'THE ACTUAL MURDER WITH WORDS':
A DISCUSSION OF VIOLENCE IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT, ROMANTICISM...AND AFTER

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
Centre for Comparative Literature,
University of Toronto

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0-612-35188-2
The actual murder with words: A discussion of violence in the Enlightenment, Romanticism...and after.
A thesis submitted to the University of Toronto for the Ph.D. in Comparative Literature by Colman Hogan, 1998.

Enlightenment: reason, emancipation, progress. Romanticism: the irrational, rebellion, return. These two constellations describe not merely historical epochs but attitudes of culture from which modernity seeks to escape and to which it ceaselessly returns. Although their notions of violence are much at odds, they each presuppose a vision of the other with which they contend. This thesis seeks to articulate their ideas about violence and its place in their thought.

Part I: The successes of seventeenth century mathemata gave Enlightenment luminaries cause to feel a door to the prison cell of existence had opened. Newton’s emulators set to work confident that knowledge would dispel ignorance and violence; and an enormous tide of Reason is unleashed, sucking up into it all the counter-currents it produces. Belief that acts of will can fashion the correspondence of ‘reality’ to the ‘true’ engenders a preoccupation with the flight of the possible over the grounds of the probable. However, Reason’s tide eventually turns and, secularizing its own myth, begins to hear the voices of those counter-currents that have all along fed its progress.

Under the spell of an imagined future in which violence would be erased, Enlightenment discussions of the subject are marked by a significant absence. Into this frame the art of Goya explodes: with a new urgency he paints its light as dark. No longer merely the image of reason, light is also the conscienceless instrument of executioners; no longer purely irrational, darkness also limns an evil that ‘reasons’ its overthrow of my ‘natural’ instincts.

Part II: In Beloved a catastrophic past is repeated and re-presented, bringing to fruition the promise of emancipation in the active-passive injunction: be good, be-loved.
Accession to this covenant is effected through the 'cut' in which the rhythm of the given is disturbed by the giving that guarantees the equilibrium of all givens. Opening to the pledge is manifest in a bodily exposure of precisely that which violence aims at: the you beyond every denomination. The sounding of this exposure is a pure assignment that renews time. In it the possibility of a past repaired, forgiveness and fecundity are revealed.
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Jocasta states that Oedipus belongs to whomever speaks to him of *phoubou* - unhappiness, terror, disasters, nefarious violence of any sort

René Girard

*Lo que no se detalla es la brutalidad del procedimiento*

José Emilio Pacheco

Murder exerts power over that which escapes power

Emmanuel Levinas
The question of definition

Violence and words, words and violence. It is hard to imagine a more necessary conjunction and a more generalized failure. From the *Eumenides* through *Yvain* to the inverse example of *Frankenstein*, violence and words have always stood opposed to each other. And yet this evidence notwithstanding, abhorrence of violence has never halted its spread: "it is precisely because they detest violence that men make a duty of vengeance" (Girard 1977, 15). Violence eludes definition, and, paradoxically, because violence eludes definition this statement both strikes home and misses its mark, for violence is both radically intolerable and seemingly irresistible, centrifugal and centripetal. It combines something of the profound ungraspability of the horizon and the immediacy of a blow to the head. In this violence is like love, except that violence is not an emotion. Nor is violence an essence, for it would not then elude definition; and neither is it a force. for it has the disturbing propensity of transforming what stands opposed to it into a manifestation of itself.

What then is violence? There is an singularity to violence that belies its many forms and formulations. On the one hand violence is like a rare element, highly unstable, promiscuous in its attachments, and almost impossible to encounter in a pure form. On the other hand one wonders just how exceptional it is, for it has a way of infiltrating the most benign transactions. To some, violence is at its root a domestic affair, that which transforms a host into a hostage, and hospitality into hostility. To others our passage through violence constitutes history. However vertical or horizontal, ethereal or domestic, one thing about violence seems undeniable: violence manifest is an intensifier of reality: in it the presentness of the present is made crystal and frighteningly clear - magnified but contracted, galvanized but impotent, accelerated and paralyzed. Violence, or the threat of violence, has an unnerving facticity that mocks generalities; it has the ability, notes Elaine Scarry, to make and unmake the world.1

The anthropological insights of René Girard are germane here. According to Girard, violence is a form of social contagion, a pestilence in the body politic that fast-breeds with a horrifying rapidity and contaminates all who come into contact with it. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to contain, for its principal cause and devastating effect is the erasure of all differentiation. This fact also, I might add, makes it difficult to define. This negation of degree and distinction in acts of violence opens up a vicious circle of vengeance and retribution that almost always swallows the participants. Goya's engraving 'Con razón o sin ella' ('With or without reason'; *Desastres* #2, circa 1820) gives us an image of this. There we can see violence mock the autonomy of the individual, rendering illusory his or her belief that violence can be a means of self-determination conferring
sensations of power, *connatus essendi*, or existence. There we see violence objectified, its power to transform the subject into an object, its recreation of the human as the appendix of a fatality in which violence itself is the sole and unique reality and of which we are but phantom executors.

Perhaps the most disturbing facet of violence, as both Goya and Girard point out, is that violence and the methods of combating violence somehow form an identity. If 'Con razón o sin ella' can be construed as a question, the following print in the sequence of the *Desastres de la guerra* answers it: 'Lo mismo' ('The same'). This series is perhaps the culmination of a theme Goya had been pursuing for three decades, two moments of which we can isolate in the paintings *The Second of May 1808* and *The Third of May 1808* (both 1814). In the latter work, an anonymous phalanx of French soldiers angled away from the viewer level their muskets against an unarmed rabble of Spanish patriots. On the ground in front of the soldiers stands a lantern whose harsh light cuts a diagonal across the canvas, illuminating the mass of martyrs-to-be upstage on the hill left, throwing steely highlights on the iron fascicle of the executioners' rifle barrels centre, but curiously never reaching their three-quarters-away profiles to the right. These erased faces are contrasted with the blazing white shirt of the principal victim, a kneeling Christ figure, his arms outstretched, palms open (one of which is wounded), and especially with what Gwyn Williams calls his "swarthy proletarian face, eyes creased in mute pathetic appeal which yet communicates a dumb inevitability" (4). This image, taken on its own, has passed into the iconography of resistance and oppression: "*The Third of May* seems timeless, transcendent, eternal; it is the 'human predicament.' It is unforgettable" (5). Yet as Williams also points out, the principal face of *The Third of May* returns centre stage in the painting's companion piece, *The Second of May*, where the popular insurrection that unleashed 'the peoples' war' is depicted. This double face, argues Williams, forces upon us a review of the seemingly clear lines of demarcation that have been read into the paintings when taken individually:

The face this time is hard and implacable as its carrier wrenches a Marmeluke cavalryman from his horse in a city square and thrusts a dagger into him, as his fellows mill around the French, killing, killing, killing. What sort of martyrdom followed then, the next day, on the hill of Príncipe Pío? (5)

In 'Con razón o sin ella' Goya offers us a graphic apotheosis of this duplicity of violence. In it two sides of an antagonism are propelled against each other in a grotesque and deadly embrace. The air above and about the figures is seemingly atomized with blood; below them deepens a pool that is on the verge of trickling out the bottom of the frame.
The cannibalizing dynamism of their contract is caught and rendered legible by the
violent signature that their locked pikes designs: the butt end of the alphabet, the letter
zed. Here is a consummation of violence and history that mocks any notion of engender-
ing, synthesis, or transcendence. The two-faced truth of violence is that violence
intoxicates with the revulsion of it.

How then to grasp this non-essence, non-force, this viscous complexity? Perhaps
one can do no better justice to the Janus face of violence than by designating it under the
rubric of economy. This may seem transgressively banal, but violence is that also. Yet
however much I try to limit violence by giving it a definition, I must resign myself to the
provisionality of this maneuver. Economy has always escaped every concept of
production, labour, capital, value, always rearing its head as a surplus to one's logical
pinions, more than the sum of its parts. Violence seems very similar to this notion of
excess with the added difference that limits to violence are both ethically necessary -
inasmuch as violence is that which seeks to overthrow every limit - and necessarily
inadequate. They are impotent not merely because every delimitation of violence belies
its dynamism and protean capacity for metamorphosis, but more crucially because the
total command of violence is a terrifying idea. What difference would there be between
the perfect logic of violence and the worst violence? Must not reason's ability to
comprehend violence scotch itself?

The question of opposition

Thus in asking the question 'what is violence?' its counter-question arises: what
stands opposed to violence, what excludes it? The traditional answer to this question has
been ethics, either in the form of legal strictures which seek to constrain and/or remedy
violence or ethical discourse which seeks to undermine the allegiance to violence by
deconstructing its reasoning. The legal view puts the question of violence in the clearest
and plainest terms: violence is a willful act causing bodily injury to another. This
definition touches upon a central fact, that violence is a denial of the being and/or
meaning of the other. The bat, the bullet, the bomb, each assert that the other is mine, that
I give meaning to him or her, that ultimately their being issues from me and my acts of
will. Pain, the principal attribute of violence, is merely the evidence that this is so. As
Scarry points out, torture concentrates pain; and, by denying the necessary link to the
body that suffers it, the torturer seeks to transform and appropriate the evidence of pain
into an insignia of subjection to his power and solipsism (56-57). Legal redress seeks to
reverse this process by ascribing guilt to the agent, but because it is unable to account for
the quidity of pain it must proportion the remedy of the law upon the quantity of what is
reproducible as evidence, the injury. Further, ethical views that rely on a legal deterrent to violence, often end up sanctioning the use of that which they condemn, substituting a legitimate version of violence for an illegitimate one. Both of these responses assume that the logic of violence is transparent, a quid that, at least in theory, will always receive its pro quo; neither seems to address the more perplexing question of whether violence can be truly countered.

Here we begin to glimpse the fact that violence is profoundly intractable, intransigent, and refractory to logic. Although it is perhaps an extreme case, the experience of the Holocaust has proved, in reflection, to be a crucible for burning off the logical impurities of violence and reasoning. By the best available accounts, 'life' in the Nazi death camps was characterized by the complete overthrow of all the norms of just reason. Primo Levi in his testimonial *If This Is a Man* describes his initiation into the order of the Lager at Auschwitz with the phrase 'here there is no why': "*Hier ist kein Warum*" (1993, 29). This is not to say that in the Lager all logic was absent. On the contrary, according to Levi the difference between the logic of gulag and that of the Lager was the difference between deviation and consistency, for whereas the Soviets betrayed their ideals the Nazis realized their faith. In Auschwitz, by Levi's analysis, the violent overthrow of the norms of logic was inscribed as the primum mobile: "to he that has, will be given; from he that has not, will be taken away" (88):

Many people - many nations - can find themselves holding, more or less wittingly, that every stranger is an enemy. For the most part this conviction lies deep down like some latent infection; it betrays itself only in random, disconnected acts, and does not lie at the base of a system of reason. But when this does come about, when the unspoken dogma becomes the major premise in a syllogism, then at the end of the chain, there is the Lager. Here is a product of a conception of the world carried rigorously to its logical conclusion; so long as the conception subsists, the conclusion remains to threaten us.

It would not be entirely without merit then, to consider violence as a kind of anti-logic, the torsion or perversion of rationality. However, we must guard against taking this formulation in too simple and straightforward a manner first and foremost because it ignores Pascal's 'reasons of the heart,' which intend no injury. In a theoretical schema that staged reason and violence as logical antitheses where would we place the affections, the primary faculty of our human response to violence? In addition (and what may be worse), such a conception, in authorizing our ignorance of the potential imbrication of violence and reason, discourse, or ethics, is unable to see violence in history. This blindness is felt to be particularly acute in our age.
We cannot achieve an image of our civilization in which Hitler and Picasso, Stalin and Stravinsky, are merely opposed, within the grasp of coherence. Such a conception would threaten any concept of civilization and the myths by which we survive...Modernity can be comprehended, made endurable, only by distinctions and separations of a transcendent order: in the phrase of Czeslaw Milosz, the modern is 'a neo-Manichean age'...

The transcendence of evil - its otherness from reason, history, etc. - has in its keeping the order of our sanity. That is what is at risk in the debates about Heidegger and de Man...The critical point that has been unspoken is that these debates have been generated precisely for the purpose of preserving the scheme, propping up the wall. At a deeper level, what is not being contested is the validity of the scheme itself. As long as one has two separate realms - the good of Culture, the bad of Nazism - the discourse has no requirement for an internal ethical critique. (Lock, 434-435)

The question of the Same

In acknowledging the ethical force of such arguments one is caught in a double bind. For if Nazism was at root "the upshot of a barbarous irrationalism" then it can be casually sanctified - albeit negatively, but sanctified nonetheless - as "transcendentally other to our modes of explanation," and that is untenable. Yet on the other hand, to rationally explain a phenomenon like Nazism, making it "homogenous with the rest of history," runs the risk of rationalization, of a relativism without ethics (434). One might object that a rational explanation of violence can be the means of formulating a judgment or condemnation of violence; and further, that this recourse to rational explanation is not only possible but necessary in any system of rationalized justice and punishment. This objection is formidable, but it begs the question of the extent to which rational explanations of violence falsify it, and in doing so serve to legitimate violence or counter-violence. (Seamus Deane has put this question to art: to what extent, he asks, does art "falsify[ly] atrocity (and perhaps all history) by rendering it in forms which afford it a meaning or spiritual dimension which it does not have?" (in Hart, 88). This is a question I have not been able to answer but which has caused me to hesitate before every utterance that follows.) The objection also serves to point out the principal debility of the conception of violence and reason as a complex, for to speak of violence in terms of rationality is precisely what the perpetrator himself does. He indulges in the fiction that pain is toward some end, be it intelligence, confession, punishment, the just society, or the 'final solution' - he has his reasoning, and, however unethical, it is usually consistent.

If you are truly convinced that there is some solution to all human problems, that one can conceive an ideal society which men can reach if only they
do what is necessary to attain it, then you and your followers must believe no price can be too high to pay to open the gates of such a paradise. Only the stupid and malevolent will resist, once certain simple truths are put to them. Those who resist must be persuaded; if they cannot be persuaded, laws must be passed to restrain them. If that does not work, then coercion - if need be, violence - will inevitably have to be used, if necessary, terror, slaughter...

The root conviction which underlies this is that the central questions of human life, individual or social, have one true answer, which can be discovered, all other answers being false; that once it is discovered, it can and must be implemented, and those who have found it are the leaders whose word is law.

(Berlin 1994, A-11)

**Reason's allegory of violence and reason**

Nothing seems...less outdated than the classical emancipatory idea

Derrida

"Try to be precise," wrote J. Middleton Murray, "and you are bound to be metaphorical" (75). In an effort to bring some precision to this introductory discussion, let me reframe it as an allegory, or rather the description of an allegory. I elect allegory not by hazard but because it is, as Gordon Teskey puts it, the mode-genre of "a culture that [has] submitted nature to a violent expulsion of divinity" (39). Teskey has specifically in mind the Christian culture that from late antiquity made exuberant display of the violent transformations of pagan booty, whether as artifacts or ideas, for its anagogic purposes. Allegorizing ancient deities, Christian culture was able to cleanse and appropriate the psychic power of a Pandemonium of chthonic forces for monotheism and monistic idealism. In Teskey's schema, from which I will borrow, allegory is the exertion of instrumental meaning as a creative force upon "a realm that is intolerably 'other' before it is raised to the position of the transcendental 'other'" (6).

We may also view this cleansing and appropriation of the psychic power of the antique gods as a repetition of the sacrificial dynamic. In sacrifice, the world is divided into sacred and non-sacred spheres in order to limit the sacred. Limitation of the sacred both delivers humanity from the subjection to fear that the sacred entails - this deliverance constitutes the legitimacy of the sacrificial order - , and defines an extrasacrificial realm of safety where the profane destruction of culture, that is its relentless translation of nature into culture, may proceed unabated. In this division and limitation (which is also a limitation of exchange), every sacrifice is a repetition of the first sacrifice, creation - the self-limitation of the gods' own omnipotence. In substituting the sacrificial victim for our own guilt of profane destruction, and by returning 'culture' (symbolized in the creation-destruction of the victim) to its source, sacrifice reinforces the sacred/non-sacred division and pays a debt to the gods, leaving us, provisionally, debt-
The debt, of course, always returns because our bifurcated space (and the freedom it permits) is limited by and contingent upon the realm of the gods beyond, where "in their other space they enjoy a single space" (Serres 1983, 51). And so the sacrifice must be repeated. It is for this reason that sacrifice is always reproduction, a performance that reproduces the canon (rule/rod/order, or standard of perfection) and *enacts* (not imagines) the interdependence of the two realms. In Teskey’s analysis of the Christian terms of allegory, instrumental force is exerted upon the intolerable otherness and over-flowing desire of the single space of the antique gods, capturing and raising it to the position of a transcendental singularity. We may say that in doing this Christian culture puts the knife to sacrificial culture, subjecting it to a sacred reenactment. Thus, notes Teskey, "the first, and perhaps the most dangerous, of the vices that are defeated in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*...is a figure called 'Worship of the Ancient Gods' (*Veterum Cultura Deorum*), who is defiled with sacrificed beasts, and who suffocates in her own blood as her eyes (with which she reads omens) are trampled by Faith" (37).

The allegory of violence and reason I propose to describe has four stations, and in each of them this dynamic of transformations is key. Onto it I will attempt to graft the formal notion that we can only think coherence within non-coherence and non-violence within violence because, in Eric Weil’s words, "all meaning has its origin in what is not meaning and has no meaning - and is only revealed to developed meaning" (1950, 61).

The first station (the termini, we might say, without spoor) is antiphrasis: violence as chaos, limitless non-identity. Hobbes' war of each against all, in which prior to the advent of any concept of differentiation total non-coincidence equals rule of the same, pure erasure, pure contradiction. It is this that humanity fears most and unceasingly. To describe this station in the terms I have used is, properly speaking, a contradiction in terms, for it is to have already imagined reason and the choice for reason, and this station in its pure form (of formlessness) is the irrational without the rational. Yet is here that the self-constitution of reason takes place. Violence acquires a meaning, and the legitimation of reason arises from the meaning violence has for reason: chaos, non-identity, erasure, contradiction, etc. The foundational choice that appears here - a choice that is not necessary for we can and could always (and sometimes do) choose differently - this choice for reason, language, and discourse is literally unimaginable, "except perhaps," notes Weil, in the paradox of "extreme situations...situations in which choice itself disappears with language" (1987, 23).

The second station is sign-posted capture. Here violence is incorporated into reason à la Hegel as the negative foundation of reason’s freedom. Actually, to say ‘reason’s freedom’ is to utter a pleonasm for in reason’s terms - and there are no others:
"Reason is not described from an external aspect, as another, it describes itself in so far as it is what it describes" (1950, 6) - reason is freedom and freedom is reason. Freedom merely describes the fact that reason has plans, it's on the move, always, and these plans lay down the first spoor from the termini. Now depending upon how we describe this spoor it appears in one of two guises. From the point of view of freedom it is a one-way track from antiphrasis to reason, from 'what is' to 'what is not' (yet). From violence in view of coherence, a ghost line that once traversed disappears, for behind capture station there is nothing. The fact of this vanishing point describes the predicament that reason, as 'unnatural,' lacks its own reason, its own 'why'? - unless it articulate violence and the fear of violence as the meaning that makes the a-reasonable choice for reason (i.e., not within the limits of reason) possible. From the point of view of chaos the first spoor and capture station are both 'feeders' (chaos is insatiable), and transgressive limits beyond which it must not venture without risking the lex talonis of capture, confinement, and ingestion, but limits which it will, nonetheless, constantly probe and sap, like the sea against a dyke, thirsty, as it were, for land. Now reason, preferring to view all things symmetrically, has an uneasy relationship with capture, for reason's seizure of chaos is (violently) asymmetrical and reason's mastery forever insecure because violence resists reason categorically, unreasonably we might say. It is for this reason that capture and particularly the first spoor to it - the report of differential energy which is the origin of reason as freedom - are for reason a primal scene of guilty pleasure. Teskey calls it a "rapto" of "prevenient violence": "The pleasure we normally associate with allegory...should not distract us from the most satisfying pleasure of all: that of observing the subjection of what we cannot control to the violence of thought, which we imagine we can" (18; 24).

The third station is polysemy. If at antiphrasis violence is the source from which reason springs and at capture it is the repressed other to reason, at polysemy reason is violence itself transformed from aberration to rectitude, from senselessness to sense, from 'what is not' to 'what is.' What is revealed in this negation of terms is the positivity of reason as the meaning of meaning. To be reasonable is to be capable of realizing an 'innate' negativity, for the human is that discontentment that knows not what it wants but knows what it does not want. This is to say that violence is not error but rather integral to reason's self-constitution as legitimate, because reason is the fundamental and foundational negation of the given. Yet this negation is itself negated, the negation of 'what is' out of discontentment, and the negation of discontentment in view of contentment (presence). From within view of polysemy station, spoors proliferate everywhere and every spoor sprouts branch lines. An infinite substitutability of quasi-
equivalences (concealing "the disorder with which and out of which allegory works")
takes over as reason's *modus operandi* "where every opposition arising from the contrast
of meaning and life is redistributed hierarchically such that one term is placed over the
other. Under the regime of polysemy, anything that appears to escape or resist the project
of meaning...is interpreted as a further extension of meaning" (Teskey, 30).

At the final station, singularity, reason becomes system. In point of fact the train
of reasoning never actually pulls into this station because it has an uncanny way of
receding at the same rate as reason's rate of approach. The infinite multiplication of
spoor heading every which-way becomes, as system, evidence not that contradictions are
the basis of discourse, but rather of the certainty of the negation of every contradiction,
the singularity of the 'what is.' All spoor henceforward assume the same heading and
every attempt to jump the tracks merely lays down another, oblique, spoor that ultimately
points in the same direction, the direction of the same. At singularity negation of violence
remains the fundamental possibility of reason's freedom, but as long as humanity is not
fully reasonable violence cannot be completely negated. This is the enlightenment
dialectic (as distinct from the 'Dialectic of Enlightenment', the dialectic in which
enlightenment is both verbal or discursive activity and future substantive. Within this
enlightenment dialectic violence and ignorance are the resistance necessary to reason's
movement as negation, but would be dissolved - as would be reason - in full
enlightenment. What is to be noted here is that reason, as wedge, splits, and binds its
other into negative and positive singularities, chaotic violence and transcendental
beatitude, the dissolution of reason and the purely ideal state of reason's total victory. The
chaotic other of violence, however, always returns and is always transformed - reason
cannot do without it - and the transcendental other as positive singularity of reason is
thus, through the anagogical movement of polysemy, constantly produced but forever
defered by the residual resistance and remainder of its negative singularity, violence,
chaos, and contradiction.

The irony of this allegory, and it is a double irony in that allegories are not meant
to be ironic, is that the fear of violence, the pure erasure of differentiation that was the
incipit of the allegory, seemingly returns in its finis as a violent reduction of all to the
same: *finis coronat opus*. "How" asks Weil, echoing perhaps Heidegger's analysis of the
*subjectum",17 "can a being of whom we can and must speak as if he were a thing, be
free?" (1950, 44). In choosing reason we understand ourselves vis-à-vis it and not vice
versa. We do not *comprehend* reason, for we are its products; "The subject of the
discourse is the discourse itself, its object is none other than itself, and the 'problem of
truth'...is not that of the *adaequatio intellectus ad rem* but that of the *adaequatio hominis*
ad intellectum" (66). Here arises the tyranny of 'second nature' in which the rational human being is by definition a calculator without significance (origin, perhaps, of another violence, this time of resistance, and of the potential subjection of the other human being to the guardians of the 'one true answer'). Within reason's allegory violence has no 'true' meaning - in fact nothing does: they are all meanings for reason. And indeed every other cannot but be what Weil calls a "lie by preterition," a thing or substance brought to heel by the *raptio* of capture, its legacy passed over, unmentionable, indentured serf to reason's singularity (1987, 30).

Goya, once again, appears to have mutely glimpsed this predicament. In his mezzotint, *The Colossus*, Goya situates our point of view at an immense distance and a great height from this being, almost as if we were perched in an aerial balloon several thousand metres up and several leagues off shore. The foreground of the littoral, the granite bluffs, and the gently rising headland (of Gibraltar?) have been enormously foreshortened. Like Atlas, condemned to support the sky on his shoulders, this titan appears to bear a momentous but enigmatic burden. Perhaps he has failed to foil Zeus' treacherous ruse of gifting Epimetheus all the world's troubles; but then again perhaps he is that gift, not super- but subhuman. It is twilight, Goya's preferred time, but whether it is daybreak or darkness that dawns (morning star or evening star), we cannot know. This hesitation is caught in his blurred face: does he turn away or towards, in anger or in fear, from violence in view of coherence or... And if it is us he turns away from or towards, what other, chaotic, transcendental, are we?

When we pass into anagogy, nature becomes, not the container, but the thing contained...Nature is now inside the mind of an infinite man who builds his cities out of the Milky Way. This is not reality, but it is the conceivable or imaginative limit of desire, which is infinite, eternal, and hence apocalyptic...the imaginative conception of the whole of nature as the content of an infinite and eternal living body which, if not human, is closer to being human than to being inanimate. (Northrop Frye in Teskey, 154)

**Ethical crisis**

Here we arrive at an impasse and interruption, one not unfamiliar in the history of thinking about violence. Reason contra violence, or violence reasoned - both conceptions illuminate aspects of the mechanics of violence but fail to do it justice. Emmanuel Levinas has pointed out - citing "Pascals phrase 'That is my place in the sun. That is how the usurpation of the whole world began'" - that the logic of identity, that 'A is A', that 'A is not (and indeed can never) equal B', recapitulates the logic of violence. because once
the proposition is 'either A or B' any difference between the two can only be resolved by war (1986, 24). He argues that to render another logically the same, in any form whatsoever, is itself to render violence. This poses a profound challenge for any ethical discourse: how to oppose physical violence without falling into its logical or discursive manifestations.

What is called for, then, is a middle road between the rational and affective failures to encapsulate, to respond to, and to reject violence - one that can navigate between the contradictions of violence and the violence of non-contradiction. This is a tall order, and perhaps especially given the impoverished state of our language for discoursing about violence. Indeed 'impoverished' misrepresents the status, for has there ever been a language adequate to violence? The languages we do have, that of 'reason against violence' and 'violence can be reasoned,' are undergraded by logical structures of grammatical manicheanism and falsification that vitiate their ethical force. Discourse, if it wishes to speak peace, cannot conscionably appropriate its own violence in order to subdue the greater violence - and yet, perhaps, it must. Further, and most paradoxically, to take responsibility for violence we must articulate a relationship with the other, without, however, reducing them to a generic concept reductive of their incomparability.

The predominant stream of our philosophical heritage exacerbates this dilemma in as much as it has sought truth not 'out of exposure' (experientia / ex-periculum) but in freedom, the "equation of truth with an intelligibility of presence":

According to the Greek model, intelligibility is what can be rendered present, what can be represented in some eternal here and now, exposed and disclosed in pure light. To equate truth thus with presence is to presume that however different the two terms of an relation might appear (e.g., the Divine and the human) or however separated over time (e.g., into past and future), they can ultimately be rendered commensurate and simultaneous, the same, contained in a history that totalizes time into a beginning or an end, or both, which is presence. (Levinas 1986, 19)

The synchronizing, symmetrical totality of identity relations that construe and explicate this vision of the universe as cosmos (order, form, arrangement, viewed sub specie aeternitatis) is the impersonal reason of an ontological autonomy. In this ontological autonomy the absolute subsumption of all that is other to the same is also a representation of 'I' as an It, the One, the Same:

Perceived in this way, philosophy would be engaged in reducing to the same all that is opposed to it as other. It would be moving toward auto-nomy, a stage in
which nothing irreducible would limit thought any longer, in which, consequently, thought, non-limited, would be free. Philosophy would thus be tantamount to the conquest of being by man over the course of history. (1987, 48; final two emphases added)

The danger of rationality is that in our rush to identify, catalogue, schematize, and/or hierarchize violence we may be scientifically desensitized, led into a formal blindness of the content of our systems. What escapes as surplus is the incomparable fact of pain - "Lo que no se detalla es la brutalidad del procedimiento"20 - and the inalienable lien of that affliction to a body in pain, to some other. Can I pass by, deaf? Does not the other's agony place a lien on me, in and prior to my autonomy? What is reason for? Caught between the factum of violence we would oppose, the ethically vitiated linguistic structures we would oppose it with, and the perjured, impersonal and ontological dictates of presence and identity that would reduce to the same both I and the other to whom I would give succor, we are faced with a crisis. This is what Levinas calls "the great paradox of human existence," that "we must use the ontological for the sake of the other; to ensure the survival of the other we must resort to the techno-political systems of means and ends...[a] paradox...also present in our use of language..." (1986, 28). We can hear something of this paradox in the language of Amnesty International, a language in which the tact and sensitivity to individual suffering confronts, combats, and colludes with the language of moral urgency and public outrage in an economy of competing necessities (Scarry, 9). Bringing a halt to torture necessitates communicating - without alienating - the fact of an unbearable pain to those whose aid you would enlist.

If, reflecting on these constraints, we find that ethics is in crisis, we can perhaps take a discomforting comfort in the recognition that ethics has always been in crisis, that "there is crisis in ethics for all time"21 because ethics is a disturbance of 'what is.' As disturbance, ethics is the recognition of a non-mastery over the world.

the refusal to acquiesce to the judgment of the State, of history, at the expense of the person whom this history or State crushes in order to arrive at its goal...a refusal of a universality that ignores the interhuman order, the refusal of the realization of a unity that would not have been arrived at through respect for persons. (Levinas in Aronowicz, xxiii)

To take stock of this crisis would be to recognize the fact that reason lacks 'a why' and that that lack is the positive condition of ethics, for we do not assent to reason by compulsion (or fear, both of which are tyranny), or through persuasion (which already assumes reason and is always subject to the 'no' of scepticism), and neither through the
dictates of egoism (what do I gain in giving my assent?), but rather from some personal, pre-rational lien with the other: a 'reason of the heart,' an obligation, and a promise, to listen - and to respond.

Language

Since such people exist under violent conditions, their language too, speaks in a more violent order, almost in the manner of furies

Hölderlin. Remarks on Oedipus

Violence, as Roland Barthes has noted, is "stubbornly literally" (1978, 309). An intensification beyond the normal, an excessiveness in se, it is this that makes violence intolerable and chaotic, and discussions of it troubling and messy. This literalness casts a troubling pall over discussions of its representation, for representations of violence are, in a way that I am at pains throughout what follows to articulate, and in degree if not in kind, somehow different from other representations. Stereo-typically (the stone-cutter's optic), the discourses of science (and I include here political science) deal not with representations, but with the 'world.' What is at stake is objective fact, existence, human lives - in a word: power. It is for this reason that these discourses have resisted recent attempts by cultural and literary studies to introduce the problem of representation between every discourse of science and its referent. This resistance says: 'Don't mess with power.' Literary studies and aesthetics, on the other hand (and again, stereo-typically), only deal with the 'world,' it is said, at one remove. Mediated by 'fictional objects' they are, from the point of view of the realism that lies at the base of what I have invoked as the stereo-typical optic, extrinsic discourses. They do not hew stone, they merely describe or narrate how it is done, and it is from the fact that they 'cut no ice' that their notorious freedom and licence stems.

This line of demarcation (or pacification) between these two sorts of discourses is complicated by our recognition that the exercise of power bears directly upon representations, that language, as the Renaissance knew, is a weapon of power. The locus classicus of this fact would be Machiavelli's narration of how Remirro de Orco is dispatched. Charged by Cesare Borgia with the pacification of Romagna, de Orco, having fulfilled his brief with terrifying efficiency, is presented to the citizens of Cesena as an "emblem," severed in two and accompanied by a stick and a knife (Teskey, 136). This representation speaks volumes. Not only has the agent of Borgia's political will, de Orco, himself been rendered an object (as if a knife could hack itself to bits), it is an object 'dressed,' not 'to kill,' but to figure Borgia's murderous power over the past ('Romagna: here is your yesterday'), the present ('Now it is over'), and the future ('Beware...'). To
reiterate: violence has a meaning for reason; and representations of violence exert an
instrumental meaning upon an intolerable other in the service of the singularity of power.

I have found it difficult in my questioning the subject of violence to avoid four
orientations and their corresponding difficulties. Although these orientations are nowhere
explicit in what follows they have conditioned the sorts of questions I ask. They are: the
analytic problem of multiplicity ("this word lends itself to dissertation"), whose
contingent difficulties of reference confound knowledge; the existential problem
("Violence threatens bodies") of the refusal or exaltation of violence, whose modal
difficulties challenge our empathy; the political problem ("as old as the world itself") of
the control of violence and the violence of control, whose tactical difficulties of logic,
dialectics and paradox confuse thinking; and the ethical problem ("the fact that we are, in
a way, impotent before this word"), the problem of self and other, order and orders,
whose ontological difficulties question the autonomy of the same.22 The imbrication of
these difficulties, in the manner of confusion upon confusion, has over the course of
history made theological and metaphysical categories seem as though only they possessed
enough 'leverage' to comprehend the phenomena of violence. There is much truth in this
perception. That said, however, violence still remains 'stubbornly literal.' This modern
view, stemming perhaps from Machiavelli's severance of violence from passion as a
rational technique in the management of power, rejects such complications. In an effort to
keep faith with the brutal realism of this insight I have at times found it necessary to
maintain a stubborn vigilance to contexts.

Yet at the same time I have also found recourse in the ancient view of violence
(also present in Machiavelli, i.e., Borgia's 'emblem') as irredeemably tropic. According to
this view, violence is theorized as an excess of passion, an uncontrollable force that
perverts the 'natural' course of things and beings, whether they be conceived in terms of
natural law, natural limits, or virtues. This twisting and turning - and we may say
interpretive - conception focuses on the unexpected and chaotic consequences of
violence; it persists in such expressions as 'do violence to my words.' In our contemporary
ethical crisis this tropic violence may be reaching a summun of sorts. The most recent
entry (1984) for 'violence' to the OED, thus, alerts the reader to the fact that "much
violence was done to the word violence, which it appears can be used to describe almost
anything you do not care for" (citation from the London Daily Telegraph reporting on the
Labour Party Conference). Unlike the modern view, however, the ancient recognizes the
complicity of violence, logos, and language, and that the designation of 'the literal' as a
category (literalis: of letters) may be the first instance of metaphor. Thus out of the
conjunction of the ancient tropic and modern literal conceptions of the term there arises
an analytic paradox: violence both strikes at the heart of a human essence, quiddity, or qualia (however defined) and yet strikes at that essence “from an indirect angle” (Levinas 1987, 19). It never approaches the human as an individual, but only as "a particular case of a concept" (20). As Castellion, the sixteenth century Calvinist, fulminated: "Killing a man is not defending a doctrine, it is killing a man" (in Barthes 1978, 309).

Finally, and this historical limit is the specific focus of the dissertation, there is the question of the rational abstraction of language: science, secularization, modernity. Four centuries of scientific rationality have undermined the notion that one can confidently 'know' what is 'the human.' Stripping away the external props of what I have called human essence has seemingly left modern knowledge of a human being 'structureless.' In the absence of that confidence, and under the stresses of the denaturation of human essence, there has grown a corresponding absence of limits. Without a structure or sense of bodily inviolability (habeus corpus, for example) it has become more and more difficult to articulate the 'worth' of a human and thus harder and harder to enforce limits to violence against human beings, harder and harder to argue that a human being is worth protecting against violence. Further, and in tandem, the historical development of this denaturation has been paralleled by what historians call 'the road to total war.' This road is marked by four dissipations, the first two of which had their origins in the historical context of sixteenth century fears of violence and needs for greater security, the latter two attesting to the fact that increases in security since then have resulted in the application of more and more concentrated forms of violence in order to breach security. These four are: the etiolation of 'natural' limits, that is, the modern sense that the individual, society, and violence are not 'natural' but social artifacts; the gradual replacement of morality by rational techniques of the management of power; the elimination of the distinction between the soldier and the civilian; and the technological breach of geographic and bodily limits. We are all by now far too familiar with the pan-global and biological, potentially extra-terrestrial and genocidal, nature of a twentieth century warfare that often characterizes its enemies in purely abstract terms.

Throughout much of the time for which we have a record of human behaviour, mankind can clearly be seen to have judged that war's benefits outweighed its costs, or appeared to do so when a putative balance was struck. Now the computation works in the opposite direction. Costs clearly exceed benefits...A world political economy which makes no room for war demands, it must be recognized, a new culture of human relations. As most cultures of which we have knowledge were transfused by the warrior spirit, such a cultural transformation demands a break with the past for which there are no precedents. There is no
precedent, however, for the menace with which future war now confronts the world. (Keegan, 60)

If there remains any hope left to us it lies in opening up a responsibility to the other, in listening, and in what Michel Serres calls the reversal of morality and necessity. According to Serres, the empirical sciences have over the course of history pushed back the limits of necessity such that humanity is now poised on the brink of deciding on the largest questions of life, death, disease, reproduction, feeding, caring, healing, climate, apocalypse. Whereas the Cartesian method promised to make us 'masters and possessors of the world,' now that that pledge has been delivered we have yet to assume the momentous and crushing responsibility it implies. Formulated in an era when necessity was objective and morality subjective, deliverance from necessity has turned the tables on us - for now necessity is of our own making.

This new mastery has made old necessity change camps. Whereas it formerly inhabited nature, either inert or living, and slept, hidden in the laws of world, now, in the last fifty years, it has decamped surreptitiously, to take its place right inside our mastery. It now inhabits our freedom... (1995, 171)

The lives and actions of our children will soon be conditioned, in fact, by an Earth that we will have programmed, decided upon, produced and modeled...The technology of reality makes the consequences of our acts into the conditions of our survival. We construct the givens...When necessity decamps from the objective world and moves toward people, morality, in turn, moves from individual people toward the objective world. (1995, 175).

The itinerary

Only philosophy can go deep enough to show that literature goes still deeper than philosophy

Michel Serres

The three chapters that follow trace three moments of a potentially other allegory of reason and violence. The first, Enlightenment, narrates the frame of a problem. It concerns the historical intoxication with an idea (or ideal) of rationality; the promise of that idea, emancipation, that is, the theory of a socio-political project; and its historical creation, progress, an historico-interpretive transformation of the nature of temporality necessary to the unfolding of the idea-ideal-theory. This is the story of the advent of the revolutionary concept as a means for understanding historical and material change, a concept so ingrained in our own self-understanding that it is difficult to see 'around' it. The revolutionary concept says that modernity (here taken as 1800 - ) is the age of revolution and revolutions - in politics, historical understanding, geology, epidemiology, biology, chemistry, linguistics, aeronautics, electronics, sexuality, physics, media.
computation, fertility, morality, etc., *ad infinitum*. It says that in each revolution the past is erased behind us. Common to all these revolutions is the notion that temporal centrality replaces spatial centrality as the defining attribute of power, the notion that 'here we are on the cutting edge of time.' There is a confusion of spatial and temporal categories in this notion that we will have to unpack. That this is a grossly simplified view of things, one need only consider the fact that the automobile (still, I would argue, the principal site of the interface between advanced technological research and social practice) is a composite of many times and many technologies. The wheel is prehistorical, the lever, the spring, and the screw are pre-Christian, the gear is early modern, combustion and electricity are nineteenth century; only electronic circuitry is of our own age. Time is not the singularity that technical rationality would make of it. But I get ahead of myself.

Born aloft and carried away by this idea of rationality, its promise and its creation, eighteenth century discourses either ignore violence entirely, consider it poorly or consider it in the same traditional ways, or, and it is here that I focus my analysis, push it outside the temporal-spatial sphere of rationality. Two aspects of that outside of rationality, Nature and the colonies, receive special attention as sites of struggle between the scientific and gnostic universal of rational networks and the agnostic universal of the inner voice. The principal lines of the argument explore the origin of the idea of rationality as a social structuring power in the wake of seventeenth century religious wars, and its alliance with technological-scientific universals; Nature as a site of confusions about social rationality, its apotheosis and its antithesis; culture and aesthetics as discourses of resistance to social rationality; the colonies as a 'barbarous' *locus* of civilizational transformations; and what Charles Taylor calls the "strangely inarticulate" nature of rationality with respect to its own "moral sources" (338).

My desire in recounting this narrative has been to trace the frame of a problem that is with us still, the structure of reason's thinking about violence, and the institutional structures of ideas and mortar that hem us in when we try to think about this problem differently. Further, I have sought, in my retelling, both to stand if not outside, at least to the side of rationality's own narrative of these developments, and to inhabit them, as it were, because they abide in us. To that end I seek to impart a sense of how eighteenth century situations and dialogues about them *sounded* 'on the ground.' This, in my reading, was a rather chaotic affair, characterized by multiple voices and conflicting notions of seemingly similar ideas (some well known, others less so): a hurly-burly of overlaps, constant recontextualizations, confusions, and contradictions. My guiding intuition has been that the phenomenon of the Enlightenment only 'makes sense' in retrospect, perhaps because it is only in and through catastrophic events that the swirling patterns of the past
concrete into recognizable comprehensive forms. To that end I have often, perhaps too often, declined to immediately 'cash in' the value of my individual discussions until such time as new historical events, narrated by and large chronologically, allowed the past to make sense of its past. For the past is not merely an object, and to treat history solely as one is to spin confections. In addition I have sought to broaden the traditional scope of this narrative, to give it what I feel is its proper sense of scale, because in the eighteenth century, and perhaps for the first time, the 'world' is 'at stake' in a recognizably modern way.

The second chapter, Goya, recounts a shattering of this frame from within. In it, I employ Goya's graphic work as a rebuttal to enlightened arguments that violence was somehow (already) behind or outside the civilized, rational world. This graphic work in effect says: "The truth will not run away from us" (Keller in Benjamin, 255). It interrupts the Enlightenment's Trinitarian narrative of reason, emancipation, progress, with the counter-retort of the irrational, rebellion, and return. With Goya we are witness to the advent of an absurdity and a meaninglessness whose horrifying character is all the more acute in that it arrives in a world where, it is felt, there ought to be meaning. I trace the origins of this advent to the waning of the Christian notions that life was a form of servitude and that in death one received one's just reward. In representational terms, this means that for Goya and a tradition that follows upon him, the work of art's previously allegorical character, what John Berger calls its status as an ethical "garment," is hollowed out by its relation with its world (217). As hollow, and fundamentally unfinished, such artworks can only communicate a meaning through completion by us, the viewers.

The theory of the fragment, and its principal lines of force - irony, destruction, and self-destruction - as well as the theory's relation to calls for an 'imagined community,' are explored as influential consequences of this sense of a shattered whole. Parallels are sought between the notion of the fragment and that of the nation as they are formulated in German Romanticism as fellow means of forging new allegorical meanings and communities: that is, the 'nation' as a work of art that we, its subjects, give meaning to in our collective social betrayal of local customs and allegiances. The Romantic "superiority complex," compounded of equal parts romantic aesthetics and Machiavellian Realpolitik, is contrasted with the Kantian foundations of enlightened reason and a correspondence between these two stances is traced in which we become aware that radical evil and enlightened reason share as 'moral' universals a troublingly similar, contentless form (Keane, 24). The consequences of this recognition are explored through an analysis of Goya's representations of a 'blindness' constitutive of humanity and of a world 'gone deaf'
which, lacking an image with which to represent reason, finds no synthetic position
available to it from which to judge catastrophic events. The chapter concludes with a
consideration of the Kantian sublime as a discourse promising to put us in touch with the
source of morality, but which may, in fact, merely be the violent exchange of a
powerlessness for omnipotence.

Chapter three narrows the focus to an analysis of a single work of contemporary
literature in which notions of reason, emancipation, and progress, and notions of the
irrational, rebellion, and return vie for ascendancy over one another. *Beloved* is the story
of two children, one born in freedom, the other murdered in freedom, with all the
inflections one could place on such a description. The novel demonstrates that that
freedom has a pledge against it - it is *token* - a pledge that will have to be repaid in full if
not in kind. It is for this reason that the novel operates a tragic, alternating rhythm
between flight and return, sublime empowerment and ethical divestiture, the injunction to
be good and the pledge to be-loved, the law of the mother and the submission of the child
(who is a mother-to-be): between the haunting possession of the ghost story and the
emancipatory promise of the slave narrative, and between the freedom to command and the
freedom to resist. In a 'Keplerian' structure of double foci, the novel searches for an
ethical equilibrium inclusive of both reason and the passions but beholden to neither
exclusively, an elliptical movement of true freedom, true love, and complete humanity.

Morrison's complex use of the mythic is examined by focussing on how the
individual 'interior' of memory-experience-haunting and the collective 'exterior' of
archetype-cosmological world view-the law are articulated. The structure and rhythms of
the novel propose a road map of stations through which Sethe and the reader must
journey. Viewed from 'the outside,' the internal transformations follow a mythic
superstructure based in part on Greek tragedy and in part on Bakongo cosmology, and
particularly its ideogram of the cosmic journey - the *dikenga* - the cross within the circle
that Sethe's mother bears under her breast. Following a path charted out in advance,
Sethe's rise to maturity, it is suggested, lies in giving in to a cosmic rhythm that brings to
term a maternal genealogy of conception, gestation, and parturition. With the birth of
Denver, Sethe and the reader are afforded a fleeting knowledge of some 'outside' thing
that gifts time, fecundity, and creation, but which nonetheless arises from within.

Complementing this movement like a counterpoint rhythm is a resistance to
external possession that we may call inoculation. Ingesting the germ of a potentially
deadly externality (this ghost is *real*) which nonetheless belongs to Sethe alone, Sethe is
exposed to an infectious agent that threatens not only Sethe but the community at large
with bitterness, recriminations, and pollution. They must defend themselves by expelling
it from their individual and collective bodies politic and return the ghost to where it belongs: "an outside thing that accuses while it embraces" (Beloved, 271). The ritual of this exorcism takes the form of a bodily exposure of precisely that which violence aims at and in aiming at it becomes intolerable: the you beyond every denomination. the face in which appears the 'thou shalt not kill.' The sounding of this exposure is the unqualified assignment of an I-am-for-the-other that grounds language as a system of substitutions in the obligation, and promise, to listen - and to respond.
Preface Notes:

2: Derrida: "...within history...every philosophy of nonviolence can only choose the lesser violence within an economy of violence" (1978, 313: note 21).
3: Cf. *OED* entry for 'violence' i.e. (Law): "1867 SMYTH Sailor's Word-bk. 713 Violence, the question in tort, as to the amount of liability incurred by the owners for outrages and irregularities committed by the master."
4: The American edition of Levi's *Se questo è un uomo* (1947), which I use, is titled *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity.* The original English title is immensely preferable: *If This Is a Man.*
6: Economists have described this (in relation to the dynamics of monopolies) as the 'Mathew principle.' Cf. Mathew 25: 29, the parable of the ten talents: "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."
7: "The heart has its order, the mind has its own, which uses principles and demonstrations. The heart has a different one. We do not prove that we ought to be loved by setting out in order the causes of love; that would be absurd." *Pensées* # 298, (122).
8: The phrase "the upshot..." is Terry Eagleton's; the phrase "transcendently other..." is Lock's. Both in Lock (434).
9: Here I follow the analysis of Calasso as elaborated in his sections 'Elements of Sacrifice,' 'Law and Order,' and 'The Doctrine of the Forest' (134-181).
10: Calasso notes that the Nahuatl word *quechcotoma* "means both 'to cut off someone's head' and 'to pick an ear of grain with one's hand'" (135).
11: All translations from Weil my own.
12: I take the names I give to the four stations from Teskey: antiphrasis, capture, polysemy, singularity. The imagined allegory is mine, but is based in large part on Weil's analysis of violence and reason in the 'Introduction' to *Logique de la philosophie* (1950, 3-86).
13: One may, and perhaps ought to, conceive this incorporation in materialist terms as "the desire of every organism to master its environment by placing that environment within itself" (Teskey, 7).
14: We may, however, be chastened in this view by the Yanomami notion of whites as 'los racionales.'
15: Cohen: "Knowledge will not be humbled by an immediacy it knows - rightfully - to be mediated. But knowledge of itself knows of no sufficient reason to set its sufficient reasons in motion. Rather, it only knows sufficient reasons - it knows nothing more compelling than reason...What is lacking to reason is its very raison d'être, its why. The movement that sustains knowledge while remaining outside of knowledge is that of the ethical situation" (6).
16: The 'Dialectic of the Enlightenment' is a thesis advanced by Horkheimer and Adorno in a book of the same title (1947) which I will discuss *infra.*
17: Cf. 'The Age of the World Picture,' *passim.*
18: The complete *pensée*, #64, reads: "*Mine, thine. This is my dog.* 'This is my place in the sun.' There is the origin and image of universal usurpation" (Pascal, 47).

19: "Speech is doubtless the first defeat of violence, but paradoxically, violence did not exist before the possibility of speech. The philosopher (man) *must* speak and write within this war of light, a war in which he always already knows himself to be engaged; a war which he knows is inescapable, except by denying discourse, that is, by risking the worst violence. This is why this avowal of the war within discourse, an avowal which is not yet peace, signifies the opposite of bellicosity..." (Derrida 1978, 117).

20: "What is not signified is the brutality of the process" (Pacheco 1967, 68; translation mine).

21: Rear jacket blurb to Llewelyn.

22: The four-fold division here is an amalgamation of Barthes' and George Steiner's four levels of difficulty. The quotations are from Barthes (1978, 307).

23: Levinas (1987, 19-20). The full passage reads:

"Violence is a way of acting on every being and every freedom by approaching it from an indirect angle. Violence is a way of taking hold of a being by surprise, of taking hold of it in its absence, in what is not properly speaking it. The relationship with things, the domination of things, this way of being over them, consists in fact in never approaching them in their individuality. The individuality of a thing, the τοσθα τι, that which is the designated and seems to alone exist, is in reality only accessible starting with generality, the universal, ideas and law. One grasps hold of a thing out of its concept.

"Violence, which seems to be the direct application of force to a being, in fact denies that being all its individuality, by taking it as an element of its calculus, and as a particular case of a concept."

24: A remark of Borges' from his essay 'The Modesty of History' is germane here: "On the twentieth of September, 1792, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (who had accompanied the Duke of Weimar to Paris on a military excursion) saw the finest army in Europe inexplicably repulsed at Valmy by some French militia, and he told his disconcerted friends: *At this place and on this day a new epoch in the history of the world begins, and we shall be able to say that we were present at its beginnings.* Ever since that day there has been a plethora of historical dates and days, and one of the tasks of modern governments (most notably in Italy, Germany, and Russia) has been to fabricate or counterfeit them, with the help of previously accumulated propaganda and of persistent publicity. Such 'historic' dates, in which the influence of Cecil B. DeMille may be noted, bear less relation to history than to journalism. I have long suspected that history, true history, is far more modest, and that its essential dates may well be, for a long time, secret as well. A Chinese writer of prose has observed that the unicorn, for the very reason that it is so anomalous, will pass unnoticed. Our eyes see what they are accustomed to see. Tacitus did not perceive the Crucifixion, though his book records the event" (179).

25: A current event clarifies this. Should there be found conclusive evidence of life on Mars, the whole discourse of Martian 'canals,' men-in-the-moon, etc. would change its meaning - it would cease being a fairy tale and begin to make sense.
Chapter One:

Enlightenment, emancipation, progress: an idea, its promise, and its creation

A study in genealogy normally is owing to either pride in one's ancestry or uncertainty about it; our history of ideas is no exception. Given the fruit this century came to bear, however, there are additional reasons for such scrutiny, which have nothing to do with attempts to brandish or ascertain the origins of our nobility.

These reasons are revulsion and fear.

Joseph Brodsky
I. Introduction

On the question: What is Enlightenment / What does 'to enlighten' mean?

To propose this question is to situate oneself in relation to a past and to adopt a stance vis-à-vis contemporaneity. As is well known, the Berlinische Monatschrift published a response to this question in November 1784 by Emmanuel Kant ('Beantwortung der Frage: was ist Aufklärung?') that has since become a touchstone and landmark of thinking about (the) Enlightenment. And in fact, we may say that Kant's reply is all about thinking for his answer, you will recall, was "Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage...the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point."¹ Adopting as his emblem the motto of the semi-secret Society of the Friends of Truth, Sapere aude! ('Dare to know!'), Kant thundered against laziness, cowardice, and timidity, and advocated that all obstacles to the public use of reason be eliminated so that "a true reform in ways of thinking" could take place. Kant's pronouncements, and the tenor of those pronouncements ("renouncing the haughty name of tolerance"), have become emblematic of a certain definition of enlightenment/the Enlightenment and emblematic of a certain way of thinking about them characterized by an heroic and unshakable faith in the power of the mind, a refusal to separate theoretical and practical reason, and a rigorous defence of autonomy and the freedom of autonomy.

It bears recalling, however, that Kant's reply to the question was the second response to it in as many months. In August of 1784 Moses Mendelssohn had given a lecture to the very Society of the Friends of Truth from whom Kant had adopted his motto, and the lecture was published in the Berlinische Monatschrift the following month, in September, under title 'Über die Frage: was heißt auflären?' ('On the question: what does 'to enlighten' mean?').² Kant's title was remarkably similar but subtly different, and Kant appended a footnote to the last word of his manuscript protesting his belatedness and his ignorance of Mendelssohn's essay; nevertheless, Kant continues there, I have gone ahead with the publication of my essay "only in order to see how much agreement in thought can be brought about by chance" (emphasis added). What is to be noted in this concurrence of reflections on the question is that in this beginning there is a confusion between Enlightenment and enlightenment, between what we might call a capital letter, categorical concept under which other forms of thought are subsumed, and a small 'e' notion that exists in a more horizontal relation with its neighbours. (Mendelssohn's essay, as we shall see, addresses this confusion directly.³) Further, and this strikes me as particularly salient, is the fact that from this beginning there is already a plurality of opinions (somewhat glossed over by Kant's title and footnote, and by his
categorical tendency), a plurality stemming not solely from the fact of two answers to the question but perhaps especially founded in the two formulations of it: 'was heißt aufklären?'. "was ist Aufklärung?"

To ask what Enlightenment is, is to propose Enlightenment in physicalist terms. It is to adopt an ontogenic point of view on temporality (Kant speaks of "maturity") framed as an arrow of time moving from barbarity to enlightenment in which the phenomena of history come into focus vis-à-vis the existence or non-existence, and perhaps the rate, of what Kant calls "free motion," "progress" toward improvement, and "the escape" from heteronomy. These terms cloud, perhaps, Kant's answer, for to Kant Enlightenment concerns the mind; but then again they are also apposite to Kant's notion that Enlightenment is a flight from materiality into the mind. It would be too strong to say that Kant sees Enlightenment as inevitable, but his physicalist metaphors do grant it a force that is quietly and ultimately irresistible. Thus, those who preach of the dangers of Enlightenment, claims Kant, are mistaken for "[a]ctually...this danger is not so great" and "indeed, if only freedom is granted, enlightenment is almost sure to follow." Foucault has emphasized the radical move Kant makes in elevating the notion of private freedom of conscience to the status of public reason and in posing the relation between philosophy and the present as a question. For Foucault, Kant's question of philosophy, history, and the present founds a "critical ontology of ourselves" and of contemporaneity, "a question that modern philosophy has not been capable of answering, but that it has never managed to get rid of, either" (1984, 50; 32). In this sense, for Kant as interpreted by Foucault, Enlightenment cannot be limited to an era, event, or accomplishment, that is, to the Enlightenment - and despite the fact that as Kant states in the Critique of Pure Reason, "Our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism, and to criticism everything must submit" - but rather, Enlightenment must be seen as a perpetually renewed Enlightenment, what Kant calls the "the propensity and vocation to free thinking," and what Foucault calls "always [being] in the position of beginning again" (1984, 47).

To ask what 'to enlighten' means, however, is quite a different matter. To ask this question is not to propose a Copernican shift of viewpoint, but rather to situate a phenomenon that may be new (or perhaps better said a term descriptive of a phenomenon) in relation to pre-existing phenomena/terms. And, in fact, this is what Mendelssohn does. His first sentence reads: "The words 'enlightenment,' 'culture,' education' are still newcomers to our language." Enlightenment in Mendelssohn's view is one of two components of education (the other being culture), all three of which are "modifications of social life, effects of the hard work and efforts of human beings to improve their social condition." While culture refers to the practical dimension of education and reflects upon
the productive and useful vocation of human beings as citizens, enlightenment (Enlightenment) refers to a theoretical dimension that reflects upon the vocation of a human being as a human being. Thus Mendelssohn proposes a series of antitheses separating and linking the practical and theoretical aspects of education: "Enlightenment is related to culture as, generally, theory is related to practice, knowledge to ethics, criticism to virtue.

It is here that two striking points of Mendelssohn's analysis stand out. The first is that enlightenment is seen as an abstraction speaking of and to the human being in universal terms without distinction of class or standing. From this point of view the human being in abstract "is not in need of a culture, but is in need of enlightenment." However, while enlightenment in this sense is "indispensible to humanity," it is not strictly speaking necessary to society, for from the point of view of culture the distinctions between the vocation of a human being as a human being and the vocation of a human being as a citizen "collapse into one another since all practical perfections have value merely in relation to the life of society." Because Mendelssohn constantly views enlightenment in relation to the vocation of a human being and the life of society, his notion of enlightenment is what we may call humoral, to be determined, he says, "according to a proportion." What is at question is not, dryly, enlightenment per se, but rather "its extent and its strength," its "degree," its "level."

The second salient point follows from this. Mendelssohn views enlightenment as inseparable from two real dangers, one practical and specific, the other general and regulatory. The first concerns the potential conflict between the enlightenment of human beings and the enlightenment of citizens, a danger that places the "constitution" of the state in peril. Given this danger (over which, Mendelssohn says, philosophy has no leverage), "[n]ecessity" may prescribe laws that humiliate and stifle humanity. With respect to this conflict,

the virtue-loving man of enlightenment will proceed with caution and discretion, and prefer to indulge prejudice than [sic] drive away the truth that is so wound up with that prejudice. This maxim has, to be sure, always been the bulwark of hypocrisy, and we have it to thank for so many centuries of barbarism and superstition. Whenever one tried to grab hold of the crime, it escaped into the sanctuary. But in spite of this, the friend of humanity himself will have to have recourse to this consideration even in the most enlightened times. It is difficult but not impossible, even here, to find the borderline that separates use from misuse.

(It is difficult not to read into Mendelssohn's discretion his awareness of the legal status of the Jews in eighteenth century European society, a situation that puts him.
socially, historically, and intellectually, on a footing markedly different from Kant's.) Mendelssohn's second danger concerns a general law that "the nobler a thing's perfection...the ghastlier is its decomposition." By this Mendelssohn means that both enlightenment and culture are subject to misuse, if not abuse, and the best way to forestal their "corruption," he says, is for culture and enlightenment to form a compact and "proceed at the same tempo." Elaborating, Mendelssohn applies this maxim to the health of society, suggesting that the high level of perfection that a nation may reach through culture and enlightenment bears within it the danger of excess, of falling either into sickness, since an excess of prosperity or health "can already be called a sickness," or into exhaustion, "since [a nation] can climb no higher." Notable here is that Mendelssohn's vision of enlightenment situates it within the limits of a larger socio-temporal 'life.'

**Unitary and mediated views**

Two questions, then, and two enlightenments, the daring thought of the autonomy of freedom and/or the cautious discretion of a virtue-loving wisdom. I don't want to be too categorical here, for those are the terms one of the parties to this couple and clearly there is some of both in each, but these descriptions do seem to represent pronounced tendencies. The first we may call unitary. It adopts a linear metaphor of the unfolding of temporality and of the progressive autonomy of the freedom of thought along time's arrow that it tends to view as an absolute. Its champions are Kant and later Hegel (and perhaps before them Descartes whose method is influential here). It speaks of ends, implicitly teleological, and ruptures; and while Kant and Hegel may be opposed on other matters (notably on their views of authority and the limits of rationality), they both proclaim the end of something, be it tutelage or history. The second view is a contrary or oppositional one which we may call mediated. While it recognizes the teleology of reason and emancipation, and has hopes for it, the mediated view sees that end in relation to something else. I am not sure if it would be correct to call Mendelssohn the 'champion' of the mediated view, as he has been largely forgotten by the mainstream of philosophy, but it is worth recalling that he formed part of what was known as the Mitnagdim (literally: opposing) stream of eighteenth century Judaic thought, advocates of an intellectual and legalistic approach to Judaism in opposition to the emotional and mystical currents of the Hasidim (literally: pious). Neither, I think, would it be correct to frame Mendelssohn's views solely in an image of time's cycle (even though his organic, humoral metaphors of health, balance and constitution do bend in that direction), for he seems to recognize the truth and the relevance of both time's arrow and time's cycle. In this sense Mendelssohn is
doubly contrary for he seeks to stand between the categorical tenor of Kant and the pious tenor of the mystics.

If we were to trace a genealogy of the mediated view, of small 'e' enlightenment, we might bring forward Maimonides, Montaigne, and Pascal, and Nietzsche, Adorno, and Foucault. For all of these thinkers, in different ways, enlightenment was a central concept. All entertained notions of two types of reason, and particularly of their imbrication, what Mendelssohn calls 'the truth that is so wound up with prejudice.' This helps us to see that the mediated view sees enlightenment, whether as novum or as contemporaneity, in retrospect and historically, by which I mean not as unitary and not as an end in the two senses that Kant makes of that word, but rather as an important possibility existing in a world containing many contradictory considerations. Further, and this is perhaps crucial to the mediated view, it sees the reason of (the) Enlightenment as bound up with unreason, or the irrational, whether defined as past ignorance, prejudice, violence, religion, superstition, etc. For reasons which are too complex to fully explain here, ours is the age of the mediated view, an age in which the Enlightenment's critiques of the past are themselves subject to critique.

Clearly, our preference for the mediated view bears a direct relation to a revulsion and a fear at the bitter fruit that 20th century history has produced. Further, there is the complex question of the relation between the historical production of the those catastrophes and Enlightened and Enlightenment rationality. The contemporary waning of Enlightenment energies and heroic self-confidence, I believe, stems from the fact that we feel ourselves to be in the shadow of something we would rather turn away from but which we have an obligation to face. Unlike Kant - "only one who is himself enlightened is not afraid of shadows" (1784) - we are afraid, and for good reason. For ours is a past that, however horrifying - and in fact precisely for that reason - we cannot, and indeed must not, forget. The fact of this shadow, an awareness of which appears to have grown in strength in recent years, places us in a rather ambiguous situation vis-à-vis the Enlightenment. On the one hand we are somehow 'outside' or 'alee' of it, while on the other hand we can recognize that "the rationalization of the irrational element in rationality's self-understanding...[is] a logical result of the Enlightenment itself" (Blumenberg, 378). So the question, then as now, is not one of 'for' or 'against' enlightenment or the Enlightenment, but rather 'what kind of enlightenment are we for?'

And to answer that question we need to ask 'what was the Enlightenment?'

Recent reflections on this question have been divided between advocates of the unitary view and those of the mediated view, with the balance favouring the latter. In the former group we would put figures like Isaiah Berlin, particularly in his earlier writings,
and the American philosopher John Rawls, both of whom have championed
Enlightenment notions of universal rationality, emancipation, and progress as promising
freedom for all subjects and justice for all communities. In the latter group stand four of
the most influential recent (re-)interpreters of the Enlightenment, Meinecke, Adorno,
Foucault, and Zizek. For each of these thinkers and their numerous followers, among
whom I count myself, the Enlightenment must be seen in light of what it has wrought.
Each of them can be heard to be saying two things: first, that reason, Enlightened reason,
is not a disembodied abstraction, or not only, because it has consequences, and those
consequences reflect back upon our understanding of reason; and second that, as
Blumenberg puts it, "the picture of its own origin and possibility in history that the epoch
of rationality made for itself remained peculiarly irrational" (377). These two
considerations are crucial, we say, because promises of enlightenment that do not take
them into account are hollow and, what may be worse, without an understanding of the
imbriication of reason and un-reason, the bitter fruit that the Enlightenment has produced
may be tasted again. Compelled by this 'reason' (these reasons) I seek to ask in this
chapter not merely 'what was the Enlightenment?,' but especially 'how was violence
understood in the Enlightenment?'

The eighteenth century problem of violence

Asking and attempting to answer this latter question is plagued by a curious fact.
Although in the grand scope of histories, the eighteenth is a relatively peaceful one
(particularly when viewed internally), its vision of Enlightenment, in many respects
profound, is marked by the absence of any concerted refections on the problem of social
violence. By comparison with the seventeenth century, the age of Enlightenment seems to
have pushed the question of violence even further into the dark realms of the irrational
and unthinkable; discussion of violence in the eighteenth century is even more opaque
than it had been in the seventeenth when, in the aftermath of the wars of religion and
under the influence of Hobbes, there had been much talk of whether violence was
politically inevitable. Over the course of the Enlightenment, when not ignored out-right,
new ideas about violence either get shunted into pre-existing discourses of legality (state
erationalization, crime and punishment, etc.) or couched in the 'foreign' terminology of
'civilization' ('barbarism' and cruelty). The examples here are many and repetitive.
Rousseau and the philosophes, for example, while differing on the question of whether
natural goodness belongs to the triumph of civilization or inheres in the state of nature,
both see violence as insubstantial: "in the true state of nature," writes Rousseau (and for
the philosophes read: in the true state of civilization), "pride does not exist...[and] neither
[does] hatred nor the desire for vengeance" (1984, 167-168). Foucault has shown how in the eighteenth century, while there was a significant shift from public spectacles of state torture to an internalized, carceral regime of 'correction,' this supposed 'amelioration' of violent state practices was in fact designed "not to punish less, but to punish better" (1979, 82). And John Keane has noted how eighteenth century space was divided into zones of civility and incivility, and that one of the principal functions of that division was to police the rude, the unsavory, and the violent in a manner analogous to the servants' entrances to genteel houses. He quotes from Swift's letters penned on a trip to County Armagh in the summer of 1728: "...I have often reflected in how few hours, with a swift horse or a strong gale, a man may come among a people as unknown to him as the Antipodes...[where] every male and female, from the farmer, inclusive to the day-labourer, [is] infallibly a thief, and consequently a beggar, which in this island are terms convertible" (16-17).

The problem of progress

In each of these three eighteenth century modes of addressing the problem of violence, not considering it, considering it in traditional ways, or pushing it outside the pale of metropolitan society (where it could then be tamed and reintegrated by the discourse of 'civilization'), I see a notion of progress in one of its many variations playing an instrumental role. In the first mode it surfaces in or underneath the idea that we must already be enlightened (to some degree) in order to have posited Enlightenment, then the problem of violence cannot be real, it must in some way belong to a past that is in some significant degree already superseded. In the second mode it inhabits the idea that the gradual amelioration of laws and customs will 'of its own' solve the problem of violence, with the implication that violence must not really be such a problem because we have arrived at a state of affairs where the problem is in the course of being solved. In the third mode the problem of violence is seemingly most real, but this is an illusion. It is an illusion because the complicity of imperial enterprises in the creation of violence is ignored, and worse, an imperial 'mission civilisatrice' is defined as the sole means of assuring the unqualified victory of Enlightenment over 'darkness,' be it in the regional hinterlands of national empires or in overseas possessions.

In general terms these three modes of addressing the problem of violence follow one another chronologically over the course of the European eighteenth century (although with much overlap). Within the movement from one mode to the next there is a gradual externalization of violence, from a central fact (state spectacles) that is not really a problem, to an internal problem that is pushed to the margins of society (carceral
regimes), to a external fact (colonial 'barbarism') that requires, and obliges, our intervention. This externalization of violence had, of course, been implicit within a 'colonial' discourse originating in the crusades. In the eighteenth century, however, what had been latent within colonial discourse for several centuries surfaces within rationalism as a core constituent of its raison d'être. This developing externalization is aided and abetted by the eighteenth century's increasingly flattering portrait of (European) human nature as both an image of desired future possibilities (full enlightenment) and as a misrecognized present reality upon which the program of future possibilities was grounded. As Keane points out, the externalization of violence from social discourse implicit in this portrait was to a large extent based upon its imagined erasure from future society, what Keane calls the eighteenth century's reigning "assumption that modern times differ from and are superior to previous eras of rudeness because violence is potentially removable from significant areas of life" (21). The validity of this assumption would soon be called into question, at least temporarily, by the continental scope, the unprecedented scale, and the patriotic ferocity of the 'national' wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

This account of how violence was understood in the Enlightenment stands, of course, more to the side of the Enlightenment's own, unitary, view. Its tendency is not see violence as a problem for the reasons I have given. The mediated view, on the other hand, is quite contrary: it says, violence is the problem. And the problem of violence from this perspective takes three main forms, in each of which a notion of progress plays an important and more problematic role. The first is what Foucault has called the carceral and panoptic nature of rationalism and rationalization, in which progress as amelioration and humanization of practices plays a justificatory role in the dissemination and imposition of state institutions and modalities of practice. The second is a dissatisfaction with progress perceived as a rationalist unfolding of the timeless perfection of Natural Law, "the concept," writes Meinecke, "which so limited any deeper research into the human soul" (6). We may describe this dissatisfaction as taking place on the level of meaning in that once rationality appropriates to itself the production of all knowledge, freedom becomes tied to the rational version of progress as the imposition of state practices. This dissatisfaction was instrumental in opening up a discourse of the inner voice and inner moral topographies where, it was thought, a more authentic freedom and meaning could be found and founded. The problem of this inner discourse, however, was how to contain the profound uncertainties it revealed and to give it a measure of objective cogency. The influential solution proposed by Kant (and foretold by de Sade) had most unexpected implications: for, given certain formal considerations deemed necessary by
Kant to guarantee the surety of its knowledge, the universal aspirations of my personal reason could be seen to share a disturbingly similar, contentless form with a reasoned radical evil. The third form of the mediated view that violence is the problem, is what we might call a political corollary of the Newtonian law, that every action has an opposite and equal reaction. This is to say that some people and some groups of people were bound to be 'put out' by the successes and excesses of progress, the devout, for example, but also those at the bottom end of the economic ladder who suddenly found their previous ways of life destroyed and the alternatives placed before them nasty, brutish, and mean. Although these are the two most obvious groups whose lot grew rapidly worse in the age of progress, the potential acolytes of 'reaction' (broadly conceived) could be found in all walks of life. Who among us in our own time has not rued the loss of one cherished facet of the past or another into the trash-compactor of rational progress? This 'universal' sense of loss, what Zizek calls the 'apolitical' "utopian longing for an authentic community life...the fully justified rejection of the irrationality of capitalist exploitation" (in the nineteenth century) and rationalist expansion (in the eighteenth), made every member of society a potential enthusiast of, and accomplice to, new and violent forms of resistance, rebellion, and ideological reaction (1997, 30).

It is to be noticed that in the eighteenth century development of these applications of what I have called a notion of progress (as yet undefined), progress is engaged to secure a kind of meaningfulness, and yet threatens it by making all things contingent (Bernstein, 16). As Bernstein points out, within this development there is a tension between progress conceived as a radical teleological force (modeled upon Christian universalism), initially viewed as hubristic, and progress conceived as open-ended movement of material improvement, now often viewed as a meaningless immanence (18). Furthermore, as a key constituent of the eighteenth century's understanding of violence as non-problematic, progress itself is subject to continual refashioning. Inherited from the seventeenth century as a sense of having overcome the Aristotelian paradigm in the sciences and the Scholastic model of the ancient arts as insuperable exemplars of perfection, progress, over the course of the eighteenth century (and beyond), joins hands with a delight in human agency and a sense of the limitless expansion of human desire to become generalized 'across the board,' applying to every discourse and practice worthy of the name modern. To add to this the infiltration of a notion of progress into the implicitly colonial discourse of 'civilization' (as productive of and mitigating 'barbarism'), is to realize that progress is a multi-headed beast whose tentacles permeate a whole gamut of key eighteenth century concepts.
Synopsis

Thus the task at hand in this chapter becomes three-fold: to impart a sense of what was the Enlightenment, to show how violence was and particularly was not understood in it, and to examine the role of the problematic and shifting notion of progress in the obfuscation of Enlightenment understanding of violence. I propose to pursue this task in five movements, Origins, Distancing, Nature, Alienation-Primitivism, and Allegory. These five movements, or treatments, establish and elaborate on a number of contradictory phenomena, events, and ideas that constitute the shifting frame of the eighteenth century's self-image, a frame that in the Enlightenment's twilight will be largely shattered. They circle around and spiral in on the great eighteenth century problem of the knowledge of knowledge: that if my cognition places frames around the things 'I know' then how 'real' or 'true' is that knowing? Shuttling back and forth between the frame of the century's self-image and the 'picture' that sits within it, these movement-treatments discover that greater and greater understanding and articulation of what is interior to the frame largely serve to vitiate its containing and comprehending, sense-making power. The general movement is one of a steady erosion of the culture that constructed the frame, and of a 'de-allegoricization' of 'culture,' construed as the compact of materiality and metaphysics, history and ideas. Indeed, anticipating my trajectory, I will argue in the following chapter that Goya's art is a concerted reflection on the emptiness and blindness that results from the shattering and misrecognition of the frame that makes knowledge visible.

In the first movement I trace the origins of a new discourse of reason out of the ruins left standing by the seventeenth century wars of religion. Upon these ruins Descartes, Hobbes and Boyle erect a rationalist architecture of thought that, it is hoped, would provide sure foundations for universal, extra-religious conceptions of epistemic certainty and social order. This rational architecture engenders a new scientific-epistemic universalism based upon rational networks of experimentation and verification that implicitly conflicts with the older Catholic, Biblical universalism and its modern avatar, Natural Law. Potential conflicts are downplayed and assuaged, however, by the division of representation into two distinct languages dealing with two separate entities, human agents (political science) and material things (natural science). State absolutism, as the social materialization of the rationalist architecture of thought, takes over Catholic, Natural Law universalism as its ostensible standard, but is seen, in fact, to actualize in its institutions and in its institutional rationalization the practices of the scientific variant. If progress is seen to intervene in this movement's self-understanding, it is in a merely stop-gap capacity as explanatory, and not hortatory, of the change in universals and social
structures. In addition, a nascent colonial discourse is examined as a site outside the fortress of rationality where a double language and a corresponding double temporality is explicit and becomes problematic. This double language of the co-presence of different times in the historical present will, in the eighteenth century, provide a model for Rousseau's 'allegories' of the overcoming of alienation. It is this complex of rationalist architecture in thought and social structure that is bequeathed to the Enlightenment as the initial frame of its own dwelling.

