot about falling in love and virtually nothing about staying in love.” The aim of research is to help us to “achieve or regain satisfying levels of functioning,” which is done by “restoring more normal emotional control” through anti-depressants. Moreover, the smell of ooze matters because we know from Aristotle that happiness is the greatest good, and that happiness begins in self-love or the love of the scent of oneself. We know that friendship is built on love for another and that politics requires that we as social animals must love the smell of society. What matters is finding the right scent that leads us to all manner of love.

Ooze is the wrong word, however. For the right words we turn to the “Fifth Treatise” of the Third Spiritual Alphabet, in which Francisco de Osuna writes, “It is appropriate to combine the third word with the two just expounded because it counsels us to perfect all our works so that the words of the prophet may be applicable.” We must read our Spiritual Alphabet, comprised of so many letters and which begins with an I Love that ends in You.

But we spiral downward again in that Aristotle made great efforts to elevate human beings above all other animals by way of the ethical concern for happiness. But now rodents and fishes seem to be happy and in love just like us. Perhaps they are even happier and more in love

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103 Liebowitz, *Chemistry of Love*, 10 and 200.

104 Ibid., 12.

105 Francisco de Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, 156.
since we seem to suffer from the multiple afflictions of anti-love. Leibowitz writes, “Extreme sensitivity to rejection, excessive emotional dependency, and panic attacks can be greatly diminished or blocked by specific medications that do not in any way impair or otherwise a person’s ability to react emotionally.”\(^{106}\) Thus the prescriptions and therapeutics aim merely to helps us regain parity with the love lives of raccoons and halibut.

Some might object that this is mere sophistry and that the point is the state of deficiency of Suicide — what Hippocrates and Plato might call the *hexis* of physical and moral ailment. The genetics and biochemistry of Suicide point to a deficiency as sickness that needs correction, while the Spiritual Alphabet of Love points to moral and physical health. Suicide is nothing like Love. Suicide is in truth anti-Love since a Suicide is depressive and anti-social and anti-self-preservational. Suicide means severing the great chain of Love. But we arrive at a riddle. If Love means fullness as health and Suicide means deficiency, do animals Suicide?

The answer is that only the human animal Suicides. We can first establish that the gods, as divine animals, do not Suicide. Pliny’s *Natural History* observes that Suicide sets us apart from God, since God cannot “even if he wishes, commit suicide, the supreme boon that he has bestowed on man among all the penalties of life.”\(^{107}\) Yet Chiron, the immortal centaur, son of Cronus, exchanged his life for the release of Prometheus. Odin pierced himself in nine-symbolic places and thus went to “join the Gods at their immortal feasting”\(^{108}\). The half-mortal Sphynx was not pushed to his abysmal end. And what of the half-man, half-God, Jesus Christ? In his *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, Origen writes: “if we were not afraid of words and pay attention to things, we might say … that divinely (in a manner of speaking) Jesus killed

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himself.” St. Jerome in the West and the Venerable Bede in the North concur that Jesus was a Suicide. In *Biathanatos*, John Donne pictures Christ as the Lamb and the High Priest, the sacrificing and sacrificed on behalf of Man, the doing-self and the self-done-in so that man is truly done-for. “There is the example of our blessed savior, who chose as the way for our redemption to sacrifice his life and shed his blood.” And does Christ not say, “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” And, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” And, “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. (John 10:11–18)

Nevertheless, Suicide is the supreme boon that the gods reserve for humankind. For how can the indestructible destroy itself? Why would perfection wish to do so?

What then of the animal kingdom? In *Suicide: A Social and Historical Study*, Henri Fedden determines that “the question of animal suicide is doubtful.” He continues, “We must remember that extinction is a concept which animals do not have, and that death which is the result of the cessation of a voluntary act (for instance feeding) is not necessarily volitional.” Fedden reports that “monkeys, notably devoid of principle, have cut their throats with razors.” This is due, however, “to the imitation of men shaving” and “seems simply to have been an unfortunate death.” George Minois concurs, writing that animal suicide is “in the realm of myth; humankind alone is capable of reflecting on its own existence and deciding to prolong life or put an end to it.”

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110 Reported in Fedden, *Suicide*, 10.
112 Fedden, *Suicide*, 11-12.
113 Minois, *History of Suicide*, 2.
This seems to be an empirical rather than a mythical question. In fact, humans have tested the theory. Halmuth Schaeffer writes, “Some time again while talking shop about some work I was doing with mice as experimental subjects, Professor Shneidman asked me half jokingly whether I thought a mouse could commit suicide.” Thus begins his research, titled: “Can a Mouse Commit Suicide?”

Schaeffer and Shneidman, the father of Suicide prevention in the United States, agree on key points: that stories of horses and dogs and pelicans and lemmings Suicide seem far fetched—especially because conceptions of suicide almost always entail “intent,” conscious choice; and, that behaviorism offers techniques to assess these very qualities in animals. “There is, of course, a good deal of statistical, actuarial, and survey-type material on suicide, but nobody has ever experimented with suicide. The obvious reason for this is that such experimentation with humans is out of the question.” Fortunately, Schaeffer writes, “With lower animals it should be possible to conduct experiments that involve physical death.” In short, “we might induce lower animals to kill themselves.”

On a moral plain, this reasoning suffers from its own defect. Would an animal that exercises and demonstrates Suicide in the experiment really be a lower animal after all? If not, would the finding not be unethical in the final analysis, thus making the study unethical from the very beginning? Experimental failure would support the moral position for experimenting, and experimental success would undermine the very ethics of the experiment. In any case, in the experiment Schaeffer presents animals with “lethal situations” in order to observe their actions and discern their discriminations. In the end, Schaeffer admits to experimental failure or at least

114 Halmuth Schaeffer, “Can a Mouse Commit Suicide?,” in Essays in Self-Destruction.
115 Ibid., 496 (emphasis original).
116 Ibid., 497.
inconclusiveness. He could not discern vital aspects of discrimination, akin to a human who feels, fears, and hopes.117 “Without knowledge about death, without an understanding of the meaning of death,” he concludes, “no organism can be said to commit suicide as we use the term.”118

Of course, this is all incorrect since animals other than humans do Suicide. In battle the carpenter ant swells a gland in its abdomen with acid and then bursts its abdominal wall, consuming its enemy along with itself.119 An injured bee will sting itself if it is unable to return to the hive. A sick bee will remove itself from the colony to die.120 Saint Ambrose reports that bees Suicide for disobedience to their master though he does not explain how he identified bee disobedience. In the Falkland Islands, Uckland geese mate for life. When a partner dies, the living goose will remain at its side and wait to die as well.

In Biathanatos, John Donne reports that a female pelican feeds her young with her own blood.121 Donne draws attention to the parallel with Jesus Christ. The blood evidence of the pelican turns out to be the red color of her breast. Vampire bats do practice blood feeding, however. Brosnon and de Waal write, “To survive, [vampire bats] cannot go longer than three days without a blood meal, and adults miss a meal about once every 10 days. These females exchange blood meals with conspecifics who have failed to feed for one or more nights in a row.” The practice entails a high risk, flirting with one’s own death in order to preserve

117 Ibid., 508.
118 Ibid.
121 Donne, Biathanatos, 17.
another.\textsuperscript{122} The practice centers on mother and offspring, and expands from there, which simply suggests that Jesus was not a pelican though he was a vampire bat.

In one experiment, a rhesus monkey is rewarded with food if it pulls a chain. The chain, however, is connected with a device that shocks another rhesus monkey in an adjoining cage. Because the first monkey is able to recognize the suffering of the second, and the reason for the suffering, it refrains from pulling the chain. One participant stopped pulling the chain, and thus stopped eating, for five days. Another would not eat for twelve days. Preston and de Waal write, “These monkeys were literally starving themselves to prevent the shock to the conspecific.”\textsuperscript{123}

Feeding, we know, is at the heart of living. Feeding is the basic law of Nature as the law of self-preservation. How might an animal be induced to violate the law? What principle of death would override the principle of living? A Fox News Science article begins, “The insect world may have found its Mom of the Year in the female Stegodyphus lineatus, a desert spider that feeds herself to her young shortly after they’re hatched.” How is this possible?

The babies crawl all over her head, trying to get at the liquid that is leaking from her face. She makes no attempt to escape as her young eventually pierce her soft abdomen with their mouths before feasting on the liquefied guts inside. This process takes a few hours, at the end of which their mom is officially dead.

A researcher continues, “I know it looks ‘disgusting’ for someone who is not familiar, but it shows the amazing way evolution and natural selection work. It is amazing to think that this


behavior has evolved as the best way (evolutionarily) for a female to reach a high reproductive success by ‘giving herself to her young’. It really shows how the natural world is remarkable.\textsuperscript{124}

On the question of Suicide, then, we can say literally that birds do it and bees do it and on that logic that we may do it too. But do animals Suicide merely because they are animals? A crab, for instance, scuttles in spite of itself and why would that matter to us? In “Make Love, Not War,\textsuperscript{125}” Matt Kaplan writes, “The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the most volatile and hostile countries on the planet, yet its dark interior is home to a group of pacifists who look like refugees from the Summer of Love.” The pacifists are bonobos, “considered by many to be our closest living relative,” adds Kaplan. “They are very docile towards one another, never aggressive or murderous, and possess many of the psychological traits we value most, including altruism, compassion, empathy, kindness, patience and sensitivity.” Why study the bonobo? The answer is educational and ethical. “Can they teach us to be more tolerant?” he asks. “What would it take to turn on our inner bonobo?” Something more fundamental is at stake as well? “How come they have taken such a different evolutionary path?” — different from chimpanzees and gorillas, of course, and different from human beings, as well. Augustine relies on the Old Testament commandment that forbids killing precisely because we do kill. By comparison, bonobos seem to have gone down the path less taken by higher mammals, the one commanded by Christ, which is merely the commandment of love. (John 13:34)

Now we arrive at mixing of questions. If animals Suicide and animals Love, do animal Suicide as Love or Love unto Suicide? Love as violence as true love. We answer the question syntactically and by way of the ways we judge ourselves. Ant Suicide is the emptying of the doing-self such that somebody is done for in a double sense. Durkheim calls this altruism and it

\textsuperscript{124}Walt Bonner, “‘Mom of the Year?’ Mother Spider Feeds itself to Babies,” \textit{Fox News} (May 7 2015).

indicates physical and moral health, individual and society. The sick bee enters into the original position of society to remove itself from the very same? The Suicide of a disobedient bee shows us an Aristotelian kind of shame — the quasi-virtue of ethics — in which a good bee does a bad thing and becomes good again by way of self-punishment as self-justice. Blood sharing is simply an ethic of care when it matters the most and when it means the greatest risk to the doing-self such that the self may be done-in. Bonobo empathy is simply to say that I could not live if it means your suffering. In The Rebel, Camus calls this “metaphysical solidarity” unto self-sacrifice. The vigilance of the goose says that without you I will not live. The spider simply demonstrates the syntax of Suicide as the rule of mother and child as being good to the very last drop.

This line of thinking is mere trickery, however. Nature is instructive but selectively so in that we select what we wish to learn from it. Hobbes led us out of a nature that is not entirely nasty or brutish and Rousseau led us back into a nature that is not always sweet and tender. Nature has infinite lessons to teach. The bonobos followed a different evolutionary path so that we must ponder what else might we learn from them? “There is the sex,” Kaplan writes. “Bonobos are famous for it. Aside from the typical male/female activity, they also engage in more “creative” behaviours: wet kissing, masturbation, oral sex, female/female and male/male couplings, group activities, the list goes on and on. The only restriction seems to be incest between mothers and their children.” Mother and child is out, meaning what’s in is father/son, father/daughter, brother/brother/sister/sister, and, what might be called the “intergenerational.” Some fish sniff each other and fall in love. Some sharks mate by way of violent bondage. The male secures the female by biting down on the head and gills so that he can penetrate her. In
some cases multiple males will compete for the honor so that the female is torn apart. After the act of love, a female lotus will sever and eat the head of her mate.

But we are spiralizing again, to borrow from Ahab. “It spiralizes in ye,” he cries. “That way it went, this way it comes … so brimming life is gulped and gone.”¹²⁶ We can assume that animals are above God’s law because they are so far below it. As a question of human life and human happiness nature is not law but supporting evidence. The task is to elevate the question of Suicide to an ethics suitable for human beings. Which ethics? The ethics of imperative and choice and sin and sickness and madness and justice and revenge and sacrifice and preservation and propagation and extinction and Love — a monstrous mix of what’s good and evil as the doing-self and the self-done-in as the true syntax of Suicide. How to proceed?

FOURTH MEDITATION ON MOOD METHOD

There are some enterprises in which a careful disorderliness is the true method.
—Ishmael, “The Honor and Glory of Whaling”

Though this be madness, yet there is a method in’t.
—Polonius

When the troops were about to capture the tower and were forcing the door of the courtyard, they ordered that fire be brought and the doors burned. Being surrounded, Razis fell upon his own sword, preferring to die nobly rather than to fall into the hands of sinners and suffer outrages unworthy of his noble birth. But in the heat of the struggle he did not hit exactly, and the crowd was now rushing in through the doors. He bravely ran up on the wall, and manfully threw himself down into the crowd. But as they quickly drew back, a space opened and he fell in the middle of the empty space. Still alive and aflame with anger, he rose, and though his blood gushed forth and his wounds were severe he ran through the crowd; and standing upon a steep rock, with his blood now completely drained from him, he tore out his entrails, took them with both hands and hurled them at the crowd, calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to give them back to him again. This was the manner of his death.
—Second Book of the Maccabees (14:41–46)

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2 Augustine reports on the very same in “Letter 162,” in *Political Writings.*
In the Fourth Meditation we take up the question of Mood Method as a method of mood and as the mood of method. In the study of Suicide, method often means the means of Suicide. In his letters to Lucilius, Seneca counsels, “there is nothing to keep a man from dying but the will,” and, a “scalpel opens the way out to the great emancipation, a prick makes you carefree.”

Sometimes the means do not matter so that we have method without a meaning to the means. Seneca describes a German gladiator who “excused himself to relieve his bowels — the only function for which the guards would allow him privacy. Then he took the sponge-tipped stick use as a torchecul and rammed it down his throat and choked his breath till he suffocated.” Seneca exults, “That was the way to insult death! Yes indeed, not very clean or nice, but how stupid to be fastidious about dying!”

In the Middle Ages, a noblemen exhausted and enraged with life had duels and quests and wars to achieve a glorious end. By contrast, Minois reports that peasants had “a rope or a river to end their woes” and either would do. A note found on the body of a Golden Gate jumper reads, “Absolutely no reason except I have a toothache.” Kresten Bjerg characterizes it as leaving the field at the slightest provocation or at least seemingly so.

In present times, method as means matters since by controlling the means as method we can limit the very manner and matter of Suicide. In July 2016, The Washington Post ran an article titled, “To Reduce Suicide, Look at Guns.” “In 2014,” the article begins, “42,773 Americans killed themselves according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.” Suicide is rooted in “severe depression,” which is a problem for mental health. Suicide as

3 Seneca, Essays and Letters, 205–206.
4 Ibid., 206.
5 Minois, History of Suicide, 16.
7 Bjerg, “Suicidal Life Space,” in Essential Papers on Suicide, 490.
depression reaches a “fever-pitch” as the “impulse” to follow through. It turns out, the article continues, that over half of Americans who Suicide follow through with a gun.

Guns matter because of the “lethality of the method.” Ninety percent of Suicide attempts by gunshot are truly done-for while only four percent of Suicide attempts by poison perish. The suffocation success rate is eighty percent and only “32 percent of those who jump from significant heights are killed.” While outlawing fluffy pillows or silk neckties or tall buildings seems impractical, according to the Post, “gun-control measures” would reduce “the suicide rate by over one-third.” Most people choose guns because they can be reached for quickly and their effect is near instantaneous and absolute. Reducing access to guns means deterring Suicide or at least reducing success rates. One Suicide researcher states, “If you have an impulse for suicide and you have easy access to a gun, you’re very likely to be successful at committing suicide.” He continues, “But if access to that means is not there, then the impulse may pass.” Another researcher states, “If we had a shift in the number of people who attempt to end their life with a firearm — who chose other means — we would very greatly reduce our suicide rate.” The Post cites a 2002 report, which concludes that “more than 90 percent of people who survive a suicide attempt won’t die from a later suicide attempt either.” Controlling method means buying time for mental health.

Often times there is meaning in method. In ancient China the poet and statesman Qu Yuan composed a final poem to protest the corruption of the state and he then waded into a river weighted down by a rock. More recently 120 Tibetans self-immolated to protest Chinese occupation and repression,9 Which China views as acts of terrorism. The New York Times reports

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9 Pasang Yangkyi, “Tibetan Man Self-immolates in China,” VOA (December 4, 2013)
that thirty-nine Chinese farmers, women and men, have Suicided over the confiscation and clearing of farmland. Suicide was by immolation, steamroller, and bulldozer.\(^{10}\)

In “Gendered Endings,” Isak Niehaus draws on the concept of “symbolic violence” to discern “themes of protest” in thirteen female Suicides in South Africa. The Suicides were not merely private escapes. They were public demonstrations “aimed at dramatizing the culpability of domineering parents, neglectful boyfriends, disrespectful affines, and abusive husbands.” They were highly visible, expressive, and violent. Of the thirteen women, seven self-immolated and one swallowed broken glass. One Suicide was found in a field for all to see, another in a neighbor’s yard, another in the home of her employer where she was discovered “with blood running from her mouth.”\(^{11}\)

In “Suicidal Performances,” Julie Billaud traces poetics as it runs through Afghani history and culture and intersects with female Suicide.\(^{12}\) First, there is the threat of Suicide. In 2007, the rape of a young girl became a national question of crime and punishment. “We saw on television and in newspapers, reports of mothers threatening to commit collective suicide if the criminals were not prosecuted.”\(^{13}\) Words promise a deed as the instrument of demand — a precision attack and a broadside against the perpetrators, the family structure, the government, and society as a whole. The protestors displayed stereotypes — the tears, the crying out, the fainting. These performances were no mere frailty, however.


\(^{13}\) Ibid., 269–270.
During these rituals, women’s expression of pain through lamentations and screams, allows them to obtain some form of collective validation … [The] women’s capacity to receive such a validation is due to the almost legal value that pain assumes … To “witness,” “to suffer for” and “to come out as representative for” are narrative devices in laments that fuse jural notions of reciprocity and truth-claiming with the emotional nuances of pain.\(^\text{14}\)

Then there are those who proceed perhaps never truly hoping to die. Picture the Suicide attempts of sisters Khadija and Fawzia. Khadija is a musician and singer who went into artistic hiding under the Taliban regime and under the regime of her father. When her father discovered her music he destroyed it and threatened to imprison her at home. She swallowed a “cocktail of tablets” and barely survived. Five days later Fawzia did the very same. Her job as a teacher, her success as an athlete, her clothing and lifestyle, also came under threat by her father. Billaud does not question the sincerity of these attempts. She offers an insight. They should not be considered failed attempts, but rather attempts at success. They were singular performances akin to collective protest — efforts to “claim the last word.”\(^\text{15}\) Living a double life, each sister had reached the limit of what words could do. Akin to Antigone the deed itself had to speak for her. For the sisters, the deed was Suicide in the hope for a better tomorrow.

In some cases, a rope or a river will do. Sometimes, Suicide sends a message to the world around. In other cases, Suicides are like tourists. They love landmarks.

The Eiffel Tower, at 1,063 feet tall, is a lovely site for Suicide, but falling requires skill or luck to navigate the many wires and beams. Rating: Romantic but challenging, not for beginners. 2 Stars.

\(^\text{14}\) Ibid., 279.

\(^\text{15}\) Ibid., 278.
Since 1840, Niagara Falls has sent 5,000 bodies up and over and downstream. Rating: Cold and noisy but near certain, no skill necessary. 3 Stars.

The Golden Gate Bridge, connecting San Francisco and the North Bay, is 746 feet high. Gladys Hansen, the city’s unofficial historian, says: “What makes the bridge so popular is that it’s a monument, a monument to death.”\(^\text{16}\) In *Night Falls Fast*, Kay Redfield Jamison describes the material effect of jumping — or more precisely, the effect of a vertical-water-landing at seventy-five miles an hour. “Trauma from water impact is extreme, ripping apart the great blood vessels, demolishing the central nervous system, and transecting the spinal cord.”\(^\text{17}\) Coast Guard officer Ron Wilton explains, “It’s as if someone took an eggbeater to the organs of the body.”\(^\text{18}\) At the Golden Gate Bridge, most die from impact. Some miss the water and hit land, a small outlet on the north side of the bridge, since they elected not to look down beforehand. A few survive impact and then drown. One is known to have been eaten by a shark.\(^\text{19}\)

The Bay Bridge is 526 feet high and connects San Francisco and the East Bay. The Bay Bridge would do just fine, but nearly no one jumps from the Bay Bridge just as no one proposes marriage on a tall building down the street from the Eiffel Tower. People cross the Bay Bridge in order to reach the Golden Gate in order to jump. Dr. Berman, executive director of the American Association of Suicidology, explains, “Suicidal people have transformation fantasies and are prone to magical thinking, like children and psychotics. Jumpers are drawn to the Golden Gate because they believe it’s a gateway to another place. They think that life will slow down in those final seconds, and then they’ll hit the water cleanly, like a high diver.”\(^\text{20}\) For some, life does in

\(^{16}\) Friend, “Jumpers.”

\(^{17}\) Kay Redfield Jamison, *Night Falls Fast*, 148.

\(^{18}\) Friend, “Jumpers.”

\(^{19}\) Redfield Jamison, *Night Falls Fast*, 149.

\(^{20}\) Friend, “Jumpers.”
fact slow down. It takes four seconds to reach the bottom. “On her way down in 1979, Ann McGuire said to herself, three times: ‘I must be about to hit.’”21

The media does not help to tamp down magical thinking. In his *New Yorker* article, “Jumpers,” Tad Friend writes

The coverage intensified in 1973, when the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner* initiated countdowns to the five-hundredth recorded jumper. Bridge officials turned back fourteen aspirants to the title, including one man who had “500” chalked on a cardboard sign pinned to his T-shirt. The eventual “winner,” who eluded both bridge personnel and local-television crews, was a commune-dweller tripping on LSD.

He continues

In 1995, as No. 1,000 approached, the frenzy was even greater. A local disc jockey went so far as to promise a case of Snapple to the family of the victim. That June, trying to stop the countdown fever, the California Highway Patrol halted its official count at 997.

In early July, Eric Atkinson, age twenty-five, became the unofficial thousandth; he was seen jumping, but his body was never found.

Spectators do not help either. In 1976, engineer Roger Grimes “walked up and down the bridge wearing a sandwich board that said ‘Please Care. Support a Suicide Barrier.’” There is resistance to a barrier due to cost and aesthetics. “People were very hostile. They would throw soda cans at me, or yell, Jump!”22 Suicides do make for good sport, however. “In the eighties, workers at a local lumberyard formed the Golden Gate Leapers Association — a sports pool in which bets were placed on which day of the week someone would jump.”

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
Only 1% of jumpers (or fallers) survive. Friend tells the story of Paul Alarab. On Wednesday, March 19, 2003, Alarab made his way to the outermost beam, 32-inches wide and called “the chord.”

Alarab, a forty-four-year-old Iraqi-American, was a large, balding, friendly man who kept a “No Hate” sign in his office at Century 21 Heritage Real Estate in Lafayette, across the Bay. The day before, he’d told a co-worker that the prospect of civilian deaths in Iraq made him sick to his stomach. Alarab had chosen this day, the first of America’s war against Saddam Hussein, to make a statement of opposition.

Alarab is the 1%. In 1988, he was protesting the “plight of the handicapped and the elderly.” It is not clear that he intended to jump, but he fell anyway. Falling, he thought to himself, “Never again.” Protesting the war in 2003 he fell again. Again, it is not clear if he jumped or slipped. In any case he died.

At the opening ceremony of the Golden Gate Bridge, in May 1937, chief engineer and visionary Joseph Strauss reprimanded reporters, “Who would want to jump from the Golden Gate Bridge?” In his official remarks at the dedication, he stated, “What Nature rent asunder long ago man has joined today.” Friend concludes his article, “Joseph Strauss believed that the Golden Gate would demonstrate man’s control over nature.” Rating: It’s the Golden Gate Bridge, deduction for 1% survival. 4 Stars.

For a time Godzilla lived in the active volcano of Mount Mihara on Oshima Island. Like many Suicides, Godzilla did not have many friends. Instead he had enemies, including the

23 Redfield Jamison, Night Falls Fast, 149
24 Friend, “Jumpers.”
Japanese government, which imprisoned him there in 1984.\(^{25}\) Godzilla did not make Mount Mihara famous, however. That distinction goes to a twenty-four-year-old named Meiko Ukei.

In January 1933 she climbed to the top with twenty-one-year-old Masako Tomita. Meiko “announced to her friend that she intended to throw herself into the volcano. She would, she explained, be cremated instantly and sent heavenward in smoke and beauty.” The lava reaches 2,200 °F. She swore Masako to secrecy and then she jumped. But this kind of secret is difficult to keep. Masako told another friend. In February, Masako and friend climbed to the top of Mihara. The friend jumped as well. Masako returned home and this time word spread. In April, six people leapt into the volcano and twenty-five others were physically restrained. By December 140 people had jumped. Steamers and boats saw an opportunity and began to provide regular transport to the island. They refused to sell one-way tickets, which lays claim to a certain logic. Tourists came to watch. One hundred and sixty jumped the next year. “In January 1935, three young men jumped to their deaths within ten minutes of each other.” In 1936, the annual figure reached 600. “The island’s population increased greatly. Fourteen hotels and twenty restaurants opened within two years. Horses were imported to carry tourists to Mihara’s summit. Five taxicab companies opened for business … A post office was opened at the crater’s edge.” And, the \textit{pièce de résistance}: “a 1,200 foot chute-the-chute down Mihara’s slope” was built “to provide the visitors a final thrill.”\(^{26}\) For all of the above: 5 \textit{Stars}.

If there is meaning in method, method also means the methodological study of mood. Method leads to an understanding of mood as it is finally raised above the water level. From the beginning, \textit{Hamlet} announces mood and never leaves it. “Tis bitter cold and I am sick at heart,” laments Francisco. The only character of reason and moderation, Fortinbras, finally enters after


the damage of mood is done. In *The Suicidal Mind*, Edwin Shneidman — the father of Suicide prevention in the United States — writes, “Suicide never stems from happiness — it happens because of the stark absence of it.”

Suicide is *psychache*, he explains, as thwarted and distorted psychological needs that play out in the “drama of the mind.”

The need for love and acceptance and belonging that is frustrated by rejection and alienation. The need for achievement, autonomy, and order that is frustrated by fractured control, unpredictability, and instability. The need for protection that is frustrated as defeat, humiliation, disgrace. The need for nurturance that is frustrated as failed and hurtful relationships. The need for dominance and counteraction that is frustrated into rage and hostility.

Suicide is, by definition, a “lonely,” “desperate,” and “unnecessary” act.

In “Hopelessness and Suicidal Behavior,” Aaron Beck summarizes his efforts to make psychache measurable by way of the Beck Hopelessness Scale and the Beck Depression Inventory. Hopelessness can be measured according to “cognitive distortions” in which “the patient systematically misconstrues his experiences in a negative way and, without objective basis, anticipates a negative outcome to any attempts to attain his major objectives or goals.” The Inventory and Scale provide the “psychometric means of measuring the intensity of depression and hopelessness, respectively.” “By focusing on reduction of a patient’s hopelessness,” Beck concludes, “the professional may also be able to alleviate suicidal crises more effectively than in the past.”

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28 Ibid., 4.
29 Ibid., 25.
30 Ibid., 160.
31 Aaron Beck et al., “Hopelessness and Suicidal Behavior,” *JAMA* 234, no. 11 (1975): 1146–1149; also in *Essential Papers on Suicide*. 
Decades before Shneidman and Beck, Viktor Frankl inaugurated the Third Viennese School by taking up the question of Suicide as the question of existence itself. In *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Frankl begins by bearing witness to despair in the face of immeasurable suffering. The crucible that Frankl speaks to is Auschwitz, where he learned two lessons. The first lesson is the calling of Suicide, which spoke to everyone there. The second lesson is finding meaning even amid terror and degradation. “Man’s search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life,” Frankl writes. Following the war, Frankl devised *logotherapy*, which takes up the task of discerning *logos* (“meaning,” on his account) in chaos and despair — a therapeutic salvation from suffering. “A strong meaning orientation plays a decisive role in the prevention of suicide…” What meaning? The meaning that comes from love, he explains. “No one can become fully aware of the very essence of another human being unless he loves him.” Love is what gives life meaning, day-to-day and hour-to-hour.

In a similar spirit, Irvin Yalom’s *Existential Psychotherapy* builds upon Ludwig Binswanger and Medard Boss, who translated Heidegger’s Dasein into the field of psychology. Yalom’s *Existential Psychotherapy* offers a different assessment and methodology on the question of mood. Yalom proposes that death-anxiety enters into the individual unconsciously from childhood and only intensifies as it becomes conscious later in life. In turn, the individual erects defense mechanisms, which mask and distort but do not overcome anxiety or the presence of death that leads to it. Rather, anxiety blossoms from it originary root. Yalom calls the result *neurosis*, which realizes its own afflictions and manifestations, but indicates the ever-present, underlining existential crisis.

32 Viktor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, 91.
33 Ibid., 108–111.
34 Irvin Yalom, *Existential Psychotherapy*. 
The reading of Suicide according to mood is not new. Long before Freud theorized the connection between melancholy and Suicide, the condition of melancholy had been viewed as the cause of Suicide. In 1265, Brunetto Latini drew from Greek medicine and philosophy to diagnose the affliction as “an excess of black bile that clouded the brain and prompted somber thoughts.”\textsuperscript{35} By 1394, when Jean Masstoier threw himself down a well, the authorities were quick to conclude that he suffered from “melancholy of the head.”\textsuperscript{36}

Minois observes that the diagnosis of melancholia was a turning point in Suicide. Recalling the spiritual analysis of demonic rage as demon possession, melancholy by contrast began to move diagnosis into the scientific realm of the objective and empirical study. The distinction was not absolute. Timothy Bright’s \textit{Treatise of Melancholie} (1598) maintains that the affliction is “both divine vengeance and diabolical temptation.”\textsuperscript{37} More decisive was Robert Burton’s \textit{The Anatomy of Melancholy} (1621), which replaced the spiritual with a scientific and therapeutic axial analysis of melancholy. One axis is the innate, for individuals are melancholic by greater or lesser degrees according to their natures. One axis is environment, event, and action. Thus, melancholy cannot be exorcised, as it were, but it can be managed or even harnessed in meaningful activities and contributions. Minois observes that Burton’s contribution was scientific and humanitarian by offering explanations that might elicit compassion rather than condemnation.

The humanitarian aspect of Suicide is captured in one word: \textit{Prevention}. The fundamental question of Suicide is one of preventing Suicide. In Part Four of \textit{Suicidal Mind}, which is titled “Staying Alive,” Shneidman writes, “Like food for a starving person or new

\textsuperscript{35} Minois, \textit{History of Suicide}, 38.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 8.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 98.
clothes for a liberated concentration camp prisoner, new ideas create new hope.”38 Shneidman describes and explains Suicide in order to overcome it — to lead one out of Suicide and into a new reality. His method and concern is total. “I am not talking about males, or suicide among African Americans, or suicides among teenagers, or suicide among manic-depressives. I’m talking about suicide — all suicide.”39 The therapist, then, intervenes by fostering hope toward new horizons. Shneidman admonishes the therapists

You should be thinking how to help the suicidal person generate alternatives to suicide, first by rethinking the problem, and then by looking at possible other courses of action. New conceptualizations may not totally solve the problem the way it was formulated, but they can offer a solution the person can live with. And that is the primary goal of working with a suicidal person.40

Existential psychotherapy offers a different analysis than psychache, but assumes the very same task of prevention. Yalom writes, “The task of the therapists is to reduce anxiety to comfortable levels and then to use this existing anxiety to increase a patient’s awareness and vitality.”41 In some respects, Yalom’s method and aim are consistent with existentialism itself, in which the point is not to die but to live and live authentically. The therapeutic method against mood dates back centuries. Plotinus establishes that Suicides succumb to “disgust, grief, and anger.” It is not a rational act. Porphyry, student of Plotinus, reports his own contemplation and the intervention of his master. “He came to me unexpectedly … and told me that this lust for

38 Shneidman, Suicidal Mind, 129.
39 Ibid., 130 (emphasis original).
40 Ibid., 137.
41 Irvin Yalom, Existential Psychotherapy, 188.
death did not come from a settled rational decision but from some melancholic disease, urging me to go for a holiday … So I was brought to abandon my longing for death.”

At the heart of Suicide prevention is the conviction that this too shall pass. Moods can be fierce tropical cyclones, but they do not need to sink the ship. In a *Washington Post* article, “My Husband Died by Suicide,” Suicide researcher Jennifer Stuber describes her efforts to limit access to “lethal means.” “Some people have the impulse to use a firearm to end their lives. Others may choose a less violent ending, such as a drug overdose. Our working group concentrated on limiting access to both of these lethal means.” The crux is that “In some cases, all that’s needed is enough time for the most serious feelings of pain and hopelessness to subside.”

If method studies mood then what mood for the methodological study of Suicide? How to study method and mood according to the mood of method? Often, the study of Suicide means method without mood. We might call this the clinical treatment of Suicide as bloodless words on words mixed with blood. Durkheim’s monograph is one example, written with the same dispassion as one might study traffic patterns. The reply is simply that dispassion is finally what is needed. The absence of mood as purified method as the means to study Suicide is method that is true in that method is truly free and unburdened from mood. Morselli sets the scientific tone for a study of Suicide. He begins “But it is certain that the subject of self-destruction did not enter into its positive phase until after statistical researches.” “This new aspect of suicide could not become clear where metaphysical systems prevailed; it was necessary to collect all the facts, to unite them together, to consider their analogy and difference, to do … precisely the reverse of

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what philosophy had done up to that time.” “For the phenomena of social life this aim can only be attained by statistics.”

Sometimes, however, mood fuels method. In the prologue to *Why People Die by Suicide*, Suicide researcher Thomas Joiner writes

My dad rose from bed … He walked past the room he had shared with my mom, and then past my younger sisters’ room, where they lay asleep … He went downstairs … He walked outside, got into his van, and drove a half-mile or so to the lot of an industrial park. He prepared no note. At some point before dawn, he got into the back of the van and cut his wrists. His self-injury escalated from there — the cause of his death from his autopsy report is “puncture wound to the heart.”

He continues, “I share with survivors the pain of losing a love one to suicide. But I share with clinicians the challenge of treating suicidal behavior, and I share with scientists the daunting task of unraveling suicide’s mysteries.” The field of Suicide prevention is populated, in a sense, by those who did not prevent Suicide. Suicide is studied by way of heartache and regret. The question of Suicide is asked as anger, not as Ira but as outrage in the Aristotelian sense. That attention must be paid. That something must be done.

Now we have a mixing of mood and method as means and meaning; method as means and means as mood and mood as meaning and means without meaning and the meaning of method and method without mood and the mood of method. How to settle the question of mood and method for ourselves on the question of Suicide?

We begin in present-day educational research where *mixed methods* is the gold standard — the unholy union of quantitative and qualitative made pure. Mixed methods is not pure gold,

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44 Morselli, *Suicide*, 1–2.
45 Thomas Joiner, *Why People Die by Suicide*, 1 and 15.
however, but an alloy meant to be stronger and more lasting than its constituents. How, then, to properly mix a method? We turn to Jennifer Green and *Mixed Methods of Social Inquiry*, who tells us that, in a word mixing methods is “done thoughtfully.”46 The researcher mixes methods by way of thinking thoughtful thoughts that are guided by reasoning that is free from melancholy or hopelessness or demon possession. *Dissertation for Dummies* supports this view in that a dissertation of mixed methods is logically designed and executed without the vagarious and inconstancy of mood to cloud judgment.