In the second movement, Distancing, a growing consciousness arises of the distances between the promises of Enlightened discourse and its fruits, and between Enlightened discourse and its objects, be they religion, the sciences and arts, the subject, the 'silent' populace, or the colonized. This consciousness can be seen as a kind of proto-alienation, an awareness that the state's dominance of the production of rational discourses engenders a bifurcated discourse, "that of an 'enlightened' reason...axiomatic of social utility...and that of beliefs...the figure of an obscure origin, an 'obscurantist' past of the systems which took their place," a "double language" that mimicks the seventeenth century division between the representation of things and the representation of agents (de Certeau 1988, 171). The doctrine of universal benevolence attempts to address this problem, and round the corners of scientific state rationalism's frigid contours, but does not overcome its distances because, like a balm upon a cancer, it does not address the real causes, state rationalizations, which continue apace. The doctrine of the 'best possible world' while seeming to offer a promise of social optimism is actually premised upon a flawed logic entailing the "morally monstrous" corollary of "irremediable inequality" (Lovejoy. 246-247). A number of further stop-gaps are adduced to plug the growing rift and save the appearances, notably proto-evolutionary ideas and 'culture.' but these merely reinforce the status quo picture of society as moving through time in a 'steady-state' manner, leaving the distances intact. In fact, each of these measures is an evasion of the growing consciousness of distances and of pasts 'produced' by Enlightened rationality, and as such an exacerbation of them. In this movement there is dawning awareness of the idea that progress may offer some solution to the discomfiture of the ever-widening gap between the theory and practice of Enlightenment.

In the third movement, Nature, the discourse of 'the natural' is examined as a site of confusions about Enlightenment. Drawing on Jean Ehrard's analysis, three phases of the discourse of nature are discussed as images of the Enlightenment's changing and contradictory views of rationality. These images reveal a gradual pluralization, overlap, and contestation in the constellation of ideas conjoined to this concept, from initial notions of nature as the harmonious apotheosis of Natural Law and necessity, to an
intermediary notion of nature as a conciliating equilibrium between nature and nurture, tradition and the new, to a state of discordant and polemical antitheses. Concurrent with these disputes, a further and disconcerting aspect of distancing surfaces in the growing consciousness of the limits of philosophical realism and of the import of psychology, that is, of a conflict between our knowledge of the world 'out there' (beholden to the conventions of institutionalized rationality), and the rise to awareness of the mind's (and the conscience's) power to frame those objects for consciousness. Adopting a version of the double language of rationalization, Rousseau's discourse of the inner voice wades into the rhetorical battle between the individual and society, waging war against society on behalf of 'nature' on two fronts. The discourse of the inner voice attempts both to overcome the alienation implicit in rationalist distancing by articulating inner distances and actualizing what Rousseau calls natural virtue and its inherent freedom, and, as an agnostic universal, to challenge the Enlightened elites' gnostic attitude towards, and control over, knowledge and privilege. Here a kind of primitive progress intervenes as the solvent to, or telos of distance - but solely in ontogenic terms, for Rousseau's dramas of self discovery, alienation, and its overcoming are all autobiographical narratives, and Rousseau himself is categorically opposed to any objective notion of progress, seeing in it only degeneration and the antithesis of the Natural Law that ultimately guides him.

In the fourth movement, Alienation-Primitivism, the recognizably modern conflict taking shape between the individual and society around notions of the 'natural' and alienation is further explored with reference to Rousseau's geographic consciousness. Recognizing the implicit weakness of his arguments for 'natural virtue' and the frailty of founding a program of freedom upon it, Rousseau turns to the nascent science of ethnography for support. There he discovers that the discourses of alienation and that of the 'noble savage' are premised upon a fundamental negation having to do with the temporality of rationalization. However, while recognizing the alienating effects of rational temporality as necessary to his vision of an ontogenic rise to self-awareness, Rousseau refuses the full implications of this argument 'for' progress by constantly reducing historical distances to an interior distance that is ultimately viewed as transparent and superable. For Rousseau, self-consciousness reveals that 'I am not myself' but 'another,' and alienation is the name given to the discord that structures my relation to my self, to others, and to the world. Similarly, ethnographic discourse now realizes that the 'degenerate savages' of the first contact, are now no longer what they were vis-à-vis newly discovered 'savages.' On the basis of an hypothesized parallel alienation, Rousseau infers that the 'essence' and history of the 'savages' hold out answers to his predicament of natural innocence, and that by employing ethnography in an instrumental manner he can
give his 'subjective' sentiments of an incontrovertible inner freedom an 'objective'
cogency. Taking up the philosophes' discourse of naturalized inferiority, in which the
'primitives' suffered from a 'natural lack,' and to which the mission of colonialism was the
pedagogical and salvational answer, Rousseau reverses the polarities of the 'primitive-
civilized' dyad by claiming that 'natural' man's lack is a positivity because he experiences
neither disharmony nor the mediation of objects - because, in short, he is free.

However, Rousseau's allegory of freedom is a contradictory, acephalic one that
'de-allegoricizes' culture. While it exerts an instrumental meaning as a creative force upon
"a realm that is intolerably 'other'" (i.e., the alienated self), it can in no way raise that
other to a transcendental position (Teskey, 6). While it is able to overcome distances by
translating them into inner terms where they can be intuitively and immediately grasped,
it inserts into the compact of historical events and metaphysical ideas a third term, the
self, whose relation to the other two is problematic. And while Rousseau's allegorical self
succeeds in binding to it the realm of ideas, it comes undone with relation to knowledge
of the world, history, and his own hopes for future political structures of social liberty. It
comes undone with relation to knowledge of the world because in Rousseau's own terms
the sole justified knowledge of freedom is an intuition that, as immediacy, can only
reflect, and reflect upon, the self. Rousseau's imaginary solution to the problem of
distancing in fact exacerbates the problem and will have profound political consequences
in the era to come, the subject of chapter two, in which a new type of political community
is theorized as a work of art that for its citizens overcomes all distances.

The fifth movement, Allegory, explores how Rousseau's acephalic and ahistorical
allegories become, paradoxically, a model for progress conceived as a secular, expansive
movement through time premised upon a sense of distancing between two moments that
progress bridges without ever reconciling. Examining two models of the allegorical
mode, we find a recurring instability in allegory vis-à-vis materiality and history on the
one hand, and the transcendental, on the other, an instability that tends to collapse in the
dissolution of one or other of these poles. In Rousseau's Allegorical Fragment we find a
similar instability and a similar collapse around a notion of the mortality of the subject
and a consciousness that is ultimately unable to create anything more than a fictional
community of subjects. Recognizing his own inability in this capacity, Rousseau
theorizes (in the manner of Christian eschatology) that the historical movement towards
an actual social contract of citizens belongs to "another dimension" (Starobinski 1988,
30). While for Rousseau that other dimension has Platonic overtones, for the many
inspired by his thinking it will be fully secularized by the progressive historical thought in
which the promise of the future is a redemption that takes place in history. Here a fully
conceived notion of historical progress modeled on Rousseau's acephalic allegories arrives as an internally consistent system that projects 'outside' of itself an image of the desired totality of inner comprehension that it lacks. Finally education and scientific travel are examined as discourses of the rationalized overcoming of the past and its violences, the first as a myth reconciling the metaphorical distances constitutive of progress, the second as a site where ethnological differences are naturalized along a stream of time conceived as a gnostic stream of knowledge.

Contemporaneity

If, upon completing this chapter, the reader feels dissatisfied with its account of the Enlightenment I have only myself to blame. And yet that dissatisfaction is, in part, the impression I wish to convey, for in my reading while the Enlightenment is filled with noble words and, sometimes, deeds, it is also singularly hollow, amnesiac, and somehow unurgent. This sense seems paradoxical given the Enlightenment's plenitude and clear-sightedness, its programmatic lucidity, but stems, ultimately, I think from the evasions of the problem of social violence that I mentioned at the beginning of this introduction; for, in choosing not to face those realities, the Enlightenment's ambition "to reveal the order of reason through politics" was as if doomed from the start (Guéhenno, 129). It will fall to the twilight of the Enlightenment, informed by the experience and consciousness of political and social catastrophes made in and of Enlightenment - a time, I think, so like our own -, to make sense of much that the Enlightenment would forget. This is the subject of chapter two, on Goya.

And not only will Goya make sense of the Enlightenment, but my excursus on the Enlightenment will, I hope, make more sense to our understanding of Goya, both in the context of his own time and "in the mind of today,"8 and for two reasons. The first reason is intrinsic and 'ontogenic.' Goya lived to the ripe old age of eighty-two (1746-1828) and, generalizing provisionally, is often characterized as having had two careers, one Enlightened and one Romantic, that of his apprenticeship, tapestry cartoons, and royal portraits (1760-1792), and that of his 'private' works which dominate the period after his 1792 illness and loss of hearing.9 The surprising fact is that had Goya died at age fifty (a respectable age for the eighteenth century) he would merit but a footnote in the annals of art history. But the Goya 'we know' - the one of the etchings, drawings, black and 'political' paintings, the Goya who, after a century of obfuscations interrogates violence in a radically new and violent (it must be said) way - this Goya is the Goya of a 'self-reinvention' who produced the Disasters of War in his sixties (c.1810-1820) and the black paintings in his seventies (1820-1823), when the notion of Enlightened progress had gone
far beyond being a merely theoretical possibility and was becoming an institutionalized and ideological reality. Moreover, Goya's late work does not merely reflect the contradictions of a social imperative, it can be said to embody them: one of his final drawings portrays a wizened, Rip-Van-Winkle-bearded old man, struggling, with the aid of not one but two canes, to shuffle a few extra steps towards the light. Goya was seventy-nine; across the upper left of the drawing he wrote in a sure hand: Aun aprendo ('Still learning'). It is in order to better understand those contradictions that I will discuss his work.

The second reason for tracing an excursus on the Enlightenment is, although related to the first, extrinsic and interpretive, that is, bearing on the work of Goya 'in the mind of today.' In 1998, after thirty years of discourse about the post-society (post-structural, post-industrial, post-modern) it is tempting to look back on the two preceding centuries of 'post-Enlightenment' as forming something of a coherent body. To do that one might quote from a recent history, *The Birth of the Modern: World Society 1815-1830*, which opens with the following paragraph:

The title of this book requires some explanation. I present the fifteen years 1815-1830 as those during which the matrix of the modern world was largely formed. Some may find this choice surprising. They might point instead to the decade of the 1780s as decisive, when the British economy was the first to achieve self-sustaining industrial growth, and the French Revolution began the process of sweeping away the ancien regime. It is true that modernity was conceived in the 1780s. But the actual birth, delayed by the long, destructive gestation period formed by the Napoleonic Wars, could begin in full measure only when peace came and the immense new resources in finance, management, science and technology which were now available could be put to constructive purposes. (P. Johnson, xvii)

We today, wherever we live on this planet, are all in our different ways descended from that birth. Our social and political institutions, both national and international, and our local-global economic infrastructure, are all, by and large, implicitly consecrated and as if 'automatically programmed' to furthering the idea of Johnson's subtitle: 'World Society.' In as much as we are the legatees of this Enlightenment, we have also inherited its amnesia. We have forgotten Goya and all that he tried to say. Through Goya's work we can, I believe, hear more clearly something about the Enlightenment that deserves our ear.

To address the Enlightenment in 1998, however, is to address a colossus that is neither completely dead nor fully alive. This is to say that although the Enlightenment remains an enduring legacy in intellectual thought the world over, its invincible optimism
does not. It is important to understand why. For, to make a serious point about a fortuitous event: with Goya the Enlightenment loses its head. In a 1795 pencil self-portrait Goya renders himself as if decapitated (Waldemar Januszczak captions it "witness and judge" (122), to which I would add prisoner and hangman): his swirling, unruly, shoulder-length mane snakes a black cangue about his windpipe, severing the head from a scarcely sketched, neckless bust. Significantly, Goya pins a faint cartouche to his lapel in which he signs his name upside down, bend sinister wise - a supposed mark of bastardy, although the inversion whispers some other, inaudible purport. This image, like so many Goyas, more apposite than it knows, is a 'strange presentiment of things to come,' for when the Spanish government requested Goya's remains be returned from Bordeaux to Madrid in 1899, it was discovered that the corpse was headless. Thus chapter one also tells the story of a head that was lost.

This notion that we are the legatees of the Enlightenment but do not share its optimism needs clarification. For some of us the Enlightenment, its resulting structures and subsequent violences, may be merely one of our two parents. In the, metaphorically speaking, 'patriarchal' order that was then born and has since grown to 'maturity,' the Enlightenment parent was the metaphorical 'father,' and it is the father's value system that until recently wouldn't hear of any other.10 The difference between then and now is that the tide of sentiment which brought about the conception, gestation, and birth of these structures has for many begun to ebb. By this I do not mean that we have collectively turned our backs on rationalism and/or rationalization. Far from it, although there are some who believe they have made that turn.11 Economic capitalization continues to structurally 'deteritorialize,' here, at an alarming pace and on broad, broad, fronts, there, only in isolated pockets, if at all. But it is today everywhere ubiquitous either centre stage or, as if invisible, waiting in the wings for the moments of opportunity which are its nourishment and gasoline. No, when I say ebb, what I mean is that the original animating spirit, which began with a small minority and was (and continues to be) disseminated throughout societies and around the world (to the point that in some societies majorities took it to be their natural birthright and in others elites imposed it on the rest), this animating spirit is theoretically besieged, beleaguered, hemmed in. It still finds champions and apologists, of course, but none whose arguments command the attention and allegiance enjoyed in the last two centuries. Practically speaking, the world continues, and 'progress' marches on as it were, in much the same way as it has, but only because of a kind of structural inertia and fear. Of course, massive configurations of this order are not re-oriented overnight, but more importantly, there is little consensus (and how can there be, when the majority of the world's population lives within or is surrounded by this
structure?) on what to replace it with, on where to go from here. These two factors, that
the film strip of history is seemingly unwinding at its usual clip, and the tacit awareness
that it has barely but perceptibly slipped a sprocket, have led to a widespread and vague
sense of indefiniteness and non-resolution, the feeling that, while the feature is still
watchable, one is also waiting for it to be realigned or changed.12

Let me flush out this idea a little further, and, shifting metaphorical gears,
continue the image-projection of the tide. It is as if an enormous historical wave
comprehending a common cast of mind thundered down on each of our particular beaches
and, surging up the shingle, swept up all that lay there into its turbulent inertia. As it rose,
the wave vacuumed up into it all the counter currents that it produced, feeding off them in
an almost Newtonian fashion ('every action produces an opposite and equal...'), propelling
itself thereby ever higher on the strand. Yet there comes a point in the story of every wave
where the 'retrograde' movement which underlies its unfolding growth, its extension - its
progress - gradually, progressively, saps its forward momentum, and, subject to gravity,
the wave turns. Inertia being a constant, the feeling of progress 'gives in' and slips away -
until the next wave comes. Today's next wave may roar, rhetorically, like the last, but
doesn't seem to bear its thundering energy, perhaps because the whole concept of a single
sweeping torrent of sentiment no longer seems possible, adequate, legitimate, or even
credible. Here there lie possibilities for many little waves. If the initial wave began to
swell when the Enlightenment set out to rationalize religion, and, in supplanting the
"Christian myth [of history as the Time of salvation] with the 'myth-history of reason.'“13
it uncoupled enormous emotional energies from their mooring structures, it is perhaps
only towards the end of the wave, 'completing,' as it were, its commission, that it begins
to secularize its own myth, and thinning, its forward momentum approaching equilibrium
with its ebbing momentum, it begins to hear as if for the first time the voices of the
counter currents that have fed it all along. Goya knew that wave from a long way off and
laboured to picture some of those many voices.
II. Origins

In order to understand the complex and somewhat contradictory pattern of forces, ideas, events, and phenomena that go by the name the Enlightenment we must first prepare the palette. To do that we need visit, briefly, the early seventeenth century as a point where in the aftermath of the wars of religion a welter of constructivist energies is released that engender an architecture of rationality in thought and practice. It is these energies and this architecture, originally a-temporal in conception, that are bequeathed to the Enlightenment as the initial frame of its own dwelling, but which over the course of the Enlightenment gradually acquire a temporalized character and as such constitute the engine propelling the wave of Enlightened, rational progress. This architecture is premised upon and enacts a dualism in thought and language between reason and its other, and between natural objects and cultural subjects, thereby legitimating its foundations as "a new and final phase of self-possession and self-realization" (Blumenberg, 378). A new discourse of scientific universals employs this dualism as a 'double agency' that allows it to produce natural-cultural hybrids all the while denying their existence and subsuming their production to the purification of nature and culture. This bifurcation of discourses is hypothesized as the theoretical seed out of which the 'Dialectic of the Enlightenment' will grow. In addition, a nascent colonial discourse is examined as also enacting this dualism and double agency, particularly with respect to a double temporality of a static time of revelation and a dynamic time of production. However, while the society of rationalist architecture is in this sense productive, its production is seen to be ultimately in the service of a reproduction of the external canon of order.14

The seventeenth Century 'Counter-Renaissance'

According to Stephen Toulmin, while sixteenth century Europe "enjoyed a largely unbroken economic expansion...from 1620 on the state of Europe was one of general crisis" (17).15 In the wake of the Reformation, new religious divisions - exacerbated by the discovery of 'New Worlds' with their multiple cosmogonies (only with difficulty contained within traditional terms of reference), by the Copernican attack on orthodox astrological cosmology (1543), and by subsequent Galilean confirmations (1610) - threatened to snowball toward schism. In addition, in the late teens of the new century economic conditions worsened as a series of wet summers and cold winters issued in failing harvests and plagues, and, with the loss of Spanish hegemony in the South Atlantic, the influx of New World gold that had fueled the prosperity of the previous
century, slowed to a trickle. All attempts at mediation and compromise between the factions failed and there followed the catastrophic Thirty Years' War (1618-1648; the first European 'Superpower' conflict, waged largely by proxies). During that war a tandem battle of polemics was fought that reached a 'height' of vituperation analogous to that of the brutality of the slaughter. This correspondence is well documented in the images and captions of Jacques Callot's *Misères de la guerre.*

Throughout this 'general crisis' there was a progressive closing of what Toulmin calls "intellectual horizons" (19). The Aristotelian-inspired openness and contingency of sixteenth century intellectual investigation, the healthy skepticism and the recognition of rootedness and limits that shaped, for example, Montaigne's reasonableness and love of wisdom, gave way under the stresses of the miseries of war and the general dissuasion resulting from factionalist polemics. In its place arose a more formalist, Platonically inspired style of 'geometricism' and quest for certainty, in which questions were framed "in terms that rendered them independent of context" (21). "[C]hanging the very language of Reason," new written, universal, general, and timeless modes of discourse were created, supplanting the oral, particular, local, and timely styles that were the achievement of Renaissance humanism: for Toulmin this was not merely a Counter-Reformation but a "Counter-Renaissance" (20). The very indecisiveness (and butchery) of the war, and the general dissuasion that was the fallout of its Scholastic inspired polemics, helped to open an intellectual space that would prove hospitable to extra-religious conceptions of certainty and rationality and to the search for universal foundations for order and religion:

In order to recover certitude with unity, it...[was thought] necessary then either to go back to a natural religion more fundamental than historical religions, which [were believed to be] entirely contingent; to try to bring back to one of these religions all of its rivals, which [would then] be held to be 'false' thanks to the establishment of 'marks' guaranteeing the 'true' one; [or] to try to seek in politics, in science, and still other areas, another 'way of unifying' which [would henceforth] fill the role that religion had been playing up until then. (de Certeau 1988, 152)

The fractionating explicit in de Certeau's ordering here ('either...or...or...') is not merely an analytical technique, for, as he goes on to demonstrate, the 'general crisis' that Toulmin links to a narrowing of horizons, was also a movement of a general disaggregation, particularly of religious structures:17

Totalizing references and dogmatic discourses originating in tradition appear as mere particulars. Within the very experience of practicing believers, they are
elements among others in a picture in which every element speaks of a vanished unity. What used to be totalizing is no more than a feature within a landscape of disorder which requires another principle of coherence. The criteria of each believing community come to be relativized...Divided among and within themselves, churches are localized. They can no longer supply thought or practice with the statement of general laws. Thus...two reciprocal movements are produced. On the one hand, doctrinal elements that had been combined until this time are now disconnected...On the other hand, this disconnection follows social cleavages, which are increasing...Because this fragmentation is constantly effected through more and more social divisions, it points to something that is nascent. It is also organized around something that is disappearing...The loss of the absolute object. (1988, 151-154)

The architecture of rationality

One of the principal architects of that 'other principle of coherence' was René Descartes. The architectural metaphor here is not a whim on my part, but Descartes' own analogy: "In the same way as it is not sufficient, before beginning to rebuild the house in which one lives, only to pull it down and to provide material and architects, or oneself to try one's hand at architecture...one must also provide oneself with some other accommodation in which to be lodged conveniently while the work is going on..." (45). With this destruction of one type of dwelling and the erection of another, Descartes enacts a kind of reversal. Where the medieval social-intellectual constitution was rooted in the certainty of one big thing and allowed for multiple doubts concerning many little things, Descartes, reigning in the rampant skepticism of his times, will reverse the logical chain. Building upward from one little (or, as it turns out: one enormous, little) thing, he will create a methodological blueprint for translating the multiplicity of practices and the divisions of doubt into its opposite, the certainty of Universal Reason. Descartes' whole adult life almost exactly coincides with the Thirty Years' War, and not surprisingly he came to view science and metaphysics as 'safe-havens' in which to work out new foundations for a social order in tatters.

Consummate dreamer after essences and purifications - "try[ing] always to conquer myself rather than fortune, and to change my desires rather than the order of the world" - and, like Leibniz after him, down-playing the empirical and fashioning his ideas in relation to theological questions, Descartes sought a point of maximum leverage
Descartes, 47). He would find it by ceding to the principle of *de omnibus dubitandum* precisely the stability and apodictic character that the social and political order lacked. Others would build there:

Writing as he did, at the low point in the Thirty Years' War, Descartes had good reason to understand the damage that the intellectual divisions in Christianity had done to humanity, and he dreamed of an ideal method, giving a knowledge that could transcend those divisions. Writing amid the ruins left by the same war, Leibniz saw a deeper source of war and conflict in the multiplicity of languages and cultures, and dreamed of an ideal *language* that could be learned by people of any country, culture or religion. (Toulmin, 99)

With such method in hand, a kind of intellectual battle plan for world reconstruction. Descartes imagines its limitless applications: "there can be nothing so distant that one does not reach it eventually, or so hidden that one cannot discover it" (Descartes, 41). Little did he know how fruitful his imaginative rationalism would be, for "exercising the method in the solution of mathematical difficulties, or even in that of some others which...[can be made] almost like mathematical problems by *separating them from all the principles of the other sciences*" will be the *modus operandi* of the new order that steps into the void of religious unity (50; emphasis added). It will also be the means of effecting a properly historical rupture and division of powers in which the medieval temporal/spiritual ecclesiology, the order in which "morality and religion have the same origin...a single God organizes at once a historical revelation and an order of the cosmos... [and] religion envelops [all] modes of behaviour," will be replaced by the modern political/religious orders of the absolutist state (de Certeau 1988, 148-9).

Toulmin notes that, ironically, the crisis of belief that was so cruelly tested by the musket and the sword in the villages of central Europe, issued in a pure and devout faith "in belief itself" (54). With Cartesian indubitability the scaffolding of a seemingly unconditional certainty will be erected:

> I thereby concluded that I was a substance, of which the whole essence or nature consisted in thinking, and which, in order to exist, needs no place and depends on no material thing; so that this 'I', that is to say the mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, and even that it is easier to know than the body, and moreover, that even if the body were not, it would not cease to be all that it is. (Descartes, 54)

One needs only crown this 'I', as was done by an anonymous engraver in the frontispiece to Hobbes' *Leviathan*, that is, to replace Descartes' 'I' with 'God, the King' (and then cross
out God, which is, in fact, what Descartes implies\textsuperscript{18}, to appreciate the capital and ambiguous entente of theology and rationalism that ensued. It will be Hobbes and Boyle and their followers who will explicitly rule out God, "the former by ridding Nature of any divine presence, the latter by ridding Society of any divine origin" (Latour, 33).

**The 'gas laws' of human conduct**

Inspired by the physicalism of Galileo, the geometric method of Descartes, and the Gas Laws of Boyle (each of whom he knew personally), and appalled by the general crisis of governance, Hobbes laboured to generalize the Euclidean axiomatic method to all realms of thought, in particular the discourse of society. These labours bore fruit and in 1651, at the height of the civil war, Hobbes produced a thoroughly materialist, causalist and constructivist doctrine, the likes of which had never before been seen - a kind of "'gas laws' of human conduct" (Bronowski & Mazlish, 203). The *Leviathan* so estranged Royalists and Parliamentarians alike that Hobbes was forced to flee the country.

In Hobbes' analysis, the civil wars then raging resulted from the fact that, being persecuted by the authorities, the lower orders of society exercised an *unjustified* right of appeal to the divine. Hobbes' first task as he saw it, thus, was to eradicate from the social constitution all traces of divinity:

> Inert and mechanical matter is as essential to civil peace as a purely symbolic interpretation of the Bible. In both cases, it behoves us to avoid at all costs the possibility that the factions may invoke a higher entity - Nature or God - which the Sovereign does not fully control. (Latour, 19)

Hobbes carried out this project by taking up and radicalizing the neo-Aristotelian notion of a prime mover, stripping it of all theological import: God, having no cause, would be effectively nullified and privatized; the resultant secular causal principle would then be applied to all particulars. Phenomena were to be defined in purely physical terms as the impact of corporeal bodies on the sensorial apparatus of the human machine. If no idea can be given *a priori* - that is, no idea other than corporeal sensationalism - then only what is decomposed into logical (and timeless) atoms and reconstructed into an artificial and artifactual body (whether as human being or society) is knowable. Indeed, if the only way to avoid anarchy is to unite all voices in one, in the 'Sovereign' who represents the social contract between, not the leader and the people, but between individuals, then knowledge is only meaningful "in support of the social order" which is no longer artificial, because it outlives the individual (Latour, 27).
Such is Hobbes' generalized constructivism designed to end civil war: no transcendence whatsoever, no recourse to God, or to active matter, or to Power by Divine Right, or even to mathematical Ideas. (19)

The literary technology of 'fact' - a witness that cannot lie

In We Have Never Been Modern, Bruno Latour demonstrates the interplay of Hobbes' social and Boyle's laboratory constructivism in the founding of a modern epistemological-political constitution. Like Hobbes, says Latour, Boyle also raises the question of constructivism, but resolves it in a way that continues to have profound implications for science and society. He will admit that 'facts,' like Hobbesian societies, are indeed created in the laboratory, but they are not for all that artificial because, like God who creates them, 'a-political' scientists are in complete control of their manifestation by virtue of a technology that does not, and indeed cannot, lie. Taking over a juridical metaphor that had in the sixteenth century enjoyed unrivaled prestige, Boyle gives to the inhuman witness of the mechanism the 'constitutional' role of governor-general: "According to the Constitution, in case of doubt, humans are better off appealing to non-humans...[and as a result the latter are] [e]ndowed with...new semiotic powers" (23). Human witnesses of unimpeachable character (i.e., members of the Royal Society) will merely corroborate the testimony of 'facts' by transcribing in empirical prose what has been recorded or made manifest by the mechanism. By virtue of this system of practice the machine-scientist compact will be able to overrule the intervention of governments and religions in its privileged domain of the laboratory: science will be henceforward "based not on ideas but on a practice...located not outside but inside the transparent chamber of the air pump and...take place within the private space of the experimental community" (24). What Descartes had sought to theorize in metaphysics and Hobbes in governance, Boyle's system will replicate in localities: Universal Reason and the working of Universal Laws. By following the geographic dissemination of the apparatus of production one can trace the 'historical development' (and give a materialist explanation) of a universal truth:

- its speed of propagation is exactly equivalent to the rate at which the community of experimenters and their equipment develops. No science can exit from the network of its practice. The weight of the air is indeed always a universal but a universal inside a network. (24)

Universal networks, divisions of power, orders of representation

Although we continue to use the same term, with the innovations of Hobbes and Boyle the term 'universal' has in fact taken on a new sense. The universality of the
Catholic church signified an *a priori* and metaphysically predetermined wholeness. The word 'catholic' is derived from the Greek *kata holou*, 'according to the whole', hence its connotations of general, of all things, of every member of a class (Platonic idea or Aristotelian form), unchanging. This universalism, whose 'opposite' term is pagan or heretical, was predicated upon the pan-geographic and omni-temporal notions of the Christian church triumphant (notions themselves bespeaking the ascendancy of metaphysics over geography and history). Spatially, the church defined itself as a series of centres of power that symbolized the dominion of a higher, a-local order. Metaphorically, the closer one came to Jerusalem or Rome, where, as the saying has it, 'all roads lead,' the closer one was to God. Temporally, 'classical' Christianity saw itself as a mythic and concentric sphere of "inclusive or incorporative" time in which the pagan and the infidel were "candidates for salvation" (Fabian, 26). In this schema, being whole and indivisible, there was no 'outside'; de Certeau reminds us that even heresy was defined from within theology (1988, 150); and Fabian, that the spatial expansion of the *conquista* was necessarily underpinned by the ideology of evangelization (26). The new 'universals,' however, whose opposite terms will be irrational or traditional, are predicated upon the geographic dissemination of a linked technological network of nodal points that are able to mechanically repeat messages issued from any single point. In the "naturalization of Time" that will come to fit the hand of the new universalism like a glove, time will be centred on the 'civilizational' present of the here and now, a centre that does not symbolize another order (*ibid.*). Its "temporal relations" are exclusive and expansive. The pagan was always *already* marked for salvation, the savage is *not yet* ready for civilization...[With the naturalization of time the] other is constructed as a system of coordinates (emanating of course also from a real center - the Western metropolis) in which given societies of all times and places may be plotted in terms of relative distance from the present. (*ibid.*)

Latour points out that the key set of universals created by Hobbes and Boyle revolve around the division of powers between science and politics and the notion of the *representation* of power, whether natural or social. This division is one between a mechanical-empirical discourse of material nature, comprising the repertoire of terms for natural power - i.e., facts, machines, and mechanisms - terms that both harness and represent natural force, and the scientific discourse of society (political science, later political economy) comprising the repertoire of terms for social power - i.e., authority, sovereignty, and force - terms that both harness and represent social power.
Boyle is creating a political discourse from which politics is to be excluded, while Hobbes is imagining a scientific politics from which experimental science has to be excluded. In other words, they are inventing our modern world, a world in which the representation of things through the intermediary of the laboratory is forever dissociated from the representation of citizens through the intermediary of the social contract...The link between epistemology and social order now takes on a completely new meaning. The two branches of government that Boyle and Hobbes develop, each on his own side, possess authority only if they are clearly separated: Hobbes' state is impotent without science and technology, but Hobbes speaks only of the representation of naked citizens; Boyle's science is impotent without a precise determination of the religious, political and scientific spheres...They are like a pair of Founding Fathers, acting in concert to promote one and the same innovation in political theory: the representation of nonhumans belongs to science, but science is not allowed to appeal to politics; the representation of citizens belongs to politics, but politics is not allowed to have any relation to nonhumans produced and mobilized by science and technology. (27-28)

Formulated in an attempt to transcend the limitations of sects, the new universals are 'rational' in the sense that they devolve upon a kind of free assent to 'matters of fact.' But we have good reason to be suspicious of the transparency of these 'matters,' for the matter of their mutual constructivist origin becomes progressively veiled by the separation of the two domains of representation:

The political spokespersons come to represent the quarrelsome and calculating multitude of citizens; the scientific spokespersons come to represent the mute and material multitudes of objects...In the seventeenth century, the symmetry is still visible; the two camps are still arguing through spokespersons, each accusing the other of multiplying the sources of conflict. Only a little effort is now required for their common origin to become invisible, for there to be no more spokesperson except on the side of human beings, and for the scientists' mediation to become invisible. Soon the word 'representation' will take on two different meanings, according to whether elected agents or things are at stake. Epistemology and political science will go their opposite ways. (29)

Thus we arrive at a point of bifurcation from which two discourses speaking in the same language about the same things will grow ever further apart. One might locate here the theoretical seed that will grow into what Adorno and Horkheimer will later call the 'Dialectic of Enlightenment,'20 the historical split, indeed the antagonism, between natural and revealed religion and later between Enlightened and instrumental reason. In the analysis of Adorno and Horkheimer, Enlightened reason becomes associated in the eighteenth century with progressive social forces, while instrumental reason becomes, in
the nineteenth century, associated with regressive technocratic bureaucracy. With the rise
to supremacy of the latter over the former in the late nineteenth and early twentieth
centuries, the initial status of reason as a weapon against myth, religion, and error is
overturned and an oppressive technocratic corporativism comes to dominate society,
paying only lip service to, and indeed manipulating, the initial socially progressive ideal.
Instrumental reason, say Adorno and Horkheimer, comes to take its version of reason as
an unassailable myth/truth - hence the 'dialectic' of their title. Commenting on this
dialectic, which he calls the "counter-finality of reason," Gianni Vattimo writes:

It is not simply that certain negative experiences...have led us to realize that
'progress,' above all in technological terms, can lead to consequences that are
catastrophic for life...By contrast, our own situation seems to be characterized by
something more general. Although it stands before our very eyes, to grasp it
requires a particularly concerted reflection: it is the discovery that the
rationalization of the world turns against reason and its ends of perfection and
emancipation, and does so not by error, accident, or a chance distortion, but
precisely to the extent that it is more and more perfectly accomplished. (78)

Here, in broad strokes, we can see the modern 'origin' of a bifurcation in our
thinking about rationality, and of the more recent notion that the question of scale
dramatically alters the meaning of rationality. As Latour points out, the notion of
bifurcation constantly skirts a contradiction that is in danger of bringing it to a grinding
halt. What he means is that although Hobbes and Boyle theorized a purification of the
social-subject and natural-object domains (the Sovereignty of the State, the privacy of the
laboratory), at the same time they were actually practicing works of 'translation.'
producing natural-cultural hybrids that Latour calls quasi-objects. The Leviathan, thus, is
a purely human construction that nonetheless survives the war of each against all because
it transcends social immanence; and Nature, for its part, being given by God, is something
purely un-created and yet something that at the same time we are able to 'domesticate.' In
fact, Latour explains, the principal task of the Hobbesean-Boylean "modern
Constitution...[is to allow] the expanded proliferation of the hybrids whose existence,
whose very possibility, its denies" (34). It carries out this task by "conceiving every
hybrid as the mixture of two pure forms," and thus by classifying the mediators actually
produced by the constitution as mere intermediaries in the general work of purification
(78). This modern multiplication of hybrids and the modern distinction between and
purification of the 'natural' and the 'cultural' will over the course of modernity be
constantly replayed and exacerbated. In a helpful diagram Latour charts the principal
stages of a widening rift and growing instability in modernity: the eighteenth century Kantian separation between the *ding an sich* and phenomena; the nineteenth century Hegelian contradiction between matter and spirit; early twentieth century phenomenology's unsurmountable tension between objectivity and consciousness; late twentieth century's (Habermasian) incommensurability between the object and the community of subjects and, most recently, the hyper-incommensurability of the postmoderns.21 What in the seventeenth century can initially be construed as the 'free' assent to 'matters of fact' - concerning miniscule and mute events directly witnessed in a private laboratory - will over time change its nature and its scale of operations, such that 'universals' - hyper-public, macroscopic and meaningful laws - will come to be adopted and/or imposed in the context of colossal, pan-global political-military-economic structures.

**Double agency**

The critical power of the moderns lies in this double language: they can mobilize Nature at the heart of social relationships, even as they leave Nature infinitely remote from human beings: they are free to make and unmake their society, even as they render its laws ineluctable. necessary and absolute. Latour (37)

This double language will play a principal role in our story as it unfolds. Let us also note that this propensity towards double agency has been singled out by Tzvetan Todorov as a kind of European 'ethno-cultural tradition,' revealing itself as early as the conquest of Mexico (which was also, significantly, the age of Machiavelli). In the 'Epilogue' to his *The Conquest of America*, where he seeks to explain how the colonizers were able to get the colonized to adopt European customs (to the extent that they did). Todorov writes:

> This extraordinary success is chiefly due to one specific feature of Western Civilization which for a long time was regarded as a feature of man himself, its development and prosperity among Europeans becoming proof of their natural superiority: it is, paradoxically, Europeans' capacity to understand the other. (1992, 248)

Todorov illustrates this by painting the story of Cortes as a diptych of hybridization and purification.22 Initially, says Todorov, Cortes displays a remarkable empathy towards the Aztecs, adapting to their ways and language, and metaphorically identifying with their cosmic order. He even warms to the role thrust upon him of incarnating the god Quetzalcoatl returned to earth. But there comes a second phase where, with the successes of his ruse, Cortes is emboldened in his feeling of superiority, and,
employing the knowledge he has gained, he proceeds to "reassert his own identity (which he has never really abandoned)...[in order] to assimilate the Indians to his own world" (1992, 248). Todorov sees the origins of this double agency in the Europeans' twin heritages of a Greek inspired (and specifically Aristotelian hierarchicalism of) identity - 'my values are the values' - and a Christian inspired egalitarianism - 'I can identify with you because we are all equal before God.' These attitudes were complicated of course by the fact that the discourse of identity-difference, so often used to justify mastery and slavery, also issued in a tradition of empathy (and miscegenation) couched in terms of 'fathers and children'; and by the fact that Christian egalitarianism was equally an identification before my God, and not yours. Furthermore, the Renaissance traditions of language as a weapon of power and theological instrumentalism - God is to be used rather than enjoyed - combine in Cortes' strategy into a potent praxis of dissimulation. By virtue of this unique recipe of traditions, the conquistadors are able to reverse the ends and means of conquest and conversion without contradiction, for, "[i]n the world of Machiavelli and Cortes, discourse is not determined by the object it describes, nor by the conformity to a tradition, but is constructed solely as a function of the goal it seeks to achieve" (1992, 116). In Todorov's analysis, the success of Cortes is a semiotic one. He is able to 'jam' communication with Montezuema by manipulating words and appearances - he orders that horses slain in battle be buried at night in secret, for example, in order to further the impression that they and the Spanish are supernatural entities - and by representing himself simultaneously as enemy and ally of the Aztecs.

If we put aside for the moment the issue of purely 'technological' changes, we can see that the notions of purity and hybridity have a 'pre-history,' and, more importantly, that as the two notions grow in tandem, each is recognized as containing within itself aspects of the other that are played up or played down as the situation demands - what Latour calls 'the principle of reversals.' De Certeau offers a fine example of this in his analysis of Jean de Léry's Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil (1578), showing how a tradition of divine election and the sacred word become embodied in a notion of the double power of writing. For de Léry,
totally lacking, must be even more advanced to the rank of unique gifts that men of our lands have received from God. (in de Certeau 1988, 215)

De Certeau is quick to point out that de Léry's notion of the Brazilian's exclusive reliance on verbal communication was an error, and a significant one at that, in that he seems by it to equate 'verbal' with 'primitive.' Thus, unlike speech, which de Léry sees as the production of a mortal body (and being 'limited,' thus, to the range of audition, is 'unexportable'), writing, claims de Léry, has the power of action at a distance and is able to "keep things in all their purity" (in de Certeau 1988, 215). Maintaining the authority of the past (theological origins) and at the same time wielding a dominion over the future, writing's power as de Léry defines it, says de Certeau, is "colonial in principle. It is extended without being changed" (1988, 216). And yet while enjoying this instrumental power, writing is also the means by which coevality with the Brazilians is denied, for the ethnographic event of contact that is explicitly framed in terms of hybridization is continuously over-ruled by a discursive theory in which writing as agent of typological time and sacred origins is also able to overcome ('technologically'? the gap of difference. Indeed, difference enjoys something of an ambiguous status, being "simultaneously the generative principle and the object to be made credible" (1988, 218). Thus de Léry labours to record and itemize the difference(s) of the Brazilians but always in ways that will allow the difference (particularity) to be returned to the same, European terms of reference (universality): 'In the end they are like us.'

Thus, among the four-footed animals (of which there exists 'not one...that in any or every aspect in any fashion can resemble our own'), the tapiroussou is 'half-cow and half-donkey; 'being both of the one and of the other.' The primitives incorporate the splitting that divides the universe. Their picture of the world follows a traditional cosmological order whose scaffolding is exposed, but it is a picture covered with countless broken mirrors in which the same fracture is reflected (half this, half that)...[de Léry's] narrative as a whole belabor the division that is located elsewhere in order to show that the other returns to the same. In this fashion it inserts itself within the general problem of the crusade that still rules over the discovery of the world in the sixteenth century... (1988, 219)

De Certeau shows that the principal means of this return movement, one that symbolically parallels the spatial displacement of de Léry's voyage, is the Tupi-French dictionary that is incorporated into his narrative at the point of transition between the end of his description of life in Brazil and the beginning of his return to Geneva. Just as the voyage as a whole labours to be 'productive,' to generate a return on its initial investment, de Léry orders his description of Tupi life and customs around the category of the useful.
From out of the monstrous flora and fauna described is produced the edible, from out of the 'savage' festivals recounted is produced moral example, and from out of the 'exotic' and 'illegible' language transcribed is produced intelligibility. In the course of this production the radical difference of the Tupi with which de Léry begins his account, is domesticated, for the Tupi are shown to be an example, if somewhat lesser, of the (Calvinist) universal category 'man,' the being that makes use of all things. The "theological instrument" of the dictionary caps this movement by rendering the seeming totality of the objects and practices of the Tupi world into the linguistic surface of an identity, a language that can be assimilated - French (1988, 223). In this way de Léry's theological conviction of the particularity (exteriority) of the Brazilians is translated into, and grounded in, a form of reproducible scientific knowledge of universal principles. Writing, as conceived by de Léry, ultimately verifies a line of demarcation between an a-productive society, unknowing of and unable to translate the knowledge it employs, and a productive society that consciously generates an exteriority and difference that is continuously folded back into the interiority of the same through writing.

The complicity of time

De Certeau's analysis of de Léry's *Histoire* is situated within his general thesis of a gradual and general secularization of religious structures over the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, such that in this period "the same ideas or institutions can be perpetuated at the very time they are changing their meaning within the social sphere" (1988, 157). Within this general movement de Certeau underscores four semantic shifts that are particularly marked in colonial discourse. First, theological discourse is becoming in practice a discourse of power, in which the purity that writing guarantees Christians with respect to 'origins,' is an 'advantage.' Second, the discourse of theological election is becoming one of ethnic privilege, such that writing makes us 'even more advanced to the rank of the unique gifts that men of our lands have received from God.' Third, the discourse of evangelization is becoming one of expansion and return to the same, for 'we can declare our secrets to whomever we please,' and translate their secrets into an intelligible idiom. And fourth, the discourse of revelation is being reframed as a doctrine of scientific truth in which the power of the Christian word that allows us to 'keep things in their purity' applies equally to our own theological origins as well as to the origins and customs of peoples at 'the ends of the world.' Undergirding these shifts is an inflection on the nature of time that is somewhat new: whereas revelation seems to necessitate a static notion of time as the medium of permanence, the secular revelation of science bespeaks a sense of
time as "an accomplice of our will," as the medium in which all things are accomplished.\textsuperscript{23}

The problem for the nascent colonial discourse will be how to hold these two contradictory times in hand, for, as de Léry\textquoteleft s \textit{Histoire} shows, the greatest advantage consists in making use of them both. Johannes Fabian likens this problem to the "political physics" of the law of non-contradiction, in which no two bodies can "occupy the same space at the same time."\textsuperscript{24}

When in the course of colonial expansion a Western body politic came to occupy, literally, the space of an autochthonous body, several alternatives were conceived to deal with that violation of the rule. The simplest one, if we think of North America and Australia, was of course to move or remove the other body. Another one is to pretend that space is being divided and allocated to separate bodies. South Africa\textquoteleft s rulers...[clung] to that solution. Most often the preferred strategy has been simply to manipulate the other variable - Time. With the help of various devices of sequencing and distancing one assigns to the conquered populations a different Time. (29-31)

Anticipating our story somewhat, in the colonial order of thought taking shape (here glimpsed as if \textit{in nuce} in de Léry\textquoteleft s \textit{Histoire}), the articulation of time between the European interior and the European exterior forms a kind of 'irregular solid,' composed of a static time of revelation and a dynamic time of production, whose imperfection (and distances) will be 'squared' by means of an allochronism. Within a nascent colonial discourse 'savage' society will be assigned the static universal time of revelation; and a practical coevality will allow Europeans to gather data bespeaking the 'origins of society.' To European society, however, will be assigned the dynamic particular time of production; and the fact of coevality will have to be discursively buried because the mythic, poetic, and fabular connotations of 'genesis' do not sit well with the 'objective' self-image of a productive, scientific discourse, and because it undermines the doctrine of preterition. Because the 'savage' is 'unproductive,' and because only we 'produce' time, we cannot be on the same temporal or religious footing. The discourse of 'civilizing the primitives' will later begin here.\textsuperscript{25}

In the seventeenth century this duality of time begins to be incorporated in European self-understanding as explanatory of two things, of the rupture between pre-modern Catholic universals and their modern scientific variants, and of why universal reason was 'so late' in coming (Blumenberg, 377-378). But although this temporal duality appears to be a latent developmentalism, it remains attached to and limited by an overall static conception, that is, to the canon as universal standard of perfection of an
interdependent whole, what Anderson calls the "conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable, the origins of the world and of men essentially identical" (36). Self-certainty in the possession of the 'method,' the atemporal nature of the Euclidean and Natural Law models of rationality, the nearness of the European past that had been 'overcome,' and the residual hold of ecclesiastical institutions and ideas, all combine to limit the sense of European 'progress' to the traditional notion that if there were progress it could only take place in the 'other' dimension of Christian eschatology. Ultimately, this means that knowledge of the 'primitives' will be sacrificed to the reigning interdependent conception of a whole and a canon whose ultimate source is still beyond the world - the 'unique gifts that men of our lands have received from God.' And in fact, we can say that although in de Léry European society views itself as a productive society vis-à-vis a-productive societies, and although an exchange has been made substituting as the scapegoat necessary to the Christian allegory the 'savages' at 'the ends of the world' for the decayed gods of antiquity beyond the world, the incipient production of de Léry's dictionary can only acquire meaning in the service of a reproduction of a universal category, 'man,' the being who makes use of all things. The symbolic order is still one of the reproduction of the canon through sacrifice. All that has changed, and it is by no means a little thing, is that the scapegoat of the allegory is something produced in knowledge. Throughout the eighteenth century, however, and nowhere more pointedly than in Rousseau, we will witness a 'destabilizing' process that is already latent in de Léry's Histoire: the substitution of an exterior culture and 'other' temporality for traditional sacred knowledge as the locus from which truth is derived, and the conscious generation of an exteriority and difference that is continually folded back into the interiority of the same in new works of productive rationalization. The crucial difference is that where for de Léry these transformations reproduce a canon whose ultimate source is external, for Rousseau a similar set of transformations will produce what has no model, a convention (literally: a coming together, a process) of autonomous freedom as a continuous self-creation, a convention whose ultimate source is interior.
III. Distancing

In the eighteenth century a new consciousness of distances surfaces, a consciousness of distances between Enlightenment's promises and Enlightened practices and their effects, and between Enlightened rationality and its 'objects,' particularly those objects thought to have 'preceded' reason. This consciousness may be seen as a kind of proto-alienation. In response to it a number of innovations are brought to bear to mollify and mediate the rationalist order. The doctrines of 'universal benevolence' and 'the best possible world,' as well as Deism and proto-evolutionary notions are brought forward as stop-gaps to plug the growing rift of distances. However each of these measures evades the root cause of the problem, state rationalizations and scientific rationality's production of 'pasts' that seem to be pushed ever further back in time. The possibility that the idea of progress may offer a solution to growing uneasiness about the widening gap between Enlightened theory and practice struggles against cultural assumptions of the unity and permanence of order and of time's cycle, assumptions whose apodictic character is increasingly subject to stress. Paradoxically, both the religious status quo and the materialists resist notions of biological evolution (and implicitly, progress), the former because it contradicts theological teleology, the latter because it appears to be a new form of teleology. As the paradoxes and 'moral grotesqueries' of universal benevolence become apparent, the rationalist order increasingly juggles a more and more complex and confusing series of ideas, playing one off the other in an attempt to 'balance its accounts' and save the appearances. Modern proto-political 'camps' (i.e., 'liberals' and 'conservatives') take up sides within this social environment of distance-consciousness, disseminating their views in the new periodical presses. An instability of meaning becomes more and more apparent as multiple parties employ the same repertoire of "sacred words and phrases" (notably 'rights,' 'sovereignty,' and 'nature') to often incompatible ends (Lovejoy, 14).

'To govern is to make subjects believe'

Within European society the modern constitution of distinctions, some of whose workings we have analyzed with respect to the epistemology of science and politics and a nascent colonial discourse, will have a pronounced effect on the understanding of religion and the state. In the wake of the general seventeenth century crisis of belief, and under the stress of the dissemination of the new universals, religion "begins to be perceived from the outside," as something of a 'fiction,' a system (like any other) that may be opposed to 'Reason' or 'Nature' (de Certeau 1988, 152). It is into this void of unity that the discourse of the state steps. The state, theorized as absolute precisely in order to fill the void of the
loss of the absolute object of Divinity, stakes its will to power by organizing and monopolizing practices - modes of behaviour, and the new techniques of scientific ordering - all the while paying voluble lip service to the notion that such practices merely follow from doctrinal determinations. In fact everywhere one looks the role of religion is harnessed to state policy. As de Certeau shows, under the general exigency of rationalization, religion comes to be marshalled as a means of forcing the coherence of formally opposed sects; the spectacle of the state takes over Christian theatrics; charity is politicized as a reward for demonstrations of state-sponsored doctrinal purity; and faith is rationalized into codes of civility ('politesse,' 'composure,' 'bearing,' 'productivity,' 'competition') and a nascent science of intentions. In addition, the concern for order, efficacy, and method is not limited to religious structures: mercantilism advocates the transformation of the rural peasantry into incipient modes of bourgeois-urban production: and all manner of discourses are being systematized, grammaticized, and codified, through the agency of new state institutions such as the 'Royal Society for...'

The social order felt to be lacking is reconstituted by the politicization of conduct of the absolute state, a politicization whose operative dictum is: "To govern is to make subjects believe."  

Under this ubiquitous onslaught of state power, a faith and a conscience disaggregated from formal religion are 'privatized' and retreat into various forms of interiority. However, even there faith is not immune from the power of practice, for if belief is no more certain than unbelief - there being no universal consensus as to what constitutes true belief - then practice will provide the guarantee of a faith that is difficult to prove.  

Everything is concentrated on practices. A religious group experiences its cohesion through them. In them it finds its mooring and its differentiation in respect to other social units, whether religious or of other fabric. From them it gains the confidence that beliefs themselves provide less and less. Soon, apropos of Christians, Montesquieu will state that they 'are no more firm in their unbelief than in their faith'...his remark indicates the difficulty that these Christians have in finding social landmarks for their faith. (de Certeau 1988, 162)

As a result of this situation, stations of spirituality develop which, although mimicking the general constitution of social estates within the now dominant secular-political order, begin to take their meaning from being orders apart. 'Spirituality' evolves as a mode of behaviour standing against the predominance of practice in social life. Puritans and other sects develop a prototype of political resistance to the reigning order by practicing a faith
that is "indissociable from political opposition" (1988, 167); as the signs of religious retreat become socialized and feed back into the manifestations of spirituality, faith and conscience become more political in their self-characterization. Indeed, the "enunciation of meaning" becomes a weapon in struggles for power with authority (1988, 168). Absolute states, as the avowed disseminators of reason, attempt to monopolize the production of meaning by everywhere producing mechanisms for the translation of will into action. Metropoles constitute themselves as the productive centres of culture, history, science and wealth through policies of 'civilization,' state patronage of the arts and sciences, and a spatial expansion (cadastral surveying and 'departmental' organization, for example) that attempts to rationalize the hinterland.

This reason [of state] is bound to the power of organizing practices. It considers as distinct from itself, as the field of its conquests, the immense space of irrational 'beliefs' and the inert extension of that Nature which is now offered up to those who will know its previously silent laws...From every outward sign, religious expressions are the most important element of this inert sector...Enlightened society of the eighteenth century tries to make them profitable. That is, to introduce them into its 'order.' It thus establishes as an object for its politics or knowledge these expressions that it constitutes as other in respect to the rational organization of power or, in what amounts to the same thing, in respect to power acquired by virtue of the rationalization of practices. A rift is thus cut between reason and its 'remainder.' (1988, 170)

We might also recognize in the advent of this rift a 'great leap forward' in the distance between survival and power, in that the power acquired by these rationalizations of practice bears less and less upon survival.

**Reason and its remainder - the duplex of absolutism**

Organized religion finds itself in an increasingly bifurcated position. On the one hand an 'established' church, co-opted by state prerogatives, confirming "a reason that it no longer defines and which slowly inverts religion's own principles"; and on the other hand, increasingly marginalized orders of faith characterized by their inability to garner the adhesion of ascendent elites, and by their "nonoperative languages...[directed towards] popular masses" (de Certeau 1988, 171). The absolute states' increasing dominance of the production of the discourses of culture, history, science and wealth furthers the establishment of a "double language" (and a double temporality), "constructed in a direct relation with its other, the 'savage'" (ibid.). This double language is
that of an 'enlightened' reason, avowable, productive, organizing an axiomatic of social utility: and that of beliefs, disavowed but always there, denied in the present but assuming the figure of an obscure origin, an 'obscurantist' past of the systems which took their place. (1988, 171)

An abyss opens, that will grow ever wider, between the politicization of ecclesiastical functions and the preservation of Catholic representations deprived of 'meaning.'

Truth no longer has an assigned place in the world, unless it is the line that miracle traces over the martyrdom of saints...What is experienced in faith can no longer be said in a language that is hereafter focussed on a defensive operation and transformed into the verbal ramparts of a silent citadel. (1988, 169; 180)

It is in these terms that a face off takes shape between the (officially produced) 'silence' of the populace, peasantry, women, and children - "human understanding is...in all places the same, although imperfectly developed in idiots, children, and savages," proclaimed Locke28 - and the rationalizing haute voix of the state and its "clergy of reason" (de Certeau 1988, 173). Not surprisingly a double agency of language becomes operative here, with the former 'made to speak' by the latter in terms of 'the common good,' 'public utility,' and 'universality.' The principal of reversals carries out its work by allowing the Enlighteners to view the populace as, at times, the seed bed for Enlightened reforms and, at other times, as the orchard from which Enlightened discourse harvests the raw material of its reformist critiques.

This language to be decoded [of popular, oral fabulation] is the folklore of an essential. Thus, from the middle of the eighteenth century onward, a durable combination - quasi-structural for at least a century - is formed between a 'popular' foundation to be deciphered, and a scientific rationality whose effective content is posed as exterior to itself. Reason has its own treasure hidden within the people and inscribed within history. Reason transforms it, while receiving it from what preceded reason. A popular flood rises, from which everything comes. Finally, in calling itself the most advanced part of this flood, enlightened science also admits that it is nothing more than its metaphor. (de Certeau 1988, 172; emphasis added)

In attempting to rationally overcome the unintelligible background out of which it finds its very raison d'être, Enlightened discourse is permeated by a "distancing" with respect to what 'preceded' reason (its object), a kind of unintentional Verfremdungseffekt (alienation) by which the 'cephalic' character of rational discourse begins to recognize its own groundlessness (1988, 172).29
Rounding the corners of frigid rationalism - natural benevolence

It is worth recalling that an alienating tendency was implicit from the beginning within the foundations of rationalism as the thought and structure of a dualistic ordering. Although the impulse to rationalize every facet of physical, biological, and metaphysical reality was animated by a kind of humanism - the desire to make the laws of the cosmos and the reason for their necessity accessible to the mind of any rational being, to render, in Spinoza's words, "each man his own moralist" (in Scruton, 108) - in practice the rationalist cosmos was a rather frigid affair. Thus, co-temporal with the rise to acceptance of the Newtonian cosmological paradigm, and somewhat in its image, there arose throughout rationalist Europe a principle of universal benevolence. Although there was no real evidence for such a principle (its chief support being the argument from design), and indeed, much standing against it - including notions of the fall, original sin, and the theological necessity for grace, as well as the seventeenth century idea that self-love was a turning away from God - it nevertheless "became one of the accepted tenets of the age," perhaps because it promised to round the corners somewhat of rationalism's hard-edged, geometric perfection (Hampson, 100). By virtue of universal benevolence, humanity was thought to exist in the best of all possible worlds. Benevolence not merely solidified the grounds for eighteenth century optimism and self-confidence, it promised, despite the apparent relativity of laws, a self-evident moral code of 'natural rights,' and insured the (hypothesized) harmony of self- and common-interests. In addition it fit hand in glove with the Enlighteners' desire to reject the brutishness of the Hobbesian, quasi-atheistic vision of society, and gave credence to their feelings of cultural sophistication, largesse, and 'reasonableness.' Although some Anglicans, as well as Wesleyans and Jansenists, objected to the naturalizing tendencies that seemed to accompany it, by and large there was felt to be "no conflict between the truths of Revelation and the new faith in human reason and its inference of a beneficent Providence from the spectacle of nature" (103).

The climate of sentiment and opinion that natural benevolence was the sole universal foundation for religion grew only stronger throughout most of the eighteenth century. It is in this context that one can speak of the progressive 'socialization' of religion. The theological fall was relegated to a episode of pre-history, reason replaced grace, and the pragmatics of social utility and the sentiment of the fraternity of human kind usurped the place of the metaphysics and mysteries of Christian theology in the minds of many. Indeed, by the middle of the century the French Physiocrats had advanced a vision of human industry's ability to husband the resources bequeathed by God in order to achieve "a progressive improvement in [the] standard of living" (118); under the influence of Beccaria's 1764 reformist tract Crimes and Punishments (a European best-
seller), there was much discussion (and some action) about outlawing torture and reducing the number of crimes leading to capital punishment;\textsuperscript{30} and, isolated and influential Europeans were finding that their calls for extending the principle of benevolence beyond the bounds of Europe no longer fell on deaf ears. The Spanish \textit{ilustrado} Jovellanos, for example, argued that Europe could "no longer seek nations to conquer, peoples to oppress, regions to cover with grief and poverty" (in Hampson, 157). As long as there was a relative political peace, a modest decline in religious persecution, and economic rationalization and expansion, the sunny optimism of benevolence could not but bolster the status quo. Yet, well into the third quarter of the century this sanguine view of contemporary society as a 'high point' in the history of cultural sophistication, compassion, and reasonableness was still by and large being co-opted into the quasi-sacred, cyclical notion of time in which the future meant decay, and thus was not yet understood as 'proper' progress.\textsuperscript{31}

\textbf{Optimistic evils - saving the appearances}

Further evasions of distancing, and its exacerbation, should be mentioned here. As Lovejoy enumerates, there were a number of paradoxes that stemmed from the central idea of benevolence. Chief among these is what he calls "the fatal defect of optimism...[that] it left no room for hope" (245). If the world as we know it is, by virtue of the principle of sufficient reason, the best of all possible worlds, then all existent evils, as constituent and necessary parts of the greater perfection (by virtue of the principle of plenitude), are destined to remain constant and intact: "Logically thorough-going optimism is equivalent to the doctrine of the Conservation of Evil...this optimistic paradox was a grotesque mockery" (ibid.). The "morally monstrous" corollary of this paradox was a theory of "irremediable inequality," in which the lower orders of the social hierarchy could not aspire to a higher status without fear (by virtue of the principle of the identity of indiscernibles) of displacing those above (246-47). Thus,

\begin{quote}
[t]he optimist's proof of the rationality of the general constitution of things turned out to be a proof of its essential immorality. A revolt against these two implications of the scheme, then, was inevitable, as soon as they became apparent. (246)
\end{quote}

In order to overcome this moral grotesquerie a number of innovations came to be incorporated into the general frame of conception of the rationalist world view that did not overthrow the paradigm so much as attempt to 'save the appearances' of its static order. The radical dualism of Protestant eschatology, for example, with its vision of the
afterlife as eternal bliss or eternal damnation, was modified and mollified by a Deistic conception of meliorism which envisaged, in Addison's words (1711), the "perpetual progress of the human soul to its perfection" (in Lovejoy, 247). The perennial notion, founded on psychological observation, that human happiness required a semi-constant variation of emotional state and circumstance fed into this stream of thought. In addition, as empiricism took hold in the sciences (and as a mode of life), the feeling grew in strength that "Nature as now observable did not appear to present even a segment of the chain [of being] which was complete and unbroken" (Lovejoy, 251).

This led to a shift in thinking away from the prior conception of the existing plenitude of biological species to a notion that differences between life forms were continuous and graduated. With the arrival of new paleontological knowledge, it was recognized that species might have gone extinct in the past, and that species may be in the process of extinction in the present (the Dodo, for example). By the last quarter of the eighteenth century it began to be recognized that the populations of the first contact were suffering severe stress under the yoke of colonialism and contact with families of diseases with which they were epidemically unfamiliar. Diderot comments on precisely this problem in his contribution to Raynal's *Histoire des Deux Indes* (1783):

If one considers the hatred that savage tribes bear one another, their life of hardship and want, the continuousness of their wars, the numberless traps that we ceaselessly set for them. one cannot but predict that before three centuries are out they will have disappeared from the face of the earth. What will our descendants think of this race of men, those who will no longer exist but in the annals of the voyagers? Will not the 'time of the savages' be for posterity what for us are the fables of antiquity?" (in Duchet, 20; emphasis added).

Diderot's moral reflection is germane, but the dire future of which he speaks would not take nearly so long: Nancy Shawanahdit, the last Beothuk, died in 1829.

Knowledge such as this might have dealt a mortal blow to the reigning, and theologically appealing, 'pre-existence' theory, in which "the seed of all living creatures had been formed at the creation of the world, each generation being contained in the one before, like a series of Chinese boxes" (Hampson, 74). However, a number of means were found to evade this challenge. Hypothesizing that gaps in the chain of life were perhaps due to an incomplete knowledge, naturalists began looking for 'missing links,' particularly at the 'top' and the 'bottom' of the chain; and naturally enough, these were, in a fashion, found. Polyps, thought to lie on the boundary between plant and animal, were discovered with the aid of the microscope, and what the eighteenth century considered evidence of
'rude' humanity, the Hottentots and other ethno-cultural 'exotics,' were discovered with the aid of the navigational telescope.

In the second half of the century a number of new ideas and facts began to conglomerate into what we might call a 'proto-evolutionary theory.' These ideas were to shake the confidence of the rationalist paradigm. Hampson notes that there was a growing recognition that, first, geology, paleontology, biology, and geography were all historical sciences, and that, second, the great increases in the quantity of natural historical data being produced were only with difficulty incorporated into the existing schema (221). Inspired by the notion that life was immensely old and by the wealth of empirical studies, natural scientists sought to synthesize new panoptic histories in the image of the 'Universal Histories' of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. In addition, the influx of new information about geological time and about known and unknown forms of life engendered a climate of 'defamiliarization.' The very bedrock of stasis, the ground beneath one's feet, might be millions of years old and be composed of, as Bougainville discovered of the rocks at the Straits of Magellan, "horizontal beds of petrified shellfish," themselves of indeterminate age and species (219).

[M]en were becoming accustomed to regard even the most familiar and elemental aspects of their world as being in a state of continual change. The new mental habit of considering the present, not as a standard by which the past might be known or inferred, but as something like a 'still' whose meaning was inseparable from the motion picture to which it belonged, was obviously capable of more than scientific application and was notably to revolutionize men's conception of history. (221-222)

Many theorists, notably de Maillet and Buffon, came very close to embracing an evolutionary schema. However, they ultimately found ways to dodge its full ramifications, and, by embracing notions of limited transformationism, perpetual flux and/or spontaneous generation, save the appearances of the cyclical order. These attempts became more desperate and transparent as new discoveries were made known. Kant, in his Allgemeine Naturgeschichte (1755), embraced transformationism, but limited it to the age of genesis; afterwards static time ruled (Lovejoy, 267). However, Kant's notion was complicated by his further idea of a cosmological allochronism, in which different parts of the universe evolved to the rhythms of different times. In order to explain the lack of evidence for the 'missing species,' some hypothesized that extra-terrestrial worlds contained the species necessary to the theories of plenitude and pre-existence, others posited that comets had killed them off, and still others that spontaneous generation filled
in the vacant places. For a time, limited transformationism, spontaneous generation, other worlds, and perpetual flux all contributed to a revised paradigm in which, while there might be some change in the status quo, the overarching static-cyclical structure remained intact. However, this preservation of appearances came at some cost. It was the common knowledge of animal breeders, for example, that offspring inherited some characteristics of both parents and that mutations were not out of the ordinary: but this knowledge was by and large ignored by the theorizers because it contradicted the preformationist orthodoxy (Hampson, 229).

The steady-state and its stresses: further evasions

The paradox of the 'steady-state' notion was that it was the 'best of both worlds,' both static and dynamic at the same time, depending on one's specific point of view. In this it picks up upon and replays what I called the 'irregular solid' (combining the static time of revelation, for the 'savages,' and the dynamic time of production, for 'us') of the sixteenth century's nascent colonial discourse. In the mid-eighteenth century it combines for benevolent rationalism ideas of development and decay into a vision in which "the future would be a rectified version of the present" (Hampson, 150). Given this mixture of factual indeterminacy, a growing plurality of theorizations, and the reigning Christian-classical preconceptions, it is not surprising that philosophy returned to the example of the past and began to speak in terms of classical materialism.

Granted a static universe, or a world in random motion, conforming to no identifiable pattern, philosophy seemed to be thrown back on the classical materialism of Lucretius and Epicurus. If things were in a state of unorganized flux, the product of natural determinism was nothing more than a sequence of kaleidoscopic patterns. (95)

The reasons for the willful blindness to the evidence for some sort of evolutionary time may seem puzzling to the 20th century reader. However it must be born in mind that, as Hampson writes, "men's accessibility to new theories was influenced, if not actually determined, by their philosophical presuppositions" (224). Thus, while the assumptions and opposition of the status quo were premised upon the notion of theological teleology, materialists, such as Diderot and d'Holbach, resisted evolutionism for the opposite reason. To them, 'evolution' suggested a teleology, or teleological-like explanation of history, that was to their minds untenable: "Just as Voltaire clung to fixity to preserve his faith in Providence...[the materialists] upheld the idea of a universal flux as the only means of denying it" (225).
In addition to these biological challenges, other objections began to be raised from the mid-century that further undermined the climate of optimism. Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) and *History of Natural Religion* (1757) demolished the reasoned grounds for both natural and revealed religion, and a Lockean inspired sensationalism, carried to its logical conclusion by Condorcet, led to a feeling of complete relativism in which the question of free will was problematic, to say the least. At this same time materialists were advancing cogent arguments for agnosticism or atheism. La Mettrie had written in 1747, "Who knows if the reason for the existence of man is not his existence itself," and d'Holbach in 1770, "The whole cannot have an object, for outside itself there is nothing towards which it can tend" (in Hampson, 93-94).

Under the stress of the arguments of Hume and d'Holbach, the ecumenical spirit of the times started to fray, and new set of oppositions appeared. The limited acceptance of a weak form of relativism grew into a thorough skepticism, while the belief in universals graduated towards a rigorous determinism. The only forceful response that most could still agree upon to the growing polarization of opinion seemed to be the doctrine of social utility, and it is to the crisis of this period that one can trace the roots of utilitarianism.

Arguments in favour of 'economic progress' appeared to have much merit. Throughout the century, most European nations experienced a significant growth in population and food supply. In Britain in particular, prolonged peace and a series of military successes, widespread land enclosure, and new farming methods made possible by larger land holdings and improvements in seeds, stocks, medicines and tools, produced prodigious results. After 1780 there was, notes Hampson, a marked decline in the British mortality rate, even when harvests were bad, due, it was later realized, to industrialization: "England was indeed showing the first signs of a wholly new demographic evolution, with population determined as much by industrial as by agricultural production" (167). Although he was unaware of these demographic changes (they were not apparent until decades later), Adam Smith formulated the secular ethic of the new economic thinking - "The study of [man's] own advantage necessarily leads him to prefer what is most advantageous to the society" - an ethic that seemed to diffuse the "traditional Christian conflict between virtue and acquisitiveness" (118). However, while such ideas were at first perceived as liberating, the optimism of the new economic rationalism was not unproblematic, for it was soon recognized, by Smith himself and others, that 'market laws' would, if left to their own logic, undermine and usurp the spirit of universal benevolence. As outrageous as it may seem, "the conviction that social utility took precedence over dogma run[ning] like a leitmotif throughout the century" ultimately traces a line of descent from Pope and the French neo-classicists, through Hume, Johnson.
and Smith, to the Marquis de Sade because they all adopt the line that since man is part of
nature all that he does is 'natural' (105). That the Marquis added to this genealogy of
thought the notion that 'all that man does is natural - including incest' only made his
innovations that much more difficult to refute.

The eighteenth century Kulturkampf

It is possible to speak of the growing divisions being created at this time in terms
of modern political, or proto-political 'camps.' Liberals endorsed attacks on traditional
practices and supported the rationalizing policies of the monarchy (although a significant
minority felt they did not go far enough), while conservatives rued the 'good old days' and
were incensed by changes to the status quo. Having learned from the by and large
successful polemical campaigns of the Encyclopédistes, opposition, both liberal and
conservative, became better organized and more articulate. Thus conjoined to the
discursively produced silence of the populace, of which I spoke earlier, there develops a
confusing cacophony of claims and counterclaims between the nobles, attempting to
wrest the machinery of state from the monarchy, the agents of royal power, flexing new
muscles in the search for new revenues, and some 'radical,' sceptical, or atheistic (these
latter largely limited to France, England, Holland, and Geneva) liberals, who either
supported the monarchy or urged more sweeping reforms than the most courageous or
far-sighted state minister would dare to envisage. Finally, thrown into the mix as well,
were new forms of popular urban resistance (unlike the bread riots of the peasantry), that
stemmed from the instrumental rationalization, centralization, and 'monologicization' of
'culture.' An example of this were the Esquilache riots in Madrid on Palm Sunday,
1766, in which the semi-literate urban poor revolted against a royal decree outlawing their
traditional forms of dress because they were claimed to be the disguise of criminals.
Ironically, these very same forms of dress, the broad-rimmed hat and ample cape of the
majo and the black lace and gold and scarlet trimmed shawls, petticoats, and head-dresses
of the maja, would return as an upper class vogue in 1790s Madrid.

It needs be recalled that these final confusing decades of the eighteenth century
also saw the rise of a periodical and popular literature. Such literature began to replace
oral hearsay, superstition, and habit as the fount of public 'information,' particularly in
urban centres, and played a significant role in shaping a nascent public opinion. Each of
the political camps in their own way sought to shape political events through deed and
word. But because they employed the same repertoire of "sacred words and phrases" to
mutually incompatible ends (e.g., 'rights,' 'sovereignty,' 'the people,' 'the common good,'
and especially 'nature'), reading the texts of this period one has the sense they are written
with reference to a kind of 'code' (Lovejoy, 14).\textsuperscript{37} By this I do not mean that they are impenetrable, on the contrary, but rather that their programmatic clarity is so semantically overdetermined. Multiple authors, writing from multiple and conflicting points of view, all employing seemingly identical terms of reference lead to an instability of meaning.

The result of these different policies, movements, resistances and revolts was to create a pattern of quite extraordinary complexity and confusion. In one respect royal authority was going farther than ever before in its desperate search for revenue beginning to challenge the hierarchical conception of society that it had hitherto respected. On the other hand, members of the nobility in some European states were acquiring a measure of control over the machinery of political absolutism...[Discursively, there] was not so much a European debate as a general pandemonium, for principles that seemed reassuring in one context proved highly inconvenient in another...Prescription, natural rights and public utility appeared in every possible combination of agreement and antithesis. (Hampson, 183-184).

Perhaps the most semantically overdetermined, 'sacred phrase' of the era was 'Nature.' As conceptual catch-all it could be (and was) employed across a wide spectrum of connotations from a sacred or secular moral imperative - \textit{virtu} - that we today would file under the rubric of human nature, psychology, and/or ethics, to a system (again sacred or secular) of conditioning forces, our biology, sociology, and/or psychology.
IV. Nature

In the mid-century, Nature, already a pivotal notion in Western discourse for centuries, becomes even more central as a site of Enlightenment conjunctions, compromises, confusions and conflicts. Under the stresses of the various forms of distancing, and in an era of increasing secularization of thought, rationality raises the stakes on, and the image of, Nature ever higher. Yet at the same time and for many of the same reasons, opponents of state rationalism view rationality's apotheosis of Nature as its very antithesis. They begin to perceive that freedom, the implicit promise of Enlightenment, is being hemmed in by the very processes that claim to be its realization. The discourses of sentiment and psychology highlight this problem, by showing an implicit conflict between the conventions of officially produced rational knowledge and the power of the mind and the conscience to frame the objects of knowledge for consciousness. An increasingly subtle and bifurcated notion of distances is harnessed to oppositional thought in the articulation of an alienation from Nature in 'culture' and an alienation from what is felt to be an innate liberty of human 'nature' in self-consciousness. Rousseau storms into these battles challenging the Enlightenment's gnostic attitude towards knowledge and privilege on behalf a revolutionary new and agnostic universal, the inner voice. Here we may glimpse the appearance of a 'primitive' notion of progress as the solution to or telos of distances, but one entirely limited by the ontogenic framework of Rousseau's understanding and his belief in the unchanging permanence of natural goodness. However, while Rousseau's discours of the inner voice may 'overcome' alienation it opens up even more profound uncertainties bearing upon the status of rational knowledge, culture, and temporality.

The semantic overdetermination of 'Nature'

It is worth digressing here over the fortunes undergone by the concept of nature in the eighteenth century, and that for two reasons. First, if to define nature as it has been construed in the past is to get a purchase on the operative sentiments of an age, doing so will afford us a more multifarious understanding of the 'pattern of complexity and confusion' of the second half of the century. Second, it will prepare the ground for what I will isolate in sections IV. and V. as the principal reaction to the cephalic tendencies of rationalism: the gradual 'de-allegoricization' of culture, understood as the compact of history and ideas.