Greene writes, “A mixed method way of thinking aspires to better understanding complex social phenomena by intentionally including multiple ways of knowing and valuing and by respectfully engaging with differences.” She continues, “The traveler on this leg of the journey will engage with a mixed methods way of thinking and begin to craft his or her own portrait of it.” Now we have the mixed method way of thinking. But is there not also the engagement with this very method that is mixed, as a kind of journey? What of this journey?

Greene describes her journey as methodological and scientific. She started in the field of quantitative research but soon became immersed in “holistic and narrative portrayals of human experiences…” “Over time,” Green recalls, “I began to think more seriously about how different ways of knowing might be able to help each other out.” The very forging of mixed methods meant careful and rigorous thought.

Another question emerges, however. Why the beginning and what saw her through to the end? Greene recalls that she began in “disquiet” and “discomfort” at the present state of things. “Only with enormous trepidation and anxiety” did she proceed. She did not bow down, however, but proceeded in the “spirit of rebellion.” Taken together, she proceeded as “intense

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engagement” according to “constant motivation.” Ultimately, her “career trajectory” was a leap out of and into and over an abyss, which she describes as “revolutionary” “So this is my mixed methods story,” Greene concludes — her petit recrit on the meta question of mixed methods.

Presumably, Greene’s journey means that we can start where she ended with mixed methods ready to hand. The fruit of her anxiety means that we can execute method without mood as thinking social scientists. But on her own description of mixed methods, does the fruit of her labor not seem more like a poison pill? By way of mixed methods, writes Greene, inquiry “can generate puzzles and paradoxes, clashes and conflicts that, when pursued, can engender new perspectives and understanding, insights not previously imagined, knowledge with originality and artistry.” It all sounds so positive and promising, except for the paradoxes and clashes and conflicts that the researcher undergoes, which seem not merely intellectual but positively existential. If mixed methods is done right, it should begin as a pathless wood that is soon flooded with paths, each one calling out and warning away just the same. Have mercy on me! Dante cries, and Virgil answers to lead him on the one true path. On Greene’s account, however, is there one true path of mixed methods? “The core meaning of mixed methods social inquiry is to invite multiple mental models into the same inquiry space . . .” She continues, “By definition, mixed methods of social inquiry involves a plurality of philosophical paradigms, theoretical assumptions, methodological traditions, data gathering and analysis techniques, and personalized understanding and value commitments — because these are the stuff of mental models.”

Greene borrows from Kincheloe, who borrows from Denzin & Lincoln, to name this definition. “The process at work in the bricolage involves learning from difference,” writes

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47 See, Ibid., 61–65.
48 Ibid., 24.
49 Ibid., xii.
50 Ibid., 13.
Kincheloe. “Bricolage does not simply tolerate difference but cultivates it as a spark to researcher creativity.”51 The boon is substantial. Mixed methods is “generative and open, seeking a richer, deeper, better understanding of important facets of our infinitely complex social world.”52 It is all benign and productive, except for the mask of mixed methods. What of the little lower layer, the truth of mixed methods behind the mask? Is there not — as evidenced by trepidation and anxiety and the spirit of rebellion that drives on — an outrageous strength to mixed methods by way of mood? Is mood not the true spirit and sine non qua of a method that is mixed? By way of mixed methods by way of bricolage is not the mixer of method the scientific mind as the creative mind as a savage mind in a savage mood as the scientific mood of the scientific method of mixing?

We are merely spiralizing again. We now know that the heart of the science of mixing methods is a savage one. Though mixed methods promises a better tomorrow, it is an eternal shading that never sees the full light of day. Recall that mixed methods generates puzzles and paradoxes, clashes and conflicts. This is its true power, its outrageous strength. But are mixed methods powerful enough to resolve each and every one of them? In light of the infinitely complex world that engulfs the mixer and what is to be mixed, if the puzzles are truly solved and the paradoxes resolved and the clashes and conflicts settled, then were they really that puzzling and paradoxical and riotous in light of infinite complexity? This question is not important, however, since the savage science of mixed methods is a far cry from the purity of the philosophy of education or educational philosophy, which is its own kind of alloy, and which is purified of the vagaries and inconstancy of mood.

51 Ibid., 28.
52 Ibid., 20.
The very aim of philosophy-education is to harness the outrageous strength of clear and theoretic thinking to lift us up and out from among the savages. Philosophy might mean Being in a loving mood for wisdom, but it can never mean wisdom as merely Being in the mood of love. Pure mood is pure impurity philosophically speaking. Love may be the wellspring of wisdom, but wisdom then must regulate the flow of love. This is the task of education — to lead us out of the heart and into clear and theoretic thinking on complicated matters that the heart can never comprehend.

Part of the quarrel is that mood passes itself off as philosophy by promising to speak the truth. In “Prophesying by Dreams,” Aristotle refutes the claim that the gods use dreams and prophesy to reveal the truth. This is clearly false, he reasons, for those who claim the power of dreams and prophesy are often deranged, insane, or melancholy. The gods would never use them to reveal the truth, he concludes. The dreamer and prophet may be correct at times. But correctness of thought is merely coincidence or luck. The correctness of thought matters only when it materializes by way of correct thinking. There is no thinking in a dream of prophesy but only a kind of madness that sometimes seems divine.53

In Ion, Socrates instructs the famous rhapsode, “You know, none of the epic poets, if they’re good, are masters of their subject …” The truth, he continues, is that “they are inspired, possessed.”54 How could this be, asks Ion? Socrates replies, “For a poet is an airy thing, winged and holy, and he is not able to make poetry until he becomes inspired and goes out of his mind and his intellect is no longer in him. As long as a human being has his intellect in his possession he will always lack the power to make poetry or sing prophecy.”55 Poetry means exorcism in the

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54 Plato, Ion 533e, in Complete Works, 941.
55 Ibid., 534b-c, 942.
improper, Medieval sense of calling up and conjuring of spirits in order to divine the truth.\textsuperscript{56} Poetry is winged and holy daimon possession. Mood has its place according to philosophy but philosophy must keep mood in its place.

Aristotle explains that poetics is ethics education for the masses by way of strangeness and riddles, wonder and perplexion.\textsuperscript{57} Poetics is lying by way of imitation as falsehood leading to nothing less than the truth.\textsuperscript{58} While the masses are carried along by the energy of the narrative arc, however, the philosopher begins in wonder and then proceeds according to the rigor of logical thinking.

In the Republic, however, Socrates finally realizes the futility of merely badger Athens with questions. Virtue requires readiness for virtue and readiness requires education as pre-education. Accordingly, in Book III Socrates turns to early education by way of song. “A song consists of three elements,” he begins, “words, harmonic mode, and rhythm.” “Mode and rhythm must fit the words,” and each combination has a particular application. Then from his band of disciples Socrates makes two requests.

Just leave me the mode that would suitably imitate the tone and rhythm of a courageous person who is active in battle or doing other violent deeds, or who is failing and facing wounds, death, or some other misfortune, and who, in all these circumstances, is fighting off his fate steadily and with self-control.

Now we study courage not by questioning but by the inner quickening of courage itself. Socrates continues

\textsuperscript{56} See OED, “exorcism.

\textsuperscript{57} Aristotle, Poetics 1458a, in The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 1455a.
leave me also another mode, that of someone engaged in a peaceful, unforced, voluntary action, persuading someone or asking a favor of a god in prayer or of a human being through teaching and exhortation, or, on the other hand, of someone submitting to the supplications of another who is teaching him and trying to get him to change his mind, and who, in all these circumstances, is acting with moderation and self-control, not with arrogance but with understanding, and is content with the outcome.\textsuperscript{59}

Now the virtue of mood is the readiness for virtue. “Rhythm and harmony permeate the inner part of the soul more than anything else, affecting it most strongly and bringing it to grace,” Socrates concludes.\textsuperscript{60}

What then of love? In \textit{Symposium}, we learn the two-fold lesson of love as a longing for truth as beauty, and as the shared educational endeavor of love, which binds master and student together in pursuit of the very same. A true lover loves wisdom, explains Diotima, as one who is between ignorance and wisdom. The ignorant do not long for what they know nothing of, and the wise do not love what they already possess. For the true lover, wisdom looms as she shews great or little, but not yet all. Love is bewitched by truth as beauty and the beauty of truth.\textsuperscript{61} Love is also the educational pursuit of wisdom between teacher and student as each glimpses beauty in the other, and together they drive on.\textsuperscript{62} Toward what? Toward what is suggested in the fleeting and mortal, namely the eternal and immortal, which loom for those who will look hard and strive long enough.

Perhaps the key to mood is moderation, which is the lesson of all virtue especially on the problem of mood. In \textit{Alcibiades} or \textit{Charmides}, for instance, Socrates encounters the

\textsuperscript{59} Plato, \textit{Republic} 399a-b, in \textit{Complete Works}, 1036.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 401d, 1038.
\textsuperscript{61} See Plato, \textit{Symposium} 204a-204d, in \textit{Complete Works}, 487.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 212c.
immoderation of youth as arrogance and wild ambition. In *Symposium*, Alcibiades weeps in love as the bitterness of scorned beauty. “My heart, or my soul,” he declares, “or whatever you want to call it … has been struck and bitten by philosophy, whose grip on young and eager souls is much more vicious than a viper’s …”63 The educational task of love is to harness the excesses of youth so that the youth of noble birth might become noble in spirit as well — all by way of virtuous moderation as the moderation of mood. On the authority of Aristotle and Plato, however, this sentiment rings false since the mood of virtue propels us in the extreme.

For Aristotle, what is *courage*?64 Courage is what is called for by way of defending and attacking and not merely discoursing. Courage is not fearlessness. Courage is bravery in the face of terrifying circumstance. Courage is not the unleashing of passion — anger or hatred, for instance. Courage is love in the service of what is noble. The demands of courage, and thus of virtue, entail an enemy, a threat, and even a mortal danger. For Aristotle, virtue is the mean between excess and deficit — the middle path between two extremes. Thus, courage is the mean between cowardice and recklessness. Courage is *comparatively* moderate. In and of itself, however, courage demands the expenditure of heart and soul. Courage is the extreme of love-come-to-life. Courage meets clash and conflict with outrageous strength even at the expense of a full and complete life.

We already know this from Plato, who tells us that Socrates requires the mode of “violent deeds” and the mode of facing death and the mode of “self-control” in the extreme. In *Phaedrus*, Socrates explains that arrogance and ambition as excesses are not the marks of mere youth and immaturity, but of the soul itself. Picture the soul, he invites, as “the natural union of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer.” One horse is of divine stock, a lover of honor and wisdom and

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63 Ibid., 218a.

64 See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.
self-control. The other horse is the very opposite, a “companion to wild boast and indecency” who “just barely yields to horsewhip and goad combined.” ⁶⁵

The easy moral is that the divine must prevail over the brutish in that moderation must temper excess. One elevates us unto heaven while the other drags us downward by way of debasement. Ahab demonstrates the lesson as indecency overmasters wisdom as its own kind of self-control. “Human madness is oftentimes a cunning and most feline thing,” observes Ishmael. “When you think it fled, it may have but become transfigured into some still subtler form.” Madness assumes the mask of sanity and sanity comes to serve madness, he tells us, and “in his narrow-flowing monomania, not one jot of Ahab’s broad madness had been left behind; so that in that broad madness, not one jot of his great natural intellect had perished.” Now, even the divine is made monstrous. What once was the “living agent, now became the living instrument.” ⁶⁶

This is not the true lesson of Phaedrus, however. “The wing is the corporeal element which is most akin to the divine,” explains Socrates, “and which by nature tends to soar aloft and carry that which gravitates downwards into the upper region, which is the habitation of the gods.” The natural attribute of the ignoble steed in the natural union of a pair of horses is divine by nature. The task is not that one steed drag the other up to heaven. The task is that they find a way to fly together, one offering measured navigation and the other unbridled energy. Navigation bridles unbridled energy, just as unbridled energy will take the chariot where it truly needs to go.

We can retell this story of the soul by way of two looninesses — mysticism and existentialism. Any passage of Zarathustra is enough to demonstrate the looniness of

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⁶⁵ Plato, Phaedrus, 246a–254e, 524cf, in Complete Works.

⁶⁶ Moby Dick, “Moby Dick” (XXXI), 176.
existentialism. Existentialism, in turn, helps us to demonstrate the looniness of mysticism. In *Brothers Karamozov*, we learn just how loony Father Ferapont is. “For the most part he merely uttered some strange saying,” writes Dostoevsky, “which always posed a great riddle for the visitor, and then, despite all entreaties, would give no further explanation.” He then passes on “A strange rumor … that Father Ferapont was in communication with heavenly spirits and conversed only with them, which was why he was silent with people.” Alongside angels, we learn, Father Ferapont sees devils all around. “There was one hiding from me behind the door,” cries the father. “I suddenly slammed the door shut and pinched his tail. He started squealing, struggling, and I crossed him to death with the sign of the Cross, the triple one. He dropped dead on the spot, like a squashed spider.”  

Slightly less loony is Teresa of Avila who wonders how to know that experience of union is truly Union with God? Is it a dream or imagination or devilish deceit, she wonders, since “a few lizards, being very agile, can hide themselves all over the place and infect the mind.” “Agile as they are,” she assures, “the lizards cannot enter this Mansion, for neither imagination nor memory nor understanding can be an obstacle to the blessings that are bestowed in it.”

This is not true looniness, however. In present day ethics these are simply lives that are lived, deserving not of ridicule but of ethnography. The true looniness is two-fold, as venial sin and sin that is mortal. In *The Trial*, before the first inquiry, Josef K. decides “to observe more than speak.” Once the examination begins, however, he loses himself in the moment and cannot shut up. “Behold!” declares Zarathustra, “I am weary of my wisdom. Like a bee that has

69 Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, 43.
gathered too much honey; I need outstretched hands to take it.” Recall that the Cloud of Unknowing forbids reading and writing and thinking about the Cloud of Unknowing, and then proceeds to teach by way of writing for the reader so that he surely must think, at least a little bit.

Education is the venial sin of mysticism and existentialism. Education merely paves the way for sin that is mortal. Some might say that the true sin is solipsism or nihilism or cloistering in the manner of an ostrich. The true sin is, in fact, politics toward a better tomorrow — the mythological task according to the cosmogonic cycle. Recall Father Zossima whose final wish is for a mystical mother Russia. “Our own humble and meek ones, fasters and keepers of silence, will arise and go forth for a great deed,” he declares. “The salvation of Russia is from the people. The people will confront the atheist and overcome him, and there will be one Orthodox Russia.” His command to Alyosha is to leave the monastery and go out into the world. “Watch over the people,” he instructs, “and keep a watch on their hearts. Guide them in peace.”

In the same spirit, Kierkegaard writes, “But it certainly is obvious that Christendom has gone astray in reflection and sagacity.” “On the concept of Christendom,” he continues, “I am like a spy in a higher service, the service of an idea.” His self-appointed “task” as an author? To “makes manifest the illusion of Christendom and provides a vision of what is to become a Christian” — “to make people aware” of the new way “permeated by reflection.” To build, as Nietzsche says, a society of solitary men.

In truth, politics practically infects existentialism. Marx entered the individual into the materiality of consciousness, a vital contribution to the anti-rationality of existentialism, and Sartre would ultimately return existentialism to the historical and dialectical realization of

70 Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, §1.
71 Dostoevsky, Brothers Karamazov, 314–315.
72 Søren Kierkegaard, The Point of View, 87–88 and 52–53.
Marxism. In *Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus describes the supreme tension of existence by way of the Absurd Man. In *The Rebel*, he enters the Absurd Man into the supreme calling of “metaphysical solidarity” and “natural community” with others. In *Just Assassins*, Camus works out what solidarity truly means since something must be done in this way or that to realize a just society.

Heidegger illustrates what happens when the existentialist fails at politics. In his testimony before the Committee on De-Nazification at Frieburg University (July 23, 1945), Heidegger begins, “I am admonished by earnest supporters to seize this occasion publicly to recant any offending words and deeds from the past …” In good conscience, however, Heidegger takes a different path. “In the grammar of Dasein,” he testifies, “the declining is perpetual value-motion, never coming to rest at any fixed point of case-relation; nor is there any formerly erect, pre-lapsarian subject-position from which it falls in declining relation with objects.” He continues, “The language of Dasein is no lingua franca but a vernacular whose words are a matter of sounds altogether untranslatable in the same sense in which piety and its metaphors are untranslatable.”

Now Kierkegaard cries out. “Stop a moment! You talk as if you were defending a doctoral dissertation — indeed you talk like a book and, what is unfortunate for you, like a very specific book.”

Now looninesses are shot through with sin. How shall we save them? We shall rechristen them as “ship’s charms,” of course. Recall the Pequod as it readies for what’s to come. “Did you never hear,” says Flask, “that the ship which but once has a Sperm Whale’s head hoisted on her starboard side, and at the same time a Right Whale’s on the larboard; did you never hear that that ship can never afterwards capsize?” And so it was done, and once two heads hung one on either

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74 Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, 68.
side, recall that Ishmael proceeds to compare their virtues as he “freely goes from one to the other, by merely stepping across the deck.” Why the study, he asks? “To the Nantucketer,” he answers, “they present the two extremes of all known varieties of whale.” In the same spirit, we simply suspend the heads, as well as the hearts, and study them back and forth. What lessons may we learn on mood according to two species of what looms?

For Aristotle pure intellect pushes through confusion into clarity. In Journey to the Mind of God, Bonaventure writes, “In this passing over, if it is to be perfect, all intellectual activities ought to be relinquished and the loftiest affection transported to God, and transformed into Him.” “This … is mystical and most secret,” he continues, “which no one knows except him who receives it, and no one receives it except he who desires it, and not one desires it except he who is penetrated to the marrow by the first of the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ send into the world.” Here, then, is the lesson.

If you wish to know how these things may come about, ask grace, not learning; desire, not understanding; the groaning of prayer, not diligence in reading; the Bridegroom, not the teacher; God, not man; darkness, not clarity; not light, but the first that wholly inflames and carries one into God through transporting junctions and consuming affections. This fire he alone truly perceives who says: My soul chooses hanging, and my bones, death. He who loves this death can see God, for it is absolutely true that Man shall not see me and live. Let us, then, die and enter into this darkness.76

Mysticism penetrates the light and enters into extreme darkness. In Philosophical Fragments, Kierkegaard writes, “The extension in time and space become like an enormous empty picture for intuition. Instead of filled space, he now had empty space: he started again but saw nothing

75 Moby Dick, “Stubb and Flask Kill a Right Whale; and Then Have a Talk” (LXXIII), 303–306.
76 Bonaventure, Journey to the Mind of God, 38–39.
except the enormous expanse.”

Mysticism and existentialism are merely mood music as readiness for outrageous strength amid an infinite complex emptiness.

The task is mutual since darkness readies us and then pierces and penetrates as it continues along its own path. William James records in his diary an experience as a younger man.

Whilst in this state of philosophic pessimism and general depression of spirits about my prospects, I went one evening into a dressing-room in the twilight … when suddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of darkness, a horrible fear of my existence.

James continues

After this the universe was change for me altogether. I awoke morning after morning with a horrible dread at the pit of my stomach, and with a sense of the insecurity of life that I never knew before and that I have never felt since. It was a revelation; and although the immediate feeling passed away, the experience has made me sympathetic with the morbid feelings of others ever since.

In her Memorial, Angela of Foligno recalls

While I am in this most horrible darkness cause by demons it seems to me that there is nothing I can hope for. That darkness is terrible; vices which I knew to be dead are reawakened from the outside by demons, and along with those, some vices which he’d never been there before come alive in my soul. My body experiences such burning in three places that I used to apply material fire to quench the other fire. When I am in that

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77 Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, 121.

78 William James, “February 1, 1870,” in *The Writings of William James*, 6.
darkness I think I would prefer to be burned than to suffer such afflictions. I even cry out for death to come in whatever form God would grant it.\textsuperscript{79}

One novelist concludes his story with the eulogy, “If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially.”\textsuperscript{80}

Mysticism and existentialism, penetration and counter-penetration, breaking and breaking back, discovery only in loss and the risk of losing all together — how kindred are these spirits of the extreme? Compare Nietzsche and John of the Cross. One writes, “On a dark night, kindled in love with yearnings — oh, happy chance! I went forth without being observed. In darkness and secure, by the secret ladder, disguised — oh, happy chance! In darkness and concealment … I remained, lost in oblivion. All ceased and I abandoned myself. Leaving my cares forgotten among the lilies."\textsuperscript{81} The other writes, “I am a wanderer … I cannot sit still for long”; and, “In the final analysis one experiences only oneself”; and, “Behold! I am that which must overcome itself again and again”; and, “You must be ready to burn yourself in your own flame; how could you become new, if you had not first become ashes?”\textsuperscript{82}

Compare Heidegger and Teresa of Avila on the voices that lead astray. One writes, “Terrible are the crafts and wiles which the devil uses to prevent souls from learning to know themselves and understand His ways.”\textsuperscript{83} The other writes of falling away from authentic Being by way of idle talk and curiosity and ambiguity, which conceal and convolute what matters most.

\textsuperscript{79} Angelo of Foligno, “Memorial,” in Complete Works, 198.
\textsuperscript{80} Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, 249.
\textsuperscript{81} John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul, 46.
\textsuperscript{82} Nietzsche, Zarathustra, 173, 138, and 90.
\textsuperscript{83} Teresa of Avila, Interior Castle, “First Mansions,” 25.
Compares Kierkegaard and The Mystical Theology of St. Denis on speaking beyond words. One writes, “when we enter into the darkness that is beyond understanding, we shall find not only a growing lack of words, but, as it were, a madness and complete irrationality in all that we say.”84 The other writes, “Speak he cannot; he speaks no human language. And even if he understood all the languages of the world, even if those he loved also understood them, he still could not speak — he speaks in a divine language, he speaks in tongues.”85

Compare Sartre and Thomas a Kempis on steadfastness amid sure destruction. One writes,

Because we were hunted down, every one of our gestures had the weight of a solemn commitment. The circumstances, atrocious as they often were, finally made it possible for us to live, without pretense or false shame, the hectic and impossible existence that is known as the lot of man. Exile, captivity, and especially death (which we usually shrink from facing at all in happier times) became for us the habitual objects of our concern. We learned that they were neither inevitable accidents, nor even constant and exterior dangers, but that they must be considered as our lot itself, our destiny, the profound source of our reality as men.86

The other writes, “Blessed is he who keeps the moment of death ever before this eyes and prepares for it every day.” And then, “Be always ready, therefore, and so live that death will never take you unprepared.”87

Compare Heidegger and Teresa on the task of residing always within. One writes, “I began to think of the soul as if it were a castle made of a single diamond … in which there were

84 The Mystical Theology of St. Denis, in The Cloud of Unknowing and Other Works, 7.
85 Søren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, 114.
87 Thomas à Kempis, Imitation of Christ, 21–22.
many rooms …” And, “As to what qualities may be in our souls, or Who dwells within them, or how precious they are — those are things which we seldom consider and so we trouble little about carefully preserving the soul’s beauty.”88 The other writes, “dwelling is not experienced as man’s being; dwelling is never thought of as the basic character of human being.” And, “We do not dwell because we have built, but we built and have built because we dwell …” And, “Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build.”89

On darkness that leads back into the light of pure joy compare Angela and Kierkegaard, Camus and Teresa. One writes, “In this state, the soul is drawn out of all darkness and granted a greater awareness of God than I would have thought possible. This awareness is of such clarity, certitude, and abysmal profundity that there is no heart in the world that can ever in any way understand it or even conceive it.”90 The other writes, “When he arrived at the higher thought, it as an indescribable joy, a passionate pleasure, for him to plunge headfirst down into the same coherent thoughts until he reached the point from which he had proceeded.”91 One asks, “How much rest can this poor little butterfly have amid all these trials?,” and then answers, “He bestows raptures which carry the soul out of its senses …”92 The other writes, “The struggle itself toward the height is enough to fill man’s heart.”93

Now we come to the heart of mysticism and existentialism as mood as interpenetration in light of what looms. We are now ready to witness true light illuminated by darkness. We are

88 Teresa of Avila, Interior Castle, “First Mansions,” 15–16.
90 Angela of Foligno, “Instructions,” in Complete Works, 213.
91 Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, 119.
92 Teresa of Avila, Interior Castle, “Sixth Mansions,” 103–104.
93 Albert Camus, Myth of Sisyphus, 123.
ready for darkness that light has not overcome. Let’s put pure reasoners — bloodless and pure — to the harrow to see what we can learn.

“But what is this piece of wax?,” wonders Descartes and he rolls it around with his fingers. “Taken quite freshly from the hive,” he observes, its “sweetness of honey” remains.

What can I know? wonders Kant. What should I do? What may I hope?

What of this ink pot? asks Husserl. This piece of paper, this chair, that garden beyond the window pane?

In 1920, Husserl began his “Sixth Investigation” with an apology. “In the war years,” he writes, “I was unable to muster, on behalf of the phenomenology of logic, that passionate engagement without which fruitful work is impossible for me.” This is understandable but doubly curious. Pure logic would not seem to need passion to be logically pure, and logicking purely should be immune from the distractions of the world. It is triply curious since he does not explain what passion he needed. The answer may be found in his Ideas. Husserl writes, “Here as everywhere else in phenomenology, one must simply have the courage to take up what is actually to be seen in the phenomenon, as it affords itself, and to describe it honestly …” “All theories have to orient themselves to this,” he concludes.

Throughout Logical Investigations, Husserl emphasizes the orientation of unity. Seek and ye shall find, he suggests. Unity comes by way of intentionality as pure consciousness. Now, however, phenomenology proceeds under the dual orientation of unity and courage. Recall that intentionality extracts content from an object such that pure consciousness targets the very same by way of quality — a judgment, a wish, or a feeling, for instance. This is the unity of content

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94 See John 1:5. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.
95 Descartes, Mediations II, 76.
97 Edmund Husserl, Ideas I §108, 212.
and quality toward meaning. Does not intentionality itself entail a quality, as well? Husserl calls it courage — courage as the *epoche*, the quasi-emptiness of bracketing, courage as an attitude, a manner, and a mode. We aim, but we must also summon the energy to fire and follow through.

In *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida unravels Husserl by way of language and temporality. The problem, explains Derrida, is that pure logic is pure impurity even as it aspires to an unspeakable and timeless consciousness. The problem is that phenomenology consists of only one winged horse, which aspires to the divine, and the problem is that the charioteer tries to cut loose the ignoble union in order to fly higher. The problem, Derrida argues, is one of metaphysics. The problem is that the team of steeds is indissolubly united, pure and simple, and that the charioteer will never realize his dream to gain the insight of a god. This being the case, the true problem of phenomenology is musical. What mode would suitably imitate the tone and rhythm of a courageous person who is doing violent deeds — suspending all knowledge, entering a void, fighting off his fate steadily and with self-control?

We put this question to Kant. In the three *Critiques*, Kant studies three questions of understanding, ethics, and aiming — knowing, willing, hoping. Is there not a fourth question, as well, one that resides beyond these critical domains and that binds them together? *Aude Sapare,* he declares — “Dare to Know.”

The command seems so bold and benign. Thirst for knowledge and drink from the cup. Eat from the tree and your eyes will open.

Let us expand on *enlightenment* to mean the triune of the enlightened as reason, will, and judgment. The task of the enlightened is to unify the trinity of understanding, willing, and hoping. Unity is not the crux of enlightenment, however. The crux, the crucial aspect, the true cross to bear is one of daring and audacity. Kant commands us to dare. He dares us to dare. He

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98 Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”
tasks us and he heaps us. For what is daring without risk and what is true risk-taking without courage? Kant calls it audacity. What then is audacity if not navigation along the very edge according energy that is just barely bridled. “What I’ve dared, I’ve willed,” says Ahab. “And what I’ve willed, I’ll do.” “They think me mad,” he continues, “but I’m demoniac, I am madness maddened.”

Some might say that Ahab is not Kantian, and that Kant has no place in the demonism of Ahab. This is incorrect. If we hopscotch we hop from box to box. If we step on a scotch we still land safely. We start again. We hop once more. This is called child’s play. To dare is to leap. A leap that calls for daring aims to traverse an abyss. Leaping is willing to reach the other side that is just too far, not by way of moral legislation but by way of audacity as the summoning of outrageous strength in light of the task at hand. Kant seems to understand this when he writes that as the enlightened, we are “now more than machines” tasked merely with staying alive. Daring is leaping that puts Being into play as the possibility of losing it all. This is the “intense engagement” and “constant motivation,” that Greene recounts, the monomania of daring and audacity as the leap and the task of a new Promethea, the danger of losing herself and her career along the way. Now a quality gives means and meaning to knowing, willing, and hoping, which is simply true courage amid infinite peril.

We return to Descartes as he rolls the wax between his fingers. Now he places the wax in the fire and the wax is too hot to hold. “The figure is destroyed,” he reports — it is liquefied. The taste and smell and sight and touch are altered, he continues, but nevertheless “the same wax remains.” This is useless knowledge that we must put to use.

100 Kant, “What is Enlightenment?,” 46.
Let us prick Descartes in the manner of Stubb. Let us roll him up with Kant and Husserl and set them ablaze. What discovery do they make on the question of knowing of being? What do they know and what shall they hope for when the noose pulls tight? How may they bracket a gunshot to the head? Let us pitchpole our pod pure reasoners to find out what they know. A pitchpole is like a quill or a baton, only ten feet long. We take aim so that “the bright steel spans the foaming distance, and quivers in the life spot of the whale.” What of the pure concepts and practical judgments? “Instead of sparkling water, he now spouts red blood.” What mood then? The mood is one of mortality. “The agonized whale goes into his flurry,” says Ishmael, “the two-line is slackened, and the pitchpoler dropping astern, folds his hands, and mutely watches the monster die.”

This is perverse, says the reader. It is, in fact, vital to the question of mood — mood as pure reason and logicking purely, and mood beyond the mere powers of pure thinking, pure consciousness, the transcendental ego — mood in light of the world which is no mere object or percept or intuition, but mood as the outrageous strength of interpenetration. We turn from fiction to life itself in order to illustrate.

In 1916, Wittgenstein traveled from Cambridge University and the fjords of Norway to the Eastern Front. Now the World at War is all that is the case. “Since the war began,” he writes, “it has been impossible for me to think of philosophy.” We know that the World at War exists in logical space, which is the world and the word. What then is the case or not the case as War? We look to a state of affairs. “Yesterday I was shot at,” writes Wittgenstein. “I was scared! I was afraid of death.”

101 *Moby Dick*, “Pitchpoling” (LXXXIV), 342.


103 Ibid., 129.
We know from Wittgenstein that “the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself. (2.012) — the thing to the state of affairs to the fact which is the case in the logical space of the World at War. What then is the case?

“Was shot at,” he writes again, “and at every shot I winced with my whole being. I want so much to live.” 104 The wince was the case as a wish to be the case and not to not be the case — to be a live rabbit and not a dead duck beyond pictures and words amid the structure of the world. We proceed to the little lower layer — Wittgenstein-the-world at war as the war within, and the war within as a question of Suicide and sin.

I know have such a desire to live, he confesses. And it is difficult to give up life when one enjoys it. This is precisely what ‘sin’ is, the unreasoning life, a false view of life. From time to time I become an animal. Then I can think of nothing but eating, drinking and sleeping. Terrible! And then I suffer like an animal too, without the possibility of internal salvation. I am then at the mercy of my appetites and averages. Then an authentic life is unthinkable. 105

This is merely the Augustinian sin of hunger, however. When I was born, recalls Augustine, I merely cried out for nourishment. 106 This is sin that is venial as the everyday sin of everyday people. The true sin of Wittgenstein lies elsewhere. Bertrand Russell calls it the “pride of Lucifer” 107 — the sin and strength of Wittgenstein the ignoble steed. He is Lucifier for a new age. “I wouldn’t dream of trying to drive anyone out of this paradise,” writes Wittgenstein. “I

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104 Ibid. 146.
105 Ibid.
106 See Augustine’s Confessions, Book I
107 Monk, 413.
would do something quite different — so that you’ll leave of your own accord. I would say, ‘you’re welcome to this; just look about you.’”  

Perhaps, however, the sin is one of hunger of a higher and lower order. “When I’m engaged on a piece of work,” writes Wittgenstein, “I’m always afraid I shall die before I’ve finished it.” Why would it matter? Once Wittgenstein had finished the *Tractatus* it mattered in that he despaired for lack of an audience. In his biography, Ray Monk writes, “The defeat and impoverishment of his home country, the death of his most beloved friend the frustration at not being able to re-establish old friendships and the strain of putting his whole life on a new footing might be sufficient to account for Wittgenstein’s suicidal state during the autumn of 1919.” This would stand to reason. But Monk continues, “Perhaps the most important cause of his depression was his failure to find a publisher for the Tractatus — or even a single person who understood it.”

In his study of *Rabelais*, Bakhtin contrasts the image of the “pregnant hag” with the “classic images of the finished, completed man, cleansed, as it were, of all the scoriae of birth and development” as well as “disintegration and dismemberment.” Under Descartes and the aesthetics of classicism, observes Bakhtin, the carnivalization of time and space and of consciousness itself was supplanted by a new orientation of “stability and completion of being” — all “toward one single meaning, one single tone of seriousness.” “The image of the contradictory, perpetually becoming and unfinished beyond could not be reduced to the dimensions of the Enlightener’s reason,” he adds. Consequently, these reasoners were prevented

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108 Ibid., 416
109 Ibid., 272.
110 Ibid., 173.
111 Bakhtin, *Rabelais*, 101
from “grasping theoretically the nature of ambivalent festive laughter.”\textsuperscript{112} The ambivalence is one of \textit{grotesque realism}. “It is ambivalent. It is pregnant death, a death that gives birth.”\textsuperscript{113} And is Wittgenstein not a pregnant hag? —the innocent and delicate flower of pure logician, and the twisted and withered soul in which we find “nothing completed, nothing calm and stable.”\textsuperscript{114} “The devil will come and take me one day,” he writes to Russell.\textsuperscript{115} And late in life, “God may say to me: I am judging you out of your own mouth. Your own actions have made you shudder with disgust when you have seen people do them.”\textsuperscript{116}

If we rotate the axes of observation, we can observe Wittgenstein scattered across time zones, each with its own mode and music. He is the philosopher as mythical hero. He is a renaissance man, pregnant with offspring. He is a mystic wracked by guilt. He is a feast of fools as prince to pauper and pauper to princely philosopher. He is Dostoevsky’s unwritten novel by way of infantile, tyrannical self-seriousness — Prince Myshkin turned inside out as an idiot for a new age. He is a modern-day artist hungering for acclaim and esteem. He is always giving birth while the pangs double for death throes.\textsuperscript{117} If Ahab was the demoniac who zigzagged the watery world along a singular path, Wittgenstein traveled back and forth, to and fro, here and there, as if guided by pandemonium. Listen as he continues along his journey.

“Happy mood which made it possible for me to work,” he writes.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 25
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} Monk, \textit{Wittgenstein}, 185.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 580
\textsuperscript{117} See Bakhtin, \textit{Rabelais}, “The ever unfinished nature of the body was hidden, kept secret: conception, pregnancy, childbirth, death throes …,” 29.
\textsuperscript{118} Monk, \textit{Wittgenstein}, 155.
“My unhappiness is so complex,” he writes. “But probably the main thing is still loneliness.”\textsuperscript{119}

“Deep inside me there’s a perpetual seething, like the bottom of a geyser, and I keep hoping that things will come to an eruption once and for all, so that I can turn into a different person.”\textsuperscript{120}

And late in life: “I have suffered much but I am apparently incapable of learning from my life. I suffer still just as I did many years ago. I have not become any stronger or wiser.”\textsuperscript{121}

And, “I can’t even think of work at present & it doesn’t matter, if only I don’t live too long!”\textsuperscript{122}

Like Ishmael, our man is grim about the mouth. Unlike Ishmael, Wittgenstein does not take to ship but simply tumbles overboard. “But this is just like what happens when a man who can’t swim has fallen into the water and flails about with his hands and feet and feels that he cannot keep his ear above water.” Like Ishmael, Wittgenstein clings to wreckage rather than truly taking the plunge. “This is the position I am in now,” he writes. “I know that to kill oneself is always a dirty thing to do. Surely one cannot will one’s own destruction …\textsuperscript{123} It is hard always being done-for and yet never truly done-in.

Recall that the Right Whale, when pierced with the pitchpole, took Stub in circles, round and round, and then simply died. We are both spiralizing and going nowhere. The original question was Suicide as a question of love and we have turned the question of method and mood

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 442
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 97.
  \item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 443.
  \item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 577
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Monk, \textit{Wittgenstein}, 187.
\end{itemize}
into the music of loathing and despair. There is a moral. Mood is a bit like Smerdyakov, the ever-present servant whom the philosophical family keeps hidden away. He works day and night but he is denied lineage and legitimacy. He seems a little slow or too quick to act. He is always obsequious. But he is also always observant. And in truth the story is his all along. He is the heart of what makes the murder a mystery and the mystery the true task for his half-brothers. He topples Ivan most easily since Ivan prides himself on insight and not once does he see it coming. He is the sine non qua of the family Karamozov such as it is. He is a Karamazov in that Karamazovs are peas in a pod by way of madness and monstrousness.

Perhaps we have accomplished one task. Pure reason sees in itself an outrageous strength, which is but a mask for the true secret force of reason, which is mood. The cost is that we are turned around and upside down. We must now commit alchemy by turning monstrous madness into a heart of gold. Have mercy! we cry, and Lucifer answers with a lesson forged in Hell.

To understand my Adversary, says Satan, how
And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent,
By parle, or composition, trace, or league
To win him, or win from him what I can…

Another method I must now begin\textsuperscript{124}
FIFTH MEDITATION ON THE WAYS OF THE WAY

A good man, through obscurest aspiration,
Has still an instinct of the one true way.
—The Lord, “Prologue in Heaven,” Faust
In our Fifth Meditation we search for a true mood and method for our lost little lamb. Recall that in 1821, Robert Southey published *A Vision of Judgment*, which takes up the question of meter in English verse. The aim is to advance hexameter for a new age to renew the rich tradition set down by his forerunners. “[F]rom the elaborate rhythm of Milton, down to the loosest structure in the early dramatists,” declares Southey, “I believe that there is no measure comparable to it in any other language, for might and majesty, and flexibility and compass.”¹

The work is timely and even urgent because the English “spirit” is corrupted of its “moral purity.” The spirit once pure is corrupted, but into what? Into the Romantic spirit, answers Southey, as “those monstrous combinations of horrors and mockery, lewdness and impiety, with which English poetry has, in our day, first been polluted.”² If English poetry is monstrous, the poems are mere creatures of monsters who compose them — “Men of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who, forming a system of opinions to suit their own unhappy course of conduct, have rebelled against the holiest ordinances of society…”³ Like Adam naming the beasts, Southey names this monstrous spirit and the name is pedagogical.

The school which they have set up may properly be called the Satanic school; for though their productions breathe the spirit of Belial in their lascivious parts, and the spirit of Moloch in those loathsome images of atrocities and horrors which they delight to represent, they are more especially characterized by a Satanic spirit of pride and audacious impiety, which still betrays the wretched feeling of hopelessness wherewith it is allied.⁴

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² Ibid., xvii.
³ Ibid., xix.
⁴ Ibid., xix–xxi
Witness the Romantic pedagogue and recoil. Recoil because we are otherwise mesmerized. We are mesmerized, explains Mario Praz, in The Romantic Agony, in that we experience in the “Fatal Men of the Romantics” their “mysterious origins, traces of burnt-out passions, suspicion of ghastly guilt, melancholy habits, pale faces, unforgettable eyes.”5 In Byron, as exemplar, we behold the “pale face furrowed by an ancient grief” and “the rare Satanic smile, the traces of obscured nobility worthy of a better fate.”6 Behold! our fallen hero, adds Werblowsky, Promethean in compass and import. Quant’e ne gli occhi lor terrore e morte — “How much is in his eyes of terror and death?”7 Yet in his voice we find the eternal “cry of revolt.” Hearken to the rhythms of Byron as he hearkens to the might and majesty of Manfred, who proclaims

Spirits of earth and air,
Ye shall not thus elude me: by a power,
Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
Which had its birth-place in a star condemn’d,
The burning wreck of a demolish’d world,
A wandering hell in the eternal space;
By the strong curse which is upon my soul,
The thought which is within me and around me,
I do compel ye to my will.8

In the Medieval university, the Spirit of Scholasticism hearkened to the logical spirit of Aristotle. What Spirit moves the Satanic School across the waters of the deep? The motive Spirit

5 Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, 61.
6 Ibid., 68.
7 R. J. Z. Werblowsky, Lucifer and Prometheus, 55 n84.
is, of course, the Spirit of Milton, which travels freely between Heaven and Hell and through the
Abyss unto the Land of Eden.

What then is the Spirit of Milton? In *Milton Agonistes*, E. H. Visiak tells us that Victorian
England “accorded Milton the authority almost of a Biblical writer” such that “the very
demonology of *Paradise Lost* was confused with the Bible.”⁹ Milton showed us, more than the
Bible itself, what to fear and loathe. Yet Milton showed us, in Satan more than Christ, what there
is to emulate. “*Le plus parfait type de Beaute virile est Satan,*” declares Baudelaire, “*a la
maniere de Milton.*”¹⁰ On the authority of William Blake, Milton manifests Spirit in the manner
of a man possessed. “The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God,” says
Blake, “and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true poet, and of the Devil’s
party without knowing it.”¹¹

Does not Christ in Milton’s Christology merely obey while Satan, “with thoughts
inflamed of highest design / Put on swift wings, and towards the Gates of Hell / Explore his
solitary flight.” Does not Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, simply sing the song of Satan, “for I glorie in
the name, Antagonist of Heaven’s Almighty King.”¹²

We turn to Macaulay’s *Essay on Milton*, first published in 1825, to study the Spirit more
closely, especially in that Macaulay begins his study with the very question, “What is spirit?”¹³
The answer is to found in *Paradise Lost* by way of poetic image. What then is Satan as image?
Not the *Infernal* image of Satan fixed in ice, but rather the moving picture of Spirit as the

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¹² *Paradise Lost* II 629–631 and X 386–387.
"agency of supernatural beings."\textsuperscript{14} The spirit is one of sex and love and celestial dignity, all casted in the light of ambiguity and all unfolding as the "peculiar art of communicating meaning circuitously, through a long succession of associated ideas, and of intimating more than expressed."\textsuperscript{15} All is "rugged, barbaric, and colossal." All is Promethean but more so for Prometheus was "half fiend, half redeemer, the friend of man, the sullen and implacable enemy of heaven." Satan, by contrast, "is a creature of another sphere."

The might of his intellectual nature is victorious over the extremity of pain. Amidst agonies which cannot be conceived without horror, he deliberates, resolves, and even exults. Against the sword of Michael, against the thunder of Jehovah, against the flaming lake, and the marl burning with solid fire, against the prospect of an eternity of intermittent misery, his spirit bears up unbroken, resting on its own innate energies, requiring no support from anything external, nor even from hope itself!\textsuperscript{16}

The spirit is "philosophically wrong," writes Macaulay, but "poetically in the right."\textsuperscript{17} "No person can look on the features, noble even to ruggedness, the dark furrows of the cheek, the haggard and woful stare of the eye, the sullen and contemptuous curve of the lip, and doubt that they belong to a man too proud and too sensitive to be happy."\textsuperscript{18}

In all, it seems that there are lessons to be learned by way of a Satanic school infused with Spirit as anti-Spirit, true albeit impure. Where shall we start if not in the beginning? We began our Premeditations with a preparatory prayer followed by incessant preparing. We meditated on the Word both day and night and as we near the ending perhaps we are ready truly

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., §36, 33.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., §39, 38.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., §42, 40–41.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., §39, 38.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., §44, 42.
to begin. We proceed in the manner and anti-manner of St. Liguori who leads us along the *Via Dolorosa* as the *Via Crucis* — the Way of the Cross as the Way of Sorrow.

We pass through our own Stations akin to the fourteen Stations in St. Liguori’s little booklet, which mark out fourteen moments of Jesus’ path to Calvary. Firstly, Jesus is condemned to death. Secondly, Jesus is made to carry His Cross. Thirdly, Jesus falls for the first time. Fourthly, Jesus meets his sorrowful mother. Fifthly, Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross. Sixthly, Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus. Seventhly, Jesus falls the second time. Eighthly, the women of Jerusalem weep over Jesus. Ninthly, Jesus falls the Third Time. Tenthly, Jesus is stripped of his garments. Eleventhly, Jesus is nailed to the Cross. Twelfthly, Jesus is raised upon the Cross and Dies. Thirteenthly, Jesus is taken down from the cross and placed in the Arms of his Mother. Fourteenthly, Jesus is laid in the Sepulcher. Each Station begins with a Versicle and a Response. For instance, the First Station begins:

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and we praise Thee

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Then, the Priest utters a few words, followed by a few words uttered by the People. Each station concludes with the same exchange.

V. Lord Jesus, crucified

R. Have mercy on us!

To understand the wisdom, power, and intent of the Stations of the Cross we retrace their steps along the path of empire beginning in the early fourth century. Before Constantine, a geopolitical abyss separated Christians in Europe and the Holy Land. With conquest and victory, Christendom now opened a continuous path from Paris and Milan and Madrid to Bethlehem and

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19 Alphonsus de Liguori, *The Way of the Cross*. 
Jerusalem and Jericho, Mount Sinai and the Mount of Olives, Golgotha or Calvary, so that Christians might return to the origins of their faith. In *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire*, E. D. Hunt tells of the first known journey, in 333, by the Pilgrim of Bordeaux, who is known only by the detailed journal he kept along the way. Soon, numerous Pilgrims Roads traced a route from Spain and France and Germany for those who embarked on a *biblical quest* seeking “the authority of the land, where these things were preached and done.” In the manner of Thomas, perhaps, Christians wished to see the stones and touch the soil to know the truth of their convictions.

If we return to the origins of “pilgrim” by way of *pilegrine* by way of *pelegrinus* by way of *peregrinus* by way of *peregi* we can imagine a Holy Land pilgrim in many senses. A Holy Land pilgrim is a traveler, a peregrinator — a wanderer even — who is abroad and away from home — a stranger in a strange land. The full and complete journey was always three fold as the journey to reach the Holy Land and as the journey to return home and as the truest journey in between. In all, the journey was a monumental undertaking. Egeria of Spain traveled for three years, from 381 to 384. Melania the Elder traveled for twenty-seven years, from 373 to 400. But the strangeness of the journey is not entirely correct. Pilgrims left home because home was *unheimlich* — home that was unlike home. Pilgrims went in search of a strange land as a place of comfort. As Egeria of Spain proceeded through the Holy Land, for instance, she leafed through Holy Scripture to mark out familiar places she had only read about. For pilgrims, traveling to the Holy Land was the true homecoming.

When pilgrims did return to Europe, they inspired the mapping and modeling of the Holy Land within religious sites as inspiration to others and for those who could not make the actual

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21 Ibid., 52.
journey. In the fifth century, for instance, the Monastery of San Stefano in Bologna constructed buildings and landmarks within its walls that imitated sites in the Holy Land with meticulous attention to teeny-tiny scaling and dimensions. In the early fourteenth century, in lieu of a year-long pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Sister Maria Mintz embarked on her own pilgrimage within the convent walls. “So for a year together the good lay-sister spent all her time in passing from alter to alter and from shrine to shrine within the convent enclosure, identifying them with those sacred spots which are venerated by pilgrims in the holy city.” On the final day, writes Hunt, the sister was found “lifeless and cold, but still kneeling as before, while her face was all aglow with supernatural light.”

In time the pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the pilgrimage within, which passed through sites of the Old and New Testaments, crystallized around the specific path of Christ to Calvary, the *Via Crucis* in Jerusalem. The crystallization was slow, however, taking ten centuries truly to form. In *Stations of the Cross*, Herbert Thurston reports that up until the late thirteenth century, detailed journals by bishops and noblemen mention nothing about a *Via Crucis* that would have distinguished the footsteps of Christ in the final days. The first mention seems to be in the *Liber Peregrinacionis* of Riccoldo da Monte di Croce who wrote, in 1294, of the *via per quam ascendit Christus bajulans sibie crusum* — the road by which Christ ascended carrying his Cross.

The early development of the *Via Crucis* seems to have been an effect of the Turkish rulers who controlled travel and tourism in Jerusalem, and not the specific designs of Christians who sought out the Holy City. Thurston writes of pilgrims, “For at least a whole night they were locked into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and were left free to wander about its precincts, to visit its holy places, to hear or say Mass, and to perform other devotions …” — the Holy

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22 Ibid., 17–18.
Sepulchre being the location of Calvary and the empty tomb. On a second night between midnight and dawn, Thurston continues, “they were brought back to the open space before the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with a great flare of torches; and starting from that point … made the tour of the holy places within the city and outside the walls, crossing to Mount Olivet and returning to Sion before the evening had drawn in.”

Thus, in the same manner that a tour of Eden would begin with expulsion and end in Creation, the first Via Crucis proceeded in reverse.

In the mid-to-late fifteenth century the *Via Crucis* began to acquire a structure and narrative. Based on his travels between 1458 and 1462, William Wey of England described the Via Crucis as *Loca Santa in Stancionibus Jerusalem* — The stations of the holy city of Jerusalem. *Hic incipunt sancte Stationes*, he writes of the Holy Sepulchre. From there he proceeds along the *peregrinaciones ad loca Stacionum*. Thurston writes that the term station (*statio*), which originally meant a military outpost, was adopted by early Christians to mean a vigil, often all night, beside the tomb of martyrs and fasting during the day. From vigil-keeping, *statio* evolved to encompass a Mass and a procession within, and finally the “halting-place in a procession, or site calling for special veneration”

Thus, in contrast to the many practices associated with stations, and the many routes through the Holy Land, Wey singled out the *Via Crucis* according to a specific set of *Stationes*. In 1480, Felix Fabri added the decisive authority to the *Via Crucis*, which purports to retrace the steps of our Blessed Lady, who purportedly retraced the steps of Jesus Christ each day until her death. “Thence, as long as she lived,” writes one devotional, “she used to visit every spot which her Son’s presence had sanctified, the place of his Baptism, of his Fast, of his Passion, resurrection, and ascension,”

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24 Ibid., 46.
25 Ibid., 24.
devotissimo Viaggio di Gerusalemme (1586), Zuallardo first calls the Via Crucis the Via Dolorosa, we understand the double meaning of sorrow.²⁶

In 1563, John Pascha published La Peregrination Spirituelle, which allowed Europeans to picture a yearlong pilgrimage, day by day. “The pilgrimage is to occupy 365 days,” reports Thurston, “and it is made very realistic by the assigning for each day a definite section of the journey to the Holy Land, along with a subject for meditation, and certain general devotions …” Day One begins with the pilgrim imagining the trip from Louvain to Tirlement, in Belgium, where he is invited to meditate on angels. On Day 188, Pascha writes, “Here begins the first prayer of the long journey of the Cross.” “The prayers of this Way of the Cross,” he continues, “are fifteen in number …” On Day 206 he writes, “Here begins the proper Way of the Cross to Mount Calvary”²⁷

Now go on to the last window of the workroom; this is the seventh fall. The fourteenth prayer.

Go on now to the last door in the cloister, and there CHRIST is crucified. The fifteenth prayer.

Then go on as far as the churchyard, and there say Miserere and De profundis for the dear souls, and then go to the door by the pump; there CHRIST is buried, being laid in the sepulchre. The sixteenth prayer.

Go now to the church, and offer your prayers. Then it is finished.²⁸

As students in the Satanic School, what lessons may we learn from the Stations of the Cross? In the present day, the temptation of the educated masses might be to demystify and

²⁶ Ibid., 91.
²⁷ Ibid., 83–84.
²⁸ Ibid., 95.
deconstruct the Stations. And in truth the path of Christ is riddled with variation, which we might call the many Ways of the Way. Depending on the version a pilgrim could encounter from nine to fourteen and up to eighteen Stations. Along the way a pilgrim might witness anywhere from three to seven Falls of Christ. One version has Christ falling a record thirty-two times. The Stations according to Pascha, which would become the model across Europe, suffer from a curious fact of authorship in that Pascha never visited the Holy Land. His *Peregrinations* were the gathering of accounts according to his own mind’s eye. Thurston points out that the embrace of Pascha’s version is especially notable in that pilgrims and Franciscans in Jerusalem did not seem to object to the many claims that were suspect and even spurious.

More notable is the development of the Way as a economic matter of the spirit. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europe began to model the Way of the Cross in the same manner as the broader modelings of the Holy Land. Under the authority of the Franciscans, Stations were erected in cathedrals at Gorlitz and Antwerp and Nuremberg and elsewhere. Small devotional books proliferated in Germany and the Netherlands and promised to guide the faithful from Station to Station according to the true path of Christ. As practice spread throughout Europe it became “obvious that the pious exercises of the Way of the Cross could be performed far more devoutly beside the artificial Stations of Nuremberg, or Louvain, or Rhodes, than in Jerusalem itself.”29 Eventually, the Stations were incorporated into mass such that the congregation could experience the *Via Dolorosa* while remaining in their seats. “Some little external indication that the procession is being mentally followed, as the priest and acolytes pass from one stations to another,” writes Thurston, “is all that is recommended”30

29 Ibid., 92.
30 Ibid., 176.
Now the Stations of the Cross are available to all and a lifelong journey can be taken take mere moments. To what end? Recall the “Preparatory Prayer” by St. Liguori.

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast made this journey to die for me with love unutterable and I have so many times unworthily abandoned Thee. But now I love Thee with my whole heart and because I love Thee I repent sincerely for I have offended Thee. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany thee on this journey. Though goest to die for love of me. I wish also, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of Thee. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to Thee.

The prayer is spoken as the words of the unworthy as the beginning of a spiritual journey of sacrifice. When Christ calls a man, says Bonhoeffer, he bids him come and die. By the fourteenth century, however, pilgrims started to wonder an opposing question on just how much the Way might be worth. The question was one of indulgences. It was said that in 395, Pope Sylvester granted indulgences to Helen, mother of Constantine, for her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In his survey of ten centuries, however, Thurston finds no further mention of indulgences as being the aim or reward of pilgrimages. Over time, however, certain Stations gained the reputation as having a certain value to the pilgrim. Thurston writes, “By the end of the fifteenth century, for example, it was generally stated that there was an indulgence at the house of Veronica.”

In 1561, Pope Pius IV issued a Bull that formally granted indulgences to those who visited the Stations of the Cross in the Jerusalem. Thurston calls the Bull “a most remarkable document” in a double and deeply unflattering sense. In the Bull, Pius grants indulgences but does not specify which ones and for what. Instead, he refers to tabulae, held at the Holy Sepulcher, on which Sylvester is said to have enumerated a range of indulgences, and states that

31 Ibid. 167.
indulgences “are conceded anew in the same manner and form in which they were originally granted.”  

Thurston reports, however, that no such document is known to have ever existed.

Eventually, indulgences for the Stations in Jerusalem were divided into two categories, plenary and partial. Now a new question emerged. How much were Stations in Europe worth? Thurston writes, “The question all turned upon the possibility of communicating to those who took part in the exercise of the Stations in Europe or elsewhere the extraordinarily rich indulgences which were believed to attach to the veneration of the actual halting places in the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem.”

In 1731, Pope Clement XII, still referencing the *tabulae*, sought to resolve the question.

No announcement should be made either from the pulpit or otherwise, and still less by any written placard set up in the chapels or attached to the Stations, to publish in definite numbers the amount of the indulgences which may be gained by performing the Stations. It has often been discovered that either by inadvertence or by error, or by confusion between one devotion and another, the true character of the indulgences has been wrongly represented. Consequently it will be sufficient to say that whoever meditates on the Passion of our LORD during these holy exercises, by the concession of the sovereign Pontiffs, will gain the same indulgences as if he had personally visited the Stations to the Cross in Jerusalem.

In 1834, Pope Gregory XVI authorized the publication of a booklet of the Way of the Cross, which could be used, Thurston writes, “for private recitation with the same indulgences as if the

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32 Ibid., 170.
33 Ibid., 161.
34 Ibid., 172.
exercise were performed in a church.” Five decades later, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore issued the *Manual of Prayers for the Use of the Catholic Laity: The Official Prayer Book of the Catholic Church*, which included a translation of St. Liguori’s *Way of the Cross*, composed in 1787. In the 1896 edition, the Stations are introduced as follows.

This excellent devotion has met with the repeated approvals of the Holy See, and is enriched with many indulgences. To gain them it is necessary to meditate, according to individual ability, on the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to go from one Station to another, if the space and number of persons will admit.

Similarly, a current version of Liguori’s *Way of the Cross* (2012) begins with the “Preparatory Prayer” and ends, after the final Station, with a section titled, “How to Gain a Partial or Plenary Indulgence.” The section included several conditions for being enriched, including being “free from all attachment to sin” and not being excommunicated.

The lesson is not one of demystification, however. That task is already accomplished by the faithful. In *The Stations of the Cross in Jerusalem*, John Wilkinson, a Canon of St George’s Cathedral in Jerusalem and the Director of the British School of Archaeology, observes that “some of the sites were purely fictitious.” This stands to reason, he continues. The meticulous science of archaeology did not emerge until the nineteenth century. In the meantime, imagine a knight Templar or a prioress wandering around Jerusalem, a millennium after the fact, looking for a certain spot, a particular road, the marker of a window or a wall. Now imagine a system of rewards built upon the fiction of *tabulae*, which was built upon the fictions of location. Thurston

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writes, “It is hard to resist the conviction that the whole complexus of these vague, fluctuating and indefinite indulgences was apocryphal.” In all, Herbert Thurston, of the Society of Jesus, acknowledges the “unwelcome conclusion that the whole practice is tainted with superstition” and that the present-day version was arrived at “by a sort of process of the survival of the fittest.” The lesson is not one of deconstruction, however.

What is the true lesson, then? The lesson might be devotional and thus spiritual, instead. The Way of the Cross, writes Thurston, “illustrates well the rich vein of spontaneous and devout reflection which the subjects of the Stations open up to reverent minds.” This is not the lesson either. What then is the lesson of the Way of the Cross as lessons to learn in the Satanic School?

The lesson is one of the Way by way of via via hodos. Does not Christ declare, in the Greek New Testament, Egó eimi i hodós kai i alitheia kai i zoi, so that Christ might declare, according to St. Jerome, Ego sum via et veritas et vita, so that Christ, in the King James Bible, might declare, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one cometh to my Father but through me.” (John 14:6) And only with this being the case may we truly picture Dante in the darkened woods when he declares

_Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita_

_Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,

_Che la diritta via era smarrita._

Midway upon the journey of our life

I found myself within a forest dark,

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39 Thurston, _Stations of the Cross_, 169.
40 Ibid. 136 and 139.
41 Ibid., 145.
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.\textsuperscript{42} And only then may we appreciate Milton when he declares, “Long is the way and hard that out of Hell leads up to light.”\textsuperscript{43}

The Way, via \textit{via}, by way of \textit{hodos} was not new to Jesus, however. Recall, for instance, Parmenides proceeding along the path that leads unto light. “The Mares, which carry me as far as my spirit (\textit{daimonos}) ever aspired, were escorting me,” he recalls, “when they brought me … along the renowned route (\textit{hodon}) of the goddess, which brings a knowing mortal to all cities one by one.”\textsuperscript{44}

In one sense, the tautology of the Way being the way is true in and of itself. Only the Way is the way. The challenge, however, is that signs along the way are not always clear. The three kings followed the Morning Star and the Evening Star to reach the Christ-child. In other cases, the way is plagued with confusion. We come to a sign — an abandoned shoe, for instance. The shoe \textit{is}, but what does it mean? Follow the shoe? Gather all shoes together? Ignore the shoes of the body and focus on the face and the head? Cast off the shoe and follow the gourd of Jerusalem? Sometimes, the problem of the way is that the way looms by showing great or little but never all, even on the authority of the divine. Rather than the learning the truth of the Way, says the Grand Inquisitor, we were left with the deepest hunger as the “universal and everlasting anguish of man.” Rather than the bread of life to nourish us along the Way what remained was the eternal question, “before whom shall I bow down?” in order to be sustained.\textsuperscript{45} Rather than the full presence of the divine, we were left with the vast freedom to follow idols and never truly to learn the answer. Is it not true, continues the Grand Inquisitor, that the “dread and intelligent

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\textsuperscript{42} Dante, \textit{Inferno}, “Canto I,” in \textit{The Divine Comedy}; and, \textit{La divina commedia di Dante Alighieri}.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Paradise Lost} II 432.
\textsuperscript{44} Parmenides, 28B1 1–5, in \textit{A Pre-Socratic Reader}, 56.
\end{flushleft}
spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-being — the great spirit of wilderness spoke with you in the wilderness”? Is it not true that Satan supposedly “tempted you”46 to answer instead of riddling the hearts of men? Christ replies with silence for there is nothing more to be said to illuminate the way. The final word is from the Inquisitor. “For if anyone has ever deserved the stake,” he concludes, “it is you. Tomorrow I shall burn you.”47

How then truly to learn the way of the Way?

We return to hodos to learn the lesson of meta hodos, which give us methodos as the way of method as the way of the Way. “The method (methodos) which proceeds without analysis,” explains Socrates, “is like the groping of a blind man.”48 There are many ways of the world, he suggests, and method as the absence of true method abounds. Alcibiades knows justice according to what occurs to him. Gorgias teaches rhetoric without having first taught himself the truth he purports to speak on. Euthyphro knows the will of the gods though he cannot account for how he got it. Even among methods, some are merely tricks and confusion or appearance over substance. Euthedymus shows deftness in logic that goes nowhere meaningful. Ion brings Homer to life according to a method he does not understand. Pericles masters political rhetoric that, in Menexenus, Socrates shows to be mere façade. Athens is blinded for lack of methodos and now, like Oedipus, she stumbles self-inflicted and inexorably to a fall.

For Socrates, method is urgent and revolutionary. In the hands of Aristotle, method becomes systematic and scientific. Although Aristotle’s term was analytika and not methodos, method abounds, especially in translation. In Posterior Analytics, for instance, Aristotle observes that absolute knowledge of a subject requires a finite series of predicates. “[I]t is impossible to

46 Ibid., 251–252.
47 Ibid., 260.
48 Plato, Phaedrus, 270b 1–2, 270b 4–5, 270c 4–5, in Complete Works.
traverse the numerically infinite,” he explains, in order to “know a thing absolutely through demonstration.” “But by the analytical method (analytikos),” Aristotle continues, “it can be apprehended more readily from the arguments that there cannot be either in the upward or in the downward direction an infinite series of predicates in the demonstrative sciences (apodeiktikais epistemais), which are the subject of our investigations.”

Method demonstrates its own limits, as well. “Demonstration in the absolute sense,” he declares, “is obviously impossible by the circular method … for the same things cannot be at once prior and posterior to the same things, except in different senses …” For instance, when someone sings that after midnight we are going to let it all hang out, we face the logical problem that it is almost always after midnight and just as often before midnight, and we face the question, just when should we let it all hang out, and by extension, when should we put it back in? In a basic sense, this merely demonstrates the importance of the way of method, since on the authority of Plato and Aristotle, without method as the way of the Way, we are blind and groping and perverts with our pants down.

If the heart of philosophy for Descartes is the mind, the heart of the heart is one of method. Since we are left to divine the way of truth and life, we are in constant danger of idols and the abyss. Accordingly, Descartes’ first task was to ward off evil spirits by “seeking the true Method (Methode) of arriving at a knowledge of all things of which my mind was capable.”

If Descartes promised to ward off evil spirits, recall that Giambattista Vico attempted to exorcise the evil spirit of Descartes by way of counter-method. Recall that his early work, De Nostri Temporis Studiorum Ratione — translated as On the Study of Methods of Our Time

49 Aristotle, Posterior Analytics 83b35–39, 84a7–12, in Basic Works.

50 Ibid., 72b26–33.

(which borrows more from Vico’s Autobiography in which he calls the work *Del metodo di studiare*) — is a study not of pure metal but of the mixing of methods, science and poetry, religion and law. In the 1911 introduction to *La Scienza Nuova*, Fausto Nicolini describes the spirit of the writing of Vico by way of *Lui l’antimaticesimo per eccellenza, lui l’odiator di Cartesio e del metodo matematico applicato alle scienze morali* — His anti-mathematics par excellence, his detestation of Descartes and the mathematical method applied to the moral sciences.\(^{52}\)

The *New Science* begins with one hundred and fourteen Principle-lessons learned from the Hebrews, Chaldeans, Scythians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. The preparatory work is only a rough pre-method, however. “To complete the establishment of the principles, which have been adopted for this Science, it remains in this first book to discuss the method (*metodo*) which it should follow.” For Vico, the zero degree of method is the very first instance of humanness, which is “the time these creatures began to think humanly,” which is merely the moment that these creatures began to think divinely. “In their monstrous savagery and unbridled bestial freedom there was no means to tame the former or bridle the latter but by the frightful thought of some divinity, the fear of whom is the only powerful means of reducing to duty a liberty gone wild.”\(^{53}\)

“In contemplation of this infinity and eternal providence,” Vico continues, “our Science finds divine proofs by which it is confirmed and demonstrated. These sublime natural theological proofs will be confirmed for us by the following sorts of logic proof” which consist of the
“reasoning of the origins of institutions, divine and human, in the gentile world …” Now the

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\(^{52}\) See, Giambattista Vico, *La Scienza Nuova*, ed. Fausto Nocolini, xix.

early mixing of science, poetry, religion, and law find a purpose, and the Principles on mytho-
poets and heroic theologians and poetic heroes find new meaning in a method of proof in the
manner of a mytho-poetical demonstrating. With this insight, the aim is to usher in a “rational
civil theology of divine providence” for a new age. “And history cannot be more certain than
when he who creates the things also narrates them,” Vico concludes.54

In The Great Instauration, Bacon’s task is one of exorcism, as well — to “exorcise every
kind of phantasm” of the mind —, and his task is one of nourishment as regeneration — “to give
light to the discovery of causes and to supply a suckling philosophy with its first food.”55 “Now
my method (metodo),” he declares in the New Organon, “though hard to practice, is easy to
explain, and it is this: I propose to establish progressive stages of certainty” in order to harness
nature for the good of man.56 The method is one of quantity shaped by quality. “But it is not only
a greater number of experiments to be sought, and procured,” Bacon explains, “but also a
completely different method (methodus), order, and the process of continuing and advancing
experience must also be introduced.”

Perhaps this is enough to learn the lesson that we are blind and falling, having going
astray. Have mercy, cries Dante, and Virgil answers. In the same manner, we find succor
according to method as the way of the Way.

From hodos we learned methodos as the way of the Way. We return to hodos to learn
modus as mode as the way of method as the way of the way of the Way. What then is mode?

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54 The New Science, 102–104.
55 Francis Bacon, The Great Instauration, in Selected Philosophical Works, 80–81.
56 Francis Bacon, New Organon, in Selected Philosophical Works, 86 and 73.
In *Metalogicon*, John of Salisbury explains that logic encompasses the “nature of modal propositions (*natura modalium*),” as possibility and impossibility, necessity and contingency.\(^{57}\) Mode means measuring out by which logic reaches its determinations. For Salisbury, mode also means the art and science of rhetoric by way of myriad modes as the manner of speaking (*modus loquendi*). While acknowledging that the manner of speaking may be colored in infinite variation, Salisbury distills mode into three categories. He describes modality as the “actual presence of true modes (*verum modum*),” which are impossible to know. He points to the modality of words “simply because of their forms (*formam dicantur modales*).” The supreme authority, however, is usage, “which can extend, constrict, change, and even cancel the meanings of words.”\(^{58}\) Mode matters according to the meaning it realizes.

In Spinoza’s *Ethica* (*ordine geometrica demonstrata*) mode matters in the most meaningful way.

Every mode (*omnis modus*) which exists necessarily and infinitely must necessarily follow either from the absolute nature of some attribute of God, or from some attribute modified by a modification (*modificato modificatione*) which exists necessarily and infinitely.\(^{59}\) Thus, a mode, which exists, exists as mode and mode-ification, which is the modification of a mode as a borrowing of mode to re-model into a new mode. The “Nature and Origin of the Mind” (Part II), is a prime example. “Hence it follows that the essence of man (*essentiam hominis*) consists of certain modifications of the attributes (*attributorum modificationibus*) of

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\(^{58}\) *Metalogicon*, IV.4, 209; *Metalogicus*, 160.

The body, as the essence of man, is a mode-ifying of God. What then is body? “By body, I understand a mode (modum) which expresses in certain and determinate manner the essence of God in so far as He is considered as a thing extended.”

In one respect, the lengthy chain of mode to mode as modal modification means the unpredictability and even the bondage of human existence (servitute humana). “Different men may be affected by one and the same object in different ways (diversimode), and the same man may be affected by one and the same object in different ways at different times.” The affect may be nothing less than avaritia, contemptus, crudelitas, cupiditas, desperatio, ira, misericordia, pusillanimitas, timor, and vindicta. By way of modification, Spinoza sees the possibility of human freedom, as well. “It is evident that our mind,” he writes, “in so far as it understands, is an eternal mode of thought (aeterna cogitandi modus), which is determined by another eternal mode of thought, and this again by another, and so on ad infinitum, so that all taken together form the eternal and infinite intellect of God.”

If Spinoza viewed mode by way of infinite and eternal attribution, in An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Locke enters mode into an empirical manner of method. There is the “mode of feeling” as pleasure and pain, which one may know only “by experience.” And, there is the “mode of thinking” as when “the mind turns its view inward upon itself.”

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60 Ibid., 53.
61 Ibid., 45.
62 Ibid., 135
64 Ibid., 254
65 John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, abr., XIX §1, 90.
And, there are modes which are a mixture of modes as a mode-ification and as mode in itself — “the unity of which is merely the unity in that each mixed mode is a mode nonetheless.”

In *Critique of Pure Reason*, mode takes on the greatest meaning as critical understanding. “I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition (*Begriffen*) of objects insofar as this is to be possible a priori.” “A system of such concepts would be called transcendental philosophy,” declares Kant. How then to understand our mode of cognition? In the “Transcendental Analytic,” Kant maps mode by way of Modality (*Modalität*) as the fourth cardinal point — along with Quality and Quantity, Relation — that orients our understanding of understanding as synthetic reason. This fourth function is special, Kant explains, in that Modality does not function as the forming content and instead means evaluating the very same as judging understanding as the Modality of being problematic and thus merely possible or assertoric, and of being apodictic and thus necessary.

If we enter Suicide (*selbstmordt*) into transcendental philosophy, however, we encounter a problem of synthetic reason. Suicide is, but what is Suicide since Suicide is not so much an object or the mode of cognition of an object. What is the quality and quantity and relation of an action and event that steps outside time and space as an imperative or anti-imperative? How to understand the object that remains? Now, Suicide is not an object that gives itself to reason. Suicide is reason that gives itself an object. Now Suicide is, according to pure practical reason as the moral will. We know from the *Metaphysics* of Morals, however, that Suicide is an ethical puzzle rather than a mere anti-imperative. Whether and how to will oneself in a way that passes all understanding.

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66 Ibid., XXII §§1–4, 14–116.