Jean Ehrard, on whose detailed study this digression is based, fixes three phases of the evolution of the idea of nature in eighteenth century France: the classical, the intermediary, and the encyclopédiste. He is careful to point out that "the functions that the
idea of nature assumed in the intellectual life of the epoch will doom to defeat the best efforts of those who seek to analyze, clarify, or weed out the notion" (418). This, he shows, stems largely from the fact that the three phases did not so much succeed and annul one another as witness the rise to prominence of a particular inflection of the concept over that reigning in the previous era(s), which nonetheless remained extant. In the classical phase, from 1660 up until about 1730, the idea of nature grew in the scope of its application, and stood for the supremacy of fact (fait) over right (droit), and thus also for submission to (political) necessity. This period saw the rational self-constitution of modern science and the absolute state, in which, as I have already outlined, rational society was able to "mobilize Nature at the heart of social relations, even as...[it left] Nature infinitely remote from human beings" (Latour, 37). As I have already spoken a good deal about this phase, I will not re-discuss it here. In the second, intermediary, phase, c. 1730-1750, Ehrard notes a refusal to recognize the contradictions and distancing of the classical phase which were every day becoming more apparent, the confusion, for example, between fact and right that made Pope such a popular author ('One truth is clear. Whatever Is, Is Right.' Essay on Man). This refusal was overshadowed by a sense of euphoria that nature could 'balance all accounts.' In the period after 1750, the encyclopédiste, and largely as a result of the increasingly pointed challenges to the rationalist paradigm which I have outlined, idealism and fatalism became conjoined in the double edged sword of Enlightenment polemics. In this third phase, although the Enlightenment continues to be animated by the spirit of benevolence, it constantly threatens to self-destuct its own optimism. Ehrard summarizes the inflections wrapped around nature in these phases with three conceptual couplings: the classical: compulsion/constraint-repression; the intermediary: euphoria-lenition; and the encyclopédiste: critique-combat.39

One might compare the development of these inflections to the making of a large snowball, the kind out of which snowmen are built. Starting with a palm-sized ball, one rolls more and more snow onto it until the optimum dimensions are reached. Now let us imagine that the snow is composed of three different colours, representing the three inflections, whose proportions change as one moves in time. In the classical phase the snowball is still small, and the colour of constraint-repression enjoys total dominance over the other colours which are but historically rudimentary conceptions, and pale in hue. As you roll more snow onto the ball it gets larger, and the intermediate layers of pigment, euphoria-lenition, come to dominate both the prior classical layers and the waxing layers of critique, and thus the complexion of the ball as a whole. However, whereas in the first phase the sum total of the snow was by and large entirely composed
of 'constraint,' by the second phase the euphoric layer now comprises, say, about two-thirds of the total; the intermediate layer thus now rests, and this is its lenitive aspect, in an easy (or uneasy - as you please) harmony with the classical and *encyclopédiste* layers. Finally, in the third or *encyclopédiste* phase, the snowball nears completion ('completion' merely in terms of the abstraction of this historical metaphor). While we may say that a critical-combative blush now dominates the others, which sit largely within the ball, that conclusion follows by and large, and merely, because the third layer is the most visible. In terms of proportion it may be only two-fifths of the total snow (the three layers from outside to inside being in the ratio 2:2:1). In the era of the *encyclopédistes* the pre-eminence of critique-combat is thus much attenuated vis-à-vis the supremacy reigning in each of the two previous eras, and, indeed, we may say that by the third phase there is beginning to be something of an unstable plurality of meaning associated with the term nature. Bisecting the ball as it appears after 1750 we would recognize three bands of coloured snow, each of which appears at different points in time to have constituted itself out of and melded into the others: as a whole, however, the pattern forms a kind of three banded, jelly-roll-like spiral emanating outwards from a core of constraint. Ehrad comments that "the system of nature that in 1715 had been so revolutionary," in its substitution of a harmonious, beneficent order for the blind determinism that had so frightened Pascal ('le silence éternel de ces espaces...').

had become by 1750 staid and conservative. It was the revenge of Animal-Nature on Clockwork-Nature...[and although] the new definition [of nature] is opposed almost word for word to the preceding one, at the same time it completes it." (150; emphasis added)

**The era of compromises**

The intermediary, or second, phase, as I have said, was characterized by its attempt to hold on to 'the best of both worlds.' In this period the definition of nature is a highly mediated one:

Sometimes the accent falls on the regularity of her laws, sometimes on her creative powers. But nature could not be 'mobilized' in an exclusive fashion: all the currents of thought of the century are situated, in fact, with diverse nuances, between these two poles. For the advancement of the enlighteners demanded that both the real be rational and that reason refrain from assigning in advance too strict limits to reality; thus, it implied as well a faith in reason and the consciousness of its limits. (150)
It is during this phase, which as Ehrard notes, despite its short reign, most characterizes the century, that nature becomes a touchstone for a notion of conciliating equilibrium. Thus the materialist d'Holbach champions a rigorous determinism of nature, but is unable to avoid implications of inexhaustible fecundity; while the creative evolutionist Buffon proposes a vision of nature as plenipotent and characterized by spontaneous generation, but which is guided, framed, and reigned over by the sure hand of divine wisdom. Unwilling to abandon Christian ideas, which in this phase are becoming more purely tropes, and under the influence of the new tide of 'sentiment,' the discourse of appetites and ambitions, the nature of the intermediarists begins to display a remarkable ability to unify an increasingly diverse array of concepts (Ehrard calls this ability "lexical inertia"), a unity that is "not merely verbal" but rather an "identity of attitude":

If its intellectual signification lent itself to contestation, its affective content is that of an immediate limpidity...The idea of Nature was much more than an abstraction: both those who admired the rational order of things and those who praised the power and fecundity that it revealed, adopted always an affective attitude implied in the same word. Thus a mythology rather than a simple ideology, for, whether the idea remained subordinate to God or opposed him outright, Nature had not yet lost the prestige of Divinity. (151)

This 'identity of attitude' allowed mid-century writers to capitalize on semantic overdetermination, to work up a whole series of connotations of the word nature and set them swirling like heavenly bodies around the solar gravity of 'harmony' and 'consonance.' The resulting cosmic vision, perhaps more a product of an allegoricization run wild - think of Swedenborg - than any programmatic schema, was exhilarating.

The constraints that classical nature openly opposed to the appetites and ambitions are publicly rejected by the optimism of the first half of the century; later, in large part, they are introduced through the back door, but the operation was so discrete that optimism suffered little. A lexical inquiry will afford the opportunity of affirming our analysis. In designating the notional field for the idea of nature in the period we have chosen to study, one would turn up words such as law, reason, sentiment, virtue, happiness, innocence, society, necessity, providence, order, liberty. Such semantic overtones speak volumes of the mollifying suppleness of a notion whose particularity is to conjoin unreconcilables. (420-421)

Ehrard remarks that rather than being the 'era of confusions,' as one critic he cites has claimed, this was the era of compromises: "Unstable compromises, pregnant with conflicts between religion and science, asceticism and liberalism, between tradition and the new" (417). However, the frictions bubbling beneath the surface of ideas were largely
ignored out of a feeling of euphoria that the harmony of nature could encompass all things. 'Nature' often appears in this intermediary phase as a kind of semantic vice grips, an all purpose tool for descriptively drawing into the orbit of harmony many notions that would later stray. As authorizing idea it is linked to the beautiful and reflections on aesthetic pleasure, to the heroic or the commonplace (mondain) of the academic arts, and to a neo-humanistic moral imperative that stood in opposition to tyranny and despotism. At the same time, as braking idea, it is linked to the yoke of 'good taste' and beauteous nature, to the compromises of sensibility, to the respect for (religious and other) formalities, and to "the myth of 'la Nature frugale,' the ultimate defense of the mid-century against that most subversive of words: bonheur [happiness, bliss, good fortune]" (419).

As I have already outlined, once the internal contradictions of rationalist optimism were laid bare, the equilibrium between what Ehrard calls the concept of nature as simultaneously idée-force and idée-frein (motivating and braking idea) was subject to eroding stresses. Benevolent finality began to slip imperceptibly into a kind of classical fatality. The advent of a philosophy of neo-classical resignation straddles this transition, and may be heard as the opening motif of a new awareness of disharmony.

The false optimism of the epoch crumbles the moment one grasps it for closer inspection. Confronted by the reality of physical and moral wrongdoing [mal], the pretended finality of the 'nature of things' dissolves in a crushing fatality. That is how nature was revealed to those who pierced the veil of its triumphant harmony: and they found themselves sounding once again antiquity's counsels of resignation. (419)

Also straddling this transition, both feeding into and feeding off the mounting sense of fatality, is a growing secularization of the classical notion of history as decay. Hampson and de Certeau make justifiable links between this new climate of pessimism and the sharp distinction drawn in the minds of most Enlighteners between their readers and the unenlightened masses whom they perceived as illiterate, obscurantist, and barbarous. There are a number of important consequences that need to be stressed as flowing from this gnostic attitude, which we will come to anon. However, for the moment let us recognize that the ideas that I have been elaborating were by and large the currency of a very few individuals, and, taking stock of Latour's notion of the 'network of universals,' recall that their dissemination was limited to certain specific and narrow channels, such that half a dozen leagues outside Paris would have been farther 'off the grid' of Enlightened ideas than Madrid or Berlin at a thousand kilometres distance.
Hampson recounts an anecdote illustrative of this distancing. In 1783 an unmanned hot air balloon (one of the first) came down a dozen miles outside of Paris; it was promptly "destroyed by peasants who took it for the moon" (140). As a result of this very real sense of 'distance,' Enlighteners took to defending the perceived benevolence of human nature by laying the blame for 'vice' on 'custom' and the contingency of history.

Paradoxically the hostility of free-thinkers to Christian dogma, their desire to combat belief in sin, contributed to the life-support of a form of thinking familiar to theology: history defined as the decay of first nature. That is why the spirits the least Christian appeared haunted by the image of a paradise lost; the nature of the philosophes ended up resembling, strangely, the Eden of the pious. At the same time, the guardians of the faith constantly hesitated between struggling to discover in the backward masses the proof of the universality of Revelation, and demanding of the culture that it remediate, to the best possible degree, the vices of nature. (Ehrard, 390-391)

**Fatalism, scepticism, confusion: consciousness of semantic overdetermination**

These three streams of ideas, neo-classical fatalism, the secularization of the notion of historical decay, and the still potent afterglow of benevolent optimism, began to converge, from 1750, not in harmony but in dissonance. This is the advent of the third phase, the *encyclopédiste*, characterized by the duple critique-combat. The issue of these three streams was an intellectual deadlock and increasing polarization of views that would be exacerbated by the fiscal crises resulting from the mid-century wars and the growing hostility between the 'estates' of absolute society. In the nature-nurture debates then raging, both camps of the philosophes - which, however bitter their differences, often saw eye to eye on the question of their mutual foe, the despotism of Church and prince - fashioned a 'nature' to suit the charge that they wished their polemics to carry out. On the one hand, the champions of nature advanced against absolutism an ideal exigence of natural justice, dignity, and happiness, that aspired to the autonomy of the moral life; yet this line of reasoning could be and was co-opted by the deterministic arguments of Church and state that sought to bend humanity to the common and time-worn Natural Law implicit in the 'great chain of being.' On the other hand, the champions of custom advanced a notion of education towards virtue that, it was thought, would liberate humanity from the deterministic fatality of religious and political despotism; however, often as not, it served to undercut the notion of a universal justice founded upon inalienable nature, and thus also played into the hands of king and clergy. As Ehrard points out, "[i]n practice, the 'all is custom' argument of the one was as paralyzing as the 'nature is all' argument attributed to the other. Fatalism here, scepticism there: two
attitudes equally contrary to the necessities of the struggle" (403). Here we can see the increasing impossibility of always giving the same meaning to the same word.

This polarization of attitude was the initial result of a coming to consciousness of precisely that semantic overdetermination of the idea of nature that was euphorically, and somewhat less than consciously, capitalized on by the intermediarists. However, in this new *encyclopédiste* consciousness, the overdetermination of the word nature would not lead to its rejection or reformation as an unsuitable tool; rather it perseveres as a weapon of combat and critique in the mid-century climate of the burgeoning instability of ideas. The weakness of both arguments being widely admitted, Rousseau and others began to recognize the possibility - and the potential polemical punch - of using them in combination.

After 1750...the reign of nature will be both more conspicuous and less sure...the era of 'systems of nature' will also be the epoch of putting into question that which seemed certain, an era of discussions and controversies, not only between the philosophes and their adversaries (whose oppositions hardened), but also within the enlightened camp: it became apparent that *nature* and *virtue* were not of necessity synonyms, that nature and society did not always speak the same language. The entire oeuvre of Rousseau, contrary to the idyllic naturalism that has for a long time been foisted upon him and is rather the accomplishment of his predecessors, will be a meditation on the antinomies of morality and 'natural' politics...Between 1760 and 1780 nature will pose as many questions as it resolves. (422)

**Self-consciousness: the undeclared state of war between nature and society**

It would fall to Rousseau to articulate the new sentiment - and *self-consciousness* - of distance and disharmony. Disillusioned with the providential order and recognizing the tenuousness of universal benevolence - after all, torture, capital punishment of the most brutal kind, superstition and obscurantism (not to mention snobbery and *Schadenfreude*) were at mid-century far from eradicated - Rousseau's discourse grew out of a secular sentimentalism that, as Hampson puts it, "[accepted] the heart as the legitimate consort of the head" (186).

There was a turning back towards an older Christian view of nature as a battlefield and of man as a creature torn between duty and self-interest...From the conflict in nature the transition was easy to the inevitable disharmony between the individual and society...[Rousseau, as a result,] was led on to postulate a new kind of conflict, between the demands of an increasingly unequal and sophisticated society and the natural instincts of its members. (189-190; emphasis added)
If there is a core idea to Rousseau's philosophy from which all his conclusions stem - as for Hobbes it is the climate of fear to which humanity is subject in the 'natural' state of society - it is that for Rousseau human beings are fundamentally isolated and good. The problem, however, is that human beings also desire the intercourse of society, and since society (in a considerable part of his thinking) corrupts natural virtue, consciousness of the contradictions of the human condition leads inevitably to consciousness of the undeclared state of war between human longings and social norms. This agon Rousseau was to dramatize in many forms and with considerable psychological insight. In his *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), for example, Julie takes direct aim at rationalist benevolence's core assumption that self-interest and communal interest form an identity. Listen to how she 'rationalizes' to her lover, Saint Preux, her marriage to the aristocrat her father has chosen for her:

> I infer the beauty of virtue from a conception of order, and its merits from the general utility. But of what weight is that against my personal interest, and, at bottom, which concerns me more, that I should achieve happiness at the expense of the rest of mankind or that the rest of mankind should achieve its happiness at my expense? If fear of shame or punishment prevents my acting badly for my personal gain, I have only to conceal my evil deeds. Virtue will have nothing with which to reproach me... (in Hampson, 191)

Rousseau's trenchant irony here merely serves to underscore all the more forcefully the division of and *distance* between the faculties he conceives to lie *within* the human spirit, between a passionate desire that can will no wrong because it unlocks and gives voice to the language of virtue and conscience itself, and a socially corrupted judgement that cannot but lead us astray from the promptings of the inner voice.42

Yet Rousseau's presupposition that 'society corrupts natural virtue' is far from self-evident. (The same must be said for the assumption that 'natural man' is by nature good, but more of that anon.) For Rousseau it seems to stem from an observation of the 'facts,' and, I might add, from the mid-century notion of decay and the growing awareness of the limits of Enlightenment. As to the question of whether it was necessarily so, Rousseau is much more circumspect. Indeed, one could say that necessity is something he consistently agonizes over, such that the recurring question that he seeks to answer in much of his work is: 'Is there a form of society that not merely preserves natural goodness intact, but fosters and promotes it?' At times and in a considerable portion of his thought he answers in the affirmative: there is, in principle, such a society, because the history of human kind
(as opposed to 'history' in our more modern, nineteenth century, sense) itself records the gradual unfolding of perfectability - the innate disposition to greater and greater virtue.

Rousseau's reasoning for this faith is two-fold. First is the fact that as Ehrard puts it, in the eighteenth century "the savage has only a negative goodness; [and thus] only a socialized humanity can accede to virtue properly conceived which presupposes the development of reason" (393; emphasis added). Second is Rousseau's notion of 'le remède dans le mal.' This latter encapsulates Rousseau's somewhat tragic definition of the civilized, self-conscious individual as imprisoned in a kind of half-way house of secular purgatory. All around this lonely man, and cutting him off from the intercourse with other virtuous hearts that he so desires, lie the palisades of the villainy, corruption, and vice proper to society (a sort of Robinson Crusoe in reverse). The venality of society notwithstanding, he is nonetheless aware that 'behind' and 'ahead' of him lie forms of society more suited to his innate goodness. The doctrine of perfectibility merely exacerbates his torment, for with each leap in his awareness of the plenipotence of virtue, the stakes of his prison tower even higher. His lot is that of an alienation in principle for "each step 'towards the perfection of the individual' has been also and equally one 'towards the decrepitude of the race'":

That which fashions the misfortune of humanity is precisely the human part of one's nature...the distance that reflection introduces between one's being and the consciousness that one takes of it; without that distance would one enjoy the liberty, 'the most noble' of one's faculties, that distinguishes human kind from the beasts, the 'slaves of instinct'? (ibid.)

It is important to stress that Rousseau's first vision of the isolated individual is one of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness for Rousseau constitutes the felix culpa of humanity in that it is the means by which the individual is able to take stock of the promptings of his inner voice towards liberty and virtue and that which impresses upon him the affliction of an alienating distance - distance between individual souls, between the empirical state of present society (as admixture of venality and virtue) and the ideal of possibility (the triumph of natural goodness), and indeed between the civilized individual and himself. Produced in and for society but exercised only in isolation (as refuge from the present state of moral corruption), the unhappy consciousness or exuberant spirit of the self-conscious individual is a curse. For, however fond Rousseau is of solitude, he recognizes that it too is a bane we constantly seek to overcome because our historical condition is that of a 'fall' into civilization where our natural, solitary, innocence has been lost and replaced by a need for companionship. By the fact of this need the society of
civilization is necessary after all, for it is only in society that the moral and spiritual life are possible. Building on this idea, Rousseau goes one step further in suggesting that the perfection of these latter are the telos (essence and destination) of humanity. Thus, although Rousseau rejects 'natural sociability' he makes it, as Ehrard notes, fundamental to his notion of humanity, for, while the 'savage' is by nature anti-social, he is also as if "made for the future," not only capable of sociability but created for that purpose (394). If it is by reason of society that human virtue has been poisoned, Rousseau argues, then - and this constitutes the remède dans le mal - it will also and only be by reason of society (and perhaps especially by the example of those 'sublime genii' that have managed to escape society's venality and stain) that humanity will 'cure' itself.

**Bilingual speech: 'how will we avoid circularity'?**

We are perhaps now in a position to see that central to Rousseau's notion of self-consciousness is a double language capable of articulating its inner distances and duplexity. At times Rousseau is entirely conscious of this linguistic doubling; at other times it passes by unremarked. Duchet quotes a passage from *Emile*, illustrative of the former, where Rousseau makes his consciousness of this question explicit:

> I have reflected hundreds of times that in writing a long work it is impossible to always give the same sense to the same words. There simply does not exist a language rich enough to furnish as many terms and turns of phrase as it is possible for our ideas to conceive of. The method of defining all one's terms and of ceaselessly substituting the definition for the defined is grand, but impracticable: for, how will we avoid circularity?...[Thus] sometimes I [am constrained to] say that children are incapable of reasoning, and sometimes that they reason with a satisfactory finesse. I do not believe that in doing so I contradict my ideas, but I cannot deny that I often contradict myself in my expressions. (in Duchet, 270)

This bicameralism of consciousness, arising from and in the fact of alienation, must be constantly borne in mind when we read Rousseau, and especially when we take stock of the employ he makes of the idea of nature. Ehrard provides a fine example of this gemination (Derrida in the *Grammatology* has furnished another) from Rousseau's second discourse, the *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*:

> It was by virtue of a very sagacious Providence that the faculties possessed by humanity developed only with the occasion of exercising them, such that they were neither superfluous and brought on stream ahead of necessity, nor belated, nor without correspondence to needs. Innate predisposition furnished humanity
with everything it needed to live in the state of nature: civilized reason contains only that which is necessary to live in society. (in Ehrard, 394)

Rousseau plays here on two senses of the idea of nature simultaneously: it is both essence and state, and process and becoming, empirical reality and ideal possibility. In this double-barreled usage he is at one with the critical spirit of the *encyclopédiste* philosophes for whom "Nature is at the same time an historical phenomena and a transcendental reality" (Ehrard, 394). This means that although human qualities are believed to develop as they are called for by milieu and historical circumstance, they develop out of innate dispositions; and also that, while nature is thought to be unamenable to change, it is 'human nature' and specifically the institutions that are built upon it that are called upon to mend their ways, to foster natural virtue in the image of natural society: hence, "the fiction to which Rousseau [and others] turn to for recourse in denouncing social inequality is that of the natural equality of the primitive man" (*ibid.*). During the second half of the eighteenth century this double language of 'nature' becomes welded to a polemic of combat, and the resulting double-edged broad sword of eighteenth century critique will take all comers.

Neither Voltaire, nor Rousseau, nor Diderot, were able to forgo the use of a word that they had learned to wield as their most dangerous weapon. Henceforward, the voice of nature will be raised to higher and higher pitch in the condemnation of abuses and 'prejudices.' (423)

**The era of confusions: consciousness and ideology**

Here we make a full 'transition' from the second phase, the euphoric era of compromises, to the third, the critical era of confusions. The semi-conscious identity of attitude that led to the semantic overdetermination of the concept 'nature' in the intermediary phase has become fully conscious of its own power to manipulate discourse towards properly speaking ideological ends. The explosion of periodical literature plays perhaps a crucial role in shaping and disseminating this leap towards self-awareness. Where in the previous, intermediary, phase the idea of nature was a touchstone for an all-pervasive consonance, after 1750 there is the increasing emergence - from out of the pluralities that were taken to be consonant - of a critical and combative dissonance that threatens to self-destruct the spirit of optimism on which it feeds:

All the grand themes of the *encyclopédiste* propaganda were in place well before 1750. This also can be confirmed by lexical inquiry. Parallel to the series of consonances that we have listed there were a suite of dissonances: *grace,*
prodigiousness [miracle], revelation, superstition, custom/habit, prejudice/preconception, etc. The antinomian coupling that the word 'nature' formed with the former [suite of consonances] throughout the second half of the century is sufficient proof that from this time on the word takes on a critical value: already its role is to comfort and combat. Finally, and above all, however vexing it may appear to us, the blind optimism of the majority had a polemical force, both in itself and globally. Its white lies were the handmaidens of truth. They translated the birth of a new spirit much more confidently and steadily than the more violent attacks on the institutions of the church, its dogmas, and its ethics, were ever able to do. (424; emphasis added)

This antinomian coupling of the notions of comfort and combat with the concept 'nature' opens, perhaps, a window upon a new sense of closure with respect to the 'world' and a new sense of polysemy with respect to language. For comfort and combat are not only modes of 'nature' but equally begin to reflect upon the dyad 'civilized-savage.' In a world becoming increasingly unified under rational 'universalized' knowledges, 'civilization' will become a rallying cry for comfort and combat; but once 'civilization' is the emblem-concept that unleashes armies of colonial conquest then the supposed difference that the concept marks from 'savagery' is at the same time rendered more and more purely arbitrary. It is perhaps here that modern 'perspectivism' takes root.

Finally, adding to the 'confusions' of the era is the fact that, as I have stated, the new inflection of combat did not so much succeed and annul the previous inflections of constraint and euphoria-lenition as take its place in a now uneasy disharmony with them. Consonance lingered on and was championed in deed and in print by both the traditional orders of the clergy and nobility and a nascent, and relatively weak, bourgeoisie, for whom aristocratic epicurianism was an uninteresting and remote abstraction.

Thus circulated in the public domain, the idea of nature no longer had the same sense it enjoyed in the time of La Fontaine or Sainte-Evremond. The ambiguous equilibrium that it characterized now reflects the advent of new values: work and social utility...While the modern bourgeois spirit of enterprise pleads in its favour the serene virtues of the traditional bourgeoisie - familial dignity, moral seriousness, and frugality - the idea of nature translates the new recognition taken by the commercial class of both the estates of traditional society and its own comparative weakness. Thus, behind the euphoria of the clichés [formules] of satisfaction we can perceive, veiled but not suppressed, the restrictive inflection that the idea of nature had always had. Nature repudiates the idle courtesan and the parasitic priest, but endorses indiscriminately the merchant and the forge-master, the ship chandler and the landed gentryman...the equality that it proclaims accommodates itself to the traditional hierarchy. (425)
By the late eighteenth century the movement of distancing and doubling reaches an acme. Paralleling the plurality of social orders in society, there are a plurality of ideas of 'nature,' and for Rousseau both are constituted out of an alienation in principle. It is this alignment of estates and their discourses, each in open contention with the others, that we can call (proto-) ideological.

*That which no one can contradict - my inner voice*

It is paradoxical that the incredible power that the discourse of the inner voice enjoyed in this 'era of confusions' was premised upon its universality. This universality was of a radically new kind: it was not transcendentally sanctioned like that of the Church, nor contingent upon networks of reproduction like that of science: nor was it the perquisite of the educated and/or the elites. The universality of the inner voice is, despite Rousseau's ambiguity on the question, what Kant would later call an *a priori* analytic statement (the truth of which is supposed from a 'given' preceding articulation, and true in articulation by virtue of the terms with which it is expressed). As a concept it is horizontal and egalitarian: merchant and major-general, bourgeois and Bourbon, peasant, philosopher, poet, prince and priest are all on a level playing field enjoying equal access to that which no one can contradict - my inner voice. The radical, almost transcendental, equality implied in the concept, despite its being for Rousseau a kind of moral law, was not generally recognized at the time, perhaps because of the ideational legacy of a belief in humanity's ultimate subjection to absolute and objective (i.e., external) laws or Natural Law. Rousseau, himself, seems to have often linked the notion of an incontestable inner voice to the cult of genius (implicitly his own), in which the ability of the self-conscious individual imprisoned in his secular purgatory to hear the truths that only he can hear - truths which allow him to escape the corrupting influences of society - is somewhat mysterious. It seems to be the fate and *felix culpa* of Rousseau's genius to be driven out of society into 'nature' where, isolated from all corruption, he is able to fully plumb "that inner voice which he believed to be attuned to God" (Hampson, 206). Hampson goes on to note that it is but "a small step" from the cult of genius sounding an incontestable inner voice "to the justification of revolt for its own sake"; and that especially so when the implicit (and largely unrecognized) radical egalitarianism of the notion is being widely disseminated by an exploding periodical literature throughout the nascent public space by piggy-backing on the common currency and popular polemics of the 'inner voice' (200).
Outflanking gnosticism

There are two ideas we have passed over somewhat hastily that can now be addressed. The first of these sums up in a way the confusing and critical lines of battle in the third phase. This the Enlightenment's gnostic attitude, the sharp distinction drawn in the minds of most Enlighteners between their readers and the unenlightened masses whom they perceived as illiterate, obscurantist, and barbarous. Wlad Godzich has written of gnosticism that "[a]gainst the notion that salvation originates in faith (*pistis*), gnosticism has always held that it is the result of knowledge (*gnosis*) and that error or false knowledge are the causes of perdition. Yet [originally] gnosticism did not stand alone but rather as a rationalist instrument of support of revealed truth" (ibid.). With the advent of rationalism, however, this gnostic attitude would pass beyond its prior role as a legitimate handmaiden to revealed truth and rise to a kind of self-appointed 'supremacy' as the very possession of truth:

[The gnostic viewpoint] achieved supremacy with the Cartesian reversal of the relationship of faith and reason in relation to truth: henceforth the belief in God and the truths that he dispenses would be subject to the prior operations of reason...The gnostic viewpoint far surpasses the uncertainties of faith because it rests on the certitudes of rationality. The reason of the Enlightenment is fundamentally gnostic, and, since it seeks to replace the vagaries of faith with the certitudes of rationality, it is logical that it should attempt to assert its hegemony. To sin against faith is to sin against a God whose designs are at best torturous or visible 'in a glass darkly,' but, in any case, in need of mediation. But to sin against reason is a matter of easy demonstration and therefore calls for immediate correction in all the meanings of this term. (xv)

By the middle of the eighteenth century the gnostic attitude, while becoming more and more secularized, was also becoming more and more prevalent, and less and less of a mediator. For the eighteenth century rationalist, nothing was easier to demonstrate than the trespasses against reason: they could be, and were, evinced blindfolded. Voltaire's dismissal of the 'sins of the ignorant' is entirely characteristic of a widespread eighteenth 'Enlightened snobbery':

There is always, within a nation, a people that has no contact with polite society, *which does not belong to the age*, which is inaccessible to the progress of reason
and over whom fanaticism maintains its atrocious hold. (in Hampson, 160; emphasis added)

Interestingly, Voltaire’s consciousness of distance is expressed in temporal terms, and this we may assimilate to the notion of cosmological allochronism made popular at the mid-century by Kant and others. Like the ‘steady-statists’ of that period, Voltaire’s overweening self-confidence here is premised upon “the almost universal conviction that the social order was static” and its intermediarist corollary that if there were to be any change (through education, for example) it could only take place over eons, such that the traditional hierarchy would be in no real aspect any different from what it was then - the ‘best of all possible worlds’ (Hampson, 159). As we have already seen, however, there is in Diderot’s remarks about the future extinction of the ‘primitives’ (‘one cannot but predict that before three centuries are out...’) a tacit recognition that something about the gnostic steady-state view does not quite add up.

What made the discourse of the inner voice so radical is that its greater purchase on ‘universality’ was an explicit and fundamental challenge to the gnostic elitism of the Enlightenment ‘clergy of reason,’ and one that implicitly outflanked the rationalist status quo of ‘stations’ and ranks. Somewhat ambiguously, but with unprecedented polemical effect, Rousseau characterized ‘knowledge’ as by and large corrupt, contaminated and demoralized by wealth, society, luxury, temptation, and a loss of innocence: true wisdom, whose ultimate source was inner, is agnostic, depending neither on the acquiescence to, nor the acquisition of, knowledge-as-convention. However much this may appear to be a ‘proto-class-consciousness,’ it is not. Rousseau saw all forms of ‘knowledge’ in this light, save intuition of natural goodness and exultant virtue, and had little sense of solidarity with the unlettered (or women). Rather, like Luther, Rousseau’s revolt against the ‘whore of reason’ was in the name of not the oppressed, but “on behalf of an outraged nature...[a revolt whose] ultimate object was to restore, as far as that was still possible, a natural harmony...of moral purpose” (Hampson, 216). In a sense, Rousseau’s challenge to Enlightenment gnosticism, aristocratic fatalism, and elitist distance, while accepting distance as the alienating fact of self-consciousness on which all subsequent theorizing must be built, ultimately gestures towards an overcoming of (and a state of having overcome) those distances through the actualization of virtue (harmony, and the harmonization of the ‘will of all’ in the ‘general will’) and a kind of ultra-gnostic possession of the true. And because he believes a restitution of the human-natural society concord is theoretically possible, Rousseau, while fanning the flames of critique and
combat, thus also places himself mid-stream in the century's optimistic current of a secularized providential harmony.

**Whence 'Natural virtue' - self-love?**

The other idea that we have passed over too hastily is the presupposition that humanity was 'naturally' good. By virtue of the 'fact' of conflict between human longings and social norms, itself premised on the notion of what Rousseau himself calls "fatal progress" (the 'social fall' of humanity into a state of 'enslavement' to political authority and societal convention), advocates of the inner voice proclaimed that society must be reformed to suit human nature, and not vice versa (in Hampson, 215). The ruling idea here is that the individual is essentially innocent, a notion of humanity that for Enlightened Europe stems from the Gospels. In the eighteenth century this idea is renewed by two streams of thought, one 'inner' and one 'outer', the Protestant 'affirmation of the ordinary life,' and a belief in the maternal warmth of Nature (in whose bosom were cradled the inhabitants of 'Terra Nullius'). Let us take them in sequence.

Recall that the principle of universal benevolence seemed to offer an antidote to the icy geometricism of the rationalist world view. It also, and this particularly in the Protestant cultures of northern Europe, linked arms with the affirmation of the ordinary life by sanctioning the employment of reason as instrument of God's providence. For a thinker like Locke, this meant that, "[a]lthough we in fact learn of God's law through revelation, we could in principle reach similar conclusions by reason alone" (Taylor, 236). Furthermore, and this is something quite new in protestant inspired thinking, Locke champions a way of affirming the ordinary life that at the time is much resisted, but grows in strength throughout the eighteenth century. Seeking to reject original sin as being contrary to the ordinary life, Locke is then faced with the question: what of grace? Here he makes an important innovation by incorporating Gassendian hedonism into his theory of human psychology. In place of grace, Locke substitutes 'self-love,' and for original sin he substitutes "a naturalized variant...[i.e., the] inherent penchant of human beings to egocentricity and personal power":

This was innate: we see it in very young children...If we add to this the human tendencies to laziness and pride...then it is small wonder that the Law of Nature is rarely integrally obeyed...This is where God comes in. Through his revelation, he makes his law known to us, in an unmistakable fashion, one which is bound to make a deep impression on us. This happens particularly through Jesus Christ, who attests to his status as God's messenger through the miracles he performs. God thus spectacularly overcomes the difficulties we have in knowing his
Law...In so uplifting us, God uses our self-love. It is a basic fact about humans that they desire pleasure and seek to avoid pain. This is not a failing but an unalterable feature of their make-up. (240-241)

In this conception, God's awakening us to a form of self-love (natural virtue) that can be rationally reflected on and maximized to our best use (humble participation of God's plan) replaces the need for grace. But also implicit in Lockean rationalism is the notion that revelation merely offers us that which we could acquire through our own inquiries. Over the course of the following half-century as rationalist and empiricist modes of inquiry scrutinized greater and greater areas of God's design, Deism, notes Taylor, slid almost imperceptibly into naturalism; and while the necessity of human self-love as a substitute for grace did not decline, the supernatural authorization for natural virtue became more and more superfluous: "The good that God wills comes more and more to centre on natural good alone" (247).
V. Alienation-Primitivism

As we have seen in the previous section Rousseau's agnostic challenge to Enlightened thought and its socio-political order is premised upon a sense that humanity, and not society, was somehow 'naturally' good. In framing his challenge in this way Rousseau articulates a conflict between the individual and society around a notion of alienation that is recognizably modern. However, aware that his arguments for natural virtue and an innate liberty lack the support of evidence, Rousseau turns to the mid-century flood of ethnographic texts and hypothesizes a parallel between the alienation of the self-conscious individual and that of the 'savages' of first contact. Because, he claims, both have been subject to the "fatal progress" of rational civilization, he infers that the history and 'essence' of the 'primitives' hold out answers to his dilemma of giving 'objective' cogency to his 'subjective' intuitions of natural freedom (in Hampson, 215). In this, Rousseau's attitude to the distances produced by rational temporality is somewhat confusing, for, on the one hand, they are 'objective' and as such necessary to his autobiographical narrative of the rise to self-awareness (innocence-alienation-overcoming), but, on the other hand, they are 'subjective' in that they are constantly reduced to an inner distance and temporality. The question problematically articulated here by Rousseau, is the great eighteenth century problem of the knowledge of knowledge: that if my cognition places frames around the things 'I know' then how 'real' or 'true' is that knowing? Rousseau's conception of the inner self does not solve these problems but merely exacerbates them, for while it is able to rout, in Rousseau's terms, the problem of alienation, it establishes a highly problematic and contingent relation between the subject and the world, history, and Rousseau's own hopes for future political structures of liberty. This modern, agnostic universal, subject is inserted into, but ultimately exerts a 'de-allegorizing' force upon, culture construed as the compact of the materiality and metaphysics, history and ideas.

'Natural virtue' - geographic consciousness

The other idea-current flowing into and catalyzing the notion of 'natural virtue' (in addition to that of 'self-love') was the ebbing of geographic boundaries and the consequent flood of ethnographic information throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By the mid-eighteenth century circumnavigations of the globe were becoming common and the publication of voyagers' accounts was becoming a torrent. In 1746 the first volume of the Abbe Prévost's Histoire générale des voyages (15 vols.: 1746-1759), a compendium of 'world' customs, histories, geographies, arts, sciences, and manufactures -
and a kind of historical counterpart to the *Encyclopédie* - was published. In these accounts, what previously had been to some extent an inchoate notion of European superiority (largely based on the feeling that Christianity was the only 'true' religion), began to take form in a recognizably modern and *global* time-space co-equation: that displacements in space were somehow equivalent to displacements in historical time, such that the differences between 'us' and 'them' were the difference between the state of civilization and the state of nature, or perhaps more exactly the difference between agricultural/industrial societies and hunter-gatherer societies, whose modes of socio-cultural interaction are quite different. Indeed it was at this time that the word 'civilization' itself was coined.49

The true subject of Prévost was not the *Histoire des voyages* as such, as much as the history written in its margins, where there came to the fore an image of the world to come: 'To what end,' asks Prévost, 'will this work merit the name of history if the accounts related here do not have a kind of constant rapport between them which gives them a historic character?'...If there is in the *Histoire des voyages* a 'critical and coherent picture of the universe' it is because Prévost grounds his work in the Enlightenment [and specifically Ehrard's intermediary] conception of history...neither providence nor chance, but a system of forces, a chain of causes and effects, and *the inexorable distribution of that time which awards power to the strongest*: thus, the Portuguese cede the mantle of leadership to the Dutch, 'more skillful and happier,' the Spanish prepare with their own hands the ruin of their empire and slide into decadence, and the English and the French little by little assure themselves control of the seas. Prévost's *Histoire* is a *histoire raisonnée* - of commerce and navigation, of voyages, but also a chronicle of colonization...Guided by his sense of topicality [*actualité*] Prévost emphasizes a mixture of facts and a drama of relations at the moment where history is on the point of confirming their importance...In the *Histoire des voyages* an entire epoch recognizes itself, illuminated by its own dynamism and development, bound to its own vital interests. (Duchet, 85-86; emphasis added)50

**The multiple employment of ethnography**

True to the reigning paradigm of rationalism, the ethnographic knowledge garnered by these voyages was thought to be 'natural-scientific,' knowledge of those nearer to the state of nature. This knowledge could be employed to bolster Christian universalism, as we have seen with Jean de Léry's *Histoire*, or later, with the growing ethnologization of religion, to prop up the notion of nature as a system of conditioning forces, and/or the status quo of European cultural universalism. Thus Hume in his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748) offers the synoptic view that natural scientific data merely confirm a secular variant of the (European) universal-particular relation:
It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the acts of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same in its principles and operations... Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English: you cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former most of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and place, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature. (in Hampson, 109)

Note that Hume employs the concept of 'universal' in two senses: by 'universal acknowledgement of great uniformity' he means the widespread consensus among a group of European thinkers (a consensus that in 1748 was beginning to show signs of stress), while by 'universal principles of human nature' he intends an a priori notion.

In addition, however, to its function as prop in rationalist accounts of European universality, ethnographic information could also be, and in the eighteenth century increasingly was, used as a critical lever with which to censure the status quo. This critical stance was generally perpetrated in one of two forms: either by assimilating ethnographic data to notions of a weak cultural relativism (de Brosses' *Culte des dieux fétiches* (1760) saw fetishism as common to all religions including Christianity<sup>51</sup>), or by advancing the 'noble savage' as the true form of human nature that the European society of aesthetic refinement and superficial affectation was thought to have corrupted - this was after all the era of the Rococo. Already in 1670 Dryden in his *The Conquest of Granada* had introduced a weak form of this latter universalism that Rousseau would later forge into a most powerful weapon:

> I am as free as nature first made man,  
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

**The looking-glass of political anthropology**

Whether ethnographic data was used as a prop or a weapon, in both cases its employ signals that anthropological-geographical knowledge was becoming a touchstone for a new sense of European historicism and new notions of political theory. Duchet notes that Voltaire's personal library of 3,867 titles contained 133 voyagers' accounts and two dozen books of geography (65). Even a mind as skeptical as Burke's could effortlessly embrace the new horizontal orientation and will to totality:
[W]e possess at this time very great advantages towards the knowledge of human Nature. We need no longer go to History to trace it in all its stages and periods...But now the Great Map of Mankind is unrolld at once; and there is no state or Gradation of barbarism, and no mode of refinement which we have not at the same instant under our View. (quoted in Hulme & Jordanova, 'Introduction,' 9)

At the same time that sizeable chunks of the Americas were being turned into profitable export enterprises run by slave labour, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Hume, Voltaire, Buffon, Gibbon, Helvetius, Rousseau, Burke, and Diderot, all drew on voyagers' accounts in formulating a new discourse of society compounded of equal parts of history, geography, ethnology, and political theory, what Pierre Saint-Amand calls 'political anthropology.'

Although until "the mid-eighteenth century the word 'anthropology' still belonged to the vocabulary of anatomy and signified 'the study of the human body," after 1750, and paralleling the advent of the discourse of 'civilization,' 'anthropology' begins to take shape in its modern form (Duchet, 15). Duchet notes that anthropology properly constituted takes off from Lafitau's 1724 *Moeurs des sauvages américains comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps* (and despite his thesis of the impossibility of atheism), because Lafitau employs a comparative method that for the first time envisages 'exotic knowledge' as knowledge not only relevant to 'us,' but as a form of European self-knowledge. We may say that Lafitau makes a science of what in de Léry was merely latent. Duchet:

It is only by means of their own culture that Europeans begin to perceive the reality of the 'savage' world, which, in itself, remains as strange and as inaccessible [as it had been for the ancients, and for Europeans during the two previous centuries]. The metamorphosis of the 'savage' into the 'primitive,' making of him an historical being, made possible at the same time a properly anthropological perspective; in the 'primitive' the European could finally recognize himself, and learn to know himself: this metamorphosis permitted him to open up the space of his own history, and to figure the *homo sylvestris* among his own ancestors. *Thus was definitively constituted the dyad 'primitive-civilized' which, by the play of parallels and antitheses, and across the ladder of beings and values, marshalls the whole functionality of anthropological thought until the beginning of the nineteenth century.* The 'savage' man is thoroughly confounded with his doubles, Scythian or Teuton, and takes his place at their side in a vast mythology of origins. (18)

From the middle of the eighteenth century, as the 'morally monstrous' corollaries of benevolent optimism become apparent and the urgent promptings of the inner voice begin to be heard, the conflict between the individual and society begins to take shape
around a notion of *alienation* that we recognize as 'modern.' But in this era of socialized religion there is little direct evidence at hand for the 'fact' of the natural virtue of the individual, and indeed, as has been noted, much standing against its acceptance (Hobbesean brutishness, classical and Christian notions of decay). Recognizing the implicit weakness of their foundations for natural innocence, advocates of natural religion naturally enough turned to the nascent science of anthropology and the mid-century flood of 'discovery' texts to support their ideas.54

Colonialism: 'barbarisms of the civilized' and 'naturalized expansion'

An important question that we ought to ask ourselves in this context is: what relation did the self-consciousness of alienation bear to the growing awareness of the 'moral monstrosity' of colonization? The *Histoire des voyages*, notes Duchet, already refers to the empires of the *ancient* Mexicans and *ancient* Peruvians, as if implicitly recognizing that much of the colonial world had been irrevocably changed by a loss of customs, lands, and liberties, and thus "existed only through the deforming prism of European history" (19). While a tradition of criticism of the crimes of the colonizers had existed since Las Casas, following the *de facto* victory in 1551 of Sepúlveda's neo-Aristotelian 'natural slavery' argument over the universal-Christian civilization thesis of Las Casas,55 these critiques were directed against the abuses of the system and not the system itself. To have made the latter charge would have meant undermining "the sole moral foundation of a humanistic conquest - the civilization [or salvation] of the 'savages,'" and as such, political suicide (21). Even the suspicion of such a charge was enough to cause Las Casas' reformist oriented *Brevíssima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1542) to be progressively buried in Catholic Europe during the two centuries since its publication.56 As Duchet notes,

Las Casas is cited in not one of the articles the *Encyclopédie* consecrated to the Americas. After the flurry of English and French editions in the final years of the seventeenth century, years corresponding to the supersession of Spanish preeminence, this silence is the sign of a *voluntary forgetfulness*: the work awoke waves of outcry, and merely to refer to it would be to take sides - one avoided doing that. (150; emphasis added)57

She goes on to remark that while the atrocities of colonization do find their place in the *Encyclopédie* they are perceived as generic, non-quantitative, and largely Spanish:

The cruelty of the Spanish is stigmatized, but the article *'Cruauté'* places on the same level 'the incredible barbarity committed by the Spanish against the Moors,
the Americans, and the inhabitants of the Netherlands. It is as if the figures do not truly speak: millions of Americans exterminated, the total extinction of a race, are less the indicators of an unheralded barbarism than the effect of a 'destructive zeal' inspired by 'false principles' and blind superstition. (152)

It bears repeating that while eighteenth century criticism of the excesses of colonialism did not go unheard, there was perceived to be "no meaningful antidote" to the system itself (21). Perhaps most surprising is the notion that an antidote was needed at all: abandonment of the colonial enterprise was simply unthinkable. Thus while the philosophes sought the remedy of specific abuses (freeing the slaves, ending the maltreatment of the Indians, civilizing the 'savages,' etc.), their polemics were easily assimilated to the discourse of the colonial administrators (with whom they had a great deal in common) and thus merely "contributed to the maintenance of the established order...[and ultimately] a colonial ideology" (ibid.).

Duchet points out that Buffon's doctrine of the cycles of natural plenitude was very influential in this matter of the remediableness of the abuses and the immutability of the system. Like others of the age, Buffon was caught up in the general geographic consciousness of the Enlightenment and naturally enough his notions of cosmic fertility found geographic expression. In his *De la Nature* (1764), a not un-poetic paean to the 'second nature' of civilization, humanity is seen to reign over the spatial immensity and colossal undertaking of 'natural civilization' as the justified surrogate of God. Starting from a numeration of natural wonders Buffon passes effortlessly to

...the sea subjugated, traversed from one hemisphere to another; the earth everywhere accessible, everywhere rendered green and fecund...deserts made habitable cities by an immense humanity who ceaselessly circulate, radiating outwards from the centres to the extremities; open and well-travelled routes, communications everywhere established as testimonies to the energy and unity of society; a thousand other monuments of power and glory, grand demonstrations that humanity, master of the terrestrial domain, has worked upon it, renovating its entire surface, and that from all eternity humanity shares that empire with nature. (in Duchet, 224)

It is to be noted that the coordinates of Buffon's vision are all spatial, precisely in the manner of Latour's network of scientific universals, and that time remains 'from all eternity' a function of 'natural' cycles. However, Buffon's notion of the 'natural' continuity between flora, fauna, and humanity is premised upon a gemination (or twinning) in his idea of nature with respect to 'natural' limitations and 'natural' expansion. This means that, while on the one hand natural environments are believed to condition the 'civilizational
energies' of a people, such that climatic and geographic excesses are obstacles to the
development of civilization, it also means that, on the other hand, some peoples (i.e., the
agricultural, animal husbanders) are recognized as having been so favoured by their
natural environment that they cannot but take possession of the vast immensities of the
earth and the oceans - so favoured in fact that it is their 'natural' birth-right to do so.

Although Buffon is not unaware of the 'barbarisms of the civilized,' and indeed condemns
them roundly, he feels that they are but the imperfections of a 'natural' superiority. His
admonishments, thus, are cautionary: unless the abuses be remedied, 'civilized' peoples
will themselves fall back into a 'state of nature,' forfeiting their rights of naturalized
expansion and responsibility for the future of the species.

For Buffon, every refined people tends, by effect of its own dynamism, to multiply
and expand, to become the centre of a network of exchanges and communications
from which it radiates out to the extremities of the world...His anthropology,
faithful to the image of the world and humanity that he shared with his era, erects
an historical fact into a scientific concept: the difference in potential, which
attains then its maximum, between a 'civilized' Europe and the 'savage' world, and
the expansive force which results. Normative and descriptive at the same time, it
reverences [respecte] a hierarchical order implicitly seen as invariable. (Duchet.
225)

These two currents then, the critique of abuses and the ideology of natural expansionism.
combine in a curious way in the mid-century to engender a feeling that although 'we' may
have failed in our benevolent paternalism to foster the advancement of the 'savages' of the
first contact (increasingly if tacitly defined as hunter-gathers), all is not lost for there
remain still others that can be 'civilized' in the proper way.

With time, these changes [the deterioration of the hunter-gatherer peoples of the
first contact] became so conspicuous that it was necessary to redefine the state of
'savagery' from images already half-effaced, or to rediscover it in the heart of
unexplored continents or virgin forests as yet unmarked by the imprint of
conquest. In the mid-eighteenth century 'savages' from Amazonia, the north of
Europe or Asia, Tahitians, or the Xhosa renewed the image of a 'savage' world
still intact, where, sheltered from the perils of history, a 'primitive' humanity still
survived. (Duchet, 19)

Alienation and primitivism: fundamental negations

It is in the context of this redefinition that the notion of the 'noble savage' rises to
currency. Of course the discourse of 'noble savagery' can be traced back at least several
centuries, but the question here is why did it become so important in the mid-eighteenth
Todorov locates its 'modern' foundations in an equation and a deduction shared by both Columbus and Las Casas, that is, in the equation that the nakedness of the natives (the first thing Columbus remarks upon seeing them) = non-expulsion from the garden of Eden ("To me he looked like our father Adam before the Fall") = a-cultural identity ("It seemed to me that they belonged to no religion"); and in the deduction that the natives, being in a 'natural state' must necessarily evince a natural, and uncorrupted morality ("They are without covetousness of another man's goods") and thus were the most natural Christians "of any people in the world." Todorov goes on to comment that the combination of the European projection of 'primitivism' and the destruction wrought by the conquest was to have an unexpected issue in the centuries to come:

The encounter of Montezuma with Cortes, of the Indians with the Spanish, is first of all a human encounter; and we cannot be surprised that the specialists in human communication should triumph in it. But this victory from which we all derive, Europeans and Americans both, delivers as well a terrible blow to our capacity to feel in harmony with the world, to belong to a pre-established order; its effect is to repress man's communication with the world, to produce the illusion that all communication is interhuman communication...During the centuries to follow, they would dream of the noble savage; but the savage was dead or assimilated, and this dream was to remain a sterile one. (1992, 97)

Agreeing with Todorov's general analysis I would like to take issue with his conclusion of 'sterility.' What is so striking about the story as I have construed it is that the notion of alienation and that of the 'noble savage' should arise to prominence in the same moment, in conjunction as it were - that, as Hampson puts it, "[b]elief in the alienation of the individual from contemporary society was inseparable from the cult of primitivism" (208). What both notions seem to share is a fundamental negation. For Rousseau, it is through self-consciousness that I realize that I am not myself, that 'I am another,' and alienation is the name I give to the state of discord that structures my relation to my 'self,' to others, and to the world. Indeed, the alienation of the self is an image of my alienation from the world in as much as 'I' am a fundamental constituent of that world. Similarly, and at the same moment, it is realized that the 'first savages' are no longer what they were, that they too are another vis-à-vis the 'savages' newly discovered 'sheltered from the perils of history.' If the 'original savages' had been destroyed (and both Buffon and Voltaire believed that the Americas were at that time almost deserted61) then perhaps the new 'savages' could be 'saved' by being ennobled. Indeed, these latter must be noble62 because they have retained a facility with that mode of communication which 'we,' as decadent fallen humanity, feel we have lost ('But this encounter of Montezuma
with Cortes from which we all derive delivers a terrible blow to our capacity to feel in harmony with the world' (Todorov)). What is more, the question arises of conjunction, the question as to whether their 'essence' and their 'history,' which are equally ours, might hold out answers to our predicament (which is also theirs?). Eighteenth century ethnography of the 'noble savage,' then, will be the traffic circle through which the two discursive streams of alienation and salvation must pass, and in doing so they will feed one another. Ethnography is precisely that which allows me to know that my 'fall' into civilization is historically real, that the transparency and immediacy that constitute the nobility of the 'savage' (an immediacy that is also mine, for the 'savage' is an image of my own rise into a naturalized place of understanding) is forever lost in an ageless past; however, it is also that which allows me to realize (and palpably experience) that that natural innocence is not entirely extinct, but in fact present if somewhat hidden, for by reflection I can hear its urgent voice buried deep within me.

When Rousseau confidently invokes a 'nature that nothing can destroy,' he becomes the poet of enduring essences, at last unveiled. He discovers the primal transparency close at hand within himself. 'Natural man,' whom he had sought in the depths of time, turns up in the depths of the self, with all his 'original features' intact...Historical distance is reduced to mere interior distance. From that moment, nature (like the divine presence for Augustine) ceases to be what is most remote from us in the past and becomes what is most central to our very existence...now transparency is an inward condition...An image results, which (Rousseau assures us) is a true image of the history of the species as a whole: the vanished past is resurrected and revealed to be the eternal present of nature. (Starobinski 1988, 18-19; first emphasis added)

If for Rousseau historical distance is reduced to interior distance, ethnography is a kind of historical time machine guaranteeing that the fall did take place, as tradition tells us, in a time immemorial, for the 'fact of it' is as if scientifically confirmed here and now in the present of ethnographic literature. And, what is more, this fact is as if doubled in the 'past-present tense' of ethnographic literature and in the resonance that that literature finds within me by virtue of a principle "antecedent to reason," viz. compassion: that which "inspires in us a natural aversion to seeing any other sentient being perish or suffer, especially if it is one of our kind" (Rousseau 1984, 70).

'Subjective' intuitions and 'objective' cogency

In seeking to account for the notion of alienation that Rousseau fashions into a common currency of modern European thought critics have rightly focussed on the self-
demonstrative 'psycho-drama' of Jean-Jacques. Jean Starobinski calls this Rousseau's resurrection of the Christ-archetype of the "suffering healer": "Everything, it seems stems from Rousseau's being deprived of maternal love. 'I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes'" (1988, 367; 170). There is no doubt that Rousseau's sensitivity to misery is genuine, and that it is generously extended in a deep and prescient compassion for the misfortunes of others, as Starobinski notes:

Rousseau was permanently 'sensitized' by what he had seen of rural and urban poverty... At Montpellier in 1737 he saw what many Frenchmen at that time could not see and was astonished by things that astonished almost no one else: 'These streets are lined by superb town houses interspersed with wretched cottages filled with mud and dung. Half the inhabitants are very rich, the other half excessively miserable. But all are equally beggars for living in the vilest and filthiest manner imaginable.' (1988, 284)

What I would like to emphasize, however, is how Rousseau's 'subjective' sentiments are given 'objective' cogency64 - and not just for Rousseau himself but also for 'the world' - through the resource of ethnography. Five years after his visit to Montpellier, Rousseau makes the acquaintance in 1742 of Buffon. Rousseau is thirty years old and seeking to make his way in the world. Over the decade spanning this meeting and the publication of his first and second Discourse(s), Rousseau will devour a great deal of what is then currently available in the fields of natural history, voyagers' accounts, and social and legal theory. In the Discourse on Inequality, whose jacket blurb declares "[t]he discourse sets out to demonstrate how the growth of civilization corrupts man's natural happiness and freedom," of the sixty-odd references that Rousseau makes to other authors or works, voyagers' accounts top the list (19), followed by social and legal theory (14), classical references/quotations (12), and natural history and literary-moral references (10 each).65 What is more, the kind of references Rousseau cites from (largely seventeenth century) social and legal theory or classical authority are of an anthropological nature; these citations themselves bear the imprint, sometimes very deeply, of the impress that voyagers' accounts had had on their authors.

What is to be noted about the authors Rousseau cites, is that while both he and they employ anthropology to analogous (but not similar) ends, only Rousseau speaks of alienation. Between the era of optimism and that of (Rousseau's) alienation something, it appears, happened to European society; but just what exactly it was is difficult to identify, not only in terms of Rousseau's own experience, but particularly in terms of the 'climate of ideas' that found in Rousseau's experience a sounding board for a much more
widespread feeling. Qualitatively, then, let me propose a recipe of ingredients whose proportions are as uncertain as they are overlapping, and whose constituents each contain the seed of negation. Modern alienation is compounded out of one measure of a new fascination with the drama of the self (nourished in the climate of sensibility growing out of the writings of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, by the new notion that happiness was a goal worthy of pursuit, and furthered by the literary medium of choice for explorations of this kind: the novel\textsuperscript{[66]}), one measure of properly speaking historical awareness (made salient by changes in the 'state of nature' and the fate of the 'savages' in the colonial world), and one measure of reflection on structural changes in the European natural-social environment (the formalization, capitalization, and standardization of practices resulting from the rationalizing policies of absolute states). The seed of negation implicit in the drama of the self stems from Rousseau's recognition that the alienating effects of rational temporality are necessary to his vision of an ontogenic rise to self-awareness, what we might call an autobiographical understanding: 'I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes.' The seed of negation implicit in the new historical awareness I have already linked to the notion that the 'old savages' were being destroyed and new 'savages' were being discovered. This is the idea that if History was to be not just a series of random changes which could in theory revert to their former state, but rather a form of programmatic change for the better, and as such inevitable and/or irrevocable, then something was profoundly wrong with this idea (cf. Diderot's comments on the future extinction of the 'primitives'). With respect to the seed of negation within the changes brought about by the rationalization of states, this is a home-bred variety of the structural changes wrought abroad. Because structural changes in the colonies were not nearly so visible to the residents at home, and because these lands and cultures were perceived as having no structures (or history) to speak of, such changes were interpreted within an historical optic, the European history in which they were now encased by virtue of contact and colonization. At home, the mid-century preference for steady-state notions of temporality and fact that these changes were the subject of widespread polemic and recorded, incremental alterations accounts for their being assigned to a structural frame of perception.

Finally, adding to my previous discussion of the seed of negation within modern self-consciousness, let me state that this negating operation dates back to one of Rousseau's principle models for his endeavours, Augustine. Augustine, as Charles Taylor notes, took over a whole series of oppositions from Platonism ("higher/lower, eternal/temporal, immutable/changing"), and, through the mediation of the gospel of St. John, re-organized them "essentially in terms of inner/outer...\[\cdots\] 'Do not go outward:
return within yourself. In the inward man dwells truth’” (129). In shifting “the focus from the objects known to the activity itself of knowing,” Augustine can be said to inaugurate a tradition of self-reflexivity that is to us now so ingrained we take it to be part of the ‘natural’ ontogeny of the mature human subject (130). For Rousseau alienation is a loss of precisely this self-immediacy of the inward (an immediacy, moreover, that he equates with infancy), stemming from his belief that, as Starobinski expresses it,

[n]o longer is there a direct connection of mind to mind: the relationship now involves the mediation of things. The resulting perversion stems not merely from the fact that things come between minds but also from the fact that men no longer identify their interest with their personal existence but instead with mediating objects, which they believe to be indispensable to their happiness. Social man no longer seeks his being within himself but outside, among things: his means become his end. Mankind as a whole becomes a thing, or the slave of things. (1988, 23)

Given his conceptions of history as "progress in the negation of nature" (a progress that had not, however, succeeded in eliminating it67), and of civilized society as the contemporary end of this process, Rousseau conceives his own project as a "negation of the negation"68 (Starobinski 1988, 24; 23). To overcome alienation, fully and forever, fact and value would have to be reunited, and the circle closed joining the innate good and presocial independence of the past with a willed virtue of the future - the 'social contract' guaranteeing social transparency, harmony, and liberty. For Rousseau the closing of this circle could only take place within, in a reduction of historical distances to inner distances and of the future and the past to a moment of the inner present.

**The elsewhere-man: we are those who Not**

Let us hypothesize then that alienation arose in Rousseau’s self-conscious reflection as a central constituent of his own personal narrative, and that, chancing upon voyagers accounts and a natural history and socio-legal theory larded with anthropological touchstones, Rousseau seemingly found the objective cogency that would ground his own intuition. And in fact, he seems to hint at something like that process in the opening lines of the Preface to the second *Discourse*, where he says:

The most useful and the least developed of all the sciences seems to me to be that of man (B), and I venture to suggest that the inscription on the Temple of Delphi [Know Thyself] alone contains a precept which is more important and more challenging than all the heavy tomes of moralists...What is even more cruel is that the whole progress of the human species removes man constantly farther and
farther from his primitive state; the more we acquire new knowledge, the more we deprive ourselves of the means of acquiring the most important knowledge of all. (67; emphasis added)

It is ironic that while the knowledge that Rousseau deems is the most important of all is seemingly closest to home, he first establishes it (or rather the knowledge of that knowledge) as being elsewhere.69 By 'elsewhere' I do not only mean his directing us to the maxim of Delphi, but also the fact that from the very beginning of his discourse on origins he is already sending us off somewhere else, to retrieve something that can only be found in his own footnote 'B'. There we find the admission that:

(B) From the outset, I lean with confidence on one of those authorities [it is from Buffon's Natural History that he is about to quote] who are respected by philosophers because they speak from a solid and sublime reason which philosophers alone know how to discover and to recognize:

'However much it is to our interest to know ourselves, I wonder if we do not know better everything which is not ourselves...' (139)

From the outset. Inaugurating his discourse on origins Rousseau chooses as its first prop not only the authority of sublime reason (which, however elsewhere, seems only natural), but, and this is particularly relevant I think, the fact that we 'know better everything that is not ourselves.' And what is more, he then ties this epistemically foundational 'elsewhere-ness'. if we follow his line of thought from the first statement through the footnote and back to the conjoined statement, to the Socratic adage: 'know thyself.' This discursive circumlocution seems as if to say: 'because we know better everything which is not ourselves, because knowledge of man is in but a rudimentary state, and given that knowledge in our society is perjured (i.e., the more we know the more distance is placed between ourselves and that knowledge that is most important), then if we seek to know man, and thus ourselves, let us first pursue it elsewhere, as is our wont. Let us begin with Man - whose first exemplar is the man from elsewhere - for he will lead us back to that knowledge that is most important of all, ourselves.

And what of this hypothetical elsewhere-man, what is there to be said of him? First and foremost he is a man wanting: "We conclude, then, that savage man, wandering in the forests, without work, without speech, without a home, without war, and without relationships, was equally without any need of his fellow men and without any desire to hurt them..." (Rousseau 1984, 104). This characterization Rousseau appears to have picked up, as he did so many of his starting points of reference, from Buffon.
It is because history has a sense/direction \textit{sens} that man cannot remain in a state of savagery without suffering an essential lack, and that the race ought to advance toward the state of civilization as towards its natural end \textit{fin}. In this sense the anthropology of Buffon does not fundamentally differ in its structure or ideological elements from that of the other philosophes. (Duchet, 23)

Here the teleology of history that had been somewhat secularized by Bossuet is anthropologized by Buffon: the philosophes' discourse of lack serves to naturalize an inferiority to which the mission of colonialism is a pedagogical and salvational answer. It is Rousseau's great innovation that \textit{he reverses the polarities of this valuation}. To the gnosticism of Buffon and the philosophes, Rousseau replies agnostically.

According to Buffon... 'It is evident that the more ideas we have, the more sure we are of our existence; the more intelligent we are, the more we exist; and finally, that it is through the soul's power of reflection, and through it alone, that we are certain of our past and foresee our future life.' Rousseau disagrees. Contrary to what Buffon says here, natural man can be aware of his existence without forming any ideas, and so can Jean-Jacques. In fact, the less man reflects, the more aware he is of his existence: 'His soul, which nothing disturbs, dwells \textit{only in the sensation of its present existence}, without any idea of the future, however close that might be.' (Starobinski 1988, 329; emphasis added)\textsuperscript{70}

Natural lack is for Rousseau in fact a positivity because the 'primitive' experiences no lack. His \textit{natural state of being elsewhere} means that the knowledge that is most important of all is to him transparent: without home, companionship, work or speech ('in-fans'), he experiences neither \textit{disharmony} nor the \textit{mediation of objects}.\textsuperscript{71} He is truly the photographic 'negative image' of civilized man - "the savage lives within himself; social man lives always outside himself" (Rousseau 1984, 136) - a negative, what is more, that is \textit{illuminating}, for it brings into greater resolution its complementary positive. (One needs recall here Rousseau's own self-image of a solitary, homeless, wanderer, and thus his self-proclaimed 'exemplarity' vis-à-vis society.) And if by the function of 'elsewhere-ness' the state of lack that characterizes the 'primitive' is in fact a positivity, then the same principle of reversals will reveal civilized man as \textit{elsewhere} to his own self-image:

Culture [for Rousseau] transforms into 'needs' all these lacks, and nullifies the state of nature as a 'system' of negative relations...one passes from Nature, where nothing is lacking humanity that is necessary, to Culture, where everything is lack, needs never satisfied. (Duchet, 276)
From civilization to nature and back to civilization, in this convoluted but fundamentally circular odyssey of self-knowledge, whose propelling force is negation, the resource of the 'elsewhere-man' is essentially like that of a picture frame: it captures but deflects our gaze back to the subject of the work that it frames, which, for Rousseau, is the knowledge that we are lacking.

This intuition of Rousseau's may be more knowing than it knows. According to the hypothesis of Robert Olson of OISE there is no negation 'in the world,' rather negation is a function of the understanding afforded us by the technology of literacy and specifically by our systems of phonetic transcription. What he means is that the appearance of negation in writing is a function of our thinking about language as an object in the world. Olson uses this hypothesis to explain not that signs of negation do not exist in pictographic writing systems (which appears to be the case), but that they are almost impossible to recognize. His reasoning is that because such systems posit a correspondence between pictographic sign and the world (as, for instance, in Blackfoot 'winter counts,' or Sumerian grain inventories), a correspondence which does not place 'writing' in the world, such writing systems can only represent things talked about, and not the way they are talked about. Should marks denoting negation be found in pictographic writing, such marks would signal that the system in question had begun to 'represent' speech rather than the referent of speech, the 'world.' Pace the eighteenth century notion of 'primitives' as fundamentally lacking, Rousseau's Discourse tells us that we, properly speaking, are those who Not.72

A fractal allegory

For Rousseau, the knowledge that we lack is that we are without ('without work, without speech, without a home, without war, without relationships, without any need of fellow men...'). This is a curious form of knowledge, however, because by virtue of reflection on the picture of ourselves we are first led to that which is not ourselves, the frame, which then redirects our attention to the work itself. Yet the ensuing knowledge of ourselves as the work is a knowledge that we are incomplete, without a proper frame. The paradox is twofold: we are lacking because, on the one hand, although we are situated within the frame, our desire is mimetically directed (and thus mediated by the) without; and we are lacking because, on the other hand, in grasping the allegory of this alienation and in resolving on the level of interpretation our conflict with ourselves and the world, we run up against the knowledge that we are both whole and not whole. Whole, in as much as the resolution of the conflict resides in recognizing that the wholeness (i.e., the state of being without needs) of the 'noble savage' is inalienably our own (positive
alienation, if you will); but not whole, in as much as in grasping the terms of the allegory which afford us this resolution - that is, in seeing the whole, the relation of picture to frame, of which we are a part - we then recognize equally that we are merely a part, without wholeness (negative alienation). This 'allegory' of self-knowledge is a paradox in that it offers us a seemingly coherent image bespeaking our lack of coherence (positive and negative charges ground each other); and further, that this image of the coherent whole that it proffers us is only an imaginary whole (positive and negative cancel each other out), for the relation of the self and the other that the image creates is entirely a function of the partial perspective of a, or the, lacking subject.

It is not clear that Rousseau wishes us to think of the 'allegory' in this way - in its undoing, as it were. What is clear is that he wishes it at least to show us how the 'primitive' is, and this is Rousseau's innovation, solitary and, as such, free. Of course this itself is problematic for, as Duchet points out, how could this solitary "sustain and reproduce himself without leaving the state of isolation" (272). Be that as it may, we can accept the hypothesis of solitariness as hypothesis once we realize that Rousseau's true aim is political:

From the beginning of history humanity finds itself under the sign of liberty and not that of necessity...Rousseau separates himself definitively from Buffon and Diderot when he defines humanity by its 'quality of free-agency' and not by its 'rational faculties'...the history of humanity is not to be confused with the history of human reason. (Duchet, 273-275)

The far deeper problem, however, resides in Rousseau's epistemology of freedom, that is, in his conception of two types of knowledge, and particularly in the movement he imagines that carries us from the one to the other. When he says 'the more we acquire knowledge the more we deprive ourselves of the most important knowledge of all,' he seems to geminate 'knowledge' into a gnostic, mediated, discursive, cognition, and a direct and intuitive understanding of that which is 'most important.' If it is our condition 'to know better everything which is not ourselves,' then the return from knowledge of the 'savage,' containing the kernel of freedom which is ours, to knowledge of ourselves is problematic to say the least. Which knowledge is which? Rousseau seems to posit that the knowledge of the 'primitive' - an understanding of his immediacy which is his freedom - is not a mediated knowledge, but rather an intuition. As intuition it is, like compassion, 'antecedent to reason.' However, and here lies the paradox, my understanding of his freedom, which as intuition is an immediacy, can only, as immediacy, reflect (on) myself: it cannot provide me with knowledge of the 'primitive.' In fact, by this division of
terms there is strictly speaking no 'knowledge' (discursive, mediated) of the 'truth' of the 'primitive' or of 'the world.'

The mimetological double bind

The epistemological problem here is one Plato faced over two millennia ago. Plato, you will recall, seeking to distance himself from the visible realm of opinion characterized by the imagining (eikasia) proper to images, shadows and reflections, and the belief (pistis) proper to living things, then ran into problems about how to construe, and in what terms, true knowledge (Cf. Republic, Bk. VI: 509 ff.). One thing was certain: true knowledge could not be mimetological, for that was the operative principle of envious opinion. His solution was to posit, by means of the metaphor of the divided line, an upper realm of intelligibility, characterized by the discursive thinking (dianoia) of mathematical objects and the intellection (noesis) of forms (eidos). The problem, then as now, is how the perfect and unique truth of something (in fact, the essence of that thing, for it is the model for all other things or ideas of the same kind) manages to pass from its privileged realm up there to we mortals down here without the employ of some notion of representation. Plato's distaste for representation stems from the fact that, as he sees it, representation is a re-presentation; this he feels entails the delivery of an unsatisfactory bill of goods. By virtue of the 're-' they are copies, and as such undermine the perfection and the peerlessness of the essence of true knowledge, and Plato will settle for no less than the real thing. Although he conceives imagination as the lowest of the low in his hierarchy of modes of thought, paradoxically Plato also conceives of escaping the debasement of mimesis through a special type of imagining:

Oversimplifying to excess, it can be said that, at least since Plato, education or training, political Bildung, has been thought taking the mimetic process as starting point: Plato challenges this, dreaming precisely of a (philosophical) self-grounding of the political, i.e., cutting through the mimetological double bind - admittedly with an idea of the Idea that is itself paradigmatic (and belonging, in consequence, to the mimetological)...It is not by chance that the 'myth' of the Cave - a myth that has no 'mythic' source, a myth that is self-formed and self-grounded - lays the foundation of Plato's political project. Identification or appropriation - the self-becoming of the Self - will always have been thought as the appropriation of a model, i.e., as the appropriation of a means of appropriation, if the model (the example) is the ever paradoxical imperative of propriation: imitate me in order to be what you are. (Lacoue-Labarthe, 80-81)
By means of this imagining which is not mimesis Plato believes he can escape the
mimetological double bind, and thus the debasement he holds proper to it - the
inauthenticity of the copy. Curiously, one is not an imitator when imitating the inimitable:

At a deeper level, in reality, the constraint governing imitatio, the mimetological
law, demands that imitatio rid itself of imitatio itself, or that, in what it establishes
(or has imposed upon it) as a model, it should address something that does not
derive from imitatio. What the...[Platonic]74 imitatio is seeking in [this non-
derivative meta-model]...is the model - and therefore the possibility - of a pure
emergence, of a pure originality: a model of self-formation. (79)

What I would like to suggest is that Rousseau confronts the same mimetological
double-bind that gave Plato so much trouble. Disparaging the mimetic as mediated
knowledge and the mode of all corruption, Rousseau also wishes to self-ground the
political, in particular his intuition of a foundational freedom. Rousseau's solution to the
problem of mimesis, following Plato term for term, is an 'identification and appropriation
of a model, the appropriation of a means of appropriation' (i.e., the 'noble savage' - and
here his nobility begins to make ever more sense),75 where the model says: 'imitate me in
order to be what you are.' The 'noble savage' is precisely this kind of inimitable, meta-
exemplary model because, lacking nothing and, unlike all other animals, capable of
anything and everything, he is the essence of pure possibility, perfection in potentia -
"made," as Ehrard had said, as if "for the future" (394). Thus Rousseau's allegory of self-
knowledge speaks in terms that are proper to it after all. In appropriating the freedom of
the 'noble savage,' the freedom of self-formation and self-determination, Rousseau
escapes the inauthenticity of the copy by appropriating the very essence of the
paradigmatic.

There is, however, one ultimate glitch. On the one hand, the paradox of mimesis
presupposes (in its Hegelian turn) the pre-existence of an other whom I imitate. Yet, in as
much as mimesis is the means and ends of my self-identity, the identity of the other is
reduced to the role of a difference within "the identity of identity and difference"; this
identity 'as difference' Lacoue-Labarthe rightly terms the presupposition of a "virtual"
subjecthood (81). On the other hand, Lacoue-Labarthe continues,

by definition, mimetism forbids such a presupposition, and this has been very
convincingly established by Diderot: no subject, potentially identical to himself or
related to himself, can pre-exist the mimetic process, except to render it
impossible. If something pre-exists, it is not even, as Plato believed, a substance,
in the form of a pure malleability or plasticity which the model would come to
stamp as its own 'type' or on which it would imprint its image. Such a substance
is, in reality, already a subject, and it is not on the basis of an eidetics that one can hope to think the mimetic process, if the *eidos* - or, more generally, the figural - is the very presupposition of the identical. And it is, moreover, because...such an eidetics underpins mimetology...that an entire tradition...will have thought that the political is the sphere of the *fictioning* of beings and communities. (81-82)

Following through on this analysis of what he calls "onto-typology," Lacoue-Labarthe posits that if mimesis is possible, and to all evidence it appears to be more than such, then it is only possible under certain conditions (82). The principal of these is that the "subject of the imitation...the imitant, has to be nothing in and of itself or must, in Diderot's words have 'nothing characteristic of itself.' It therefore must not already be a subject" (ibid.). If Rousseau's trajectory of self-knowledge in the *Discourse* is one that, under the inspiration of Buffon's guiding principle, departs from the self only to return to its self with that knowledge which is most important - the freedom of self-formation and self-determination, and thus the self-knowledge of one's own status as inimitable meta-exemplary model -, the prize of this argosy in mimetological terms seems to be not merely that we are those *who* not, but that we are not ourselves - we *are* not.