68 Ibid., A74/B100.
In the Logic of John Stuart Mill, which Husserl will call Psycho-Logic, modes abound.

“There is as great diversity among authors in the modes which they have adopted of defining logic, as in their treatment of the details of it.” The task, Mill continues, is to “fix upon the most correct and compact mode,” which is ratiocination, which is the “mode of acquiring real knowledge.” What follows is a charting of a constellation of modes. There are “common modes of bad reasoning” and even “rude and slovenly modes of generalization.” There are “legitimate modes” of ratiocination and “right modes of philosophizing,” which include “modes of experimental inquiry” or induction, the “mode of investigation,” the “mode of discovering or proving laws of nature,” and the “mode of ascertaining these laws,” laws which would seem to be modes in themselves. There is the “mode of performing observation and experimentation, which depend on “modes of mental culture,” which make one more or less equipped for modes of logic. Wrapped up in the mode of ratiocination is the modus loquendi of logic. Language is a “mode of employment,” Mill explains, as expression and signification, defining and wording, explaining and classification. And there is the challenge of unraveling the modes of phenomena in that “different natural phenomena have their separate rules or modes

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69 John Stuart Mill, A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive §1, 1.
70 Ibid., 119.
71 Ibid., 449.
72 Ibid., 487.
73 Ibid., 113
74 Ibid., 449.
75 Ibid., 237.
76 Ibid., 252.
77 Ibid., 224.
78 Ibid., 265.
79 Ibid., 216.
80 Ibid., 11.
of taking place, which, though much intermixed and entangled with one another, may, to a
certain extent, be studied apart.”

Husserl begins his *Logical Investigations* by quoting Mill, here rendered, “There is
accordingly as much difference of opinion in regard to the definition of logic as there is in the
treatment of the science itself.” “This was to be expected,” the passage continues, “in the case of
a subject in regard to which most writers have only employed the same words to express
different thoughts.” In this spirit, Husserl takes up the question of mode and modality, which he
recasts in the image of phenomenology. In the “Fifth Investigation,” for instance, Husserl turns
to the “fixing of terminology,” the crucial term being “intentional experience,” which is not so
much receptiveness as activity — intentionality as *act*. This *act-character* of intentionality,
Husserl continues, is a “mode of consciousness” (*Weise des Bewußtseins*), that he calls
mindedness (*Zumuteseins*). Thus, to be intentional is to be in the mode of mindedness. To be in
the mode of mindedness as the way of intentionality, Husserl continues, does not mean that one
is confined to a single, solitary mode. Instead, the mode of mindedness entails a range of modes.
“I also regard it as relatively evident … that there are different ‘manners of consciousness’
(*Weisen des Bewußtseins*), different intentional relations to objects: the character of our intention
is specifically different in the case of perceiving, of direction ‘reproduction’ recall, of pictorial
representation, and again in the case of a presentation through signs.” Each manner and mode,

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81 Ibid., 191.
82 Edmund Husserl, “Prolegomena” §1, in *Logical Investigations* vol. 1, 11.
83 Husserl, “Fifth Investigation” §14, in *Logical Investigations* vol. 2, 101; and, Logische Untersuchungen, vol. 2,
part 1.
84 Ibid., §14, 103.
and each way of consciousness is a “logically distinct way” (logisch unterschiedenen Weise) as the ways of the way of intentionality.\(^{85}\)

Immediately following this discussion, Husserl turns to the question of feeling. Are there any intentional feelings? he asks. Is there a mode of feeling as a manner of consciousness? The answer is no, he declares, since feeling supplies content to intentionality but intentionality is not a feeling-act.\(^{86}\)

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty will proceed in the manner and anti-manner of Husserl by entering mode into new thoughts on feeling. For Merleau-Ponty, perception is, in fact, the modality of feeling as a pre-mode of intentional experience. In this sense, perception is the true and originary mode of consciousness. “I experience sensation as a modality (modalite) of a general existence, already destined to a physical world, which flows through me without my being its author.”\(^{87}\) Merleau-Ponty calls this the “attention to life” as “an intention of our total being.” This, he continues, is the “modality of a pre-objective perspective of ‘being in the world.’”\(^{88}\) And yet, sense-experience is not merely receptive. Sense-experience is authorial and even legislative as the mode of existence. “If qualities radiate a certain mode of existence (mode d’existence) around themselves, if they have a power to enchant or if they have what we called earlier a sacramental value, this is because the sensing subject does not posit them as objects, but sympathizes with them, makes them its own, and finds in them his momentary law.”\(^{89}\)

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\(^{85}\) Ibid., §14, 106; and, Logische Untersuchungen, 386.

\(^{86}\) See, ibid., §15, 110.

\(^{87}\) Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Donald Landes trans., 224; and, Phenomenologie de la Perception, 261.

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 81

\(^{89}\) Ibid., 221/Fr.258
What then is the lesson of mode? Mode is measurement and measured stepping along method as the way of the Way to truth and light. Now we learn the lesson of mood as the bastard brother of mode by way of modus. Ishmael rather than Isaac. Smerdyakov and not Alyosha. A mere mockery of the way of the way of the Way. Recall Chaucer who gives us rhyming couplets in *The Romaunt of the Rose* (Frag. B) — under the heading, “How Reason Defines Friendship.”

For no man may be amorous

Ne in his living vertuous,

But-[if ] he love more, in mood,

Men for hem-silf than for hir good. (5327–5828)

In “The Phiscisien’s Tale,” mood becomes the man who beholds woman.

Anon his herte chaunged and his mood.

So was he caught with beautee of this mayde. (126–127)

In early-Modern English, Shakespeare invokes “mood” over twenty times in his plays and poems. “True grief,” we learn in “The Rape of Lucrece,” “is fond and testy as a child / Who wayward once, his mood with nought agrees.” In *Midsummer Night’s Dream* mood is merely mistaken as Demetrius declares to Hermia, “You spend your passion on a misprised mood” for I am not the killer of Lysander. In *King John*, mood is what’s needed for the bloody work of an assassin since “wicked heinous fault lives in his eyes” and “does show the mood of a

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91 Ibid., 553.
94 *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 3.2.74, in *Complete Works*, 322.
much troubled breast.”

Enobarbus plots against Anthony whose mood means being beyond sense in the movement to war.

To be furious,

Is to be frightened out of fear; and in that mood

The dove will peck the estridge; and I see still,

A diminution in our captain’s brain …

Mood is fateful in All’s Well That Ends Well, for “I am now, sir, muddied in Fortune’s mood, and smell somewhat strong of her strong displeasure.” And mood is the name of woman in that Ophelia is “importune, indeed distract. Her mood will needs be pitied.”

On the authority of Shakespeare mood is the lover ensnared or the tenor of assassin’s heart or the frailty of woman. Mood is childish and foolhardy. Above all, mood is made humorous as the fluids of the body that bubble up into pleasure and pain. Mood is bile as melancholy or madness and the diminution of the brain. Mood builds up and cries out to be drained.

We know this from Emily Brontë, by way of Catherine, who disapproves of Heathcliff with the explanation, “In his crossest humors … I liked him better than I do in his present curious mood.” We know this from Heathcliff who reveals to Nelly, “I have to remind myself to breathe — almost to remind my heart to beat!” And we know this from Nelly, who reflects,

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95 The Life and Death of King John, 4.2.73, in Complete Works, 415.
97 All’s Well That Ends Well 5.2.4, in Complete Works, 878.
98 Hamlet 4.5.3, in Complete Works, 678.
99 Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 226.
“Though he seldom before had revealed this state of mind, even by his looks, it was his habitual mood, I had not doubt …”

We know this from Captain Peleg who explains of Old Ahab that “ever since he lost his leg last voyage by that accursed whale, he’s been a kind of moody—desperate moody, and savage sometimes.” “But that will all pass off,” Peleg assures Ishmael.

We know this from the patron saint of mood who tells us that he can be in the mood for sarcasm or cocktails or for horsing around. for no reason at all. And we know this when Holden is sometimes not in the mood for reasons that may or may not be good enough.

“Jane Gallagher. Jesus …” I couldn’t get her off my mind. I really couldn’t. “I oughta go down and say hello to her, at least.”

“Why the hell don’tcha, instead of keep saying it?” Stradlater said. I walked over to the window, but you couldn’t see out of it, it was so steamy from all the heat in the can. “I’m not in the mood right now,” I said. I wasn’t, either. You have to be in the mood for those things.

We know this from the parallel path of mood as mut and muth so that gemutsmensch would seem to be a fitting way to describe Holden as a young man of many moods who does not truly know his own mind. The truth, however, is the mood is a bastard child though mood is unrelated to mode by way of modus. To learn the lesson of mood we must trace a separate bloodline.

To loeran the lesson of mood we begin in mōd by way of Beowulf by way of Old English. In A History of the English Language, Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable explain that

100 Ibid., 277–278.
102 J. D. Salinger, The Catcher in the Rye, 42.
mód — pronounced with a longish-o, like Wodan — could mean heart, mind, and spirit, boldness, courage and pride. From the root of mód Old English generated over one-hundred words and forms. Mód gives us módig (adj., spirited and high-minded) and módiglic (adj., magnanimous), and the módidlice (adv., boldly). Old English intensifies mód by way of gupmód (war-like) and swípmód (resolute). Mód elaborates on itself as módcroeft (intelligence), módlufu (love), and módcaru (sorrow). Mod also helps to reveal its own absence and excess as módlēas (spiritless) and módfull (haughty), madmód and módhete. In her study of mód as “mind,” Soon-Ai Low reports that mód, along with heorte, sawol, and gast, each appear over one thousand times in Anglo-Saxon literature, which is to say that mod, along with heart and soul and spirit, were all on the Old English mind.

We turn to the Old English edition of Beowulf, by Harrison and Sharp (1895), to analyze the mód in its poetical purities and its mixing as pure poetry. Beowulf is often divided into three sections as the three great battles with Grendel, Grendel’s modor, and Fire-Drake. Harrison and Sharp provide further structure by organizing the poem in forty-three episodes, “The Passing of Scyld,” “The Hall of Herot,” “Grendel Visits,” and onward until we reach “Beowulf’s Funeral Pyre.” Reading within this structure in mind, we find that mod appears at least fifty-five times in at least thirty-four episodes. As a root-word in an epic poem, mod can be divided into four categories.

In a time of savage violence, and with violent death being the rule, the living mourn the dead with deep sadness and sorrow — murnende mód (50) and geomor mód (3019). For the living, then, violence calls for módigra (312) and mannes mód (1058), swípmód (1625) and

103 Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable, A History of the English Language, 64.
gufmōd (306) when a monster is in their midst. In the most extreme imperative, the warrior must summon mōdes myrde (811), a murderousness to do what needs to be done. Beowulf is not the story of mere savagery, however. Beowulf is the story of tribal society that calls for mōd as peaceful intercourse, hospitality, and leadership, as well. Hrothgar welcomes Beowulf in a mōd bļip (436), a blitheness or graciousness. He counsels Beowulf to lead according to wisdom (mōdes snytrum) (1707). Beowulf and Hrothgar then part ways in a glad-mōd (1785) and a mod-lufan (1824).

To these mōds, we add a final category as the mod of the monster. We first encounter Grendel as the grimma gast and the fēond on helle, the grim spirit and the fiend of hell (101–102), and the ellen-gaest (86), the mighty spirit that dwells in darkness. In war, then, Grendel comes on in an yrre-mod (727), and with flames in his eyes he slaughters wantonly. When Grendel is slaughtered by Beowulf in reply, Grendels mōdor is overcome with grief that turns to rage.

And his mōdor pāt gyt
gifre and galg-mōd gegān wolde
sorh-fulne sīð, suna deāð wrecan. (1276–1278)
And his mother, now gloomy and grim,
would go on that quest of sorrow,
the death of her son to avenge.

The petty theft of a golden goblet draws the dracan, a terrible spirit (gast, 2313) out of slumber and awakens in a savage fury (hreōh-mod, 2297).

Now we witness the mixing of mod as the unfolding of the story. After fifty years on the throne, Beowulf prepares for battle once more. His mood is mixed, we learn — geōmor sefa,
wafre and wal-fus (2420) — gloomy is his soul, waver-ing and death-bound. There are other men who could fight, but they cower and so Beowulf must go alone — harrowed but stern and bold. Now they finally meet, the dracan and Beowulf, each knowing to fear his foe, though fierce their mood (stiphmōd, 2567). Now the dragon is slain and but Beowulf suffers a mortal wound. The king dies a hero’s death, in the mōdiges mannes (2699). Now, even in sadness may we feel pleasure as the story reaches its ending.

Now we can trace the path from modus to mod by following the path of the Roman empire along two routes, as the direct conquest of Britain and the civilizing of German savages who would later — as Jutes and Frisians, Angles and Saxons — conquer Britain. We can follow the path of Christianity along two routes with the same end, as Irish and Roman missionaries converted the island savages and as the conversion of the Germanic tribes that would soon reinvade the island. We can look to the Vulgate, which became the controlling religious document and Latinized manner of discourse, and the Rules of St. Benedict, which became the Latin model for prayer and work (ora et labora). We can point to the Latin codifications of law — or the Barborum leges antiquae, as Paolo Canciani calls them in his five-volume collection — which includes the Leges Frisionum, the Leges Saxonum, and the Leges in Anglia conditae. We can recall that in 601, Æthelbert was dubbed rex Anglorum by Pope Gregory and that by the time the Vikings invaded, Englaland was ready to convert them as well. We can recall that Ælfric’s Latin Grammar textbook, written in Old English, aimed to “implant both languages into their tender minds.”105 We can follow the military and religious education of young and noble barbarians who learned war and Vergil, rhetoric and theology in the Roman Christian world. We can point to the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire and its political, military, and religious

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influence throughout Europe — all by 800 AD and two centuries before the writing down of *Beowulf* that comes down to us.

If *Beowulf* is an epic poem in Old English about the Danes, written down in its present form by the tenth century, we might consider the *Gestas Danorum*, a century later, as the full demonstration of the crisscrossing of Latin learning and influence by way of the complex and highly stylized language of the Danish native *Saxo Grammaticus*. We can trace *modus* to *mod* by tracing Latin to Old English and by tracing Latin to Old Saxon to Old English. In a survey of the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (aka., *Journal of Germanic Philology*, 1897–1902) between 1897 and 2016, the influence of Latin on Old Saxon, or Old High German, is substantial as a question of syntax and verb form, grammar and etymology such as *yrre*, which was derived from *ira*. Most decisive is simply the Old Saxon alphabet which replaced runes with a Latinized system of letters. Even before the Norman invasion, in 1066, Old English seems to have been Latinized in a similar manner. In the *Blicking Homilies*, which are rough contemporaries of *Beowulf*, we find a dual illustration of the influence of Latin on Old English. And the Lord said, *Qui facit angelos suos spiritus et ministros suos ignem urentum.* Hwilum se ilce God sendep his engla gastas to aerendwreeum, hwilum he sendep purh fyres leg.106 Now the same passage, in Latin and Old English, is set alongside itself, just as *angelos* has already morphed into *engla*.

In truth, *Beowulf* is plagued by Roman Christianity. In a seminal study of *Beowulf*, “The Christian Coloring of the Beowulf” (1897), F. A. Blackburn identifies sixty-eight references to Christianity that run through the “essentially heathen” poem — Biblical allusions, references to God (*god*) the father (*faeder*), as well as devils (*deofla*) and *hellegast*, the spirit of Hell, and most

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importantly, condemnations of heathenness. In “The Ideal of Kingship in Beowulf,” Levin L. Schucking detects the synthesis of the “heathen-Germanic warrior-ethic” with an Augustinian political philosophy of “love, benevolence, sympathetic care,” as well as justice, courage, prudence, and temperance.\(^{108}\) Thus, concludes Schucking, the kingship ideal in Beowulf, “shows itself to be a mixture of Germanic-heroic and Stoic-Christian ideas.”\(^{109}\)

In some respects, Beowulf is distinctly Roman, as well. While H. Munro Chadwick views the funeral of Beowulf as Teutonic, derived from recent memories,\(^{110}\) Thomas D. Hill finds verisimilitude in the Roman military funeral, which would date sometime between the first and the fourth centuries. “The ritual of Beowulf’s funeral, as it is depicted in the poem, follows an elaborate and carefully sequenced procedure,” writes Hill. “Virtually every step in this process is paralleled in the tradition of Roman military funerary rite.”\(^{111}\) In all, just as mod runs through Beowulf and Old English, Latin runs through Old English by way of Roman and Christian influences that seem to go to the very heart of the language and the poem. Even the meanings of mod suggest a barbarian modification of modus as a measuring out and as a manner of proceeding. In a world of Roman Christian Latin, mod was surely born of modus and as the bretheren of mode.

In truth, however, mod is neither Roman nor Christian nor Latin though mood is infected by them. Mod is pagan heroism and monstrousness in its heart of hearts. We can trace mode and mod into mood according to positive and negative English language etymologies. The subtitle to the 1659 edition of Riders Dictionary includes the dual promise to trace hundreds of English

\(^{108}\) Levin L. Schucking, “The Ideal of Kingship in Beowulf,” in Ibid., 39–46.

\(^{109}\) Ibid., 49.

\(^{110}\) H. Munro Chadwick, “The Heroic Age,” in Ibid., 29.

words from the French and Latin and to “expunge Barbarous words … to help young scholars, which before they used instead of good words.”¹¹² The entries for “mode” and its *cyn*, such as “modification” and “modulation” and “modesty” are extensive and return us to its French and Latin roots. “Mood,” by contrast, is nowhere to be found and we can only concluded that *modus* did not beget mood such that the exclusion means that a barbarous word needed expunging.

We can confirm the heritage of the English *mode* by way of the first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l’Academie Francois*, which describes *mode* as choice as the manner (*la maniere*) of measuring out in the manner of *modus*.¹¹³ *Mode* is philosophical as the manner of being (*maniere d’etre*). *Mode* is grammatical as the measuring out of verbs by way of inflection and conjugation. And *mode* concerns manner as “certain choices dependent on the institutions and caprices of man,” including *nouvelle mode, mauvaise mode, mode ridicule*, and *vielle mode*, so that we might say that when cometh *Ivans deoful* he comes outmoded in his dress — his trousers and jacket and scarf — and outmoded in his very being.

A study of *modus* into German, however, finds that *modus* did not beget *mod*, which would become *mut* or *muth* in the modern language. According to Friedrich Kluge’s (1921) *Etymologisches Worterbuch der deutschen Sprache*,¹¹⁴ which remains authoritative, *modus* runs through the Gothic *mitaþ*, as a measure of corn, and the Old Saxon *metan*, in order to become the modern *messen*, as a measuring out, so that when Alfred Lord Tennyson writes that the old king metes and doles out unequal law, we know the madness of an ill-modeled measure and his awareness of the very same. Wherefrom *mod*, then, which runs through Old Frisian and Old

¹¹³ Auguste Bourguignon’s *Dictionnaire etymologique de la langue francaise* (1921) helps to confirm simply that modus begat mode, just and mode is the offspring of *modus*.
Dutch and Old Saxon and Old Icelandic and Old Swedish and Old Danish as *mod* and *moed*, *muod* and *moet*, *mofs* and onward. Kluge tells us that they all grew from the Teutonic root *moda-* “the origins of which cannot be traced with certainty in the non-Teutonic languages.”

We studied *mood* and *mode*, *modus* and *mod* analytically to discover two distinct bloodlines that are kindred if at all somewhere in the Indo-European mist. We have learned an superabundance of words that tell us very little and far less than we had hoped for. How to proceed?

We begin by witnessing the bleeding out of *mod* as the mixing of bloodlines. Recall that for the Romans, barbarians were bearded ones such that beards marked their savagery. Barbers, accordingly, tended to the hair about the face and head as the measure of civilization. If we advance to the Middle Ages, we know that barbers were bleeders, as well, according to ancient rite and as the method of revitalization. For the barber, blood, which George Thomas calls the “sublimest juyce in our Body,” was also the substance of affliction such that its very quantity determined the quality of life. With this in mind, we can witness the barbering of *mod* as the civilizing of words bled dry.

To witness the mixing of the blood of words we mix metaphors as a conflict of words as competing constellations. Constellations are curious animals. They do not exist except to the mind’s eye according to the stories we tell ourselves, and yet their configurations help us to navigate the world within and all around. The invalue of constellations is nowadays reduced to a nursery rhyme of childish wonder. Once, however, the unfolding arrangement of the stars meant readiness to take up the very unfolding of life. Constellations marked the seasons, writes Julius

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Staal in *New Patterns in the Sky* — “when to plough, sow, reap, hunt, fish and celebrate other annual events.” “Ancient man lived much closer to nature than we do,” he continues, “and knowledge of the stars and other celestial bodies was essential to his existence.”

In our case, a constellation is a mere metaphor as well, as patternings that help us to chart a path beyond the where the stars might take us. How then do constellations compete? By competing claims to the stars and by stretching and pulling them according to different laws of gravity. In physical and logical space we might assume that only one set of laws may truly apply. We know from Augustine, however, that human affliction is one laws in conflict — the “law of my mind (*legi mentis meae*)” and the “law of sin” (*legi peccati*), he explains in his *Confessions*.

If we borrow from this conflict between a law and counter-law, we might observe the conflict of constellations as the mixing of the blood of words.

What shall we call these constellations? The first constellation we name *Weg*, as the way of the Way. Beowulf is promised gold to avenge the death of Aeschere, if he is willing to *cymest* the way (*weg*) unto the mother of Grendel. To hunt her down and kill her. Beowulf replies

Each of us must his end abide

in the ways of the world; so win who may

glory ere death! When his days are told,

that is the warrior’s worthiest doom. (1387–1389)

What then are the words of *Weg*? The stars are *heorte and sawol*, *gast and blod*, *lif and deað*, and *mod according to guf- and swif-, -croeft and –caru, -lufu and –bliþ*. And in the end, we learn that a “warrior passes into death” (*forð-weg*) as the way forth and beyond as the way of the wise (*frod*) (2626) and the *modes snyttrum*.

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118 Augustine, *Confessions* 8.5.12, Sheed trans. and, S. Aurelo Augustini, *Confessionum libri tredecim*.
We can now witness the formation of a counter-constellation, which we call *Via*, as the way of the Way by way of St. Augustine. Augustine begins his *Soliloquies*, “For many days I had been debating within myself many and diverse things, seeking constantly, and with anxiety, to find out my real self, my best good, and the evil to be avoided.”\footnote{Augustine, *The Soliloquies of St. Augustine*.} What follows is a dialogue in which Reason serves as the guide to truth. In his *Confessions*, Augustine portrays not a debate but an affliction and the path to healing. “*Unde hoc monstrum?*” he asks time and again. Why this monstrousness?\footnote{Augustine, *Confessions* 8.9.21; and, Confessionum.} It is no monstrousness, he concludes upon analysis, but “sickness of the soul” (*aegritudo animi*) that may be diagnosed and remedied only according to the spiritual senses.\footnote{Ibid., 8.9.21.} “But do Thou, O Lord my god,” he pleads, “hear me and look upon me and see me and pity me and heal me, Thou in whose eyes I have become a question to myself; and that is my infirmity.”\footnote{Ibid., 10.33.50.} The affliction is one of wills, he discerns, one carnal (*carnalis*) and one spiritual (*spiritualis*). “How the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.”\footnote{Ibid.,8.5.11.} How the wills are in conflict and how “in their conflict wasted my soul (*animam meam*).”\footnote{Ibid., 8.5.10.} “What course of life (*modus vitae*) to adopt?” he asks.\footnote{Ibid., 6.10.16.} Who can “deliver me from this body of death (*corpore mortis*)?” he calls out.\footnote{Ibid., 8.5.11.}

Augustine discovers the answer by way of Scripture as a burning of the mind and soul. “By these holy words (*sanctis dictis*), my mind is kindled more religiously and fervently to a flame of piety…(*flammam pietatis*).” He learns the answer by way of the Holy Spirit (*spiritus*...
sancti) as the “chalice of our redemption.”\textsuperscript{127} “The face of love, the tears of confession, Your sacrifice, an afflicted spirit, a contrite and humbled heart (\textit{cor contritum et humiliatum}).”\textsuperscript{128} I want to be “warmed by the fire of Your Spirit,” he declares.\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Adhuc frigidi a calore spiritus} — I am cold and long to be enflamed.

The way of the Way is to \textit{cymest} unto Christ as the calling to life. “Your words breathe life,” he proclaims, “sung with sweet and measured voice (\textit{cum suavi et artificiosa voce cantatur}).”\textsuperscript{130} For you have called us to be “poor in spirit, to be meek, to mourn, to hunger and thirst after justice, to be merciful and clean of heart and peacemakers.”\textsuperscript{131}

The answer cometh by way of God as Spirit as the infinite measure,\textsuperscript{132} the measure (\textit{modum}) of “supreme beauty”\textsuperscript{133} according to the “spiritual deep” (\textit{abyssum spiritalis}).\textsuperscript{134} “For without Thee, I am but a guide to my own destruction” (\textit{dux in praeceps})\textsuperscript{135} — I fall according to my own lead. With Thee “my heart is healed (\textit{sanato corde}),” he confesses.\textsuperscript{136} With Thee, I have a clean heart. I confess to You, Augustine declares, that I “love Your holy ways (\textit{bonas vias}).”\textsuperscript{137}

In \textit{Being and Time}, the flesh will cry out according to mood (\textit{Stimmung}), which speaks to the modes of Being if only Dasein will hearken to them. Long before Heidegger, however, Augustine speaks of mood that runs through his body and blood (\textit{carne et sangue}) asking only to

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 10.23.49.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 7.21.27.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 9.7.15.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 10.23.49.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 11.1.1.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 3.7.12.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 10.34.53.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 12.17.25.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 4.1.1.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 9.13.34.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 1.13.22.
riddled of itself. “I was frantic in my mind” (ego fremebam spiritus), he recalls. “My brow and cheeks and eyes were flush, the pitch of my voice (modus vocis quam verba) spoke my mind more powerfully than the words I uttered.” He feels the turmoil of being thrown and fallen as a storm rages in his breast (tumultus pectoris) and “all my bones cried out (omnia ossa mea clamabant) and worshipped heaven (caelum).”

Now we picture the constellation of Via as words meant to illuminate and guide the spirit and soul, the mind against the body, the body as the voice that speaks to the heart, the message of life over death, and blood that cleanses all.

Now we bear witness as one constellation is refashioned in the image of the other. We begin with the Old English translation of the Soliloquies, set down by Alfred the Great in the tenth century. “Why should the practical warrior-king of Wessex have become the translator of the Latin Father?” asks Henry Lee Hargrove. The answer he gives is that in 893, the warrior-king casted out the Danes from England after five centuries of barbarian and pagan infestation. Following his temporal victory, Alfred turned to the spiritual conquest of the land so that, as Hargrove writes, “He was thus the first English king to become a truly great defender of the Faith.”

Augustine begins his Soliloquies with a short declaration — Volventi mihi multa ac varia mecum diu, ac per multos dies sedulo quaerenti memetipsum ac bonum meum, quidve mali evitandum esset — whose translation into modern English, above, is just as succinct. Alfred begins his translation in the following manner.

\[
\text{ða reahte he, hys mod for oft gastende and smeagende mislicu and selcuð þing, and ealles wiþust ymbe hyne sylfne hwaet he sylf waere; hwaeper hys mod and hys sawel}
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138 Ibid., 8.8.19.
139 King Alfred’s Old English version of St. Augustine’s Soliloquies, Henry Lee Hargrove ed., xxiv.
deadlic were and gewtendlice, þe heo were a libbendu and ecu; and eft ymbe hys God, hwaet he were and hwilce he were, and hwilc good him were betst to donne and hwilc yfel betst to forletende.

Then said he, his mind (mod) often went fearing (gastende) and searching out various and rare things, and most of all about himself—what he was; whether his mind (mod) and his soul (sawel) were mortal (deadlic) and perishable, or ever-living and eternal; and again, about his God, what He was, and of what nature He was; and what good (good) it were best for him to do, and what evil (yfel) best to forsake.

From the Soliloquies, we sample the Blicking Homilies, written down in the tenth century and consisting of nineteen sermons that mark important days in the Christian Calendar.

In “The Annunciation of St. Mary,” for instance, we are told that Mary sang “with a joyful mind (bliþe mode) — ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit (gast) doth rejoice.’”¹⁴⁰ She was “humble” (eaðmod), we are told, and this is what made her saintly.¹⁴¹

On “The Day of Pentecost,” we are encouraged to pursue the everlasting light “diligently and meekly (eapmodlice).”¹⁴²

During the “Festival of St. Martin,” we learn that when others doubted that a dead man might be resurrected, St. Martin trusted mid ealle mode (with all his mind) on Ælmihtes God miht and mildheortnesse.¹⁴³

On the “Fifth Day of Lent,” we learn that task is one of “spiritual teaching” (gastlican lare) as true nourishment. “As the body cannot live without meat and drink, so then the soul, if

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 12/13.
¹⁴² Ibid., “The Assumption of the Virgin Mary” (XIII), 133/134.
¹⁴³ Ibid., “Festival of St. Martin” (XVIII), 216/217.
she be not spiritually fed (*feded gastlicum*) with God’s word, will perish through *hunGre & pirste.*"\(^{144}\)

And, on “Palm Sunday,” we learn to practice our teaching. “The teachers (*lareowas*) must mortify their own bodies by abstinence,” we are told, “and prepare the way (*weg*) of the Lord for their minds (*modes*).”\(^{145}\)

In the beginning, the disciples of Christ were as yet carnal-minded (*flaesclices modes*) and were not yet filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.” “Therefore they were not able to understand the words of the heavenly mystery.”\(^{146}\) Where are hearts (*heortan*) are devoid of spiritual power (*gastlicra maegena*), we learn “wicked power” (*maegre yfelu*), the power of evil, may prevail. In fact, the *mod* of man is bounded up with *mod* as the picturing of *gast* according to good and evil. Above all and in each homily, we encounter *se Halga Gast*, the Holy Ghost, who is attended by *engla gastas* and *haligra englas*. Then, in the spirit of Grendel — the *grimma gast* and *foend on helle* — and we encounter the *werigra gastes*,\(^ {147}\) the fallen spirits and the hell-fiends (*helsceaðum*).\(^ {148}\) All are engaged in spiritual warfare over *manna cynn*\(^ {149}\) — the battle for the heart and mind of mankind. For the accursed spirits (*gastum gefylle*) of the Anti-Christ (*Antecrist*) capture men’s souls (*manna saula*).\(^ {150}\) In hell, we are told, are thieves and magicians and proud men (*oformodan*) — men of too much *mod*.

\(^{144}\) Ibid., “The fifth Sunday in Lent” (V), 56/57.

\(^{145}\) Ibid., “Palm Sunday” (VI), 80/81.

\(^{146}\) Ibid. “Shrove Sunday” (II), 16/17.

\(^{147}\) Ibid., “Easter Day” (VII), 82/83.

\(^{148}\) Ibid., “Dedication of St. Michael’s Church” (XVII), 208/209.

\(^{149}\) Ibid., 202/203.

\(^{150}\) Ibid., “Easter Day,” 94/95
In “Dominica Prima” (First Sunday of Lent), we learn the language of *gastes* as the “Perverted spirit spoke perverted words (forhwyrfdan gast spraec forwyrfedlice word)"\(^{151}\) to tempt Christ himself. The task, then is to see with a “spiritual light” (*gastlice loeht*), which is the “light we have in common with the angels in the spiritual assembly (*gastlicum þrymmum*).”\(^{152}\) “What believeth the body but by the soul?” “Let us cleanse our minds (*mōd geclaensian*), from evil words (*yfelum wordum*), and ever, with joyful spirit (*blithe mode*), let us keep God’s behest.”\(^{153}\)

We can look to Old Saxon to trace a similar path by way of the *Heliand*, which was composed in the early ninth century. Instead of being an epic poem of Germanic heroism, the *Heliand* — consisting of seventy-one *Fitten* in 6,000 lines — traces the life and ethic of Jesus Christ, approximately two centuries before the single extant manuscript of Beowulf was written down. In his “Introduction” to the *Heliand*, James Cathey explains the literary task as being one of existential transformation by way of lexical translating. “The Germanic ethic required behavior that with Christian sensibility was understood as *superbia,*” he writes — bravery and glory, loyalty and kinship.\(^{154}\) In his *Commentaries*, Caesar will observe the prowess (*virtute*) of the Germanic people in justice and war,\(^{155}\) and Tacitus will describe the “singing” (*barditum*) of a powerful people — a “harsh, piercing note, and a broken roar” as a song of courage (*animos*) for the coming of war (*pugnae*).\(^{156}\)

\(^{151}\) Ibild, “The First Sunday in Lent” (III), 30/31
\(^{152}\) Ibid., “Shrove Sunday,” (II), 20/21.
\(^{153}\) Ibid., “The Third Sunday in Lent” (IV), 38/39.
\(^{155}\) Julius Caesar, *First Six Books of Caesar’s Commentaries on the Gallic War* VI.24; and, Commentarii De Bello Gallico.
\(^{156}\) Tacitus, *Germania*, in *Agricola and Germania* III 6–8; and, Germania (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1897).
Ten centuries later, Cathey explains, the poetical aim of the epic becomes one of *humilitas* rather than *superbia*. The challenge was one of vocabulary and finding words capable of describing a new way forward. Since *homicide* was often an expression of both war and justice the “Saxon mind” flourished in words like *bald* (bold) and *obarmodig* (proud), and had far perhaps fewer ways to conjure modesty, humility, and gentleness.157

To study *mod* in the *Heliand*, as the reorientation of *Weg* according to *Via* as the Way, we begin by bookending the *Fitten*. “Fitt I” begins in the following manner.

There were many whose hearts (*mod*) told them that they should begin to tell the secret runes, the word of God, the famous feats that the powerful Christ accomplished in words and in deeds among human beings. There were many of the wise who wanted to praise the teaching of Christ, the holy word of God…”158

“Many there were,” translates Tonya Kim Dewey, “whom their mood enticed so that they began to tell the word of God…”159

In the beginning, then, hearts as minds are called to harken to the word of God to learn the story of Christ. The final Fitt (LXXI) ends in Jerusalem with prayers of celebration for Christ is risen and the disciples of Christ had “joyful hearts” (*frah-mod hugi*, 5984).160

In the remaining sixty-nine episodes, we come across *mod* over one-hundred-and-thirty times in thirty variations, which tell the story of Christianity.161 Over and against the *obarmod* of

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159 Tonya Kim Dewey, *An Annotated English Translation of the Old Saxon Heliand*, 1
160 Ibid., 189.
161 See Berr, *An Etymological Glossary to The Old Saxon Heliand*; and Heyne ed., *Héliand: Mit ausführlichem Glossar*. 
the People and the *slīðmod* of Pilate — arrogance and stern-mindedness — witness Christ, who “stood silently through humility (*od-muodi*), answered nothing against their angry words.”

In turn, we are called to a mixture of *mods* as the lessons of life. The lesson is one of humility, which Christ models for us. “To love the light of God in their minds (*mode*), to leave off crime, arrogance, and evil, to take humility (*odmodi*) and load it in their hearts.” (4255–4256) The lesson is to be a “firm-hearted hero” (*hard-modig herron*, 3138) in one’s convictions, and not *wek-mod* (4694) like Peter who denied Christ in the moment of truth. And from the final Fitt we know that the calling is one of joy (*frah-mod*) and happy-minded hearts (*fro-mod hugi*, 1163), since Christ has ventured into Hell so that we do not have to.

If we return the Old English and Book II of the *Junius Manuscript*,¹⁶² we can witness the decisive metamorphosis of *mod* by way of *Christ and Satan*, a poem in 729 lines of verse. In the poetic language of *Christ and Satan*, which consists of three parts — The Fall of Satan, The Harrowing of Hell, and The Temptation of Christ — pagan *mod* (*superbia*) finds a true home within the *mod of humilitas* in the same manner that *humilitas* finds its ultimate justice according to *superbia*.

*He on beame astah and his blod ageat, god on galgan, þurh his gastes mægen.* (547–548). Christ ascended the cross and his blood flowed, now blessed upon the cross through his great spirit. Christ is the sacrificial lamb who suffers on our behalf. In the same manner, “Dominica Prima” tells us that Christ overcomes the devil in humility and spiritual strength (*eadmodenesse* and *gastlices maegenes*)¹⁶³ as an example to us all. Worthy is the lamb that is slain, says Holy Scripture. We know this by way of the *Via Dolorosa* as Christ stumbles and falls and takes his last breath. In the Christology of the early times, this was known as the Suffering

¹⁶³ *Blickling Homilies*, “Dominica Prima” (III), 29.
Christ. The Christ who, according to the Apostle’s Creed, the “creed of creeds” by one estimation — suffered under Pontius Pilate and in the fires of Hell. *Descendit ad infernos, tertia
die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad caelos sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis.* He descended into hell and on the third day he arose and ascended to heaven where he sits at the right hand (*dextram*) of God the Father.

The events of the descent, however, remain a mystery since Holy Scripture is silent on the Way of Christ after the Cross. Some say he merely suffered on our behalf. Others think the preached the gospel (*Kerygma*) to the damned and liberated the just. “The imagination of Christians,” writes on scholar, “delighted to dwell on the Saviour’s experiences in the underworld…” The most potent image of the descent is one of conquest and victory. The “triumph over Satan and death, and, consequently, the salvation of mankind as a whole.”¹⁶⁴ This is known as the Victorious Christ.

If we return to *Christ and Satan*, we find that in spiritual battle Christ is no longer a lamb worthy of slaughter. Christ is the Warrior (*þegan*) and the *stronglic storm* (385). Christ is the Angel Prince (*beoden engla*) of strength and wondrous power (*maegencraeft and mihta miccle*) (199). Christ is *strang und stiðmod* (246). Christ is simply the *cyninga cyninge* — the king of kings or the meta-king (203). “Then came the sound of angel legions, and thunder at the blush of dawn. The Lord Himself had overcome the Fiend; the deadly strife began at dawn when the terror fell upon them.” And with that, the battle is over.

What then of Satan? Satan, the cursed monster, flees and sinks into the hell of *clyle* and *fyr, wean* and *witu* — cold and fire, pain and woe amid a house of darkness (*dimman ham*) — the *dimne* and *doercne* of *helle grund*. (332, 335, 453–454). The true *mod* of Satan is not the *mod* of

monsters akin to Grendel or the Fire-Drake. When Christ and Satan finally meet in Hell, each
does not know fear of his foe, though fierce their mood (stilmōd, 2567), for Satan is simply a
coward and a wyrm, a serpent emptied of the mannes mod of a hero or a dragon.

The Blicking Homilies tell us that Christ did not suffer but allowed the destruction of his
body unto death (deap). We learn that the Lord God “sent his glorious spirit (wulforfaetan gast)
into the abyss of hell (helle grund, 85). Now the little lamb “reveals to us how power and his will
(mihte & his willan)” and his “undaunted mind (unforhte modes)” achieves “the devil’s
humiliation” (deofles genyperunge, 67) and releases us “from the devil’s servitude (deofles
peowdome).”

Amid spiritual warfare, then, what task remains for the faithful? The task is one of
memory and mindfulness. Gemunan symle on mode meotodes strengðo, (285) we are told. Keep
always in mind the strength of the Ruler. And again, “With blithe thoughts in our hearts
(breostum)… let us be mindful of his righteousness and truth as we kneel before his Royal
throne...(204). In the Blicking Homilies the faithful learns to “contemplate himself in his heart
(heortan), with a silent mind (swigende modes)” (56–57). For Satan tells us that I was once an
angel in heaven (in heofnum halig aengel) but resolved in my heart (mode) to overthrow the Lord
to claim the power and glory, and in so doing I consigned myself to myself to an eternal home in
hell (helle ham). (84–88)

Thus the decisive prayer, “leave not my soul with hell’s hosts (hellwarum), but show thy
mercy upon me and bring me out of these bonds … and from the shadow of death” (86–87). The
lesson is one of being a little lamb.

Næs ða monna gemet, ne mægen engla,
ne witegena weorc, ne wera snytero,
þæt eow mihte helpan, nimðe hælend god,

se þæt wite ær to wrecæ gesette. (489–492)

For no strength of man, nor power of angels, nor work of prophets, nor wisdom of men may help, but only God, the Savior, who has ordained punishment in vengeance.

We turn to one final study to witness the decisive victory of *mod* over *mod* toward a bleeding out as the becoming of mood. The fourteenth-century poem, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which Tolkien places among the ranks of *Beowulf* and *King Lear*, captures the right mix of faith and the fierceness of nobility. Although battle might appear to be the crucial event of the poem, calling for a knight’s courage, Tolkien observes that the crucial test is one of piety such that *synne* is the true enemy.

And from her closet she came with many comely maidens.

She was fairer in face, in her flesh and skin,

her proportions, her complexion, her port than all others…

“Gawain’s mood,” Tolkien explains, is “of a man who does not know what to do. He is in the throes of temptation.” True *modleas* is not cowardice in battle, but *couetyse*-ness, as the allure of courtly love as a Middle English *mod-lufu*, when the moral courage of a knight is what’s called for.

What then of *mod* in the poem? *Mod*, which abounds in Beowulf, appears once in Sir Gawain as *oure luflých lede lys in his bedde* (1469).

The lady did not forget,

to come to him for her due.

Full early she him best

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166 Ibid., 85.
His mood (mode) for to subdue. (1472–1475)

Tolkien’s conclusion to his study of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* perhaps explains the near-absence of mod by explaining that the trials faced by Sir Gawain are the very “problems that so much occupied the English mind: The relations of Courtesy and Love with morality and Christian morals and the Eternal Law.”¹⁶⁷ In other words, the mod of Beowulf was not on the English mind.

Now we understand Blake when he tells us that Milton took the Devil’s party without knowing it, for Milton imagined Satan not according to Biblical tradition but according to the pagan and barbarian guide star of mod, which he composed as a poetical Weg for a new age. Now we understand Blake when he writes, in “A Memorable Fancy,” “This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is my particular friend: we often read the Bible together in its infernal and diabolical sense.”¹⁶⁸ Once more, the Devil speaks in his own voice according to his own mod and manner. In the mixing of metaphors, we might say that the Way of Via, as the sanato corde, the cleansing of the heart, was merely corruption of the heart and mind of mod. We might say that in Milton we witness Weg as the Way re-realizes its own constellation of words and blood.

To chart our course thus far, we have traced the modification of mod by way of the mode and manner of Christianity. We have traced the modification of Christian mod into the literary mode of mood, which covers all manner of weakness and wantingness. Accordingly, the mod of *Beowulf* was mixed and bled out twice over. We have only traveled partway, however. We might trace a returning to mod as the mood of the British Romantics as heart and soul and stygian courageous. For our study, however, we turn to the mod of Old Saxon in order to follow a kindred path into the modern German Gemüt. In “The Concept ‘Gemüt’ in Novalis” (1925),

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 105.
Theodore Geissendoerfer begins with the origins of the words in Old High German. “Originally the word Gemut was used to denote our inner life in distinction from the body, the two constituting the human being.” Gemut was the “unity of all the higher faculties of man”—“comprehensive” as the life of the mind.169

For the German Romantics, Gemut does not merely stand against the mode and method of reine Vernunft, nor does it simply return us to the tender heart of Nature that Rousseau envisions. Gemut hearkens back to the mod and muod and mut and enters the word into a new constellation, which we will call Geist.

Among his Fragments, Friedrich Schlegel writes, “Feeling (Sinn) that is aware of itself becomes spirit (Geist). Geist is an inner conviviality, and soul (Seele) is hidden amiability (Liebenswürdigkeit). The real vital power of inner beauty and perfection is mind (Gemüth).” He continues, “But the instinct for moral greatness which we call Gemüth needs only to learn to speak to have Geist. It needs only to move to love (lieben) to become all Soul.” And then, “Geist is like a music of thoughts; where Soul is, there feelings too have outline and form, noble proportions, and charming coloration. Gemüth is the poetry of elevated reason, and, united with philosophy and moral experience, it gives rise to that nameless art (Kunst) which seizes the confused transitoriness (fluctige) of life and shapes it into an eternal unity.”170

In Schiller’s twentieth letter on Aesthetic Education he writes, “The mind (Gemüth), then, passes from sensation to thought through the middle disposition (mittlere Stimmung) in which sensuousness and reason are active at the same time.” This very simultaneity as the mittlere Stimmung means that sense and thought are “mutually destroying their determining power and


through their opposition producing negation.” Schiller concludes that this *mittlere Stimmung*, in which our “nature” (*Gemüth*) resides beyond the physical and moral, “preeminently deserves to be called a free disposition (*freie Stimmung*), and when we call the condition of sensuous determination the physical, and that of rational determination the logical and moral, we must call this condition of real and active determinancy the aesthetic.”\(^{171}\)

In the next letter he writes, “The mind (*Gemüth*) is determined by its own indeterminacy as the *mittler Stimmung*, which is the aesthetic disposition (*aesthetische Verfassung*) of infinite inner power (*innerer unendlicher Kraft*) and infinite inner abundance (*innerer unendlicher Fülle*), empty infinity as the openness of unending possibility and filled infinity as its realization. The mood (*Stimmung*) of Beauty, which “transports our spirit (*Gemüth*)” is not merely concerned with knowledge. Transportation is restoration of Nature as the freedom (*Frieheit*) to be what he ought to be” — an aesthetic moral imperative. “It is no mere poetic license,” Schiller concludes, “but also philosophical truth, to call Beauty our second creator.”\(^{172}\) *Gemut* is limited only by the determinations of its own absolute power as the empty fullness of Absolute Spirit.

For the Romantics of *Sturm* and *Drang*, *Gemut* realized itself in a three-fold ideal of Goethe’s *Die Lieden des Jungen Werther*. The ideal is Young Werther according to his own confessional. “My spirit (*Seele*) soars above my sepulcher” so that “Farewell! It is time.” The ideal is Goethe as he writes upon the young artist according to the constellation of *Geist*. “Sorrow and discontent (*unmut und unlust*) had taken deep root in Werther’s soul (*seele*), and gradually imparted their character to his whole being. The harmony of his mind (*Geistes*)

\(^{171}\) Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 98–99; and, Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen, 281-282.

\(^{172}\) Ibid., 100–102/298–299.
became completely disturbed.”

The ideal is Goethe as Werther allows the author to write upon himself as a confessional for a new day.

I have carefully collected whatever I have been able to learn of the story of poor Werther, and here present it to you, knowing that you will thank me for it. To his spirit (Geiste) and character you cannot refuse your admiration and love (Hebe): to his fate you will not deny your tears. And thou, good soul (Seele), who sufferest the same distress (Drang) as he endured once, draw comfort from his sorrows (Leiden); and let this little book be thy friend, owing to fortune or through thine own fault, thou canst not find dearer companion. Werther is the model of Geist as Unmut und Unlust in the same moment that Goethe exemplifies Gemut as his writing achieves the heart and soul and the courage to speak according to his own Spirit.

The path of German Romanticism in literature and philosophy is curious, however. If the task was a recovery and purification of the blood of words, the demiurge and training of these students of theology and philosophy, poetry and painting, is often to return to the Greeks and Hebrews, and even the Persians, to excavate a way that was lost in Roman and Christian times. We see this in Hamann and Lessing, Moritz and Schiller, Novalis and Holderlin. We see this in Nietzsche and much later in Heidegger. In Hegel we see a return to Geist that merely summons the protection of Science and Reason. As a counter-spirit to Hegel, we see in Kierkegaard a reimagining of Geist, Mod, and Stimmung as a new Christian mythology filled with figures full of dread and courage to make the ultimate leap toward Christ.

Perhaps the fault lies with mod that was imagined and performed but not documented in a lasting way. Now mod looms in the greatest manner by showing little and being overshadowed

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by the time in between. Now philosophers and artists and theologians are forced to turn to the fragments of Heraclitus and Parmenides and Empedocles as proximate spirits to primordial *mod*. How then to recover *mod* except by merely re-imagining it?

We can witness this re-imagining in in a double sense by reading the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* of Nietzsche as he reads and writes “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” so that we might read Wagner directly. We proceed in the manner of Spinoza so that we might demonstrate Nietzsche’s demonstrating of Wagner in geometrical order.

**Axioms on Time and Untime**

In the first instance, Nietzsche studies Wagner axiomatically by way of anti-axioms to challenge what is understood and taken for granted in *Modern Times*.

**Axiom 1: Muth**

We have “dirtied our hands and hearts (*hande und Gemuth*),” Nietzsche declares, “in the service of idols of modern culture.” Modern man suffers from “an unspeakable poverty (*armuth*) and exhaustion.” He lives a life of “despairing despondency” (*Unmuthes berauben*) — a “state of distress extending as far as civilization now united nations.”

**Axiom 2: Geist**

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174 Friedrich Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” in *Untimely Meditations*, R. J. Hollingsdale trans.; and, in Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Recall that in *Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche proposes an academic call for the study of the history of morality. “What signpost does linguistics, especially the study of etymology, give to the history of the evolution of moral concepts?” (§17). For us, however, Nietzsche is not the conductor orchestrating the answers, the voices — *stimmungen* — of moral history-writing. He is our first violinist, or perhaps our first oboist as the closest thing to our own voice. Viewed otherwise, Nietzsche was party to *mod* in the heroic style without knowing it.


Modern Geist is monstrous in its minusculeness. It is “retarded, delayed, pacified, and weak.” Nietzsche calls this the “narrow spirit (Geiste) of tyranny,” in which the “world locks man in its ghostly arms (Gespensterarmen).” It is the affliction of false feeling and the “madness of universal concepts” (Wahnsinn der allgemeinen Begriffe). Is “mind” (Geist) present at all, he asks, in the modern age?\(^{178}\)

**Axiom 3: Sprache**

The symptom and disease may be found in words and meanings. Everywhere language is sick (Sprache erkrankt) and thereby infecting “the whole of human development.” In language we witness “degeneration and enfeeblement”; “manifold losses and mutilations”; “sin and depravity.” In speaking we parrot the highly derivative and artificially rhetorical languages of the Roman family…” — to which we might add Heidegger’s observation on the “long Christianizing of the god” and the “covert yet obsolete ‘domination’ of the churches.”\(^{179}\) Man is then a stranger and a strange land without the words to return home.

**Axiom 4: Kunst**

The symptom and disease may be found in the false artist of the modern soul, which plays to the crowd as a “kind of terror and fear of ghosts” (Angst und Gespensterfurcht).\(^{180}\) The condition is one of grotesque (grotesken) comedy and a grotesque lack of dignity, writes Nietzsche.\(^{181}\)

**Axiom 5: Weg**

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\(^{178}\) “Wagner,” 219/149.

\(^{179}\) Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, §7 and §14, 21 and 32.

\(^{180}\) “Wagner,” 219/149.

\(^{181}\) “Wagner,” 204/125.
“Like a wanderer in the night,” writes Nietzsche, we have no Weg in the modern world. The way of the Spirit is one of alienation and hostility (Geist der Entfremdung und Feindsegkeit). The way of modern men is a living death, for “they are dead while they are still breathing.”

Propositions on Time and Untime

Proposition 1: Time

The time is one of Geistige Ringen eines Volkes — the spiritual struggles of a people. It is time to hearken to the voice (Stimme) of mighty insight (wird uns auch der grosse Blick zu Theil) — toward a “mighty future.” It is time to “move men to piety” (Andacht stimme).

Proposition 2: Untime

What is timely is untimely as a return to a noble age and a higher time (Zeitalter). The past must be written again, by a mighty soul (machtigen Seele) — a return language to the “realm of strong feelings” (Reich des Gedanken zu erfassen).

Proposition 3: Time and Untime as Myth and Musik

How then does a reorientation come into being, he asks? The answer is Myth and Musik. Myth debased as fairytale and now restored to its “manliness” and Music is re-enchanted. Myth and music as Mittelreich as Time and Untime.

Proposition 4: Time and Untime as Art and Artist

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182 “Wagner,” 204/231.
184 “Wagner,” 217.
185 “Wagner,” 129.
186 “Wagner,” 199/117.
189 “Wagner,” 217.
What then is the way through the *Mittelreich* of Art if not the Artist. The wise and observing spirit (*Ein weisen betrachtender Geist*) of ruthless courage (*rucksichtslosen tapferkeit*).\(^{190}\) The untimely man (*unzeitgemasse Menschen*) who makes his home (*Heimath*) in a different age.\(^{191}\) “The poetical elucidator of past philosophies of life (*leibenbetrachtungen*)”\(^{192}\) — past meditations on living. “The philosopher, the historian, the aesthetician and critic, the master of language, the mythologist and mytho-poet.” The artist who assembles “stones and fragments borrowed from an earlier culture.”\(^{193}\) Recall that Achilles had lost his spear and shield and waited upon Hephaestus to forged them anew. In Time and Untime, Nietzsche gives us the artist as hero who forges nothing less than strength and protection for a new age.

**Proposition 5: Wagner as Time and Untime as Art and Artist**

Wagner was Time and Untime to the world, declares Nietzsche. There were no warning signs. Wagner was Untime unto himself, as well, according to the times. He was penniless and beset with temptation to become the modern man of art and society, power, fame and pleasure.\(^{194}\) The specter (*Gespenster*) was one of fame or failure, popularity or obscurity.\(^{195}\) Wagner was Time and Untime unto the world in that “he sensed with profound pride the natural originality and inexhaustibility still existing in this language …” — “a remarkable richness in strong and significant words.”\(^{196}\)

**Proposition 6: The Demonic Weg**

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\(^{190}\) “Wagner,” 198/115, 208/130.  
\(^{191}\) “Wagner,” 198/115.  
\(^{192}\) “Wagner,” 205/125.  
\(^{193}\) “Wagner,” 216.  
\(^{194}\) “Wagner,” 204/231.  
\(^{195}\) “Wagner,” 205/125.  
\(^{196}\) “Wagner,” 238.
Wagner sensed the way of the Way as the Demonic Weg, a “descent to the very bottom (Grunde).” The first sign, writes Nietzsche, was a “spirit of restlessness.” Then came “bewildering dreams,” strange and remote (Entfremdung und Entlegenheit). Finally, in the manner of Augustine who proceeds into the garden, Wagner entered the “darkest sanctuary of his soul” (heiligsten Dunkel seiner Seele). He is “alienated from his own being” and only now does he understanding the “demonic (damonischen) transmissibility and self-relinquishment of his nature.”

The way is one of pandemonium as “soulful quietude” (Gemuthsstille) turns to noise and violence. “Each of his talents, joyful in its existence, wanted to tear itself free from the others and satisfy itself individually.” He experiences moods (Stimmungen) of “almost pathological intensity” — the Mittelreich of a “sudden explosive intoxication of spirit” (Rausch der Gemuthes) and a return to a “strangely consoled mood” (Stimmung).

The way is pandemonium finding its true voice. Wagner’s task, explains Nietzsche, was “the demonic communicability of his nature” (damonischen) and the “struggles to bestow upon it the greatest clarity and capacity to conduct such a mighty colloquy.” In all, his “many-voiced Being” (vielstimmgen Wesen) needed a “ruling passion” according to a “single inner law.”

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197 “Wagner,” 231/169.
198 “Wagner,” 222/115.
199 “Wagner,” 200/118.
200 “Wagner,” 204.
201 “Wagner,” 200/118.
202 “Wagner,” 228/163.
204 “Wagner,” 232.
205 “Wagner,” 208/130.
Proposition 7: Time and Untime as the Demonic Mittelweg

“As soon as his spiritual (geistige) and moral maturity arrives,” writes Nietzsche, “the drama of his life also begins.”

Only then could the spirit of music (Geist der Musik) speak to him “with a wholly novel psychical magic.”

The demonic path was a double-path (doppeltoen Weg) to translate the world through myth and music into “soul and primordial life” and truly to inhabit a world as the very same. This was der langen Weg (the long way) that only Wagner knew.

He composed in a mode of thinking (sondern er selber ist ein Denken) beyond logical links and causalities and against theoretical man. He began hesitantly, in an “uncertain tone (stimme) of ghostly words (gespenstisch schone Worte) he cannot quite grasp.” He learned to “speaks only to self; no longer to the public or folk.”

He learned to be “the interpreter and transfigurer of a past.” He learned to speak in a mythical language as the spirit of poetry (Geiste). He learned “to follow wherever (den Weg) his ghostly guide (gespenstischer Fuhrer) may lead.”

He learned Myth and Music according to the “elevation and sanctity of mood” (Stimmung). He wrote in “flesh and blood” (Fleish und Geist), mythically and musically unto himself. Only then could he proceed along the demonic way that he no longer feared. It was the path that plunges “down into the depths with a demonic joy (daimonischen Lust) into the abyss (Abgrund) and into its seething waves.”

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206 “Wagner,” 201/120.  
207 “Wagner,” 228/164.  
208 “Wagner,” 236/177.  
211 “Wagner,” 202/121.  
212 “Wagner,” 206/128.  
Stimmungsmusik – music of moods.\textsuperscript{214} Not an indefinite, general mood (\textit{unbestimmt}, \textit{stimmungshaft})\textsuperscript{215} but one that draws together justice and enmity, love and war. “Wagner is never more Wagner,” writes Nietzsche, “than when difficulties multiply tenfold and he can rule over great affairs with the joy (\textit{Lust}) of a lawgiver.”\textsuperscript{216}

What of us? asks Nietzsche. Our task is to “take courage (\textit{muthiger}) from the sight of a hero (\textit{Helden}) who has learned not to fear."\textsuperscript{217} Our task is to battle with courage (\textit{muthe sollte er kampfen}) amid the waves and down into the depths of the soul. Nietzsche ends with a warning. “If the soul should speak out in free full tones it would shake and terrify our soul as would the voice (\textit{Stimme}) of some hitherto concealed evil spirit of nature” (\textit{bosen Naturgeist}).\textsuperscript{218} “Have you the courage (\textit{Muth}),” he asks, “to point to the stars in this celestial vault of beauty and goodness and say: is it our life that Wagner has set upon the stars?”\textsuperscript{219} Have we the courage to set our life upon the stars?

Having learned the lesson of \textit{mod} we return to \textit{hodos} to turn to \textit{metahodos} to learn the lesson of \textit{meta} to learn the lesson of \textit{me ta hodos}. \textit{Meta} seems to mean many things to many people. For Aristotle, the \textit{Metaphysics} come \textit{after} and go \textit{beyond} the \textit{Physics}. \textit{The Metalogicon} receives its title, explains Salisbury, “For in it, I undertake to defend logic,”\textsuperscript{220} such that \textit{meta-logos} is language in defense of logical language in need of defending. In “Logic Based on Inclusion and Abstraction,” W. V. Quine introduces a system of systems — a meta-system in a manner of speaking — by way of meta-math and meta-theorems. Taken in combination, he

\textsuperscript{214} “Wagner,” 241/184.
\textsuperscript{215} “Wagner,” 242/186.
\textsuperscript{216} “Wagner,” 243/187.
\textsuperscript{217} “Wagner,” 206/127.
\textsuperscript{218} “Wagner,” 251/201.
\textsuperscript{219} “Wagner,” 253/204.
\textsuperscript{220} John of Salisbury, \textit{Metalogicon}, 5.
explains, they produce “metamathematical theorems about theorems.” Amid his logic of *Strange Loops*, Hofstadter seems never to have met a *meta* he did not like. Meta-language and meta-schema, meta-agnostic and meta-analogy, meta-author and meta-book, meta-description and meta-evidence, meta-hiccup — “I am myself but a hiccup in some higher author’s brain” — and meta-wish, which is merely the wish for more wishes from the meta-genie, which is a mongrel term etymologically speaking. Most importantly, as the logic of strange loops *meta* does not transcend but merely rises and falls like the tide since “ascending and descending are just the same” and straight lines always circle back.

For Lyotard, the meta-narrative is the governing narrative of narratives, such that we might picture a *petit recrit* as being a meta-meta-narrative as it unfolds beyond and against and not in defense of the meta-narrative. In *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger offers an ontological articulation of *meta* by way of *meta ta phusika*, which is “away over” and “over beyond” so that when he describes the German people as the metaphysical people (*Volk*), he hopes that they will enter into a meta-physical “leading into asking the fundamental question” of Being, which is its own kind of strange loop.

In one sense, Heidegger provides a helpful clue in that *meta ta phusika* is merely eschatological as the asking of ultimate questions (*eschatos logos*). Recall that for Heidegger, the onto-epistemological question is one of why Being and not not-Being, and “Whether we are capable of experiencing a provocative happening in this recoil of the why-question, back upon

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222 Douglas Hofstadter, *I am a Strange Loop*, 726.

223 Ibid., 13.


225 Ibid., 21.
itself.” Our *meta* is simpler. Our *meta* is merely *me ta*, which is merely being *together with* — whether for or against, within or beyond, above or below — so that our *metahodos* means *me ta hodos* so that we are truly with the way wherever it goes. Recall that Hamlet knew the way, but he was never truly with the way since what passed for conscience made a coward of him all so that what passed for being with the way merely produced recoil or backlash as the true story of *Hamlet*, which is the effect of eschatology that asks and answers while never truly being with the meta-question as it rises and falls with the tide.

By contrast, Christ is the way in a curiously meta-way for followers of Christ. For the Way of Christ is both the Way we want to be on, since we want to be together with Christ along the Way, and Christ’s own Way which is precisely the Way we want to avoid. “Permit me to accompany thee on this journey,” we beg. Locked in the Holy Sepulchre, one pilgrim exclaims, “Oh, how joyous an imprisonment! How desirable a captivity! How delightful an enclosure! How sweet a locking-in, whereby the Christian is locked in and impressed in the sepulcher of his Lord!” But this is precisely the journey we do not want to take — namely, the journey into Hell. We want to take the journey of the Way of the Cross, which is the Way of the not-Cross as the meta-Cross as what comes after the Cross. We leave this Way to Christ as the cross He must bear, and as the *hodos* he must be together with, since He bears the Cross so that we do not need to go down that road. Now we arrive at a curious problem of the Way of the Cross, which is that the *Via Crucis* ends just as the Way truly begins, which is precisely the point and the anti-point of being together with the way.

\[226\] Ibid., 6.

SIXTH MEDITATION ON METAPHORMORPHOSIS

… for it was by the love implanted in them by You that they gave so willingly that milk which
by Your gift flowed in their breasts.

—Augustine, Confessions

Then it was all dark and his white crib and the dim faces that moved above him and the warm
sweet aroma of the milk faded out altogether from his mind.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”

1 Augustine, Confessions 1.6, Sheed trans., 7.
In the 1958 film, “Touch of Evil,” our corrupt and corpulent sheriff Quinlan demands of the gypsy woman, “Read my future.” “You haven’t got any,” she replies. “Your future’s all used up.”² We know this fortune, or anti-fortune, to be a lie since the sheriff has another sixty-three minutes before he is shot and then crawls into a pool of cess to die. Perhaps we might find truth in the lie, however, by solving the riddle of time.

If we picture time by way of philosophy we draw a beast with many-headed masters. Time fluxes and flows and we dip our toe in and out as if we were not caught in its currents. Time conditions pure intuition. Time unfolds as absolute spirit. Time structures labor just as time revolts in a permanent manner as the evolving of time until time resolves itself. Time flows as experience and consciousness. Time builds up and stores times in order finally to remember. Time remembers and rushes back uninvited. Time returns and restores. Time is Being according to the future-tense. Time gives way to anti-time as eternal time as a land beyond time. Like Paul to the Corinthians, taken all together, time can be all things to all people.

To learn the first and lasting lesson of time, recall not the scholar and saint, but the infant Augustine who feeds on time in the manner of the child’s game Hungry Hippos. “For at that time I learned how to suck, to lie quiet when I was content, to cry when I was in pain …,”³ and each lesson and each instances is a marble to chomp on. “That infancy of mine,” he claims, “died long since, yet I still live.”⁴ Perhaps Augustine is correct in that later in life he no longer suckled or lied quiet or cried with pain, though we know this to be a lie since he suckles on the teat of God and he suffers pain at the death of loved ones and he quietly contemplates as solace for life and

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² Touch of Evil (1958).
³ Augustine, Confessions, 1.6, 7.
⁴ Ibid., 1.6, 9.
since he still lives by feeding on time. To picture time is merely to witness life feeding. Chomp!
Chomp!!

How then can Quinlan have no future? He gluts on food and drink. He leers at the
luminous gypsy with ravenous eyes. The answer is that time feeds on life. We feed on time and
time feeds on us until nothing remains. It is a race for and against the clock. We call this feeding-
time. Your future’s all used up, says the gypsy woman. Why don’t you go home.

To picture time feeding time we turn to the hexistential by way of diathesis. Long before
Heidegger entered Being into regions of possibility and then entered space into time, the Greeks
studied the hexistential as the riddle of Being as diathesis as time feeding time as being and
becoming. In present-day analysis, diathesis means the disposition to mental disease in the
manner of Ishmael who begins his journey while being grim about the mouth. In her doctoral
thesis at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for instance, Heidi Gazelle advances
the hypothesis of “Anxious Solitude and Peer Exclusion” according to a “Diathesis-Stress Model
of Internalizing Trajectories in Childhood.” “The diathesis-stress hypothesis will be supported,”
writes Gazelle, “if high anxious solitude in the context of high exclusion predicts the most
elevated depressive symptom trajectories.”

What then is diathesis? Diathesis is “personal vulnerability” as the disposition to social
anxiety and depression. In this sense, the hypo-thesis of Ishmael points to his diathesis as a kind
of defect in the hull of a ship that should otherwise be sound. Or, when Hamlet begins in bitter
cold we know that the soul of the prince will be damp and drizzly even on a bright summer day.
Or, when we learn of Bartleby who yet lives and yet stops feeding on time we call time that stops

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6 Ibid., 7.
feeding time “morbid moodiness” and “pallid hopelessness,” “mild cadaverousness” and the “preference not to be a little reasonable.” Bartleby, we learn is “deranged,” as an “incubus” and a haunting specter, afflicted by an “innate and incurable disorder,” triggered, it turns out, by the dismembering of the Office of Dead Letters and the scattering of the clerics within.⁷

Gazelle bases her study on the psycho-social theory of diathesis + stress, which emerged in the 1980s. In 1982, for instance, Metalsky et al. published a study that attempts to predict “depressive mood responses” in college students when poor exam grades intersect with a “diathesis for depressive reactions.”⁸ In 1986, Donald Rubinstein published “A Stress-Diathesis Theory of Suicide,” in which he advances a “biocultural theory of suicide which addresses both the specific situational stressors and the categories or predisposing factors of vulnerable individuals in a given culture.”⁹

Clinical diathesis as the disposition to mental disease is not new or even recent, however. In 1907, David Heron of the University of London and the Francis Galton Laboratory for National Eugenics published A First Study of the Statistics of Insanity and the Inheritance of the Insane Diathesis, in which he concludes that the “tendency of pathological defect” is “associated more intensely with the earlier born,”¹⁰ which is to say that first fruits are more likely to be bad seeds. Interestingly, about the time that Heron adopted diathesis for mental health, the medical world was abandoning the term, which dates back to Hippocrates. In his medical history of the word, Erwin Ackerknecht reports that with Hippocrates, diathesis was a vague term that never

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⁷ Herman Melville, “Bartleby, The Scrivener,” in Billy Budd and Other Stories.
¹⁰ David Heron A First Study of the Statistics of Insanity and the Inheritance of the Insane Diathesis, 32.
achieved greater depth than “watery,” “consumptive,” or “authentic.” Galen used the term frequently but inconsistently. In some instances, one may have a healthy or sick diathesis. In other cases, diathesis is the sick condition of the body in contrast to health. Finally, reminiscent of Aristotle, Galen draws equivalency and interrelations between phusis, hexas, schesis, and diathesis such that each one means kataskene, or the constitution of the body.11

Around 1800, diathesis came to mean the state of the body as the disposition to acquire certain diseases or ailments. A sthentic diathesis points to overexcitement. An asthentic diathesis points to Ishmael, who merely trails behind funeral processions. A sthentic-asthentic diathesis seems to describe Hamlet, who alternately lashes out and grinds to a halt.

The period between 1800 and 1900 is known as the ontological period of medical diathesis and concerns states of being as a question of disease. By the turn of the century, however, states of being — spastic, apoplectic, and nervous, for instance — had given way to the pathological study of disease by way of bacteria and biochemistry so that in 1914, in the same moment that diathesis entered the domain of mental health, the Reference Handbook of the Medical Sciences declared the medical term to be a “relic.”12 To study diathesis as a relic, we turn to the Greeks who render the term as time feeding time by way of hexas.13

For Hippocrates, hexas means having by way of echein (“to have”) as a diagnosis of the body. Echein is not predicative such that Socrates is water or wateriness. Echein is possessive such that Socrates has water. He is in possession of wateriness. He is possessed by wateriness.

12 Cited in Ibid., 325.
13 See, Edward Darcy Harter, “A Study of Hexis and Dispositional Properties in Aristotle,” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1972), which is invaluable for Harter’s self-described “spade-work” that digs up instances of hexas and diathesis like so many roots and tubers.
He is watery though he is not water. Accordingly, hexis points to the present and unfolding state of phusis according to diathesis, the disposition of phusis made manifest in hexis. Hexis is wateriness that passes through Socrates though Socrates is not water through and through.

From phusis to eidos, Plato casts hexis according to the ideal molding of the soul so that “to have” becomes “to be” and “to become.” The task, explains Socrates, is to “prove some possession or state of the soul to be the one that can render life happy for all human beings.”\textsuperscript{14} What state? The state is one of arete as wisdom and courage, moderation and justice — to be in possession and to be possessed by the very same. The task is also one of steresis as deprivation. To feed virtue means to starve away hexical vice — vice as a derangement and morbidity of the soul, vice as the hexis of a slave, and vice as very nature of a monstrous soul, defective and corrupt.\textsuperscript{15} Oedipus has eyes but he is deprived of moral sight, while Tiresias can see the landscape of good and evil despite blindness. Now, however, hexis is the question to its own answer. Hexis points to disease in an otherwise healthy soul, yet Socrates describes those who are who are by nature sick and licentious.\textsuperscript{16} Hexis describes the highest aspiration of man and his greatest challenge not to become good now and then but to “persist in that state [hexis]” which, according to Socrates “is not humanely possible.\textsuperscript{17} Hexis needs nurturing such that the wrong choice may be “devastating to the culturation of the soul,”\textsuperscript{18} yet Socrates assures us that the hexis of the soul, fleeting in life, will endure after death.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{14} Plato, \textit{Philebus} 11d4, in \textit{Complete Works}.
\textsuperscript{15} See Plato, \textit{Laws} 790e–791b, 1460; \textit{Laws} 966a–b, 1614; and, “Letter VII” 343e–344a, 1661, in \textit{Complete Works}.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Protagoras} 344b–c, in \textit{Complete Works}, 775.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Phaedrus} 241c, in \textit{Complete Works}, 520.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Gorgias} 524b, in \textit{Complete Works}.
With Aristotle, we consider the science of the riddle or the riddle of the science of *hexit* and *diathesis*. The analytical and dialectical riddle is one of the potential and the actual since the first potentiality resides in merely being actual, and the first actuality is potentiality toward potential actualized, and potential actualized is actual potential toward potential actualized and on and on in the spirit of Hegel. In any case, the danger is to go astray by way of *steresis* as actual deprivation as a *hexit* of potential never actualized. “I coulda been a contender,” pleads Terry Malloy. “I coulda been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am.”

The Greeks knew no good wind for a sail without direction. What then gives hexis its orientation and aim?