**The inner truth of freedom: non-identity**

> The heart only receives laws from itself: by wanting to enchain it one only releases it; one only enchains it by leaving it free
> 
> *Rousseau, Emile*

In my description of Rousseau's epistemological journey I have employed the metaphor of a work of art and its frame. This metaphor seems to me to be an apposite one because as the problematic of knowledge in the eighteenth century develops from Locke and Hume through Rousseau to Kant there is a growing consciousness of the limits of philosophical realism and of the import of psychology, that is, a growing consciousness that our knowledge of the world 'out there' is not a one-way street of sense data impinging upon the mind, but that the mind also plays a role in framing those objects of knowledge for consciousness. Translating Kant's famous epigram - 'Concepts without percepts are empty, but percepts without concepts are blind' - into the terms of this metaphor would be to say that frames without pictures are empty, but pictures without frames are blind. This metaphor is an important one because my story of the eighteenth century is in one sense that of the rise to awareness of the fact that cognition places frames around the phenomenal 'seen' and of a growing discomfiture with that fact. Seen from this optic the numerous and somewhat contradictory phenomena, events, and ideas that I have elaborated on in this chapter constitute as if the frame of a century's self-image, a frame
that in the "Twilight of the Enlightenment" (1790-1815) will be largely shattered. Indeed, anticipating my trajectory, I will argue in the following chapter that Goya's art is a concerted reflection on the emptiness and blindness that results from the shattering and misrecognition of the frame that makes knowledge 'visible.'

Let me take a moment to examine the dynamic of the frame from a closer point of vantage, for in doing so we will see how while Rousseau rejects any and every notion of progress, his conception of self-knowledge is in a way fundamentally developmental and futural. From civilization to nature and back to civilization, in this convoluted but basically circular odyssey of self-knowledge whose propelling force is negation, the resource of the 'elsewhere-man' is for Rousseau essentially that of a picture frame: it (re)directs our gaze back to the subject of the work, to ourselves, to the knowledge that we are lacking, to the self-knowledge that we are constituted by a lack. This means that in departure, by reflecting on that which is not ourselves (the 'primitive' and/or our alienated 'selves'), we garner a knowledge-as-intuition of the frame as an immediacy and a freedom (the 'primitive in us,' our 'authentic' selves that experience no lack). In visual-semiotic terms this immediate freedom of the frame stems from what Ortega y Gasset has called its essential non-being. The frame, says Ortega, functions conceptually as a transition element of a pure lack of substance, and as such it itself is something only with great difficulty framed in perception. It leads a kind of chameleon existence: it is at once necessary, neutral, and a kind of non-entity. On the one hand, walls, paintings, and frames without each other are incomplete objects; on the other hand, the wall, as utilitarian, and the painting, as "pure metaphor," share a mutual antagonism for each other which necessitates the mediation of a third, neutral party: an insulator, the frame (24). Like the strip of no-man's-land lying between the international border posts of two geographically contiguous and hostile nations, the frame is a region of necessary difference. Yet paradoxically, at the same time it is a sort of non-entity, focussing attention on itself only to instantaneously deflect onto the painting: "As the frontier for both regions...and acting as a trampoline, [the frame] sends our attention hurtling off to the legendary dimension of the aesthetic island" (24).77 It is worth reflecting that this negative essence of the frame, this "spectre without substance" (ibid.), parallels what might be called the essence of language in as much as the "utility [of language] lies in its extreme lack of identity, its expertise in indicating but never being something, its immateriality."78

What is most curious, however, is how the 'knowledge' garnered in the movement of departure is paid out in the movement of return, that my 'knowledge' of the freedom of the frame, the unveiling of its essential immediacy and non-being, becomes in return an intuition of myself as immediate, free, and without being, without identity. Now to say
that the frame, either as neutral non-identity (whose sole function is to deflect onto the work) or as the 'primitive' (who because he lacks nothing is therefore free), enacts a freedom is one thing. But to say that the freedom and non-identity of the frame are mine is quite another. It is to recognize that the frames of perception through which I view the world are not of the world in the same sense as the objects in it are of the world; it is to recognize that those frames (and all that is framed by means of such frames?) derive from something I 'do' to the world. It is also perhaps to recognize that framing is a closure I place upon the plentitude of possibilities called the world and that frames themselves are not complete - they must enclose something. To assume for myself the power of framing, to assume myself as a framer of things for myself, is to view myself as an incomplete work, as a meta-exemplary model for a 'myself' that is yet-to-be, and, perhaps, to intuit that my meta-exemplary status is inextricably tied to the lack I experience of not yet being an identity. My freedom, it appears, resides in precisely this futurity, this incompletion.

This knowledge-as-intuition is inaugural: it becomes the frame of a future possibility of being ('becomes,' in all its senses: comes to be; suits, enhances, compliments; is in keeping with, conforms or corresponds to). What is more, that this intuition becomes the frame of a future possibility is not merely appropriate but appropriative, for the lack of identity and non-being of the 'primitive' is taken over as image of a freedom that is already mine - my freedom-to-be, to become.

Freed from the rule of necessity I am at liberty to complete the work of myself, and in fact, within this futural optic liberty becomes necessity reconfigured. Yet the problem for Rousseau's freedom begins anew when he recalls that the perfection of the moral and spiritual life are only possible in society. The problem then becomes that the knowledge that we are lacking (the knowledge of ourselves as lacking) is that we are innately free to imagine other frames of possibility but without the structures and institutions best able to actualize the liberty and transparency that is within. In the circular odyssey of self-knowledge the knowledge that Rousseau had lacked, that of how to objectively ground subjective intuition, was as if magically resolved. However, Rousseau only was only able to 'overcome' his allegory of alienation by rendering it an acephalic allegory, an allegory (of) without, in which the dynamic of rational temporality was fed back into an internalization of burgeoning self-knowledge. As acephalic allegory, however, self-knowledge cannot reflect (on) anything but its self, and is thus caught in the double-bind of being able to ground its own intuition of freedom but unable to realize it because, by definition, it has no 'knowledge' of the world 'out there' where the structures and institutions of society best able to actualize that freedom lie. Here the problem of distances that Rousseau believes he has solved returns in another, more exacerbated form.
I am free, unconditionally and irrevocably, but at the cost of a seemingly insurmountable obstacle, the apparent fact that the frame of my self-knowledge of freedom does not allow me knowledge of the world. There is a temptation in confronting this impasse to ask oneself rhetorically: 'what do I really need to know of the world? I am free, that is enough. And, in fact, that is All. Any resistance that the world throws against me I can subdue in the self-surety that I am free.' Rousseau, we will see, goes right to the edge of this precipice, where any forward movement would necessitate the rationalization of violence, and turns back. But in blazing his trail up there, he opens up a path that will have dire consequences, and not solely on the other side of the brink.

On this side, one principal corollary of Rousseau's self-researches will concern a kind of nihilism that will feed into, as we will see in the next section, a fully realized notion of progress. Where for de Léry freedom consisted in the production of useful knowledge (and of a self-knowledge of usefulness) that ultimately reproduces the universal canon of order, for Rousseau freedom has become a necessity grounded in the non-identity of the subject that it projects outside of itself as a desired but unrealizable goal. I have already remarked that Rousseau repudiated 'progress' as the repetition of an enslavement to social convention, its reproduction we might say. But we may also say that Rousseau repudiates 'progress' not because it is a convention, but only because it is an external convention. Rousseau's stratagem in the contest of alienation and freedom is a martingale, to find a maximal move. But when Rousseau finds his martingale and founds non-identity as freedom, he creates not only the autonomy of self-certainty and the self-certainty of autonomy, he creates an innate contingency. In this inner dynamic, 'progress' is not 'out there,' where it may or may not happen, may or may not be 'discovered' (in new scientific universals, for example), and where for Rousseau it is a 'fatal' subjection to mediation by objects, but rather, progress is 'in here,' in the non-identity of the subject where everything is contingent in the production of self-creation.
VI. Allegory

In order to better see the relation between Rousseau's acephalic allegories and a fully realized myth of progress, we need to look briefly at the mode-genre of allegory. Both Auerbachian and de Manian notions of allegory, while seemingly at odds with one another, confirm a tendency within allegory to dissolve one of its principal poles of reference, either historical materiality or the transcendental. In Rousseau's *Allegorical Fragment* we find a similar collapse around a notion of the mortality of the subject, leaving Rousseau to theorize that the social and historical realization of freedom takes place in a quasi-Platonic other dimension. Overtones of that otherness will pervade secular, fully modern formulations of progress as the model of an expansive present that bridges but never reconciles two moments, and in which reason develops through the transforms of education, technology, and critique as modes of the production of self-creation. This model is acephalic in that it is an internally self-consistent and immanent system that projects outside of itself an image of a desired total self-comprehension that it lacks. With progress we are also witness to the end of sacrificial culture, and a number of substitutions, therefore, can be seen to take place. Conventions as transitive barriers replace the previous notion of limit; a lyrical illusion of credit replaces a prior sense of debt; fragmentation and autonomy replace interdependence; and a multiplication of exchange and a generalization of sacrifice replace the limited conceptions of those practices as enforced within sacrificial culture. Finally, education is examined as the discourse of reconciliations promising and producing the movement of progressive rationality's desire for self-comprehension; and the topos of travel is seen to be the site of a naturalization of ethnological differences along a linear stream of temporality conceived as a gnostic stream of knowledge.

Allegory and the problem of reference

Allegory is one of the most confusing notions of literary history, so let me take a moment to sketch out some of its principal lines; this will serve to clarify what is at stake in the notion of an acephalic allegory. Allegory, classically conceived (here I follow Auerbach), is both a recognition of the mysterious and fragmentary nature of reality and an understanding that conflicts within the order of sensory reality can be - and indeed must be - resolved on the level of narrative interpretation. If our worldly reality is that of a fundamental homelessness, allegory proposes that there is an order of reality enveloping us into which we fit (in the Judaic schema the *Torah* precedes the world), one that we can 'reach' only through understanding. In making this presupposition allegory places the
realm and function of meaning above that of sensation. Unlike the Homeric narrative whose realism posits a transparent relation between sign and referent ("Homer can be analyzed...but he cannot be interpreted" (Auerbach, 11)), the allegorical understanding of Scripture posits that the relation between a sign and its referent is both arbitrary and fixed.

The total content of the sacred writings was placed in an exegetic context which often removed the thing told very far from its sensory base, in that the reader or listener was forced to turn his attention away from the sensory occurrence and toward its meaning...[in the allegory of Eve's birth from Adam's rib and that of the Church's birth from Christ's rib] the sensory occurrence pales before the power of the figural meaning...In comparison, the Greco-Roman specimens of realistic presentation are, though less serious and fraught with problems and far more limited in their conception of historical movement, nevertheless perfectly integrated in their sensory substance. They do not know the antagonism between sensory appearance and meaning, an antagonism which permeates the early, and indeed the whole, Christian view of reality. (42-42)

It is because of this antagonism, and indeed of the very multifariousness of sense data, that Biblical (and Platonic) allegory bespeaks a purposefulness that both transcends and precedes the world, a purposefulness concerned with what John MacQueen calls "the divinely operated movement of history" (28-29).

Allegory's relation to history, however, is somewhat bedeviling. On the one hand the Biblical narrative posits that the fragmentariness of events and sensory details is a function of their historical import; not everything is important to (a) history, and thus a certain selectiveness is requisite.

The Old Testament...presents universal history: it begins with the beginning of time, with the creation of the world, and will end with the Last Days, the fulfilling of the Covenant, with which the world will come to an end. Everything else that happens in the world can only be conceived as an element in this sequence; into it everything that is known about the world, or at least everything that touches upon the history of the Jews, must be fitted as an ingredient of the divine plan...interpretation in a determined direction becomes a general method of comprehending reality [as historical]...But this [interpretive] process nearly always also reacts upon the frame, which requires enlarging and modifying...Thus while, on the one hand, the reality of the Old Testament presents itself as complete truth with a claim to sole authority, on the other hand that very claim forces it to a constant interpretive change in its own content... (13)
However, while the historical import of fragmentary events is the very basis for their narrative selection, on the one hand, their cohesion as history, on the other, is in fact the function of a verticality that is profoundly a-historical: \(^8\) "The greater the separateness and horizontal disconnection of the [Biblical] stories and groups of stories in relation to one another...the stronger is their general vertical connection which holds them all together" (14). As the relevance of the Bible expands beyond pre-classical (and pre-Christian) Palestine, this fragmentary disconnection of historical events grows stronger, and the labour of interpretation with respect to a vertical point becomes more and more of a spiritual-intellectual accomplishment. In Auerbach's interpretation of Christian allegory (an interpretation limited to the 'mainstream' of Christian sects) this results in a greater and greater dissolution of the historical:

This type of interpretation obviously introduces an entirely new and alien element into the antique conception of history...a connection is established between events which are linked neither temporally nor causally - a connection which it is impossible to establish by reason in the horizontal dimension...It can be established only if both occurrences are vertically linked to Divine Providence, which alone is able to devise such a plan of history and supply the key to its understanding. The horizontal, that is the temporal and causal, connection of occurrences is dissolved: the here and now is no longer a mere link in an earthly chain of events, it is simultaneously something which has always been, and which will be fulfilled in the future; and strictly, in the eyes of God, it is something eternal... (64-65; emphasis added)

In Auerbach's analysis, the victory of the figural (Christian typological) interpretation over the classical a prioristic conception of history ("the ethical and rhetorical approach [of antique culture] is incompatible with a conception in which reality is a development of forces" (35)), is also a failure. It is a failure in that the recognition of the antagonism between sign and referent that gives the Bible its drama, what Auerbach calls its "enormous pendulation" of emotion, an antagonism, moreover, that seems to demand investigation and interpretation, results in a fixity and an arbitrariness that, while initially its strength, becomes in the end its very weakness (36).

Thus, the figural interpretation of history emerged unqualifiedly victorious. Yet it was no fully adequate substitute for the lost comprehension of rational, continuous, earthly connection between things, for it could not be applied to any random occurrence, although of course there was no dearth of attempts to [do so]...Such attempts were bound to founder upon the multiplicity of events and the unfathomableness of the divine councils. And so vast regions of event remained without any principle by which they might be classified and
There remained passive observation, resigned acceptance, or active exploitation of whatever event chanced to occur in the world of practical events. (66)

Allegorical failure

A quoy faire ces pointes eslevées de la philosophie sur lesquelles aucun estre humain n'est peut rassoir
Montaigne

This description of allegory, while admittedly partial, does nonetheless account for its repeated 'failure' throughout history. Offering an image of the total coherence of reality, allegory is seemingly bound to an erosion by the very history/world it seeks to represent and transcend; and this because, as Paul de Man has pointed out, in fixing an interpretive schema and the key by which such a schema is to be unlocked, it actually proposes a realist definition of the relation between sign and referent that it views as arbitrary and conventional. De Man illustrates this by taking the example of Pascal's theory of mathematics. For Pascal, says de Man, mathematics is the 'perfect' allegorical system because in its nominal definition of terms ('let x equal...') mathematics purports to seal off the realm of its science from contamination by realism, the referential relation between sign and the world. At every moment of a mathematical proof there is never the slightest ambiguity about the meaning of a term (for the terms, like the corporate logo, are nominally defined as mono-semantic). In addition, by virtue of the seeming impermeability and self-referentiality of the mathematical domain, all the repercussions of a given operation can be worked out in an absolutely rigorous entirety and clarity. The problem of this perfection, however, arises from the very beginning, from the moment we start to separate nominal terms from real terms, for to do so, as Andrzej Warminski points out, we begin to employ notions like true (as opposed to valid):

...the inaugural definition of nominal definition itself...can take place only by, as, a real definition. This should be no surprise since, after all, the very institution of the distinction between nominal and real definition necessarily takes place by the definition of a relation between a purportedly closed semiotic system of nominal definitions and an indeterminate world of natures and essences 'outside' it that would be the object of real definitions...The upshot is that the system of nominal definitions, as a system of signs, cannot account for itself as a system, that is, as closed off, because it cannot render itself homogeneous as a sign system. It is contaminated from the start, from the very first definition of nominal definition, by tropes, the signifying function, and the real definition. (26)

At the end of the day Pascal's mathematic theory of language demonstrates that there is a fundamental instability between the literal and figurative levels of allegory, an instability,
de Man claims, Pascal (already) recognizes. This instability turns on the paradox of our seeking, but never being fully able to effect, an escape from realist reference, and, by implication, from materiality:

...if we ask what all these allegories are allegories of, the most 'direct' answer would have to be that they are allegories of reference, which amounts to the same thing as saying that they are all 'allegories of of,' since 'of' [or, prepositions in general] is the very bearer of the referential function. (Warminski. 18-19)

Because we cannot but make realist reference, 'perfect' allegorical narrativization, claims de Man, will always break down, demonstrating "the destruction of all sequence" (1996, 69). For de Man, allegory is, in fact, the consciousness of this failure - "[t]he (ironic) pseudo-knowledge of this impossibility" (1996, 69) - a consciousness that "the continuous universe held together by [the dialectical terms of allegorical interpretation]...is interrupted, disrupted at all points by a principle of radical heterogeneity without which it cannot come into being" (1996, 59). Perhaps it is going too far, but it seems as if de Man gestures here towards an acephaly invested in the very relation of 'of,' in the relation between language and the world.

**Acephaly**

Man will escape his head as a convict escapes his prison

Bataille

There is an important insight here. If allegory so construed is a recognition that conflict can only be resolved transcendentally, as it were, in interpretation, it is equally an acknowledgement that such transcendence is bound by time and the nature of language as system of signification, which is to say: impossible. Though we seek to escape brute materiality through our linguistic manipulations - and how can we not so desire - that very process of attempted flight plucks the feathers from our imagined wings, reinforcing our inescapable mortality (making, thus, all the greater our need for illusion?). There are echos here of Rousseau's acephalic allegory of self-freedom.

Starobinski's analysis of an unpublished early text of Rousseau's, the *Morceau allégorique* (Allegorical Fragment), casts a revealing shadow on this notion of irresolute, irresolvable resolution. The Fragment concerns a dream of a mythic land where a blind populace worships a veiled statue. The dreamer relates his perception that this idol is in fact a fraud, an evil power whose dark magic is to keep humanity in its thrall. Three men come to the temple who, acting on behalf of humanity, each seek to dispel the monstrous illusion. The first, a philosopher, manages to remove the blindfolds of some of the
supplicants, but is unable to dethrone the statue itself; he is summarily dispatched by a mob whipped up by the priests. The second, Socrates, leaps onto the altar and tears the veil from the statue, revealing a grotesque vision: the beatific idol crushes beneath her foot a suffering humanity. The crowd is more impressed by her ecstatic countenance than the spectacle of violence, and Socrates, too, is done away with. The third, Christ, effortlessly topples the statue, takes its place on the pedestal, and begins to speak. In the vision as Rousseau describes it,

[Christ] seems to be assuming his rightful place rather than usurping that of another...To hear him once was enough to admire him always. One sensed that the language of truth cost him nothing because he held its source within himself. (in Starobinski 1988, 68)

Starobinski comments that

[t]he Good makes its appearance in the world through the agency of an ego. The man-god (like Rousseau himself, in different circumstances) offers himself to the public not in order to be seen for himself but in order to make manifest, through the very act of speaking, a source of the sacred...Rousseau's text (is it really unfinished?) breaks off just before the crucifixion - a fact of considerable significance. The reason is that Rousseau does not know what to make of the cross, a symbol of mediation. For him, the essence of Christianity lies in the preaching of a truth that is immediate. (1988, 69)

The magic of the allegory, says Starobinski, stems from the fact that it is structured around two unveilings that, however similar, are in fact very different. The first is critical and motivated by disenchantment (with mediation); yet in order to avoid a reverencing of the lies denounced a second unveiling is required.

The unveiling of truth is essentially an unveiling of consciousness...[In the Morceau allégorique] consciousness manifests itself as an absolute beginning, an inaugural act totally distinct from the prior unveiling, which, being the end of an illusion, inaugurated nothing. (1988, 78-79)

As Starobinski notes, this latter unveiling while seemingly premised on a realist metaphor of grasping the thing itself, is in actuality a subjective unveiling (of immediacy) in that human consciousness is the thing revealed. In this transposition of orders Rousseau treats 'subjective unveiling' as though it were objective, as though the object unveiled were a tangible fact as well as a revealed moral quality...The reality of the external
world remains hidden, but it hardly matters, since now the truth appears to us as inner truth. (1988, 75)

It is of capital importance that Rousseau's truth does not reveal the world - it remains hidden - that the truth revealed is an inner truth; and we can see in Rousseau's allegory of alienation in the second *Discourse* a homologous movement. There, by routing self-knowledge through, and grounding it in, the elsewhere of an hypothetical anthropology, that is, in formulating self-knowledge not merely as the desire for freedom and transparency, but the fact of it - "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains" chimes Rousseau in the opening pages of the *Social Contract* (118) - Rousseau frees his discourse from historical necessity. Yet at the same time Rousseau's claim of a foundational freedom for humanity seemingly grounds freedom contra necessity in a narrative of historical origins. In fact, Rousseau's 'history' is much more personal than anthropological, so much more that, as we follow Rousseau's fractal itinerary in the second *Discourse* we can see how, as Stambinski rightly states, "[a]n emotional need is transformed into a historical hypothesis" (1988, 146).

This knowledge of Rousseau's two distinct forms of unveiling allows us to read his second *Discourse* both as a traditional allegory of ascent from the literal to the figurative and as an acephalic 'allegory' in which the one line does not recapitulate the other. 'Traditional' eighteenth century 'anthropological' allegories, whose key we may call the principle that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, operate an anagogical upward movement from a literal phylogeny to a figurative ontogeny of the human. This means that the 'phylogenic line,' moving from the negativity of the state of nature to the positivity of civilization, is recapitulated by the 'ontogenic line' moving from the essential lack and needfulness of infancy to the culmination and consummation of adulthood. In both lines the initially negative sign is rendered a positive, a double movement that we may call fulfillment. In traditional metaphysics this anagogical interpretation moves from the debased metal of worldly existence to the golden City of God. Yet as Rousseau frames things that progression is reversed: in the second *Discourse* the positivity of nature passes inevitably to the negativity of civilization, yielding an allegorical interpretation in which the innocence of childhood is seen to deteriorate in the corruption of mediation and the 'elsewhere-ness' of alienation. Here both lines manifest a change from an initial positive to a final negative sign, a double movement of 'negative fulfillment.' However, this is not the end of the story, for Rousseau also wishes his *Discourse* to reveal to us the subjective immediacy of self-consciousness. Here lies the acephaly of Rousseau's 'allegory.' For once we take subjective unveiling to be the ontogenic import of the
narrative (‘acquiring the most important knowledge of all’), we can see that the revelation of immediacy is not a recapitulation of phylogenic history (duplicating the change in sign from a positive to a negative), but rather precisely its decapitation. The ontogenic line of subjective unveiling annuls the movement from a positive to a negative sign. In a kind of transcendent hypostasis the ontogenic line manifests without substitution the revelation of what is already there: ‘To hear him once was enough to admire him always. One sensed that the language of truth cost him nothing because he held its source within himself.’ Both the phylogenetic line in se (‘negative fulfillment’) and the ontogenic, ‘allegorical’ interpretation (i.e., the acephaly) of the phylogenetic line as subjective unveiling demonstrate a refusal to submit to the inevitability, positivity, and revelation of ‘fulfillment.’ For what is revealed by the ontogenetic line is the notion of consciousness as incompletion, that we are an incomplete work, a mode of becoming. Viewed acephally, fulfillment is an illusion, and it is for this reason that Rousseau’s ‘reality’ remains ultimately hidden.

If by virtue of an acephaly regnant in the relation between language and world, the head could not ground freedom then perhaps the heart could. For Rousseau, the desire to ground his intuition of alienation in objective cogency (through the historical ‘allegory’ of the ‘noble savage’), and in doing so overcome it, returned him in the end to that which he could not escape, the first of his misfortunes, his birth in, and into, death (‘I cost my mother her life, and my birth was the first of my misfortunes’). De Man sees Rousseau circling around and ultimately coming to terms with this difficult truth in a passage in the Social Contract where Rousseau states that to found a state is “to substitute a fragmentary and moral existence for a physical and autonomous one...to mutilate, so to speak, the human constitution in order to strengthen it” (in de Man 1979, 271; emphasis added). To this foundational invoice de Man appends a “somewhat cryptic and isolated note by Rousseau” that would seem to revoke the bill of goods offered: “‘I created a people, and I was unable to create men’ (‘J’ai fait un peuple et n’ai pu faire des hommes’)” (271-272). If in ‘classical’ allegory the end of interpretation lay in the ability to place oneself at the vertical point, to, through the agency of language, speak in the voice of God - to achieve the ne plus ultra of realist reference - the end to Rousseau’s acephalic allegories lies in the power of the self-conscious linguistic subject to create coherence by negating self-identity (‘language’s utility lies in its extreme lack of identity, its expertise in indication but never being something’). This power does not, properly speaking, refer to anything in the world, but is rather the imaginary power to reflect (upon) it/ourselves.83 In this allegorical recision is a recognition of the very limits of that power.84 For, although Rousseau can bite the bullet, so to speak, and by the figurative violence of an
allegorical sequentialization create a people, that power is ultimately infertile - and mercifully compassionate - with respect to the creation of men.85

**Eschatology: progress: eschatology**

Memory is the lining of forgetfulness

Chris Marker

As we have seen Rousseau views the unveiling proper to his 'allegory' as the end of illusion and the inauguration of transparency. However, by considering the acephalic inflection we can also take 'end' as teleology, and 'inauguration' (literally: the reading of omens) as 'the fictioning of beings and communities.' In this reading, Rousseau's overcoming of alienation is able to found a physical and autonomous existence but unable to found a moral one save in the molding of a communal fiction. Although the 'world' in Rousseau's acephalic allegory is necessarily eclipsed (in recognition of the limits of 'allegorical' power), that will not dissuade Rousseau from imagining a social contract of civil religion and the "great lawgiver...the engineer, who invents the machine" (Rousseau 1968, 84). The notion of a fiction here is Rousseau's own (he speaks in the final line of the *Social Contract* of being unable to "complete my study" due to "my weak vision" (188)), and it is one of pure unveiling, pure becoming purged of transition and history:

The *Social Contract*...contains no discussion of present or future historical conditions. The hypothetical contract is situated at the beginning of social life, just as man emerges from the state of nature. There is no question of destroying an imperfect society in order to establish freedom and equality. Rousseau thereby side-steps the practical problem of how to effect the transition...The social pact is not an evolutionary development that follows naturally from the second *Discourse*; it belongs, rather, to another dimension, a purely normative dimension outside historical time. (Starobinski 1988, 30; emphasis added)

Duchet rightly likens this dimensional shift to a Platonic and Christian ascent, "distancing oneself from the 'facts,' by means of a slow ascension, in order to form an idea...that would 'truly illuminate the Nature of things'" (279). Over the course of Rousseau's *oeuvre*, and, as we have seen, produced by it, this distance will yawn wider and wider, such that by the end of his life and his work,

[not] only is the self the exclusive 'referent' of his discourse, it is also the only possible recipient...Of course the perfection and harmony of the style suggest a virtual witness...Yet it will be so long before this becomes possible that Rousseau prefers to say that he has absolutely no chance of being understood. This lack of opportunity creates an immense void. (Starobinski 1988, 278)
Here, again, we return to another mode of de Certeau’s ‘formality of practices.’ While Rousseau’s vision of an eschatological salvation is one that annuls history (as “essentially decay”) and is, as Starobinski points out, conceivable “only in opposition to history’s destructiveness,” that is not how he will be ‘read’:

Rousseau’s testimony is the most important of his time concerning the discovery of history and temporality, not because he offers a theory of progress but because he recoils in horror from the danger, but also from the fecundity, of temporal existence. Yet his suspicion of history, it must be noted, did not prevent his thought from influencing the course of history. (1988, 302)

Taking up a position outside the self-reflecting world of Jean-Jacques, that is, coming back to our present, we can perhaps see that, ironically, when abstracted from the unique individual that is its exclusive ‘referent’ Rousseau’s acephalic allegory becomes (suits, enhances, compliments, is in keeping with, conforms or corresponds to, comes to be) a model of historical progress. If we remove the individual from Rousseau’s discourse, and why not - he is theorized as being identity-less -, all the constituents of a progressive historiography, what de Certeau calls "the composition of a place which establishes within present time the ambivalent figuration of the past and future," are there (1988, 83).

In Rousseau’s discourse we have the articulation of the past as "the means of representing a difference," the "stag[ing of] the present time of a lived situation," the "clarification of the relation of dominant forms of reasoning to a proper place which, in opposition to a 'past,' becomes the present," "the figure of the past...[as] representing what is lacking," and a figure presaging a future -

a material which in order to be objective is necessarily there, but which connotes a past insofar as it refers first of all to an absence, this figure also introduces the rift of a future. It is well known that a group can express what it faces - what is still lacking - only through a redistribution of its past. Thus...the locus that it [historiography] carves for the past is equally a fashion of making a place for a future. (1988, 85)

All these constituents can be reshaped by another reader at another moment to secure a kind of meaningfulness for the yawning of distances by formulating a model of progress as the inauguration and teleology of an expansive movement in the lived time of the present which bridges but never reconciles two moments, and in which reason itself necessarily develops through the transforms of education, art, technology, and critique as modes of the production of self-creation. This model will also be, unlike the standard kind whose telos is transcendentally other, an acephalic allegory in the sense that it is an
internally self-consistent system (of an inescapable mortality and materiality) that in projecting 'outside' of itself a purely ideal fiction of total inner comprehension, seemingly sacrifices nothing and produces itself. With our late twentieth century hindsight we know that such a 'denial' of sacrifice will come at an enormous cost, for the application of progress as a means of securing meaningfulness will threaten that very meaningfulness, and that while such a system may be self-consistent, it will be paradoxically indeterminate. For with Gödel's incompleteness theorem what was only suspected will be rigourously formulated: "If a...system is consistent then the notion of truth - that is, the collection of all the true theorems of the system - is not definable in the system itself" (Barrow, 125).

Progress: the end of sacrifice

Many people in the nineteenth century accused the new age of 'materialism': today we realize how naive they were. In fact the gnosis of the modern age, clandestine and imperious, assumes that all is spirit and that spirit is the most malleable of materials. Roberto Calasso (250-251)

Sacrificial culture is, as I mentioned in my preface, the division of the world into sacred and non-sacred realms. The reason of this division is to limit the sacred, to define an extra-sacrificial realm of safety where the profane destruction of culture may continue unabated, and to both control exchange and preserve culture. In every act of sacrifice a repetition is performed of the inaugural division and limitation enacted by the gods when they voluntarily chose to limit their omnipotence and designate a realm apart for humanity. By returning to the gods a symbol of the culture we have been given, i.e., the individual made victim as incarnation of humanity’s guilt for going about its destructive activity without conscience, sacrificial culture pays off, for the time being, its debt of guilt. This ‘credit,’ however, is always limited, perhaps first and foremost by the periodic cycles of fertility and fallow upon which human material existence is dependent, but also because the freedom we enjoy in culture is always contingent upon the inaugural sacrifice. Thus, in order to sustain the renewal of the cycle, and in order that the canon or rule of perfection existing beyond the limit of our world in the single space of the gods be reproduced - and that the interdependence of the two realms be re-enacted - a repetition of the inaugural sacrifice must be not merely imagined but performed. When sacrificial culture comes to an end, however, and this is another way of describing the movement of secularization that washes over the eighteenth century, the reproduction of the canon of order in sacrificial performance is transformed by the formality of practices into the production of conventions as images in which the limit of the world is replaced by a series of barriers as discrete and fragmented obstacles to the multiplication of exchange.
With the end of sacrifice, the sacred is released from its containment and allowed
to proliferate without end: "the cloud of the religious envelops the entire social order
down to its smallest details" (Calasso, 161). Henceforward within the self-understanding
of rationality everything comes together in a process of conventions and the overthrow of
conventions whose verb of choice is "to produce (note: not reproduce!)" (228). Recall
that when Rousseau finds and founds non-identity as freedom he creates not only the
autonomy of self-certainty and the self-certainty of autonomy, he spawns an innate
contingency. Progress for Rousseau is not an externality but rather an inner convention of
the non-identical subject for whom everything is contingent in the production of self-
creation. Contingency (con-tangere) is a malleability in which everything is reduced to
the graspable, a thing; and when all is thing, context is reduced to a nullity.

In order for all to become process, all had to become thing. (Thing is what is at
our disposal; process is a power that can have anything at its disposal.) And in
order for all to become thing, all had to be definable, limitable, ultimately
separable from all. (279)

By the formality of this convention-process the world as interdependent whole is
necessarily eclipsed. Here we can see that Rousseau's intuition of freedom as a self-
 immediacy that is able to reflect (on) only itself joins hands with the modern constitution
of distinctions and separations. However, where for the society of de Léry the 'credit'
acquired in the production of useful knowledge (and the self-knowledge of usefulness)
was returned to what 'we have received from God,' for the eighteenth century fin de
siècle, the lyrical illusion of credit (that which sacrifices nothing and produces itself, that
which 'costs nothing because it holds its source within itself'), engineers a machine of
continual self-creation that struggles against (and believes it can outmanoeuvre) natural
limit cycles by translating them into the frame of a 'cultured nature,' a nature entirely
amenable to cultural manipulation, production, and capitalization. In the French
Revolution, even society will become a creation of laboratory conditions.

What is the first negation of the whole? A negation that negates not a
detail but a characteristic of the whole - namely, its interdependence. From this
step follows all subsequent steps. Once the interdependence of the whole is
negated, the world is left divided into aggregate systems, varying in size and
stability, from which individual elements break free and become autonomous.

The process of becoming autonomous, in which constitutive elements escape the authority and looming presence of the context, was for many decades
known as 'nihilism.' It functions much like the progressive release of a discrete
substance from a compound that includes them all. And once released, these
substances have an effect on the compound. Above all they contribute to its further breakdown. (225)

If sacrifice is a limiting application of exchange (i.e., victim for culture, in order to preserve culture as the compact of material practices and metaphysical ideas), the denial of sacrifice entails that everything can be substituted for everything else. In this 'omni-substitutability' every thing loses its identity - including culture, which is thereby 'de-allegorized.' Paradoxically, in the denial of sacrifice, sacrifice becomes generalized and divested of meaning; the sacrificed becoming merely the raw material consumed in the workshops of production. Rousseau, unlike de Léry, does not sacrifice knowledge of the 'primitive' to the reproduction of the external canon of order and the cultural reproduction of interdependence, rather, he produces an inner 'primitive' as an image of an interior otherworldly-ness, an innate freedom. In autonomy, freed from necessity, we believe what we choose, and meaning becomes inconsistent when not contingent upon conventions. Or rather, meaning becomes inconsistent when not subject to the one thing "all conventions have...in common, namely faith in convention" (222). Where the rule of the canon demanded sacrificial acts of reproduction, with the denial of sacrifice (what I have called Rousseau's 'refusal of fulfillment') we can see that the rule of convention produces images of autonomy. While Rousseau had repudiated 'progress' as the enslavement to social conventions and the mediation by objects, once the rule of convention replaces the limit of the world beyond by a series of barriers - discrete and fragmented obstacles to the multiplication of exchange, whose character is (or frames are) believed to be entirely interior - autonomy can be produced in images without copies, it can imagine or fiction itself as an unconnected and incomplete - inimitable - model. Once autonomous freedom has become a necessity grounded in a ruling non-identity, it projects 'outside' of itself an image of the desired totality of inner comprehension it lacks. This image is the future, imagined as a totality we create in history (and not beyond it) in production. Calasso quotes and glosses a passage from Marx' Grundrisse that gives us an image of this image:

'What is it [wealth] if not the absolute realization of his [man's] creative gifts, with no presupposition other than prior historical development, which makes this totality of development - that is, the development of all human powers as such - an end in itself, and not one measured by a predetermined criterion? A totality of development in which man does not reproduce himself in a single specificity, but produces his totality?' Here we witness the reappearance of an old obsession: the unit of measurement. But once again, the situation is reversed. The ancient world had, as a frame of reference, an actual canon of man, which seems to have been a
utopian state of society that in itself possessed the criterion of perfection. The modern world, on the contrary, has no real use for perfection. Its only unit of measurement is work time - meaning abstract work, an empty unit, without any special features. But it is precisely this empty unit that allows man to produce (note: not reproduce!) himself to a degree unheard of in any other world...

The world of production knows no models and sets itself no limits; its limit can only be the whole. From maximum fragmentation, engendered by the absence of models, it wants to converge toward maximum unity, which is that of a whole immediately possessed. And this demand for totality hovers like a ghost over every part of the process, since the absence of totality causes keen anguish. (Calasso, 227)

Here we arrive at the point of a revolutionary historical creation. This is not the concept of modern political revolution, but rather that of the creation of the doctrine of progress as an historico-interpretive transformation of the nature of temporality necessary to the unfolding of Enlightenment and its promise, emancipation. Progress - to call it revolutionary from this point forward is a pleonasm - reinterprets the now as a modernity in which everything that is past is a kind of mythology, or museumology, implicitly archaic. Although progress may be seen as a flight from the anxiety of redundancy (Polybian repetition) and inauthenticity (Platonic mimesis), and as such can be represented in a metaphoric image of the irreversible arrow of time, repetition that does not return produces its own anxiety. Progress, thus, with its endless (and repetitive) transgression of discrete barriers, constantly needs to renew its inaugural gesture of a division of the world into two temporal regimes: the cutting edge of time, and 'every-when' else. In this sense progress contains a repetition essential to its own myth (as every myth must), revolution.89

The myth of education, motor of progress

With the dawn of a full doctrine of progress also opens the twilight of the Enlightenment. For, just as every dawn posits a twilight behind it opening the first pages of a night which the dawn closes like a book, so too does the doctrine of progress create its own past and 'backwardnesses.' However, because the time of (revolutionary) progress is not as straightforward as it seems, in order to get a grip on its essentially spatial notion of temporality we need to reculer un peu pour mieux sauter. In this twilight era, once the distance constitutive of Enlightened discourse, between an avowable progress and an unavowable archaicism of faith, is recognized as un-self-grounded, it becomes metaphorical.90 It is in the context of this nominalism that the 'myth' of education as a "dream of reconciliation" arises (Eagleton, 25). Between the realm of ideas
marching ever, and unimpededly on, and the domain of those practices that lag behind, education becomes that which assures that the gap between the one and the other will never become insurmountably large (or conversely, the threat held over regimes that are insufficiently committed to education: 'without education the masses will never 'catch up'). Indeed we may say that from a social point of view the promise of Enlightened education becomes the very motor of the production of perpetual progress: "the role that 'milieu' plays for individuals is envisioned from the perspective of a production. 'Custom' is not only a fact, but also a tool: a society acquires through it the power of endlessly 'perfecting' itself, of acting on itself, of changing its nature, of constructing itself" (de Certeau 1988, 178). This discourse of education encompasses the curious practice in which the enlighteners view the populace as both the seed-bed for enlightened reforms and as the orchard from which enlightened discourse harvests the raw material of its reformist critiques, on the one hand, and yet tacitly envisages the final erasure of the seed-bed/orchard, and implicitly the necessity for enlightened leadership, on the other.

Reason, which organizes a society's practice upon itself, always takes for granted that its 'essence' and its truth are buried within 'vulgar' strata and hence foreign to it. Whatever might be its successes, the method is relative to a foundation which remains extrinsic. It is for others - it assumes a civilizing and pedagogical form - just as this popular other is for itself, destined to join the enlightened bourgeoisie. Each of the two terms can find its truth only in its other...Education in particular, a crusade of the eighteenth century, is obsessed with the same insurmountable ambivalence. It colonizes, to be sure, but is also an eschatological quest: it awaits the coming of the confirmation and the effectivity of what it already asserts...the educational task will thus ceaselessly perfect its methods and expand the field of its progress in order to surmount the rupture that keeps reason outside its own truth and forces it to depend on its own adversary. Yet this rupture is a constitutive one...Henceforward truth will no longer be given in signs. Reason has in its other, outside of itself, what makes it endlessly produce. (de Certeau 1988, 174)

The paradox inhering within this secular eschatology surfaces in utopian fictions like Louis-Sebastien Mercier's L'an deux mill quatre-cent quarente (Amsterdam, 1771), "the first utopia," writes Simon Collier, "to be located in the future" - and thus the first utopia for which an ideology of progress was a sine qua non - and the "first to make the whole planet its setting" (38; 97). The paradox of temporality in L'an 2440 is that while Mercier can envisage the final triumph of Enlightenment the whole world over, he cannot dispense with the necessity for unenlightened others. For, Mercier's triumph of
Enlightenment would be the end of enlightenment, and as such, with no one else to
Enlighten, its collapse.\textsuperscript{91}

Within this ethical torsion, "many philosophies build the rationality of practice on
a principle of action...its elucidation (\textit{Aufklärung}) in every instance impl[ying] the double
reference to the culture which 'is fashioned' (that of the Enlightenment) and to the
situation which is a 'fact' (and still a religious one)" (de Certeau 1988, 175). The
attempted and futural reconciliation of two entities deemed exterior to one another (the
Enlighteners and the to-be-enlightened) is manifest in a bifurcated discourse of
Enlightened 'science' re-organized according to the formalities of Christian experience:
that which precedes and that which awaits.

In other words, 'enlightened' practice is organized along the lines of formalities
which \textit{were} of a religious nature before being taken up as postulates of a morality.
The pattern is the same for the three great stages of ethics which can be designated
by the privileged reference: politics, conscience, progress. These moments refer to
historical experiences of Christianity and bear the mark of religious forms whose
very archaeology they establish, whether it be ecclesiology, a spirituality or
pietism, or a messianism of a people elected by God for a universal mission.
(1988, 176)

In this formation, the politics of progress takes shape as a secular ecclesiology, in which
the state is fashioned or renewed as the mediator of social salvation whose gnostic
crusade is premised upon the resistance of the 'ignorant' which it denies. Conscience, as
we have seen with Rousseau, becomes the secular form of an agnostic spirituality
"transformed into the morality of autogenesis," but one whose original meaning is
increasingly emptied out and gradually topped up with notions of bourgeois liberal

\textbf{Progress (eschatology)}

The pure light of science seems unable to shine but on the dark background of ignorance
\textit{Marx}

Within the dynamic of these transformations, 'progress' may also be seen as
rationality's narrative of the recognition of the implicit limits to the realization of the
Enlightenment project. It tells the story of past prejudices 'overcome' and reminds 'us' of
our civilizing mission, both in terms of what precedes us and of what awaits to be done.
In this, progress is the inversion and legatee of Providence: it is the myth proper to our
power to transform 'Nature' and 'Custom' through education, technology, critique,
economic production, and social civility. However, while "[t]he metamorphosis of
Christianity into ethics and, more broadly, into culture can be located ultimately under the sign of progress," this evangelization of reason will come to be "measured only by the limits that its meets, not by the truth that it bears" (de Certeau 1988, 178-179):

Thus the impossibility of having social reality gain a structural coherence or of identifying language with a logic leads to [reason's] envisaging reason as a story of progress; that is, to categorizing observed phenomena along the line of a development of reason. Dates become a means of recovering an order, since exceptions can be ranked among resistances and former prejudices...

Messianism, evangelism, crusade: these Christian structures can be recognized in the enterprise which associates the Enlightenment with their predication, this civilizing mission with the power of changing nature, and the task of converting the meaning of being and of doing with the truth of history. Hegel will be the theologian of this future of the Spirit. (1988, 178)

The rationalization of religion under the aegis of social utility abandons Biblical Revelation as surety only to replace it with a reason that is revealed to be first and last thing: "reason must be bound to the exteriority of its future if a function of Christianity is to be revealed in its purity," an exteriority, however, that it constantly produces and consumes (1988, 178-179). The others of this secular revelation become the 'silent' and "future witnesses of an uncertain and inner truth" (1988, 179).

The allegory of time-travel

A similar attitude underlay the comments of the Spanish writer, Jovellanos, on the subject of European colonization, which would 'no longer seek nations to conquer, peoples to oppress, regions to cover with grief and poverty.' but on the contrary would seek to bring to backward peoples 'the virtues of humanity, practical science and peaceful arts, all the gifts of abundance and peace.' Hampson (157)

In Jovellanos' comment we can see that the gnostic discourse of distances that had been exported to account for the expanse of time between Europe and colony (i.e., 'civilization' and 'barbarism' as historical ages) is also re-imported via the notion of the secular salvation of the 'savages' as a reflection of a distance overcome. As the discourse of the inner voice undermines the elite pretensions of the 'clergy of reason' to cast a rationalizing beacon on the obscurantist hinterlands, a new discourse of travel renews the gnostic attitude in a modified form by establishing links with an ethnology of 'productive' and 'a-productive' societies. The innovation in the eighteenth century, however, is that a temporalization is increasingly applied to the gap between discourse and its raw material other, in the image of a secular salvation that is produced in history. As Fabian points out (echoing de Certeau), Enlightenment thinkers made use of the same Christian code of an earlier era but change the message to suit the times: "these thinkers replaced Bossuet's
Christian myth with the 'myth-history of reason' which, by and large, continued to use the conventions and devices of earlier periods" (6).

The topos of travel was to play a key role in the secular renovation of these Christian forms. Whereas the pilgrimages, crusades, and missions of the past, imitative perhaps of the *vita* of Christ, had been voyages from the periphery to the centre (Rome/Jerusalem), that is, "to the centers of religion, or to the souls to be saved; now, secular travel was from the centers of learning and power to places where man was to find nothing but himself" (ibid.). Eighteenth century voyages of secular enlightenment, 'sentimental journeys' aiming at personal self-fulfillment, become, under the inspiration of natural history, part of a new "idea and practice of travel as science" (ibid.). In taking on these pretensions the new travelogues do not lose the *Bildung*-novelistic flavour which Prévost had introduced into the genre in his re-writing of the voyagers accounts. They still remain guidebooks of a sort to the spiritual development of the traveler (and in fact deluxe productions peppered with colour intaglio prints give way to pocket-sized, portable editions921), but as *scientific* travelogues their scope of reference is much larger. Extra-European travel now contributes to the fleshing out of the taxonomic table (and cartographic map) of the diversity of human societies and the articulation and ramification of the historical tree of a single human family. In this scientific notion of travel the temporality of the voyage becomes for the first time explicit:

The philosophical traveller, sailing to the ends of the earth, is in fact travelling in time; he is exploring the past; every step he makes is the passage of an age.

(J. M. Degerando, *The Observation of Savage Peoples* [1800]; in Fabian; 7)

With the advent of 'scientific travel' the theorization of an 'essential anachronism' is properly constituted. The principal characteristics of this theorization of time are composed of the contradictory assertions that first, homogenous empty time (time as a uniform Newtonian constant) is immanent to and co-extensive with space, such that displacements in space (e.g., 5 leagues) are throughout the universe and consistently equal to distensions in time (e.g., 5 hours); and that second, paradoxically, relations in space are equivalent to relations in historical time (the implicit relation between time and space in *L'an 2440*), such that displacements in space from the centre are equivalent to a dispersal in time from the present into the past. The paradox here is that equal distances in space do not entail equivalent amounts of historical time; for 200 leagues displacement within Europe, from say Paris to Berlin, does not involve the temporal regression that 200 leagues travel from Seville, say, outside Europe would entail. Fabian demonstrates this change in temporal conception by comparing the use to which Bossuet in the seventeenth
century and the scientific travellers in the late eighteenth century put the topos of 'Oriental dilapidation and corruption.' For Bossuet,

Egypt, once so wise, stumbles along drunken, dizzy, because the Lord has spread giddiness in its designs; she no longer knows what she is doing, she is lost. But peoples should not fool themselves: When it pleases Him, God will straighten out those who err. (in Fabian, 10)

Although one may say that Bossuet here tacitly attributes to Egypt a time different than that under which he writes, such difference is to Bossuet ultimately illusory, for the appearance of difference is in fact subsumed under the mantle of a providential history which, however uncertain in its particulars, is certain in its solidity and design. One hundred and ten years later, however, Volney, in his Les ruines ou Méditations sur les révolutions des empires (1791),93 will rework the trope to entirely different, and neognostic, ends:

It is a man's folly that makes him lose himself; it is up to man's wisdom to save him. The peoples [of Egypt and Syria] are ignorant, may they instruct themselves; their rulers are perverted, let them correct and better themselves. Because that is the dictate of nature: Since the evils of societies come from cupidity and ignorance, mankind will not cease to be tormented until it becomes enlightened and wise, until they practice the art of justice, based on the knowledge of their relations and of the the laws of their organization. (in Fabian, 10; emphasis added)

The important innovation introduced in late eighteenth century discourse, of which Volney is merely an example, is that differences between societies are no longer merely differences of convention - they are polytheistic, we are monotheistic; they prohibit mimetic representation, we do not - or differences of fact - they are weaker, and we are stronger. From this point forward societal differences become naturalized, and, in the image of Linnean natural history, arranged along a stream of time conceived as a stream of knowledge: they are 'backward' while we are 'progressing' because we are more (and they are less) productive of that knowledge that leads to salvation in a secular form: 'Enlightenment.'

The transformation that occurred [in the secularization of Judeo-Christian time] involved, first, a generalization of historical time, its extension, as it were, from the circum-Mediterranean stage of events to the whole world. Once that was achieved, movement in space could become secularized too. The notion of travel as science, that is, as the temporal/spatial 'completion' of human history, emerged and produced, by the end of the eighteenth century, research projects and
institutions which can be called anthropological in a strict sense... It would be naive to think that Enlightenment conceptions of time were the simple result of empirical induction. As the 'myth-history of reason,' they were ideological constructs and projections: secularized time had become a means to occupy space, a title conferring on its holders the right to 'save' the expanse of the world for history. (Fabian, 146)

With the advent of this notion of 'chrono-political geography' - the construction of a space necessary to both capitalist and colonialist production and a time that accommodates progress, development, and modernity (as well as stagnation, underdevelopment, and tradition) - with this advent we can perhaps for the first time speak of geopolitics as a singularity. This advent is also a full 'gnosticization' of (natural) history in which philosophic thought assumes, willingly or not [bon gré mal gré], responsibility for the violence wrecked on 'savage' man in the name of a superiority which it enjoys: it is in vain that it will affirm the brotherhood of man, for it will be unable to defend itself against the charge of a Euro-centrism that finds in the idea of progress its best alibi. (Duchet, 20)

It is to Mercier's great credit that he imagines in L'an 2440 future generations actually shouldering the naturalized violence of colonialism which most of his contemporaries merely assumed. In placing his imagined pardon in the centuries to come Mercier, opens up a stream of discourse that will henceforward employ the future as a critique of that which is untenable in the present.

Sebastien Mercier in his L'an 2440 imagines a 'singular moment' where 'the nations represented solicit the pardon of humanity' for their cruelty. Among them, Spain, groaning 'from having covered the new continent with 35 million cadavers, from having hunted down in the darkest forests and cavernous rocks the pitiably remnants of a thousand nations, from having accustomed animals, less ferocious than they, to drink the blood of human beings.' (Duchet, 149)
VII. Conclusion

Strange inarticulateness

Here I come to the end of my story. Let me in closing these historical reflections tie off some of the many strands we have followed by raising three issues: the problem of moral sources, the dissonance of eighteenth century contract theory, and the eighteenth century problem of violence. We have seen how the inner voice, arising in the self-consciousness of alienation and implicitly challenging the gnosticism of rationalism, conceives of itself as an apodictic, a priori whose truth it nevertheless recognizes as ungrounded and merely formal. For Rousseau, the unveiling of this stellar voice was equally an occultation of the world. What I would like now to focus on is the paradox that the frame of non-being in which Rousseau conceives freedom becomes the frame of a future possibility of being. Charles Taylor, although framing it in different terms, has pointed out (what I take to be) the same paradox.

Taylor demonstrates that the eighteenth century moral theory of social progress existed in an uneasy tension with the same century's 'scientific' theory of individual psychological motivation, the evasion of pain and the pursuit of pleasure:

the radical Aufklärer... were spurred to disengagement and scientific reason by the sense that they were affirming the unadulterated demands of nature and freeing universal benevolence from its prison of superstition and error.

In one way, this is obvious. It leaps out at you from their writings. In another way, it is problematic, and this because of a central feature of their doctrine. That is that this obvious fact about their motivations and aspirations can't be easily stated within the terms allowed by their theories of human nature. These, in their insistence on the physical nature of the moral life or on the reduction of all human motivation to pleasure, in their zeal to root out all religious and metaphysical doctrines about 'higher' or 'spiritual' aspirations, to [sic] leave them absolutely no ontological space, seemed also to abolish the space for what I have been calling 'strong evaluation,' the recognition that certain goals or ends make a claim on us, are incommensurable with our other desires and purposes.

(331-332)

The tension on which Taylor here sheds light is that the theory of social benevolence seems able to ground itself only in that which disengaged reason had ruled out as a possibility: in some concept of 'innate ideas.' Of course the idea of benevolence had always been non-observational, whether in Plato or the Gospels, and had always been grounded in some form of external law (Providence). However, once the philosophes had discounted the validity of such a priori ethical systems the only remaining source for a
motivational social benevolence was through direct disengaged introspection: "The Aufklärer felt the goodness of their own motivations, and felt this to be linked with their rational insight" (331). This paradox of legitimation was exacerbated by the status of benevolence as a double operative in Enlightenment theories of the good, what I have called the topos of preceding and awaiting. On the one hand benevolence was seen as the end product of a present social process (Mercier's L'an 2440); while on the other, the practice of the Enlightened social project had to assume that some form of benevolence was already extant, i.e., that through rational reflection/introspection one would opt for the maximalization of the common goods palpably felt to lie already within the subject. With the advent of the Sadean cosmic fiction this tension was near rupture: for the good Marquis' world view was no less disengaged, materialist, sensualist, or utilitarian than Diderot's or Rousseau's - "Infamy must be able to go as far as to dismember nature and dislocate the universe"94 - yet it was entirely amoral.

This welter of paradoxes inhered from the beginning in the century's mechanist assumptions, i.e., that true knowledge had to be of a piece with the formal and universal truths of Newtonian physics, Cartesian algebra, Euclidean geometry, etc. Berlin points out that in the climate of invincible optimism that these assumptions engendered, a whole gamut of unjustifiable inferences about other forms of knowledge were made: "since [for the eighteenth century] such questions as what to do, how to live, what would make men just or rational or happy, were all factual questions, [and since] the true answers to any one of them could not be incompatible with true answers to any of the others," i.e., with the formal universals I have mentioned, "[the philosophes'] ideal of creating a wholly just, wholly virtuous, wholly satisfied society, was therefore no longer Utopian" (1956, 27-28; emphasis added). As the eighteenth century social project gathered steam, the friction or dissonance accumulating between the rational comprehension of the physical model as actual and completed and the passionate apprehension of a futural social order of perfect benevolence issued in two unexpected forms: silence and polemics. Taylor:

The rationalist self-image, and the occulting of moral motivation, is the dominant trend in Enlightenment naturalism. It grows from the most common reaction to the...[various tensions] described above: to suppress the problem and fudge it over with the aid of various theories of harmony and sympathy. The resulting theories are all strangely inarticulate. Classical utilitarianism is perhaps the first to exhibit a feature which afflicts a host of contemporary theories...they are debarred by the ontology they accept from formulating and recognizing their own moral sources. Their commitment to the goods which drive them occasionally emerges in direct invocations...But for the most part, these underlying moral sources emerge only through rhetoric of argument; and above all
through the denunciations of the religious and philosophical errors which bring such great suffering on mankind...they are mainly invoked in polemic. (338-339; emphasis added)

Dissonance in contract theory

Perhaps the most salient manifestation of this dissonance can be seen in the development of social contract theory through Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. The underlying assumption, that grows stronger as one 'progresses' through this triumvirate, is that it is only by virtue a primary and inalienable autonomy that the individual in a state of nature is able to enter freely into a social contract.95 Yet, as Hegel would later point out, however intuitively apposite this notion may seem to be, it is a logical contradiction: society cannot "have been based in any contract, since the individual autonomy, without which no contract can be made, presupposes the society which is supposedly formed through it" (Scruton, 208). Pierre Saint-Amand notes as much in Rousseau's critique of Montesquieu:

Montesquieu preserves the state of nature intact. Presocial man for him is weak, and knows not aggression. Nevertheless Montesquieu will also say that this man is haunted by fear of the other. Rousseau called attention to the contradiction of such a presupposition by stating that fear, effectively, can only be fear of aggression. Aggressive confrontation must be theorized as antecedent to any social contract. (18-19)96

Yet in throwing the light of his considerable intelligence on this contradiction, Rousseau too, ultimately evades it.

In the Preface to the Discourse on Inequality Rousseau at first proposes to address the question of human violence:

Human society contemplated with a tranquil and disinterested eye appears at first sight to display only the violence of powerful men and the oppression of the weak...and as nothing is less stable among men than these exterior relationships which are produced more often by chance than by thought...human institutions seem at first sight to be founded on piles of shifting sands. (71)

However, Rousseau immediately concludes, this seemingness is merely a mystification of appearances that the cogency of analysis unveils:

It is only by examining them more closely, and only after clearing away the sand and dust which surrounds the edifice that one sees the solid base on which it is built, and learns to respect its foundation. For without the serious study of man, of man's natural faculties and their successive developments, one will never succeed
in analyzing these distinctions, and separating, within the present order of things, that which the divine will has contrived from that which human artifice claims as its own. *(ibid.)*

The solid base on which 'true' society and institutions are (to be) built is, for Rousseau, exactly like the inner voice, an a priori analytic truth (and as such a circular and nominal definition): it is the peaceable and solitary nature of the 'noble savage.'

It would seem at first glance that men in the state of nature, having [as absolute solitaries] no kind of moral relationships between them, or any known duties, could be neither good nor evil, and that they could have neither vices nor virtues...[However,] let us not conclude with Hobbes that man is naturally evil just because he has no idea of goodness, that he is vicious for want of any knowledge of virtue...Reasoning on his own principles, that writer ought to have said that the state where man's care for his own preservation is least prejudicial to that of others, is the one most conducive to peace and most suited to mankind. (98)

The 'savage,' it appears, is the very image of a saintly peaceableness. His solitary freedom precludes any (real) violence, for faced with a situation in which violence might arise, he will always choose his natural abode - elsewhere: "It is impossible to enslave a man without first putting him in a situation where he cannot do without another man, and since such a situation does not exist in a state of nature, each man there is free of the yoke and the law of the strongest is rendered vain" (106). It appears that the 'savage' can do no evil because evil is defined only in relation to sociability, ownership, and society, and the 'savage' has nobly declined to embrace such notions.

What is more, and this, I think, is cornerstone of Rousseau's conception, natural man is peaceable because he makes no comparisons, his desire is not mimetic. In a footnote explicating the difference between *amour-propre* (pride) and *amour de soi* (self love), Rousseau writes:

(O)...*in the true state of nature*, pride does not exist...it follows that a sentiment which has its origin in *comparisons he is unable to make* could not possibly begin to exist in his soul. For the same reason this man could experience neither hatred nor the desire for vengeance, passions which can arise only from a belief that an offence has been received; and as it is the contempt, or the intention to hurt, and not the harm itself that constitutes an offence, men who do not know how to evaluate themselves or to compare themselves with others, can do one another much violence, when it brings them some advantage, without conversely ever giving offence. (167-168; emphasis added)
Of the many things that could be said of this passage, let us place to the side Rousseau's naturalization of 'animal' violence, what he calls violence without intent to hurt. Let us also, for the moment, accept Rousseau's analytic definitions of 'in the true state of nature,' in which natural man is absolutely alone (or nearly so: "men...would perhaps hardly meet twice in their lives, without recognizing or speaking to one another" (91)), and of the 'real' (or true) form of violence whose genesis he seeks to explicate. Purged of these complications, what Rousseau in a nutshell says is that because the solitary is alone he cannot make comparisons; and because he cannot make comparisons, he cannot be truly violent. The problem here is that in challenging what he sees as Montesquieu's contradiction of a first man who is both fearful and lacking aggression, Rousseau then characterizes the thought process of this man as one of comparisons doubled on comparisons. It is by virtue of the comparisons he is able to make (comparisons. I might add, that appear to take him far beyond the pre-linguistic simplicity that Rousseau would have him in, but never mind), it is by virtue of these comparisons that the natural man overcomes his fear, and returns to the tranquility that is proper to his state.

An illustrious philosopher [Montesquieu] thinks, on the contrary [i.e., to Hobbes]...that there is nothing so timid as man in the state of nature, that he is always trembling and ready to run away at the least noise he hears or the smallest movement he observes. This may well be true of things he does not know...Yet such circumstances are rare in the state of nature...The savage, living among the animals and placed from an early age where he has to measure himself against them, soon makes the comparison, and perceiving that he excels the beasts in skill more than they surpass him in strength, learns to fear them no longer...In the case of animals that really do have more than his skill, man is in the same situation as other weaker species, which nevertheless subsist, except indeed that he has the advantage that, being no less swift than they in running, and finding an almost certain refuge in any tree, he can either accept or refuse an encounter; he has the choice between flight and combat. (82-83; emphasis added)

Without the human intercourse from whence 'real' comparison derives, Rousseau's animal-man nonetheless makes a whole welter of comparisons to his advantage - indeed he has to, in order to overcome fear. Even more paradoxically, one would think that such reflection on his 'natural' advantages would allow 'natural' man a peaceful sleep. But no, this is precisely what is denied him: "Solitary, idle, and always close to danger, the savage cannot enjoy sleeping...Self preservation being the savage's only concern, his best trained faculties must be those which have as their main object attack and defence" (86-87; emphasis added).
Perhaps we ought to give Rousseau the benefit of the doubt, and accept without too many cavils his premise that the first man was not inherently violent. If he was as solitary as Rousseau would have him then he could conceivably be un-self-conscious of any human advantage he might wield over other humans. However, that granted, it does not follow that this man's seemingly pacific nature is the benign model on which 'true' society should be built, and this by Rousseau's own terms. For the first man is not only innately peaceable (and given to comparisons with animals), he is the very *eidos* of the paradigmatic:

Man dispersed among the beasts, would observe and *imitate* their activities and so assimilate their instincts, *with this added advantage* that while every other species has only its own instinct, man, having none which is peculiar to himself, *appropriates every instinct*... (81-82; emphasis added)

The point here is no longer whether this first man is innately violent. That question is now moot. Given that he *appropriates* every instinct he observes and makes it his own, and that this is, properly speaking, *his* instinct, the important question arises: how can he not appropriate intentional violence once he comes into contact with it?

That advent of violence Rousseau, somewhat disingenuously, postdates to the era - and in this he follows Pascal⁹⁸ - following the advent of property relations. But if the 'natural man' is he for whom nothing is his own save the appropriative instinct and, it should be recalled, "an innate repugnance against seeing a fellow creature suffer...so natural a virtue that even beasts sometimes show perceptible signs of it," then is it any wonder that in first society or last (civilized) society he manifests an instinct for violence that it is his instinct to appropriate (99)? Rousseau is quick to point out that the compassion that is proper to the state of nature survives into the state of civilization; however, 'true' violence, he claims, can only be created there. Of the mimetic instinct common to compassion and the appropriation of violence Rousseau will be silent, perhaps because it is Rousseau's discursive necessity and emotional need to found an unalienable and peaceable, primary autonomy.

**The eighteenth century problem of violence**

This quotient of desire is important to a further facet of the dissonance arising from Enlightened rationality. In his analysis of the infirmities of reason John Ralston Saul elucidates how the movement of the philosophes was characterized by a formal continuity with that to which they believed they were opposed.
If the philosophers of reason believed that nothing provokes violence so effectively as fear and that fear is the product of ignorance, it was because they had arrived on the scene after two hundred years of religious and civil wars. These had produced levels of civilian violence not achieved again until the twentieth century. The reasonable men of the eighteenth century wanted to cut the roots of this fear...

What these philosophes do not seem to have noticed, however, was that the very methods they were about to loose upon the world, in the name of reason, had been in ever-increasing practical use throughout the two preceding centuries of violence. In fact, these methods had been used by Richelieu 150 years earlier precisely to create the absolutist state against which the Enlightenment was now rebelling. (1992, 38-39)

According to Pierre Saint-Amand the principal cause of this blindness of methods stemmed from the philosophes' desire "to be the saviours of men":

The philosophes draped the origins of human society in a veil of modesty. They refused, in effect, to take human beings such as they are; curiously, they desired to be the saviours of men, all the while distancing them from their own wickedness...they placed before the human subject a self-image that could not but flatter him. (14)

Saint-Amand sees this negation of violence as being co-temporal, throughout the course of the eighteenth century, with the waning of the vertical order of politico-religious transcendence and the coming to majority of legal theory. Once it was up to human beings to found a social order in horizontal and egalitarian terms, a new symbolic economy of human autonomy was unleashed in which 'origins' would be a code-term for the distance desired between the philosophes' present faith in society and society's all too recent and actual links to a transcendent and sacred order. Recall that it was only in 1715 that Louis XIV had died, and that the grisly auto-da-fé with which Foucault begins Discipline and Punish was celebrated in the Place de Notre Dame in 1757. If the future was to be as rosy-bright as was hoped it would be, then an already extant human nature adequate to this future-present model was indispensable. A theoretical tailor's dummy of human nature, charges Saint-Amand, was fabricated; necessary not only for its inspirational and affirmative content, but tactically as well: for a (Hobbesean) theory of human nature as intrinsically violent was hardly the lever with which to rally troops to the cause and pry concessions from absolute monarchs:

in the face of a glorious and possible future, a human nature made to measure would be necessary. The violence of social intercourse, the vertigo of antagonistic relations had to be relegated to a far-away past. Exit hostility. The unheralded age
of republicanism and history to come would give a benevolent gloss to the visage human nature. Contemporary legal theory, also playing its part, was full of good will. The natural goodness of man would facilitate the codification of a new justice. (15)

While the difference here between the philosophes and Rousseau on the location of violence may appear substantial, it is, as I have laboured to show, not really so. For, although the philosophes conceive natural goodness as belonging to the triumph of civilization over the brute state of nature, and although Rousseau reverses these terms - the insubstantiality of violence is the same: 'in the true state of nature,' says Rousseau (and for the philosophes read, in the true state of society), 'pride does not exist...[nor] hatred nor vengeance.'

And where, Saint-Amand asks, does hostility go? It is banished to prehistory (or, in Rousseau, to the externality of 'custom') as an unnatural, irrational aberration, to be excluded from all 'true' conceptions of human nature. Listen to how the Encyclopédie (article: 'Société') judges vengeance: "Stifling the very principle of goodwill, vengeance puts in its place feelings of animosity and hatred, viciousness itself, contrary to the public good, which natural law formally condemns" (in Saint-Amand, 18). This definition is conceptually identical to Rousseau's analytic a priori of the peaceable and solitary nature of the 'noble savage.' As Saint-Amand demonstrates, on the verso to the recto on which the eighteenth century, rationalist social contract is written, is inscribed violence, for violence is conceived as pure irrationality.

With the slate thus (imagined) clean, a new incarnation and an avant la lettre codification of the futural-hypothetical justice could begin. Here is how the Encyclopédie (article: 'Sociabilité') defines sociability:

That disposition which inclines us to do unto men all the good that can possibly rest with us [peut dépendre de nous - alternately: 'be within our control'], to reconcile our own happiness with that of others, and to subordinate always our particular advantage to that of the common and general weal. (in Saint-Amand, 16)

This idealized definition, says Saint-Amand, was based on - and in a circular fashion formed the basis for - the animating force of the philosophes' notion of society, imitation:

It is the pulsion, the affect par excellence of sociability. The Encyclopédie conceives imitation as that which renders social exchange possible. Imitation thrusts man towards his neighbour. It is to the mimetic affect that we owe the first social intercourse: effects of sympathy, pity, desire to congregate...Human reciprocity is imagined as bearing essentially towards the good. (16)
Imitation so monochromatically conceived, purged of all Augustinian darkness, is a strangely inarticulate transparency. Charles Taylor devotes many subtle pages to expounding the view that Protestant theology, growing out of a rejection of Augustinian external law and its corollary of external grace, opted instead for a notion of *homo religiosis* (Luther), in which an innately longed for God might justifiably be sought within. Enlightenment Deism, he says, picked up on this refusal; and whereas the Augustinian stream of Christianity saw grace as necessary even to discerning the natural good, the Deists' promoted the innovation that grace merely allowed one to surpass the natural good that already inhered within every Christian. After all, that inner resource was but the natural reflection of a cosmic harmony available to the disengaged reflection of the Lockean *animal rationale*. But once "[t]he good that God wills comes more and more to centre on natural good alone...[e]ven eternal reward comes to be seen as just a lot more of the same," as, that is, superfluous (Taylor, 247). At this point "Enlightenment Deism ends up suppressing any place for grace...in the teeth of orthodox opposition, and then naturalism takes over from there" (246). The resulting condition, in which God is left "no choice" (he refrains from miracles), and in which the Judeo-Christian conception of history is marginalized (no miracles: *ergo* no eruptions of the supra-worldly into the mundane), opens before human society an elemental and rhetorical bifurcation reflecting the distance between the Enlightened spirit and the material masses requiring Enlightenment (273).

The paradox of the Enlightenment "Gospel of the happy future" is that while anything was thought possible, everything was subject to criticism and dissent (Fuentes 1989, 92). For Taylor antinomies were recognized, then fudged and 'harmonized.' For Saint-Amand, Kant, at the end of a century long trajectory (and at the very end of his own career), introduces a singular innovation into this complex of ideas that breaks one of its reigning illusions: that irreconcilable propositions are more likely than harmonious consensus, for "rationality is rare" (Saint-Amand, 24).

At the end of the century Kant will trace the contours of a peace among citizens, but not for philosophers. Moreover, in order to avoid apathy, the sleep of reason [*le sommeil de la raison*], it will be necessary for philosophy, says Kant, to engage confrontation, voice passions, even to wage war: 'to battle in favour of his philosophy and, massively mustering in camps which oppose one another (school against school as army against army), ultimately to wage an open war.'" (24-25)
Throughout the century and becoming only stronger with the implicit sanction of the sage of Königsberg, eighteenth century political theory is characterized by a moral absolutism. With each new work an apparent theoretical coup d'état of the past consensus was effected. Hampson's characterization of Voltaire's 'anti-clericism' - "The great anti-clerical assumed the accents of the preacher as he proclaimed the presence of the Newtonian God in language that might have graced an eighteenth-century pulpit" (79) - is a description that one could apply to many an eighteenth century philosophe. This was a regicide, however, in name only, for, although each new work seemed to stake its claim to fame on toppling its predecessors, all embodied a secularized version of the foundational, sacral character of divine right: "anxious to triumph, and being accompanied by not the slightest real political mobilization, the theoretical critique of politics [had] forsaken reality" (Saint-Amand, 25).

Shadows on the negative: 'Light thickens'

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck.
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeing night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pittiful day.
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale. Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to th'rooky wood.

Good things of day begin to droop and drowse.
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvell'st at my words, but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.

Macbeth III. ii: 45-55.

It is into this frame of discourses that the art of Goya, like the French Revolution, explodes. In the final years of the eighteenth century when 'progress' is in the process of becoming an ideational, ideological, and structural reality, when the problem of violence is imagined as somehow already resolved, and when in the same moment the (Rousseauist) negation of negation is assuming the mantle of personal and philosophic affirmation, a discourse of shadows engendered by the selective illumination of Enlightenment reason rears its ugly head. Everywhere throughout the graphic work of Goya - a medium, it should not be forgotten, premised upon the interplay of scorings and blanks, in which what is 'marked' appears 'light' on the plate but prints black on the paper103 - these shadows 'make wing.' For there below the surface of the finished image we perceive ghostly, under-etched shades that in the process of finalizing the plate have been progressively shrouded by layers of over-etching. Right there, in the fortuitous
conjunction of an artistic technique and an historical configuration of discursive forms, Goya's 'light thickens':

The paradox of the eighteenth century was that as it celebrated its promises, it had to criticize them, since freedom to dissent was also the basis of the Enlightenment's revolt against political and religious dogma...So Goya wasn't alone. But his way of seeing the lights of the century was uniquely Spanish. His paradox is that the light is dark...[and] the bitter, corrosive laughter that accompanied his identification of light with shadow was immersed in a peculiarly Spanish sense of irony, for no other European nation had so many reasons to espouse the Enlightenment with such a vengeance. (Fuentes 1989, 92; emphasis added)
Chapter One Notes:

1: Kant (1784). As this article is a brief seven pages, and as I will make repeated reference to it, I have elected to cite it without page numbers.

2: As this article is an even briefer five pages, I will cite from it without page numbers.

3: Mendelssohn (1784): "The enlightenment that interests the human being as a human being is universal, devoid of any class distinction; the enlightenment of the human being as a citizen, is modified, based upon standing and profession" (emphasis added).

4: From the Critique of Pure Reason, first edition (1781); note appended to 'What is Enlightenment?' by the editor/translator, Lewis Beck White.

5: These would be Greek and Judaic (Maimonides), direct and errant (Montaigne), geometric and heart-felt (Pascal), Apollonian and Dionysiac (Nietzsche), instrumental and enlightened (Adorno), institutional and emancipatory (Foucault).

6: Meinecke seems to me to be somewhat different from the others of this group on a couple of accounts. First is the fact that his major works all date from the 1920s and 30s. but which due to the vagaries of history and intellectual trends did not receive the audience they deserved outside of Germany until many years later. Secondly, Meinecke differs from the others in that although his work discourses the constant and continual interplay between reason and un-reason, and between rationality and the inner voice, there is a marked Platonizing tendency to it as well, stemming, perhaps from his enduring fear of relativism. The latter comes out clearly in his 'Preliminary Remarks' (particularly, liv-lxi), while the former appears most salient in his summation of Goethe's influence on historicism (particularly, 492-494), and in the 'Supplement' on Leopold von Ranke (496-511).

7: Some readers may be unfamiliar with this term. Webster's defines it as "any of the popular French intellectuals or social philosophers of the eighteenth century, as Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire, etc.," to which I would add: the philosophes (with the exception of Rousseau) were not philosophers but philosophically oriented social critics, historians, scientists, polemists, and/or reformers.