Recall Ahab as he enters the Japanese Sea. The Whale is close. He takes his position by the sun and stars. He falls into a reverie and then into a rage. “Curse thee, thou quadrant!” dashing it to the deck, “no longer will I guide my earthly way by thee.” “Thou tellest me truly where I am — but canst thou cast the least hint where I shall be.” Thus “I trample on thee” and proceed by “dead reckoning” as the seeing-eye of the sun and stars within. “Where is Moby Dick?” he asks. “This instant thou must be eyeing him. These eyes of mine look into the very eye that is even now beholding him; aye, and into the eye that is even now equally beholding the objects on the unknown, thither side of thee, thou sun!” In ancient times, having fire in the eyes meant not the flicker of a flame casting inward but a blaze from within casting outward so that when the Bard summons a muse of fire to ascend the brightest heaven of invention, the light of language he calls for will burn from within.

Now we are mixing metaphors according to the ancient elements since the path is one of wind and fire as we travel over land and sea as time feeding time. The wind is one of *kinesis* as

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motion and moticity from actual potential to potential actualized or from de-actualizing actuality toward a re-actualization according to actual potential. The fire is one of energia and orexis as desire and the origin of action. What directs the wind? Aristotle answers by way of the intellect and ethics, habit and education, nature and reflection, singularly and in combination, in harmony and in opposition. What fuels the flame? Rational desire, answers Aristotle, or pathos as love and hate, fear and assurance, longing and compassion,22 or fantasia as the power of pictures in the soul23 that see the world as it may be or as it must become. Finally, the task is one of praxis as enaction as doing so that it is done.

What then of diathesis if not the hunger of the whole as the many winds and fires of hexistence? Or diathesis as the whole hunger, the hunger of hungers beyond and before being hungry to hunger for milk or rest or the cessing of pain. Or diathesis as its own kind of steresis as a depriving of the hunger of hungers in the manner of Bartleby, a “motionless man” without a gust of wind and “great stillness” in the absence of dancing fire. “No more,” says Bartleby, which is startling in that diathesis speaks. Without wind or fire what voice is diathesis to have? What is the voice of diathesis? What voice does diathesis possess? What voice possesses the very same? The answer is one of diathesis as the words of blood.

In Tekhne Grammatike, Dionysios Thrax studies diathesis as a question of the verb. Today, we know the verbal voice by way of activum or passivum — active and passive verbiage. Before this translation, however, Dionysios explained that the verb is one of energeia or pathos, performance or experience.24 “Either you must do something,” Bartleby is told, “or something

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23 Aristotle, De Anima, III.7, 431, in Basic Works.
must be done to you.”

In the Institutes (Book IX), Quintilian will translate verbal diathesis into **modus loquendi**, the power of the voice, with an eye to eloquence as composition, lyricism, and delivery. Composition, says Quintilian, is artistic structure as the welding of words and as the force and direction of language in the manner of a bow to its quiver of arrows.26 The hope for an arrow, however, is that it travels straight and true. By contrast, Quintilian tells us that words must be musical as they make their way through the artistic structure — always “obedient to the will of the speaker” and “susceptible of every variety of sound and inflexion that can be required, and possessed, as they say, of all the notes of a musical instrument.”27 In the same spirit, the delivery and performance — the audible voice and gesture (**vocem gestumque**) — must be “easy, strong, rich, flexible, firm, sweet, enduring, resonant, pure, carrying far and penetrating the ear.”

To what end? What is the target for words in the mode and method of music? Not the ear, but the soul. To charm the ear, says Quintilian, is to stir the soul (**ad motum animorum**) in both war and genuflexion (**genu supplicandum**).29 The Scholia Marciana of the tenth century will call this the “transposition of the person” by way of “action or experience, through which the psyche is disposed and established either as one who performs something or as one who experiences.”

The inspiration for Diathesis is positively Aristotelian. Quintilian admonishes us to “cultivate the middle tones,” evenness in rhythm with nothing jolting, sonorous and agreeable (**dulcis**), and never harsh31 — the musical Rousseau rather than Stravinsky. Dionysios calls this **mesotes**, the middle voice and the middle way, mutually generative and reflective. In this respect,

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26 See Quintilian, *Oratoria* 9.4.9, in vol. 3, 511.
28 Quintilian, *Oratoria* 11.3.40, in vol. 4, 265.
the middle voice is the formal way of the verb. *Diathesis*, explains Dionysios, is formal as being either performance or experience. The form of the verb is independent of context and meaning.\(^{32}\)

In the next breath, however, Dionysios describes *mesotes* as the middle way of opposing which ways — energetic pathos and experiential *energeia*\(^{33}\) — a kind of verbal interpenetration of forms toward meaning. For instance, when we learn that “Jesus wept” (John 11:35), we know that Jesus weeps in the face of the weeping of Mary and Martha. And we imagine the weeping of Jesus as no mere pathos, as experience, but divine compassion as indignity against death, so that when we learn of the passing of Christ we picture Christ’s passion as pure suffering such that its very purity resides in active suffering and performative experience.

In the same verbal spirit, the fall of Lucifer is no mere gravity. For gravity, Milton tells us, is “fraught with envy against the Son of God …”\(^{34}\) and gravity is filled with pride and malice and contempt and resolve. Gravity realizes its true pull by way of oratory to gather a Legion around him.

So spake the false Archangel, and infused

Bad influence into the unwary breast … \(^{35}\)

— the gravity of verbal form such that *Satan falling* as simply another name for Satan’s verbal *attack* on the power of Heaven.

In Camus’ final novel, *The Fall* (Le chute), we witness the nominal fall verbally as opposing which ways so that the performance of falling is the experience of not falling, and the performance of not falling is simply to fall over and over again. For Camus, awareness is born with an inkling — a crucial first testing — that finally becomes the “pure flame of life.” In *The


\(^{33}\) Ibid., 159.

\(^{34}\) PL, V 663.

\(^{35}\) PL, V 694–695.
Fall, Jean-Baptiste tells his story always in a half-light, riddled and refracted, and doubled over again and again. Scripture calls this seeing through the glass darkly (1 Cor 13:12), though Jean-Baptiste never truly comes face to face with himself. His supreme clarity is coupled with a vital deceit: acute awareness scattered to the wind and blown back upon him. His words mimic those of the absurd man. They embrace the present as lucid despair and the abandonment of hope. But his awareness resides in a shadow and suggests that he could have illuminated a different path. He lives failure again and again, an ongoing present without hope, now a studied perversion of absurd wisdom. The crucial test was Suicide.

One night in November, Jean-Baptiste crosses the Pont Royal. On the bridge he passes a figure leaning over the railing, staring at the river, a “slim young woman dressed in black.” He reaches the other side.

I heard the sound … of a body striking the water. I stopped short, but without turning around. Almost at once I heard a cry, repeated several times, which was going downstream; then it suddenly ceased. The silence that followed, as the night suddenly stood still, seemed interminable. I wanted to run and yet didn’t stir. I was trembling, I believe from cold and shock. I told myself that I had to be quick and I felt an irresistible weakness steal over me. I have forgotten what I thought then. “Too late, too far…” or something of the sort. I was still, listening as I stood motionless. Then, slowly under the rain, I went away. I informed no one.\(^\text{36}\)

This moment could have been the inkling, the birth of absurd wisdom summoned to its purest flame. It tried to be. But “Too late, too far” he reasons once more, according to the half-light of memory. The futility of jumping would have produced a double sin, one suicide begetting

\(^{36}\) Albert Camus, *The Fall*, 70.
another, two souls lost instead of one, the extreme affront against truly living. The moment seems to illustrate the painful crucible of an absurd ethics. But was this an example of absurd indifference or of cowardly indecision? Jean-Baptiste thinks of it as an act of indifference. But does he not simply adopt an indifference to his indecision, over and over again? He is indifferent to his cowardice, not to her Suicide. Perhaps Jean-Baptiste did discover compassion through inaction. Perhaps his growing sickness — the panic and shame of later events — betrays his gnawing conscience. He sickens himself and each time he doubles down to the very last. The Fall ends with a soliloquy as just one more unending dialogue with himself:

Then please tell me what happened to you one night on the quays of the Seine and how you managed never to risk your life. You yourself utter the words that for years have never ceased echoing through my nights and that I shall at last say through your mouth: “O young woman, throw yourself into the water again so that I may a second time have the chance of saving both of us!” A second time, eh, what a risky suggestion! Just suppose … that we should be taken literally? We’d have to go through with it … But let’s not worry. It’s too late now. It will always be too late. Fortunately!\(^37\)

In Myth of Sisyphus, Camus studies the mythical figure not as he pushes the rock up the mountain. His descent is what intrigues Camus. The descent is his “hour of consciousness” in which he steals himself to begin again. For Camus, “Sisyphus teaches a higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises the rock.” Only then may Sisyphus become “superior to his fate.” Only then is he “stronger than his rock.”\(^38\) Jean-Baptiste did not struggle or become superior to his fate. He cowered. He did not walk away grimly under her cries for help. He did not plunge into the water, his very own descent, crying “All or None!” He was confronted with the

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 147.

\(^{38}\) Albert Camus, Myth of Sisyphus, 123 and 121.
dangerous maybe, the fundamental perhaps of Suicide and he would not choose. He did not achieve a higher fidelity. He degraded himself. The world moved all around and against him. It spoke for him while he remained silent and still. The *Myth of Sisyphus* describes Suicide as a kind of philosophical sickness unto death. *The Fall* illustrates the question of Suicide as a sickness unto life. Jean Baptiste would not choose, even unto Suicide, and thus his sin was to choose living. The consequence is that he must live with himself in a full and complete life. Either you fall, in a manner of speaking, or you shall be fallen.

If we return to the diathesis of Bartleby, we witness the middle voice of the middle way as a mixing of voices as opposing which ways. Diathesis as anti-diathesis as pure practical *steresis*. Either you must do something, or something must be done to you. “I prefer not to,” Bartleby replies as a path that follows neither which way. And so we encounter Bartleby, “Strangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, his head touching the cold stone.” On the errand of life, concludes Melville, Bartleby sped to death. “Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!”

Having arrived at the diathesis of words as the middle voice of many which ways, we turn to another measuring of words by way of metaphor. Having learned the lesson of Being with the way and the lesson that Being on the road does not necessarily mean Being with the road in its expanse and directions and in the ticking off of each step along the way, we return to the meaning of the Way as a metaphor for metamorphosis.

What is a metaphor if not a trope, though trope can mean many things to many people. We do not mean the Tropes — ten in all (*Deka Tropon*) — of Sextus Empiricus, which are Modes of Logic designed to achieve in the hearts and minds of the Dogmatists a suspension of judgment (*epoche*) — to drag them along the road they would not otherwise take. We do not

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mean the trope of the Middle Ages, which seems to mean musical mode-ification rather than literary tropification. In “Aux origines des tropes d’interpolation: le trope meloforme d’introit,” for instance, Michel Hugo enumerates six categories of tropes that concern the matching of words and notes, the amplification of melody, the insertion of liturgical acts such as communion, the bookending of liturgy with prelude and postlude, the use of melodic opposition, and the interchangeability of instrument and voice.40

We do not mean the trope of classical music such that “typical material is combined in atypical ways.”41 In his study of Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, Robert Hatten writes, “Like a metaphor in literary language, a trope is sparked from the collision or fusion of two already established meanings, and its interpretation is emergent.” So for example, Schubert’s Piano Sonata in E-Major, D. 567 realizes a movement that is “tropologically conceived as a working out of the opposition between the relaxed realms of dance … and the charged progressiveness of development in sonata.”42 Or, according to one scholar, Schubert’s Winterreise, whose penultimate verse is title “Courage!” (Mut!), “juxtaposes the tragic and a rather exuberant, joyful expression.”43

When the snow flies in my face, I shake it off. When my heart speaks in my breast, I sing loudly and gaily. I do not hear what it says; I have no ears. I do not feel its laments; lamenting is for fools. Merrily out into the world, against wind and weather! If there is no God on earth, then we ourselves are gods!44 [Chomp! Chomp!!]

41 Robert S. Hatten, Interpreting Musical Gestures, Topics, and Tropes.
42 Ibid. 15–16.
43 Lauri Suurpaa, Death in Winterreise, 141.
44 Ibid., 144.
We do not mean the jazz trope as a “vernacular language and lifestyle, decoded through the metaphors of jazz” that gives voice and speaks to “the unique history and experience” of a people.\(^{45}\) For then, music is the metaphorical “masking, hiding, dissembling, getting by, surviving, making do,” which encodes and expresses the meanings of life.

We do not mean Quintilian’s Trope as the “artistic alteration (\textit{virtute mutatio}) of a word (\textit{verbi}) or phrase (\textit{sermonis}) from its proper meaning to another.”\(^{46}\)

For Quintilian, the most common and most elegant Trope is \textit{metaphora}, which is merely \textit{translatio} in Latin.\(^{47}\) There are four modes of metaphor as mutation. A metaphor might mutate the animate into the animate, as when a hungry, hairy bear who sells his birthright for a bowl of porridge. A metaphor might mutate the inanimate into the inanimate as with the “globular brain and ponderous brain” of Old Ahab.\(^{48}\) A metaphor might mutate the animate into the inanimate, such the mirror of the soul or a stained glass heart. A metaphor might mutate inanimate into animate as with Homer’s daybreak and dawn stretching out her rose colored fingers.

Quintillian then turns to the meta-mode of metaphor, which entails “effects of extraordinary sublimity… as when the theme is exalted by a bold (\textit{audaci}) and almost hazardous (\textit{proxime periculum}) metaphor and inanimate objects are given life and action…”\(^{49}\) We mean none of these.

We do not mean the \textit{tropos} of Aristotle in the \textit{Prior Analytics}, which became the \textit{modus} and mood syllogism for the Medievals. The trope of metaphor in \textit{Poetics} and \textit{Rhetoric}, by

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\(^{45}\) Alfonso W. Hawkins, Jr., \textit{Jazz Trope: A Theory of African American Literary and Vernacular Culture}, xvi.

\(^{46}\) Quintilian, \textit{Oratoria} 8.6.1, in vol. 3, 300–301

\(^{47}\) See \textit{Oratoria} 8.6.4, in vol. 3, 303.

\(^{48}\) \textit{Moby Dick}, “The Ship” (XVI), 76.

contrast, means to change the very meaning of a word to make the familiar unfamiliar and in consequence to make what is now unfamiliar that much more familiar.

Metaphors, Aristotle explains, “draw from things that are related to the original thing, yet not so obviously related” in order to invite the “acute mind” to “perceive resemblances.” In one sense, the task is to draw together words that are alien to each other. To be a “master of metaphor,” declares Aristotle, is a “sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars.” The task is not merely to match-make between strangers. The task is to find, in the little lower layer, a bloodline that runs secretly through somehow related words. To draw together strange and alien word (allotrios) that are, in their heart of hearts, kindred spirits.

The power of metaphor is not in argument or proof. Instead, the words in metaphor “set the scene before our eyes” as a puzzle or riddle. Metaphor reflects and generates a “state of activity” as the wrestling with the meaning that has changed in order to fully realize what is meant. We do not mean metaphor in this sense, either.

If metaphor is a trope or tropos as the turning or altering of direction, and if a metaphora is not to merely to set the altering way before the eyes, but to be possessed by the altering and to be what alters, then metaphor simply means a metamorphosis of words in blood. We call this the metaphormorphosis in the manner of Ricoeur, who wishes to move beyond the Aristotelian parameters of “displacement and extension of the meaning of words” according to a theory of substitution. In The Rule of Metaphor, Ricoeur envisions a “gravity shift” as an “inter-

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50 Aristotle, Rhetoric 1412a9–12, in The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle.
51 Aristotle, Poetics, 1459a5–8, in Ibid.
52 Rhetoric 1410b33.
53 Ibid. 1411b26.
54 Paul Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, 3.
animation of philosophical and poetic discourse” that “unleashes the power that certain fictions have to re-describe reality.” For Ricoeur, the power of metaphor is not confined merely to words or sentences, but to discourse and the whole of narrative. The task is not merely epistemological, as metaphor sets the scene before our eyes. The power is ontological as the metaphorical narration of our very Being as it feeds its way through time. The task is not one of mimesis as a representing of the world faithfully. The task is one of *muthos*, as the writing of the very story of life along the way.

At the heart of metaphor, then, is *tropos* as more than the mutating of word into word or meaning beyond meaning. Now *tropos* is ontological in its heart of hearts in the manner of Gregor Samsa, who literally morphs into the metaphorical bug. On the page, we may read the bug as metaphor, just as the castle and the burrow and the penal colony are all metaphors that we may puzzle over. For Gregor, however, the metaphorical metamorphosis was quite real, which, ontologically speaking means that he really became a bug for us to puzzle over. Without ever leaving home, he truly changed along the way, such that onto-metaphormorphically speaking, we must picture the “uneasy dreams” of Gregor as *fantasia* that somehow conjured himself that morning.56

We mean metaphor in the anti-manner of Ricoeur, as well. Despite or perhaps because of the outrageous strength of metaphor as a shift in ontological gravity through the mass and energy of words, Ricoeur wishes to ground an unstable metaphorical hermeneutical ontology in the gravity of gravities by way of Aristotle’s *ousia*. *Ousia*, Ricoeur explains, is a “first term” that is “entirely outside the bounds of all language games.” Accordingly, *ousia* will “rescue the diverse

55 Ibid., 257 and 7.
meanings of being from dispersal” by placing “all the other terms in the realm of meaning.”57

Ousia is the grund, and not the abgrund, on which we may firmly stand. The riotous power of language, he writes, points to the “capacity of words to receive additional, displaced, and associated meanings on the basis of their resembling the fundament meaning.”58 But the aim of metaphor is one of health and not sickness such that the polysemy or lexical ambiguity of language is “not a pathological phenomenon but a healthy feature of our language…”59 The fabled beast must always be made man again since the metaphor of life needs a happy ending, or more precisely a promising new beginning — to begin with Being so that we might end there safely after all.

What of our metaphormorphosis? It is well know that Morning Star is a riddle in need of clarity amid confusion. In his essay on Sinn and Bedeutung, Gottlieb Frege declares, “Anybody who did not know that the Evening Star is the Morning Star might hold the one thought to be true, the other false.”60 Likewise, Merleau-Ponty writes, “When I simultaneously touch and see an object, the unique object will be the common reason for these two appearances, just as Venus is the common reason for the Morning Star and the Evening Star …”61 Morning Star is Evening Star and Evening Star is Morning Star according to sight and feeling and the writing of purified concepts.

It is also well known that to touch and see Morning Star is not to see and feel the truth of Evening Star. Recall that in Oedipus, Seneca declares

*uno aetatem permensa die,*

58 Ibid., 177.
59 Ibid., 115.
60 Gottlieb Frege, “On Sinn and Bedeutung,” in *Frege Reader,* 156.
61 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* 239.
"post Luciferi nata meatus
ante Hesperios occidit ortus"

...They measured their lifespan in one day,
Born after the Morning Star emerged,
Fallen before the Evening Star rose.

—Seneca, *Oedipus* 62

Carl Jung tells us that “we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the program of life’s morning for what was great in the morning will be little at evening and what in the morning was true, at evening will have become a lie.” 63 J. Alfred Prufrock recalls his evenings, mornings, and afternoons. He measures out his life with coffee spoons. He knows the voices with a dying fall, beneath the music from a farther room. *Measuring out life according to morning and evening, rising and falling star.*

Perhaps most perplexing is Morning Star according to the Word of God, such that Morning Star proceeds as opposing which ways. “How you have fallen from heaven,” wonders Isaiah, “Morning Star, son of the dawn!” (Isaiah 14:12) “I am the Root and the Offspring of David,” promises the Book of Revelations, “and the bright Morning Star” (Rev 22:16). Now we know Morning Star as our man, Christ or Satan, Good or Evil. A riddle for the ages. We take, then, our metaphor-morphosis to be one of Morning Star. To what end? In the beginning Gregor was dismayed to have morphed. “What has happened to me?” he asks. Take this cup from me, we can hear him say. Time feeds on him. He hears drops of rain against the window. The hands of the clock register six and now seven. A knock on his bedroom door. Gregor remains at home, in his very bed. Yet he is far away from home.

62 Seneca, *Oedipus* III.740, in *Tragedies II*.
In time, however, he becomes familiar with his transformation. He starts to see the way home again.

In this state of vacant and peaceful meditation he remained until the tower clock struck three in the morning. The first broadening of light in the world outside the window entered his consciousness once more. He watched as it slowly began to get light everywhere outside the window too. Then his head sank to the floor of its own accord and from his nostrils came the last faint flicker of his breath.\(^6^4\)

Gregor morphed in the morning according to evening as he finally returned home. In this spirit and anti-spirit, our metaphormorphosis will be one of Morning Star as Evening Star amid Pandemonium as the way home.

\(^{64}\) Kafka, *Metamorphosis*, 135.
I weigh my past against my future, but find both of them admirable. I cannot give either preference.

—Franz Kafka, “The Way Home”

Housed everywhere but nowhere shut in, this is the motto of the dreamer of dwellings.

—Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

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2 Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, 82.
“Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds,” recalls the novice, “which I should first break through and pour a torrent of light into our dark world.” In time our novice would come to be known in error as Dr. Frankenstein, a scientific madness in a stygian castle. In the 1818 edition of the story, however, young Victor is a mere university student seduced by alchemy and the dark arts. He styles himself a creator to be blessed by his creature. He is a ghoul who stalks charnel houses for his material. He assembles the parts and infuses them with life. “His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath,” yet the eyes open and it begins to breath. Beautiful! he marvels like a naive God. Monster and fiend, he recants in the very next breath. Filthy daemon! he recoils. He beholds his creature and then flees from its sight. He fashions a monstrous bride as compounding sin, a companion for his creature, only to tear it limb from limb. With this cautionary tale in mind, we picture Morning Star so that we may break through the boundaries of life and death.

We begin with a reading of *Being and Time*, which begins by being possessed of perplexion about Being. Being, such as it may be, is perplexed by what Being is and what it truly means. The answering of the question of Being, explains Heidegger, will write Dasein as regions of possibility then entered into Time so as to re-write Being, all according to a hermeneutical spiralization. In truth, *Being and Time* is the very writing of Dasein as a re-reading of religion in an unconcealing light, *aletheia* Heidegger later will say, as fundamental ontology stripped of religiousness. In the same spirit, we read Dasein by writing primordial Adam and Eve in order to write our reading of Morning Star, Satan and Christ, in order to arrive at Pandemonium on the question of Being and Time.

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3 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 33.
4 Ibid., 35.
Long before Victor Frankenstein, God raided Adam as a living breathing charnel house to fashion Eve as the source of true life. “This is now bone of my bones,” declares Adam, “and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23). And so we are led to read the story of cleaving in a double sense as one becomes two so that two may become one. We are led to see the two as the singular story of sin according to two roles as a shared fate according to their natures. For Eve, sin means pain and sorrow in bringing forth children. For Adam, sin becomes toil and tears as the sweat of labor and the pang of privation. For Eve and Adam, exile means two who exit as one, says Milton

They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,

Through Eden took their solitary way.\(^5\)

We begin our reading there, where we find books in the world, ready to hand, reached for and de-severed, drawn to the eyes and taken possession of. Now books have direction, aimed straight unto Dasein. Now Dasein measures out modes of Being in the World as Being with Books — attending to and not neglecting them, undertaking the words and not renouncing them, interrogating what they say rather than relying on them,\(^6\) reading teeny tiny regions of the Word and crossing over with a view to Dasein.

Now the question is the meaning of words as Being pictures its very meaning. In the horizons of Eve and Adam, then, we discover regions of potential Being as Dasein reading Dasein as Adam and Eve. The task is one of Disclosure\(^7\) by way of signs and wonders that reveal and warn and orient\(^8\) according to the Theme of the Analytic of Dasein as being possessed of the realization of our own-most possibility of Being.\(^9\) The task is one of optics as structural sight in

\(^5\) *Paradise Lost*, XII 648–649
\(^6\) *Being and Time* §23.
\(^7\) *Being and Time* §16, 105.
\(^8\) *Being and Time* §17,111.
\(^9\) *Being and Time* §9.
the double sense of seeing fore-structures according to the fore-structure of seeing. “For now we see through a glass, darkly,” writes Paul to the Corinthians, “but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Cor 13:12). Dasein comes face to face with Dasein as the transparent disclosure of our own-most Being-possessed. The task is one of hearkening “as in hearing the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it,” declares Heidegger.¹⁰ Now Dasein entails Daemonic possession as the voice of Dasein unto ourselves. The task is Discursive as Being and Time as Dasein un-conceals and expresses Dasein as true depicting. The uncovering, explains Heidegger, is the documentation of truth such that “uncoveredness is preserved in what is expressed.”¹¹ The concern is nothing less than the structural unity of Dasein as whole and complete Being. Now we can picture Dasein reading the union of Adam and Eve, not as two people, but as regions of possibility of Being, since unity does not speak of mere singularity, but rather of the perfect interpenetration of the legion that looms.

In Being and Time, Heidegger directs us first to read the everydayness of Dasein as a mere propaedeutic to Dasein in full, which is Being in the fullness of Time slipping away. If for Adam and Eve the sun rises and sets everyday, then we first appreciate the ontological aspect of Temporality according the bountiful feeding on Time while never being fed upon. Each morning begins with a hymn of praise. Throughout the day animals graze and ruminate and look on — the lion beside the lamb. In the labor of Eve and Adam the world is nourished by way of manuring and tending, pruning and manicuring. Their labor is rewarded each day with an overflowing basket of “supper-fruits” whose “savory pulp they chew” with delight.¹² They know no thirst as

¹⁰ Being and Time §34, 206
¹¹ Being and Time §44, 266.
¹² Paradise Lost IV 335.
they drink from the “milky stream” of berry and grape. Each evening concludes with a hymn of thanksgiving and their sleep is “aery light.” In the garden, says Eve, “I forget all time, all seasons and their change.” “Spring and Autumn,” says Adam, “here dance hand in hand.” They distinguish not at all between the sweet breath of morning and grateful evening and silent night for “all please alike.”

They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet

Quaff immortality and joy, secure

Of surfeit where full measure only bounds

Excess

What disclosure, then, with Eve and Adam in everydayness? Sameness, to be sure, which feeds on Time as an unending return to nourishment. Innocence, as well, rewarded with “No happier state” as “know[ing] to know no more!” In the very everydayness of Adam and Eve, however, we detect an unfolding and thrownness into Time, such that Adam and Eve begin to be fed upon. The feeding is not yet one of Death, but rather a kind of nibbling prelude to the very same.

If we listen in on Eve and Adam we hear them in conversation one evening. “The only sign of obedience,” Adam reminds Eve, is “not to taste the only Tree of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life.” “So near grows Death to Life,” he adds, “whate’er Death is.” Now we picture Adam and Eve reciting their own Being in the World as a picturing of not-falling There or

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13 *Paradise Lost* 100 305–306.
14 *Paradise Lost* V 4.
15 *Paradise Lost* IV 640–641.
16 *Paradise Lost* V 395.
17 *Paradise Lost* V 637–640
18 *Paradise Lost* IV 775.
19 *Paradise Lost* IV 423–425.
picturing how *There* not to fall. This is not Idle Talk as gossip or superficial conversation, but rather conversation of the greatest import as the There-ness that they should never come close to.

Yet the talk is idle as superficial wonderment. “Let us not think hard,” admonishes Adam, but rather extol the bounty before us through our dutiful tasks. The talk is idle as one of looking without really seeing by way of words. Heidegger calls this Curiosity as distractedness and incuriousness for what truly matters. “Hail, universal Lord,” they proclaim. “Be bounteous still to give us only good. And if the night have gathered aught of evil, or concealed, disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.” Darkness is dispersed for them and they are well pleased. “Thus talking, hand in hand, along they passed,” concludes Milton, “On to their blissful bower.” Some might calls this the mere venial sin of idle talk and curiosity, hexistentially speaking. What then of mortal sin. The sin is one in the same.

Heidegger warns of idle talk in the most grievous sense of “becoming public” and “perverting the act of disclosing.” Venially, then, words say what Adam and Eve already know and so they say what does not need to be said. The saying matters little since the true task is not to think hard about what the words truly mean. And yet they are said. They are said intimately in private though they are publicly made since we witness Satan who has crept into their midst. Satan listens, says Milton, “To mark what of their state he more might learn / By word or action marked.” What does he learn?

All is not theirs, it seems;

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20 *Being and Time* §35.
21 *Being and Time* §36.
22 *Paradise Lost* V 205–208.
23 *Paradise Lost* IV 689–690.
24 *Being and Time* §35, 213.
25 *Paradise Lost* IV 400–401.
One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,

Forbade them to taste.

Is Knowledge truly forbidden? he wonders. Is it sin and death truly to know? Yet from their mouths, he pledges, let me not forget what I have gained. Now idle talk opens up a new horizon for Being as a region of possibility, which is Time such that Eve and Adam begin to prepare themselves as supper-fruits.

That night Eve dreams of the Fall as a foreshadowing of what’s to come. When she wakes she describes her dream to Adam. In the spirit of Aristotle, Adam explains that dreams are mere Fancy and Imagination— the wild work of lesser faculties while Reason sleeps. They tell us nothing of what is true. Heidegger calls this explanation Ambiguity as a clouding of Dasein in its regions of possibility so that it “becomes impossible to decide what is disclosed in a genuine understanding, and what is not.” Be not sad, says Adam, for we do not dream but rather dreams are done to us. To what effect? To none whatsoever.

Evil into the mind of God or Man

May come and go, so unapproved, and leave

No spot or blame behind; which gives me hope

That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream

Waking thou never wilt consent to do.28

“Let us to our fresh employments rise,” he bids, “Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers … Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store.”29

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26 Paradise Lost IV 512–519.
27 Being and Time §37, 217.
28 Paradise Lost V 116–120.
29 Paradise Lost V 125–128.
We know the ending of the story, which is simply the beginning of true Time as an ever-present Even-Time toward the darkest night. Now Dasein pictures a future-tense as the past-tense of nothing less than Being dead. Now Time feeds on Adam and Eve, which Heidegger calls the fore-structure of ontology according to Temporality — Being always-already entered into Time, which feeds on Being until nothing remains. The far-most region of Dasein may be found in its utter limit of Temporality, which Hamlet calls the undiscovered country as Space that is really the Time of not-Time. In reading Eve and Adam, Dasein merely bears witness to a primordial falling such that Adam and Eve are uprooted and thrown out of Eden, which is no mere place — Being in the world — but rather Eden as Time as boundless supper-fruits and as Temporal steresis — Time deprived in its hunger of hungers. In place of bliss feeding on Time to its heart-content, Heidegger gives us anxiety as Time feeding on Being. In place of hymns of thanksgiving, Heidegger counsels “Courage!” in the face of death. Mut zur Angst von dem Tode, he writes\(^\text{30}\) — as if to say that Being-now-thrown, do not fall again.

Heidegger pictures authentic Dasein according to the fundamental ontology of not-Being, but the insight is not new. Recall that in the first moment of writing in primordial anthropological time, the fate of Enkidu reveals mortality to Gilgamesh. Enkidu’s death is the beginning of Gilgamesh’s search for true life as assured immortality. His quest is not for love of life, however, for Gilgamesh becomes a wanderer, filled with despair. “I am afraid of death … I stray through the wilderness and cannot rest.”\(^\text{31}\) Siduri explains to him, “You will never find that life for which you are looking. When the gods created man they allotted to him death, but life they retained in their own keeping.”\(^\text{32}\) Yet Gilgamesh perseveres, “wandering over pastures in

\(^\text{30}\) Being and Time §51, 298/254.
\(^\text{31}\) Gilgamesh, 101–103.
\(^\text{32}\) Ibid., 102.
search of the wind.” He resolves to “cross the waters of death,” to reach father Utnapishtim, who along with wife, was granted eternal life by the gods. Utnapishtim offers Gilgamesh a test. “Prevail against sleep for six days and seven nights” and you will receive eternal life. But Gilgamesh cannot endure and falls asleep for days on end. “Look at him now,” says Utnapishtim, “the strong man who would have everlasting life, even now the mists of sleep are drifting over him.” Gilgamesh sleeps when he should rage dexterously and rage authentically against the dying light.

Having tasted Time without limit according to a hunger of hungers, Adam and Eve are now consumed by Time. But death is no dumb brute. Death is merely the fore-structure of life foretold from the very beginning as the most outrageous strength imaginable. This is what Death is for Dasein. What then does it mean? To answer this question, Dasein proceeds to the little lower layer as Adam and Eve read their regions of possibility as Satan and Christ and the contest for dominion over Life and Death.

Recall that in the Garden, Raphael appears to Eve and Adam. “O favorable Spirit and propitious guest,” says Adam, please tell us the story of Good and Evil. The angel demurs but Adam insists for Time is on their side. “And we have yet large day,” he says, “for scarce the Sun / Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins / His other half in the great zone of heaven.” Raphael finally relents as if to say, “Here is the story as I’ve always heard it. I will tell it to you in my turn.” The story is one of Dasein as opposing which ways — the “invisible exploits of warring Spirits” brought to life for Adam and Eve from “spiritual to corporal forms.” For the

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33 Ibid., 103.
34 Ibid., 114.
35 *Paradise Lost* V. 505
36 *Paradise Lost* V 558–560.
37 *Paradise Lost* V 565–566.
events, adds Raphael, the happenings are “more swift / Than time or motion, but to human ears / Cannot without process of speech be told.”

What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice

Or heart of man to comprehend?

The story begins as Dasein beyond Good as authentic Evil — fallen-ness that realizes its full potential. The story proceeds with Dasein as Good beyond Evil as actualized potential and as potential never actualized. By what ontological and ethical principle shall we interpret his words? According to the principle given by Raphael to Adam and Eve. “God made thee perfect,” he declares, “not immutable.”

By what principle may Dasein mutate? According to the principle of Pandemonium, the place of all Spirits, which morphs and mutates the very same. By what principle will Pandemonium morph and mutate into nothing at all? According to the principle of energetic and pathetic infinity — doing infinity and infinity done for. In Totality and Infinity, Levinas envisions Infinity coming face to face. We know, however, that infinity is not immortal. The face ceases when the eyes shut and the mouth closes and the countenance withers away. Time feeds on infinity such that even perfect Good and of Evil, Satan and Christ, are mortal too.

It would be wrong to picture Satan as pure evil start to finish, however. By way of Milton, we can observe the mutation of evil through and through.

Evil that awakens in envy and malice and disdain.

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38 Paradise Lost VII 176–178.
40 Paradise Lost V 525.
Evil that spreads to others by awakening the very same. “Sleep’st thou, companion dear? what sleep can close Thy eyelids?”

Evil that summons the purest flame of rebellion. “Our puissance is our own,” declares Satan, “our own right hand / Shall teach us highest deeds.”

Evil to be punished into Good, he is warned, as an “Iron Rod to bruise and break / Thy disobedience.”

Evil in pressure and pain that summons the primordial virtues of “valor and strength” as hope mixed with yrre-mod and malice.

Evil that mines for “materials dark and crude” that in the war for Heaven inspires inventions that only “devilish machination might devise.”

Evil that fails and falls only to rise again in anger and vengeance and defiance that shatter the stunned silence. “Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.”

Evil “of dauntless courage and considerable pride,” that puts on swift wings and explores his solitary flight.

Evil, on the edge of Eden, that is no dumb brute as “conscience wakes despair” and “horror and doubt distract / His troubled thoughts.”

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41 Paradise Lost V 673–674.
42 Paradise Lost V 864–865.
43 Paradise Lost V 886–887.
44 Paradise Lost VI 457.
45 Paradise Lost VI 478, 504.
46 Paradise Lost I 263.
47 Paradise Lost I 603.
48 Paradise Lost II 631–632.
49 Paradise Lost IV 18–23.
Evil that enters into the Theme of the Analytic of Dasein as a question of Submission and Repentance and renewed Obedience, and Dasein as absolute resolve.

So farewell hope, and with hope, farewell fear,

Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;

Evil, be thou my Good.\textsuperscript{50}

Evil, we must recall, first awakened by the Tyranny of Good in the kingdom of Heaven. Hear ye all Angels, commands the Lord.

This day I have begot whom I declare

My only Son, and on this holy Hill

Him have anointed, whom ye now behold

At my right hand; your Head I him appoint;

And by my Self have sworn to him shall bow

All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord.\textsuperscript{51}

Then, by blood and not by merit and still in swaddling clothes, Christ becomes Lord and lawgiver to Angels “who without law / Erre not,”\textsuperscript{52} since they are always already good.

Evil such that to be Good would now be undignified. Evil such that God being a Tyrant and Christ a marionette, evil is nothing less than heroic good.

Evil that says to Dasein, “Not to know me argues yourself unknown.”\textsuperscript{53}

We must recall, however, the fallenness of the fallen — how the fallen stumbles and falls according to the sin of Dasein, which Heidegger calls the “inconspicuous domination by Others.”

\textquotedblleft One belongs to the Others,” writes Heidegger — one is possessed — “and enhances their

\textsuperscript{50} Paradise Lost IV 108–110.
\textsuperscript{51} Paradise Lost V 603–608.
\textsuperscript{52} Paradise Lost V 798–799.
\textsuperscript{53} Paradise Lost IV 830.
power” accordingly.\textsuperscript{54} He calls this Idle Talk that eats away. Recall that Satan begins his seduction of the Angels in vaunted oratory — “Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers”\textsuperscript{55} — so that Satan might become the true archon and overmaster. Then, akin to David, Satan flies from them as the sole warrior to battle an overwhelming Goliath. What drives Satan onward? \textit{Mod} in its many variations of courage, heart, soul, and mind? The answer is No, not exactly. At the edge of Eden, Satan hesitates as we listen in.

Disdain forbids me, and my dream of shame
Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
With other promises and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
The Omnipotent
Under what torments inwardly I grown,
While they adore me on the throne of Hell.\textsuperscript{56}

Aristotle calls shame a quasi-virtue since a good man knows he has done bad. We may now picture shame as evil that knows that it is not evil enough — evil shamed into being more evil so that the appearance of evil matches an evil running through and through. Thus under the hexistential metamorphological mutational principle of actual potential and potential actualized, we can picture Satan as imperfect evil that took perfecting.

Perhaps we can picture Christ as the highest ideal of Dasein. Christ who is thrown but never fallen. Christ who feeds on Time, for “Whatever was created needs to be sustained and

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Being and Time} §26, 164.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Paradise Lost} V 772.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Paradise Lost} IV 82–86.
fed,”57 and Christ who “walks forth, without more train / Accompanied than with his own complete / Perfections; in himself was all his state.”58 While Eve and Adam dined on supper-fruits, Christ merely fed on himself as a fattening lamb so that others might partake of him. Take and eat, commands Jesus, for this is my body. Drink, he commands, for this is my blood. What puissance makes all this possible? Not the power of Christ generated in itself but the handing down of power according to hereditary might. “Into thee such virtue and grace,” says the Almighty, “Immense I have transfused, that all may know / In Heaven and Hell thy power above compares.”59 What animates Christ in all this power? “My exaltation,” pledges Christ, “and my whole delight / That though in me, well pleased, declar’st thy will / Fulfilled which to fulfil is all my bliss.”60 The true power and justice of Christ is to obey since “to obey is happiness entire.”61

What then of Christ as Dasein? Heidegger explains that Dasein grasps primordial Being by way of Care.62 What then of care according to Christ? The answer is one of sin. If the first sin of Dasein is to fall, the second sin is not to fall since the very authenticity of Dasein depends on transgression that only deepens unity. Now the Analytic of Dasein deals in a kind of brokenness and the synthetical care to bind the pieces together. “What is decisive for ontology,” writes Heidegger, “is to prevent the splitting of the phenomenon” and “to hold its positive phenomenal content secure”63 — to weather the storm within and all around and to press onward. What then of the brokenness and healing of Christ in the contest for Heaven?

Under his burning wheels

57 Paradise Lost V 414–415.
58 Paradise Lost V 352–353.
59 Paradise Lost VI 703–704.
60 Paradise Lost V 727–729.
61 Paradise Lost V 741.
62 Being and Time §28, 169.
63 Being and Time §28, 170.
The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout,
All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
Among them he arrived, in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their souls infixed
Plagues.\(^{64}\)

But what glory without courage and boldness and the risk of faltering? The battle is yours, assures God, “for I have ordained it.”\(^{65}\) What true intelligence when Christ becomes possessed, “full of wrath,” as torrent and flood and terror. What ontology when Christ merely demonstrates a three-fold everyday onticness as being in the world. Like a Jove, Christ reaches for thunder, ready-to-hand.\(^{66}\) With thunder and chariot and the implements of war Christ manipulates the world around so that the Rebels shall “know whether I be dextrous to subdue” as I “quell their pride.”\(^{67}\) In so doing Christ forges himself, like a Heideggarian hammer, as the true instrument of God, ready to hand. “Go then … in thy Father’s might,” Christ is commanded, “bring forth all my war / My bow and thunder, my almighty arms.”\(^{68}\) How hollow, then, his proclamation that “I alone” stand against angels in rebellion.\(^{69}\) How ontic that Christ seems not to ask the question of “I.” “If we posit the ‘I’ or subject as that which is proximally given,” warns Heidegger, “we shall completely miss the phenomenal content of Dasein.”\(^{70}\) Now we see Christ as Dasein truly fallen as a dumb brute who simply rages and proclaims and in his heart of

\(^{64}\) *Paradise Lost* V 832–838.
\(^{65}\) *Paradise Lost* VI 700.
\(^{66}\) *Being and Time* §15.
\(^{67}\) *Paradise Lost* V 738–740.
\(^{68}\) *Paradise Lost* VI 710–712.
\(^{69}\) *Paradise Lost* VI 820.
\(^{70}\) *Being and Time* §10, 72.
heart obeys. Heidegger calls the inauthentic mode of Being the “failure to stand by oneself.”

How does Christ stand? On the shoulders of God, says Milton. We call this the imperfection of perfection, perfection that fails never to have taken solitary flight.

As Dasein reads Eve and Adam reading Christ and Satan we discover perfect examples of Dasein in all of its imperfection. We are now ready to picture what this means as Satan and Christ come face to face. The encounter, we learn from Levinas, means Totality as total and everlasting war in Heaven and on Earth and in the Depths of Hell. Levinas begins Totality and Infinity with the declaration, “Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality.” Are we not, we must wonder? If we are, the effect is to render morality both risible and an instrument of war. We do not do morals. Morals are done to us. If so, then morals belong to the domain of the real as dextrousness in the world. We do morals to do unto others to give as good as we get. The effect, says Levinas, is Totality as the primordial state of war in which nothing is truly unjust and in which the world is possessed, including possessing every Other body, heart, mind, and soul. Levinas calls this “harsh reality” a “trial by force” and an ontology of violence such that life is merely solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. We are not concerned with a state of nature in the everyday life of I and Thou, however. We are our concern. We know that the Devil possesses us since Luther tells us that Suicide is merely Satanic possession of the most terrible kind. Are we not possessed by Christ, as well? Christ dwells in us, he tells the Ephesians (Eph 3:17). Christ penetrates us, says Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor 13:5). “I am crucified with Christ,” who gave his life freely, he writes to Galatia, “and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20). Now we see

71 Being and Time §27, 166.
72 Emmanuel Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 21.
73 Totality and Infinity, 21.
that the story of Eve and Adam reading the story of Satan and Christ is merely a reading of
Dasein on whether we are not duped by morality on the question of Good and Evil, Being and
Time, Life and Death.

Levinas begins his Analytic of Totality bathed in *Atheism* as temporal separation “so
complete that the separated being maintains itself in existence all by itself.” Now Christ and
Satan each lives outside the Other, always “at home with oneself” and never dwelling in and
never penetrating the Other. Atheism means *Egoism*, says Levinas, as I posits I only in relation
to what’s in it for me. There is no true Other, he continues, since — in the spirit of Protagoras —
I am the “measure of all things.” Good is never meted out according to Evil, and Evil maintains a
standard independent of Good. Egoism reduces the Other ontologically and morally to my
totality. Does Satan not command Christ, “Bow down and worship me” (Matt 4:9)? Does
Christ not declare, “I am Alpha and Omega” — the first and the last, the beginning and the end,
all that is, all that was, all that shall be (Rev 1:8, 21:6, 22:13)? Does not the Book of Philippians
declare that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:10-
11)? Now we see Totality as a mutual hunting round Good Hope and around the Maelstrom and
never quell. I will fly & thou pursue. Night & Morn the flight renew.” Yes, a spiralizing abyss
divides Christ and Satan as the mere distance to travel in order totally to dominate. The fields
of battle are three in number.

The battle, says Milton, begins in Heaven in which governance and liberation are the
terms of the debate. “At first I thought that Liberty and Heaven / To heavenly souls had been all

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74 Totality and Infinity, 58–59.
75 Totality and Infinity, 46.
77 Totality and Infinity, 39–40.
one,” says Satan, “but now / I see that most through sloth had rather serve — to which Heaven replies, “Serve” and “Obey.” Heaven, says Christ, is the “seat of bliss” that “brooks not the works of violence and war.” Then, grasping ten thousand thunders Christ infixes their souls in plague and fire. “One spirit in them rules,” writes Milton, “And of their wonted vigor left them drained / Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.”

“Then,” writes Matthew, “Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”(Matt 4:1) Now Spirit prosecutes war by way of words — “a great duel” adds Milton, “not of arms” but of “hellish wiles.” The temptations are amateurish and unbecoming, however. Food for a hungry belly. Women for a wandering eye. Power for the deepest desires of a king. Satan fails once again and falls once more now in awe of the “dread Son of God” and the “terror of his voice.” It is written, it is written, it is written, declares Christ so that Christ overcomes temptation by rote repetition.

The war concludes in Hell, says the Apostle’s Creed, as Christ descends not by falling but by falling upon as whole-hearted attacking. Christ bursts the gates of Hell, virtually all agree. Christ crushes, binds, and humiliates the Devil. Christ is victorious. Christ is the conqueror. “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years (Rev 20:1–2). “And the devil that deceived them was cast into

78 Paradise Lost VI 164–166.
79 Paradise Lost VI 273–274.
80 Paradise Lost VI 848–852.
81 Paradise Lost I 175.
82 Paradise Lost IV 625–627.
83 See, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev, Christ the Conqueror of Hell; and, Piotr Ashwin–Siejkowski, The Apostles’ Creed.
the lake of fire and brimstone, … and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev 20:10).

Now we picture Dasein as Levinasian History as a Totalization by way of translation, spiritual to corporeal, to illuminate a Universal History for all of us. Recall that the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to John by God, will show us “things which will come to pass” (Rev 1:1). Now we see the ending of the story of Satan as having no future in an everlasting present of being fed upon. Light consumes darkness, says John, and darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5). Recall the ending for Christ as well. “He ascended into heaven,” says the Apostle’s Creed, “and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty” — now and forever ready to hand. Such is the history of Totality when Christ and Satan come face to face.

In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas shows us the way beyond and before Total War. The path is one of Conversion. “The conversion of the soul to exteriority to the absolute other, to Infinity,” he explains, “is not deducible from the very identity of the soul, for it is not commensurate with the soul.” Is conversion one of belief? I convert from this to that, I might say, as belief changing while I remain the constant. Recall that on the road to Damascus, Saul comes face to face with Christ (Acts 9). Saul trembles in astonishment. Saul is possessed of blindness so that he might truly see. The converting is from threats and slaughter to what Levinas calls “messianic peace,” which speaks to the heart of hearts. The conversion is one of ontology and not mere belief. Conversion moves the soul beyond the soul. Conversion is so profound that Saul requires a different name in the manner of Abram since the signified has now traveled far beyond the sign.

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84 *Totality and Infinity*, 55.
85 *Totality and Infinity*, 61.
86 *Totality and Infinity*, 22.
We might question the conversion of Saul by way of Levinas, however, since Saul was riddled with light and stunned by a commanding voice — I am Jesus, says Jesus — but we can see that Jesus remained unfazed throughout. Jesus was not converted by way of blindness to light. Jesus did not stand speechless so as to receive the Word of Saul. Once the Apostle Paul is converted, his task is to convert others. “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God,” Paul writes to the church at Colossae, “which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God” (Col 1:25). Christ is in Paul, but Paul is probably not inside Christ.

By contrast, Levinas envisions Conversion as a both-which-ways of doing and being done to — an interpenetration of Being. If we begin with Saul and Christ, we must witness a mutual Conversion as each enters the presence of the Other. Levinas calls this the “transcendental method” and an “eschatology of peace.” Wherefrom the outrageous strength needed for Conversion? From the pathetic energy of infinity, Levinas tells us — “en-ergy in the vision of the face, or in the idea of infinity,” the mythical energy of “faith purged of myths.” It is the “dawn of humanity,” he declares — daybreak and a better tomorrow. If the energy of infinity entails doing work and work that does to (en ergon), what of infinity? Levinas tells us that infinity is an “overflowing of an adequate idea.” It is a “miraculous abundance.” Recall that Paul describes the peace of God as “passing all understanding.” God looms, he explains, and by looming God “guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:7). In the same spirit, infinity looms by showing great or little but never all so that infinity might guard our hearts and minds.

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87 Totality and Infinity, 25.
88 Totality and Infinity, 196.
89 Totality and Infinity, 77.
90 Totality and Infinity, 80.
91 Totality and Infinity, 97.
Having established that infinity passes all understanding, Levinas then proceeds to help us understand infinity so that we might read about the face of the absolute Other so that we might look for the face of the Other that looms so that we might picture our face set before the eyes of the Other. In this manner we read that infinity begets Conversion as a double-doing and a double-done-to. Infinity entails a perfect interpenetration, we learn, of society and ethics, language and learning, which, in Biblical terms, we would call a circular genealogy or a virtuous spiralization of begetting and begotten-ness.

Infinity puts our spiritual senses to work. Infinity reveals infinity by way of the face of the Other. “The eyes break through the mask,” writes Levinas, as revelation and epiphany. Now spiritual optics mean experience as mutual expression — discourse prior to words — “the primordial event of signification” as the “language of the eyes.” The face is a feast for the eyes that excites our spiritual belly. “To recognize the Other,” says Levinas, “is to recognize hunger.” The experience is educational as teaching and being taught — mutual “mastery” such that each is “magisterial” and magister ludi unto the Other. The lesson is metrical as the musical meter of the Other as the “measure of all things.” The experience is social as the very “inauguration of society.” The social lesson is one of hospitality as the “welcoming of the Other” into the presence of the face. The experience is one of mutual nudity, Levinas declares, as

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92 Totality and Infinity, 75.
93 Totality and Infinity, 97.
94 Totality and Infinity, 69.
95 Totality and Infinity, 72.
96 Totality and Infinity, 104.
97 Totality and Infinity, 27.
being “completely naked” in the face of the Other\textsuperscript{98} and as “desire for the absolutely other”\textsuperscript{99} — being at home and hungering for the Other who “arouses my goodness.”\textsuperscript{100}

Only in this perfect interpenetration do we experience what Levinas calls “metaphysical truth,”\textsuperscript{101} not as knowledge but as the transcendental ethic of love, which is nothing less than spiritual optics as love at first and love as lasting sight. Do you love me, asks Jesus? Then feed my sheep (John 21:17). In a similar spirit, love is “the satisfaction of a sublime hunger,” writes Levinas,\textsuperscript{102} such that each is a little lamb unto the Other. Love is an infinite feeding and being fed upon. Now we understand our hunger artist who, in the end, asks for absolution from the circus hand. “Forgive me,” he begs. Forgive me not for fasting unto death, but for failing to “find the food I liked.”\textsuperscript{103} Now we see that had our man merely pierced the mask of the Other, he would have found the right kind of nourishment.

Now we see that for Levinas murder is the greatest sin since murder is merely the annihilation of the Other. Murder means being the outrageous strength and the brute force of Time that consumes the Other so that nothing is left. Philosophically speaking, however, murder is nothing less than spiritual Suicide by disposing of the only food that truly nourishes. Now we face a metaphysical puzzle. “Murder exercises power over what escapes power,” says Levinas. Murder converts infinity to oblivion. And yet infinity converts murder by way of a metaphysical seduction. “The infinite paralyses power by its infinite resistance to murder.” Infinity “gleams in the face of the Other, in the total nudity of his defenceless eyes, in the nudity of the absolute

\textsuperscript{98} Totality and Infinity, 74.
\textsuperscript{99} Totality and Infinity, 34.
\textsuperscript{100} Totality and Infinity, 200.
\textsuperscript{101} Totality and Infinity, 78.
\textsuperscript{102} Totality and Infinity, 34.
\textsuperscript{103} Kafka, “A Hunger Artist,” 277.
openness of the Transcendent.” Infinity flashes the face of the Other. Infinity spreads itself wide and murder is transfixed. Now we see the power of mutual Conversion, from war to love by way of infinity, and from love to war by way of murder, as opposing which way.

We translate this puzzle from spiritual to corporeal form by way of Satan and Christ as a second puzzle in Totality and Infinity. For Levinas, the Other is nothing less than Total Alterity. The Other is not merely another but the “absolutely other.” “The absolutely other is the Other,” he declares — the Other as total and complete Stranger. “The Other remains infinitely transcendent, infinitely foreign.” Each is an alpine pass, beyond category to the Other. Such is the basis for mutual education. “The absolutely foreign alone can instruct us,” he writes.

We learn, however, that Total Alterity is Fraternal according to the “commonness of a father.” Society is one of “fraternal community” since brotherhood means equality. Hospitality implies a shared home. Ethics concerns familial care. Language must be homespun. Nakedness is kept in the family as brothers present themselves each to the face of the Other. Now we see that the proper incarnation of Infinity is nothing less than Christ and Satan. Total Alterity as the absolute Other. Total strangeness. “Radical separation,” which means both separateness and having been uprooted and separated as brothers torn from each other’s hearts and minds.

We know that Satan and Christ are brothers on the authority of the Lord who, in the manner of Abraham (Heb 11:17), declares Christ to be his heir and only begotten son (John 3:16). The question is one of legitimacy — Isaac over Ishmael, Christ but not Satan — and not of

104 Totality and Infinity, 198–199.
105 Totality and Infinity, 33.
106 Totality and Infinity, 39.
107 Totality and Infinity, 194.
108 Totality and Infinity, 73.
109 Totality and Infinity, 214.
blood. Now we see our man Ishmael in the proper light as a brother to all men uprooted from their very homeland. For all men all drawn to the “extremest limit of the land,” he writes, but their extreme is mere limit to keep from truly taking to ship.

We also know fraternity when Satan speaks from his heart of hearts. “The Son of God I also am, or was,” he says. “And if I was, I am.” Now we know that Christ and Satan are brothers in the blood running through and through us. With this in mind, we are ready to read Adam and Eve reading Christ and Satan reading Totality and Infinity as brothers and absolute Others. The task is one of Conversion or the Conversions of Conversion as meta-Conversion.

We begin with the problem of Converting Dasein reading Satan and Christ. In Sickness Unto Death, Kierkegaard begins with a limerick. “A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relations relating itself to itself.” Kierkegaard notes that “the self is not the relation but the relation’s relating itself to itself.” Only in this relating of the self to the self may the self relate itself to another, says Kierkegaard. The view is Aristotelian as a question of love. Love of another begins in self-love that learns to love beyond the self. On Levinas’s account, however, the self may not relate itself to itself as the little lower layer, but must always remain on the surface of egoism. Only in the Other may the self truly see itself according to a mirror set before it. To see the Other is to truly see oneself — learning to love the Other toward self-love. We draw these views together with the simple observation of Christ and Satan in us, converted as Pandemonium as Satan and Christ come face to face as we come face to face in the relation relating ourselves back and forth again and again time after time.

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111 Paradise Lost IV.518–519.
The Conversion begins as orientation and anti-orientation. For centuries, the puzzle of Hell was one of location. Hell where? The question of location is then one of direction. Milton tells us that when faced with a wrathful Christ, Satan and the angels casted themselves “Down from the verge of Heaven.” They fell nine days, he recalls, passing through Chaos and Anarchy and the Abyss until Hell — a “house of woe and pain” — welcomed them home. We also know that when Satan took his solitary flight he put on swift wings and traveled up and up even to reach the gates of Hell to proceed onward.

Rather than adjudicating between up and down, we ask the question, Is a house a home if no one lives there? Was Hell even, before it was dwelled in? Milton tells us that Satan was the “Author of Evil, unknown til thy revolt / Unnamed in Heaven” until “These acts of hateful strife.” How could Hell precede evil? Did not Hell become, was it not built in the very moment it was dwelled in? Milton gives us two answers, which are one in the same. Milton tells us that the Almighty hurled Satan headlong from the ethereal sky, “down / To bottomless perdition, there to dwell / in adamantine chains and penal fire.” Now we know that Hell is not a destination and residence but an endless falling. We know that adamantine chains do not mean hardness but the binding of sheer gravity, and that penal fire does not rise up but merely burns within and all around. Now we encounter the hexistential question of having or being. Is Satan falling or is Satan fallen through and through. Is Satan consumed by fire or is Satan fire that consumes? In the Analytic of Dasein, Satan answers for us.


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113 *Paradise Lost* VI 864–876).
114 *Paradise Lost* VI 262.
Horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts; and from the bottom stir
The hell within him; for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself can fly
By change of place.\(^{116}\)

Now despair analyzes Being.

Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; my self am Hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.\(^{117}\)

Satan is Hell as experience, says Milton. Hell as “waste and wilde.” Hell as “lost happiness and lasting pain.” Hell as “one great Furnace flam’d.” Hell as “fiery Deluge.” Hell as “torture without end.” From this lowest deep, however, we trace the little lower layer of devoured devouring. Recall that by the third day of the chase, Moby Dick is filled with harpoons — “fresh irons that corroded in him.” Does Moby Dick dive deep to escape? No, says Ishmael. The water boils and crushes into the air. Up rises the whale, “wide tiers of tendons” stretched across his “broad white forehead.” Enraged is Moby Dick, “possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven.”\(^{118}\) What does this mean if not that Moby Dick is possessed of Pandemonium, an “army

\(^{116}\) *Paradise Lost* IV 18–24.

\(^{117}\) *Paradise Lost* IV 73–78.

\(^{118}\) *Moby Dick*, “The Chase: The Third Day” (CXXXV), 515.
of fiends, fit body to fit head,” adds Milton.\textsuperscript{119} Now we read Milton in the proper sense and against the Milton that we typically read. Not Satan amid society but society amid Satan. Not Pandemonium as the high capital of Satan and his peers, but Satan as the seat of uproar through and through — the \textit{cathedra} of sheer noisiness. Behold a wonder! writes Milton. “They but now who seemed / In bigness to surpass Earth’s giant sons, / Now less than small dwarfs, in narrow room / Throng numberless.”\textsuperscript{120} Now Dasein learns a vital lesson in relating itself to itself. Hell is not other people. Hell is being possessed of Pandemonium — the gathering of all Spirits — as all Others within as the relation relating ourselves back and forth again and again. Hell means the terror and task of Authoring as we discern our own story — a shoal of fishes, fit head to fit a body in motion. Thus, writes Milton.

\begin{quote}
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.

Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms

Reduces their shapes immense, and were a large,

Though without number still, amidst the hall

Of that infernal court.\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

Now we learn the crucial error of \textit{Paradise Lost}. For if Satan is author of evil, Milton tells us that Satan is written by God, the “Author and prime Architect”\textsuperscript{122} so that Satan merely plays his part. Do you not know, have you not heard, has it not been told from the beginning, says the rhetorical God, that your future is all used up according to my design. And this is the correct story of Good and Evil according to tradition. There is another story, however, written

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{119} \textit{Paradise Lost} IV. 955.
\footnotetext{120} \textit{Paradise Lost} I. 777–780.
\footnotetext{121} \textit{Paradise Lost} I. 788–792.
\footnotetext{122} \textit{Paradise Lost} X.356.
\end{footnotes}
between the lines of *Paradise Lost* that moves us beyond and before Good and Evil. Why must Satan play the part? Because God doth compel ye to my will? No.

Recall that in *Monsters and Marvels*, Ambroise Paré declares that demons are “immortal and eternal” — “Incapable of mortal injury,” says Milton, “Imperishable, and though pierced with wound, / Soon closing, and by native vigor healed.” Thus, Satan may have a mortal wound while not being wounded mortally. Now infinity means Being in unending Time — immortality that feeds on Being without ending. “Confounded though immortal,” Milton explains. Is Evil then eternal and immortal? “To kill is not to dominate but to annihilate,” write Levinas. Can Good not kill Evil or does Good by nature or neglect choose not to? William Blake seems unsure when his Christ promises Satan “Eternal Death In Self Annihilation” as torment “for ever & ever.” “Such is My Will,” declares Christ. The Good Book seems unsure, as well. Recall that the Book of Revelations describes Evil as a kind of reoccurring nightmare.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

(Rev 20:1–3).

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124 *Paradise Lost* VI 434–436.
125 *Paradise Lost* I 53.
126 *Totality and Infinity*, 198.
This may be true according to Total War, but it is incorrect according to the true ontology of mortality as an ethic of love.

Recall that in Book II of *Paradise Lost*, the voices of Pandemonium enter into disputation on which way to go. Beelzebub declares that man is mortal and may be destroyed. But are not the immortals mortal as well and do they not know it in their heart of hearts? Recall that in the War for Heaven we learn of self-healing and limits to the very same. Michael and Gabriel cut and maim the Rebellion, which soon heals “throughout every vital part” for they “cannot but by annihilating die.”128 Annihilation of immortality?

Remember the reasoning of Moloch in waging a second war against Heaven from the depths of Hell.

More destroy’d than thus,

We should be quite abolished and expire

What fear we then?

To be quite consumed and reduced to nothing?129 — echoing Socrates — and thus we have nothing truly to fear.

Recall, however, the greatest fear of Pandemonium, which is true death. Recall how in the face of destruction the Angels in rebellion rushed like lemmings down from the Verge of Heaven. Thus we begin *Paradise Lost* in Hell because “eternal wrath” was better than annihilation.130 We know that all Spirits are annihilate-able, as well, when Christ comes on with only half his strength, “for he meant / not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven.”131 From this moment the meaning of Being is written according to the greatest of fears, which is simply Not

128 *Paradise Lost* VI.345–348.
129 *Paradise Lost* II 92–97.
130 *Paradise Lost* VI 865–867.
131 *Paradise Lost* VI 853–856.
to Be. “For proof look up,” says Gabriel, “And read thy lot in yon celestial sign, / Where thou art weighed, and show how light, how weak…” And so Satan flees and with him the shades of Night so that he might live some more.132 Satan abides by the hunger of hungers and the fear of starving to death, and in so doing all the Spirits as Satan must play their part.

We know from Milton that Christ and Satan come face to face in Total War and not in Love. “A new commandment I give you,” says Christ, “Love one another” (John 13:34) — though like a Caesar, Christ adds, “Remember, and fear to transgress.”133 In one respect, a prince who instills the virtues of love and fear is to be praised. Love lifts society to the very heights of peace and harmony, while fear sets the firm foundation of law-abiding. The ethos is positively Medieval as the hagiology of a Christ who commands our hearts and minds, body and soul.

How then to Convert Christ in us? We begin with a puzzle. The Apostles’ Creed tells us that Christ “was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. The third day he arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.” From the Creed we learn that Christ received a mortal wound though Christ was not wounded mortally. Christ was killed though Christ did not truly die. We know that despite death, Time proceeds onward such that Christ consumes Time that consumes us so that we might consume Time to our heart’s delight. We know that Christ, once deployed, returns to the throne of the Almighty, ready to hand.

We know from the poem Christ and Satan that Christ’s Time in Hell was one of Total War. Christ descends to the domain of Satan yet remains the king of kings. Christ comes on with strength and wondrous power so that Satan flees in cowardice and pain. The aim is one of murder in the formal sense. Recall that in the most extreme imperative, the warrior must

132 Paradise Lost IV 1010–1015.
133 Paradise Lost VI 912.
summon *môdes myrde*, a murderousness to do what needs to be done. Levinas writes that “murder alone lays claim to total negation” of Total Alterity. “Murder exercises power over what escapes power” says Levinas.¹³⁴ Recall that after battle the Messiah tours Heaven like a Caesar in “triumphal chariot.”¹³⁵ What is there to celebrate if not the total negation of Evil in the spirit of Carthage put to the sword and then razed. But of course murder is Evil on Levinas’ account so that murdering Evil is just the same as Evil that murders.

How then to picture Christ standing naked before himself? Heidegger tells us that fear is mood that shows us the modes of Being. How then to picture Christ in Gethsemane as conscience wakes despair? “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Mat 26:38). I am in agony, he prays, as drops of blood fall from his broad white forehead (Luke 22:44). “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” reads the Book of Psalms, so that Christ might echo the very same. “I cry by day, but You do not answer; And by night, but I have no rest.” (Ps 22:2). “My tears have been my meat day and night,” says the Book of Psalms, “while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?” (Ps 42:3) Let this cup pass from me, pleads Christ, for I am to be fed upon for now Christ is forsaken unto himself.

Now we see the regions of possibility of Being as a question of Christ. The *Cloud of Unknowing* tells us not to look up or down or behind or in front to find Heaven but to look for regions of possibility as our very own Being.¹³⁶ We do not picture Christ in Heaven but Christ as Heaven as our very own Being. Now we picture Christ as readiness and unreadiness for the descent. “For the main road and shortest road to heaven,” says the Cloud of Unknowing, “is run

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⁴ Totality and Infinity, 198.
⁵ Paradise Lost VI 881.
⁶ Cloud of Unknowing, Chapters 58 and 60.
by desires and not by footsteps.” What then is Hell if not the long road and the hard way that Christ has no desire to be on? What then is Hell if not the stripping of Christ’s killing power? Hell as experience as the waste and wild of Being Hell. Now Christ bears witness to his very scattering as conscience wakes despair. Now the “I” undergoes analysis to discover multiplicity. A commanding voice now immersed in uproar.

O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel my self, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compared.

The singularity of “Power Divine” now possessed of all the daemons of Hell. “Effulgence of my glory,” says the Lord. “Son in whose face invisible is beheld / Visibly, what by Diety I am.” Divine sight that once saw the Good succumbs to the pan-optics of the eyes of a bug. The “great ensign of Messiah” now signifies a mixture of meanings. Christ once bathed in singular light now looms unto himself. Eternal Time is out of joint, we can hear him say. Time now feeds on my hunger and thirst. O cursed spite, Christ laments, that I ever was born to set it right. On the authority of Milton, now we learn that Christ bears witness to being possessed of Pandemonium.

Having converted Christ and Satan by way of Pandemonium, Pandemonia come now face to face as Total Alterity. In what manner? In the manner and anti-manner of infernal

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137 Ibid., 87.
139 *Paradise Lost* VI 780.
140 *Paradise Lost* VI 680–682.
141 *Paradise Lost* VI 775.
hospitality beyond mere Good and Evil. “Hell shall unfold,” says Milton, “there will be
room.”142 What then of hospitality? Levinas tells us only that hospitality means welcoming in the
spirit of a greeter at the door. Welcome to an infinite feeding. There must be more.

Recall that Beowulf departs the Danes as the rum-heort gast (1806), the great-hearted
guest, now ready to return home. When Beowulf returns to Geatland and comes ashore the
warden of the watch, before recognizing him, calls out, Welcome! in order to grette the gastes
(1894). Recall that in Die Walkure — the second of four in Der Ring des Nibelungen —
Nietzsche’s Wagner invokes the ancient law of hospitality to govern the gastliphnes — not
between friends but between blood enemies. Siegmund has killed and now he is hunted. He takes
refuge in a home built around a mighty ash-tree, and there Sieglinda and Hunding find him. He is
a stranger (Fremde) not a friend (Freund), but he is welcomed and given nourishment under “this
resting roof, this harbouring house.” Hunding will learn that Siegmund is mere quarry according
to the ancient laws of patron and client, blood and cyn, but first he must welcome the unknown
visitor as gast under the most sacred (heilig) custom. You have spilt Sippen-Blut, the blood of
my blood, he tells Siegmund, and the command is justice as vengeance. But “tonight you are
safe” for “my house holds thee from harm.” Now Hunding must play host (gast) to Siegfried his
guest (gast), who is fah (foe) and not freund.143

Long before Wagner, Tacitus declared hospitality to be over and above blood-feuding.
“A man is bound to take up feuds,” he writes in Germania, on behalf of “father and kinsmen.”
But the ancient law of blood (Fehden Sippen) is superseded by the right and responsibility of
hospitality (ius hospitis or Gastfreundschaft), which is divine. “It is considered impious (nefas)
to turn any man away from your door,” he writes. The host (hospes) must welcome the guest

142 Paradise Lost, IV 381–383.
(hospes) as friend and guide to hospitality (comes et monstrator hospitii), meaning that the bond between gast and gast surpasses mere walls of the phenomenological dwelling. Hospitality makes no distinction between friend and enemy (hostis), stranger (hospes) and acquaintance, declares Tacitus. For Nietzsche, in fact, the heart of “hospitality” (gastfreundschaft) is learning to love what is strange. Especially in the face of the indescribable, says Nietzsche, all are welcomed such that we all must be welcoming.

Thus, a hospes may be a host and a guest, who may be a stranger and even enemy (hostis). A hostis may be part of a hostis as a band of armed soldiers and an enemy host. And a hostis might, in the end, practice the ritual of hostia, which was originally a human sacrifice — Ovid writes, “Hostibus a domitis hostis nomen habet,” which is to say that after we defeat the enemy, now become victima by our dextra victorix, we sacrifice them to the gods — so that now the host of the host might be the sacramental bread that goes with the blood of wine to nourish the spirit of the guest.

The Knights Hospitaler in Jerusalem, for instance, played host to the pilgrims and guests seeking hospice and a hospital, and they comprised a warring host and the blood enemy of savages and infidels during the Middle Ages. The practice of hostage-taking illuminates the intersection of war and hospitality. A hostage is a guest by virtue of war, to be treated in the manner commanded by St. Benedict, so that the host as hostis and hospes assumes the role of

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146 Ovid's Fasti I 335–336, Thomas Keightley ed.
host-aging by virtue of hostility and hostality so that when the little candlestick sings, “Be our guest, be our guest, put our service to the test,” we can see ancient law at work.

If we turn to the Rules of St. Benedict, we can witness the mixing of two bloodlines, Latin and Anglo Saxon, in the rule of hospitality. In the tenth century, Edgar the Peaceful, one of the last Anglo-Saxon kings, instituted religious reform that centered on the monastic ethos of St. Benedict. Accordingly, the Rules were translated from the Latin into Old English and widely disseminated.147 In Chapter LVI, titled “The Abbot’s Table,” Benedict instructs that the abbot shall take his meals with “guests and strangers” — cum peregrinus et hospitibus and mid aeltheodigum and cuman — and that along with guests (gystes) he may sup with any of the Brethren he may choose. Chapter LIII, titled “Be Cumena Andfenge” — How to Welcome Guests — goes to the heart of the question. All guests that to the monastery cometh (Ealle cuman be to mynstre cumad) shall be treated at Christ himself, since Christ would say: Ic waes cuma, and ge ofengon min (I was a stranger and you welcomed me.) The imperative of hospitality remains divine such that hospitality is now Christ-like.148

In the same spirit, the Fourteenth Blickling Homily describes the coming of John the Baptist according to the task of hospitality. That with the coming of John the Baptist, we are told, “a house of holiness (halignesse hus) was first to be purified, and the hospitality (gastlipnes) of Christ’s harbinger, and the liberality of God’s messenger, was to be secured.” This was to be the “abode (heall) of the Holy Spirit (Halgan Gast), a temple altogether fit for God … in which the

147 See, Charles Gross, The Sources and Literature of English History from the Earliest Times to about 1485 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1900), 211.
Holy Spirit’s wisdom (Haliges Gastes synntro) should dwell” (gerestenne). Just as Christ promises to prepare a place for us in Heaven, the task of John the Baptist is to prepare a place for Christ on earth. The task is one of gastilpnes, not as ghostliness or spiritedness, but of hospitality.