8: John Berger, jacket blurb - "...Goya is rescued from the past and the fields of dead study, and planted where he still belongs - in the mind of today" - to Gwyn A. Williams' Goya and the Impossible Revolution.

9: There are many ways of dissecting the artistic life of Goya, all of them including my public-private 'typology,' clearly, abstractions from the lived reality. Williams talks of four 'painters': the apprentice of the tapestry cartoons, the King's painter of the royal portraits, the satirist of the Caprichos, and the dark artist of the war and its aftermath. "He was sixty-four years of age when he started on the Disasters, with three life-times as a painter behind him" (12). In both of these typologies there is an enormous amount of overlap. Goya paints his final tapestry cartoon in 1792, his first etchings (after Velázquez) in 1778, his final royal portrait in 1814, his first 'dark' etching ('The Garroteed Man') in 1780. In 1798 Goya is working on a series of frescoes illustrating the miracle of St. Anthony of Padua (in the church of San Antonio de la Florida in Madrid) and preparing the acerbic Caprichos for publication.

10: This is a difficult point to make in a few words. What I am trying to express - and if you have turned to this note for clarification I have not so done succinctly - is the
situation of those nations (the world's largest group - by far) for whom the Enlightenment is an 'import commodity' (although as 'import' it may and often does strike chords of resonance with pre-existing quasi-religious values of betterment, utopia, or power). In such nations, the result of the importation of modernizing enlightenment on the pre-existing value-cultural system has been either decimation (e.g., the Beothuk of Newfoundland), marginalization (the bulk of the First Nations of the Americas; the masses of India) or transformation of those values into an indigenous-Enlightenment hybrid that modernizes all the same (Japan; Taiwan; Indian elites). In each of these cases, and it seems everywhere that Enlightenment appears, the pre-existing value-cultural system is devalued vis-à-vis enlightenment values (which is not to imply that they are static, or erased).

11: I am thinking here of 'fundamentalist' and 'communist' states, of whom it is believed that they have turned their backs on the spirit of the Enlightenment. I think it more accurate to say that they are states/societies of transition from a kind of neo-feudalism (China, Cuba, Iran, for example) to a more wholesale state of modernization.

12: One can find examples of this sentiment of suspension in many places. Here, for example is Gianni Vattimo in his *The Transparent Society* (1992): "With the discovery of the counter-finality of reason ("what, in their 1947 book, Horkheimer and Adorno called the Dialect of Enlightenment" (78)), which is lived in the collective imaginary via the affirmation of counter-utopias, it is not only isolated errors or risks of corruption that are experienced and exhibited; it is the very mechanism of rationalization that is 'suspended,' thrown into crisis and under accusation worldwide. It is apparently no longer by chance that counter-utopia comes to the fore in an age when, at the level of common consciousness, there is a marked dissolution of the ideology of progress (inspired by the same experiences of 'counter-finality' that inspire counter-utopia). But this is not all: progress no longer makes any sense as a dogma of the philosophy of history because it is precisely history as unilinear that is no longer intelligible, except at the price of grave ideological violence" (81).

13: Fabian, (6).


15: Toulmin entitles his second chapter 'The seventeenth Century Counter-Renaissance.'

16: See Goldfarb and Wolf.

17: de Certeau isolates three groups arising out of the general disaggregation: a group of atheist 'libertines,' drawn from the urban literate professions, extracting reason from faith (a prototype for the middle class of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries); a group of rural sorcerers extracting collective symbols from religious ritual and galvanizing the uprooted peasantry; and a group of mystics, "often localized among those lawyers subject to contradiction between their allegiance to a cultural tradition and the decrease of their
political or economic power," extracting 'psycho-biographical itineraries' from the institutional narratives of worship (153).

18: It should not be forgotten that for all Descartes' justifications of God, in the sharp dualism of the Cartesian philosophy God is effectively crossed out, rendered a silent non-participant in the affairs of the world, leaving rationalists the "masters and possessors of nature" (78). As for the substitution 'T - 'King', Descartes consciously writes, as did almost every European of his age, in the shadow of superiors, both worldly and divine.

19: Altery is perhaps the preferable and more apposite term here because, whereas heresy was defined from within theology (the heretic was already within Christendom, seemingly, if erroneously, referring to the same common symbols), the order of new 'universals' recognizes and necessitates true outsiders (having other points of reference).

20: See Adorno and Horkheimer (1972), passim.

21: These stages are diagramed in Latour's Figure 3.3. "The modern paradox" (58).

22: Todorov does not employ the concepts of hybridization and purification but, I think, the process he describes is sufficiently similar for me to draw this parallel.


24: If we place the terms of this comparison within the Western history of the standardization of logico-temporal units, this likeness becomes stronger than analogy. This would be a history linking the Greek standardization of logical (a-temporal) units, to a Medieval technology of standardized units of time (clocks), to an Enlightenment theorization and practice of universal measurement (e.g., the metric system).

25: One wants to question whether the notion of Judeo-Christian preterition is a non-trivial factor in contemporary controversy over the dating of indigenous settlements throughout the Americas. There is a consistent history of European, and more specifically American, refusal to accede to indigenous claims as to the length of native occupation of the continent(s), such that evidence of settlements that challenge the Bering Strait theory (limiting native prehistory to a migration from Siberia in the period 12,000-50,000 B.C.) has been consistently challenged. Vine Deloria discusses in detail the controversies of dating, the overwhelming lack of evidence for the Bering Strait hypothesis, and their consequences. Cf. Red Earth, White Lies (66-107).


27: Goya's Desastre #77, 'Que se rompa la cuerda' ('The cord breaks') can be seen in this light. An intrepid friar braves to walk the tightrope between an adherence to the tenets of a traditional Catholicism, a sympathy for the assumptions of the enlighteners, and a loyalty to the populace. An expectant crowd watches with baited breath.

28: Quoted by Fuentes (1989, 95).

29: Toni Morrison has remarked of this abyss between discourse and practice in the eighteenth century that, "we should not be surprised that the Enlightenment could accommodate slavery; we should be surprised if it had not. The concept of freedom did not emerge in a vacuum. Nothing highlighted freedom - if it did not in fact create it - like slavery" (1993, 39).

30: Throughout the century practices thought 'barbaric,' such as witchcraft trials, either subside or are programmatically purged from the statutes. However, Hampson notes that France and Britain can be seen as an exception to the general eighteenth century
compassion: "In 1789 there were still over a hundred crimes which carried the death penalty in France, while across the Channel the number of capital crimes increased throughout the century until it stood at over 200 by 1815" (156).

31: Hampson notes that because of the Christian and classical prejudice of conceiving time as the story of decay, "genuine scientific evidence could be quoted in support of an untenable theory. Thus Chastellux wrote, in De la félicité publique (1772), 'The enormous size of the bones of [extinct] land animals proves the antiquity of their race and reveals a slow degeneration of species'" (224).

32: The Dodo, first sighted by Europeans in 1507 on the islands of Mauritius, Reunion, and Rodrigues, had gone extinct by 1681 (in Mauritius), 1746 (Reunion), and 1790 (Rodrigues), largely due to the introduction of non-native species that took the Dodo as prey.

33: All translations from Duchet, mine.

34: Interestingly, one theorist did give greater credence to the evidence than to the reigning presuppositions: in a series of publications in the 1740s and 1750s, Maupertuis (President of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, and an important mathematician) outlined a truly evolutionary theory - yet it was so counter to the prevailing wisdom that no one paid any attention. "Virtually every idea of Mendelian mechanism, of heredity and the classical Darwinian reasoning from natural selection and geographic isolation is here [in Maupertuis] combined, together with De Vries's theory of mutations as the origin of species, in a synthesis of such genius that it is not surprising that no contemporary of its author had a true appreciation of it" (Glass, in Hampson; 230).

35: Godzich and Spadaccini note that in a society such as eighteenth century Spain, without a mechanism for political disputation and problem solving, 'culture' became the battle field of political forces. "The critical spirit becomes the instrument for the constitution of a new identity and for the establishment of a monologizing view of the culture, since it provides the means for the sifting out of the inherited culture, in the name of rationality, and thus for keeping only those elements and features that are in conformity with the ideological orientation of their propounders: criticism is the method, while [societal] security is the objective that is projected in all fields...the only means for a successful counter-offensive was by means of the accusation of insufficient patriotism" (1987, 17-18; emphasis added).

36: It was these riots that led to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain. In the aftermath of the disturbances, which were not limited to Madrid, the Italian minister Esquilache was sacked and the decree revoked. He was replaced by the 'frenchified' Count of Aranda who within a year had repealed the concessions and 'unmasked' the 'Jesuit conspiracy' against the king.

37: This 'coded-ness' is particularly salient in Spain where Inquisitional spies and rigid censorship were ubiquitous.

38: L'idée de nature en France à l'aube des lumières. All translations from Ehrard are my own. Ehrard's general thesis is that the plurality of uses of the term do not exclude its unique function as intellectual 'hand-rail,' simultaneously 'idée-force' and 'idée-frein': "It established the demarcation of the possible and the impossible and traced with a firm hand the limits of the human condition. Henceforward it tends to mask these frontiers" (420). Although Ehrard's study is limited to France, the centrality of France in the
eighteenth century European, and particularly continental, history of ideas, manners, and policy was enormous. This is especially true for Italy, and even more so for (after 1713) Bourbon Spain. Hampson quotes from a 1776 work entitled L'Europe française by an Italian author, Caraccioli: "When the eighteenth century appeared, adorned with its grace and charm, there was more than one people in Europe which, where habits and learning were concerned, was still in the fifteenth century. The distance has shortened and, broadly speaking, every European is now a Frenchmen" (in Hampson, 146).

39: Ehrard uses the terms contraignante-répressive, euphorique-lénitive, and critique-offensive (423-424). It ought to be born in mind that the dates of the three phases are approximate, and that there is much overlap.

40: I make no claim for the validity of these proportions as 'historical quantities.' They are meant for the purposes of visualization only.

41: Ehrard remarks that this ability has been the most salient characteristic of the idea of nature throughout its long history since classical Greece (419).

42: A fulgent statement of Rousseau's creed can be found in many places throughout his oeuvre. The following is from the Reveries of the Solitary Walker, Rousseau's final work, completed in the year of his death (1788): "Sometimes they ["the objections which I was unable to answer or...those which I had not foreseen and which arose from time to time in my mind"] have worried me, but they have never shaken my faith. I have always said to myself: 'All these are hair-splitting metaphysical subtleties which count for nothing against the basic principles adopted by my reason, confirmed by my heart and bearing the seal of my conscience uninfluenced by passion. In matters so far above human understanding, shall I let an objection that I cannot answer overturn a whole body of doctrine which is so sound and coherent, the result of so much careful meditation, so well fitted to my reason, my heart and my whole being, and confirmed by that inner voice that I find absent from all the rest? No, empty logic-chopping will never destroy the close relation I perceive between my immortal nature and the constitution of the world, the physical order I see all around me. In the corresponding moral order, which my researches have brought to light, I find the support I need to be able to endure the miseries of my life. In any other system I should have no resources for living and no hope when dying. I should be the most unfortunate of creatures. Let us hold fast then to the only system which is able to make me happy in spite of fortune and my fellow-men" (55-56).

43: Le Remède dans le mal (literally: the cure in the illness), is the title of Jean Starobinski's book on the problem of morality in eighteenth century France. A more figurative translation might render it 'the gift of poison.'

44: And not only the growth of periodical literature. Estivals estimates that the annual production of books in France between 1775 and 1791 grew over 500% from approximately 300 titles to over 1500; by 1802 production would top 5000 per annum (Diagramme 1; p. 32).

45: The role and status of education (both formal and informal) as disseminator of benevolent optimism is clearly important to the spread of the gnostic attitude.

46: The radical nature of this outflanking manoeuvre clearly has some precedents in the Protestant affirmation of the vernacular and the "Puritan idea of the sanctification of ordinary life" (Taylor, 226).
47: This too finds its precedents in the Reformation (and elsewhere). Taylor remarks that "There were recurrent revolts by Christian thinkers against some or other aspect the marriage with Greek philosophy [the marriage issuing in the notion "that thought/reason orders our lives for the good, or would if only passion did not prevent it"...] from time to time the thesis would be pressed that reason by itself could just as well be the servant of the devil, that indeed, to make reason the guarantor of the good was to fall into idolatry. Luther speaks graphically of reason as 'that whore'" (116).

48: "[T]he whole Essay [Concerning Human Understanding] is directed against those who would control others by specious principles supposedly beyond question, like the ones that are allegedly 'innate'...[Locke's] anti-teleological objectifying view of the mind doesn't only rule out theories of knowledge which suppose an innate attunement to the truth; it is also directed against moral theories which see us tending by nature towards the good - in the first place, of course, the major traditions which came down from the ancients, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic. Disengagement has to transform our theory of motivation as well. Locke, like other anti-teleological theorists before him, and following Gassendi, adopts a hedonist theory. Pleasure and pain are for us good and evil...But following his objectifying view of the mind, Locke puts this ancient theory through a reifying transposition. What moves us is not directly the prospect of good, i.e., pleasure, but 'uneasiness' (Taylor, 169).

49: Jean Starobinski traces the evolution and formation of this concept in the years 1750-1800 in the opening chapter of his Remède dans le mal. Thus parallel to the century's exploration of geographic frontiers was an equally widespread inquest into the shape of things temporal and historical.

50: Duchet goes on to note that Raynal's Histoire des Deux Indes (10 vols., 1783 ff.; with numerous entries by Diderot) should be seen as the supplement to Prévost's work: "The one is the continuation of the other, and Raynal's reformism is a political response to the problem implicitly proposed by Prévost: that of human and inhuman relations in the frame of a nascent imperialism" (86-87).

51: Hampson (107).

52: Following on the critical anthropology of René Girard, Saint-Amand argues that Enlightenment political theory ought to be reconfigured as 'political anthropology' in order to better understand its genesis and import. He levels the charge against eighteenth century social theory that "se tromper sur la violence, c'est se tromper sur la société ('to be mistaken about violence is to be mistaken about society') (in Saint-Amand, 19). See Les lois de l'hostilité, passim.

53: She quotes here from the Encyclopédie article 'Anatomie.'

54: I admit to having begged the important question as to what degree the publication of this ethnographic information led to notions of natural religion. This is an important and complex issue.

55: In 1550-1551 in Valladolid Las Casas clashed with the Royal historian and humanist Ginés de Sepúlveda over which of these two visions was 'correct,' and thus over what form Spanish colonization should take. Cf. Todorov (1992), Chapter 3, and particularly pp. 146-167. Although the outcome of the debate was indecisive, in one sense "the balance tends towards Las Casas' side, for Sepúlveda does not receive authorization to publish his book"; however, in another sense, the arguments of Las Casas are
insufficiently persuasive to halt the incipient trade in human cargo that the Spanish colonial-economic system (of encomiendas) necessitates (Todorov 1992, 152). Cf. also Wynter, *passim*. These polarities will remain those between which most of the modern discourse of primitivism will alternate.

56: Las Casas' *Relación* had been employed as fodder by Northern Protestants who attacked not colonialism but the papacy.

57: Duchet notes that Voltaire 'redisCOVERS' Las Casas in 1756 and quotes from the *Relación* in his *Essai sur les moeurs*.

58: That would not come (from a European) until the mid-nineteenth century. Multatuli's (Edward Douwes Dekker) novel *Max Havelaar* (1860), based on the author's own experience as an agent of the (Dutch) East Indian Civil Service in Java, advocated the wholesale disbandment of the colonial system.

59: These quotations, a mixture of Columbüs' and Las Casas' words, are from Todorov (1992). Columbus' first remark, 'Presently they saw naked people' (39); the native Adam, Las Casas (164); lack of religion, Columbus (35); lack of covetousness, Columbus (39); the most Christian of 'any people...,' Las Casas (164).

It ought to be born in mind that this discourse of the noble (child-like) savage was locked in a struggle with the discourse of the savage as beast. While the former can be traced back to a vision of humanity found in the Gospels, the latter finds its foundations in the Aristotelian doctrine of the natural slave.

60: Michael Bell opens his brief monograph on primitivism with the reflection that "The nostalgia of civilized man for a return to a primitive or pre-civilized condition is as old it seems as his civilized capacity for self-reflection. And it is a familiar characteristic of human nature that almost every step towards what would generally be regarded as increased sophistication or progress is accompanied by misgivings frequently leading in turn to doubts about the whole enterprise of civilization" (1).

The inseparability of alienation and primitivism becomes from this time, i.e., the so-called 'age of progress,' something of an enduring trope compounding the polarities of primitive as child and primitive as beast: Karl Marx and Karl May, Picasso and African sculpture, Jackson Pollack and Navajo sand-painting, Keith Harring and Australian aboriginal and Panamanian Cochle design.

61: Duchet (151). She also quotes Cornelius de Pauw to this effect: "'There is almost nothing left of ancient America,' he writes in his *Preliminary Discourse* [1768], 'save the sky, the earth and the memory of hideous misfortunes'" (152).

62: Although 'noble' is not an adjective that Rousseau uses, it is the customary translation for his usual phrases *l'homme sauvage* and *l'état de pure nature*. I am well aware that Rousseau takes pains to differentiate between the historical 'savages' known to eighteenth century ethnology and what Rousseau calls the *hypothetical* 'noble savage' ('a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never existed, and which will probably never exist' (*Discourse on Inequality*, 68)). In fact the *Discourse* is roughly divided into two parts dealing with what Rousseau believes are two distinct epochs of human history. Rousseau's distinction notwithstanding, however, as the *Discourse* progresses (and indeed over the course of Rousseau's entire *oeuvre*) the fiction of the noble savage takes on, as Starobinski notes, more and more of the trappings of an historical verity: 'In fact, the more Rousseau developed his 'historical' fiction, the more it shed its hypothetical
character: intellectual prudence gave way to ever-increasing confidence, to a rapture of the spirit...For Rousseau the image was too powerful, too profoundly satisfying, not to have corresponded to the letter of historical truth...Conviction overcame all doubt: the origins of mankind were incontrovertibly thus and so" (1988, 14-15). Thus, Rousseau, in the second part of the Discourse, after having outlined the rudimentary state of society that differentiates the 'savages' from the solitary 'noble savage,' goes some way to eliding his own distinction by stating: "Thus although men had come to have less fortitude, and their natural pity had suffered some dilution, this period of the development of human faculties, the golden mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our own pride, must have been the happiest epoch and the most lasting...The example of savages, who have almost always been found at this point of development, appears to confirm that the human race was made to remain there always; to confirm that this state was the true youth of the world, and that all subsequent progress has been so many steps in appearance towards the improvement of the individual, but so many steps in reality towards the decrepitude of the species" (115). And in fact, this elision is to be found in the first part as well. Speaking of the ataraxia of the first savages Rousseau writes: "His soul, which nothing disturbs, dwells only in the sensation of its present existence, without any idea of the future, however close that might be, and his projects, as limited as his horizons, hardly extend to the end of the day. Such is, even today, the extent of the foresight of a Caribbean Indian..." (90). On the appositeness of the adjective noble, cf. my note 75.

63: Rousseau's mother died in childbirth; the incident is recounted in the opening pages of the Confessions.

64: Starobinski makes the point, that Rousseau's entire oeuvre is in large part motivated by the desire to ground subjective intuitions in objective phenomena. I will elaborate on this anon.

65: Prévost (6), the voyager François Coréal, Buffon, and Plato (5 each), are the authors most cited, followed by Locke, Hobbes, and Algeron Sidney (4 each). Cranston remarks in his notes to the Discourse that "It is doubtful whether Rousseau had more than a scanty knowledge of Hobbes's work" (176, note 3).

66: The eighteenth century manifests an important cross-fertilization of the genres of self- and world-exploration, of which, perhaps Robinson Crusoe is a paradigm example. Duchet comments on what she calls the 'novelization' of the voyager's accounts re-written by Prévost: "The facility with which the personages of Lesage or Prévost appear in fictions such as Candide or the Voyages of Scarmentado, displacing in a dilated space unto the ends of the earth, the invasion into the novel of romances of long and hazardous sea-journeys, well demonstrates not only that the thematic of voyages had entered into the discourse of manners, and the accounts of voyages into libraries, but that the discovery of the world had become, for the collective conscience, the human adventure par excellence...The history of the discovery of the world itself resembled a novel..." (40). She goes on to make a pointed comparison of Prévost's preface to his sentimental novel Cleveland and his comments in the Histoire des voyages on the Dutch explorer Schouten: "The author presents Cleveland to his readers in these terms: 'A work of this nature can perhaps be regarded as a country newly discovered; and the design and the reading of it like a kind of arm-chair voyage for the reader.' And of the explorer Gautier Schouten,
Prévost will say that "...it seems that in the story of his little adventures his plan is to make known by what degrees his reason and his courage had occasion to form themselves" (81).

67: Rousseau cannot believe that nature had been eradicated, for how would he be able to tap into its resources, either in himself or in the 'noble savage.' However, that said, at the end of the *Discourse on Inequality* Rousseau comes close to envisaging civilization's final destruction of all that he values: "From the extreme inequality of conditions and fortunes, from the diversity of passions and talents, from useless arts, pernicious arts and foolish sciences [Rousseau's implicit description of the then present state of affairs] would arise a mass of prejudices, equally contrary to reason, happiness and virtue...It is from the bosom of this disorder and these revolutions that despotism, by degrees raising up its hideous head and devouring everything that it had seen to be good and sound in any part of the state, would finally succeed in trampling on both the laws and the people and establishing itself on the ruins of the republic. The times leading up to these final changes would be times of troubles and calamities; but in the end all would be consumed by the monster, and the peoples would no longer have chiefs and laws, but only tyrants" (134).

68: Starobinski attributes this phrase to Engels (302). Here Rousseau picks up on another Augustinian idea - the privative notion that evil is a void of the good - and the Scriptural idea that evil is a mode of the good, that good can come of evil. Rousseau goes some way to 'modernizing' these notions in his expression of the necessity of being 'moved' to do good, and his recognition that the emotional and the rational are not opposites.

69: Starobinski makes this point about the importance of 'elsewhere' in recounting how, on the 24th of February, 1776, Rousseau sought to place one of his manuscripts on the high altar of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. "A preamble to the manuscript states that Rousseau knows he has no right to expect a miracle; he leaves it to God to chose the time and the means. Yet even as he pretends to entrust his fate to God, he is eager to attract the attention of mortals. He hopes that 'rumors of his deed bring his manuscript to the attention of the king.' An odd stratagem: though directed toward heaven, the gesture is made only in order to be observed by other men...ostentatiously demonstrating that his only resource lies *elsewhere*" (1988, 227).

70: Starobinski quotes from the *Discourse on Inequality* (90). Starobinski characterizes Rousseau's reversals of concepts as: "The historical pessimism of the [second] *Discourse* is counterbalanced by the anthropological optimism that is a constant in Rousseau's thought" (1988, 295).

71: Here we can see again how the a-spatial nobility of the 'savage' is an image of Rousseau himself in different circumstances. In a letter to Malesherbes Rousseau claims that his homelessness affords him a 'position' from which to critique society: "What does it matter where I live if I act as I ought to act?" (in Starobinski 1988, 288). Cf. also my note 96 on the hagiographic a-spatiality of the 'savage.'

72: While this negation may afford us some degree of freedom, particularly with respect to abstract manipulations and inventories, we may also say that it is the oral recitation of pictographic writing (its necessary complement as a primarily mnemonic system) that allows for a greater freedom of illocation. The oral teller of a Blackfoot 'winter count' enjoys a freedom of expression (his talk can be long or short, literal or figurative, etc. - *as suits the occasion*) as well as a freedom of interpretation that goes beyond the limits
authorized by a 'written' text: s/he is not constrained to quote verbatim (private communication with R. Olson).

73: "When Rousseau attacks reason, his target is primarily discursive reason. Whenever he can rely on intuitive reason, immediate illumination, he becomes once more a rationalist. The crucial choice is not between reason and feeling but between immediacy and mediation" (Starobinski 1988, 288).

74: Lacoue-Labarthe’s narrative concerns the double bind of the "agonal history of [modern] Germany" in its attempt to forge for itself an authentic self-image without imitating the Latin 'style' of the French or the Greece that 'belonged' to Latin civilization (78; emphasis added).

75: Noble: from the Latin (g) nobilis, accreted upon the root gno from gnosis: to know. For Rousseau the nobility of the 'savage' of the 'Subject' resides not in any thing known, but rather in the pure possibility of knowing. The 'savage'/the 'Subject' (and the child) cannot distinguish between the allegorical and the literal: this is their gold. Cf. my note 79.

76: I take this phrase from the title of Tomlinson's work Goya in the Twilight of Enlightenment.

77: The surreptitiousness by which the frame performs this action makes it akin to our modes of perception, of which we are only very rarely conscious. Yet, at the same time, both the frame and perceptual processes are decisive boundaries, our blind spot for which contributes to the magical and aesthetic efficacy of their products. For, should we be aware of how we see while we see, what we see would be compromised by a kind of cognitive dissonance. Hence not only does the frame isolate, it has a way of insulating itself from our scrutiny.

78: Dewdney (56).

79: A martingale is a system of gambling in which the stakes are doubled after each loss. Theoretically, that is given infinite resources and time, the martingale bet need only 'win' once to recoup all its losses.

80: This prioritization of meaning over sense is from a very early date linked to a gnosticism by Plato: "A child cannot distinguish the allegorical sense from the literal" (Republic II: 378, quoted in MacQueen, 13).

81: Auerbach goes on to note that the attempt by Augustine to fill in the lacunae of the fragmentary and prophetic history of the Bible with other (historical or Biblical) events was in fact an attempt "to establish a continuous connection of events, and in general to give the highest measure of rational plausibility to an intrinsically irrational interpretation" (65).

82: The important question here is whether these two inflections on the import of allegory are in a relation of opposition, complementarity, or...? Although de Man traces his notion of the 'impossibility' of allegory back to Pascal, one wonders if he believed it held good for Biblical and Platonic allegories as well. It should be noted that this theory of what I have been calling acephalic allegory dates from the work of Bataille and Benjamin in the twenties and thirties of this century.

83: Discussing Rousseau's notion of the transparency and immediacy of signs, a transparency that renders 'reading' and interpretation superfluous because meaning is felt, Starobinski remarks that "The sign possesses absolute value not because of some quality
of the object but because of Rousseau’s act of faith" (1988, 166). Earlier Starobinski had analyzed the semiotic confusion in Rousseau’s notion of transparency: "Even if we eschew conventional signs and return to natural ones, and even if we refuse to separate signifier from signified, we are obliged to concede that the mind has a role to play in perceiving the meaning of the sign. Idealist presuppositions aside, meaning will not yield itself up where there is no consciousness ready to receive it, no mind in search of meanings to attach to it (and ‘aimed,’ as it were, at the sign). This solicitation of meaning is spontaneously, from its inception, an act of interpretation...Rousseau, however, refuses to admit that meaning depends on him, that it is, in large part, his own creation. He wants it to inhere entirely in the object perceived. He does not recognize his own question in the world’s answer" (1988, 155-156; final emphasis mine).

84: Starobinski notes that over the course of Rousseau’s oeuvre there is a change in audience: "The transitive function of language decreases steadily as we follow the chronological evolution of Rousseau’s major texts. In the first Discourse, the Letter on Spectacles, the Social Contract, and Emile, the author directly addresses an audience (respectively, the Academy of Dijon, the Republic of Geneva, d’Alembert, the ‘Public.’ and ‘mankind’). Note that already [in the second Discourse] the intended recipient is more imagined than perceived as a concrete personality" (1988, 276-277).

85: If this reading of Rousseau’s discourse of society as an acephalic allegory holds water, then the gesture towards authoritarianism lurking beneath its surface - ‘to substitute a fragmentary and moral existence for a physical and autonomous one, to mutilate, so to speak, the human constitution in order to strengthen it’ - is shadowed by an irresolute, irresolvable resolution to the problem of political formation.

86: Here again I follow the analysis of Calasso as elaborated in his sections ‘Elements of Sacrifice,’ ‘Law and Order,’ and ‘The Doctrine of the Forest’ (134-181), and the sections ‘Limits,’ ‘Process,’ and ‘Glosses on Marx’ (222-239).

87: Calasso quotes a passage from Marx’ Grundrisse, whose last sentence reads "A totality of development in which man does not reproduce himself in a single specificity, but produces his totality," and glosses: "The ultimate opposition, then, is between reproducing and producing. ‘To reproduce’ is the verb of the world of the canon, dominated by rituals which strive each time to bring process back to order, to reproduce an order, that of the rta, which sustains the cosmos as well as society. ‘To produce’ is the verb of the world of hegemonic exchange, where it is essential to be able to use a functional artifice that will enable process, as it unfolds, to bring with it - despite everything - an increase of power. This happens precisely because the direction of production is not determinable, and is actually neglected, whereas research is focussed chiefly on intensifying and expanding the means of production. It is, in fact, only in their evolution that we see any consistency." (228-229).

88: "...rationality, when conceived as complete, as excluding all arbitrariness, becomes itself a kind of irrationality. For, since it means the complete realization of all the possibles, in so far as they are composable, it excludes any limiting and selecting principle. The realm of possibles is infinite; and the principle of sufficient reason, when its implications were thought through, ran on, in every province in which it was implied, into infinities - infinite space, infinite time, infinite worlds, an infinity of existent species, an infinity of individual existences, an infinity of kinds of beings between any two kinds.
of beings, however similar. When its consequences were thus fully drawn, it confronted the reason of man with a world by which it was not merely baffled but negated" (Lovejoy, 331).

89: Thomas Jefferson once said, I believe, that revolutions ought to be repeated every twenty years.

90: I am referring to a passage from de Certeau I have already quoted: "[F]rom the middle of the eighteenth century onward, a durable combination - quasi-structural for at least a century - is formed between a 'popular' foundation to be deciphered, and a scientific rationality whose effective content is posed as exterior to itself. Reason has its own treasure hidden within the people and inscribed within history. Reason transforms it, while receiving it from what preceded reason. A popular flood rises, from which everything comes. Finally, in calling itself the most advanced part of this flood, enlightened science also admits that it is nothing more than its metaphor" (1988, 172; emphasis added).

91: In Mercier's future, rationality being the governing principle of enlightened society, war is outlawed. However, the enemies of enlightened society persist in a twilight realm beyond its borders; to them enlightened society sends the 'pestilent' works of theology. Cf. Collier. Although banned in France and Spain, L'an 2440 ran into a dozen editions by Mercier's death in 1814. The untheorized notion of progress implicit in the fiction should perhaps be characterized as a proto-ideology, for in the continental Europe of the 1770's (unlike Britain) the institutional structures and mechanisms of progress were in but a nascent state.

92: Duchet (83).

93: It is not without significance that Volney (1757-1820) was a member of the influential group of French intellectuals known as the Idéologues. The Idéologues were the second generation philosophers who sought, particularly in the period of the Directoire and after, to advance a thread of Enlightenment anti-metaphysical, positivism that they felt had been buried under the libertarian and emotional excesses of the French Revolution. They are best remembered for their promotion of an atomistic, associationalist, and radically materialist psychology championed by Cabanis and Destutt de Tracy. Volney's anthropological travelogues were widely read in the early nineteenth century: Ruins of Empires (English trans. 1795) figures as one of four books in the autodidact education of Dr. Frankenstein's monster.

94: Quoted in Foucault (1973, 299; note 3).

95: "[T]he single most important thought to be found in Hobbes lies in his assertion that there can be 'no obligation on any man which ariseth not from some act of his own.' The history of political philosophy in the eighteenth century is largely the history of that thought" (Scruton, 198). Although Hobbes would use contract theory to bolster monarchy, and both Hobbes and Locke saw one's assent to the social contract as much more tacit and passive than deliberated and volitional, the theory's primary core of individual autonomy grows more and more iron clad as the century advances. Thus in its Rousseauist formulation, although individuals cede their natural autonomy, as in Hobbes and Locke, they relinquish it to the 'general will' of the citizenry; legislative power flows not from God, the monarch, or natural laws discovered by means of rational reflection, but is an expression of the moral welfare of the whole.
96: All translations from Saint-Amand my own.
97: Yet a further justification for the adjective of nobility. De Certeau notes that hagiography concerns the election/vocation of the saint, and as such stands in contradistinction to any developmental, biographic notion: it is "the progressive epiphany of the given" for, saints are precisely those "individuals who lose nothing of what was originally given them" (1988, 277). Like Greek tragedy, whose end reiterates the beginning, the saint's life, too, reveals only what was known from the first. However, where for the Greeks this concerns the radical fall of the hubristic man, for hagiography it concerns a glorious ascension. In addition, de Certeau stresses the geographic constancy of the saint's life, its annulling of the temporal "in order to display a truth which is a place," but a spiritual and utopic place whose "meaning is a place which is not a place" (1988, 281-282).
98: "Mine, thine. 'This is my dog,' said these poor children. 'That is my place in the sun.' There is the origin and image of universal usurpation" (47: Lafuma 64; Brunschvicg 295).
99: "For the better part of a century...[Enlighteners] had been congratulating themselves on the improvement of modern manners relative both to violence and sexuality. Circumscribed ever more narrowly, the legitimate uses of violence had visibly diminished. What such changes meant, Montesquieu, Adam Smith, and Adam Ferguson were prepared to explain: commerce civilized. The exigencies of exchange softened the manner of men and improved the treatment of women. The late eighteenth century was no peaceable kingdom, but by the time the Bastille fell, violence had become what it remains in modern Western sociology - an aberration to be accounted for...Whatever view of human nature one held, whether one followed Hobbes or Rousseau, whether one preferred culture or nature, violence required explanation" (Janes, 243).
100: Where for the philosophes 'origins' is a code-term for the distance desired between their present faith in society and society's links to a brutal order in the past, for Rousseau, 'origins' also bespeaks a desire, and in fact a homologous one. In both cases desire serves to externalize and distance violence from the present: for the philosophes the present is the past already overcome, for Rousseau, it is as if overcome in the 'true' nature (and potential state of society) hidden within the hearts of men.
101: Rousseau will retain Augustinian externalism precisely as that exteriority which is evil: "'self-love' is accomplished in happiness, if one...'retreats into oneself': there the 'natural goodness' of men survives, which sociability alters, for 'evil is exterior and it is the passion for the exterior'" (de Certeau 1988, 177).
102: Saint-Amand quotes from Kant's 1795 work Perpetual Peace.
103: Plate and print thus form a negative-diapositive couple, exactly like a photograph and its negative. Patricia Wright's book reproduces several of Goya's etchings and their companion plates: cf. pp. 17 and 41.
Chapter Two:

Goya and Twilight

When reason and unreason come into contact, an electrical shock occurs. This is called polemics. Novalis, 1798.
'Since he had nothing'

like a moment of exposure to interstellar cold
Seamus Heaney

The fact is wretched. A crackling incandescence rips into the plasma of this space splintering anonymous shards. The silence, like that after an explosion, is audible, contracting existence. There he is. The face is merciless, impudent. And so too is the 'he'; we ought to say: there it is. The impersonal pronoun, the one we employ with reference to the newly born, and here so apposite, seems to secrete through the pores of the 'there' a naked noxiousness. There is no door, no window, no egress, only a sealed, frozen, cauterization of time. A whole corner of the room, if it is a room, gapes and disappears as if ingesting itself. The ultimate gesture and final breath have transpired. "Language abdicates" its "parasitic existence" in the face of this untoward, this surd. He is dead: or rather, there it is death.

And yet the lexicon of gestation seems to hazard itself. Seated on that chimney-stook _ex cathedra_ as though petitioning, accented by the verticals of stake and candle and the radials of flame aureole and face, salient against the netted backdrop of as if magnetized shearings, there is a larcenous realism and viscous pregnancy to the moment. Now stands at attention, watching, waiting, the legs _en accouchant_, the ceiling withdrawn, in a kind of hyper-transitivity. In Spanish _atender a_ signifies 'to pay attention to.' Details, for example: notice how the digits of the (viewer's perspective) left foot clutch for a toe hold, while the enormous right has lost its grip, more than half-way released. We know that it is from the transitive form of the verb that the passive voice is constructed; 'transitive: characterized by or involving transition; transitional; intermediate' (_Webster's_). When inflected in the passive voice, however, as the fact of representation seems to insist on, the transitivity of verbs like execute or throttle is paradoxical - what intermediacy could there be in the 'interstellar cold' there when a searing present commands our full attentiveness? Perhaps it is we who are called upon to intercede; but if so, here we are too late. Hence the disquiet, the noxiousness of innocence, the passing presencing finality. In Spanish _atender por_ signifies 'to answer to the name of.' It is called, anonymously, impersonally, _El Agarratado (The Garroted Man)_.

For every ball cast aloft there comes at the top of its trajectory between its rise its fall a blinking moment of stasis and momentum. It is as if this movement has been translated laterally. The left eye seems about to close, about to open, fluttering, like a misaligned film strip that makes us conscious of a structuring frame we are not supposed to see. Between consciousness and its negation, sleep, something is improper, belonging to neither one state nor the other, the raw exasperation of insomnia. When is a man dead?
A coroner's report typically specifies the time to the minute. In the 'no-man's land' of insomnia - paradoxically we call it a demilitarized zone, but is there any more and on more sides beset? - one experiences an eternity, from which there is no evasion, of not being - asleep or awake - self-possessed. The axes of three crosses describe a series of oblique angles. Part divine part carnal (the crucifix to which the hands are bound), part tool part weapon (the handle of the fully tightened screw, of which only half is visible), part sign part referent (the cross represented on the scapulary), these coordinates are excessive, as though "all the foundations of the earth are out of course" (Psalm 82). Perhaps they compass the inordinate of non-finality in this seeming moment of utmost.

And that candle, for whom is it? The garrotted man surely, but also the mourners, to whom we, by point of view, belong. And so the wake is on, traditionally the juncture of departure and arrival; and we wait and wake, even though awake. This nexus is even more explicit in Spanish: vela, velador, velatorio - candle/vigil, sentinel/candlestick, funeral wake. Traditional symbol of insomnia, the candle attends death classically conceived as the "twin brother," repeated Goethe, "of sleep." But the fissioning incandescence of the flame, does it etch its way into (that is, make visible or memorable by hollowing or eating away) the darkest darkness of the space? Or, is it deflected, inane, dissolving in the maw of the black? Do the pitch of scores that steel the space to the left hand side of the smock swarm into some nocturnal white-out, some nighttime all-now? Or does the candle's lucent halo announce some other, hallowed dawn, some tacit Tersanctus? In the Roman liturgy after the offertory and before the canon the celebrant tenders an inaudible prayer known as 'the secret.' El Agarrotado seems to hold out, and insist, on some quiddity or qualia of non-comprehension, some unsynthesizable thing. Its picto-grammatic mood is one of apprehension: there, below the all too well-defined edge of the cup that holds the candle, the support stand bleeds into a substancelessness to the right, and stanches itself as if by stypsis, to the left.

Mastery accomplishes itself through separation, tearing from, out or away, sloughing off, the into, inside, in toward of a state, condition, form, action, or circumstance. As Kant recognized in his discourse on the sublime, the purchase gotten on one's own fears is the eversion ('turning inside out') of possession: only the self-possessed dare to know. Years earlier as a young man Kant had formulated the hypothesis that the planets had concreted out of primordial swirling clouds of gas. Would it be too presumptuous to place this image of a cosmic genesis beneath the transparency of the Kantian transcendental admonition to autonomy and duty? El Agarrotado motions towards an ontologically claustrophobic premonition of a 'without-mastery.' Like Michelangelo's Accademia Captives, who arise out of or sink into the senescence of brute
stone, this prisoner is fixed, but not as it were in essence, neither through election (Clark designates the Captives willfully, aesthetically "unfinished"), nor for our placid contemplation. The fixity of El Agarrotado is without distance, mechanical, diabolical, and final; even the viperish mane of hair twists about the knuckled face whose exhausted features bear the stamp of a rapacious power. A world has come undone and all that remains is a searing gaze, hovering between the hallowed and the hollow, an accusation.

Historical scholarship has been unable to cast much light on the enigma of this print. We know it dates from the period 1778-1780, during which Goya was employed as a cartoonist in the Royal Tapestry Works and in which period he produced a series of etchings after Velázquez that were offered for public sale (July and December of 1778). It has been ascertained by Eleanor Sayre that garrottings such as depicted here were rather rare in late eighteenth century Spain. By the testimony of Llorente, the head of the Madrid Holy Office of the Inquisition, only four prisoners were so executed during the reign of Carlos III (1759-1788). In addition, Sayre points out that the costume of the prisoner does not conform with Inquisition practice; rather, it appears to be the scapulary bestowed upon lay devotees of the highly secretive Carmelite sect, the order, it should be recalled, of Juan de la Cruz and Teresa de Ávila, accounting perhaps for the print's graphic reverberations of 'silent music.' Perhaps the most astonishing fact that bears upon the image is the revelation that garrotting, considered a more 'civilized' form of execution than hanging (because 'modern' garrottes were fitted with a sharp point at the back of the collar that would pierce the spinal chord and thus render a quicker death?), was the exclusive prerogative of the nobility (as was decapitation in France prior to the Revolution).

The relations of the Hidalgo...had been watching the progress of the trial, in order to step forward just in time to avert the stain which a cousin in the second or third remove, would cast upon their family, if he died in mid-air like a villain; presented a petition to the judges, accompanied with the requisite documents claiming for their relative the honours of his rank, and engaging to pay the expenses attending the execution of a nobleman. (in Sayre, 13)

It seems clear, given these circumstances, that this etching is more than a little anomalous: product perhaps of a piercing fascination or terror, or even, as darkly ironic memento mori, of a scandalous black joke amongst intimates - in any event in the Spain of the 1780s consummately private. Both in terms of technique and subject matter, the print represents a radical departure for the rustic from Zaragoza, whose works to this date conform, albeit uncomfortably, to the canons of genre painting and neoclassicist doctrine,
and whose lifelong public preoccupations appear to have been (and will continue to be) health, patronage, promotion, and above all wealth and its trappings. Of the little that is known of Goya's family life, the "first years of marriage ought to have been marked by sadness" as seven of the eight children born to Francisco and Josefa in the first decade of their marriage (1773 ff.) "died in infancy" (Luna & Heras, 376). It is perhaps not insignificant that in Goya's letters to his bosom buddy Martin Zapater (in which Goya's wife and children are rarely mentioned) - a correspondence larded with lively banter, an obsession with money, and much pictographic and literary scatological and sexual innuendo - there are numerous references to Goya as "el Demonio" or "un Pinta Diablos." The coordinates are again excessive, but somewhere, one feels, between the cardinals of money, birth, death, and the caustic irony that would later become a leitmotif of Goya's art, must lie the key that could unlock the significance of El Agarradero. It is, however, not to be had; and that is something entirely new. In the golden age of calculus here is an image of something that stubbornly resists the infinitesimal squaring of the circle, and the causes of resistance are everywhere overwhelmed and voided by the dark scorings of the consequences. "Something we cannot understand," writes Maurice Blanchot, "maliciously neutralizes the authority of a master knowledge"; in El Agarradero we run smack up against a nameless but palpably definitive limit (1986, 87). This contraction of meaning was something Yeats would be entirely familiar with:

We are closed in, and the key is turned
On our uncertainty; somewhere
A man is killed, or a house burned,
Yet no clear fact to be discerned.7

Seven centuries earlier, however, within the limited horizons of Dante's Tuscany 'to contract' entailed the forging of a divine covenant with the sum total of all that is. In the ultimate canto of the Paradisio Dante is offered a vision of cosmic unity figured as a knot. This "hieroglyph of divine love," writes Octavio Paz, is an analogy "based on an ontology" of the Trinity which reconciles the One and the Many, substance and accident. Therefore [Dante] knows - or thinks he knows - the secret of this analogy, the key with which to read the book of the universe; this key is another book: the Holy Scriptures. The modern poet knows - or thinks he knows - precisely the contrary: the world is illegible, there is no book. (75-76)
According to Paz, with the advent of this modern illegibility (the first effacements of which we can perhaps situate in *El Agarrorado*), analogy, "science of correspondences" (72), "manifestation of cyclical time" (74) and property of mind that "conceives of the world as rhythm" (63), does not lose its purchase on the world; rather it becomes compounded and confounded by irony, "the child of linear, sequential, and unrepeateable time":

> Analogy turns irony into one more variant of the fan of similarities, but irony splits the fan in two. Irony is the wound through which analogy bleeds to death; it is the exception, the fatal accident...necessary and deadly...Irony shows that if the universe is a script, each translation of the script is different, and that the concert of correspondences is the gibberish of Babel...The universe, says irony, is not a script; if it were, its signs would be incomprehensible for man, because in it the word death does not appear, and man is mortal. (74; emphasis added)

What I would like to suggest is figured in the programmatically ambiguous space of *El Agarrorado* is the action of a mordant on the temporal-eternal cruciform of eschatology. This mordant is agnosticism. The scaffolding of salvation, revelation, and redemption has been eroded, rendered transparent, insubstantial; and yet a phantom metaphorical after-image (attesting to the difficulty of relinquishing what developmental psychologists call 'object permanence'?) remains, fixed. In the interstice between the phosphene of the vanished structure and its objective non-presence arises a premonition that the compact of social reality and the social imaginary has been riven and secured by a single wedge compounded of irony-analogy. What is at stake here is not the question of death in the abstract, the challenge of the faithless to the faithful, both of whom struggle over the status of signs of the afterlife, but the more radical and personal factum of violent death, which concerns the present. Licht says of Goya's *St. Francis at the Deathbed of an Impenitent*, that it makes Goya "the first artist to depict death as something basically repellent," but I think it is rather here that this statement finds its true referent (1979, 55). In the "militant scenography" of Christianity, torture, like its counterparts exorcism and crusade, is believed to make manifest here and now the perpetual (futural) victory of Christ in the production of visible and audible signs of triumph (Sichère, 159). It is, however, as Sichère points out, really a mise-en-scène impatient with the futural, and rather testifies to the (supposed) primacy of symbolic ritual over the brute fact of inhumanity and humanity, humanity's inhumanity. In art's manner of scheduling history, Christian representations of death have traditionally prepared us for the end, always already known. Goya's agnostic image inverts this priority
of the ideal: it is the *en garde* of the real. If the question that Christianity asks of death - a catechism whose "final purpose...is to dissect" (Canetti 1973, 331) - asks 'of what transcendent order does this trial bespeak?", *El Aggarotado* is an open-ended statement about life in which the "brutality of facts...[can] never [be] redeemed by an imposed or deduced moral meaning" (Licht 1979, 106).

The mordant of agnostic reckoning is mortal and always unfinished; it eats into and gnaws away at the question of eschatology. But as mordant it is also a stop that checks the course of a cancerous actuality, the instrumentalization of violent death, as if the past, in which it was over and done with, and the future, in which it would arrive and terminate, were scandalously put in abeyance.8 'Browning out' the beacons illuminating the ascension machine of the afterlife, the agnostic mordant lodges instead in the warp and weft of life's fabric the peculiar vitality and secret emptiness of matter. And the question then mooted is - what would be the muscle of a *vanitas* without props, without eschatology? Years later in his seventies Goya will depict the Fates as grotesque, but Fates all the same. In 1778 Goya experienced the first of four mysterious crises of health (the others in 1781, 1792-1793, and 1819); and one can imagine the young sensualist, certain his star is rising, having his blind lust for life shaken to the marrow by a vision of his own death: successful, famous, wealthy, but spiritually and artistically intestate. It is here that the graphic suspension of *El Aggarotado's* harrowing 'there' intervenes, contracting existence. Out of such contractions a future is sometimes born, the compassion of those about to die for those already dead. John Berger has written of a photograph depicting the dead Che Guevara words that seem to sum up this moment: "In face of this [image] we must either dismiss it or complete its meaning for ourselves" (47).

In 1781 Goya's father, a lowly gilder whose fortunes had both risen and fallen, died destitute, having "made no will," the parish record states, "since he had nothing" (in Wright, 6).

**The death of Neo-classicism**

The neo-classic represents the triumph of the corpse in art

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Michael Levy

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One of the major streams of European art, if not its major course, is the tradition of what Berger calls "making an example of the dead" (43). For over two thousand years no ambitious artist could afford to shuck in representation what is often shunned in life. With the rise to power of Christianity, the religion of the crucified god as Nietzsche called it (and as non-Christians have long recognized), the religion in which tragic "death completes and exemplifies the meaning of...life," this responsibility became an imperative
Try to imagine if you can the career of any canonical pre-eighteenth century artist without a Pietà or crucifixion. Even those artists, such as Jacques Callot (in his *Misères de la guerre*) or Rembrandt (in *The Anatomy Lesson of Professor Tulp*), who seemed to address death from a secular point of view, could not avoid the injunction of an albeit veiled pedagogy of the eschatological. Throughout this tradition, argues Berger, what kept death, if not within the limits of reason, at least within the bounds of the tolerable or endurable, was the linkage of death to servitude.

Until the end of the eighteenth century, for a man to envisage his death as the possibly direct consequence of his choice of a certain course of action is the measure of his *loyalty* as a servant... The power may be considered abstractly as Fate. More usually it is personified in God, King or the Master. Thus the choice which the man makes (the choice whose foreseen consequence may be his own death) is curiously incomplete. It is a choice submitted to a superior power for acknowledgement. The man himself can only judge *sub judice*: finally it is he who will be judged. In exchange for this limited responsibility he receives benefits. The benefits can range from a master's recognition of his courage to eternal bliss in heaven. But in all cases the ultimate decision and the ultimate benefit are located as exterior to his own self and life. Consequently death, which would seem so definitive an *end*, is for Him a *means*, a treatment to which he submits for the sake of some aftermath. Death is the eye of a needle through which he is threaded. (47-48)

Throughout this period, and particularly between Giotto and Ingres, the guarantee binding the exemplum of death in representation to its redemption by servitude was underwritten by the textual traditions of Scripture and Humanism. So thoroughly did these common emotional-moral systems of structure and reference underlay the religious and mythological subjects of art that Berger designates the tradition of heightening "the verisimilitude of the things portrayed" one of manufacturing ethical "garments held out for the spectator-owners to put arms into and wear" (217). Although the images of this tradition have been read within a historical optic as records "of what people or events looked like," we should not forget that for their contemporaries they were largely ideal evidences of what people or events should look like, in grandeur, desire, or commiseration, as much as in death (*ibid.*).
or inspire; they were meant to clothe the systematic fantasies of their owners.

(218)

In my introduction I attempted to trace some of the many places where in the eighteenth century the tacit and subterranean support system of reference to the values and ideals of the past that shadowed this empty art was under stress. There I emphasized the watchword of reform, that while rationalism, empiricism, and secularization offered cogent criticisms of the excesses of the church, only in radical cases did they envisage the overthrow of Christian Humanism. Thus the Enlightenment's rationalist answer to the problem of religion was to replace servitude to the church by an allegiance to that which appeared to be much older (and with the newly unearthed discoveries of Herculaneum and Pompeii, more enduring): the past as the True. For the fine arts this was something of a sea change in attitude, for it entailed a rationalization of the aims of art that overthrew both the Renaissance balancing act of 'to instruct and delight' and the Rococo insistence on the pleasing. Fidelity to the true, however, quickly became servitude of a new kind, to a sanguine but otherwise inanimate abstraction that buried the specificity of the work of art beneath the principles it was held to illustrate. This criticism holds not just for the arts, and had particular purchase in those parts of Enlightened Europe where Catholicism was strong and empiricism weak. It is not without cause that the Age of Enlightenment was known in Spain as *la Ilustración*.  

As socialist realists were later to find out, the secular religion of the Enlightenment was, iconographically speaking, a very shaky ship. The immediate "problem of the religious painting in the age of reason" was how and with what to plug the yawning gap of the transience of life (Levy, 179). First up to bat were depictions of the classical martyr:

The incidents which were chosen tended to serve, like the whole neo-classical movement, the cause of a new secular religion: emotional and instructive scenes from the lives of saints were replaced by comparable antique examples, where virtue was tested more sharply...The death of Socrates is especially the martyrdom that touches this religion; but deaths of all heroes have their part. (*ibid.*)

However, given the neo-classical doctrines of stoicism in emotion and formalism of line, distance, and depth, these images, and particularly their renditions of death, were rather bloodless (and sexless) affairs.  

Again the analogy with socialist realism is apt: rather than the subject of any deep personal commitment, neo-classicism was more a gospel of the powerful and their institutions, in the depiction of which, by the bye, it excelled. As Levy remarks of the principal proselytizer of neo-classicism, the Austrian Aton Mengs
whose influence was pan-European and who dominated Spanish art during his residencies in Madrid (1761-1769, 1774-1776), "Mengs produced works which have every merit except that of being art" (177). The uneasy tension between the eighteenth century's moral theory of social progress and its 'scientific' psychology of individual motivation here came home to roost in the remarkably lifeless neo-classical image:

There is something profoundly unpsychological - and unurgent - about most neo-classical pictures. They remain illustrations, dependent on a Greek or Roman text, doubtless more accurate than the Renaissance vision of the classical past - but lacking that imaginative energy which so often animates a quite minor Renaissance painter's picture of antiquity. It was perhaps inevitable that a rational age, au fond sceptical of art's power, should rely on the painter instructing where he could not inspire. (186; emphasis added)

Strike one.

Next at bat, and only logically, given that the pace of reforms could not seem to satisfy the impatience for them, came the national heroes of past and present virtue.

Under the impact of the Enlightenment the concept of an eternal life in another world was giving way to one of immortality on earth: the Christian day of doom was beginning to seem less real than what Macaulay was later to call judgement at the bar of history...The hero takes the place of the saint in the iconography of death. (Honour, 152-153)

This turn to history is something of an intermediate phase between viewing the past as the eternally true and the trends that were to follow, in that while eighteenth century history painting presupposes the rational world order of the truly neo-classical work, on the one hand, it secretly opens, as it were, the back door to the unstable energy of events, on the other; and in that it well expresses the dynamics of feedback between the impatience for and the realization of reforms in late eighteenth society.

David is the premier painter of this mode. In his major works he overcomes the lifelessness of illustration without sacrificing neo-classical rigour, achieving what in his own words he described as "charming the eyes...[and] penetrating the soul" (in Honour, 145). Valeriano Bozal has called this mode the "historical sublime," a classically balanced fusion of the disparate traditions of the picturesque, as attention to proximity, concrete detail and anecdote, and the sublime, as ethos of distance, the grandiose, the amazing, and the fearful (1994b, 132). In his analysis of David's unfinished Tennis Court Oath (1791) and the sketches for the individual figures, Bozal underscores David's paradoxically sublime treatment of historical-political actuality:
the nude figures display their semantic values, values which do not arise from an anecdotal exigence but rather from a rhetorical proposition: not only do they express personal emotions and states of mind, the attitudes and corporeal dispositions, but they figure generalized emotions, typical emotions. The anecdote is transcended in a rendering that aims at the universal and the emphatic.12 (1994b, 134)

David’s balancing act between these two manners becomes clear when we compare the preliminary sketches of the figures for the Tennis Court Oath with the cartoon of the overview. The figures in the former are isolated in space like museum statuary and strictly rendered as classical nudes. It has been ascertained that David then began and finished the cartoon of the entire scene, employing his sketches as models for the fully clothed figures. In the third stage, which was never completed, David again sketched the classical nudes this time on the canvas, and began to work up in oil details of physiognomy and gesture. Interpolating the finished work from these pieces, we can see that David depicts this singular moment not as something to be contemplated from afar like a landscape (although there appears to be a great depth to this huge crowd), but rather as something affective, impassioned and impassioning, a kind of theatrical-historical mise en scène “by means of which we enter history” (134). These techniques were employed, and to the same effect, in David’s two earlier masterworks of historical allegory, The Oath of the Horatii (1785) and The Lictors Bringing Brutus the Bodies of his Sons (1789). Taken together, these three works reach the highest plateau of the eighteenth century neo-classic historical mode, largely because of their consummate execution and because that realization is ‘legible’ in Paz’ sense of the term yet without being overwhelmed by rigid servitude to any particular abstract canon or truth.

Possibly David’s greatest work, Marat assassinated (1793), marks a turning point in this tradition in two ways. For largely extrinsic (political, technological, and other) reasons the onslaught of an accelerated temporality by this date begins to overtake the contemporary history painting’s raison d’être, to immortalize the pregnant moment. Bozal relates an anecdote illustrative of the changing nature of the time lag between ‘events’ and ‘arts.’ In 1791 one Jean Jacques Lebarbier was commissioned to perpetuate the memory of the first ‘martyr’ of the revolution, Desilles; labouring as courageously as his subject, Lebarbier completed the Heroic Courage of the Young Desilles in 1799. But in the short span of eight years interest in Lebarbier’s accomplishment folded because Desilles had long since been branded a traitor. One wonders how it was that previous historical moments of import were rendered, as they surely were, into art? The naiveté of this
question is not as simple as it seems. For what appears to be an isolated anomaly in the case of Lebarbier and Desilles will come, and rapidly, to dominate the plight of the history painting: the pregnant moment begins to be a shrinking fuse. It is for this reason that modern revolutions will find their pictorial expression more in graphic (and photographic-cinematic) work than in paint. But this phenomenology of revolutionary time will not be limited to the Revolution, for in addition to the modern revolutions of politics, print making and print disseminating technology, there is a concomitant revolution in the perception of time's constitution that both gives meaning to and renews the others.

As François Furet proposes, the Revolution as 'modality of historical action' is to be distinguished from the Revolution as 'process.' The events of 1789 were no more revolutionary than the modern world has been modern. The actors and chroniclers of 1789 used the notion of revolution to understand what was happening to them, and to influence their own fate. (Latour, 40)

From this point forward it is as if time itself becomes fragmented and subject to the stresses of politicization.

The second factor, although related to the first, is intrinsic to Marat assassinated itself. David has carried through into this work his programmatic reduction of extraneous details, raising that evacuation to a higher level: "We are aware of standing in the presence of a Republican altarpiece" (Licht 1979, 106). Charlotte Corday, excessive blood, signs of struggle, all have been removed leaving only the bare minimum necessary to the import of this moment: the body, the bath, a simple desk; blanket, turban, and sheet; pen, paper, inkwell; and the knife. The juncture here is truly classical in the sense that it is a "posterior moment - not the event, but the martyrdom" (Bozal 1994a, 156). This effect is heightened by the abstraction of the space behind the bath. This is no place in particular, but rather the site of a pathos that has already been half removed from the here in its aspiration to the transhistorical: "A classical martyrdom for a secular piety, a piety that is figured no where; there is no grieving on which it could support itself: it projects piety into history" (ibid.). Or out of history? The double dating of the scene, at the head of the letter (du 13 juillet, 1793), and at the foot of the escritoire (L'an deux) is key. It situates this juncture, in a manner analogous to traditional crucifixion paintings where Hebrew, Greek, and Latin inscriptions and the cross itself image the transposition of vertical and horizontal temporalities and traditions, as a moment first and foremost 'in time': but at the crossroads of two different orders of time.
Yet unlike the bright new dawn of republicanism that the three previous works herald (but which stand more as summations of "three-quarters of a century's striving"), *Marat assassinated* depicts the end of a dream (and the advent of political terror), and it does so in the classical mode of death the brother of sleep (Levy, 192). The cognitive dissonance (and unintentional irony) of the image is phenomenal. As Levy sums up its 'message,'

The shock of *Marat assassinated* is the century's shock. The Revolution stood for liberty and the release of all mankind's finest feelings; it was meant to end, not inaugurate, bloodshed. Yet liberty has led to this. (195)

Yet even more shocking than the murder, is the stoicism of emotion, classicism of line, and lambent illumination with which it is rendered. This "shocking actuality" is painted in exactly the same manner as the *Oath of the Horatii*, and if anything outdoes it in technique, focus, and pathos (*ibid.*). Without this image and the fall it represents, the emotional frenzy and seething grief, the claustrophobic "shrieks of the sword" and "the almost hysterical...calm" latent in David's earlier visions of revolutionary republicanism would not have achieved the purchase on visibility that they now enjoy; all that would have remained merely one of a series of quiescent potentialities (190-191). In less than a decade, however, time and events catch up with these works and lay bare their "deepest conviction" not only that "violence will provide a solution" (Levy, 191), but that a moral grandeur of violence can be projected beyond the brutality of the fact and introjected in paint as legend, "legitimated and sublated in the figure of the hero" (Bozal 1994b, 135). *Marat assassinated* is a pictorial grand slam, and one which ends not merely the game of history painting, but the re-creation of moral universalism through it. Liberty has led to murder: "The eye of death's needle has been closed" (Berger, 52).

The David who in *Marat assassinated* seems to have glimpsed this fact - the plaint of the carefully detailed note is after all a ruse - will in the years to come avoid its gaze. His subsequent historical works effortlessly slide from the moral universalism of the earlier phase into an iconoduly ('the veneration of images') of national religion, without so much as batting an eye. "David," writes Licht, "seeing things *sub specie aeternitatis...*produced many a canvas that can only be defined as a 'machine'" (1979, 107). Works such as *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (1800), with its heroic genealogy of Hannibal, Karolus Magnus, and Bonaparte chiseled into the inert boulders over which the conqueror rears - the obvious in stone - are sublime monstrosities of the didactic, illegible through hyperdetermination, and evidence that the distance between pathos and bathos is not that wide but unfathomably deep. David in this and other Napoleonic works returns to
the unconscious vacuousness of power, bedecking the paragon of liberty with all the trappings of despotism. It would be David's heir A. J. Gros, however, who would develop the underlying Davidian ideal of combat to its fullest expression in a series of battle scenes in the early 1800s, notably *The Battle of Aboukir* (1806), and *The Battle of Eylau* (1808). In these paintings, as Bozal points out, the absolute positivity of the secular saviour makes instrumental use of pathos and universalism in the national liturgy of the hero. Gros' three-fold plan makes this plain: in the foreground, death, corpses piled in heaps at the eye-level of the spectator, the 'universal'; in the background, battle, the 'particular' events; and in the free space of the middle ground, the nexus: free-will itself in action. By reason of this tripartite structure the pathos of the dead and the historicity of the enterprise can only be resolved in the central figure of the hero. However, in passing through the axial point he embodies, universals and particulars exchange places. and the centralized hero exacts a toll: in him is united cause and effect, of the *desolation of the particulars* and of the *sublimity of the universal adventure*.

The hero gives reason and sublimes such desolation, and in a plastic manner: the pictorial context affirms his sublime status, and consequently, that of his enterprise. The horror that so much violence solicits feeds the sublime of the historical accomplishment. (Bozal 1994b, 137)

Gros here mounts an impressive effort, and, we could say, achieves a line drive double, but only for those who beyond all evidence believe the game is still on, indeed that the game is still playable: which is to say, he imagines for the converted in an age where servitude has become a choice.

**From theos to agnostos**

> We cannot blame God any more. Human freedom has occupied all the spaces of the world. Büchner, *Danton’s Death*

In Berger's analysis of death in representation (as distinct from death in its 'reality'), with the indictment, judgement, and execution of the sovereign, the French Revolution accomplishes a liberation of death from external servitude. Henceforward, Berger claims, death becomes a standard by which to judge interiority, "the measure of [one's] love of Freedom; a proof of the principle of [one's] own Liberty" (48). He quotes Saint-Just on the eve of his own execution by the republic he had championed, proclaiming that the pending ultimate decision belongs to him and him alone: "I defy anybody to snatch from me what I have given myself, an independent life in the sky of the centuries" (in Berger, 49; emphasis added). Saint-Just's declaration of solitary
independence unto death, however, somewhat obfuscates the situation, for behind his proclamations (and that of others who were to tread this path, both then and later) lies "the ghost of a pre-existent order," the ambiguous status of History (49). The sovereignty of the monarch, master, or prime mover, it is true, will no longer count for much on judgement day - but that is not to say that nothing will count and no one or nothing will judge. For Saint-Just envisages History-as-the-Truth-of-Reason as the moral tribunal to which we all are and equally called to jury duty:

Tyrants everywhere looked upon us because we were judging one of theirs; today when, by a happier destiny, you are deliberating on the liberty of the world, the people of the earth who are the truly great of the earth will, in their turn, watch you. (in Berger, 49)

In these speeches to the Convention Saint-Just imagines his death much as he might have seen it staged in Plato's Apology, the Chanson de Roland, or David's Death of Socrates, which is to say as an aesthetic production. But even as he declaims his faith in the vindication of futurity, he seems presciently aware that what he calls the silence of the monarchical-scriptural past will be doubled by the noise (and the technological inflection of this term is here not irrelevant) of an uncertain future:

Fame is an empty noise. Let us put our ears to the centuries that have gone: we no longer hear anything: those who, at another time, shall walk among our urns, shall hear no more. The good - that is what we must pursue, whatever the price, preferring the title of a dead hero to that of a living coward. (in Berger, 49)

Is it too much to read into Saint-Just's stirring words the novel recognition of an inescapable absurdity? Fame is empty, he declares, striking the familiar chord of vanitas: but, he then continues, let us embrace the good even if it costs us our lives because at least we will enjoy the renown of the martyr. I have already remarked how in the medieval world meaninglessness was next to impossible; heresy was conceivable only within the ecclesiastical order, and even the 'world turned upside down' was a recreation structured into the liturgical calendar. Saint-Just, however, seems to recognize no other world. Definitions of modernity are by now legion; but let me attempt, heuristically, one more: where there is absurdity, and the laughter and despair that are proper to it, there is modernity; sheer meaninglessness - where, it is felt, there ought to be meaning - is modern. Already in his Nouvelle Héloïse (1761) Rousseau had remarked upon it: "everything is absurd, but nothing shocking, because everyone is accustomed to it"; and his dismay stems from the fact that only he is outraged (in Berman, 18). But Rousseau
rejected that absurdity and laboured to ground his sense of objective truth in the inner voice. For Saint-Just, however, the modest distance between the senseless world and the truth of interiority that Rousseau believed he could overcome, is collapsing into a total opposition. Never mind, Saint-Just replies, if the world is absurd, so be it: I will stand firm against it, alone if necessary.

In Berger's analysis the twilight of death as servitude marks the beginning of the end of the mediation of religion: "The confrontation between the living man and the world as he finds it becomes total. There is nothing exterior to it not even a principle" (50). For some, confident in the solidity of any one of a number of possible substitute structures (science, progress, capital, art, nation), the etiolation of religious mediation implicit in 'total confrontation' will be nothing to lose any sleep over. Laplace, for example, is reputed to have rebuffed Napoleon's query about the status of God in his cosmological mechanics with the quip 'I have no need of that hypothesis.' Fichte, Schopenhauer, Clauswitz, and their followers will surmount the absurd exteriority of the world with notions of an absolute will. Others, however, will be far more troubled. One can only imagine how it struck the foot soldiers of Napoleon's Grand Armée when, retreating from Moscow in the winter of 1812, they pass again through Borodino and find only crows and wolves attending their unburied comrades. Most likely they found it unbearable.  

It is necessary to recognize that the intolerability of the world is, in a certain sense, an historical achievement. The world was not intolerable so long as God existed, so long as there was a ghost of the pre-existent order, so long as large tracts of the world were unknown, so long as one believed in the distinction between the spiritual and the material (it is there that many people still find their justification in finding the world tolerable), so long as one believed in the natural inequality of man...The world is not intolerable until the possibility of transforming it exists but is denied. (Berger, 51-52)

This dawn of a new found intolerability suggests another line of entry into the contracted existence of El Aggarotado. Williams has noted that in Goya's oeuvre "graphic work accounts for two thirds of the catalogue, drawings alone representing nearly half his entire output"; Goya's phenomenally productive seventh decade (1808-1819) sees the completion of 700 (of his over 1900) works, with "four fifths of these [being] drawings and prints" (65-66). In the bifurcated 'two Spains' of the late eighteenth century - "on one side ideas without action, on the other actions without ideas," Marx would later write  - El Aggarotado may also represent Goya's first recognition of a grey zone lying between the illumination cast by enlightened beacons and the shadows they made visible, a zone
that would come to preoccupy him until his death. He would people it not only with the phantoms and ghouls that the name Goya evokes, but with marginal and shadowy figures drawn 'from life': victims of torture, madmen, workers and artisans, and a series of mendicant cripples inked in his final years in Bordeaux. *El Aggarotado* thus marks a beginning of sorts, although it would take 15 years for this debut to take off. In it Goya not only discovers for himself the technical possibility of this grey zone, which then stands, perhaps, as an index of the confusion and indirection of late century Spanish society, but begins to see its discursive possibilities as the groundless ground - to Enlightened reason invisible - on which links between the two Spains would have to be forged. Hubert Damisch has written of the *Caprichos* (1799) words that image what may already be surfacing in *El Aggarotado*:

> The artist ceaselessly interrogates images which pass before him as so many enigmas, impatient to recognize by this deviation contact with a reality that recedes from his grasp...in the same cross-examination he calls into question an enlightened 'reason' that isolates him from the real. (255-256)

Over the course of the eighteenth century, as we have seen, the discourse of reason staked its fortune on the programmatic unfolding of enlightenment. However, given the mathematical, atemporal, and what I have called the cephalic, characterization of reason implicit in that wager, material and temporal obstacles to progress were bound to surface. In the long run these blind spots of enlightened illumination would force a redefinition of the rational and the reasonable, but in the hurly-burly of the eighteenth century *fin de siècle* "the confusion of reason with the efforts of humanity to master a history that it creates but whose sense escapes it" brought about a loss of confidence in reason (*ibid.*). The dawn of the historical age of Europe is commonly translated by the formula *mythos* into *logos*. This classificatory schema, *logos*’ own, values writing and history over myth and oral (or other) forms of recording the passage of time, and its, broadly speaking, technological component (*techne*) should not be underplayed. What I would like to suggest is that in the high tide of the Enlightenment with the etiolation of servitude and mediation an analogous transition makes its appearance. However, given the particular nature of the twilight involved it is not apparent at the time whether this moment heralds a sunrise or a sunset. Let me call it a passage from *theos* to *agnostos*, a passage that completes Descartes' doubt, and thus heralds full modernity, but whose technological component is and will be dogged by the advent of ideology. In pictorial terms it represents a "trajectory from historia, which presupposes a rational world order, to capricho, which abandons that order...[but whose separate] modes are not mutually
exclusive" (Tomlinson, 190). Does agnostos value doubt over the apodictic-transcendental? Yes, in the sense that an aesthetics and a hermeneutics of privacy, which come into their own in this new age, will be premised upon a primacy of misunderstanding that founds the necessity of artistic, critical, and personal 'translation'; no, however, in the sense that chronic uncertainty and thus a consequent craving for certitude, submission, and absolute goods will bedevil the public sphere, and acutely so in those 'open,' horizontal, and democratic societies that embrace the transition from theos to agnostos.

**Problematic literacy and Imagined communities**

Language is the main instrument of man's refusal to accept the world as it is. Without that refusal...we would turn forever on the treadmill of the present...Ours is the ability, the need, to gainsay or 'un-say' the world, to image and speak it otherwise. George Steiner

Myron Tuman has proposed that a fundamental change in the import of literacy occurred at roughly this point in history. The essential divide in the history of literacy, he argues, is not between modern and premodern, but rather "between those forms of practice that tend to reify the existing social order and those forms of praxis, including the acts of creating and comprehending texts, that tend to expose its contingent nature" (178). Tuman designates this new, roughly Romantic, conception of reading, 'problematic literacy.' Problematic literacy is characterized by three shifts: a transposition of the exterior 'verticality' of texts, whose aim had been to allegorically reference the transcendental divine, into a sense of inner 'depths' expressing the power of a uniquely individual imaginative freedom; a concomitant shift in emphasis away from previous notions of the text as normatively communicative (still the implicit aim of the encyclopédistes) in which reading and writing are reiterative performances of one's allegiance to a social order; and a consequent proliferation of specialized texts and knowledges as focal points of symbolic intimacy or practical idiolects.

Up until these shifts, argues Tuman, the meaning of a text was inextricably linked to a shared context and intention between readers and writers whose model was ordinary conversation. He calls this the synecdochic mode: the 'said' of a synecdochic text was by and large subordinated to the need for social accord. In the symbolic mode of problematic literacy, 'artistic' texts programatically embrace the multiplicity and non-contingency of meaning and intention out of a pure pleasure of expression: symbolic meaning conveys more meaning than is called for, and proffers itself first as hidden or enigmatic in order to transmit the sensation of a transformative power, of a discovery of a new mode of the world or being. Symbolic meaning in this sense, however, does not alone constitute a
Paradise Lost, after all, demonstrates both multiple meanings and the revelation of an order that would transform the world; and we should be careful to characterize the shift in question as one of emphasis rather than out and out rupture. What renders the symbolic text problematic in Tuman's sense is a different notion of community implicit in the text and its readers, its gesturing toward a meaning that is solitary and free from "tyranny of the present" (171). Over the course of the eighteenth century, with the breakdown of the patronage system and the mushrooming of book and periodical production, the author's relation to his or her readers begins to be an economic one; he or she writes for an unknown audience that must be created by the text, and who implicitly share in the creation of meaning. Problematic literacy is founded on the recognition that we "are able to 'speak' and 'listen' to a whole new class of people - those whom we can only know through texts," be they the avatars of an aesthetic avant-garde or a community of professionals (engineers, for example) with whom we may have no personal contact, but with whom we wish to share in the dissemination and melioration of a specialized, practical (or aesthetico-ideal) knowledge (28-29).

The notion of problematic literacy is a way of addressing both what I have called the phenomenology of revolution and Berger's intolerability of the world. While the symbolic texts of problematic literacy are not necessarily revolutionary in content, they are premised upon a revolutionary notion of the possibility of human action beyond the confines of the synecdochic. In this sense problematic literacy is a recognition of the Enlightenment's victory, of its assertion that universal reason constitutes the ultimate court of discursive appeal. Henceforward, even texts which argue for the status quo will acquire whatever 'compelling' power over individuals they can through appeals to an authority 'higher' than that of pure social solidarity. The paradox of this universalism is that its imagined universal audience will be, for most of the nineteenth century, largely composed of the nascent bourgeoisie: "as late as 1840, even in Britain and France, the most advanced states in Europe, almost half the population was still illiterate" (Anderson, 75).