We can picture hospitality by way of Gothic horror and the contest between monsters and men, which thrives on the violation of hospitality according to the thirst for flesh and blood. In the spirit of Levinas, does not Dracula say to Jonathan Harker, “Welcome to my house! Enter freely and of your own free will!” Dr. Jekyll summons Mr. Hyde but welcomes him only into the laboratory. In time, however, Mr. Hyde will enter Dr. Jekyll at will in his very home and his bed and eventually in his heart of hearts. “I rushed to the mirror,” recalls the doctor. “At the sight that met my eyes, my blood was changed into something exquisitely thin and icy. Yes, I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde.” This is the moment of defeat and triumph such that in the end we understand that some kind of human sacrifice (hostia) will be in order. Recall our monster as he asks for succor from the old man in the cabin.

“Pardon this intrusion,” said I. “I am a traveller in want of a little rest; you would greatly oblige me if you would allow me to remain a few minutes before the fire.”

“Enter,” said De Lacey; “and I will try in what manner I can relieve your wants; but, unfortunately, my children are far from home, and, as I am blind, I am afraid I shall find it difficult to procure food for you.”

Now the law of hospitality is invoked, but the children return to see this abomination and they set upon him with “supernatural force.”

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149 Blickling Homilies, “The Birth of John the Baptist” (XIV), 162/163.
150 Bram Stoker, Dracula, 13.
151 Robert Louis Stevenson, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, 47.
“Save and protect me!” cries the monster. “You and your family are the friends whom I seek. Do not you desert me in the hour of trial!”152

But the monster is thrown back into the woods, unwelcomed and unwanted and forced to flee for his life. Recall, in fact, that Hunding welcomes the Wagnerian hero, who merely replays hospitality by thieving his weapons and his wife and stealing away in the night.

We can now picture the unheimlich of Freud and Heidegger according to the ancient laws of war and hospitality. How terrible it must be to feel unwelcome even at home — to feel a strangeness and hostility so that Heaven and Hell were the homes of Satan though Satan never really felt at home. How Christ must have feared mutating into Hell as being heimathlossen — to borrow from Nietzsche153 — in his heart of hearts as being casted out of divine shelter within and all around. Welcome, says the Devil. Enter of your own free will. And certainly Christ was not a good guest since he bursted the gates and shackled his host and fled with all the little lambs. Recall that in the Book for Matthew (12:29), for instance, Christ boasts that only a strongman can plunder the house of the Devil.

Now we see the wisdom of invoking hospitality as the overcoming of Total War in favor of perpetual peace. My home is your home is the motto of hospitality. We see the fatal flaw, as well, since hospitality only means a temporary possession and not the permanent hexis of being home. Tonight you are safe, says Hunding, but come daybreak (morgen) we do battle.

How then to convert hospitality from temporary to permanent house and home? Recall the panicky fear when Ishmael first meets Queequeg. “Angels! Save me!” he cries out, and Peter Coffin answers.154 Soon, however, Queequeg and Ishmael become bosom brothers in the manner

152 Frankenstein, 93–94.
153 See, Die fröhliche Wissenschaft §377.
154 Moby Dick, “The Spouter Inn” (III), 32.
of Levinas. With much interest I sat watching him, says Ishmael. “Savage though he was, and hideously marred about the face, his countenance yet had something in it which was by no means disagreeable. You cannot hide the soul.” In his “honest heart” and “large, deep eyes,” he continues, “there seemed tokens of a spirit that would dare a thousand devils.”

Now we see Ishmael and Queegqued in the Spouter Inn, in the small rented room upstairs that once was “cold as a clam,” in that “prodigious bed” so warm and snug—a place like no other, says Ishamel, for confidential disclosures and nappishness and free and easy conversation and the crisscrossing of legs thrown over each other. In bed, he explains, “Man and wife … open the very bottom of their souls to each other.” “Thus, in our heart’s honeymoon,” says Ishmael, “lay I and Queequeg—a cosy, loving pair.” And after conversation, “Queegqueg embraced me, pressed his forehead against mine, and blew out the light.”

In this manner, we convert strangers to brothers and brothers to lovers in our heart of hearts so that mere hospitality mutates into the true and lasting marriage of Heaven and Hell. We call this true fraternal interpenetration.

What then of marriage? Recall that in the manner of bonobos, Adam and Eve are practically related even before becoming husband and wife. What then is their task? “Our maker bids increase,” writes Milton. “Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source of Human offspring.” What then is evil if not true hunger artistry. “Who bids abstain,” Milton declares, “But our Destroyer, foe to God and Man?”

Even demons and monsters feel the hunger for family, hearth, and home, which Tacitus calls universa domus. “I am alone, and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as

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155 “A Bosom Friend” (X), 55.
156 See, “Spouter Inn,” 28; and, “Nightgown” (XI) and Bosom Friend (X), 58.
157 “Biographical” (XII), 62.
158 *Paradise Lost* IV 748–750.
deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species, and have the same defects. This being you must create.” Now the monster bids his maker increase. “This you alone can do; and I demand it of you as a right which you must not refuse to concede.”

We proceed, instead, in the manner and anti-manner of Wagner by converting space into time into no time at all. Recall the mythological Siegfried, the fruit born of sister and brother, whose death, in Götterdämmerung, means the funeral pyre of the gods — Even-Time into twilight with no tomorrow.

Levinas pictures infinity as a concept that bursts its own boundaries again and again so that true nourishment spills over. This is not correct. Infinite voice means a legion of unceasing voices. Infinite sight means being riddled with irresistible penetrating light. Infinite touch means being picked clean and rubbed to the bone. Infinite words means drowning in meaning. Infinite society is a pandemic of population. Infinity is nothing less than absolute pandemonia as “hideous ruin and combustion” and “rolling in the fiery gulf.” How to proceed?

Let Paris stand for Pandemonia. Not the cowardly prince but the high capital that bears his name — a city of infinite light just as blinding as darkness. Recall that in Poetics of Space, Gaston Bachelard encounters the problem of insomnia amid the uproar of Paris and he offers a solution. “When insomnia, which is the philosopher’s ailment, is increased through irritation cause by city noises, or when late at night, the hum of automobiles and trucks rumbling … cause me to curse my city-dwellers, I can recover my calm by living the metaphor of the ocean.” With the roar of the city Gaston takes quietly to ship. “My bed is a small boat lost at sea” and “that sudden whistling is the wind in the sails.” Maybe thunder rolls with lightning in and all around.

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159 Frankenstein, 101–102.
160 Paradise Lost I 46 and 52.
“Sleep in spite of the Storm,” he writes. “Sleep in the Storm. Sleep in our own courage, happy to be a man who is assailed by wind and wave.”¹⁶¹ We borrow from Bachelard to call this verberation of sonority a sleep without dreams — “Pandaemonium,” says the monster, as “exquisite and divine retreat,” a little house on a “lake of fire.”¹⁶²

Now as the stillness and calm of Pandemonia we come face to face with Total Alterity once again so that infinity comes face to face with being possessed of nothing at all. Let this monstrous union of unions mean a metaphormorphosis beyond words as Morning Star yield its own path into Evening Star into what looms. Now in the manner of Milton and as a new exit from Eden and hand in hand with wandering steps and slow we take our solitary way.

Here ends the story of Suicide, said the novice. The Man who has told it to you is —

¹⁶¹ Bachelard, Poetics of Space, 48–49.
¹⁶² Frankenstein, 72.
FORE AND AFT ON A SHIP OF FOOLS

Then without warning the tempest broke …. The waves rose in growing fury, each overtopping its fellow, till in a very few minutes the lately glassy sea was like a roaring and devouring monster.

—Cutting from “The Dailygraph”¹

In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent. Pop would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech — and nothing would happen.

—Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

It can also happen that a man of force accomplishes a deed which strikes a reef and sinks from sight having produced no impression; a brief, sharp echo, and all is over.

—Nietzsche, “Richard Wagner in Bayreuth,” *Untimely Meditations*²

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¹ Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 66.
“Look ye, carpenter,” says Ahab, midway through the voyage.

Look ye, says Ahab, “When thou art dead”— as the carpenter whittles a new leg for old Ahab.

Look ye, carpenter, when thou art dead “never bury thyself under living people’s noses.”

The carpenter scratches his head for the look ye is doubly curious. Should the carpenter not sometimes and not always but never when he art dead bury himself under living people’s noses? Does Ahab task the carpenter with his own burial when he art dead? Let the dead bury the dead, admonishes Christ and, like the carpenter Christ, Ahab is after all a “grand, ungodly, god-like man.” But this is nonsense. For Ahab the riddle is no riddle though the carpenter is perplexed. Our answer is different but just as good.

In the Middle Ages, the doctoral examination was a double demonstration of mastery. The master commanded the pro and contra of others toward a final determination of his own. In this way the doctor and the thesis underwent a Siamese birth forever to be joined at the head. In present day examinations the little lamb climbs up to the cathedra to advance a thesis and then climbs down again to defend it for dear life. Only in a successful defense does the little lamb become a full-fledged sheep worthy of returning to the cathedra for a lifetime. We have already demonstrated the absence of a thesis, making our writing indefensible. Being helpless and defenseless, we conclude by attacking in order to dissect.

Dissection is the wrong word, however, suggesting surgical precision. Recall Ishmael who declares, “Dissect him how I may, but I go skin deep. I know him not, and never will.”

Dissection is surgical precision aiming at knowledge as an analysis of organs and organization.

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3 *Moby Dick*, “Ahab and the Carpenter: The Deck — First Night Watch” (CVIII), 432.

4 Says Captain Peleg in *Moby Dick*, “The Ship” (XVI), 82.

5 *Moby Dick*, “The Tail” (LXXXVI), 351.
Our task is simply one of processing. Aboard the Pequod, how is a whale processed once it is hoisted onto deck? We begin in the blubber-room with the pike-and-gaff man and the man of the spade. Together they hook and pin and chop the whale into “portable horse-pieces.” We port them to the try-works where the mincer lays quivering lumps over a wooden plank and reduces them to bite-size pieces that are ready for the pot. Last comes the pagan harpooner who pitches the “hissing masses of blubber into the scalding pots.”

Pin and chop, mince and boil. What fuels all it? asks Ishmael. Not wood or coal. The “scraps or fritters” feed the fire — the whale’s own blubber. “Like a plethoraic burning martyr, once ignited, the whale supplies his own fuel and burns by his own body.” All that’s left of these fritters that feed the flame, says Ishmael, is horrid smoke that “smells like the left wing of the day of judgment.”6 It is hideous to inhale. But does not Nietzsche declare that “most books are born out of smoke and vapours of the brain” and that “they ought to return to smoke and vapour” accordingly. “And if they have not fire of their own,” he concludes, “fire should punish them for it.”7 We begin the process.

In the First Meditation we argued that the present doctoral dissertation is not a dissertation that is doctoral. A doctoral dissertation forms and is shaped by thetic argumentation linked by way of logic. A doctoral dissertation is bounded by a millennium of tradition in the university and the decades-long tradition of philosophy of education. We argued that the doctoral, deep inside, means position, honor, and reward, and we purported to reject the academic economy in the name of purity. We know this to be a lie. Let us turn to the question of the thetical.

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7 Friedrich Nietzsche, “Schopenhauer as Educator,” in *Untimely Meditations*, 147.
On the eve of the first day of the chase Ahab cries out, “what cozzening, hidden lord and most and cruel remorseless emperor commands me?”8 In the same spirit we wonder what commands our writing even as anti-commandment. Not love and not true life, which is the essence of a clean heart. The answer is a thesis hidden in our heart of hearts. For our heart is diseased and wasted through and through, and our thesis is separated as two halves divided in hostility. Our thesis is the merely the dangerous maybe of life and death and either will do. The thesis is not new, just as love was not new when Christ commanded it (John 13:34).

In his essay, “Is Life Worth Living?” William James writes, “Once more it is a case of maybe. And once more maybes are the essence of the situation.”9 In The Ethics of Ambiguity, Simone de Beauvoir writes, “To attain his truth, man must not attempt to dispel the ambiguity of his being but, on the contrary, accept the task of realizing it.”10 In Eudemian Ethics, Aristotle establishes our “innate desire to be alive.”11 But may we not overcome the imperative of nature as well? He declares, “The right hand is superior by nature, and yet it is possible for everyone to become ambidextrous.”12 Are we not or may we not become ambi-valent in our heart of hearts and ambi-dextrous as being either-handed and thus own-handed in either case? And does our man not declare, “But who has the will to concern himself with such dangerous maybes? For that, one really has to wait for the advent of a new species of philosophers … philosophers of the dangerous ‘maybe’ in every sense.”13

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8 Moby Dick, “The Symphony” (CXXXII), 493.
10 Simone de Beauvoir, The Ambiguity of Ethics, 13.
11 Aristotle, Eudemian Ethics, VII 1244b.
12 Ibid., 1134b.
13 Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil §2.
Perhaps our thesis is not Scholastic, and thus scholarly, as a proof or demonstration. Or perhaps the Scholastic thesis concerns the thetic as the anti-thetic since, as Husserl observes, the universalized heading of “thesis” is not begotten by formal logic, but begets logical links as the offspring of thetic consciousness. \(^ {14}\) So perhaps we are not anti-thetical, but merely un-thetical as being pre-thetic as being-thetic, which precedes the doctoral thesis, which we have in fact undertaken.

Viewed another way, recall that Ishmael begins his written journey guided by hypos. In that spirit, perhaps our hypo-thesis — our thesis below, our thesis that looms — is that we are positively thetic, as the union of Husserl and Milton, as being-synthesis as polythesis as monothesis as diathesis, and as diathesis we are positively hexistential and as hexis we are simply pandemonium as the dangerous maybe. Recall in *Ideas* that Husserl’s first thesis is one of anti-thesis, which identifies and suspends the very thesis of what exists according to what we think we know about existence. \(^ {15}\) The anti-thesis, he explains, “utterly closes off for me every judgment about spatiotemporal existence.” \(^ {16}\) Then, phenomenologically speaking, consciousness recognizes in itself what we might call the teeny-tiny theses of experience, the quality and mode that repletes and completes the content of intentional intuition. Content that is complete and fulfilled entails a thesis on content. A thesis does not merely establish the true or false of the content. The thesis actualizes the content in the richness of possibility as intentional experience. “Even in valuing, wishing, or wanting,” writes Husserl, “something is ‘posited,’ apart from the doxic positionally that ‘lies’ in them.” For Husserl, richness of possibility is truly actualized as content attains more than one meaning. “It is essentially inherent to each intentional experience,”


\(^ {15}\) Ibid. §31, 52.

\(^ {16}\) Ibid. §33, 56.
he writes, “to have at least one, but as a rule several “theses” — “characters of positing’ that are bound up with the manner of founding.”\textsuperscript{17} This thetic abundance begets not the links of logic, but thetic weavings as \textit{synthetic consciousness} — which \textit{collects}, \textit{disjoins}, and \textit{explicates} — and the synthetic structuring of syntheses as “polytheistic syntheses.”\textsuperscript{18} The process is political as the problem of pandemonium. Husserl explains, “Among these several positings, one is then necessarily, so to speak, the \textit{archon}, unifying all others in itself and dominating them throughout.”\textsuperscript{19} And the process is ethical as consciousness unifies and hearkens to its call to action. Now consciousness converts the “multi-beam” syntheses into a “single beam” called the “monothetic,” which translates judgment into the “monothetic act” as intentional action.\textsuperscript{20} Now reflection realizes and completes consciousness as consciousness in itself. Now unities of consciousness are beams, trajectories, paths to take. Now consciousness gives courage to us all on our own authority, even proceeding in the darkness night.

Now we have one horse-piece packed with the amoral fiber as the dangerous maybe as a kind of dia-thetic command and anti-command that runs through every word. And if we have one horse-piece pinned and chopped we must have two, for one does not exist without the other.

In the Second Meditation, Bakhtin’s \textit{Dialogical Imagination} helped us to distinguish between epic poetry and novelistic prose. While epic writing speaks in a singular voice, the novel is one of heteroglossia — pandemonium as many spirits speaking and proceeding of their own accord. “Instead of the philosophical novel we turn to novelized philosophy,” we promised of our writing. Did we fulfill our promise? To answer this question, we turn to Bakhtin’s

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid. §117, 231–232.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid. §118; 235–236.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid. §117, 232 (emphasis original).
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. §119, 237.
Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics to dismember our writing by way of true, novelistic philosophy.

“Dostoevsky creates not voiceless slaves,” writes Bakhtin, “but free people, capable of standing alongside their creator, capable of not agreeing with him and even of rebelling against him.” Dostoevsky completes the novelistic task — or rather initiates it — by way of polyphony. “A genuine polyphony of fully valid voices” and entails “a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses …” This is the “chief characteristic of Dostoevsky’s novels,” he concludes.21

We can understand Bakhtin’s study of Dostoevsky by way of comparison. In Tolstoy we experience the author’s singular and complete command over his numerous cast of characters. In Steinbeck even the land in its geological compass finds orientation according to the author. “The direct and unmediated power to mean,” writes Bakhtin, “belongs only to the authorial point of view lying at the base of construction; everything else is merely its object.” Not so with Dostoevsky, through and against which the characters enjoy and suffer the “capacity to outgrow from within and to render untrue any externalizing and finalizing definition of them.”22 A true Lucifer or Jesus Christ, for instance, would be written with actual free will as an invitation to overwrite the Word from the hands of the Creator. By contrast, our writing commits the double sin of spiralizing in and out of control.

Just as Ahab in Nantucket knew he would sail for the Pacific seas, our writing unfolds in the most premeditated manner. Were not the paths of Satan and Christ, in the Seventh Meditation, preordained all along? Was there any doubt that they would meet face-to-face and fall in love? Were their words anything but the script of an author in the manner of wedding

21 Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics, 6.
22 Ibid., 57 and 59.
vows that pretend to be un-coerced expressions of love? Was there any chance they would not go hand in hand? Are their voices anything but representations of the hollow interior of the author’s own monologue? Just as Ishmael is ever-present on the Pequod, and just as Melville is the true voice of *Moby Dick*, are we not made to speak according to singular, authorial design? “Ye are not other men,” roars Ahab, “but my arms and legs; and so obey me.” And now Ahab’s double sin reveals our own. For our words are merely arms and legs that do not obey in the same way that Ahab tried and failed to command and failed to be aboard even as the Pequod goes down. Oh! “death-glorious ship,” cries Ahab, “must ye then perish, and without me?” In truth, all was foretold by Father Mapple in the story Jonah. For Jonah in his “hard-heartedness” is beset upon by the whale and “goes down in the whirling heart of such a masterless commotion.” Such is the true fate of our writing, reduced to a horse-piece.

We are now ready to mince words in the manner of Mannerism — *a maniera* (“mannered”) — in that we are merely mechanical and unoriginal much like a three-point argument, and unmannered by being “bizarre and unnatural,” “perverse and decadent.” Mannerism as “stylish style” as style drained of substance — a compact mass, a hive of swelling bodies. Mannerism so “drenched in *maneira*” as to be *senza maniera alcuna*, style without style; unbalanced and unstable, heightened and unhinged, primitive and ecstatic — “an expression rising from the depth of the soul and hitherto unknown in his age and style.”

In truth, however, our words go by another name that moves in the same manner of Mannerism. Our words have a name and the name is *grotesque realism* as real blood made

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24 Ibid., 519.
impure by the grotesque words. In *Rabelais*, Bakhtin locates grotesque realism, historically and literarily, between the epic and the novel. Grotesque realism, according to Bakhtin, accomplished a double-task by helping to bring the epic to a comedic close — *Don Quixote*, for instance — and as the prenatality of Dostoevsky’s novel. Grotesque realism, in its literary form, required gestational performances throughout Europe in the course of centuries so that Rabelais could absorb and synthesize the folklorish culture of the Middle Ages. Only then could grotesque realism realize itself in the highest and lowest literary form of words that reflect and surpass the world.

How does Rabelais accomplish this feat? By way of mixed methods in the Gargantuan sense. In the fifth chapter, titled “The Grotesque Image of the Body,” Bakhtin explains that “an object can transgress not only its quantitative but also its qualitative limits, that it can outgrow itself and be fused with other objects.” This is the “logic of the grotesque” such that the “object transgresses its own confines” in “hyperbolic quantities and cosmic dimensions” so that the object “ceases to be itself.” The logic of realism enters into the grotesque, he continues, as the grotesque transgresses the real. “The limits between the body and the world are erased,” writes Bakhtin, “leading to the fusion of the one with the other and with surrounding objects.” Better yet, grotesque realism entails a mutual consuming that “swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world.” The method is not one of analysis but of fecundity as a gardener in the wild and as the wild in the gardener.

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27 Rab, 308.
28 Rab, 336.
29 Rab, 310.
30 Rab, 317.
31 “I love the wild not less than the good,” writes Thoreau.
What yield in what’s overgrown? Not the refined and statuesque. Not the mannered and manicured. Grotesque realism yields in fertility and birth as a riot of genitalia, a banquet of roasted meats and wine ending in urine and excrement. Grotesque realism realizes itself in the carnivalesque as “an entire system of crooked mirrors, elongating, diminishing, distorting in various directions and to various degrees.”

Grotesque realism ventures into the underworld of ambivalence and inversion, crudity and travesty.

In Dostoevsky, Bakhtin traces the roots of grotesque realism to the Menippean satire of the ancient world, characterized by fantastical anarchy. The fantastic was no mere style, however, but served as a kind of *mod* method. “We emphasize,” he writes, “that the fantastic here serves not for the positive *embodiment* of truth, but as a mode for searching after the truth, provoking it, and most important, *testing* it.” To this end, he continues, “the heroes of Menippean satire ascend into heaven, descend into the nether world, wander through unknown and fantastic lands, are placed in extraordinary life situations.” Moreover, the geographical or cosmological journey expresses what Bakhtin calls “moral-psychological experimentation” — “A representation of the unnatural, abnormal moral and psychic states of man — insanity, split personality, unrestrained daydreaming, usual dreams, passions bordering on madness, suicides, and so forth.” Of Dostoevsky, Bakhtin writes, “Everything in his world lives on the very border of its opposite. Love lives on the very border of hate, knows and understands it, and hate lives on the border of love and also understands it.” The task is hexistential in that writing “destroy the epic and tragic wholeness of a person and his fate.” “He loses his finalized quality and ceases

32 Rabelais, 127.
33 Dostoevsky, 114.
34 Dostoevsky, 116.
35 Dostoevsky, 176.
36 Dostoevsky, 116.
to mean only one thing; he ceases to coincide with himself.”\textsuperscript{37} With Rabelais and Dostoevsky in mind we discover that the present writing is grotesque realism as a desiccation of its true energy and meaning. In the present writing we encounter a gathering of words as nonsense as the noisy disorder of pandemonium — words full of coq and ass that signify nothing. A demonstration of meaningless silence amid a superabundant outpouring of words.

We are now ready for the boil. We know that the true joy of whaling is in the whale once it is boiled down to the essence. Recall that after the whale has cooled and crystallized, Ishmael is tasked with refining with a squeeze of the hand. Such a “sweet and unctuous duty!” he declares. “Squeeze! Squeeze! Squeeze! All the morning long. I squeezed that sperm till I myself almost melted into it.” “Come,” he calls out, “let us squeeze hands all around; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.” “Would that I could keep squeezing that sperm for ever!” he marvels and laments.\textsuperscript{38}

Having chopped and minced our words, we now boil them down to learn their essence. Ishmael revels in the whale as sperm fills his soul. Our work, by contrast, takes place in a setting akin to the blubber-room — “a scene of terror to all tyros”\textsuperscript{39} — and proceeds no farther than that. Recall that some whales produce inferior sperm in quantity or quality.\textsuperscript{40} The hump back yields plentiful oil of low quality. The porpoise contains oil in the highest quality but only a gallon per creature so that we seldom find a porpoise in profitable whaling. What then of our essence?

The essence of writing is procreation, some might say. The hope is always for a good and long life, and a measure of gratitude in return. “A new species would bless me as its creator and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[37] Dostoevsky, 117.
\item[38] Moby Dick, “A Squeeze of the Hand” (XCIV), 384–385.
\item[39] Ibid., 384–386.
\item[40] See, Moby Dick, “Cetology” (XXXII), 127–139.
\end{footnotes}
source,” thrills one novice, and “many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me.”

By analogy and according to the same impulse, it would be unheard of to procreate only to abort the unborn and it would unprecedented to give birth only to abandon a newborn into the wild. Some might point out that Suicide takes up the question of what already is. Suicide does not create our Being-in-question just for the sake of extinguishing it, in the same sense that God does not breath life into all creation as mere readiness for eternal damnation. Suicide that brings into Being what is to be obliterated is no Suicide at all. Suicide as such is merely an abomination of what Suicide truly is in that such Suicide is more like premeditated procreative murder — writing that aims from the beginning to erase ourselves and leave no trace.

Some may climb a ladder that leads to hermetic silence and the solitude of a tree house. This is nonsense. Simply lean another ladder against the tree. Simply lower the ladder to get down again. Our aim is not to demonstrate our own limits on the fiction that discursive limitations may never again be transgressed. Recall that after all go down amid the boiling ocean, there is only Ishmael. What does he see? “Now small fowls flew screaming over the yet yawning gulf; a sullen white surf beat against its steep sides; then all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled five thousand years ago.”

Our essence is merely a watermark upon the sea and when we boil we boil away so that nothing is left. Who are we? We are legion. In what manner? In the manner and anti-manner of words. We are doing words and words that are done for.

To complete our processing we load up the scraps and fritters to burn and boil away. But what truly infuses the fuel to feed the flame? Why the carnivalization of the dissertation? Why grotesque realism over staid scholarship? The answer seems to be protest. Protest against process

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and performing. Protest against the field of philosophy of education. Protest against institution of the university. In fact, the question is not what is being protested, but what is not being protested. Once again, Bakhtin will help us to understand the outrageous strength at work in a doctoral dissertation that is not a dissertation that is doctoral.

In 2010, *Social Identities* devoted an issue to carnival and the carnivalesque, stemming from a symposium at the University of Iowa. In the introductory essay, “Carnival Praxis, Carnivalesque Strategies, and Atlantic Interstices,” Michaeline A. Crichlow and Piers Armstrong explain that the contributions aim to “rethink carnivals and the carnivalesque principally in terms of its movements, boundary crossings, convivialities, creative bricolage and fantasies, which are maneuvers open to anyone state elites, ‘folk’ and visitors, players and observers.”

Crichlow and Armstrong note that the very origin of “carnival,” by way of *carne levare* (the removal of meat), is utterly Rabelasian and prepares us to appreciate that carnival strips away even as it builds up fantastically in feasts and parades and riots and revelry. The power of carnival is one of protest as performance, the unmasking mask. In the same way that Suicides in South Africa and Afghanistan dramatize protest beyond words, in “Carnival Time in the Kingdom of Coal,” Mary Hufford writes that “carnivalesque maskings and unmaskings dramatize a struggle for publicly relevant subjectivity in the United States.” The contest is between the People and King Coal as the corporate colonization of West Virginia. Hufford continues, “Social bodies constructed through such carnivalesque tropes as the grotesque body, the slaying of the king, and (ecologically) gay materiality articulate profoundly different stakes across class lines.”

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In “Carnivals Against Capital: Radical Clowing and the Global Justice Movement,” L. M. Bogad studies tactical carnival in the “toolbox of the burgeoning social justice movement.” By way of the “oppositional events” of costume and music and dance and puppetry, writes Bogad, carnival declares and embodies the global movement of movements — the meta movement — which is “anti-corporate and anti-authoritarian.”

In virtually every essay contribution, the social and political power of carnival is traced to Bakhtin’s originary study. The hereditary king is now King Coal. The universal church is now the transnational corporation. Only the carnival remains to pick the meat off the bones and redistribute it to the people. Thus, if the present doctoral dissertation is meant to fuel protest of the doctoral dissertation, grotesque realism and carnivalization seem fitting. We can discern the limits of carnival as protest, however, as a neutralizing fuel, a counter fuel, an anti-fuel that merely envelops the miniature flame. How many corporations or World Trade Organizations or Wall Streets have been toppled by way of performative occupation, inversion, and travesty? There is an abyss, to borrow from Bakhtin, between the trope of regicide and regicide in real life. The problem is in the defect of carnival as protest as the very logic of protest as carnival.

Carnival, says Bogad, is a tactic adopted by movements of social justice. As a movement, carnival envisions an end beyond itself, namely social justice, environmental justice, and onward. Carnival is a cultural and political technology with an aim that surpasses the confines of carnival. In A Carnival of Revolution, Padriac Kenney studies the role of carnival protest in the Solidarity movement of Poland. “A carnival breaks down borders of all kinds,” he writes. “It forces a suspension of the usual rules in society, issuing a challenge to the existing roles and

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reversing social and political hierarchies.” 46 And as the crowds massed in protest, the battle cry was, “Police! Come party with us!” 47 We carnival today for a better tomorrow.

Bakhtin himself embraced the promise of carnival as a kind of monomythical subgenre and as the hero for a new age. He calls it the “carnival spirit, with its freedom, its utopian character oriented toward the future.” 48 The carnival spirit, he explains, works in mysterious ways, unlocking a secret power within and against the powers that be. “It makes a man renounce his official state as monk, cleric, scholar, and perceive the world in its laughing aspect.” 49 It “expresses the people’s hopes of a happier future, of a more just social and economic order, of a new truth.” 50 It fashions a “people who are continually growing and renewed.” 51 It “renews the world.” 52

What is this power? The power is one of laughter as critical jest. “This is why festive folk laughter presents an element of victory not only over supernatural awe, over the sacred, over death; it also means the defeat of power of earthly kings, and of the earthly upper class, of all that oppresses and restricts.” 53 The power is in the mockery of today as the promise of a better tomorrow.

The problem is one of endurance since whatever the power of carnival in the moment, it is existentially impossible to party all the time as part of the permanent revolution. The problem is also in the false promise of carnival, whose essence is not teleological but circular in a double

47 Ibid., 1.
48 Rabelais, 33.
49 Rabelais, 13.
50 Rabelais, 81.
51 Rabelais, 19.
52 Rabelais, 17.
53 Rabelais, 92.
Carnival spiralizes unto carnival. Carnival is not the scene in which the hero slays the monster — an epic in disguise. Carnival is grotesque realism the flourishes by consuming itself or by reaching its fullness only in what is all used up. The pregnant hag. The court jester. The foolish wise man. The beggar-king. Each embodies force and counter-force in life and death, health and decay, laughter and bitterness, praise and abuse, travesty and elevation, inversion and dismemberment and monstrous new forms so that nothing is sacred. Carnival is a compact mass and a hive of swelling bodies. Carnival always turns back upon itself, never ending in resolution.

If carnival is circular, we also witness the circularity of carnival as getting as much as giving. In their introductory, Crichlow and Armstrong identify the strength and weakness of carnival in that carnival is a maneuver “open to anyone,” from peasants and novices to the “state elites,” which means that carnival is a move open to carnivalization as the profaning of sacred carnival protest.

We might call this the carnivalization of carnival, or carnival carnivalized as meta-carnival as the true nature of carnival. If carnival is the move of protest, carnivalized carnival is the counter-move of counter-protest. The problem is that pure carnival entails no logical end.

Invert the inverted, play with the players, play upon the play so that we find the carnival tactic in the toolbox of state actors and corporations, as well as the movement of movements.

“In Ethnic Identity and Elite Idyll,” Kristen McCleary reports on the “demise” of the Buenos Aires carnival as it falls into the hands of “elite politicians, commercial interests, and the middle and upper classes,” as well as the “rise of a vacation culture.” Carnival is now an instrument of tourism that serves the affluent from abroad and a counter-instrument of pacification from within.

In “The Cultural Politics of Carnival in 1930s Dijon,” Philip Whalen returns to originary Medieval site of carnival to study its role in the early-twentieth century. Akin to present-day social justice movements, the Dijon carnival was one of aims and ends. Carnival in Dijon took shape, however, as a “state-sanctioned project of regional modernization.” The aim was not to disrupt society but to stabilize political and economic interests toward a modern tomorrow.55

In “Bahian Carnival and Social Carnivalesque in Trans-Atlantic Context,” Armstrong describes the Brazilian carnival as a “beacon of Afro-centricity” and “resistance to patriarchal order,” blended with “the surprising viability of a conservative agenda in which ‘dissidents’ often collude. “Bahian carnival,” Armstrong concludes, “is less an inversion of order than an intensification of an everyday culture which has already assimilated carnival motifs and values.”56

This should come as no surprise since Bakhtin documented the carnivalization of carnival in his own studies. Medieval carnival is reduced to masquerade ball for the wealthy, holiday for the bourgeoisie, and excuse for gluttony and forgetting by the peasants. Carnival is reduced in power by the Enlightenment and its commitment to “icy serious and single meaning.” Uproarious carnival gives way to Romantic brooding — stygian rather than satirical — and existential terror.

In particular Bakhtin traces the path of carnival through the university of “one single meaning, one single tone of seriousness.”57 In this setting, says Bakhtin, there was little room for carnival and grotesque realism, which means, of course, that there was in fact a little room for grotesque realism.

57 Rabelais, 101.
School and university recreation had great importance in the history of medieval parody. These recreations usually coincided with feast days. All feast day privileges granted by tradition to laughter and jokes were fully accorded to recreation. Not only could the student relax from the official ideological system, from scholarly wisdom and academic rules, but there were allowed to transform these disciplines into gay, degrading gams and jokes.  

Thus we have scholarly compositions titled, “The Liturgy of the Drunkards,” and “The Gambler’s Gospel,” and “The Will of the Ass,” as “parodies of monastic rule, of ecclesiastical decrees and the constitution of the Councils, of papal pulls and encyclicals, as well as of sermons.”

In the same manner that Rabelais combined his surgical precision as a medical doctor with the ribaldry of vital organs and bodily fluids, in the Middle Ages each composition would infuse parody with precise knowledge of theology and law. Bakhtin turns to another genre in the same period called *coq à l’âne*, — from rooster to ass — which is “systematic, pure, and unbroken” impurity. “This is the genre of intentionally absurd verbal combinations,” he writes, “a form of completely liberated speech that ignores all norms, even those of elementary logic.” *Coq à l’âne* is not the language game of competing orders but a “game of words” that have been “released from the shackles of sense, to enjoy a play period of complete freedom and establish unusual relationships among themselves.”

But the exception, the recreation, the irreverence, merely demonstrates the rule of stable and complete and serious and singular meaning by way of the university. We already know this

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58 Rabelais, 83.
59 Rabelais, 85.
60 Rabelais, 422–423.
by way of the central and enduring organizing principle of the disputation and the dissertation. In fact, the true dimensions of carnival are established not by performances but by footlights. Recall the play *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet plays with footlights. As the play within the play draws its characters, the characters of Gertrude and Claudius are drawn into the play in spite of themselves so that the play within the play spills over as the true players play upon themselves. But the doctoral dissertation is no room for play. This is merely to say that we are pinned and chopped, minced and boiled by burning ourselves away. To borrow from Hamlet, we are hoisted on our own petard. What did we achieve? Did we discover outrageous strength? Is anything renewed? No. We merely conducted a teeny-tiny protest that meant nothing at all. We merely arrive at readiness for our aim to fire.
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