As a politico-aesthetic programme problematic literacy champions writing as an act of "social betrayal," one that dismisses the present 'as it is' for another world (Tuman, 32). It also, thus, gives us an index of a burgeoning fragmentation and reformation of social cohesion in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The pre-bourgeois ruling classes generated their cohesions in some sense outside language, or at least outside print-language....But [what of] the bourgeoisie? Here was a class which, figuratively speaking, came into being as a class only in so many replications. Factory-owner in Lille was connected to factory-owner in Lyon.
only by reverberation. They had no necessary reason to know of one another's existence; they did not typically marry each other's daughters or inherit each other's property. But they did come to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves through print-language. For an illiterate bourgeoisie is scarcely imaginable. Thus in world-historical terms bourgeoisies were the first classes to achieve solidarities on an essentially imagined basis. (Anderson, 76-77)

Nowhere, one might claim, was this imaginative cohesion more developed as an idea-programme than in German Romantic poetics and hermeneutics, where in the last quarter of the eighteenth century an unprecedented literary-political vocation was announced: originality - originality of individuals, of texts, and of national peoples. This movement was to play the role of midwife to two ideas that were to shoot through the political-cultural discourses of the next two centuries like an electric current: the idea of the 'nation' envisaged as a community of speakers of a common language, who, by virtue of this personal-communal property, felt "entitled to their autonomous place in a fraternity of equals", and the idea that art is grounded not in mimesis but in expression (Anderson, 84).

The point of contact between the parallel lines of nationalism and expression, and particularly the intersection of the political theory of the nation and the aesthetic theory of the fragment, bears investigating. Let me take a moment to sketch out its background and some of its general lines as I think it will help us see how with the dawn of the new century new ideas about violence begin to be bruited in new contexts. Politically, the age of absolutism dates from 1648, the end of the Thirty Years War. With the Treaty of Westphalia a political order is established in which "whole regions and ultimately the globe itself must perforce be divided territorially among sovereign states enjoying a monopoly of the means of violence, each state being left free to enter into ienic agreements with others, or to make war on those states it declares its enemies" (Keane, 45). By means of this monopoly, it was theorized, intra-state peace could be guaranteed. On the international (inter-state) stage, however, the Westphalian model rationalized a kind of limited anarchy of external opportunism, and this because the limits on violence proposed by the social contract of a state monopoly of violence are, paradoxically, a form of political suicide in inter-state conflicts. While the rationalization of violence in these terms did to a large extent enable the weak pre-absolutist state to discipline its rogues and thus protect society from the violence of non-state (local) vested interests, Keane makes an important point when he stresses that it was "also a process of insulating the ownership and deployment of violence against moral calculations and, hence, carries
Within it the seeds of planned cruelty on a mass scale" (35). This latter potential would become ever more ominous as the state apparatus came more and more to dominate the three-fold division of political life as conceived by Westphalia: government, armed forces, and civilians. Thus in the Westphalian era discourse about violence was entirely subsumed under the discourse of the law of, not merely just or unjust wars or punishments, but state power politics.

During the eighteenth century, the discourse of violence (really a non-discourse, upon whose eighteenth century silences and obfuscations I have remarked in my introduction) continued to have no place of its own. This was so largely because new ideas on the subject were most often couched in the 'foreign' terms of civilization, barbarism, and cruelty, on the one hand, or because they were filed under the rubric of 'modernized' aristocratic codes of honour - what John Keane has called the "invention of civility as an antidote to incivility" (18) - on the other. Over the course of the eighteenth century these two streams of ideas merged under the aegis of the century's guiding lights of optimism, meliorism, and progressivism, with the result that the question of violence was pushed even further into the dark than it had been earlier when, kindled by Hobbes, there had been much talk of whether violence was politically inevitable. As I stated in my introduction, by the second half of the century under the illumination of powerful beacons a flattering image of human nature took the stage as both an image of a desired future possibility and as a (misrecognized) present reality on which the program of future possibilities was grounded. As Keane notes, the erasure of violence from eighteenth century social discourse was to a large extent based upon its imagined erasure from future society:

Among the weaknesses of this ['civilizational'] type of eighteenth-century interpretation of the problem of violence in civil society is its secret commitment to an evolutionary or teleological understanding of history as a process of transformation from 'rude' societies to 'civilized' societies. [Adam] Fergusson himself [in his Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767)] worried about the possible relapse into barbarism, but the general framework of his study stands firmly on the assumption that modern times differ from and are superior to previous eras of rudeness because violence is potentially removable from significant areas of life. (21)

Keane underscores that the blind spots of analyses like Fergusson's lay in their refusal to recognize both the persistence of violence in all civil societies and the real possibility of regress from civil to uncivil society. I will return to these notions later, but what I want to focus on here is how with the advent of symbolic literacy new notions about violence
tacitly surface in a discourse of 'social shattering' and violent estrangement from synecdochic ties. This concerns the national aesthetics of the formation and reformation of character, the art work, and the fragment.

The Romantic fragment - Bild, bildende Kraft, Bildung

The fragment should be like a little work of art, complete in itself and separated from the rest of the universe like a hedgehog.
Friedrich Schlegel, Athenaeum Fragments # 206

In order to understand the novel character of the Romantic fragment let us compare it with its classical predecessor. Recall that in Deleuze's typology 'classical' philosophy was concerned with the representation of what he called 'God forms,' that is with notions of human finitude and divine infinity. Classical philosophy's recourse to negation was a question of overcoming those limitations that separated the finite being of humanity from the transcendent: "The most typical seventeenth-century texts therefore concern the distinction between different orders of infinity: the infinity of grandeur and the infinity of smallness in Pascal; the infinite in itself in Spinoza; all the infinities in Leibniz, and so on" (1993, 96). Within this vertical order, the seventeenth century fragment (Pascal, La Rochefoucauld) was conceived as both centrifugal, a finite part broken off the whole, and centripetal, in that by virtue of its classical form it was thought to fix (in a manner analogous to representations of the crucifixion) the pith of the transcendent, and thus adequately represent the striving of humanity for the infinite. Once constitutive limits are placed on human knowledge by the Kantian system, however, there is a radical change of view: the greater 'all' beyond this world, of which this world is merely a part, comes to be seen as itself essentially fragmentary.

Departing from the point where Kantianism leaves off, the fragment then takes form in Jena aesthetics as a formally centripetal unity, that is as a positivity representing the fragmented totality, which, in order to undo its own perfection and thus truly present the character of the all, must imagine its own self-destruction as unity. Thus while conceived as formally centripetal, the Romantic fragment is also and equally conceptually centrifugal. The resource of negation again plays its role, this time by effecting an overcoming not of limitations but of the opposition of centripetal unity and centrifugal frangibility: neither sublation (Aufhebung) nor dissolution (Auflosung), the Romantic fragment strives dialogically and dialectically to express the cosmic totality here.

[T]he image projects beyond itself in a provocative way...Its separation, indeed, is aggressive: it projects into the universe precisely by the way it cuts itself
Each fragment is, or should be, a finished form: it is the content that is incomplete. (Rosen, 48)

The Kantian point of departure from which the Jena aestheticians 'make hay' is Kant's notion of aesthetic ideas as the bridge between cognition and morality. Although, according to Kant, aesthetic ideas offer us neither knowledge of any concept of reason nor of any practical object of sensation, they nonetheless partake of morality by engendering a superabundance of possible forms and thoughts about them that provokes reason, searching for a concept adequate to that excess, to stretch its own limits. This animating function of aesthetic ideas places it in contact with the transcendental source of morality by "creating the subjective conditions under which the mind can become receptive to ideas strictly speaking - to ideas in the first place" (Gasché 1991, xxvi). For the Jena Romantics this constitutive centrality of aesthetic ideas becomes pivotal: aesthetic ideas are no longer conceived as cognitive-moral bridges so much as instantiations of the 'All-fragment.' As fragments they are philosophical in nuce because, in a manner analogous to Kantian sublime representations, they set the mind in motion, opening it toward the unrepresentable, but, and this is the critical Jena irony, as product of a clarity of critical judgement that "knows itself as fragment" they then self-destruct in paradox: "the Romantic fragment thematizes an incompletion that is universal, essential...an incompletion that is itself a mode of fulfillment" (Gasché 1991, xxx). In so doing Romantic fragments both liberate the presentation of ideas from conceptual subservience - they are truly Ideal ideas - and demonstrate the inexhaustibility of reason, expressing an image of reason that is always more than what is comprehended by the mind's conceptual mechanics.

In the manner of Blakean contraries, the Romantic fragment is a dynamical, explosive, paradoxical fusion of heterogeneous elements - an instability expressed in the word 'totality' - and it finds articulation not in practical (moral) action but in the work of
art. In the Jena imagination, however, this work does not represent a fixed, and thus
categorical, or conceptualized, 'said,' but is rather something organic, developing
(both physically and intellectually), in motion: a pro-ject.

22. A project is the subjective embryo of a developing object. A perfect project
should be at once completely subjective and completely objective, should be an
indivisible and living individual. In its origin: completely subjective and original,
only possible in precisely this sense; in its character: completely objective,
physically and morally necessary. The feeling for projects - which one might call
fragments of the future - is distinguishable from the feeling for fragments of the
past only by its direction: progressive in the former, regressive in the latter. What
is essential is to be able to idealize and realize objects immediately and
simultaneously: to complete them and in part carry them out within oneself. Since
transcendental is precisely whatever relates to the joining or separating of the ideal
and the real, one might very well say that the feeling for fragments and projects is
the transcendental element of the historical spirit. (Schlegel, *Athenaeum
Fragments; 20-21*)

This notion of an organic developing project takes as its point of departure Kant's notion
of the empty, substanceless, but fundamentally moral, subject, "the subject unrepresentable
to itself" (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 30). To the evacuation of what Lacoue-Labarthe &
Nancy call the "intuitus originarius...what had heretofore ensured the philosophical
itself," the Jena School responds by championing the Kantian subject's transcendental
imagination as the individualizing power of image formation:

> From the moment the subject is emptied of all substance, the pure form it assumes
is reduced to nothing more than a function of unity or synthesis. Transcendental
imagination, *Einbildungskraft*, is the function that must form (*bilden*) this unity,
and that must form it as *Bild*, as a representation or picture. (*ibid.*)

The question that will dog both Kant and the Jena aestheticians, however, will be
how such an empty, image producing subject is necessarily a moral unity, how, in
Kantian terms, it is *subject* to the moral law. As Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy demonstrate, a
two-fold resolution was proposed. On the one hand, if the supersensible idea of morality
was to appear to the empty subject (as Kant's synderesis proposed it should), it could only
appear in "the reflection of the synthetic function of the subject," a reflection that "brings
about the unity of the subject only insofar as the subject sees itself in the image (*Bild*) of
something without either a concept or an end" (31). However, to the extent that this
notion of reflection could be assimilated by connotation to notions of Aristotelian
substance and Platonic finality and stasis, it would be, within the growing secularized and
progressive currents of Enlightenment thought, an unsalable bill of goods. Rather than turf it out as defective, however, the Jena Romantics tempered its fixity and substantiality with a notion of "the Darstellung (the presentation, the figuration, the staging...) of the never substantial 'substance' of the 'subject' by means of the Beautiful" (ibid.).

[L]et us say that the resolution was envisaged in the Darstellung of the 'subject' by means of the Beautiful in works of art (the formation of the Bilder able to present liberty and morality analogically), by means of the 'formative power' (bildende Kraft) of nature and life within nature (the formation of the organism), and finally by means of the Bildung of humanity (what we retain under the concepts of history and culture). It is necessary to emphasize the Bilden here...in order to underline (1) the solely analogical character of Darstellung... (2) the strictly unknowable character of life, of the formative power, insofar as for us it has no analogon; and (3) the infinite character of the process of human Bildung (...the first view of history that refers its telos to infinity). (32)

Where for Kant the three-fold compact of Bild - image, formative power, character formation - coalesces into "a regulatory idea" of the System and "the will to system," the Jena Romantics envisage the system-project as an organic and individualizing "living system" (32; 34). Against the Kantian schema of a priori categories and regulative laws that articulate the production of poetry, but whose formal character is deductive, they theorize a production paradigm that, anterior to schematization, would engender "the idea as such": artistic labour "produces the truth of production in itself...the truth of the production of itself, of autopoiesy" (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 12). This auto-productive character of the living system is crucial in that it permits, and indeed ordains, the work of art as one of fragmentary unification, for beauty is the "Idea that unites the rest." For Schlegel, all too conscious of Kant's 'Copernican Revolution,' the beautiful thing cannot be a self-sustaining planet-like object; rather it must be an instantiation of the governing or generative principle that while available to ideation, nonetheless escapes comprehension:

434. ...Whatever somebody is capable of producing, or whatever happens to be in fashion, is the stationary earth at the centre of all things. But in the universe of poetry nothing stands still, everything is developing and changing and moving harmoniously; and even the comets obey invariable laws of motion. But until the course of these heavenly bodies can be calculated and their return predicted, the true world system of poetry won't have been discovered. (Athenaeum Fragments, 90)

...
The Romantic fragment, then, is theorized as fundamentally ethical because it presents as it were the idea of ideas, that of an aesthetically moral ideal, not the planet-object but the 'invariable laws of motion.' In fragmentary presentation the ethical-aesthetical ideal - "[that] formative power is aesthetic power," "[that] the aesthetic act...[is] 'the highest act of Reason'" (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 35) - is staged both as a point of governance beyond the sensible and conceptual, that is, the very principle of possibility (which no phenomena can adequately express) by which both the reasoned ethical and the beautiful reason may be made practically real, and as a concrete fusion of heterogenous elements of language-concept: it is centripetal-centrifugal, ethical-aesthetical.

The Romantic fragment is, therefore, a closed structure, but its closure is a formality: it may be separated from the rest of the universe, but it implies the existence of what is outside itself not by reference but by its instability. The form is not fixed but is torn apart or exploded by a paradox. (Rosen, 51)

The work of art: the Nation

As instantiation of the 'living system' the fragment-idea is conceived as an unstable, violent force, one capable of imaging the paradoxical totality only by negating "all the organic oppositions...[starting with] the most fundamental of all, the opposition of System and freedom" (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 35). To say that the Jena ideal substitutes the human work of art for the divine creation of the world, and thus represents the rise of the artist to the status of priest in the secular age, would be, however, not to go far enough. For in the work of art the Jena school seeks to present not merely creation (originary creativity) in se, but to produce an entirely mortal - that is, both time-bound and fatal - parturition of a singular particularity which is also universal. This birth is theorized in a three-fold manner on three analogous levels. First, as we have seen, the work of art concerns the effectuation of a violent power (bildende Kraft), whereby the stationary object becomes the ever developing cosmic-fragment-work. Second, and concurrently, by virtue of this transformative death the individual character of the artist (Bilder) is forged from out of the raw material of human personality:

60. Individuality is precisely what is original and eternal in man; personality doesn't matter so much. To pursue cultivation and development of this individuality as one's highest calling would be a godlike egoism. (Schlegel, Ideas; 99)
Third, in forging idea-fragments out of nature and artists out of men (the masculine here
seems paradoxically apposite) the *Sturm und Drang* of the formative power gives birth to
the godlike vessel of a developing humanity (*Bildung*):

44. ...A mediator is one who perceives the divinity within himself and who self-
destructively sacrifices himself in order to reveal, communicate, and represent to
all mankind this divinity in his conduct and actions, in his words and works...To
mediate and be mediated are the whole higher life of man and every artist is a
mediator for all other men. (Schlegel, *Ideas*; 98)

We can see here why for the Jena aestheticians the notion of artist-priest is far
from sufficient: it is much too finite, too mediated. The model of the cleric is wanting in
that creative, powerful, and explosive energy - possession- that defines the worldly artist-
god who incarnates the originary becoming of the universe as idea-ideal: only a secular,
self-annihilating Christ could apprehend and express the sublime glories of a total
'destruction-creation.'

131. The hidden meaning of sacrifice is the annihilation of the finite because it is
finite. In order to demonstrate that this is its only justification, one must choose to
sacrifice whatever is most noble and most beautiful: but particularly man, the
flower of the earth. Human sacrifices are the most natural sacrifices. But man is
more than the flower of the earth; he is reasonable, and reason is free and in itself
nothing but an eternal self-destination into the infinite. Hence man can only
sacrifice himself, and he does so in an omnipresent sanctity the mob knows
nothing of. All artists are Decians, and to become an artist means nothing but
consecrating oneself to the gods of the underworld. In the enthusiasm of
annihilation, the meaning of the divine creation is revealed for the first time. Only
in the midst of death does the lightening bolt of eternal life explode. (Schlegel,
*Ideas*; 106)

And what is more, the cleric is wanting on another, and important front. If for Schlegel
the priest is already superannuated as image of the artist we must remind ourselves that it
is because with the rationalization of religion in the eighteenth century the mediations of
the clergy have become a consummately private affair concerning only the petty pieties
and crabbed spirits of (what Schlegel considered) 'the mob.' Reaching for an image of
cosmic scope and aesthetico-political (i.e., social) power adequate to his vision of the
primacy and immediacy of ideas it is perhaps only fitting that Schlegel would light upon
the little Corporal of Corsica as having raised the intellectual and godlike devotion to
ideas of the French Revolution to the summit of self-sacrificing destructive creation:
422. Mirabeau played a great role in the Revolution because his character and mind were revolutionary; Robespierre because he obeyed the Revolution absolutely, devoted himself entirely to it, worshipped it, and considered himself its god; Bonaparte because he can create and shape revolutions, and destroy himself. (Athanaeum Fragments, 86; emphasis added)

Schlegel's vision here is curiously prescient, in that this fragment was written in 1798-1799 (the Ideas in 1800). Although by this date Bonaparte was already making moves into Germany and Austria, he would not become First Consul until early November 1799 (Emperor in 1804); his great expansionist adventures (Jena, Austerlitz, Friedland, Borodino, etc.) would not begin to make waves for another half dozen years, and his even more renowned defeats (Moscow, Spain, Leipzig, Waterloo) were over a decade away. Perhaps, however, Schlegel had in part two of Napoleon's early escapades in mind, both bearing upon the classical iconology and genealogy of the nation. The first of these was Napoleon's Italian campaign of 1796, in the aftermath of which the looted treasures of Hellenistic antiquity, including the Laokoon, were paraded through the streets of Paris; the second was the invasion of Egypt (1798), which although it quickly ended in rout, gave the occasion for some marvelously sublime bons mots of romantic grandeur, including "Soldats, songez que, du haut de ces pyramides, quarante siècles vous contemplent."21 Let us not forget that Schlegel was a classical philologist-translator by training, and that, although in all probability he would have been unaware of the fact in 1799, Napoleon's Egyptian expedition was to pilfer from the banks of the Nile two artefacts that in the centuries following would become, even more than European treasures, icons of national self-construction: the Rosetta stone (stolen by the British from the French in Alexandria harbour) and the obelisk that now graces the Place de la Concorde in Paris. In the age of national formation an Egyptian-style obelisk would become the de rigueur symbol of a militant nationalism with pan-national aspirations; it would represent in stone the longing for legitimacy of that paradoxically 'natural' socio-political entity without a past, the nation. Just as Egypt had in eighteenth century thought represented the crucible and summa of the classical world, so the conquest of Egypt in arms as well as letters was to be the herald of a new world-historical era. Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier described the prize in his introduction to the principal intellectual fruit of the Egyptian campaign, the 18 volume Description de l'Égypte (1809-1828):

Placed between Africa and Asia, and communicating easily with Europe, Egypt occupies the center of the ancient continent. This country presents only great memories; it is the homeland of the arts and conserves innumerable monuments; its principal temples and the palaces inhabited by its kings still exist, even though
its least ancient edifices had already been built by the time of the Trojan War. Homer, Lycurgus, Solon, Pythagoras, and Plato all went to Egypt to study the sciences, religion, and the laws...No considerable power was ever amassed by any nation, whether in the West or in Asia, that did not also turn that nation toward Egypt, which was regarded in some measure as its natural lot. (in Said, 84)

Over the course of the nineteenth century obelisks will be erected (in addition to Paris) in London, Washington, Rome, St. Petersberg, Buenos Aires... They will stand as monuments to a national memory constructed over the dead body of a forgotten past; for of the forty centuries evoked in Napoleon's exhortation, 'the French' in 1798 had, realistically, only existed as French for a mere two or three.

Although its contours are in Jena Romanticism only sketchily drawn, one can see in the three-fold notion of Bild the outlines of an aesthetic nationalism (or national aestheticism) in which the project of the nation parallels the development of the work of art. This means that if the self-destructive sacrifice of personality is the precondition for the birth of the godlike egoism of the artist-work, then an analogous destruction of local allegiances, customs, and boundaries (Tuman's 'social betrayal') is envisaged as the midwife of the truly national (or supra-national) character of the nation-state. And just as the Jena programme sees the artist as ordained with extra-ordinary executive-legislative power in the formation of a new art/new society, so too analogously, and by virtue of a similar self-sacrifice, the new national sovereignty is envisaged as the incarnation of extra-ordinary, arbitrary and absolute powers over both vested interests and the laggardly 'mob.'

328. Only someone who risks himself can risk others. So too only someone who annihilates himself has a right to annihilate another.22
377. Does the state have a right to sanction change, purely arbitrarily, as being more valid than other treaties, and thereby deprive these of their force? (Schlegel, Athenaeum Fragments; 65, 77)

Placing these two fragments side by side one is made witness to a pregnant torsion in the Jena school's national aesthetic. As I have tried to show this torsion is implicit from the very beginning in the centripetal-centrifugal, aesthetico-ethical character of the project. But there appears here a third instability, concerning a tension between certainty and uncertainty, that we must now turn to. Let us consider the latter side of the polarity first. Schlegel's interrogative mode in fragment #377 is somewhat hesitant, and this may stem from an instability inherent in the very notion of the nation itself, for the nation is an entity both universal and relative. It is universal in that it is conceived as the natural birth-
right of a 'people,' indeed of all peoples, the socio-political formation best capable of giving voice to their innate aspirations; and yet it is equally relative, in that because all peoples (and particularly their languages) were imagined as inherently different, socio-political formations realizing their innate aspirations would of necessity follow divergent paths. The confusion here turns on the difference between what John Keane calls 'national identity' and 'nationalism,' a confusion that will very quickly come to have grave and catastrophic consequences. This is the difference between a notion of national identity, whose tolerance of difference and openness to other forms of life is qualitatively greater, [and a notion of] nationalism [that] requires its adherents to believe in themselves and to believe in the belief itself, to believe that they are not alone, that they are members of a community of believers known as the Nation, through which they can achieve immortality. (126)

Although they have an all too common tendency to slide into one another, it is important to emphasize some differences here. National identity would retain the unobstructed, unfinished, and inherently pluralized quality, the willingness and patience to hold open the space of complexity and uncertainty that nationalism seeks to close off. Nationalism, for its part, maintains that although the national project may not yet be complete, the national qualities (whether historical or bio-ecological) that are the prerequisite of national allegiance have already been established and are fixed, absolute, and final: as Keane writes "[w]herever one member of the Nation is, there is the Nation" (128). It would be difficult, on the other hand, to imagine feeling one's national identity if one were entirely alone; and this because national identity only appears through the mediation of a community, whether it be yours or another's, real or virtual, as when one participates in a work of art. And thus: where national identity recognizes multiple allegiances, nationalism sees only singularities, the National We - and of course the Others who are "everything and nothing," powerful, hated obstacles blocking its path to self-fulfillment and vilified sub-humans worthy only of contempt (127). It is this vacillating (or hybrid) quality of nations that Schlegel seems to touch upon when he says that fragments of the future are (easily?) distinguishable from fragments of the past by their progressive, not regressive, character (Athenaeum Fragment #22), but then remains silent on just what it is that enables one to differentiate the pro- from the re-gressive nature of the signs in question. And yet despite this seeming hesitation, Schlegel also conceives these identifying marks in (nationalistic?) either-or terms. History will soon prove those terms of reference to be woefully inadequate; and it should be born in mind that the modern notion of a reactionary movement or regime makes its appearance in
thought and political reality on the coat-tails, as it were, of the nation, which is to say that it too is something entirely 'new.' Universal but mortal, relative but timeless - this constitutive semiological confusion will be the uncertain mark of many nations to come.

Fragment #328, however, in its formally compacted conviction, stands almost diametrically opposed: it bellows, somewhat gnostically, an absolute confidence, finality, and superiority. Against the centrifugal hesitancy of fragment #377, it thunders the same centripetal, self-justifying defiance that we have heard in Napoleon's 'civilizational' proclamation to his troops in Egypt. The difference between Schleiermacher's remark (#377) and Napoleon's, however, is crucial, for when such remarks concern questions of aesthetics they are, however offensive, somewhat innocuous; but when, on the other hand, they reference political praxis their charge is inflammatory. The problem that arises here, and remains with us today, is that in defiantly refusing to differentiate between these two contexts the Jena aesthetico-political ideal opens the door to a slippage between the aesthetic and the political, and between national identity and nationalism. It is because this door had already been thrown open that Napoleon can rhetorically capitalize on the paradox at the heart of the national aesthetic, and construe the 'progressive' character of the French (national) 'civilizational' project as a cosmic (pan-national) and completed finality to which all must pledge allegiance. It has been remarked that there are principally two types of wars (although here too there is a tendency for elision): wars of real estate, in which I want what you have, and wars of ideology, in which I want you to have what I have. With the advent of the national aesthetic Europe will be visited by a plague of wars of this latter type that, although they had been a constant in its extra-European affairs, Europe had not seen the likes of since the early seventeenth century. As Norbert Elias put it over fifty years ago,

In 1798, as Napoleon sets off for Egypt, he shouts to his troops: 'Soldiers, you are undertaking a conquest with incalculable consequences for civilization.' Unlike when the concept was formed, nations from hereon consider the process of civilization as completed within their own societies; they see themselves as bearers of an existing or finished civilization to others...Of the whole preceding process of civilization nothing remains in their consciousness except a vague residue. Its impact is understood simply as an expression of their own higher gifts. (in Keane, 24)

Here at the mid point between Jena aesthetics and Napoleonic Realpolitik one may locate the origin of not only what Keane calls the Romantic "superiority complex" (ibid.), but the point of embarkation for both the political and artistic avant-gardes.
Common to both these movements is a flight from what Berlin calls 'reason-as-unifying-force' towards a self-determination of will whose principle mode of operation is division.

The division of mankind into two groups - men proper, and some other, lower, order of beings, inferior races, inferior cultures, subhuman creatures, nations or classes condemned by history...permits men [in political terms] to look on many millions of their fellow men as not quite human, to slaughter them without a qualm of conscience...The model for ethics and politics has suddenly shifted from analogy with the natural sciences, or theology, or any form of knowledge or description of facts, to something compounded out of the concepts of biological drives and goals and those of artistic creation. (1990, 179-180; 187-188)

In this new world of will and ideal, the Christian topos of, and faith that, a lack of 'success' in worldly terms is compensated for by eternal blessedness will be ridiculed as a weak and insincere capitulation. In fact, questions of commonly shared ideals or purposes of life begin to make less and less sense once each of us is thought to bear within our breast our own incontrovertible and inalienable guiding light of personal truth. Against the Enlightenment's deepest assumption that the reasoned principle for action, however debatable, could in principle be got at, the Romantic aesthetic proposes a unanimity of purpose that leaves only the consequences - the work, as product - to be hashed out. Paradoxically this seeming equality - that we all struggle for self-realization - proposes a profound challenge to notions of a universal human equity and humanity.

The moving figure of Beethoven in his garret creating immortal works in poverty and suffering duly yields to that of Napoleon, whose art is the making of states and peoples. If self-realization is aimed at as the ultimate goal, then might it not be that the transformation of the world by violence and skill is itself a kind of sublime aesthetic act?...As the artist blends colours and the composer sounds, so the political demiurge imposes his will upon his own raw material...and shapes them into a splendid work of art - a state or an army, or some great political, military, religious, judicial structure. This may entail great suffering: but like the discords in music it is indispensable to the harmony and the effect of the whole...Once the assumption is made that life must be made to resemble a work of art...that human beings can be looked on as so much 'human material', a plastic medium to be wrought at will by the inspired creator, the notion of individuals as each constituting an independent source of ideals and goals - an end in himself - is overthrown. (Berlin 1990, 193-194)

Finally, let me touch upon the communicative semantics of Romantic expressionism; and here again we will encounter another, and fundamental, instability. Tuman remarks that the "pun, the metaphor, and the aphorism are all minimal units of
[problematic] literacy because their goal is less to facilitate mutual agreement between parties than to attain the status of a text by giving meaning an identity free from the control of the cooperative principle" (22). Traditional interpretations of Romantic poetics have focused on the elevation of symbol and metaphor to a status of primacy; and Tuman, quoting Ricoeur, sees this employ of metaphor in problematic literacy as crucial, for it becomes that mode's principal means of effecting the extension of (a) language's power to redescribe and recreate the world. But in order to do that it must first explode the status quo: "The strategy of discourse implied in metaphorical language is neither to improve communication nor to ensure univocity in argumentation, but to shatter and to increase our sense of reality by shattering and increasing our language (Ricoeur, in Tuman, 18; emphasis added). In Ricoeur's interpretation, the metaphor 'works' by means of a violent and creative estrangement (or more domestically, by weaving, unweaving): it asks us to step on a rug and then pulls it out from underneath our feet. By proffering a literal meaning that we quickly realize is incongruous (i.e., its sense is unsupported by the context of the utterance), the metaphor "force[s] us to take seriously what we first recognize as inappropriate" (Tuman, 18). Metaphors wreck their symbolic havoc by pulverizing pre-existing modes of categorization and erecting upon that rubble a new, poetico-logical order of classification which, although semantically impertinent by previous standards, is felt to be creatively apposite to the new configuration of meaning - so apposite in fact that its impertinence serves to naturalize a concept that did not exist prior to the metaphor. If the assimilation and normalization of this estrangement offers the reader an image of power and potentiality beyond the confines of the synecdochic, metaphorical writing for the writer, as Schlegel intuited, verges on the enactment of that power.

Writing is a fundamental act of social betrayal; Steiner insightfully locates the source of literacy - what he calls 'vital acts of speech' - in private experience that, from the point of view of the group, represents lying, falsehood, and saying 'the thing which is not' - saying, in other words, what is not ordinarily called for by a given context. Like the image of the metaphor, the text thus violates what is normally called for in any given situation; indeed, the text [of problematic literacy] is a metaphorical image raised to the level of discourse - it is the literal lie that expresses a greater, figurative truth, even when the text purports to be factual, historical, or scientific. (Tuman, 32)

The Sadeian fiction - ex nihilo ad nihilo ad infinitum

It is in the troubling figure of the Sadeian libertine that forms of all these seething tendencies come to a head. To the complex of Romantic superiority championing radical
self-realization, the breakdown of commonality in the wake of inalienable personal truths, and the rupture and reformation proposed by the semantics of the metaphor. de Sade goes one further by adding to the mix the apotheosis of a cephalic reason. Sade's fictions take problematic literacy's elevation of the efficient cause to the *ne plus ultra* of "inhuman verity" (Sichère, 199).24 Where the formal cause of Aristotelian aesthetics proposed the mimesis of human qualities and actions, and the final cause of the neo-classical proposed mechanisms for the rhetorical persuasion of an audience, the efficient cause of Romantic expressionism presents a god-like imagination - not Poesy but the Poet - aiming not to convince but at the True.25 In Sade's monotonous, shadowless litany - Foucault calls it a "movement that retraces the course of contemporary lyricism, drying up its sources" (1973, 282) - Sade's language, however, forswears metaphor: "the imperative and descriptive function of language transcends itself towards a pure demonstrative instituting function" (Deleuze 1989, 23). Ultimately, it does not aspire to persuade, teach or exhort to action, but rather, in its absolute self-enclosure, it seeks
to demonstrate that reasoning itself is a form of violence, and that he [Sade] is on the side of violence, however calm and logical he may be. He is not even attempting to prove anything to anyone, but to perform a demonstration related essentially to the solitude and omnipotence of its author. The point of the exercise is to show that the demonstration is identical to violence. It follows that the reasoning does not have to be shared by the person to whom it is addressed any more than pleasure is meant to be shared by the object from which it is derived. The acts of violence inflicted on the victims are a mere reflection of a higher form of violence to which the demonstration testifies. (17-18)

Indeed, we may say that the Sadeian demonstration is intended to present the ascension of the libertine from a personal violence reflective of his or her particular appetites, to a higher plane where a purely impersonal violence, identified with the force of Primary Nature and the "Idea of pure reason," is attained by means of the negation of one's own libidinous ego, what Sade called *apathie* (Deleuze 1989, 20). In negating the ego the libertine seeks to fuse his or her being with the unlimited sovereignty and "exorbitance specific to reason," and, in a manner that is one part Plato, one part Kantian sublime, one part Clauswitzian will and one part mathematical exposition, "bridge the gulf between the two elements, the element at his actual disposal and element in his mind, the derivative and the original, the personal and the impersonal" (27-28).26

In a way the Sadeian fiction inverts and mimics the 'wrathful God' of Christianity, that which is because it is: as Lacan points out, Sade's "idea of hell, a hundred times refuted...and dammed as the means of subjection used by religious tyranny, curiously
returns to motivate...his heros” (64). To Christianity's transcendence of the good and the innocent, Sade proposes the transcendence of evil; where the Christian God is the initiator of time and history, the Sadeian universe proposes a perpetual insurrection of vice that comes from nowhere and leads nowhere, but is nonetheless a principle of constant movement: ex nihilo ad nihilo ad infinitum; where Christian reason proposes a metahistorical narrative from alpha to omega in which at the end of time the just are promised redemption and beatitude, Sadeian 'reason' proposes an encyclopedic catalogue of masked revelers whose masks obscure their facelessness, and whose isolated, frozen acts of license instantiate the 'zed' of Sadeian-Christian atheism - that liberty equals atrocity. As Sichère points out, in a perverse way Sade is a neo-Christian moralist, perhaps the first in modern Europe to "take evil seriously," who, in a neo-gnostic effort to liberate humanity from materiality, demonstrates the ineradicability of the evil that Enlightened reason had in its fudgings and silent obfuscations implied was archaic, contingent (196). Thus where the thought of Christian-Enlightenment had proposed a vision, by and large assumable by all, of an interiority (and psychology) of pure openness and innocence that would unproblematically mirror in the manner of microcosm-macrocosm the ubiquity of benevolent reason, Sade's fictions are a slap in the face. Radical evil, they posit, is that outside constituted by reason, and it is to be found everywhere, both in Nature and in the human breast, that reason is.

Following in the footsteps of Lacan, Sichère (like Zizek) argues that Sade is the all-too-perfect complement to Kant laying bare the blind spot of Kant's Christian beliefs: in particular his belief that, however radically a priori, evil exists for a purpose and is therefore not only both ultimately limited and rationally enunciable, but a necessary component in humanity's unswerving advancement "toward a more comprehensive submission to the Law, toward a State of universal law and a constitution of all peoples" (Edelman, 60). The point of leverage used against Kant is his notion of the sublime object that infinitely, exorbitantly exceeds representation.

It is precisely this infinite that the Sadeian hero claims, articulating it in the register of the 'Thing' as a point of horrifying jouissance: that which Sade nominates the 'monster,' is a subjectivity capable of gathering into itself the infinite, an infinite which is not thought in relation to the transcendence of the Christian God (absolute resource of an Other who knows, whom one addresses, and who pardons), but an atheistic infinity which exceeds all law, all value, all conscience, principle of not exactly a will to do evil but rather a paradoxical will of the subject to abolish itself in order to be nothing more than the acephalic receptacle of violent forces which traverse it. (Sichère, 213-214)
This can be seen, for example, in the conclusion of Sade's *Histoire de Juliette* (1791), where Justine, already brought to death's gate by the machinations of the society of the libertines, is expelled from the Château of Noirceuil and takes her first hesitant steps of freedom - only to be sexually violated and struck dead by a single bolt of lightning (Foucault 1973, 284). Contemplating further desecrations of her bloody remains, Noirceuil exclaims: "Praise be to God! You see how decent He is: He has spared...her sublime derrière...Does that not tempt you, Chambert?"; and it does. What is so monstrous about the verity Sade seeks to present is that it is formulated, as Deleuze points out, in a language that is "paradoxical because it is essentially that of a victim" (17). Given that a certain secularized Christian tradition had ordained that only the victim can speak with authority, and thus by consequence that "the torturer of necessity uses the hypocritical language of established order and power," in appropriating the language of victimhood, Sade's libertines perjure an usurped idiom in order to proclaim a depersonalizing and transcendental desire that rationality can only construe as evil (17).

But from Sade's own point of view, as Blanchot (comparing it with Saint-Just's) construes it, Sade's apologue of freedom is morally and maniacally without limits:

> whatever there is humanity there you encounter a victim of law...Instituted in order to restrain the passions of my neighbour, from which, perhaps, it preserves me, the law affords me not the slightest guarantee against its own most cruel and most corrupt prescriptions. It represents nothing other than the incarnation of icy force, the very antithesis of freedom. (1965, 34-35)

**Radical evil**

*La coeur humaine marche de la nature à la violence. de la violence à la morale.*

Saint-Just

If reasoning is a form of violence, then Sade sees himself as the prophet of the order it seeks to destroy and the altar it strives to erect:

> The reign of philosophy comes, in the end, to annihilate the reign of imposture; finally humanity becomes enlightened, and it destroys with one hand the frivolous baubles of an absurd religion, while it raises with the other an altar to the most cherished Divinity of its heart. Reason replaces Mary in our temples. (in Blanchot 1965, 46-47)

But in carrying violent reasoning to the point of apotheosis, Sadeian fiction completes an arc whereby evil upstages the Kantian good as an ethical stance. Zizek demonstrates this by laying out Kant's reflections on radical evil, showing how "by rejecting...[his own] hypothesis of 'diabolical Evil,' Kant retreats from the ultimate paradox of radical Evil,"
the paradox that "Evil...not only opposes the other [the Good], endeavoring to annihilate it, but also undermines it from within, by way of assuming the very form of its opposite" (1993, 95; 101). Kant's argument about evil stems from his unswerving allegiance to a single idea of moral freedom and his adversarial employ of the principle of either-or: "Man is (by nature) either morally good or morally evil" (Kant 1793, 17). For Kant, this means not that humanity is in essence this or that (only animals are such and such by essence), nor that he embraces moral perfectibility (although sympathetic to this view he sees no evidence for it) or a continuous decline from a Golden age (an attitude which to his thinking shirks responsibility for evil acts), but rather that humanity, as endowed with reason by nature, always freely elects to act well or badly. Kant's vision is not one of an ascendency to perfect happiness, but rather one of perfect obedience to the moral law, the accomplishment of which, in his somewhat penal metaphor, demands "continuous labor" (43). In essence Kant's moral vision is a negative one: there is nothing positive to be said about the substance of the good (just as there is no essential quidity to the 'I' - it is a vacuum of sorts): the morally good person is she or he who by continuous labour resists inner inclinations towards evil conduct, which is to say that assiduous resistance constitutes the freedom of moral autonomy. (Perpetual travail and perfect obedience to the moral law places Kant's morality in a 'dangerous' formal congruence with Sade's, as we shall see; the citation from Sade above is an excerpt from his Philosophy in the Boudoir (1795) entitled (after Sade's exhortation in it) Francais encore une effort.)

For over a millennium Christian theories of evil were in essence based on a pre-lapsarian view of the primordiality of the good, and of the defective nature of evil (causa defectiens). According to this tradition, which was still current in the eighteenth century (Leibniz likened evil to the distortions of an anamorphic illusion which we can 'read' if we adopt the proper perspective of reason sub specie aeternitatis), "[t]here is no more a specific, independent principle of evil than there is a specific principle of darkness, for both spring from an absence of the positive, which reveals itself and its contrary" (Lowith, 214). Seeking to oppose the Augustinian thesis that evil is insubstantial,30 a defect of the will which in its state of purity cannot but chose the good, Kant in a somewhat novel manner theorizes that there is within us, in addition to a propensity for the good, an a priori kernel of resistance to the moral imperative: "what opposes Good must be some positive counterforce, not just our ignorance, our lack of insight into the true nature of Good" (Zizek 1993, 99). In this Kant has grounded his vision in the primordiality of the post-lapsarian state where, once there is knowledge (and freedom), there is evil. According to Kant these two propensities, which in their elevation into maxims of good or evil are expressions of the constitutive freedom of humanity, are
inextirpable; as a freely willed act our step into good or evil behaviour is non-contingent, and ultimately mysterious. However, and somewhat paradoxically, although these evil maxims may be ethically formulated, they always remain contingent upon and subservient to the empirical conditions and "actual desires of the subject to whom they are addressed," and can never in Kant's terms be universal (Scruton, 151). Knowledge of the superiority of maxims of the good over maxims of evil stems from the fact that I always feel responsible for and debased by my evil deeds; and for Kant this resistance means that good actions are never automatic, but always the product of my deliberation as to the right of moral universals over pathological, particular inclinations.

However, the inextirpable nature of good and evil should not, warns Kant, lead us to believe that humanity is in essence both good and evil. As he puts it, such miscegenation is only permissible on the grounds of appearance; and Kant's geometrico-legal mind will permit no contradictions, no laxity, nothing that is not foursquare to the ground of principle.

Experience seems to substantiate the middle ground between these two extremes. It is, however, of great consequence to ethics in general to avoid admitting, so long as it is possible, of anything morally intermediate whether in actions (adiaphora) or in human characters; for with such ambiguity all maxims are in danger of forfeiting their precision and stability... (1793, 18)

Neither can a man be morally good in some ways and at the same time morally evil in others. His being good in one way means that he has incorporated the moral law into his maxim; were he, therefore [sic], at the same time evil in another way, while his maxim would be universal as based on the moral law of obedience to duty, which is essentially single and universal, it would at the same time be only a particular; but this is a contradiction. (1793, 20; emphasis added)

The lynchpin, and the difficulty, of Kant's "rigoristic diagnosis" (his words) is the universal singularity of the moral law, that one is always beholden to the moral law even in the corruption and perversion of having freely elected an evil maxim (1793, 18).

Given that one is always conscious of the moral law, evil for Kant can only be an alliance with the pathological particular. Kant thus proposes that evil takes expression in three forms of self-deception. First, the evasion of (known) responsibility, what Kant calls frailty: 'evil is a weakness in my nature,' I say, but in that saying I have already presupposed standing outside of myself in a place where that 'nature' is no longer binding. Second, pathology construed as duty, what Kant calls impurity: this is a form of self-deceit graver than the first, for, believing myself to be motivated by ethical considerations, I effect evil which I do not recognize as such because I do not recognize
my own pathology. Zizek assimilates this form of deception to right-wing authoritarianisms and gives the example here of a dictatorial teacher who, in tormenting his charges out of a belief that they benefit from discipline, is in fact nursing his or her own sadistic impulses. Third, the externality of laws not concerning me, what Kant calls perversity: 'what society calls evil is merely a set of arbitrary rules designed to thwart my own satisfaction, whereas I have committed no crimes, and merely wish to indulge myself and avoid censure.' In this form of evil, considered by Kant to be the worst, "the very notions of 'right' and 'wrong' lose their meaning" (Zizek 1993, 100).

Zizek, however, points to a fourth form, 'diabolical evil' (raised but then excluded by Kant), where evil assumes the form of an ethical principle. Given Kant's typology of a bifurcated human nature the possibility of a principled evil seems eminently logical; but Kant will have none of it:

Man (even the most wicked) does not, under any maxim whatsoever, repudiate the moral law in the manner of a rebel (renouncing obedience to it). The law, rather, forces itself upon him irresistibly by virtue of his moral predisposition...Now if a propensity to this [the elevation of evil maxims over those of the good] does lie in human nature, there is in man a natural propensity to evil; and since this very propensity must in the end be sought in a will which is free, and can therefore be imputed, it is morally evil. This evil is radical, because it corrupts the ground of all maxims; it is, moreover, as a natural propensity inextirpable by human powers. since extirpation could occur only through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt; yet at the same time it must be possible to overcome it, since it is found in man, a being whose actions are free. We are not, then, to call the depravity of human nature wickedness taking the word in its strict sense as a disposition (the subjective principle of the maxims) to adopt evil as evil into our maxim as our incentives (for that is diabolical); we should rather term it the perversity of the heart. (1793, 31-32)

Although Kant is here categorical in his denial of any principled meaning whatsoever to diabolical evil, later, in a section dealing with the difficulties of moral obedience, he raises its possible existence in a somewhat backhanded manoeuvre. Kant there bruits the possibility of one whose repeated efforts to bring his actions into line with the maxims of the good are an utter failure: "Such an individual can entertain no reasonable hope that he would conduct himself better were he to go on living here on earth, or even were a future life awaiting him, since, on the strength of his past record, he would have to regard the corruption as rooted in his very disposition" (1793, 62).
As Zizek points out, the possibility that Kant raises again but stubbornly refuses to sanction is precisely the notion of radical evil as an ethical principle (diabolical evil). The sticking point, although he never seems to address it directly, is Kant's obdurate insistence on synderesis, that knowledge of the basic principles of morality (such as Kant construes them) is innate. Had Kant truly been as rigorous as he claimed to be, argues Zizek, he would have had to allow for the possibility of a diabolical evil entailing nonpathological acts of wickedness, nonpathological in that against my own instincts for egological satisfaction I undertake acts which I have reasoned further (and universally so) my moral goals. On this point of principle, diabolical evil is entirely different from the three other forms in that it is not based on a notion of self-deception, and indeed is ethical in form in that it has 'reasoned' its way to overcoming its 'natural' instincts. Zizek assimilates this form to left-wing totalitarianisms, because moral agents espousing its reasoning really act for the sake of what they perceive as virtue and they are prepared to stake everything, including their lives, on this virtue. The irony, of course, is that the exemplary case is the Jacobinical 'dictature of virtue'; although Kant opposed the Jacobins in politics, he laid the foundations for them in his moral philosophy. (1993, 100-101)

What Zizek means by the Kantian foundations for Jacobinism is Kant's insistence that the individual's struggle to realize the purity of total obedience to the moral law is, because essentially bearing on one's "cast of mind" and not one's "sensuous nature," necessarily of a revolutionary character:

If a man is to become not merely legally, but morally, a good man (pleasing to God), that is, a man endowed with virtue in its intelligible character (virtus noumenon) and one who, knowing something to be his duty, requires no incentive other than this representation of duty itself, this cannot be brought about through gradual reformation so long as the basis of the maxims remains impure, but must be effected through a revolution in the man's disposition (a going over to the maxim of holiness of the maxim). He can only become a new man only by a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation (John III, 5; compare also Genesis I, 2) and a change of heart. (1793, 42-43)

The difficulty here is that in order to give evil a positive power in the face of the good, Kant imagines how, in a timeless transcendental act, I must have chosen freely my eternal character by giving preference to Evil over Good...the fixation on some Thing which derails our customary life-circuit. By way of Evil, man wrests himself from
animal instinctual rhythm, i.e., Evil introduces the radical reversal of the 'natural' relationship. (Zizek 1993, 95-96)

And if evil is contra nature (i.e., the inclination to follow one's 'natural' pathological instincts), argues Zizek, then diabolical evil precedes the good because "the possible space for Good is opened up by the original choice of [an ethically motivated] radical Evil" (1993, 96). The reason why Kant rejects diabolical evil, Zizek alleges, is that in conceiving good and evil as Newtonian forces (opposite but equal), the diabolical form of evil muddies the contest by opening up the relativist can of worms where a kind of evil judgement is formally indistinguishable from good judgement (and, vice versa):33

In his Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, Kant points out how, apropos of some really evil person, we can see that Evil pertains to his very eternal character: this person did not yield to evil under the influence of bad circumstances; Evil lies in his very 'nature.' At the same time, of course, he is -like every human being - radically responsible for his character. The necessary implication of it is that, in an 'eternal,' timeless, transcendental act, he must have chosen Evil as the basic feature of his being. The transcendental, a priori character of his act means that it could not have been motivated by pathological circumstances; the original choice of Evil had to be a purely ethical act, the act of elevating Evil into an ethical principle. (1993, 101)

With this insight we can see how the Sadeian variant of Kant's universal moral law slides into Jacobinism, where in a radical transformation of heart, revolutionary government overcomes its pangs of remorse (the weaknesses of an inclination for particulars), and institutes the reign of Terror-Virtue: as Robespierre expressed it, "La vertu, sans laquelle la Terreur est fausse, la Terreur sans laquelle la vertu est impuissante" (in Baczko, 81).34

**Romantic rebellion**

> When the heart listens to itself and free of every particular and real object, becomes its own ideal object. then religion is born

Novalis

Here we abut what has come to be known as 'Romantic rebellion,' but which for the reasons outlined above ought better to be called Romantic sincerity, since this latter term leaves the door open to the nature and mixture of maxims one takes to one's heart. (I will nonetheless continue to use the expression Romantic rebellion as it is the term of common currency). Romantic rebellion concerns the tendency, grouping a wide variety of artists, towards the revelation of the power of inhumanity, a revolt against the tyranny of reason, the testimony of an evil deemed archaic, and the presentation of an infinite and irrational desire either unformulated (and unformulable) in Kantian law or considered the
illusion of an insufficiently infinite absolute in Hegelian spirit. In Lacanian terms we could group these tendencies under the heading of the Real to which a Biblically inspired dramaturgy had found the means to give representation, but which had escaped the comprehension of the rationalist constitutions of Enlightenment thought.

At bottom, the Sadeian and Romantic hero drives home the same critique: the Revolutionary Terror is not a faulty interpretation of liberty but...the resurgence of a fundamental barbarism at the heart of the formulation of reason as revolutionary. The Romantic rebellion announces a verity that Hegelian philosophy understands no better than the Kantian: that which Greek tragedy had enacted, which Christian dramaturgy in its turn had powerfully staged, but which neither Enlightened thought, nor revolutionary praxis, nor the modern reason which succeeded it had been able to assume responsibility for or symbolize - the point of subjective extremity that is radical evil. (Sichère, 217)

If I could draw here from the Terror one lesson (later I will draw others) it would be that the Terror illustrates the end of ecclesiology and the errant remainder of the sacred. The end result of a century's attack on institutional religion meant, from an anthropological perspective, that the sacred had been more than ever separated from the confusions of the impure, but also that European "culture had fallen into what Blake called 'single vision and Newton's sleep,'" and that thus unhoused from its traditional locus of dwelling the sacred was set wandering (Young, 401). In this sense Kantian rationalism 'fails,' for although it attempts to posit a space for the sacred between the pinions of the universal law that regulates and the pathological particularity that distorts, it insists that the sacred is epistemologically and representationally uncompassable. Kant is quite explicit in this regard: we cannot know the Thing-in-itself; knowledge of God cannot be objective but only a form of personal conviction. Yet this very Kantian epistemic 'impotence' has had the effect of implying that that which is called unknowable is in some sense a substance, and, as Zizek has argued, the insinuation of substantiality has transformed "the impossible real...into an object of symbolic prohibition," and thus an ever more sublime object of desire (1993, 116). (It is here that radical nationalisms will find their point of departure.) Hegelianism, in its turn, 'fails' in its inability to conceive of the sacred in any other terms than knowledge. In Hegel's conception Kantian philosophy is still 'metaphysical' in its gesturing towards a positivity of the thing-in-itself beyond knowledge; to have made this intuition, Hegel claims, one has already reached into that beyond (1993, 246: footnote 47). For Hegel, what passes as the radical exteriority of evil is merely a perspectival illusion of the insufficiently infinite/absolute; once we become conscious of this illusion as illusion, knowledge of evil is incorporated into the self-
consciousness of the spirit-system, and evil is defanged and transformed into that which
gives force to the moral law within (Sichère, 216). And yet this conviction that nothing
escapes internalization as knowledge remains open to the charge that it itself is a
necessary illusion that frames the veracity of the system’s truth. The sacred is caught here
in a gridlock of absolutes. On the one hand a negativity instrumentally incorporated into
a notion of the State as absolute rationality; on the other a potential positivity beyond all
justified knowledge, which is to say absolutely irrational: in both cases, albeit in different
ways, the sacred has been rendered a stranger at every door. The fallout of this deadlock
would be that the sacred’s companion of the millennia would be commandeered and
reconstituted as a religion in its own right:

In the struggle against the frozen forms of faith, the Enlighteners have left one
religion intact, the most preposterous of all: the religion of power. There were two
ways of confronting it. One way, in the long run the more dangerous of the two,
chose not to speak about it, to silently keep practicing it in a traditional manner,
strengthened by the inexhaustible and, alas, immortal models in history. The other
way, far more aggressive, first glorified itself before commencing; it publicly
declared itself to be a religion, in the place of the dying religion of love, which it
mocked with strength and wit. It announced: God is power, and whoever has it is
his prophet. (Canetti 1978, 26)

**Romantic critique and the intervention of art**

It is difficult at times to repress the thought that history is about as instructive as an abattoir
Seamus Heaney

There is, however, one further principal fallout from the absolute grid-lock of the
sacred, and it constitutes the foundation of all enterprises such as we are engaged in here.
From the historical perspective (pace Hegel’s claim in the Aesthetics that romanticism
marked the end of art and the beginning of true philosophy), in the wake of that failure
within philosophy to account for that kernel within subjectivity resistant to reason,
Romantic rebellion opens society onto the era of the expanding province of art (Sichère.
205). Henceforward art, appropriating the iconology of radical evil, will propose visions
of a fictional integration of chaos, evil, and that desire that a strain of modern reason
would deny as contra propriety, into an ecumenically catholic vision of the world. From
this moment forward art becomes the arena in which witnesses to the irruption of the Real
will be able to testify and intervene in the trial of this world - what Seamus Heaney calls
art’s ability to imagine “some equivalent of the labyrinth [of predicament and actuality]”:

Such an operation does not intervene in the actual but by offering consciousness a
chance to recognize its predicaments, foreknow its capacities and rehearse its
comebacks in all kinds of venturesome ways; it does constitute a beneficent event, for poet and audience alike. It offers a response to reality which has a liberating and verifying effect. (1995b, 2).

Heaney, who has written so masterfully on the multiple violences that plague our world, and pondered long and deeply on the complex of convictions, cultures and complicities that envelop them, has coined the expression 'the redress of poetry' to encapsulate this recognition and rehearsal. As he inflects it, the redress of poetry is both social and aesthetic: it seeks to repair past wrongs and set future icons upright. But, or should I say and, it goes further than being only a reparation or celebration through its employ of imaginative surprise. This concerns "the way it [the artistic representation] enters our field of vision and animates our physical and intelligent being in much the same way as those bird-shapes stencilled on the transparent surfaces of glass walls or windows must suddenly enter the vision and change the direction of the real birds' flight. An image of the living creatures has induced a totally salubrious swerve in the creatures themselves" (1995b, 15). If the romantic rebel might deign to correct, or rather to draw out an implication, of the Nobelist's metaphor, it would be to point out that those stencilled images are often of the order of Raptores, birds of prey.

**Metaphors of light**

With the advent of the Romantic metaphorical discourse of violent transgression and notions of a specific independent principle of evil, the animating metaphor of the Enlightenment - light, *lux, lumen* - has so shifted its connotative range that it begins to entail something quite different from, and indeed quite contrary to, its former meanings in the age of Rationalism - and yet without entirely leaving those associations behind. The resulting mixture of reference points for the concept made it as confusing a notion as the employ of the word 'Nature.' Metaphors of light were to be found as just as commonly in the Royal decrees of the Spanish state of the 1780s as in the declarations of emancipation of the Tupac Amaris in Peru. Jean Starobinski has charted in detail these shifting sands of semantic value, arguing that eighteenth century metaphors of light were organized around a tripartite conception of light-as-reason triumphing over darkness-as-ignorance (the inevitability of 'progress'), and light as image both of social rebirth out of death and decay (reform of the ancien regime) and of the world brought back to its origins in innocence and purity (the legitimacy of reason as founding principle of society). We might characterize all three of these semantic fields under the age-old rubric of a solar cycle in which a new dawn promises a new day. By the Revolutionary period, however,
these associations had been subject to the torsions wrought by the twilight of death as servitude and the waning of religion as mediation, such that the new connotations spoke of light confronting darkness, a passion for absolute beginnings (and terminations), and the union of principle and will (Starobinski 1982, 43; 69). Here the governing image would be one of a singular, nocturnal explosion (and we would do well to recall that this was the era in which modern chemistry was born; Lavoisier’s *Theory of Combustion* and *Fundamental Treatise of Chemistry* both date from the 1780’s; and Lavoisier dies under the guillotine in 1794) - a singular explosion that clears away the rubble of the past in order that new structures be erected upon their ruins. This shift entails a transvaluation of the metaphor of light from one of a guiding motif subsuming optimism, meliorism, and progressivism to what Starobinski call the ‘Solar Myth’ of the Revolution:

> The French themselves believed that in overthrowing abuse and privilege, in destroying the great citadel of despotism that had overshadowed Paris [the Bastille], and in coming together in the radiance of universal benevolence, they were bestowing on the world a new sun and source of light. As Tocqueville wrote, ‘No one doubted that the fate of mankind was involved in what was about to be done.’ This feeling found echoes abroad: ‘It seems to me,’ wrote Fichte in 1793, ‘that the French Revolution affects the whole human race’...[and in fact he gives] a 1793 political pamphlet...the dateline: ‘Heliopolis, in the last year of darkness.’ (1982, 44-45)

It may help to clarify the welter of possibilities evoked by the metaphor of light in the eighteenth century *fin de siècle* by (somewhat arbitrarily) aligning them under the two rubrics of mediation and possession. For the philosophes light stood in for the mediation of reason: it was thought to clarify, vivify, fertilize, give solace and make visible the good and the true. It stood in direct opposition to the darkness that obscured, etiolated, poisoned, or seduced the mind into all manner of vices, errors, and abuses. The Christian associations of this diurnal polarity should not be downplayed, and it bears repeating that as natural religion overtook revealed religion towards the middle of the century it also took over essentially the same typology of light. Thus, the Platonic and Johannine notion that divine light possessed and animated the mind in the revelation of truth lurks just beneath the surface of the essentially renaissance conception that animation of the mind (as seat of the faculty of reason) by ‘light’ enabled reason-as-rational-reflection to assume the principal and mediating role in the dialogue of the inner and outer human, that is, in praxis. (It is for this reason that the emotions as a legitimate area of study were for so long a fallow field: constitutionally the role of sovereign had been bestowed upon the
light of divine or secular reason with the emotional attributes relegated to the subordinate status of appetites to be regimented, reigned in, or horse-whipped.)

And yet although natural religion, in Enlightened circles at least, seemed to enjoy the upper hand over revealed religion, there is a curious hesitation, somewhat unacknowledged, between the two types of faith due to the fact that the two stances shared essentially the same metaphor. Following through on this schematization, if natural religion and secular scepticism tended toward the pole of light as the mediation of rational reflection, revealed religion shared with secular gnosticism an affinity for the inflections of light as possession and animation. Paradoxically, one should have to place Rousseau's recourse to the inner voice (and those streams of nationalism that develop on it) on that side of the divide, for, as you will recall, Rousseau's sense of that voice is one of the possession of a personal and inalienable resource. The paradox lies in the fact that while they differ on the question of universalism, that is, on just how openly or widely available the light of truth is, both the secular Gnostics, like Voltaire, and the secular agnostics speak in terms of possession of an unmediated truth (Rousseau's Christ after all appears without a crucifixion).

And further confusions appear when we step down from the level of intellectual discourse to which I have throughout this account largely confined myself. This would be to consider the figure of the aristocratic libertine, and the ranks of those tradesmen and gens sans aveu out which the Jacobin party was to recruit its supporters. Starobinski perspicaciously alerts us to the fact of a "strange convergence" in their seemingly antithetical employments of the metaphors of light. On the surface of things they stand in distinct opposition. The libertine's life is seen as one of intermittent flashes of light punctuated by extended dark intervals, ending in death, while the Jacobin's imagination is animated by the desire for

a swift and decisive act of destruction which it hopes will give rise to a continuous emission of light. The signs are reversed. Wealth, which the libertine needs to sustain his pleasures, is in correlation to the poverty of the people. The dark power of want, famine, and destitution is the shadow cast by the exclusive delights of the privileged. Because he is a prey to the dark drive of want, a poor man paradoxically identifies the brilliant life of the aristocrat with the blackness of a storm cloud. Whence a strange convergence: The man of pleasure rushing to his doom collides with a famished people hurling itself on the hated citadels. At the meeting point of these two forces beats the black heart of the Revolution and there ferments its fertile chaos. Here is the symbolic home of regicide; the bright star of the new age is only its replica in reverse. (1982, 48)
Amidst all these confusions whirling centrifugally-centripetally around and about the late eighteenth century’s metaphors of light - whether of mediation or possession, the natural or the revealed, universalism or self-realization - it needs be recalled that for an unknown but significant number of individuals these conceptual thunderstorms, while highly public affairs, were experienced first and foremost (and all at the same time) in the intimacy of one’s own personal foyer. Does not Faust’s research into and interrogation of the forces that be take place in his private study? This is to say that the larger frenzy of competing and combating notions and revolutionary motions - “The French Revolution brought venerated social traditions into crisis: what was once a social hierarchy now looked more like a kaleidoscope” (Tomlinson, 26) - was also an inner and exhausting whirlwind of emotions, as perhaps can be gleaned from Benjamin Constant’s diary entry of June 4, 1790 (and this before the full brunt of the storm had broken): “I feel more than ever the emptiness of everything, how much everything promises while nothing is given…we are like watches without a dial” (in Starobinski 1982, 234-235).

This same feeling had been growing inside Goya for over a decade; as Licht has noted “[w]henever Goya and tradition encountered each other antagonistically, it was always tradition that was routed” (1979, 28). Such clashes must have taken their toll on the artist. To take stock of this development would be to consider a chain of incidents: the 1777 invoice for tapestry cartoons on which Goya wrote “the important words ‘own invention’”; the return by the Royal Tapestry Works in 1778 of his cartoon Blind Guitarist for ‘corrections’, prompting Goya to create from the original an etching before resubmitting the modified work; the 1780-1781 falling out with the Zaragoza Board of Works and Francisco Bayeu (his father-in-law and mentor) over interference in his designs: the 1788 letter to Zapater expressing his desire to “be done with those commissioned works, and in the time remaining [!] to occupy myself with things of my own fancy”; the 1790 refusal to work on any more tapestry cartoons; the late 1792 unauthorized flight from Madrid (as pintor de camara he was by definition continuously ‘on call’) during which he was overcome by the attack that would leave him deaf. One can easily imagine Goya also feeling existentially, rhythmically out of sorts, buffeted, ragged, uncertain of the shape of things past and to come, overwhelmed with more questions than answers. Incorporating in his work aspects of the philosophe, the libertine and the tradesman, in his heart also beat with the fertile chaos that was the product of their confusion and collusion. Just sixty days prior to the attack which cost him his hearing, Goya proclaims in a discourse to the Academy (14 October, 1792) that “there are no rules in Painting” (1793 marks the suppression of the Academies in France and the first free salon); and in the period immediately following his convalescence he produces a
series of cabinet paintings of violent and erotic scenes reminiscent of the works of Sade (Goya 1993, 17-18). In a 1794 letter to the Academician, friend, and ilustrado Bernardo de Iriarte, Goya writes of these works -

In order to occupy my imagination tormented with my own troubles, and in order to compensate in part for the great extravagances that have happened to me, I dedicated myself to painting a series of cabinet pictures in which I have been able to make observations for which there is normally no place in commissioned work which gives no scope to fantasy [capricho] and invention. (1993, 31)

It was in these years also that (in addition to the political fireworks taking place in France and the climate of reaction they engendered in Spain) Goya "belonged to a group centred on the playwright Moratín who called themselves Acaloflos, lovers of ugliness, who steeped themselves in all the irrationalities, monstrosities and absurdities of the day, primarily to mock and puncture, but also to take cognizance of them, to incorporate them in their rationalism" (Williams, 53). Moratín had written a mocking commentary on the Relación of the Lograno auto de fe of 1610, that served Goya as a picaresque primer to inquisitional rituals and the grotesqueries of (a supposed) witch-craft. What a decade was this! In addition to Goya's own personal crises and the troubles in France, we should also note that the Manichean formality of the 'Two Spains,' in these years calcifying into an obdurate political reality, was paralleled by an influential theoretical discourse coming from abroad (Kantian in inspiration), in which the dissonance between fact and value was rigorously demonstrated to be null and void. As Starobinski has written:

the Critique of Judgement [1790] tries to make us admit that the 'natural and historical reality is, and is meaningful, because everything is a meaningful Whole'; in short, that meaning and fact, far from being opposed to one another, are the same. Goya seems to have been haunted by the opposite belief. But he did not paint in order to impart that conviction, but rather to try and exorcise and cure himself of it. (1982, 278)

Interpolating on Fuentes' suggestive metaphor that the paradox of Goya's work is that 'his light is dark,' would be to ask what does this dark light (seek to) do? If light rationally conceived is an image of mediation, then do Goya's shadows attempt to facilitate the articulation of the stars above and the moral world within (think here of the mezzotint Colossus)? Or, if light is gnostically conceived as image of possession, then do these shadows bespeak a demonism inherent in the human condition (Saturn devouring his Son)? Both of these suggestions contain their kernel of truth, but, I think, also miss the mark because they misrecognize a fundamental shift in thinking that I have been
labouring to explicate. This concerns the fact that once evil has been accorded its own positive principle (and potentially ethical form), that is once darkness is no longer merely the absence of light, then light and dark have been irremediably changed. Light and dark can no longer stand in allegorically as instantiations of clearly defined moral valencies. Where in the chiaroscuro of an artist like Caravaggio light is rendered as piercing through jet-black shadows, imaging the certainty of divine intervention or mediation even in the darkest darkness of despair; and where in Rembrandt light is rendered as an inner emanation of the (Protestant) Godliness of humanity - in both cases "it is always light that is victorious" (Licht 1979, 180). In Goya's The Third of May, however, light is made instrumental, imprisoned in the lantern that screams its beams out from under the feet of the firing squad. Light there is not the light of divine or secular reason: "Quite the contrary. it is the conscienceless implement that assists the executioners in accurately carrying out their gruesome duty"; "In The Third of May, light and light source...no longer symbolize illumination but are the impartial servants of the good and the wicked alike" (1979 119; 181). Delinked from its allegorical-transcendental context light becomes intransitive.

Zizek designates this change in categories "determination-by-absence" and explicates its ramifications with reference to Adorno's history of music:

> after the advent of dissonances, the meaning of the tritone changes, since its further use implies the negation of dissonances - its new meaning results from the way the very absence of dissonances is present in the use of the tritone. In its immediate presence, the tritone remains the same; its historical mediation is revealed by the fact that it changes precisely in so far as it remains the same. (1991a, 181)

Rosen, in his analysis of Romantic fragmentation in music, also dwells on a similar notion. He focuses on the work of Robert Schumann (1810-1856), whose *Humoresk* (for piano) is written in three parts, the right hand, the left hand, and between them the melody - *Inner Stimme* (Inner voice) - whose function is neither to be played nor heard, but, says Rosen, to be "the echo of an unperformed melody":

> These pages of Schumann may contain a secret, but they do not hide one: on the contrary, they insist openly on the presence of a secret, with their strange sonority that both dispenses with a fully developed melody and continually suggests one...The inaudible in Schumann's music is not conceived, as in Bach, as a theoretical structure which can only be imperfectly realized in sound, but as a structure of sound which implies what is absent. The actual heard sound is primary, a sound here of improvising an echo, an accompaniment to a melody
which exists only in its reflection...In Bach the notation implies something beyond the reach of every realization, but in Schumann the music is a realization which implies something beyond itself. (9-10)

The technical analogy here with Goya's painting is, I find, remarkable. Translating Rosen's description into our Goyaesque terms of reference one could say that Goya's use of light both dispenses with a fully developed narrative and continually suggests one; the unvisualizable (and inaudible) in Goya's art is not conceived as a theoretical structure that can only be imperfectly realized in paint, as it is perhaps in Tiepolo's infinitival, illusionistic, frescoed ceiling to the Throne Room of the Royal Palace in Madrid (cf. Licht 1979, 58-62), but as a structure of paint implying the absent; the actually seen is primary, an image of an improvised echo accompanying the narrative that only exists by reflection: Goya's art represents that which is not beyond the reach of every realization, but rather that which - constitutionally, formally, as it were - is beyond itself. It is, in Starobinski's terms, constantly trying to erase the bar of negation (the 'T' in the $\neq$) disqualifying the equation of fact and value, a bar whose existence and reality is constituted by the desire to draw that very equation. Moving with freedom through all the strata of late eighteenth century European society, Goya's was a well placed eye and, despite the tinnitus that would plague him in deafness, perhaps the privileged ear to catch and render into visual music something of the cacophony that rolled and pitched in the turbulence at the twilight of the Enlightenment.

'Strangely silent and noisy'

A word that is almost deprived of meaning is noisy
Blanchot

An eerie silence. Just where it comes from is not exactly clear. The scores of bats and owls, their thousand susurating feathers, their bulging eyes and gaping beaks, and the pitted, static-electric texture of the air ought to sound the escalation of a crescendo. Or - given the staggered imbrication of descending and ascending scale-like motifs, creating what musicians call a falling upwards - would it be a diminuendo? The black tipped ears of the lynx prone right stand erect like the tines of a tuning fork; a patient cat crouches ready to the beat; and, like sotto voce cymbals materializing out of - or dissolving into - the inky black of silence, a cloud of wings, whose skittish lofings finesse as they bear down the buoyancy of gravity, alights. One owl holds up a brush to the artist heavy with sleep - and what does it caw, beak ajar next his ear? The silence is noisy.

Something of a baffling concept, silence is stricto sensu not 'natural' to terrestrial existence; Bell Laboratories has spent millions designing chambers capable of
eliminating all ambient sound, which in the electro-mechanical age seems to proliferate geometrically with every passing year. In the Western literary tradition silence is often used to express some kind of emotional summit as when Shakespeare has Claudio in Much Ado About Nothing declare his love for Hero with "Silence is the perfectest herald of joy; I were but little happy, if I could say how much" (II, i, 274-275); for other cultures silence is a manifestation of anger. Throughout history people have been for moments aware of silence, underwater, for example, or in deep caves or forests - and especially in dreams. But these can only have been isolated instants of exception before the imperium of sound reestablished its rule. And, in fact, we ought to say that the rule of sound - even before the breath of language and music - is coeval with the onset of awareness, for hearing is the first of the senses to develop in the womb. Perhaps then we should think of silence as relational, as, for instance, when a power failure at a rock concert irresistibly forces upon us a cognizance of silence - though solely through the unexpected absence of sound. This relationality extends to the space in which sound is (or is not) propagated: the Bushmen of the Kalihari report the death of a comrade by saying "The sound which used to ring in the sky for him no longer rings."38 Given this determination-in-absence, silence becomes pregnant with a kind of meaning in obverse, like a secret whose power is a function of the number who know its content and the inverse ratio of the number it concerns:39 "A secret is something denser than the matter surrounding it, not continuous with it and kept in almost impenetrable darkness" (Canetti 1973, 333). According to one school of thought, silence (and perhaps more precisely incommunicability) is a non-sequitur because, as Primo Levi has stated, "[e]xcept for cases of pathological incapacity...silence, the absence of signals, is itself a signal, but an ambiguous one, and ambiguity generates anxiety and suspicion" (1989b, 89). If silence had a history one would want to know why its worldless current should bubble to the surface in the twilight of the Enlightenment. Perhaps it is the onset of the electrical age - "secrecy, product of electricity" (Barthes 1964, 11) - and air travel that thrusts the three pregnant sibilants of silence, secrecy, and suspicion one giant step forward (Montgolfier brothers 1785; Volta's battery 1798). Science is on the cusp of discovering the soundless universes of the biologically, chemically, and physically invisible; constitutional democracies are in the process of enshrining the secrecy of the ballot box and the 'right to remain silent' in law.

It is a precarious limb to walk out on, but one, I think, bursting with all manner of suggestive shoots to try and reconstruct what it might have been like for Goya to encounter the world as a deaf man. I have been led out onto this limb by a seemingly casual remark of Oliver Sacks' in his Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf, where he describes deaf signing as "strangely silent and noisy" (130). We know that
Goya lost his hearing quite suddenly in late 1792. 'Loss of hearing' is really not an accurate description as many of the even clinically deaf can 'hear' after a fashion, either through the intensity of the sound (e.g., gunshots, thunder, etc.) or through the force of vibrations; thus, Beethoven, for example, is reputed to have composed his middle works with his upper jaw pressed down on the lid of the piano; later he had a piano made without legs so that both he and it sat on the floor boards through which the sensations of music passed back to the creator. What is more, disturbances of hearing are often accompanied by tinnitus (ringing) and, as the ear is also the body's gyroscope, disorientation and dizziness, both of which plagued Goya. It is also known that Goya had within a couple of years learned some form of sign language. In this respect Goya was most fortunate to have lived in Spain, and when he did, for Spain had been since the Renaissance a leader in deaf education, and the Enlightenment is now thought to have been "a sort of golden period in deaf history - [because it] saw the rapid establishment of deaf schools...the emergence of the deaf from neglect and obscurity, their emancipation and enfranchisement, and their rapid appearance in positions of eminence and responsibility" (Sacks, 21).

Mention should be made here of the l'Abbé de l'Epée (d. 1789) who founded in Paris the first publicly funded school for the deaf in 1755, and under whose successor, l'Abbé de Sicard, it became the National Institute for Deaf Mutes in 1791. Combining a passion for good works and a familiarity of Enlightenment ideas about language and communication, de l'Epée was perhaps the first European to listen to the deaf, and in doing so to realize that the deaf are not 'dumb': "The universal language" he wrote in a path-breaking 1776 work, "that you scholars have sought for in vain and of which they have despaired, is here: it is right before your eyes, it is the mimicry of the impoverished deaf. Because you do not know it, you hold it in contempt, yet it alone will provide you with the key to all languages" (in Sacks, 17). Sicard, himself a linguist, took this idea further by proposing the revolutionary idea that communication is not based on speech, as it had been theorized by Aristotle and accepted as dogma ever since, but rather on symbols. We should also recall in this context the eighteenth century vogue for questions surrounding the essence of 'human nature': this was the age of Molyneux's problem, Diderot's Letters on the deaf and the blind, de l'Epée and Sicard's public demonstrations, and of course the wild boy of Aveyron who was brought to Paris in 1800. By 1789 twenty-one schools for the deaf had been established in Europe modeled on de l'Epée's system. The underside of this story, however, was that de l'Epée's classically inspired mind was unable to appreciate that the indigenous language of the deaf contained its own 'grammar,' and his spirit of charity bore the bitter fruit of a hybrid language system of
native signs and French grammar that dominated deaf education for some sixty years. It was not until Roch-Ambroise Bébian, Sicard's successor, that this notion of the 'grammatical lack' of sign language was overruled. Unfortunately, however, this recognition of and development towards an autonomous and organically founded sign-language was by 1890 stopped in its tracks, after which deaf education returned to its previous insistence on teaching speech. During the 1960s the tide began to shift back to native sign-language, and it is largely due to research in a wide variety of linguistic and auditory sciences as well as the contributions of writers and memoirists from the deaf community since that a new understanding of what might be called deaf consciousness has come about.

A world gone deaf

Selectively eavesdropping on this world, let me highlight a number of its features that are I think useful to an appreciation to the art of Goya. Just as it is common for the blind child, through what is called 'sense-ballooning,' to "tend to become 'hyperverbal,'" to employ elaborate verbal descriptions instead of visual images," and "to produce a sort of pseudo-visual 'false self,'" a pretense that the child was seeing when it was not," so too many deaf people experience a kind of hypervisuality (Sacks, 9 footnote). The English poet David Wright has written an profoundly insightful autobiography detailing how at age seven he was stricken by deafness, and how the fact of a silent world struck him. With respect to visualization he writes

I do not notice more but notice differently. What I do notice, and notice acutely because I have to, because for me it makes up almost the whole of the data necessary for the interpretation and diagnosis of events, is movement where objects are concerned; and in the case of animals and human beings, stance, expression, walk, and gesture. (in Sacks, 101; footnote)

And further, not only is sense-ballooning into hyper-visuality a 'natural' outcome of deafness, but in those who are not deaf from birth there is for a period after the initial damage, analogous to the phantom limb symptoms of amputees, an experience of phantom voices. Wright remarks of how when in the first months of his deafness his mother spoke, "I seemed to hear her voice":

It was an illusion which persisted even after I knew it was an illusion. My father, my cousin, everyone I had known retained phantasmal voices. That they were imaginary, the projections of habit and memory, did not come home to me until I had left the hospital. One day I was talking with my cousin and he, in a moment of
This question of what I would like to call the framing power of vision (and by implication, of art, language, and rationality) becomes a central concern of Goya's in the decade of the Peninsular War, and I will treat it in depth at the end of this chapter. Let me remark here that the illusion that persists even after it is known to be illusion contains a further dimension. This concerns the fact that through the process of learning to lip read, which almost assuredly Goya mastered (how else would he have been able to negotiate with the scores of sitters he was commissioned to paint in the 1790s and early 1800s), one becomes aware that as Sacks puts it "lip-reading is not just a visual skill," but touches upon a subliminal sensibility and sensitivity to a gestural, physiognomic sub-grammar: "75 percent of it is a sort of inspired guessing or hypothesizing, dependent on contextual clues" (70, footnote). Much of Goya's later work seems to depend on us that we 'lip-read' the image.

All three of these phenomena, sense-ballooning into a hyper-visualility particularly sensitive to movement, expression, stance, and gesture, phantom voices that may persist even after they are known to be illusory, and the consciousness that as the old saw has it you can see for miles, but you can't see around a corner, that is, that visuality and visualization have physical limits, are all particularly important to bear in mind when taking stock of the visual world of the later Goya. (With respect to the limits of visualization one may even perhaps speak of sub- and meta-physical limits as well; Diderot's blind man Saunderson notes of Deism that "if this perfection in design astonishes you, it is perhaps because you are in the habit of regarding anything you cannot understand as a miracle" (in Furbank, 64).) It is in light of these phenomena that we can perhaps grasp something of the import of Goya's turn to drawing and India ink washes after 1792, and the mushrooming visual inventory which he recorded in a series of notebooks containing fully half his artistic work (over two-thirds of these drawings bear no direct relation with any of Goya's other works). The word inventory is used advisedly for in the final seven of the eight notebooks the drawings are numbered and almost all are captioned. However, as Sayre notes, these drawings are not so much observational as interrogative: "Goya began developing an extremely original concept: a journal-album of drawings illustrating what he thought, as opposed to what he saw, which was the visual equivalent of the literary journals that Spaniards were lending to their friends in manuscript form, because they could not be published" (59). In these notebooks forms of two of the recurring tropes in deaf education operate as constant visual touchstones.
These are the antithetical notions of first, the power of signs to open up and to order under powerful generalizing categories a 'whole new world,' and second, the recurrent penal metaphors of 'solitary confinement,' 'watchfulness' and 'outside observership.' This latter can be expanded to include the problematic of epistemological verification. It is difficult enough for the hearing and speaking to know whether what they are being told is true, but they at least have at their beck and call the resources of speech and interrogation. It is to be remarked how limited are the number of situations where the deaf could easily solicit the information felt necessary for verification; and how, without those opportunities, the subject under scrutiny, to whose dialogue the deaf would not be privy, would appear to be a kind of moving picture of alterity to one's continuous inner monologue.

We can perhaps assimilate these two tropes to two salient aspects of the notebooks: first, the fact and style of the notebooks themselves in which Goya exercised drawing (unlike his preparatory studies for paintings) as an interrogation and celebration of fleeting aspects of existence and which evidence a consistent development of style and theme over time; and second, to the recurring notebook themes of power/powerlessness and enfranchisement/disenfranchisement (whether as scenes of seduction, violence, persecution, prisoners, madmen, work, or religion). Although the bulk of these drawing are characterized by the finesse and development of 'finished' works, they also constitute by proximity of style and theme an overture of sorts to the four graphic series of the *Caprichos*, the *Disasters of War*, the *Taruomaquia* and the *Disparates*. And there is the question of Goya's 'neo' neo-classicism. It has been suggested, by Symmons and others, that the later Goya's classically inspired formal succinctness of line, and his pared-down-to-essentials rendering of gesture and expression stemmed from Goya's study of the English artist Flaxman, some of whose prints Goya either owned or was extremely familiar with. It ought also to noted that these very qualities in Flaxman that Goya clearly admired were also likely endemic to his new found condition's phenomenology of perception. If the very act of communication is plagued by difficulties, it is perhaps best to doff as much of the extraneous as possible.

Pushing out further on this associative limb would be to consider what Sacks calls the difficulty of the question form that the deaf overcome through recourse to the open ended statement. This means that rather than asking, for example, 'What hobbies do you have?', the solicitation of information in deaf communication prefers to employ elliptical statements like 'You enjoy reading, sewing...' It has often been noted that Goya's graphic work, and indeed many of his later paintings, seem to fall into a kind of elliptical visual utterance (and that Goya himself saw his *oeuvre* as following in the line of Velázquezian
and Rembrandtian naturalism). This is particularly the case in graphic work where the captions exacerbate the ellipsis, often constituting a challenge to the subject-viewer in precisely the terms that Sicard put to scrutiny - speech as evidence of humanity. Thus in Disaster #18, for example, in which a couple (out on a Sunday, country-side stroll?) chances upon a heap of stripped and rotting corpses, we are enjoined not to pass judgement but to 'Enterrar y callar' ('Bury them and shut up'). Although we recognize Goya as undisputed master of the visual medium, it is not often enough remarked how pointedly and laconically he achieves the effects and affects he does through the one-two punch of image and caption - or perhaps better put, the see-sawing of image-caption-image and/or caption-image-caption. Not only does Goya push the envelope, as the contemporary phrase has it, of visual representation, but equally he seeks to chart the uneasy frontiers where speech, writing and surd are contiguous.

These captions have often struck me as voices materializing out of nowhere (Indeed, 'nowhere' appears almost always to be the physical locus of action, but more of that anon.) Who, for example, is enjoining us to 'Bury them and shut up'? The tenor of the injunction is capable of multiple connotations depending on whether it were barked by a musket-leveling sergeant, sloughed off between shovelfuls by a workman already up to his armpits in the grave to be, or whispered under the latter's breath in a moment when the former's watchful eyes have been distracted. It is this place-less quality that would help to account for the numerous examples in Goya's prints of visual homonyms and what I call his 'graphism.' The paradigm example of the former (although there are many instances) would be chamber pot and the two masks above it to the left of the figure in Disaster #68 '¡Qué locura!', which taken as an ensemble form a monstrous face that appears to have suddenly caught the attention of the figure, as if the haphazard assemblage of detritus had begun to speak. Or: does s/he/it look upon the phantom face with other intentions? - signalled perhaps by the empty spoon, and our knowledge that previous prints in the series have portrayed aspects of the Madrid famine of 1812 in which a fifth (20,000 people) of the population perished. An example of Goya's 'graphism' (again one of many) can be found in the disturbing Disaster #36 'Tampoco' ('Nor wherefore'), in which a regally bedecked soldier (a Polish mercenary?) leans contemplatively head on hand, elbow to his 'desk,' seeming to mull over the fate of the hanged man directly in face. In the background stretching towards an undefined horizon there appears a series of such victims. Just what such a perpetrator, if indeed he is one, could find worthy of pondering here, is out and out baffling - and it is this enigma that the as if written but then erased inscription on the front of the stone (?) 'desk' seems to render: a meaning that may once have been, but that now through attrition, erosion, or...? has been lost to comprehension.
The scene's legible-illegibility is administered in triplicate through the counterpoint-means of graphism, caption, and the fine line, both smirk and a sneer, of the soldiers mustachioed mouth.

How all this relates to Goya's work is somewhat tenuous. As one endowed with the hyper-sensitive antennae of a great artist (a sensitivity that, largely unannounced by his previous work, blossomed and reached a maturity in the latter, deaf, half of his life), Goya would surely have been aware, either explicitly through his voluminous reading or tacitly through monitoring his own states of awareness, of much of what I have raised here. And this both because of his 'condition' and because many of these anomalous aspects of cognition and perception are of fundamental import and interest to (among others) artists. What is more, with the coming of the wars of the French Revolution, perhaps the first world-war44 ("fought defensively at the outset by the French, who had renounced wars of conquest in May 1790, they rapidly swelled into the most sustained and extensive offensive yet known in European history" (Keegan, 348-349)), a series of wars in which, literally and with disastrous consequences, liberalism went on the offensive, Goya, longstanding partisan of the Enlightened camp, can be forgiven for thinking that the world itself had gone deaf. It is perhaps some combination of these factors that lay behind Goya's entitling the second draft of 'El sueño de la razón': 'Ydioma Universal'.45

A new space, light, and line

An unprecedentedly modern note is sounded by Goya and Stendhal: only fragments are capable of being encompassed by our modern limited perceptions. The totality of experience escapes us.

Fred Licht

Fred Licht has argued that Goya deserves the title as the first 'modern artist' - before modern art, he argues, there was 'painting' - on the grounds of Goya's "completely new logic of seeing," a logic by which "our eye is deprived of leadership" (1979, 93; 114). In Licht's analysis this new logic is played out in the novel sorts of spaces Goya develops in his researches: battle scenes in which Goya substitutes immediacy and its chaos for the bird's eye centrality and impartiality of the Renaissance battle picture (a trait not, I would allege, limited to Goya's battles scenes); religious works in which the tradition of the religious painting comes to an end, in which Goya voltaically grounds and discharges the traditionally supra-worldly current of religious narratives in the carnal here and now (of 1799 Goya's frescoes in San Antonio de la Florida (Madrid) and the notorious painted railing around the lower edge of the cupola behind which the narrative takes place Licht states "these are the first ceiling figures who respond to the force of
gravity" (1979, 64)); and particularly the abstraction of spatial determinations in the *Caprichos*, in which, Licht underlines, Goya has deliberately accentuated the ambiguity of the settings.

Pictorial allegories prior to Goya are recognizably 'classic,' taking place in a 'somewhere' that stands in for 'everywhere' (Arcadia, the sea coast of Bohemia, etc.); their only requirement is that they imagine a freedom that we cannot see, as it were, but for the trees. In the *Caprichos* Goya assumes the mantle of stage director and decrees that all the props of physical and metaphysical co-ordination be removed from the theatre of operations. His is a dramatic space after the manner of Dante - or Beckett: the prevalence of cropped trees on a metaphorically lunar landscape is to be noted - a space that is neither recognizably domestic nor out of doors. All props having been removed, we are faced with a theatre space from which allegory has been subtracted, that responds to no questions, a 'nowhere' that could be 'anywhere.' A comparison with the frontispieces to Rousseau's *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris 1793, vols. 29 & 30) is instructive.46 The first of these prints show the author, surrounded by the demons of envy, wrath, and folly, receiving courage and inspiration while he writes by turning his face heavenwards from whence streams the quasi divine light of 'Bonheur' emanating from an 'Monde Idéal.' In the second print, Rousseau, diligently fixed to his task and again bathed by the sunny beams of a regnant all-seeing eye of Truth, holds up his manuscript 'To every French citizen who still loves Truth and Justice' to a be-pedestaled Madonna and child as if in justification and confirmation. Goya's 'El sueño de la razón produce monstruos,' so its caption informs us, also gestures towards the sublime realm of capital letter concepts. Yet the ringing question, as we shall see, is 'up to what light does Goya hold reason?' Cut off from the scene, defamiliarized, where are we to find or establish "a synthetic position from which to read the ambiguous caption" (Cascardi, 191)? Again the question, as if in echolalia - and what of the owl who holds out a brush, what is it saying, beak ajar next the artist's ear? The silence is noisy. Both allegorical and realistic - and yet neither, the setting of the *Caprichos* is entirely other to these lines of inquiry: any sense that vice, obscurantism, or error are contained by or judgeable within a frame of divine retribution has been studiously absented.47

The principle means of establishing this metaphysical truancy is through an employ of light that renders it undecidable in traditional terms. Traditionally light had almost always been used as a legend, as that by which the image is 'read' or made legible. What fascinates is how in an age inundated with the politics and metaphors of light, Goya, court lickspittle and tapestry cartoonist longstanding, re-invents himself, and with a smouldering intensity, puts light to the test, in relief. The tides of Enlightenment are
everywhere sweeping the dust from the corners of monarchical Europe, and with light, it seems, anything is possible. Yet for Goya something is missing. In the *Caprichos* what we encounter is a light that is seemingly non-specific, does not illumine, and in fact operates, as Licht points out, as an abstract icono-structural device emphasizing, but not 'shadowing,' the narrative element of the images. What in fact has happened is that light has become de-allegoricized and made graphic; tones of black, white, and grey no longer bear any coherent relation to illumination, but rather are elements woven into the very disorientation of the space. This means that in the theatrical space of 'nowhere' light has become intrinsic to the design and not the narrative theme or pictorial 'illusion' - all the better to see what it is, 'that it is.' With reference to Goya's royal portraits Licht speaks of the "uncanny nuance of being intransitive," by which he means to articulate how these images are closed in upon themselves in a kind of claustrophobic looping between the figures imaged and their self-contemplation as if in a mirror (1979, 79). Rendered 'objects,' metaphysically defrocked and alienated from themselves and us, their regal pomp and splendor can only voice how hollow is any sense of a community of belief: we are, and can no longer be - literally - subject to them. This same uncanniness is staged again and again in the lighting of the *Caprichos*, where shadows no longer correspond to either sources of light (rarely if ever imaged) or the objects that would cast them.48

To Licht's analysis of space we should also consider how Goya's use of line has radically departed from what in the eighteenth century would have been the convention of ages. To the neo-classical sensibility line was conceived as the surest, most enduring and incontrovertible of foundations: "Line, which determines things, is a symbol of moral determination" (Starobinski 1982, 121). One need only consider the plethora of denotations, connotations and associations still hitched to the word by the usage-covenant of centuries: lineage, genealogy, sanctioned/unsanctioned (read between the lines), containment (toe the line), order/rule, mark (signature of contracts; banner of faiths; boundaries of allegiances), continuous, joint (seam), insulate, time (wrinkles), reading (line of text or verse), rationality (line of policy or action), information (got a line on), direction (bead), deception (gave me the line), contour, design, occupation, transportation, edge, military front, connectors of all types (threads, ropes, wires), detail (all along the line), secure (line up a speaker). There is almost a tacit ideology undergirding the line neo-classically conceived, a feeling that, in terms of the tonalities of the graphic universe, the line is able to separate and relegate the light from the dark. As Seamus Heaney writes wistfully, dipping his miner's pan in the hopes of landing a dram of the unselfconscious self-confidence of an age long gone by: "I believe any of us / Could draw the line through bigotry and sham / Given the right line, aere perennius"
This notion of the classical line would represent, I imagine, the spectrum of graphic tonalities in a linear, horizontal band from light through the grey zone to the dark, and conceive the line's special and proper power as the privilege of drawing a virgule perpendicularly through it. In doing so it proposes that the line of culture can always rise above the horizon of the given.

However, as John Berger notes, there is a congenital infirmity to the image of the horizontal band of ideological tonalities, for in "ideological contrasts, as distinct from reality, there is only a paper thin division between thesis and antithesis; a single reflex can turn black to white" (187). It is here that the anti-classical line intervenes. Its fundamental recognition is that the contrasts of light, grey, and dark are better imaged as a wheel of zones (like the Mercedes logo) in which the three zones always bleed into the other, and in which there is a point on the wheel where light confronts and becomes confused with the dark. Anne Hollander speaks of line in Goya's graphic work as being rendered "demonstrably irrelevant," but this, I think, is not quite right (254). Rather, it is as if line in all its urbanity and civility has reverted to its beginnings in Paleolithic art, liberated through the counterpoint of aquatint tonalities from its formal role as understudy and henceforward free to assume its own character as raw notch, scratch, scrape, scribble and erasure. Thus Hollander is on surer footing when she notes that

Goya uses lines not to delineate shapes but to scratch forms into existence and then to splinter them, as a squinting, half-blind eye might apprehend them, to create the distorting visual detritus that shudders around the edges of things seen in agonized haste or in semi-conscious distraction, in fear or self-disgust. (ibid.)

Unlike Blake, Flaxman and Fuseli, Goya's contemporaries whose neo-classical line serves to contain and wrest form from the frightening, amorphous mass of brute matter and "to keep [it]...from being overwhelming by lodging it firmly in the safe citadels of beauty and rhythm, Goya apparently wanted the overwhelming to overwhelm" (254-255).

Encyclopaedic monstrosity

All these components of Goya's new vision - light, line, space and silence - find their antithesis in the plates of Diderot's Encyclopédie. Ancestors of the grandes expositions and proto-prototypes of the shopping mall, the plates of the Encyclopédie form, says Barthes, "an autonomous iconography of the object" (1964, 11).49 Everywhere in this iconography, he writes, objects are represented in the most open manner possible as in every facet of their existence and presentation bespeaking the privilege of human creation, the transformation of brute material into the forerunner of humanity, and
ultimately "the human signature of the world": "the encyclopaedic man [always notes
Barthes, a seigneur; never a worker] mines the totality of nature for human signs: in the
encyclopaedic countryside one is never alone for even in the roughest of elements there is
always a product in fraternity with the human" (ibid.). As open relay from the natural to
the human, the mechanical semiology of the encyclopaedic object paints a golden picture
of a golden age of pure artisanry sans social conflict, in which the simple, vital passage
from material essence through praxis of fabrication to pure signed object is a
paradigmatic narrative of the formative power of the human hand, domestication and
appropriation.50 Although this possessive sovereignty dates, Barthes notes, not from
Genesis but from the time of Noah, as it is depicted in theEncyclopédie it is as it were a
prelapsarian propriety, in that all threat of the object has been carefully blunted: "what
strikes one in the entirety of the Encyclopédie (and particularly in its images) is that it
proposes a world without fear" (12). With the 'widow' of the Terror (the guillotine), and
the 'dark Satanic mills' that Blake and labour unrest made so infamous, this age of object
innocence will come to an abrupt end.

Yet despite the attempted pacification of the world by means of encyclopaedic
representation, Barthes detects a series of subtle undercurrents in the presentation of the
images, that all is not as it seems. A good many of the plates are arranged in couples
whereby the lower image represents the object in se, its components enumerated and
labeled, while the upper image represents the object in use, often in the form of a vignette
of commerce or consumption. Barthes sees these as representing respectively the object
as inert, mute essence, or paradigm without syntax, and the object as living, speaking
praxis, or syntagm, the novelization of the material. By opening up of the world to
illustration in this manner, Barthes remarks, on the one hand fragmenting, enumerating
and appropriating it, and on the other, doubling the world explained by the object to be
explained, theEncyclopédie opens the door to a reading at cross purposes to the ones
intended. It would have us read these diptyches in a double manner, both upwards and
donwards: reading upwards, the living reading, one animates the epic of the object,
marking its passage from 'nature' to 'sociality'; reading downwards, the descent to a
prioris, one reproduces the progress of the analytic spirit, the reduction to causes and
materials as primary constituents of intellectualization. And further, the ascending or
descending movement of reading the image is anchored by its own counter-movement:
when we read up vivifying the object we are conscious of the rational power of the mind
to decompose it into the constituents necessary for this process of animation to begin with
in the first place, and vice versa.
What the *encyclopédistes* could not foresee, however, was how such a manner of image presentation and its proposed readings would open up a window in the mind, as it were, to a sur-real and violent "fascination with the undersides of things":

The *Encyclopédie* slices, amputates, eviscerates the object, turning it inside out, constantly seeking to pass behind nature. Now every underside is troubling; science and para-science are there mixed, especially on the level of the image. The *Encyclopédie* carries out a relentless, impious fragmentation of the world, at the end of which deconstructive procedure what one finds is not the fundamental state of pure causes, but rather the situation in which the image for the most part obliges us to recompose an object rendered strictly speaking *unreasonable*. (16)

By proposing everywhere this double epic of rational deconstruction and reconstruction, the *Encyclopédie* casts a lucent noumenon of divine humanization over every gesture of signing and significance, as if rewriting Genesis 'In the beginning humanity created...'. But this aura of privilege, writes Barthes, engenders a state of suspension. Despite the prescribed pathways of reading, every image as image "is always deprived of logical vector...[and because] the real world can never be scaled down nor reduced to irreducible verities...[the imaged object can only exist] suspended between two grand orders of reality" (14). Due to the non-cognizance of this 'reality effect' (that something of the quidity of the object will always escape representation, and especially, perhaps, when it is thought to have been entirely domesticated by it) encyclopaedic imaging, alleges Barthes, actually turns us back from the willed full *comprehension* of the world to merely an *apprehension* of it, as if we could palpably feel the object there at our wits' end, as Eliot put it, without, however, being able to seize it as property. For all its efforts to have us move in our reading from one to the other images, encyclopaedic imaging, suggests Barthes, actually reinforces a sense of a Zenoan immobilization and imprisonment of the object. The result, he concludes, is that we are led by the hand to a monstrous, violent, and sur-real poetics of the image beyond our reach by a process that had sought to place it in our hand: "once one quits the vignette [the image in praxis] for the more analytic plate below, the peaceful order of the world is unsettled by a certain *violence*" (16).

Paradoxically by attempting to reduce everything to a pure materiality that would be the reductive handiwork and raw material of a divinely illuminated rationality, encyclopaedic imaging effects a kind of monstrosity. The end result of this unswerving focus on the sovereignty of the rational principle, the "poetic" homogenization of diverse entities under the encyclopaedic order, and an unselfconscious innocence of scale, is that an unforeseen perspective returns to disrupt the unity and identity the *Encyclopédie*
would enforce. Here Barthes unearths in the *Encyclopédie*’s inventory a tacit, Borgesian, fabular stratum:

anatomical monsters, such as the enigmatic uterus or the armless bust, whose open chest and thrown back head are purposed to render visible the arteries of the thorax; sur-real monsters such as these equestrian statues sheathed in a lattice-work of waxen casting channels; immense and incomprehensible monsters, mid-way between a stocking and a coat-stand...One of the great riches of the *Encyclopédie* is to vary, in the musical sense of the term, the level at which a single object can be perceived, thus liberating the secrets of form: seen from a microscopic perspective, a flea becomes a horrible monster, furnished with armoured plates of bronze, and sharp spines like some devilish bird, such that this monster reaches into the sublime realm of mythological dragons. (15)

Ultimately, the consequences of the *Encyclopédie*’s rational imperative having escaped its very intentions, there becomes no appreciable difference in value between a sock factory and a human uterus, a flea blown up the size of an ox and a monstrous apparition.

**El sueño de la razón**

The madman is a waking dreamer
Kant

Capricho #43 buffets us with excesses. Questions, hypotheses, contrary sleights and possible interpretations toss us like a cork on a current, helter-skelter, this way and that. Plotting the various spoors is to trace the path of a series of seasonal arroyos long gone dry by aid of an even more antiquated map. The very process seems to put a kind of legibility into question. First among enigmas is the question of *sueño*: is this a sleep or a dream? There is a great deal riding on our answer to this question because it will serve as the foundation for our understanding of the enigmatic representation of reason in the print, for, as Paul Ilie notes, "the word 'reason' remains in want of an image to represent it" (49). According to Ilie, this equivocation throws up at least three main possibilities. If it a ‘natural’ sleep, taking place in the privacy of one’s own study (although there are no markers to suggest that the desk and chair are either in or out of doors), then “the 'sleep' of reason breeds monsters by yielding to the all-too-human faculty of imagination that produces them and turns them loose” (39). This avenue seems to suggest that the monsters are the mythological and unreal hallucinations of an overtaxed or insufficiently vigilant individual (reason). As much is to be inferred from the accompanying so-called Prado manuscript ‘explanation’ of the print: “La fantasía abandonada de la razón produce monstruos imposibles; unida con ella, es madre de las artes y origen de sus maravillas.” (“Imagination abandoned by reason produces impossible monsters: united
with her she is the mother of the arts and the source of their wonders."). A second possibility resides in placing the print within the context of a nascent romantic re-evaluation of the 'reality' of the dream world. This would situate the sleep/dream on the cusp of two realms where a private aberration has been made public and taken on a 'reality' whose potential influence as poetic evocation extends far beyond the intimacy of one's own private thoughts. The second half of the Prado manuscript text, where a greater scope of reason's power is gestured towards, might bolster this line of inquiry. A third possibility would be to view the scene as an entirely 'public' dream, and thus as an image - and a critique - of the perversion of reason. This avenue leads up the path of an inherent monstrosity that would constitute one of reason's dimensions. However, each of these approaches suffers from the fact that the 'monsters' imaged are so highly probable that one questions whether to call them monsters at all, for the monster traditionally conceived is some thing that through 'unnatural' combination(s) is somehow excessive. Classical monsters these are not. As Illie notes, given that there are "no physical monsters in Capricho 43...it is [perhaps] the concept of monstrosity itself that Goya explores and portrays," its autonomous production, as it were (35).

We know that Goya spent a great deal of time working on this print, producing two preliminary versions (known as 'sepia one' and 'sepia two'), and that the image was in all probability originally intended to be the frontispiece to the collection (it and sepia two are the only plates in which the title of the print is incorporated into its imagery on a pedestal front, a common attribute of eighteenth century frontispieces). In considering the genetic evolution of the image it is possible to trace the refinement of Goya's exploration of excess. All three images have the same basic constituents (after the fashion of Rousseau's frontispieces) of a seated man leaning on his desk in reverie, meditation, sleep, or dream, although they are each accompanied by different texts and pictorial accoutrements. In sepia one, for which there is no accompanying text, in front of the desk in the foreground left lies an etcher's easel and plate bearing the faint image of Minerva and her shield. Many have pointed out that this representation seems lifted - as does the very posture, dress, and disposition of the sleeping/dreaming man - from Goya's 1798 portrait of Jovellanos, where a statuette of Minerva can be made out in the shadows on the back of the Enlightener's desk. Other features specific to sepia one are the firmly clasped hands of the man (as if in supplication or prayer?), the hasty misalignment of the chair and desk (the chair is far too forward for him to have slumped onto it without contortion), the lynx on all fours behind his chair right, and particularly the 'sunburst' of rays bearing numerous phantom faces and shapes that stream out and above of the man's head. To my counting there are eleven faces (including a horse/mule, a lion/dog, and four
ghouls), two of which (possibly three) are self-portraits. Of the two remaining faces, one is indistinct but appears to be either kissing or biting the mouth of the third 'Goya', while the other (upper left) appears to be a visual homonym which when viewed from three o'clock seems to be a bull-dog with a goatee, but when viewed from nine o'clock seems to be a human face thrown backwards seen from up close in three-quarters profile. Most marked, to my mind, is the subject's head, half of which can be seen above his left wrist, and whose mane of hair and beard ring a face that is featureless save for a kind of pineal eye.

In sepia two, the overt 'psychologism' of the first sepia has been exorcised. The mass of phantom faces has been substituted by an absence in the form of a one-quarter 'solar' disk that looming out of the top right corner appears to bear down on the slumped figure. The misalignment of the chair has been rectified, the lynx now sits head erect, and the bats and owls, previously indistinct by virtue of having been buried under a series of pell-mell overdrawn scores, are now much clearer. One colossal bat, in the same aspect as sepia one, has been brought forward to dominate the penumbra of the 'solar disk' trellised with bat-owls. (Ascending or descending? is the pertinent question to ask of these shades; and equally of the figures tumbling hurly-burly through interstellar space in *Capricho* #56, entitled 'Subir y bajar' - 'Rising and falling'.) The relation of the figure to all these surroundings has been subtly but markedly changed. His face is now entirely hidden by and buried in his hands folded in front of him; his hair has been rendered far less unruly. A series of wispy lines emanating from the left side of his drooped head, and flaring out and connecting it to the solar disk above, appear to render the disk into a sort of cartoonist's balloon, where the thoughts of the dreamer might reasonably appear - but of course the balloon is empty. In addition, the desk has been modified and abstracted, and its now plain front has been inscribed with the caption 'Ydioma univer / sal. Dibujado / y Grabado p' FCO de Goya / año 1797' ('Universal language. Designed and etched by Francisco de Goya, in the year 1797'). In the upper margin of the paper is written in Goya's hand the word 'Sueño 1º'; in the bottom margin appears the equally holographic text: 'El Autor soñando. / Su yntento solo es desterrar bulgaridades / perjudiciales, y perpetuar con esta obra de / caprichos, el testimento solido de la verdad' ('The author sleeping/dreaming. His only intention is to banish harmful common beliefs and perpetuate with this work of caprichos the solid testimony of truth').

The ambiguity of these textual markers is also remarkable. The generic 'Sueño' would situate the print within the age old genre of social critique in which "an author could indict with impunity various evils that had found indulgence or official protection in his society, since the author's criticisms could be regarded as 'only a dream'" (Sayre,
59). Yet in the print itself, isolated from the series of by and large caustic satires of vice, appears to make an uncertain criticism. The empty 'balloon' and the title 'Universal language' don't seem to help much either, in as much as the 'universal' would have in the eighteenth century been wedded to the rational - and this image's attitude to reason seems at best capricious or obfuscatory. The underlying comment is likewise equivocal, for this image (as distinct from the series) does not seem to carry out the 'author's only intention' - 'to banish harmful common beliefs' - but rather seems to do just the opposite. In a negative manner the print, if anything, perpetuates the fantasies/monstrosities of the sleeping/dreaming author. Perhaps, however, the author is 'the author of this print,' a hypothesis that would then entail that the etching is in some way 'prehistorical' in that it represents the birth or origin of the reason-scourge that would banish prejudices and establish the authority of truth.

This line of inquiry is bolstered by the fact that Goya appears to have adapted the phrase 'el sueño de la razón' from Emile, ou l'éducation, where Rousseau writes "l'enfance est le sommeil de la raison" ('childhood is the sleep of reason') (1962, 132). In his discourse on the education of children, Rousseau sought to show how from the child's perspective education appears to be purely the adult's means of dominating the child's will. According to Rousseau, in his or her innate impetuosity the child seeks to wrest control away from the law of the adults by giving vent to his/her experience of rage and fear, what Rousseau calls 'caprice.' Because the child is pre-rational these tempests of rebellion take form in images defined as "pure, absolute pictures of sensible objects...manifestations of sounds, figures, and sensations, rarely of ideas, and even less frequently of their connections" (1966, 132-133). However, as Eagleton points out, Rousseau is not advocating the suppression of the child's assurances of the heart, only their being tempered by the rational faculty of comparison; as Rousseau writes later in Emile, "[t]he heart only receives laws from itself; by wanting to enchain it one releases it; one only enchains it by leaving it free" (in Eagleton, 19). Introjecting this notion into our interrogation of the print we again confront the fundamental obstacle of sleep or dream, but now made quadratic in consequence depending upon whether reason is seen as an enchaining or liberating praxis. Here the bat-owl confusion is apposite: Lopez Vazquez has shown that in the tradition of eighteenth century iconography bats were "symbols of night, obscurity...[and] as such attributes of ignorance," whereas owls were thought to represent "good counsel, including good nocturnal counsel" (170; 172).

This zoological confusion both mirrors and augments the confusion between the 'impossible monsters' (fantasy deserted by reason) and the 'marvels' (fantasy in unison with reason), and the confusion between a dream-device, shielding the author from
censure, and a Neoplatonic sleep-trope bespeaking a liberation from this 'vale of tears.' According to Ficino's conception of human descent from divinity "corporal life is an illness of the soul that tortures itself and dreams of release; our movements, actions, and passions are merely the vertigo of the sick, the nightmares and deliria of the mad" (in Lopez Vazquez, 174). Should the incorporated soul be called (back - to respond) to divinity, a furor poeticus was thought to overtake it, resulting in an anxiety, exhaustion, and melancholy that characterized the lot of the saturnine artist in this world. Lopez Vazquez pursues this line of Neoplatonic interpretation - quoting Dionysius the Areopagite to the effect that "in sacred matters that of necessity transcend the powers of human reason, incongruent symbols are the best" (175) - arguing that the print evidences a kind of Orphic rite in which the creator's physical descent marks a mystical ascent, drinking from the waters of oblivion in order to savour the wine of verity.

A matrix of four possibles follows from the intersection of sleep/dream and enchaining/liberating reason: the sleep of an enchaining reason, the sleep of a liberating reason, the dream of an enchaining reason, the dream of a liberating reason. If this be sleep - temporary liberty from the injunctions of reason - then what we are offered is a vision of either the sleeper's heart set free in rebellion from a reason that enchains it or its even more profound enchainment to the phantasms of the imagination from which a vigilant reason would offer liberation. However, if this be dream - not a freedom from but rather a (fantastic?) freedom to - then left free to its own caprices we are confronted with a representation of the ultimate imprisonment of an enchaining reason or the most profound emancipation of a liberating reason. Yet these four consequences grouped into couples of negative and positive values (at least from the point of view of reason), are, when assayed against the imaged 'monsters,' arraigned in an ascending series of ever more disturbing outcomes: from the somewhat harmless fantasies of an enchaining reason's sleep, to the dangerous fantasies of a liberating reason's sleep, to the terrifying portents of an enchaining reason's dream, to the terrorizing omens of a liberating reason's dream. And, within this interpretive matrix all four possibles are presumably images of the heart giving to itself its own laws. By virtue of an interrogation of what sort of reason is at stake, and what the sleep or dream of it would entail, the image's ambiguity has been 'squared'; working through the quadratic of conceptual permutations and testing those hypotheses against the image presupposes an elevated degree of abstraction. Contrary to the comforts of allegory, whose interrogation traces a bee-line of greater and greater legibility and certainty, 'El sueño de la razón' spirals incipiently inwards towards greater anxiety and suspicion.
This procedure of abstraction is paralleled by another process that at the same
time makes the image more concrete. From sepia one to the finished proof a number of
transforms have been carried out that serve to supply a higher degree of resolution to the
print's individual elements and to focus the print's energies more tightly upon the figure of
the author/artist and his status. The praying hands have been rendered much less
expressive of any ulterior intent, bringing out the meditative sleeping/dreaming aspect.
The etching stand has been removed and replaced by papers and crayon holders; one of
these is held out to the artist by the braying owl to his right. The panoply of goblin masks
has been exorcised, and the trail of nocturnal animals has been recessed and made darker,
more specific and detailed, although a new clutch of cats and owls has been added
crowding over the shoulder of the artist. All of these modifications serve to highlight the
singularity of the figure and his quixotic state. Interestingly, in the early 1800s Goya
appears to have reworked the basic lines of this print in a drawing of Don Quijote
(awake) at his desk, flanked by all manner of apparitions.\textsuperscript{58} As is the case with almost
every one of the Caprichos, Goya here has progressed through the various versions to a
greater degree of focus through the excision and/or abstraction of extraneous and
specifying details, transforming the figure from a kind of phantasmic self-portrait to an
acephalic allegory of a rational-universal Enlightener. The most important transformation,
however, is perhaps the subtlest - the transition of the upper left quarter of the print from
the 'positive' representation of a sunburst of oneiric phantoms emancipated from the keep
of mental surveillance, through bright solar disk rendered by an absence of marks on the
plate (image of the soundless density of the 'testimonio sólido de la verdad'?), to the final
version in which the solar disk is rendered a ghostly 'negative' - and determination-in-
absence - evoked solely by the two-dimensional aspect of the three-dimensional cloud of
bat-owls against the undifferentiated mottled grey background.

\textbf{Black sun}

The combinatory system of saying and seeing has as its underside, or as what fundamentally determines it,
'an essential void'... For Foucault, unreason is no longer the outer limit of reason: it is its truth.
It is the black sun imprisoned in language, burning unbeknown to it. Michel de Certeau

Goya's fondness for this solar motif - about one-third of the Caprichos and the
Disasters employ a version of it\textsuperscript{59} - deserves comment. The motif is rarely if ever an
overt representation of the sun; it is sometimes structured by means of arches, cave
mouths, donjon windows, or clouds; almost always it serves to organize the graphic tones
of the print into broad areas of light and dark. Given that in these two print series Goya
portrays nocturnal scenes by means of a starry sky or a semi-uniform blackness, I would
like to call his use of this solar motif a black sun, by which I wish to underline how in the prints which employ it the sites of 'action' are graphically enveloped by a kind of smoky light emanating from a traditionally bright disk or section thereof. If you have ever had the chance to witness a solar eclipse (or the aftermath of a volcanic eruption) you will perhaps recognize how 'daylight' becomes (literally or figuratively) thick with particulate matter, engendering a hybrid-time that seems both day and night without however, evoking twilight. The technology of television picture tubes has discovered that if the maculae of colours composing the image are projected upon a black background the colours appear brighter and more clearly defined. Something analogous to this appears to be the case in these prints, for they are characterized by a high degree of optical resolution and graphic tones that sparkle. Because the inside of the disk section is the focal point of either the highest of highlights, and thus assigning to the remainder of the print's ambiguous space the darker tones of the graphic palette, or the darkest of darkences, which then seem to leach into the remaining (foreground) space, these black sun prints impart a ominous sense of claustrophobia, apprehension, and incarceration. (In the Disasters this oppressiveness is explicit in the very structure of the series, beginning and ending as it does with scenes of physical and metaphysical imprisonment and manumission.)

In all these black sun prints, of which Capricho #43 is perhaps the paradigm example, a symbolic chain of associations is forged between the 'concept of monstrosity,' the excesses of reason, (self-)confrontation and (self-)judgment, the determination-in-absence of light and dark, and the theme of liberation and imprisonment. Many have remarked that Goya seems to have picked up this latter theme from the Carceri (Prison) series of Piranesi and his follower Gonzaga, whose claustrophobic fantasies would have been well known to Goya. But the quasi-naturalism of Goya's incarceration scenes spills over by virtue of the black sun motif into a whole slue of images not overtly bearing upon crime and punishment. Goya's frame of reference seems to gesture towards some 'Universal language' whose ambit of concern is far, far greater in scope.

**Enlightened monstrosity**

those delicious Wounds that weep / Balsam to heal themselves with

Crashaw

In temporal terms the black sun represents a question directed at the rationalist-revolutionary conception of temporality and history: 'Is the past really abolished by the passage of time?' I have already remarked how in historical terms the Enlightenment's progressive vision opened up for it a past of archaic 'fossils. Slavoj Zizek, who has
written extensively and insightfully on the subject of monstrosity, notes that for Enlightened rationality the past becomes "the way the universe thinks its antagonism," specifically the antagonism between the past as a past (dead) factuality and the past as a present (living or un-dead) aversion (1991b, 61). According to Zizek the flats of rational ordering not only open up spaces for the 'past' but those spaces are of necessity populated with representations of the impossibility of the normal, a symbolic re-organization of those pre-existent meanings that the norm now deems hostile under the designator 'monstrosities.'

For Zizek this operation has a specific significance for our understanding of Enlightened rationality and subjectivity. Zizek's Lacanian inspired analysis takes as its point of departure the coming to fruition of Kant's notion of a purely formal, substanceless subject: "'subjectivization' entails a radical 'evacuation,' an emptying of 'man' qua substantial 'person,'" in which "the 'subject'...[comes to be] precisely the void that remains after all substantial content is taken away" (1991b, 65; 64). Although Zizek's analysis is thin on the socio-historical dimensions of this coming to be, we can flesh out one of them by taking stock of what Wlad Godzich has called the Enlightenment's trajectory of accelerated "social abstraction":

This process, whose nature was recognized in the Enlightenment - the period during which it achieved nearly universal extension in the industrializing countries - cleaves the subject and disrupts other entities, such as the family, in order to tailor it to the needs of production. There results an internal division of the subject between the kind of self that one needs to be in certain situations, generally linked to one's means of livelihood, and the kind of self that one is in other settings. The individual no longer feels his or her self to be a whole, but rather a series of diverse zones, subject to differing constraints, frequently of an irreconcilable sort...the fundamental effect of this experience is to create a sense of powerlessness with respect to one's ability to direct or control larger historical processes... (ix)

According to Zizek monsters arise within this process of social abstraction and subjective evacuation, in order to fulfill the specific function that socialized rationality has written for them, that of representing to subjects or social groups an image of a possible (individual or social) wholeness that by virtue of the Kantian constitution of evacuated subjectivity is no longer possible.

It is this very desubstantialization that opens up the empty space (the 'blank surface') onto which fantasies are projected, where monsters emerge. In Kantian terms, because of the inaccessibility of the Thing-in-itself, there always remains a
gaping hole in constituted, phenomenal reality; reality is never 'all,' its circle is never closed, and the void of the inaccessible Thing is filled out with phantasmagorias through which the transphenomenal Thing enters the stage of phenomenal presence. (Zizek 1991b, 66)

In this sense the monster stands in for a kind of limit to meaning created by socialized rationality that it seeks to get a purchase on.

In terms of the individual, the fantasy of the monster allows me to 'recognize' myself by placing before me an image of a fundamental prohibition, what Zizek, quoting Lacan, calls that which "is 'in the subject more than the subject himself...what the subject must renounce, sacrifice even - the part in himself that the subject must murder in order to start to live as a normal member of the community" (1991b, 54). Zizek sees this 'murderous' act as taking for its object a notion of pure enjoyment (jouissance) that the subject believes to be an obstacle to his or her social normalcy, but which is, rather, an image-stop plugging the gap that constitutes Kantian subjectivity, an image that in fact through misrecognition confers upon the subject a wholeness it does not otherwise possess. The paradigm example here is Victor Frankenstein's creation, the monster whose murderous proclivity and threatening sexuality - recall his refrain "I'll be there on your wedding night" (Shelley, 213) - Victor believes to be the source of all his woes, but whose narrative function is to return Victor to the intimacy of the family fold - "my life had hitherto been remarkably secluded and domestic" - he had abandoned in order to pursue "the dreams of the forgotten alchemists," the secret source of "the principle of life" in the "hiding places" of "nature":

Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?...I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit...A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind and never to allow a passion or a transitory desire to disturb its tranquility. I do not think that the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule. If the study to which you apply yourself has a tendency to weaken your affections and to destroy your taste for those simple pleasures in which no alloy can possibly mix, then that study is certainly unlawful, that is to say not befitting the human mind. If this rule were always observed; if no man allowed any pursuit whatsoever to interfere in the tranquility of domestic affections, Greece had not been enslaved, Caesar would have spared his country, America would... (93; 95; 99; 102-103)

Recognizing myself in the monster means, notes Zizek, that the horror proper to it is not the "someone-is-watching-me motif," but rather the "far more unbearable
experience...[of finding] oneself at this very point of pure gaze" in which the world and all that is in it - including the image of myself - is rendered a pure thing by "the object gaze that sees me out there" (1991b, 56). It is worth recalling that the Frankenstein monster is educated into the ways of the world from a voyeuristic vantage point, the chink separating his hovel-crèche from 'the tranquility of domestic affections' of Safie and Felix in the cottage adjoining, and, what is more, that the monster is somehow privileged with an uncanny omniscience about all the goings-on around him. This notion of the pure gaze, characterized by a one-way circuit of unassailable invisibility and omni-spectral omniscience, may perhaps account for the central solar or pineal eye and the multiple, ontologically inconsistent, self- (and other phantom) images that characterize Goya's sepia one. To pursue this line of interpretation would be to argue that while the explosion of phantasmic representations in this print may appear to be the private aberration of a single consciousness whose "inner worldly...[finitude is] lost in the overwhelming totality of the universe," taken as a group, however, the three versions of the image evidence something quite different: the progressive reduction of the fantastic from a 'positive' psychologic representation to a 'negative' image of the Kantian subject defined as

a substanceless point of pure self-relating (the 'I think') that is not 'part of the world' but is, on the contrary, correlative to 'world' as such and therefore ontologically constitutive. 'World,' 'reality,' as we know it, can appear only within the horizon of the [Kantian] subject's finitude. The black space of the Thing-in-itself is therefore something extremely dangerous to approach, for if one gets too close to it, 'world' itself loses its ontological consistency. (1991b, 66)

In terms of the final print, the positive of psychologic content of sepia one has become not merely a space of the positive absence of content (the empty solar disk in sepia two) but an absence only intelligible through a kind of formal, transcendental reduction: solar-psychologic monstrosity-object become representation of the limit of interpretation, principle of solar monstrosity. As negative representation of a subjective regimen itself the negative correlative of the world, the black sun is a metaphorically photographic 'positive' of the subject's constitutive substancelessness:

The emergence of the empty surface on which phantasmagorical monsters appears is therefore strictly correlative to what Heidegger calls 'the advent of Modern-Age-subjectivity,' the epoch in which the symbolic 'substance'...can no longer contain the subject, can no longer bind him to its symbolic mandate. This cutting-off of substantial tradition is the constitutive gesture of the Enlightenment. In this sense the 'monster' is the subject of the Enlightenment, that is to say it is a mode
in which the subject of the Enlightenment acquires its impossible positive existence. (Zizek 1991b, 64)

In addition to its function as representation of prohibitions fundamental to the socialized desire of the individual, the monster also has a more purely social function in representing the limits of meaning, its ne plus ultra as it were, to a social group as a whole. As Victor's monster puts it: "Alas! Why does man boast of sensibilities superior to those apparent in the brute; it only renders them more necessary beings" (143). On analogy with the monster-phantom as falsely perceived stumbling block to 'normal' sexuality, but which for the Kantian fragmented subject is in fact a materialization of the impossibility of the normal, the monster, as that which social groups believe must be sacrificed in order to achieve their vision of social wholeness and cohesion, is also the sacrificial object that confers a "phantasmic consistency" on the social bond.51 Zizek:

In the ideological field, this paradox finds its clearest articulation in the anti-Semitic figure of the Jew - the Nazi has to sacrifice the Jew in order to able to maintain the illusion that it is only the 'Jewish plot' that prevents the establishment of the 'class relationship' of society as a harmonious organic whole...[However,] what appears as the hindrance to society's full identity-with-itself is actually its positive condition: by transposing onto the Jew the role of the foreign body that introduces disintegration and antagonism to the social organism, the fantasy image of society qua consistent, harmonious whole is rendered possible. (1991b, 57)

Zizek goes on to note that in aesthetic productions symbols of monstrosity, that is symbols of the limits of and/or to meaning, are frequently 'hyper-determined' in content, in the same way that the anti-Semitic figure of the Jew has often condensed for the anti-Semite both "the excessive nature of capitalism - its wild profiteering, etc. - as well as its proletarian subversion - the 'Jewish-Communist plot'" (1991b, 63). However, he emphasizes - reformulating Heisenberg's equation in Lacanian terms: "you cannot have both meaning [position] and enjoyment [momentum]" (1991b, 64) - that if we focus solely on the content of such agglomerative symbols, we enter into an exchange system where we acquire a meaning (that is ultimately arbitrary: the 'Jew" as capitalist profiteer or communist subversive) at the cost of misrecognizing the ideological formulation at stake. Commenting on various ideological interpretations of the shark in the film Jaws, Zizek notes that

convincing as it may appear, such a direct analysis of 'ideological content' is nevertheless marked by a brand of ultimate arbitrariness, as are all analyses of this kind...it is not a question of deciding which of the meanings is 'true.' Rather what
one should do is to conceive the monster as a kind of fantasy screen where the multiplicity of meanings can appear and fight for hegemony... The crucial question is not 'What does the phantom signify?' but 'How is the very space constituted where entities like the phantom can emerge?'... What we have here is the same vel as that of the well-known visual paradox of the vase or two faces; as soon as we perceive meaning(s), the form qua place of their inscription becomes invisible. (1991b, 63)

To trace the sinuous line of the vel in the three versions of 'El sueño de la razón' would be to highlight the articulation of the thematics of reason against the deployment of a tonal organization that does not 'illumine' it. Thus, sepia one offers us an image of the mimesis of producers linking the artist with the divine on the analogy of the presence of the solar trope, reason-like-the-sun; this image 'reveals' dark demons and self images in a chaotic jumble of shooting rays. In sepia two the notion of solar (divine-human) reason has become more of an abstract icon (the tenuous wisps connecting the empty 'balloon' to the figure's head are instrumental here), in which the potentially monstrous disproportion between the figured absence of the solar 'content' and the purely formal structure of an 'Idioma universal' is highlighted as reason's excess. In the final print the trellis-form of the bat-owls delimits the image of a sun rendered black that is strictly speaking not there - 'the word 'reason' remains in want of an image to represent it.' Which is to say that the constitutive powers of individual reason have, as it were, lost their purchase of framing an organizing solar trope - whose ontological non-dimensionality and omni-dimensional emanations infect the totality of both 'interior' and 'exterior' space - because the ultimate foundation of reason as universal, the reason of/for reason, is unknowable. In 'El sueño de la razón' the subject of reason encounters the conceptual 'monstrosity' of a transcendental limit that both constitutes the world and makes it disappear into fantasy:

Only in monsters does the [insubstantial] subject encounter the Thing that is his impossible equivalent - the monster is the subject himself conceived as Thing...the subject and the Thing are not two entities but rather the two 'slopes,' of one and the same entity. The subject is the 'same' as the Thing; he is, so to speak, its negative, the trace of its absence in the symbolic network. (Zizek 1991b, 66-67)

Liberation of/from fear

The ambiguous 'liberation' of reason figured in this line of interpretation has consequences of the widest possible scope. As master trope of a rationalizing and individualizing culture the 'desubstantialization' of the subject is only one half of a process that is equally a formalization of reason. As Fredric Jameson expresses it, the
reorganization of the symbolic constitution post-Kant entails a socialization and historicization of a previously 'natural' norm:

The vocation of the symbol...lies less in any single message or meaning than in its very capacity to absorb and organize all of these quite distinct anxieties together...its essentially polysemeous function...Yet it is precisely this polysemeousness which is profoundly ideological, insofar as it allows essentially social and historical anxieties to be folded back into apparently 'natural' ones. (in Zizek 1991b, 63)

In terms of our investigation into the significance(s) of violence in the modern world, this transformation to polysemy marks a watershed. In the post-Enlightenment, the burgeoning expansion of the rule of rational norms, will, like the violent temptation to oppose their rule, no longer be a single determinate event whose significance is monosematic, and no longer contained or containable within religio-monarchical structures (heteronomy). Rather, in the post-Enlightenment the expansion of the rule of rational norms will be something that, by virtue of its being forged into the very form of the world-structure that is in the process of being created, an intimate part if you will of the scaffolding of things and thoughts, will henceforward be liberated into polysemy.

One of the principal fall-outs of this Enlightenment formalization of practices has been a mushrooming of fear and anxiety over both the essential void at the heart of the rational order and that elusive quality which rational society holds out as its milk and honey: freedom. Having replaced the rule of God with that of the abstract structures of reason, Western society has left the modern Job experiencing 'the arrows of...within me.' but, knowing not from whence they come, he or she 'fears...nought, for nought.' As Saul suggests, "there can be no deeper fear than that of mortality unchained. With the disappearance of faith and the evaporation of all magic from the image, man's fear of mortality has been freed to roam in a manner not seen for two millennia" (1992, 452). All civilizations offer to its members the implicit promise of a reduction or alleviation of fears; at the same time civilizations also produce a growth in knowledge whose effect is to replace old, contained or managed fears with new ones. This fact often escapes attention either because reason trumpets the amelioration of fears loudest or because as Thucydides recognized "Fear drives out all memory."62 It sometimes seems that for every expansion of the rule of rationality, there has been a corresponding increase in the domain of irrational fears; one need only think of how many scientifically verified phobias now exist, and the list continues to grow.63 Theodore Zeldin, who has written perspicaciously
on fear and other matters has remarked that the mushrooming production of knowledge in rational society

has not extinguished unreasonable fears, because it has also supplied new ideas for possible future catastrophes...when religion stopped frightening people, they invented new fears to frighten themselves, as though they valued fear as a necessary part of the sensation of being alive...Since the eighteenth century, security has become, almost universally, the official goal for this life, but an unattainable goal, a paradise, ever harder to locate, invisible in a cloud of doubts. The American constitution proclaimed the right to security, which meant the right to have no fears, but in vain. (173-174)

If there is a close relation between the recourse to violence and the release of deep fears - the idea in Europe at least as old as Homer that the expiation of fear through violence is ennobling: "Sweeter by far than the honeycomb is wrath" (in Zeldin, 216)⁶⁴ - then the constitutive and "chronic uncertainty" that characterizes the rational society of ever-expanding freedoms holds within it the prospect of a double-bind of escalating freedom and fear:

The openness that is characteristic of all civil societies⁶⁵ - their nurturing of a plurality of forms of life that are themselves experienced as contingent - is arguably at the root of their tendency to violence...civil societies, ideal-typically conceived, are complex and dynamic webs of social institutions in which the opacity of the social ensemble - citizens' inability to conceive, let alone grasp, the totality of social life - combined with the chronic uncertainty of key aspects of life (employment and investment patterns, who will govern after the next elections, the contingent identity of one's self and one's household) makes their members prone to stress, anxiety and revenge. All modern civil societies are caught in the grip of what Heinrich von Kleist called the 'fragile constitution of the world.' (Keane, 114-115)

Where, however, for Homeric society the hammer of violence was thought to sound the links binding the human (aristocrat) to the divine, for post-Enlightenment society, lacking that assurance, rational freedom hangs in a delicate balance with the greater metaphysical doubts that it, like a joiner, frames. But this expression of the problem is only half correct. Given that 'the desubstantialized subject of freedom is the 'negative slope' of an absence in the symbolic order,' it would be as correct to say that chronic uncertainties are that limit to meaning which frames rational freedom, and that which rationality ever seeks to acquire purchase on - "Fear has nearly always been more powerful than the desire for freedom" (Zeldin, 8). The originating and legitimating
foundation for the principle of reason being ultimately mysterious - what makes the law lawful, morality moral, and reason reasonable are questions that in the twilight of the Enlightenment are raised once again - means that the rule of rational norms will henceforward necessitate the additional catalyst of the conscious application of will, which for all its efforts will be forever unable to account for that 'outside' of discursive rationality - logically second but existentially first - that makes it possible. As Anthony Cascardi writes

Goya's patent criticism of the persistence of archaism within the enlightened world in the Caprichos ...[is not a] revelation from an implicitly enlightened stance of the failure of the (modern) Enlightenment fully to penetrate (archaic) Spain, but rather...an indication of the Enlightenment's failure to subsume completely the authority of sacred institutions and thereby...a challenge to the Enlightenment's image of its own authority through a reminder of the fact that reason has origins at all. (196)

Cascardi goes on to note that the standard interpretation of Goya's Truth Rescued by Time, Witnessed by History (1797-1798) as "an allegory of the Enlightenment as a self-validating historical field in which truth is 'saved' for modern culture by history, scientifically conceived" is plagued by problems, the first of which being that this interpretation of the painting, whose dark recesses are populated with a train of bat-owls that echo 'El sueño de la razón,' "fails to ask why truth would need to be rescued at all" (196). Cascardi remarks that "it seems on closer inspection that this painting tells not of time's saving power but of the vulnerability of truth to temporality," and, I might add, of the necessity of art to pose such dilemmas (ibid.). Goya returns to this question decades later in the context of the dark years of Spanish reaction (1814-1820) following the victory of the monarchist forces (known as the serviles) in the Peninsular War. Even before he entered Madrid, Ferdinand VII issued a decree annulling the constitution of 1812, invoking the death penalty for all who swore allegiance to it in word, writing or deed; upon his arrival the Inquisition was revived, all public evidence of the word 'Constitución' erased, and a witch hunt against liberals and afrancesados instituted. After the Inquisition had gotten wind of his Nude Maja (c. 1800-1805, in the possession of Godoy) Goya himself was called forward for 'purification.' In Disasters #79 and 80, 'Murió la verdad' ('Truth dies') and ¿Si resucitará?' ('Will she rise again?'), the bulk of the witnesses to these scenes are a series of masked and hooded clerics one of whom with a dog/cat face raises a huge open book over his head as if to cast it upon the corpse, while
another kneels over the not yet dead body brandishing a cudgel; a woman with a pair of scales collapsed in one hand covers her face with the other.

Enlightened reason's rupture with archaism will be forever incomplete because should Enlightened reason achieve 'final' success it would then have lost its mandate of bringing the archaic under control; put in other terms "the impossibility of complete secularization derives from the ineradicability of evil" (Cascardi, 204). And in fact we have seen over the course of its history since the Renaissance that modern reason continually re-invents itself through its ever new formulations of its antitheses - superstition, deviation, and abnormality. And just as the age of the institutionalization of rationality has seen a fast-breeding of new forms of fear, so too has their been a proliferation of new modes of violence. The latest edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes somewhat ruefully that the word 'violence' is "[n]ow used in political contexts with varying degrees of appropriateness," and cites a (London) *Daily Telegraph* commentary on the Labour Party Congress of October 5 1984: "much violence was done to the word violence, which it appears can be used to describe almost anything you do not care for." Should this be surprising when the same fate has befallen its nominal antithesis: "Anyone today may use a word such as *freedom* to mean everything under the sun. It is a concept which now has the intrinsic value of Weimar Republic paper money" (Saul 1992, 575). It is to be recalled that until recently (the termination of the Cold War is instrumental here) 'freedom' and 'violence' or 'terror' were widely employed as epithets for political systems one despised or admired.

**The horizontal society**

I spoke earlier of a transform in the metaphysical regimen of the eighteenth century fin de siècle from *theos* to *agnostos*. This transposition plays itself out on the level of social organization as movement from a vertical to a horizontal society. The vertical society, ideal-typically, is founded upon the 'substantiality' of the subject (and none more so than the sovereign whose body subsumes all others), a quasi-corporeality, and synecdochic (or family) ties; the subject takes his or her place as a link within a vertical hierarchy of estates, stations, or ranks culminating in the sovereign, worldly representative of God, who rules over human society by divine right. In this theological and organic conception of order each and every link, as Pope expressed it in his *Essay on Man* (1734), was essential: "From Nature's chain whatever link you strike, / Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike." In practical terms this 'great chain of being' and authority was attenuated at its nethermost extremes, meaning that the sovereign did not at first possess the machinery necessary to police its fringes. However, as the institutions
and linkages of rational 'universal' knowledge and absolutism took hold and root, these fringes were secured and incorporated within the order, and a tacit network of horizontal relations was built up that the horizontal society would take as its ruling paradigm. In terms of the law, the vertical society was characterized by an opacity of foundations and a transparency of punishments. Royal edicts arbitrarily proclaimed into law whatever the sovereign deemed necessary to social order (presumably there were dictated to him by God), and certain punishments were meted out in public spectacles of supplication and grace in which the criminal was as it were 'ingested' into the royal body in a kind of inverted communion.

In the horizontal society much of this changes. The horizontal order takes as its foundation the 'empty' subject who exists as a formal and insubstantial entity in a lateral chain of displacements in which no particular link is essential. Because the notion of the horizontal order is much more of a purely intellectual concept, the individual, while becoming more and more valued in his or her own right, is also somewhat anonymous, freed from the binding ties of station, rank, and family, and thus also much more expendable. Building upon Enlightenment metaphors, the horizontal society views itself in terms of the egalitarianism of light:

society is to be enlightened; light is to shine on all society, and thereby eliminate all the areas of darkness; the entire topography of caves and crags, mountains and valleys where shadows are cast, dark deeds committed, and diabolical plots hatched, is to be leveled. Accordingly society will form a single smooth surface, where everyone will be visible to everyone else and where conformity to the law will result from continuous surveillance. (Singer, 285)

In terms of the law, solar egalitarianism means that the citizen-subject is not only theorized as equal before the law, but 'behind' it as well, "according to which everyone participates, in principle equally, in the formulation and carrying out of the law" (287, footnote). Juries, elected representatives, and a notion that the instruments of the law are hollow vessels into which the force of law is temporarily invested, all come to the fore; the police which apprehend, the courts which prosecute, and the prison which executes the criminal are all conceived as anonymous and transparent bodies whose real source of authority is the law as constituted by 'the sovereignty of the people.' And, in a circular fashion, the people's legitimacy to promulgate laws is undergirded by a notion of the law as investing them with that right:

One consequence of this 'horizontal' positioning, which should be noted, was that the law, and the societal order that it was to establish, could no longer be inverted,
only overthrown... the legal order was held to define not just a societal order but 'society' itself. In the utopian longings of the revolutionaries, law and society were to be co-equivalent; the law was to constitute society, the pure product of a legislative project; while society thus constituted was to be so designed as to uphold the 'sovereignty of the law' and its rigors. (290)

The horizontal society differs from the vertical in another crucial respect as well: its rhetoric of criminality, unlike the vertical notions of digestion and consumption, operates a "vocabulary of expulsion"67 from the popular centre of sovereignty, and of reform, in which the criminal is temporarily folded back, beyond the city walls and outside the law, into the bosom of the state and legally reconstituted as 'social' (284). Singer charts the development of this horizontal mode through an analysis of social violence in Paris before and after the 'September massacres' of 1792. Prior to this date, notes Singer, popular violence mimicked Ancien Régime practices of public mutilation and display, and Singer suggests that because this was the method of choice, popular violence, while gruesome, was quantitatively limited. With the September massacres, however, an entirely new mode comes to the fore. While this outbreak was at first characterized by the random acts of violence of the previous sort, they soon became highly organized affairs, directed largely against the inmates of the prisons and the gens sans aveu, petty thieves, prostitutes, vagabonds, etc. Kangaroo courts were set up, for the most part in the courtyards of the prisons, and the accused were subject to the formalities of an improvised court and legal 'proceedings.' If found guilty, the victims were thrown into an adjacent courtyard where they were hacked to death by a mob and their bodies left heaped until they could transported en masse to places of burial on the outskirts of the city. In fact, these trials passed by largely unnoticed by the greater populace, who only became aware of the magnitude of the carnage after repeated processions of corpse-filled carts wound their way from the urban centre to the rural periphery. According to Singer, although authorities from the National Assembly attempted to intervene, they did so belatedly and only half-heartedly; they real motive being to distance themselves from the affair. Singer sees here not the culmination of popular violence, but rather its coming to an end in "the transformation of popular violence into 'popular justice,'" a transition that prepares the way for the Terror to come: "the official Terror follows the pattern set by the September massacres, where spectacle was abandoned for efficiency" (281-282).

Contrary to popular belief, while the Terror began its operations in the central squares of Paris, as it proceeded its loci of execution migrated to the periphery of the city, and in its final days (the Grand Terror) it was, exactly like the September massacres, confined to prison courtyards: "the violence that purged those who had been excluded was itself to be
expelled from the realms of general social visibility” (286). After the Terror had subsided, deportations replaced mass executions (Janes, 260; footnote).

An important sub-narrative to this rationalization of social violence, is the growing consciousness of the tenuousness of the law. It is one of the fortuitous coincidences of history that the year 1789 marks both the advent of the French Revolution and the invention of that infamous decollation device that bore the name of its designer, Dr. Joseph Ignace Guillotin. The good doctor had been motivated by humanitarian concerns to find a way of executing prisoners with the least amount of pain and cruelty and the maximum efficiency and objectivity, all of which for the doctor and his compatriots signified justice. As the *Ancien Moniteur* noted upon viewing a test run of the apparatus, with the guillotine the act of decapitation became anonymous “comme la loi” (in Janes, 253). The National Assembly voted to adopt the device in 1791 (although it was not brought into use until 1792) after debates on the reformation of the penal code, during which it was decided, among other things, that differential sentences based on social rank were to be abolished. In line with the Assembly's desire for legal egalitarianism, decapitation, previously the prerogative of the nobility, was to be extended to all criminals convicted of capital offences. In addition to the humanitarian and egalitarian motives for its adoption, however, there was the third consideration of the recurrent outbreaks of mob violence, particularly disconcerting to the liberal aristocrats and bourgeoisie that made up the bulk of the Constituent Assembly. Although some argued that a decapitation machine would incite the populace, others argued that it "would control the exercise of popular violence and restore control over violence to more conventional custodians" (Janes, 253). And indeed the guillotines’ cumbersome lack of portability, their weight and scarcity, in addition to the humanitarian and egalitarian motives, not to mention the sheer fascination of the deadly efficient mechanism, all contributed to the ‘reigning in’ of popular justice under state control. In time the guillotine caught fire in the popular imagination as the perfect instrument of 'the people's justice' - efficient, rational, swift, preserving the individuality of the victim, but anonymous ‘comme la loi.’ Janes points out that during its heyday, the populace’s fondness for 'their' legal instrument resulted in a plethora of nicknames - *la veuve* (the widow), *la Petite Louison* (a Dr. Louis was appointed by the assembly to look into Dr. Guillotin's invention), *Louissette*; popular representations of the guillotine soon surfaced, in the form of paperweights, toys, even hair ornaments and earrings.

Janes suggests that this popular assent and celebration of the instrument of the law, and particularly its power to constitute what had hitherto not existed, *le peuple*, was
a function of the popular appropriation and inversion of the royal prerogative "to take and to display heads":

When the sovereign displays a head, he shows it not to his equals but to his people. They are the objects of that display, both as raw material and as audience. Their heads are the heads that are elevated and it is they who must learn the lesson taught by them. When the rabble cut off the heads of the king's officers, they have redefined themselves as the sovereign people. Literally and physically, they have seized the ultimate power of the sovereign. Instead of learning, they teach...Article 3 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen declared that the people were 'the source of sovereignty.' But taking a head transforms the *menu peuple* from the passive 'source of sovereignty' to the active executor of sovereign power. (245-246)

In taking the head of the king the Revolution enacted a kind of ritual sacrifice transposing the sanctity of the vertical order onto the legitimacy of the horizontal; it is perhaps for this reason that many revolutionary images are ornamented with the Masonic level topped by the floppy headgear, the *pileus*, as a kind of anonymous artist's seal. One can't help seeing in the Masonic level an inverted image of the guillotine blade.69 However, notes Singer, with the spread of the Terror into greater and greater reaches of French society, the circular constitution of the people by the law and the law by the people, guarantee of the horizontal order's legitimacy, began to show signs of stress.

To be sure, this revolutionary apotheosis of the law could not last. For the law retained a trace of its transcendence: by its very rationality and visibility, by the very fact that it *demanded* obedience, it could never be identical to society. And as it became all to [sic] obvious that the hold of the law was (necessarily) weak, the imperative was to discover the 'real' society, the society beneath the laws, constituted of a deeper order barely visible to the social actors, an order located, at least in part, outside the self-conscious workings of their rational faculties. (290)

This opening up of the strata of social constitution to investigation brought forth new awarenesses not only bearing on the psychic well-springs of social behaviour, but also a new interrogation about the relation for society between 'is' and 'ought,' and a new understanding of the dialectical relation between surface and depth, and internal and external phenomena. Reflections of these kinds - supplementing, of course, revulsion at the frenzy of slaughter - brought into focus the issue of the status of the law, of where one was to situate the "legalized violence that establishes the boundaries" of criminality (291). Having begun by justifying the recourse to violence as the expression of the will of the
people, antecedent to every positive law, the Revolution found itself in the Terror increasingly unable to distinguish revolutionary virtue or popular justice from wholesale massacre: in Robespierre's famous words "La vertu, sans laquelle la Terreur est fausse, la Terreur sans laquelle la vertu est impuissante" (in Baczko, 81).

In order to carry out violence against its own members, theoretically all equal before and behind the law, the revolutionary horizontal society found itself having to contort its own self-definitions. Baczko notes that during the heyday of the Terror, the revolutionary rhetoric of the state underwent a profound change: it ceased to talk in terms of specificities and embraced instead a kind of wooden verbiage of glorification:

the other face of the discourse of the Terror [which is 'a discourse of fear'] is the exaltation of the Revolution and Virtue...A hackneyed language was cobbled together by means of symbolic allegories of revolutionary fervour...[characterized by] the total evacuation of the concrete and the quotidian in favour of symbolic periphrases like, for example, 'The unshakeable Mountain that purges from the soil of France the odious.' (83-84)

Here we are witness to the time honoured tradition of verbal attacks on the legitimacy of one's opponents as the preamble to open hostility. Thus, before it could subject its 'enemies' to the sanctions of the state, the revolutionary government had first to ontologically redesignate them from social 'intemals' to 'extemal' to the law. It is here that promulgations like the 17 September 1793 'Law of Suspicion,' in which a legalized network of surveillance and denunciations was established, become important as indexes of not merely the 'official Terror' but of the as it were nine-tenths of the iceberg hidden from view that the official climate of terror and suspicion create. And of course such climates and legalistic *legers de main* naturally placed the 'authorities' themselves in a precarious position.

Within the *Ancien Régime* things were clear. The violence of power was presumed necessary, the very reflection of its strength. As power moved ever deeper into the lower regions of the hierarchy, the recourse to violence was deemed increasingly necessary to enforce what could only be a minimal, grudging obedience. Moreover, power made itself visible through its violence; it had to appear spectacular and arbitrary (capable of terrible deeds, but also, acts of grace) if it was to mark its distance from common mortals. It was only when the nation was sovereign, and power was said to emerge from society at large, that its violence, at least when directed internally, would appear as weakness, the sign of a division internal to its source. (Singer, 291-292)
This dawning awareness in horizontal society that violence against its own members constitutes a debilitating flaw in its claims for moral legitimacy is the point of origin and departure for a new dynamics of politico-social violence founded upon a logic of exclusion. The sequestration of public executions in the early nineteenth century, state-sponsored eugenics programs, and the phenomena of *disparecidos*, in which attempts were made to remove from existence the very sites of violence, are all linked by Singer to a notion of the double exclusion of violence from public view.

[Where modern states have been violent, they have almost invariably sought to cover the extension of their violence with the simultaneous removal of that violence from the sight of and, more generally, intercourse with society. Indeed, one might read the history of state violence since the French Revolution as continuously attempting to improve on this logic [of exclusion]. (292)]

Given this dynamic, both anti-state terrorists and advocates of the abolition of the death penalty have sought (obviously in completely different ways) to insure that acts of violence achieve widespread publicity.

**Bound, blinded, and broken**

Baroque allegory sees the corpse only from the outside...[the modern] sees it also from the inside

Walter Benjamin

He is directly in front of us, in our sights as it were, though he does not face us. He is bound, blinded, and by the hang of his head, almost or already broken. In fact, he is not alone; but, like all the others, each tied to his individual destiny-stake, the series of which snakes into the distance, he might as well be. For the expansiveness of space - and by implication, of time: the sun is setting or rising - funnelling out behind him is about to collapse like the comrade at his feet. The example is a hard one. A funnel looks two ways: into the bottle, which once filled is stopped up, crated off and shelved, and out into the world, from whence flows the sweetness of life. Paradoxically, from the ampleness of the solar orbit way out yonder converging down and in towards the bound man, his twisted comrade, and the pool of blood that seeps towards us, the geometry of the print situates us 'in here' looking up and out, 'out there'; paradoxical because it is he who is bound, and we who are at liberty, under no compulsion, aimless. Be that as it may, the ritual of daybreak or day's end is well on its way, and nothing will change that: he is going nowhere in this world, save, perhaps, into the fosse behind him - 'Y no hai remedio' ('And there is no remedy').
Traditionally conceived, fate is binding, and it binds one to some concept of verticality and some specific notion of one’s place in that order. Here in a world ever so horizontal, in which the sun itself has been brought low, a world whose summits stop just there immediately above the upright post, as if measured by it, fate must be something uncalled for, excessive, like a seeing man in the country of the blind. Yet the bound man appears bound to, by, and for his fate - thrice over. Literally, 'bound to' the stake to which his arms are tied behind his back; modally, 'bound by' the summary judgment of a rough justice and rifle barrel - this is 'it'; and figuratively, as if 'for glory,' in that if by virtue of the literal and modal bonds he is not going anywhere, then it is perhaps in the vertical direction that he will pass. But then again he could be a traitor, deserter, or spy, and thus bound for the damnation of the faithful - as if that mattered; and in the horizontal society of 'empty,' anonymous, and expendable subjects, whose interiority is nevertheless theoretically highly valued, all that is supposed to matter is life, the rest being, literally, im-material. Hence the sense of a breakneck, ontological, buckling. Primo Levi has written that among the prisoners of his acquaintance, the 'believers' constituted a group apart because "their universe was vaster than ours, more extended in space and time, above all more comprehensible...Sorrow in them or around them, was decipherable and therefore did not overflow into despair" (1989b, 146). Now, here, with an immanent death scheduled to arrive momentarily, and departing with it all just as quickly, bound for oblivion, one suspects the bound man's single obliterating thought is fear for his life. Perhaps it all came to casually, by hazard, wandering into the wrong place at the wrong time, and his death, thus, will be nothing more than a kind of cosmic black joke. In truth, however, we really don't know what he is thinking; and anyone privy to his final thoughts is probably already dead. In the early nineteenth century, in the dawn of the age of mass mobilization and mechanized slaughter, a word is coined to express for us the bound man's fate, and that of millions like him: he is a 'casualty,' a by-product of war. 'Y no hai remedio.'

The excessive weight of these mortal considerations, on the one hand, which remain locked in a kind of private strong box for keepsakes without a key, and the casualness, on the other hand, with which the bound man will be accounted an historical statistic, is blinding; and it pulls us plummeting, headlong into a narrow and bottomless abyss. At high speeds on a narrow roadway or railway bed the oblique angles of one's lateral vision cave in, and the countryside through which you pass becomes a blinding blur as the whole world appears to funnel into the unsteady image of the way ahead on which you are as if magnetically, inertially, transfixed. The same is true of falling, and if you happen to be falling backwards then the lateral world collapses around the image
from which you recede. Most post-Renaissance, perspectival figurative art has this kind of effect on the viewer for its method is one of channeling and translating the lines of geometric force, what Leonardo called the visual cone, into mental and visual attention. By means of such techniques the imaged world appears to emanate from the central figure or scene of the representation and his or her or its emotional reality. Where there is a central figure, the fact that they (or a surrogate, sometimes an image of the artist) face us, means that visual or mental attention is further focussed into insight, both in terms of the imaged subject’s self-awareness which can be ‘read’ in the temper of their gaze (even if it does not intersect with ours), and of our own insight into they who are offered up by art to us. In ‘Y no hai remedio’ this stopping-down of attention translates into a kind of vertigo, first and foremost because the subject is blind, or rather, blindness.

The bound man is literally blinded. He does not care to witness what is about to happen, and even if he did, he could not for his eyes have been sealed, a prefiguration of the lead that has reduced the sight of his fallen comrade to a viscous blur across the upper portion of his face. Perhaps the bound man is already blind with his predecessor’s blood, sopped up by the blindfold stripped from his corpse and now knotted around the bound man’s head. ‘Modally,’ he has been blinded as well by what we might call the force of circumstances. “[T]he prisoner felt overwhelmed by a massive edifice of violence and menace,” writes Primo Levi, “but could not form for himself a representation of it because his eyes were fixed to the ground by every single minute’s needs” (1989b, 17).

Given that a survivor benefits from a privileged point observation on the events which he has survived, his perspective, notes Levi, “if only because it was higher up and hence took in a more extensive horizon... was to a greater or lesser degree also falsified by the privilege itself” (1989b, 18). This is of course doubly true for Goya, who in all probability only heard of events such as these through hearsay, but is able to bring them to our attention through the force of imagination and technique. This is made explicit in plate #44, ‘Yo lo vi’ (‘I saw it’), in which a frenzied crowd catches sight of something outside the frame of the print, something that remains to us unseen, but whose power operates upon the crowd like a lodestone upon iron filings, magnetizing the swirl of chaos into lines of flight between which we can read the workings of terror. In ‘Y no hai remedio’ the force of circumstance that has modally blinded the bound man is amplified and colored by analogy to encroach upon our own vantage point, for the point of view of the plate is neither one of self-representation nor of survival. Just whose point of view it is is a crucial question we will come to anon, but first let us address the third strata of blinding, the figurative, for it leads directly to it.
Perhaps the single most salient structuring trope of the plate is its seriality. Not only is it part, #15, of a series, originally entitled *Fatales consecuencias de la sangrienta guerra en España con Buonaparte y otros caprichos enfáticos en 85 estampas* (The Fatal consequences of the bloody war in Spain against Bonaparte and other emphatic caprices in 85 plates), but the image is itself characterized by a constancy of repetition whose stable centre is the (nominally) whole victim to be, bound and blinded. The two parallel lines of seriality, that of the prisoners bound to their stakes, and that of the soldiers taking aim against them, are truncated; neither suite of figures can be followed to its conclusion because the two lines converge into the horizon, or so it appears, blocking out our visual access. However, by a visual-geometric sleight of hand, we could just as easily say, and with a similar lack of certainty, that the two lines do not converge towards the horizon but rather vice versa, that the point of the converging series is here, directly in front of us, in the pool of blood at our feet - and it is thus we who occupy the privileged point of termination, geometrically, temporally, and affectively. If a repetition is at work in the print's geometry of affects, then something is awkwardly and profoundly amiss, for the lines of sight we are led to follow, no matter which way they converge, show us a seemingly endless series of bound and blindfolded men who stand helplessly in the sights of a series of musket wielding phalanxes: the great chain of benevolent being has become a headless monster without cause.

The fundamental question it seems to me is: does the series begin here, or are we merely a part of it, the 'it' that continues on *ad infinitum, ad nauseam*? Do we form part of the next phalanx, momentarily turning right to glimpse the last execution before we ourselves take aim; or are we next in line, furtively snatching a glance at our immediate future by turning left, just before we ourselves are blindfolded. Do I belong in or to this event, in or to the larger picture space-time? - or am I merely an onlooker to the whole spectacle? And perhaps even more fundamental, what is the whole - seemingly inferred by the seriality, but at the same time blindingly, infuriatingly escaping comprehension - the whole of which the seen 'it' is but merely a part? Ultimately, what stands behind us, both literally, in the spatial sense, and figuratively in the sense of founding the reasons for any of the answers we give to these questions? We are caught again in the push-me pull-you of apprehension and comprehension, what Benjamin called the "dialectic at a standstill"; something *must*, we feel, lie behind it all, behind us, but we have not eyes in the back of our head, our hands are tied. And yet as soon as we say 'must,' the certainty we feel begins to evaporate, for from whence does that 'must' arise? A series of sightings and a series of blindings, though it is not entirely clear what the soldiers see (there is for us no direct line of sight linking each group and their target; and is that what they see, a
nor how blind the bound men are (need they actually see the eyes of their executers to know what is happening?). One thing seems certain - our looking - and we are transfixed. And what repeats our looking are the groups of soldiers looking down their sights who we can and cannot see (no one group is seen in its entirety), who themselves can and cannot see - why are they doing this? What is more, the objects they sight can and cannot be seen: they are blinded, targets, casualties, hidden by, behind, and within a monstrous serial geometry of conflict.

These blind, bound and broken lines of sight staged here for our benefit constitute what we are literally, modally, and figuratively brought to see, made to witness: the 'Ydioma universal' of a blinded world. 'Y no hai remedio' exposes us to a vision of blindness and the blindness of vision. Coming from the burin of a deaf man this is a startling disclosure. An immense solar disk forms the backdrop, ensign-standard to this image-representation, but does not 'illumine' it. By rights the front of the bound man should be in full shade; and the central stake, rooted deep in the earth like a cosmic gnomon or spindle, casts no shadow; instead, passive, lithic, and inert, it seems to absorb all luminosity without giving any evidence of containing it. What is more, as geometric gnomon, the parallelogram-supplement whose autonomous contours delimit a miniature shadow-image of itself that defines its lack, the stake also gestures towards a verticality and solid coherence of a framing order from which we have been blinded, like a work horse. Significantly, the preliminary version of the print had a priest holding a crucifix standing in front of the bound man offering consolation (as he does in the previous plate, #14 '¡Duro es el paso!' ('Hard is the way!'), gesturing upwards). In place of this image of hope there now lies a mangled corpse.

Blinded, bound, and broken, both soldiers and victims somnambulate as if milling about some grinding stone to which they have seemingly been harnessed, but whose course, while geometrically clear, remains nonetheless a vicious circle. The election of fate has been replaced by the burden of obedience. Plates number 66 and 67 'Extraña devoción!' and 'Esta no lo es menos' ('Strange devotion' and 'This is no less curious') are instructive parallels, as is #70 'No saben el camino' ('They don't know the way'). The first
shows an ass bearing a glass coffin in procession, inside of which lies a corpse, and before which supplicate those whom it passes by; the second shows a human procession of old men entering a church bent double under the weight of plaster relics, only kept from collapse by the aid of canes; in the third procession, snaking over a landscape practically identical to 'And there is no remedy,' the figures are yoked together by a cangue and led by a blind man. A work horse is tamed and blinkered in order that its power may serve a 'higher' or useful purpose; the question here remains precisely that of mastery: who holds the reins, and to what end? And further, by virtue of the fact that the plate's visual geometry chains us into the blind series, it exposes us, photographically as it were. In normal parlance exposition is the privilege of the subject; she or he (as photographer) exposes the object (the plate) to light, to public view in a gallery, to public opinion (media exposure or exposé). Here it is as if the roles have been reversed, our privilege of revealing or concealing ourselves defected, as if we have been returned to an original asymmetry in which after the creation of light, darkness and obscurity assume their priority in the economy of creation: 'And the evening and the morning were the first day' (Genesis 1:5). The fault of a remedy is our anarchic condition of exposure, from which there is no escape. Like echolalia the murmuring caption returns again and again: 'Y no hai remedio' - because we are executant, victim, or witness?; because we cannot see the whole series?, cannot stand far enough outside it to comprehend it all? Our inability to bring resolution to these questions fixes us, or rather fixes upon us, the inert spindle at the image's heart.

A mechanical lathe is comprised of two shafts that support the work: one, the 'live spindle' on the headstock, rotates with and imparts motion to the piece being worked; the second, the 'dead spindle' on the tailstock, remains motionless. If the upright post to which the bound man is fixed is the dead spindle around or against which this work turns, the live spindle is the fasces of rifle barrels that erupt into the frame at eye level, stage right. This abrupt and commanding fragment-moment - fragments are "reveal[ed]...to be moments of visual attention" (Koerner, 186) - is motile and determining, both in the sense of demarcating a limit and decisive; and it complements those rifles stocks cut off from their barrels wielded by the phalanx of soldiers upstage. But where the truncated rifle stocks of that upstage group serve to image a blindness that for us appears to lie within the scene and within those 'subjects' - i.e., to image their desubjectification, and dehumanization; they, or rather, 'it' acts as a single body upon a 'target,' not a human being - the barrels without agents stage right cut into the representation, as if surgically, from somewhere 'without,' and set it into, or set into it a kind of motion of menace. If one blacks out in one's mind those barrels, the print becomes more open ended, unreserved,
assured and almost comfortable in its frame. With the eruption of those muzzles, a reservation is placed upon this world bearing upon a "kind of infinity, which has no center, no beginning, and no end, necessarily impl[ying] that whatever we single out can be nothing but a fragment" (Licht 1979, 142).

The inert and hollow centre at the heart of the image also extends to the serial 'whole.' The Disasters opens with the plate 'Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de acontecer' ('Sad presentments of what is to come'), showing us a dark keep in which a kneeling prisoner in rags looks up and out of the picture frame as if in supplication; behind him in the obscure reaches of the space hover a series of Goya's trademark 'over-etched' phantom figures. The foreboding that this overture holds out as a pledge, is, in an anonymous and serial fashion, delivered upon and enumerated over the course of the remaining 84 plates, but it is neither accounted for, nor 'answered.' The series winds down somewhat logically, given its lateral and a-climatic logic, with seven 'an-eschatological,' 'ana-catastrophic' images. Neither first nor last things, these seven delineate a kind of steady-state of the interruption of the serial.74

The disaster ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact...We are on the edge of disaster without being able to situate it in the future: it is rather always already past, and yet we are on the edge or under the threat, all formulations which would imply the future - that which is yet to come - if the disaster were not that which does not come, that which has put a stop to every arrival. (Blanchot 1986, 1)

These seven image-days of disaster are: the death of Truth (#79 'Murió la verdad'), whose preterite finality is immediately followed by the pendulous '¿Si resucitará?' ('Will she rise again?'); the 'Fiero monstro' ('Wild Monster') of war, a kind of colossal onager that lying prone either disgorges up or gorges upon a heap of human carcasses; 'Esto es lo veradero' ('This is all that matters'), whose bucolic imagery and radiant sunburst, while appearing to be wildly out of synch with the 'fatal consequences' of the ensemble, are in fact belied by the counter-illumination (the man facing the sun is shrouded in a pall of darkness while the woman with her back to it is flood lit) and the unsettling side-long glance she throws our way as she receives him; and the final suite of three wretchedly chained prisoners ('La seguridad de un reo no exige tormento,' 'Tan barbara la seguridad como el delito,' and 'Si es delinguente, qe muera presto').75 It is as if in traversing the piteous, horizontal surface of events from one end to the other we have come full circle to an image of the incessant interruption of the serial universe even darker and more despairing than that from which we set out. Even more abhorrent than the specific atrocities we have witnessed on this
journey, is the numbing notion that within these horizons transgression has become normalized: "Over and over again we are shocked more by the impartial, heedless manner in which people go about the business of killing or burying or witnessing starvation than we are by the killing itself" (Licht 1979, 148). The vertical idea at the heart of cynosure - from the Greek kynós oura; the 'dog's tail' (constellation) pointing to the pole star - has been vitiated and transposed, become a nebule of unending substitutions whose apparent signification is inscribed on the parchment the decomposing corpse of plate 69 holds in its hand: 'Nada.' All of the foregoing is as if drawn into focus by the blinding and motile fragment of the gun barrels without agents. Like a shadow projected from somewhere 'without,' whose formative light source and object-body we cannot see, they rear up and into this world, exposing us to some blind set of constitutive limits.

Anthony Cascardi has linked Goya's frame rupturing tropes to a reflection on the ethical limits of Kantian subjectivity. Kant, notes Cascardi, fragments the world of experience and thought into a series of domains, proposing that each corresponds to a framing power that inheres in and constitutes the ethical subject of the Enlightenment.

This epistemo-ethics develops upon the notion that the ethical can be seen as a function of a systematic framing power which, prior to the work of practical reason regulates and controls the division among the various fields or 'faculties' within which specific obligations arise...there is a concealed or unwritten but nonetheless recognizable ethic - a governing frame, a principle of internal regulation and control - at work within each of the separate spheres addressed by Kant: pure reason, practical reason, aesthetic judgment, and history. These spheres reflect the various modes of authority under which actions may be construed as having meaningful purposes or ends...The ethical expectation implicit in the culture of the Enlightenment is that the competing claims of each of these fields might somehow be acknowledged, if not actually resolved, in the formation of a neutral public space. (194-195)

According to Cascardi while Kantian philosophy recognizes that if ethics is to be ethical it must acknowledge the inherent limits of each sphere, it is bedeviled by the question of how to articulate the relations between domains, and particularly so when faced with "actions that inherently exceed any framework within which their ends and authority may be framed" (195). In order to overcome these obstacles Kant sought to anatomize how in each domain procedures of representation and reason allow one to elevate oneself over and above the specifics proper to that domain and reach the sublimation of emotions proper to the disinterest of universal judgments. However, notes Cascardi, with the Goyaesque image we are exposed to the predicament that every
attempt to establish an ethics by implicating the viewer simply by virtue of his stance *external* to the work...results in an even more troubling dilemma than one might ordinarily expect from images of destruction and war. Through a technique that uncannily anticipates the way in which mechanically reproduced images will be cropped or cut in the photographic or cinematic fields, the force of the frame in such works is not simply to indict the viewer but to implicate art itself in the very violence it helps to disclose. Thus rather than read Goya's efforts...as claiming access to the universal perspective that would allow him to criticize society as a whole - it would seem more accurate to say that the ethical possibilities revealed in them must be calculated from the relationship between the 'subject' of painting and the implicit violence that the exercise of any autonomous framing-power would create. (197)

According to the Kantian notion of secularization, the archaic sources of authority - "sheer aberrations of a reason going beyond its proper limits and that too for a purpose fancied to be moral" - are envisaged as ultimately subject (and inevitably succumbing) to the controlling force of a disinterested reason operating upon innate principles of moral obligation and self-regulation - "criticism alone can sever the root of materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking, fanaticism, and superstition" (Kant in Cascardi, 201). Yet the connection coupling the proper exercise of reason and moral praxis is a quasi religious, a priori principle, undeterred by and ultimately disinterested in its consequences. Kantian reason presupposes a good in itself which we are as if universally bound to, by, and for: "'The good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes or because of its adequacy to achieve some proposed end,' writes Kant; 'it is good only because of its willing, i.e., it is good of itself'" (Cascardi, 201). This notion of an innately good reason (as a sort of ideal and morally superior scythe) whose works and workings are transparent to all who take the trouble to discover them, this notion renders our collective enlightenment an as if effortless 'already,' something all ready to happen, with any notion of struggle, transition, achievement or set back already assigned the role of the vanquished. Goya's imaginative riposte to this notion of Enlightenment without mediation, a notion he and his circle embraced, at least until the coming of the French and Spanish Revolutions - "Events of 1808 in Spain approach in intensity those in France during the Terror" (Herr 1965, 157) - is the *Disasters*, the fatal consequences, in which 'With reason or without it' (plate #2) we are exposed to the fact that the archaic sources of authority will not so easily give up the ghost. Against his peers, against Kant (of whom he could not have known), against perhaps something even in himself, the *Disasters* speak in a charged visual idiom of the folly and naïveté of believing that, as the U. S. Declaration
of Independence trumpets, such reasoned principles are 'self-evident.' And it challenges that secular faith not only on the level of content - see what has become of your (my?) cherished ideals: 'Truth dies,' 'Will she rise again?' - but also, and in particular, hermeneutically. How can you make sense of these 'facts' that stand so much taller, nay that pygmy those ideals. What is in question is not only the world we believed in, however unreal it was, but our, my identity, my deep sense of rightness, humanity, and 'redemption.' Under a black sun, in a black mass, with a pickaxe for a monstrance, 'Did you (did I?) really believe that fanaticism and radical evil were merely 'sheer aberrations of a reason going beyond its proper limits,' that 'criticism alone [the pretensions of that adverb!] could sever the root of materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking, fanaticism and superstition'?

Sublime apprehension and comprehension

As Edmund Burke...puts it, we love the beautiful as what submits to us, while we fear the sublime as what we must submit to. Frances Ferguson

The import of Cascardi's contention that Goya's frame-rupturing tropes implicate art itself in the very violence it helps to disclose becomes clearer when viewed from the perspective of the sublime. Recall that, according to Kant the pleasure of judgment stems not from the thing judged but rather from the manner in which I present that thing to my judgment, which is to say, ultimately from the act of judgment itself. In the special case of the sublime, however, this representation to myself is dogged by the magnitude of the thing, a magnitude that not only surpasses my ability to represent the specific 'it,' but even vitiates my ability to represent 'the overwhelming.' However, this impotence is only a preliminary and seeming paradox, because as Kant emphasizes it the staging of the sublime reflects upon a fear and a power that inheres not in the object represented but in the subjectivity representing: "We must seek a ground external to ourselves for the beautiful of nature, but seek it for the sublime merely in ourselves and in our attitude of thought" (Kant 1790 [§23]; in F. Ferguson, 6). Dividing his analysis of the sublime into the 'Mathematical Sublime' and the 'Dynamically Sublime', Kant opens the latter category with the subheading 'Of Nature regarded as Power' where he writes:

Power [Macht] is an ability that is superior to great obstacles. It is called dominance [Gewalt] if it is superior even to the resistance of something that itself possesses power. When in an aesthetic judgment we consider nature as a power that has no dominance over us, then it is dynamically sublime.

(Critique of Judgment §28; in Huhn, 270)
As Huhn points out, Kant envisages here two forms of power; first *Macht* (strength, might, power, authority), a power of nature 'superior to great obstacles,' but which is ultimately tameable, and in fact subdued, by a second and even more superior power, the supreme power to *overpower* power - *Macht* raised to a higher power: *Macht*\(^*\) or *Gewalt* (power, authority, force, violence). In purely Kantian terms we can say that there must be a fearful power outside representation in order that we may experience the revelation that we can overpower it, in order that we may represent to ourselves in an act of judgment *our* power over it, both of which reflect upon Reason:

> [in] the intuition of nature, reason infallibly intervenes, as the faculty of expressing the independence of absolute totality, and generates the unsuccessful effort of the mind to make the representation of the senses adequate to these [ideas]. This effort - and the feeling of the unattainability of the idea by means of the imagination - is itself a presentation of the subjective purposiveness of our mind in the employment of the imagination for its supersensible destination and forces us, subjectively, to *think* nature itself in its totality as a presentation of something supersensible, without being able *objectively* to arrive at this presentation. (Kant 1790 [§29], 108)

In more modern terms we may redescribe this dynamic of powers as a narrative of self-preservation and self-identification, in which a fearful and absolute power within us is projected onto nature in order that we may rehearse a desire to overcome our own fear and to dominate that absolute; and this self-mastery constitutes both aesthetic pleasure properly speaking and the individual's pleasure of "identify[ing] himself...[of] attach[ing] himself to a consciousness of his own individuality" (F. Ferguson, 6).

However, as both Ferguson and Huhn recognize, this process of self-mastery is on the one hand only partial, because we feel an endless need to repeat it. If only in theory, we ought to become acclimatized to these fears, but this is patently not the case; that we continually return to them suggests both that the victory over fear and/or that the current of pleasure and power (*Gewalt*) that in our victory over fear surges through us, is never total or absolute because there is always some inapprehensible remainder of fear and desire to be mastered and possessed. The sublime thus oscillates between feelings of enormity and totality and inherent insufficiency, is forever asymptotic, for to actually grasp the sublime would surpass our ability to understand it. In the dynamic of the sublime we are as if intoxicated by a totality - 'reason intervenes as the faculty expressing the independence of absolute totality' - bearing upon our fear and desire to domesticate the infinite within. Like the comprehension of infinity and the dialectic of desire, the dynamic of the sublime is forever marked by two movements, that of being overwhelmed
by fear, a 'distancelessness' of self-effacement, and the magical insertion of a distance where there was none, a distance that brings to self-consciousness the knowledge of being overwhelmed that issues in feelings of mastery and pleasure that are in Kantian terms properly aesthetic. In fact this distancing, substituting pain for pleasure, is also the work of culture - as can be seen, for example, in 'Outward Bound' isolation ceremonials, where maturity is accomplished through self-mastery, the act of judgment that ensures our (self-) dominance.77

For Huhn, the judgment proper to Kantian self-mastery raises the notion of self-preservation and self-identity to a meta-level through violence and domination. Not only is it "the record of our having overreached ourselves...[our judging] even that which is beyond reason itself...[but] this judgment is also the founding of the self. We realize and found the self in that moment when we judge that which is beyond the self" (Huhn. 272). This founding, notes Huhn, entails the collapse of a series of fundamental distinctions: between 'us' and 'it,' between "nature as fearful and the fear of nature," and between the civilized and the barbarian, "the collapse of the distinction between self as nature and self as superior to nature" (ibid.). But this buckling also entails the elevation of the brute preservation of the species to the idea of self-preservation as the foundation of self and society:

though the irresistibility of nature's power makes us, considered as natural beings, recognize our physical impotence, it reveals in us at the same time an ability to judge ourselves independent of nature that is the basis of a self-preservation of a quite different kind from the one that can be assailed and endangered by nature outside us. This keeps the humanity in our person from being degraded, even though a human being would have to succumb to that dominance [of nature]. (Kant 1790 [§28]; in Huhn, 272-273; emphasis added)

As Huhn points out, the principle underlying this dynamic, the exchange of one form of self-preservation bearing upon the human being for another and ideal form of self-preservation bearing upon humanity, is somewhat paradoxical. As Kant expresses it "[t]he imagination...acquires an expansion and a power that surpasses the one it sacrifices...[it is] seized by amazement bordering on terror, by horror and a sacred thrill" (Kant 1790 [§29]; in Huhn, 273). For Huhn this Möbius-like, sacrificial logic operates in terms of an economy of scarcity and abundance:

What prompts the imagination to first give up its power is the recognition of an economy of utter scarcity. The imagination is reduced to complete powerlessness in the face of a nature so abundant that it cannot, initially, even be presented as
overwhelming - that is, its abundance is inconceivable...But...this is no simple exchange, for it is not the case that the nothingness of the self is merely exchanged for the sheer abundance of an overwhelming nature...The sublime self surpasses both itself and the overwhelming nature for which it sacrificed itself. In a true economy of abundance the self gains not merely something abundant, but rather itself becomes abundant. In other words, it continually surpasses itself and all that might oppose it. The capacity to become something more than all that exists, the ability to remain the supremely dominant power, requires an incessant giving up of power, an incessant presentation of nature as that which necessitates the effacement of the self for the sake of an all-powerful self. (273)

There is an instructive parallel here with Plato. Recall that in Plato a suspicion of mimesis as a re-presentation of the copy led him to search for a means of acquiring purchase over the source of mimesis and not merely its products, what Lacoue-Labarthe called "appropriation of the means of appropriation" (81). In a move analogous to Plato's, Kant's dynamic of the sublime envisages the exchange of a limited and interested power, for an unlimited, absolute and disinterested power, a sacrifice of the self-as-wholly-insufficient, in order to purchase the 'sacred thrill' (or 'holy awe': Bernard's translation) of the very principle of superabundance and supreme power. Both processes turn upon an essentially fictional dynamic of empowerment in which an inherent insufficiency or failing is as if magically turned to one's advantage; as Huhn remarks, "the sublime forces a thwarted subjectivity to appear as a dynamism rather than an image...Unable to present itself as appearance, the sublime inscribes itself as origin" (270). It is also worth noting how this dynamic of sublime powers undergirds the 'institutionalized revolution' of democracy, in which the particular powers (e.g., summary execution, torture, etc.) of particular interests (the aristocracy, the army, the police, etc.) are divested or 'hollowed out' (made anonymous agents of the state) in exchange for the all-powerfulness of the guiding idea of the Rule of Law - that the principle of order reign supreme over all. And undergirding these reasoned and cultured elevations from brute to ideal - whether of fears, desires, or powers - is the irrationality of the 'sacred thrill,' the pleasure of dominance that coheres the subject to himself and the citizen to the state, the Möbius dynamic that transforms scarcity into abundance and limitations into infinites. Huhn rightly expresses his disquiet over the terms of this contract in which "the irrational and impossible become...within sublime pleasure, the rational and necessary," and in which "[p]leasure is both the concealment and the legitimation of this elevation":

Violence becomes necessary and hence legitimate as that dynamic according to which nature is presented as fearful in order to call forth a subjectivity whose own violence might oppose that of nature's...Thus domination and violence are raised
to the level of principle, indeed the principle for the foundation of self and culture...Pleasure conceals this elevation because it alludes, especially in the guise of disinterest, to the gratuitous character of violence and domination having become the originary moment of self and culture. (274)

It is at this point that the validity of Cascardi's contention that art is implicated in the violence it seeks to disclose becomes clear, for faced with a work that masterfully and powerfully conveys the horror and terror of irrational violence, we cannot but also, in the distance we find or establish within ourselves between 'us' and 'it,' be subject to some form of what Kant called the 'sacred thrill.' In art, an aesthetic pleasure of domination is superadded to a framing power of cognition/representation in which the irrationality of the sacrifice (self-effacement) and the impossibility of the exchange (powerlessness for omnipotence) are rendered post hoc rational and necessary, and indeed legitimated by pleasure.

**The sublimity of Being**

What is assigned by the verb to be...[is] ineluctable in everything said, thought and felt. Our languages woven about the verb to be...not only reflect this undethronable royalty, stronger than that of the gods; they...[are] the very purple of this royalty.

Emmanuel Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*

In the longer view we may also see the sublime dynamic as evidence of a flight from a claustrophobia of the binding ties of intersubjectivity, family, and society. From the serial and infinite closure of the horizontal order, what Frances Ferguson calls "the claustrophobic feeling that one has become totally conditioned by being surrounded by other consciousnesses" (8). She notes that the eighteenth century "addition of the sublime to aesthetic discussion registers the entrance of an intriguing dissatisfaction with beauty," in as much as beauty, in Burke's formulation, is characteristic of object-relations, with that which submits to us, while the sublime is characteristic of subjective relations, with that (in ourselves) which we must submit to (5).

[T]he peculiar feature of the sublime is that it affirms individual identity at the expense of the notion of private ownership and the privileged access that seems to be accorded an owner and in that sense exposes not so much a drive into spirituality as a dissatisfaction with the limitations imposed by the notion of property. The trouble with property is that its essential nature is not determined by its owner; it would not be property unless it were exchangeable...The virtue of the sublime is that it cannot be exchanged, that each experience of sublimity is permanently bound not just to a subjective judgment but to its particular subjective judge. (6)
Ferguson goes on to note that Schiller rightfully describes suicide as the logical outcome of the sublime empowerment of subjective judgment. This is because, she observes, we believe it is only our own identities (i.e., second nature) that can be thoroughly determined by us through experience. To put a Kantian spin upon this would be to say that as natural human beings, created by others, we may be beautiful but are ultimately limited by synecdochic ties, subject to dominance, and not self-determining (i.e., heteronomous); however, as a self-invention, the idea of humanity in us is, both fearfully and pleasurably, absolutely non-contingent, unlimited, and all-powerful. For Ferguson sublime flight from claustrophobia is evidence of a new, gendered (and somewhat aristocratic) attitude towards society, domesticity, and procreation:

For when in the eighteenth century an aesthetics of sublimity emerges as a means of providing testimony to the uniqueness of individual consciousness, it portrays a world in which the status of objects is progressively attenuated so as to suggest that it is subjectivity rather than the mere fact of the existence of objects that gives things their force. And the pressure of the sublime claim of individuality is all the more urgent because the world of generation is largely what is being fled in an aesthetics of sublimity. The sublime claims that the beautiful is the world of society under the aegis of women and children, and that the habit, custom, and familiarity of that world of generation is what it was avoiding all along, in the nobler search for heroic encounter with the possibility of one's own death and a resulting consciousness of the importance of self-preservation. (7)

According to Ferguson this notion of sublime flight while not entirely predicated upon historical developments, nonetheless is spurred on and upwards by them. This is to say that with the eighteenth century explosion of more and more estates of society - "children, slaves, women, perhaps even the unborn" - becoming enfranchised to fuller freedoms, there arrives a growing sense of competition, crowding, and claustrophobia in the claims made upon public space, free space, uncluttered space (9). The openness of space is subject in addition to the constraints of growing populations, the mushrooming of printed matter ('objects' as if endowed with subjective consciousness), and the shrinking of geographic horizons. One wonders to what extent the liberal notion of social emancipation was/is historically contingent upon a feeling of boundless uncluttered space; for the 'vast untracked reaches' of the New World ('quelques arpents de niege') were for both Locke and Voltaire, and indeed several generations of Enlightenment luminaries, an assumption crucial to their theories of natural law.

It seems clear that the notion of seriality comes into its own in the early nineteenth century in the wake, or as part and parcel, of a recognizably modern mode of capitalistic
production. Jonathon Crary remarks that the "most important model for serial industrial production in the nineteenth century was ammunition and military spare parts...the need for absolute similarity and exchangeability came out of the requirements of warfare" (13; footnote). To this we ought to add the already mentioned late eighteenth century explosion of serial printed materials (of which Spain was a leader): journals, newspapers, and technical or bureaucratic ordinances. Already in the early nineteenth century Hegel was to remark that the daily perusal of the newspaper constituted for modern humanity an analogue ritual akin to the matinals and vespers of the medieval world. As Fredric Jameson has noted these quiet ceremonials of modern horizontal life tend to erase the specificity not merely of individual relations and things, but of specificity itself:

In seriality, what I happen to be doing, reading a newspaper, waiting for a bus, opening a can, pausing for a red light, is characterized primarily by its identity with the acts of other people...in such situations the uniqueness of my own experience is undermined by a secret anonymity, a statistical quality...In seriality, in Sartre's language, 'each is the same as the Others to the degree that he is Other from himself.' Yet in another sense there are no Others, there exists no external model which all of us are imitating: rather the serial relationship is an infinite regression, everyone projecting onto everyone else an optical illusion of centrality as 'public opinion'...those Others...remain an idea in my head: they are anonymous statistics, with no concrete reality for me: they are sheer Otherness, in the abstract. (76-77)

Today, the late twentieth century, two forms of production unimaginable in the early nineteenth century have come to up the ante on this anxiety of anonymity: digital reproduction, in which a 'copy' is indistinguishable from an 'original,' and the fact that, by virtue of artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization, the mass production of oral contraceptives, and most recently cloning, "sex is no longer technically connected to reproduction nor, to turn it around, is reproduction connected to sex. This is arguably the single most important thing that has happened to the human species. It ruptures the relationship between the generations" (Allen, 35). Of course this notion of the rupture and reformation of liens by an autonomous 'production' is in itself nothing new, it is in essence the point from which this narrative of the coming of the Enlightenment departed. And, as Canetti has noted, it may in fact be that the pure, as it were, "biological state" underlying the formation of human societies and religions is "that the crowd never feels saturated. It remains hungry as long as there is one human being it has not reached" (1973, 23-24). What is new is how far and how rapidly human society has 'developed' the means to this end: "Today countries are more anxious to protect their productivity than
their people" (1973, 543). Although he wrote down these reflections in the late 1950s, Canetti's intuition of the blind force of production and reproduction is in our age of digitalization, technological reproduction, and hyper-money more pertinent than ever:

The power of the great religions of lament is declining. They have become overgrown and stifled by increase. In modern industrial production the ancient substance of the increase pack has undergone such a colossal expansion that, compared with it, all the other elements of life seem to be on the wane. Production happens here, in this life. It grows and proliferates all the time with ever increasing speed, so that we are left with no moment for reflection. Terrible wars have not halted it and, whatever the nature of the various opposing camps, it is still rampant in all them. If there is now one faith, it is faith in production, the modern frenzy of increase; and all the peoples of the world are succumbing to it one after the other. (1979, 541-542)

Paradoxically, while sublime flight takes as the object from which it flees the constriction and anonymity proper to object relations, in another sense this same movement is one towards the objectification of life and being. This reification concerns not only that of all the others who stand as obstacles before my self-realization, but also arises to dominance in the sense that my (and in the Hegelian state. our) self-development in futurity and perpetuity comes to be an object-goal to which everything is subordinated, what Huhn called the self's (but we made also include here the state's) 'continually surpassing itself and all that might oppose it.' Here the Kantian sublime joins hands with Hegel's notions that 'Being is thought' and that the dialectic of desire is the engine driving the historical and perpetual, systematic organization of knowledge that Hegel calls Science:

That the true is actual only as system, or that Substance is essentially Subject, is expressed in the representation of the Absolute as Spirit - the most sublime Notion and the one which belongs to the modern age and its religion. The spiritual alone is actual; it is essence, or that which has being in itself; it is that which relates itself to itself and is determinate, it is other-being and being-for-self...But in so far as it is also for itself for its own self, this self-generation, the pure Notion, is for it the objective element in which it has its existence, and it is in this way, in its existence for itself, an object reflected into itself. The Spirit that, so developed, knows itself as Spirit, is Science. (Phenomenology of Spirit §25; 73)

According to Catherine Chalier the positivist and reifying tendencies of the Hegelian summation - "The progression towards this end admits of no halting and finds no satisfaction in any previous station" (Hegel; in Chalier, 71)⁷⁸ - entails that every thing
takes its place and meaning merely as stages in the progressive unfolding of that which "[n]othing seems capable of putting...into question," "the full correspondence between that which one bears within one and that in which one recognizes oneself," Being:

One then arrives at the thought that one must go beyond the death which comes towards one, and not tarry over the lot of those whom it strikes. Does not popular wisdom counsel as much when it says 'life goes on,' 'time heals all things'? Which is to say that it returns them to the order of being and its positivity, as if, from the point of view of being, each one ought to follow his own route, indifferent, self-sufficient, content. (71)

Emmanuel Lévinas has identified in this Western thinking of the historical relativity of values and their incessant re-evaluation an implicit and time-worn theodicy. Western philosophical thought, says Lévinas, from its roots in Homer onwards has been animated by a notion of an incessant historical "sacrifice of the present to a future in which all signification is thought to lie" (in Chalier, 75). The teleological imperative of this mode of thought means that every phenomenal thing is subject to a kind of cost benefit analysis of sufficiency and insufficiency, and none more so than radical evil. If the mathematically inspired imperative of Hegelian Being is to integrate everything into the process-function and system of realizing Essence, then evil is either 'that which is intermediary to no thing...an absolute resistance to the appropriation by categories destined to render it significant,' and as such unknowable, unthinkable, and insignificant, or the ultimate insufficiency because it would limit and imprison Being in finitude (Chalier 72-73). The Hegelian idea of totality, implicit already within the Kantian sublime, and further afield Greek notions of ousia, in effect champions the latter over the former:

The idea that undergirds this thinking seems to be conceived upon the [Greek] model of being and its sufficiency...a sufficiency in the image of 'being such as objects offer us. They are. Their essences and properties may be imperfect, but the fact of being is beyond the distinction between perfect and imperfect. The brutality of this affirmation is absolutely sufficient and refers to nothing other...This reference to itself [one's self] is precisely what one signifies when one speaks of the identity of being' [Lévinas]. On both the individual and collective level the idea that futurity permits essence to attain the plenitude of its destination, is itself a tributary of the ideal [that things are - perfectly, consummately, self-sufficient] of such an identity. And from the perspective of this ideal that which one considers to be evil or false finds itself denounced: in Hegelian terms 'There is as little error as there is evil.' For that which one erroneously designates as error or evil is merely the result of an illusory and rigid perspective on things: in lieu of
being conceived as moments in the progressive development of essence, they are judged for themselves and not for that which they prepare. (Chalier, 73-74)

The frame-rupturing tropes of Goya's images like 'Y no hai remedio' challenge this notion of a scientifically comprehensible and comprehensive essentiality of being, whose signification is staged in the progressive unfolding of its positivity. They constitute in effect a form of resistance to 'the appropriation by categories that attempt to render radical evil significant' all the while recognizing that they too cannot but be implicated in the 'sacred thrill' of an aesthetic power capable of overpowering force, the 'holy awe' that coheres the individual to his identity and the citizen to the state. This resistance and this recognition take form in the realization that no perspectival shift is able to afford us the vantage that 'what we see has an importance and a decipherable meaning that can be measured against an ascertainable moral scale of values,' and in the 'knowledge' that in our traverse of the horizons of war there is no climax, only a series imaging the incessant interruption of the serial universe even darker and more despairing than that from which we set out. Lévinas has written that "Being is mal (sorrow, harm, affliction, evil), not because finished or completed (fini) but because it is without limits" (in Chalier, 70). If war, in its essence, carries to term, above all logically, the paroxysmal élan of the identification of being with the good, the inevitable destiny of an interest in being that nothing or no one can judge...as if the striving of nature to preserve itself in its being/essence and its increase were the sign of a divinity of being itself, and thus that no axiology were possible, (Chalier, 75)

then Goya's Disasters of War image a scandalous anti-theodicy in which "reasoned discourse cannot integrate the co-efficient of suffering into the ruling economy of problem solving and knowledge production" (Chalier, 76). While they recognize that we may of our own volition and on our own cognizance absent ourselves from the claustrophobic confrontation they expose us to, Goya's images do not in their structure or intent allow for flight or dominance. If evil is "that which one knows one is required not to let be," and, correlatively, the failure to act when so required (i.e., when faced with suffering), then Goya seeks to expose to us that intolerability, and to expose us to the blinded and binding apprehension of something at our back which we will never dominate (Chalier, 77). We can no longer designate this 'something' a simple externality; it is an excessiveness woven into the very fabric of our being. The ideal of humanity will, I believe (and pace all talk of virtual identities, cryogenics, and artificial intelligence), be forever limited by the materiality of the human animal - for we are that too - indeed by
materiality tout court. To think otherwise is to imagine ourselves gods, and we ought to know by now, but of course we do not, that such dreams are absurd: "L'homme est bien insensé. Il ne saurait forger un ciron, et forge des Dieux à douzaines" (‘Mankind is quite insane: it couldn’t create a maggot yet invents gods by the dozen’) (Montaigne, 511). If we continue to insist on refusing this chastening lesson we had better watch our backs:

[Modern critical philosophies] permit one, first of all, to take up a position immediately behind someone who dissimulates or believes he hides something, to observe them or to pickpocket them, as it were. Now this vantage supposes at the same time a third situated immediately behind the second who is immediately behind the first, and allows him, this third, to pickpocket the same or another purse; and so on, and so on; you can imagine for yourself the series. This argument, renewed by the third man, opens up an unending ensemble of ploys like a chain of cops and robbers. Quite suddenly critical philosophy has become truly Orwellian (policière); and, in effect, police forces always requires another police force to police it. Now when from behind their backs the police survey and test the hearts of each one in front, are we to suppose that the policemen himself has no back, no heart? Here we find ourselves thrown into a detective’s logic. And the best detective will ultimately be he who is never interrogated and who puts himself in the vantage of being beyond suspicion.

The final end of criticism is to escape every possible critique, to be in essence uncriticizable. It places itself behind the back of the world, and persuades everyone that it itself has no back, no heart. It poses all its questions in such a manner that no one can pose a single question of it. In other words, the best copper is the most cunning thief...Still better said: what do we call the only person we can imagine who is behind the back of the entire world, without themselves having a back? - God. (Serres 1995, 133-134)79

None other than Nietzsche himself would later write: "In Plato’s Theages it is written: ‘Each of us would like to be master over all men, if possible, and best of all God’" (1968, 503). What will we not do in our pursuit of divinity?
Chapter Two Notes:

1: I have lifted the lexical crib employed in this section from Emmanuel Levinas' essays 'Reality and its Shadow,' 'There is: existence without existents' (both in Levinas 1989), and John Llewelyn's Emmanuel Levinas: The Genealogy of Ethics, particularly chapters 4-6. The quotations are from Levinas (1989, 130).
2: In Honour (149).
3: Clark (325). See in particular his figure 190, p. 326.
4: An index of how jealously privacy might have been guarded in mid-18th century Spain can be gleaned from an 1781 memorandum to the Board of Public Works, Zaragoza: "The honour of a professor is a very delicate thing, he is sustained by public opinion. his entire living depends upon his reputation, and if one day it is only slightly stained, then his career is destroyed" (in Symmons, 30).
5: Symmons points to numerous facts elucidating this entreprenurial side of Goya. Never very popular with other artists, most likely because of his lowly background, Goya was nevertheless one of the first representatives of the artisan class to enter the Academy which had been partly structured to police the upward mobility of guildsmen. Goya's high aspirations can be gleaned from the fact that he twice competed, and was twice rejected (1763, 1766), for a scholarship first class from the Academy of San Fernando in Madrid, rather than trying his luck at the third or second class and working his way up from there. It has been suggested that Goya's marriage in 1773 to the infanzona (lowest rank of the nobility) Josefa Bayeu, younger sister of the Academician Francisco Bayeu, made pintor de camara (royal painter) 1767, was a premeditated part of his greater plan, and as such entirely within the protocols of 18th century marriage and patronage. In fact, Bayeu himself had married the daughter of his first painting master Juan Andres Merklein. Goya's association with Bayeu goes back some way - Goya first met Bayeu at the Zaragoza workshop of Jose Luzan where Goya began his apprenticeship at age 14, and by 1771 Goya was calling himself 'disciple of Senor Francisco Bayeu pintor de camara.' The marriage contract bore, it appears, almost immediate fruit, for in the following year, 1774, Francisco Bayeu was able to secure Goya a position in the Royal Tapestry Works. Goya can be said to have courted the influence of Francisco Bayeu assiduously, and at times chafed under his tutelage; however, it was largely through the influence of Bayeu and his associates that Goya was elected to the Academy of San Fernando in 1780, awarded the rank of pintor del rey (royal painter) in 1786, pintor de camara (court painter) in 1789, and primer pintor de camara (first court painter) in 1799. These appellations designated both an ascendance in status and salary (from 15,000 to 55,000 reales per anum). In addition, Goya was a major collector, perhaps the first modern artist to do so, of his own works: "His behaviour as a collector of his own pictures is analogous to his behaviour as an investor. The pictorial investment, like the investments in banking, property, and jewelry, was for the future, the well-being of his heirs, and his own inspiration to posterity. Had he not insured that so many of his most original pictures survived, such an immense posthumous reputation would not have been established" (Symmons, 26).
7: From 'Meditation in Time of Civil War,' quoted in Heaney (1995, 26). The final (unquoted) line of the stanza, the poem's refrain, is: 'Come Build in the empty house of the stare.'

8: Cf. Blanchot: "When the disaster comes upon us, it does not come. The disaster is its imminence, but since the future, as we conceive it in the order of lived time, belongs to the disaster, the disaster has already withdrawn or dissuaded it; there is no future for the disaster, just as there is no time or space for its accomplishment" (1-2).

9: Tomlinson, and others, have noted that although on paper Enlightened reforms in Spain appear to have progressed and to have fostered 'progress,' as they did elsewhere in Europe, in fact "the Enlightenment in Spain is defined just as much by the limits imposed on its ideas as by the contradictions that arose in society as a result of their diffusion" (17).

10: There may, however, be great merit in viewing them as expressions of an elegiac culture which, as we have seen with Fuseli's drawing, then swaps some of its stoicism for pathos.

11: According to Mengs whose ideals were diffused throughout the Spanish Academy system after his death by Salvador Maella and Goya's father in law Francisco Bayeu. "painting must be ideal rather than servile imitation; this is to say, that it must imitate the parts of natural objects that transmit to us the idea of being of the thing we perceive. This finds its expression in the visible signs of the essential difference there is between one object and another, whether such objects be of a very diverse nature or almost alike. Each time we make visible these essential differences, we achieve a clarity of the object's being and properties, and thereby relieve the understanding of the labour of comprehending them" (in Bozal 1994a, translation mine). Neoclassicism in Spain became the official aesthetic doctrine only in 1777.

12: All translations from Bozal are mine.

13: This point is Keegan's, in Keegan and Durracott (203).

14: That is how they appeared to one observer, Louis von Kaisenberg, when they reached Kassel Germany on February 18, 1813: "We stared at the poor wretches, their heads and feet wrapped in tatters, the upper part of the body covered with rags of every possible material or else with straw matting. Even hides, still full of dried blood, covered their nakedness. The expression in their pallid features was a terrible one, their eyes stared from their white, lined faces as if they could still see all the horrors which had lain in wait for them on the icy steppes of Russia; and their words sounded hollow and rough, as though cries of pain had made them hoarse" (in Keegan & Durracott, 22).

15: In Damisch (253); all translations from Damisch are my own. This quotation comes from a series of articles on the history and political economy of 18th and 19th century Spain that Marx wrote for the New York Tribune in 1854.

16: This is of course, the European version of nationalism; and mention should be made of the nationalism of the Americas. Anderson: "The close of the era of successful national liberation movements in the Americas coincided rather closely with the onset of the age of nationalism in Europe. If we consider the character of these newer nationalisms which, between 1820 and 1920, changed the face of the Old World, two striking features mark them off from their ancestors. First, in almost all of them 'national print-languages' were of central ideological and political importance, whereas Spanish and English were never
issues in the revolutionary Americas. Second, all were able to work from visible models provided by their distant, and after the convulsions of the French Revolution, not so distant, predecessors" (67).
17: Jena aesthetics is a term the constellation of aesthetic theories developed by those German Romantics associated with the University of Jena, whose most important figures are A. W. Schlegel, Friedrich Schlegel, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Schiller, and Fichte.
19: The collection from which I quote is entitled *Philosophical Fragments* and comprises the complete *Athenaeum Fragments* (1798-1799) and the *Ideas* (1800).
20: Schlegel, quoted in Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy (35).
21: "Think of it, soldiers; from the summit of these pyramids, forty centuries look down upon you." Quoted in the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (359).
22: Firchow, the translator of the *Fragments*, notes that the authorship of fragment 328 has since 1967 been attributed to Schleiermacher.
23: And not only are reactionary movements 'new,' they will continue to be perennial. Canadian readers will recall how in the final weeks of the 1997 federal election, the leader of the Reform Party of Canada (whose platform one commentator has described as 'a better yesterday') announced that the old Canada was disappearing before our eyes and that the new Canada was being born, a birth, it was implied, that would herald the adoption of the reactionary social and fiscal agenda of the Reform Party.
24: All translations from Sichère are my own.
25: Tuman quotes Meyer Abrams on this point (49).
26: Other commentators seem to disagree on this point. Lacan qualifies the Sadean fetish as a "duplication" in which "the executor in sadistic experience...is reduced to being no more than its instrument," on the one hand, while "he cannot but come as a being of flesh and, to the bones, the serf of pleasure," on the other (61). Le Brun for her part emphasizes that Sadean atheism "shows us that as we dismiss the body, we thereby lose all possibility of gaining access to the truth, or more exactly, of avoiding lies" (213).
27: "Sade is the inaugural step of a subversion, of which, however amusing it might seem with respect to the coldness of the man, Kant is the turning point, and never noted, to our knowledge, as such. *Philosophy in the Bedroom* comes eight years after the *Critique of Practical Reason*. If, after having seen that the one accords with the other, we show that it completes it, we will say that it gives the truth to the *Critique*" (Lacan, 55).
28: Sade (332); translation my own.
29: All translations from this text of Blanchot's are mine.
30: As Augustine states in his *Confessions* (VIII: 16): "And when I asked myself what wickedness was, I saw that it was not a substance but perversion of the will when it turns aside from you, O God, who are the supreme substance, and veers towards things of the lowest order, being bowelled alive and becoming inflated with desire for things outside itself" (150).
31: To be fair Kant has, in his manner, dealt with this in his first two *Critiques* (1781 & 1788) and particularly the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), where he has argued first, that the workings of pure reason demonstrate that true freedom can in theory only consist in arriving at maxims for my own conduct that are at the same time universally applicable, and second, that such reasoned actions are in fact possible. The
difficulty of these arguments has been that while this form of free will is theoretically possible, as \textit{no\-menon} it is not rationally explicable; like the postulate of the existence of God, the principle of free will is something I accept as both the inevitable and necessary precondition to and the direct consequence of morally good actions - but the reasoning is dogged by something of a tautology.

32: Blanchot quotes a text of one Villers, published in 1797, whose intent was to slander Sade by linking him to Committee of Public Safety: "It was said that when Robespierre, when his ministers Couthon, Saint-Just, and Collot were worn out with the murders and condemnations; when the stirrings of remorse made their presence felt in those hearts of bronze; and when faced with another quire of order papers for more arrests the quill dropped from their fingers, they then availed themselves by reading some pages of \textit{Justine} [(1791), the full title being \textit{Justine, ou les malheurs de la virtu\-e}], and returned to the escritoire to continue signing." Despite, comments Blanchot, Villers' slanderous intent, "there is nonetheless something just in the accusation, in the sense that these men so opposed to one another found themselves united by the congruency of excess in their own freedom of action and in the common conviction that the test of liberty always passes through a moment of extremity" (1965, 42-43).

Interestingly, Syberberg's film script for \textit{Hitler, a Film from Germany} (based on a great deal of archival research) quotes a number of high ranking S.S. field commanders espousing precisely this form of 'I didn't want to do it, it revolted me, but I knew it was morally right' judgement. Cf. Syberberg (168).

33: Licht gives a fine example of this bearing on the Pennisular War: "The liberal English [Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington], so much admired by the intellectual, political and cultural avant-garde in Spain, finally arrived, and at first it was thought that a hopeful reprieve had come for the desperate people of Spain. But Wellesley's dispatches to the Home Office are evidence that his presence in Spain had nothing to do with the ancient dream of Spanish national liberty and self-determination. After plotting against the Spanish parliament, the Cortes, in session at Cadiz, which was trying to redress some of the medieval injustices of Spanish politics, Wellesley wrote to the British secretary of war, Earl Bathurst: 'I wish you would let me know whether, if I should find a fair opportunity of striking at the [Spanish] democracy, the Government would approve [sic] of my doing it.' To which Bathurst responded: '...if you strike a blow at the democracy in Spain, your conduct will be much approved here.'" (1979, 109-110). Licht's adjective 'ancient' in the second sentence is specious.

34: 'Virtue, without which the Terror is false, the Terror, without which virtue is impotent.'

35: 'Own invention' (Symmons, 75); letter to Zapater (Goya 1982, 185). All translations from Goya my own.

36: Symmons writes that \textit{The Monk's Visit} and \textit{Brigand stripping a Woman} correspond quite closely to two scenes in de Sade's story" (25). The work in question here is \textit{Justine}, published 1791, and, although 'forbidden,' was probably available through channels open to Goya by virtue of his membership in a circle of leading \textit{illust\-rado} intellectuals. Other paintings in this group of fourteen works on tinplate (of which eight bullfighting scenes are thought to predate Goya's illness) include \textit{Yard with Lunatics, Shooting in a Military Camp, The Shipwreck, Brigand Murdering a Woman}. 
38: Quoted in Ackerman (footnote, page 222), from Laurens van der Post's *The Heart of the Hunter*.
39: "Let us define the *concentration* of a secret as the ratio between the number of those it concerns and the number of those who possess it. From this definition it can easily be seen that modern technical secrets are the most concentrated and dangerous that have ever existed. They concern *everyone*, but only a tiny number of people have real knowledge of them and their actual use depends on a handful of men" (Canetti 1973, 345).
40: Spanish educators, particularly Pedro Ponce de Leon and his disciples, were early pioneers (from the 16th century) in deaf education, it has been suggested, in order to curtail the legal disenfranchisement of the children of noblemen who due to hearing disturbances could not speak (Sacks footnote, page 14).
41: This quotation is from Diderot's *Letter on the Blind* (1751). Furbank comments that Deism, and indeed the Enlightenment as a whole, has a natural affinity for visual metaphors: "Arguments for the existence of God drawn from the uplifting 'spectacle' of Nature are devised by the sighted for the sighted; it is a sort of argument no one would ever have thought of were it not for the special linguistic privilege attached to metaphors from 'seeing': one 'sees' the truth, one becomes 'enlightened,' the problems grow 'clear' or receive 'illumination,' etc." (63).
42: Three-quarters of the so-called drawings are actually India ink washes; only in the final two notebooks composed after 1824 in Bordeaux does Goya employ, for the first time (at the age of 78!), black chalk and lithographic crayon. Nonetheless I will continue to call them drawings after Gassier, whose album catalogue is called *The Drawings of Goya*. Gassier notes that Goya's preference for free standing ink washes (without under or overdrawing) was a "revolutionary technique - the term is no exaggeration in the Spain of the end of the 18th century" as there is no evidence that any other of Goya's contemporaries ever employed such a practice (19).
43: This becomes more and more true, I think, as one progresses through them. Gassier notes that the notebooks albums are marked by what he calls "the unity of support and the unity of medium," that is, Goya's employment in each album (unlike the preparatory drawings) of an identical type and size of paper always in a portrait orientation. "What is one to infer from this astonishing contancy in so impassioned and unmethodical an artist? To my mind, it means, beyond a doubt, that Goya planned each album in advance as a single work, as a coherent whole, each drawing as produced being assigned its due place in accordance with the themes and their continuous sequence" (13).
44: To call them the first world war would be to recognize that the Napoleonic campaigns were characterized by the mass-mobilization of societies, and the enormous geo-political scope of the fighting.
45: Cf. Ilie (43-44).
46: Sayre makes this comparision in *The Changing Image* (99-100).
47: This metaphysical indeterminacy had, as Barbara Stafford points out, a widespread and powerfully disorienting social effect. Stafford notes how in late 18th century society, with the proliferation of printed matter, there was a confusing explosion of opinions and practices: "What was new to the eighteenth-century experience - as codes of polite behaviour spread to broader and lower strata of society - was the frightening possibility
[particularly for the upper classes] that nothing stood behind decorum. No gold standard guaranteed inflated or deflated currency; no original preexisted the copy; no durable skeleton shored up the frail anatomy. Fashion, masquerade, theater, cross-dressing emphasized the total disagreement between seeming and being, the deliberately fabricated incongruity between exterior and interior" (Stafford, 86; an emended citation of this passage quoted in Wolf, 106). Stafford sees this late 18th century indeterminacy of social class, as the seed bed of that era's fondness for satire: "As the archetypal mixed genre, it was unlike the linear and continuous writing of annals, or the fluidity of the uninterrupted contour. In an encyclopedic fashion, it put contrasting units of information in communication with each other while neglecting to inform the consumer what to deduce" (Stafford, 176; an emended citation of this passage quoted in Wolf, 109).

48: All of these points are Licht's. Cf. chapter 6 of his Goya: The Origins of the Modern Temper in Art (92-103).

49: All translations from Barthes are my own.

50: The question of image appropriation is for John Berger inextricably linked to the European tradition of representational realism and tangibility. Berger quotes Bernard Berenson - "It is only when we can take for granted the existence of the object painted that it can begin to give us pleasure that is genuinely artistic, as separated from the interest we feel in symbols" - and comments: "Nothing could be more explicit about the implications of the artistic pleasure to be derived from European art. That which we believe we can put our hands upon truly exists for us; if we cannot it does not. European means of representation refer to the experience of taking possession. Just as its perspective gathers all that is extended to render it to the individual eye, so its means of representation render all that is depicted into the hands of the individual owner-spectator...It has been said that the European painting is like a window open on to the world. Purely optically this may be the case. But is it not as much like a safe, let into the wall, in which the visible has been deposited?" (214-216).

51: Barthes' insight here (this article was published in 1964) borders on a 'chaotic' recognizance of the importance of scale (144-145).

52: Many have cited Addison's famous assertion from his article in the Spectator (July 3, 1712) 'On the Pleasures of the Imagination' (translated into Spanish in the 1780s by José Luis Munárriz, one of Goya's circle): "When the brain is hurt by an accident, or the mind disordered by dreams or sickness, the fancy is overrun with wild dismal ideas, and terrified by a thousands hideous monsters of its own framing" (in Hofer, 'Introduction'; in Goya 1799, 5-6).

53: Philip Hofer, whose introduction accompanies the Dover edition of the Caprichos (which I have employed) notes that "half a dozen or more contemporary manuscript 'explanations' exist" (in Goya 1799, 3). The Prado is by far the most frequent companion text.

54: Sayre sees this copper plate as bearing Goya's copy after Velázquez of Maragita de Austria on horseback.

55: The 18th century Diccionario of the Real Academia defined capricho: "In works of poetry, music and painting it is that which is done by the power of invention rather than by adherence to rules of art. It is also called fantasy" (in Sayre, 60). The country estate of
the Duke and Duchess of Osuna, one of Goya's principle patrons, was called 'El Capricho.'

56: Translations from Emile my own.

57: All translations from Lopez Vazquez my own. Part of the suspicion surrounding the bat may stem from the fact that it shares with the human being a number of attributes: "The bat is strangely like man, and primates in general: five fingers to the hand, one thumb, five toes on the foot, pectoral teats, menstrual flux, free [i.e., external] penis; it is a little caricature of man" (Gourmont, 46). Vernant points out that in book 23 of the Iliad, the eidola of Patroclus appears to Achilles in his sleep, but when Achilles tries to embrace his dead friend "it is a wisp of smoke that vanishes beneath the ground with a little cry like that of a bat" (309).

58: (Gassier & Wilson, 432).

59: These would be Caprichos #2, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 31, 35, 36, 38, 57, 59, 60, 64, 65, 70, 73, and 85, as well as the border line cases of #27 (a pit), 41 (an explosion), 79, 80, and 82 (aureole/sunburst).

60: Bram Stoker's Dracula (1898), as representation of an avaricious sexuality threatening bourgeois sublimation of desire into productive labour, fits nicely into this paradigm, particularly when we consider that its original title was The Undead.

61: Jacques-Alain Miller in Zizek (1991b, 57). The full quotation runs: "the object is not what hinders the advent of the sexual relationship, as a kind of perspective error makes us believe. The object is, on the contrary, a filler, that which fills in the relationship which does not exist and bestows upon it its fantastic consistency."

62: Quoted in Walter (139). I have used Rex Warner's translation, (Thucydides, 181), because as Walter points out, quoting de Romilly, Thucydides conceives terror (phobos) as the affective foundation "on which everything rests," whereas fear (deos) is the rationalization of behaviour predicated upon the feeling of terror, the "constructive work" that forms alliances and associations, but which also for that reason renders them unstable (140).

63: Zeldin notes the astonishing proliferation in recent decades of information about fear: "each decade produces over 10,000 new studies, in the English language alone" (180).

What is more there is ample evidence suggesting that warfare has become an increasingly common and deadly: "Quincy Wright has calculated that, in Europe, war has increased on the following scale, taking account not only its duration but also the size of the fighting forces, the proportion of combatants to the total population and the number of casualties:

<table>
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<th>Century</th>
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(in Zeldin, 212-213).

However, these figures, particularly for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are deceptive, and most likely under-estimated, due to the fact that from the mid-18th century, and with increasing frequency, 'European wars' were fought overseas in the context of colonial geo-political struggles. As Saul notes: "In the nineteenth century, war was something which involved white people on both sides. If only one side involved
whites, then this was picturesque adventure. As for non-whites fighting each other, that was hardly real. Rather, it was tribal conflict and though of as a curiosity, of interest principally to eccentrics. Even conflicts between colonial powers were felt to be marginal unless they threatened to spread to home territory" (1992, 179). These attitudes are still with us, if we recall that recent conflicts in Bosnia, Chechnya, Mozambique, Angola, Ruanda, Zaire, to name only the most publicized, have been characterized by the media and some scholars as outbreaks of 'tribal barbarism.' Yet as Keane points out "it would be mistaken to conclude that they somehow represent a relapse into 'traditionalism' or 'tribalism.' They are in fact quintessentially modern, not only because of their implications in the struggle for territorially bound state power, but also because they are illustrations of the rational-calculating use of violence as a technique of terrorizing and demoralizing whole populations and preventing them from engaging in organized or premeditated resistancen" (30-31; emphasis added).

64: Walter notes that Homer employs the epithet krateron mestora phoboio (mighty masters of terror) several times to describe Hector, Diomedes, and Patroclus (137; note 16, 157).

65: Keane's 'civil societies' should more specifically reference agricultural civil societies, for there are significant differences between hunter gatherer and agricultural societies on this point. I thank Ted Chamberlin for this insight.

66: Many have suggested that the Second of May 1808 and its companion piece the Third, which date from this same period (1814) and climate, were Goya's way of saving face for having painted Joseph Bonaparte not once but twice (as well as numerous other commissions both for the French and members of the Spanish liberal Cortes) and currying favour with the monarchy whose restoration was immanent. Although the French left Madrid for the final time in March of 1813, taking with them 12,000 afrancesados, Goya only proposed to the Council of the Regency that he undertake to portray the patriotic events of 1808 on 9 March, 1814, a scant three weeks prior to Ferdinand's return (28 March, 1814).

67: This vocabulary likens the modern horizontal society to the tribe of the Israelites for whom the ultimate sanction was to be 'cut off' - as a desert people, from water, arable land, community?: as a people of the word, from the breath and light of God's creation, prior to which reigned the tohubohu of Genesis (1: 2)?: "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness" (Deuteronomy 32: 10); "Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!" (Job 6: 8-9); "Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of his sheath and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked" (Ezekiel 21:3).

68: The first guillotining was in April 1792, of a thief.

69: The provenance and significance of the pileus is subject to multiple speculations bearing upon the notion of castration. Cf. the Hertz article in the bibliography.

70: In Buci-Glucksmann (103).

71: Nochlin is commenting on Gericault's (1818-1819) Head of a Dead Man and Severed Heads, works which date from precisely the same epoch as the Disasters.

72: This point is Chalier's: "Pourquoi, après la création de la lumière, le soir et l'obscurité gardent-ils encore une priorité dans l'économie de la geste créatrice: "Il fut soir, il fut
matin un jour» (Gn 1, 5)? Question redoutable si l'on admet, avec le Zohar (16a), que «l'obscurité est le visage du mal» (67).

73: This definition is almost verbatim from Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary, entry: spindle.

74: Blanchot characterizes disaster as the "interruption of the incessant"; by which he means, I believe, that which is unceasing interrupts, and is interrupted, by disaster (21).

75: 'The custody of a criminal does not call for torture,' 'The custody is as barbarous as the crime,' and 'If he is guilty, let him die quickly.' The first edition of the work was published by the Academy of San Fernando in 1863, which appended the title Los Desastres de la guerra. This collection included only the first 80 prints; however the bound version of the work, entitled Capricho, that Goya gave to his friend the art critic Ceán Bermúdez numbered 82 plates, plus the three additional smaller etchings of the bound prisoners.

76: Huhn modifies Pluhar's translation, specifically rendering Macht as 'power,' where Pluhar and others have employed 'might.' The quotation cited here is verbatim from Huhn.

77: In First Nations' rituals of initiation into maturity, this process goes, perhaps, one step further in that the initiate seeks in his isolation a vision or a voice telling him the name or shape of his tutelary spirit.

78: All translations from Chalier are mine.

79: I have, with reference to the original (1994, 194-195), slightly modified Lapidus' translation.
The Bridge:

Emancipation and Resistance

The balance between knowledge and ignorance determines how wise we get. Ignorance must not be impoverished by knowledge. Every answer must make a question (remote and seemingly unconnected) spring forth from its crouching slumber. The man with many answers has to have even more questions. The wise man remains a child all his life, and answers alone make his soil and his breath arid. Knowledge is a weapon only for the powerful, the wise man despises nothing so much as weapons. He is not ashamed of his wish to love more people than he knows; and he will never arrogantly isolate himself from all those he knows nothing about.

Elias Canetti

The time has been
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end. But now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns.
And push us from our stools. This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

*Macbeth* III, iv: 78-83
Here we make a huge leap in time, but not, I want to allege, in ideas. The focus and discursive genre of my analysis stop-down to a micro-examination of a single work in which Enlightenment notions of reason, emancipation, and progress and Counter-Enlightenment notions of the irrational, rebellion, and return each vie for ascendency over the other. *Beloved* is the story a child born in freedom and a child murdered in freedom, with all the inflections one could place upon such a description. It is a story, thus, of consequences, a tragedy. But it is also a ghost story, a narrative of freedom repossessed and of a resistance to its usurpation. To each of these freedoms, freedom born and claimed and freedom claimed and murdered, correspond, we might say, separate novelistic spaces which, however different they may be from one another, overlap in the same time. The first is an utopic space, a space apart without fathers (although situated within the Kingdom of Solomon) whose model is the Song of Songs; the second is a sublime space, a propriety space of claustrophobia and an oppressive dissatisfaction with ownership as alienable. Shuttling back and forth between these two spaces and two freedoms, the novel enacts both a sublime exchange of the powerless human being for an empowered principle of humanity (humanism), and that exchange *au rebours*, the renunciation or divestiture of a certain principled power of freedom in order to affirm and respond to a human being (the humanism of the other). Weaving its plot between these freedom-spaces, the novel shows us Sethe-the-mother whose word is law, but also Sethe-the-bride, betrothed to a matriarchal principle in which freedom collapses. Freedom, we come to realize in this tragic, ghost story, is a complex dynamic: it is both self-grounded and inalienable, and token - it has a pledge against it, and as such demands repayment.

How then to articulate, for this is what *Beloved* attempts to do, these two freedoms that inhabit one another? Levinas has shown that a paradox of freedom stems from its dual articulation in Plato.¹ It is both the freedom to command, to act upon a will that puts up great resistance, and yet also that which refuses the commands of others. Plato, recognizing a fear of tyranny from without (politics) and a fear of tyranny from within (desire), attempted to resolve this paradox by defining command as doing the will of he who obeys, a formulation in which the heteronomy and exteriority of command so defined are seen to be an autonomy and an interiority, and in which the freedom of resistance situates its authorization as coming from without, in institutions and rationality, in the law. However, as Levinas points out, once freedom as externality is incorporated in law it becomes a disembodied rigidity (whose potential is to create subservience), alien to human spontaneity - and as such another form of tyranny, for it is difficult to identify with an impersonal reason. There is, in addition, the danger that multiple freedoms
incorporated in multiple institutions, wage war on behalf of their own principals, their differing principles of freedom.

Levinas' answer to this dilemma of freedoms, and it is one that Beloved seems to actualize, also finds its source in Plato. It concerns the moment in the Republic where Thrasymachus, having refused to engage in dialogue with Socrates, nonetheless assents to respond to Socrates' questions with a nod. In that gesture, says Levinas, Thrasymachus articulates the relation between the freedom to command and the freedom to resist. The nod demonstrates that "[b]eings which present themselves to one another subordinate themselves to one another," and to what Levinas calls "a veritable 'phenomenology' of the noumenon" (1987, 21). The recognition here is an acknowledgment of the order of creation, that intelligibility and other beings precede me, and that the "individual act which decide[s] for impersonal reason [does] not itself result from impersonal reason" (18). Recognizing this order and this precedence and my personal stake in it, I can assent to interlocution, coherence, and commerce (speaking to and not about another) and realize a plane of transitivity where tyranny is excluded and command is not autonomy because I and the other who takes precedence over me are mutually subject to a third, the expulsion of noise, disharmony, and chaos. In a shuttling movement between the double foci of freedom, Beloved seeks out this plane of transitivity, searching for an ethical equilibrium inclusive of both reason and the passions but beholden to neither one exclusively, an elliptical moment of true freedom, true love, and true wisdom.
Bridge Notes:

2: Republic, 350-351.
Chapter Three:

Historia Polyrhythmia: Beloved

...the very spiritual agony inherent in the subject itself imposes on the result a certain simplicity of organization and a kind of persistent rhythm...

the rhythm of 'right' and 'wrong'

Stanley Elkins

Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way.

when ye were come forth out of Egypt...

Therefore it shall be...that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.

Deuteronomy 25: 17-19
"'Everything depends on knowing how much,' she said, and 'Good is knowing when to stop.'"1

Let us take this, the Word according to Baby Suggs - 'holy,' as she is called by the narrator and Stamp Paid - as an entry-way into the cosmos and cosmology of 124 Bluestone Road, and, by extension, into the syncretic, poly-rhythmic aesthetic of Morrison's Beloved. Something catastrophic has happened in the past that will colour everything that happens in the present of the novel, and implicitly, all that is to come. Indeed, adapting Aristotle's remark on tragedy in the Physics, we may say that what will happen will imitate that past, repeating and re-presenting it, and bring to fruition that which it was unable to achieve.2 If slavery is "a pathology" in the slave and the master alike. "the effects of which are with us still,"3 then if it is to fulfill its promise emancipation must of necessity not only be an historical Reconstruction, but also a psychic re-construction of a constitution destroyed and an instantiation of an identity as yet uncreated. unnurtured. Part creation, part re-creation, but giving itself never entirely to the one or the other, true and just freeing-from-the-hand-of-seizure (emancipation) invokes a complex, historical and psychic, ethical injunction: 'be-good,' 'be-loved.' If 'everything depends on knowing how much,' then the fulfillment of the promise will demand a constant vigilance to the paradoxically 'active-passive,' alternating rhythm of the admonition. In our desire to both answer this calling and to submit to this judgement what is first levied is our recognition of a disturbance stemming from a sense of having forgotten something, something we cannot remember only remember 'about,' and of the excess that inheres precisely in us: "Violence is a distortion of what, perhaps, we want to do" (Morrison; in McKay, 414). Whence arises this excess, and how can it be good and beloved?

For Sethe it has a specific and symbolic incarnation. Though she doesn't realize it then, all that will come to pass has already been previsioned and charted out in the mark of the cross within the circle that her mother bears under her breast.

"...She picked me up and carried me behind the smokehouse. Back there she opened up her dress front and lifted her breast and pointed under it. Right on her rib was a circle and a cross burnt right in the skin. She said 'This is your ma'am. This,' and she pointed. 'I am the only one got this mark now. The rest dead. If something happens to me and you can't tell me by my face, you can know me by this mark.' Scared me so. All I could think of was how important this was and how I needed to have something important to say back, but I couldn't think of anything so I just said what I thought. 'Yes, Ma'am,' I said. 'But how will you
That mark can be read as a slave brand, insigne of ownership and reduction to the status of chattel; and while, as such, it is a mark whose specific figure and signification Sethe may escape, as she does slavery, neither she nor her children will escape the marking. Schoolteacher's nephew will plant the chokecherry whose astringent fruit Sethe will forever bear; Sethe herself marks her own children with her fingernails ("[Beloved's] skin was flawless except for three vertical scratches on her forehead" (51)), and both she and they are marked far more than skin deep by the experience.

However, the mark may also be read, against the grain if you will, as a Bakongo dikenga, an ideogram of 'turning' charting the soul's journey through the cardinal points of the cosmos: birth, maturity, death, renaissance. In a double sense, then, the mark is possibly not only something to escape but also of something inescapable, both the sign of a linear flight out of the deserts of slavery and a cyclic repetition of an eternal inevitability. Time's arrow, time's cycle, the mark reconstructs and instantiates in a complex way our deepest fears and most ardent longings. For the metaphor of flight not only figures an emancipation it also symbolizes "the terror of history" as an irreversible and unintelligible sequence embodying "no permanent stability"; likewise, the metaphor of the cycle sounds not only an eternal repetition of the inevitable but also resounds with the consolations of a regularity "subject to repeal or placation by prayer and ritual" (Gould, 12-13). What is important for our understanding is that both of these movements have their own rhythm. And it is precisely out of the clash and conflict of these two rhythms that something new arises which we as reader-participants are implicated in and may give articulation to.

African musicologist John Miller Chemoff has described the dynamics of West African percussive music as an "apart playing" of "staggered...cross rhythmic relationships" (47). The 'beat,' he says, is not something one "gets with," but rather something one "responds to" (55); it is, in a sense, absent, "an additional rhythm to the ones we hear" (49). This absence is crucial to aesthetic appreciation:

In African music it is precisely the listener or dancer who has to supply the beat: the listener must be actively engaged in making sense of the music; the music itself does not become the concentrated focus of an event...The full drum ensemble is an accompaniment, a music-to-find-the-beat-by." (49-50)
Arguing by analogy I would like to suggest that between the rhythms of linear flight and cyclic return, a third pulse is sought for and can be heard.\textsuperscript{6} It is this heart beat that the narrator seems aware of and strives to communicate in such a way that we can participate in it. It is to be realized, as Sethe's words perhaps hint, in maturity, precisely through escape \textit{and} having been marked: "I didn't understand it then. Not till I had a mark of my own" (61). Only we who are actively engaged by both the linear and cyclic rhythms, can be aware of the third, the 'music-to-find-the-beat-by'. If we can hear that absent, additional rhythm, we may realize and embody the liberating knowledge of the state of maturity. It will be a state in which the unheralded will be possible: "I will call them my people, / which were not my people; / and her beloved, / which was not beloved" (Romans 9: 25; epigraph to the novel).

\textit{Beloved} is a work of tragic aspirations and architecture. And if, as Michel de Certeau has said, every tragedy (and he has as much in mind the works of Freud as those of Sophocles), "is the progressive transformation of a spatial order into a temporal series," then we can begin to orient ourselves by taking mark of the spatial and temporal framing devices that initiate our entrance into the world of 124 (1986, 22). First of these would be the reproduction above the title on the title page. It, like the images heading each of the three chapters, is an eighteenth-century New England gravestone rubbing.\textsuperscript{7} Gillon, from whose book the images have been reproduced, points out that the early American Puritans who commissioned and made these images were part of a once widespread, but now disappearing, folk tradition of religious belief, conditioned by the real and cyclical presences of mortality and \textit{vanitas} (the death's heads) and the flight of the soul after death (the winged angels).\textsuperscript{8} When, however, we compare the images with photographs of the headstones they are taken from (some of which Gillon reproduces), we are made aware of a transformation. In the process of rubbing, faces have been blackened, and the whole tenor of the bas-relief images, often on white or pale stone, has darkened.

My hypothesis is that these four images mark out the cardinal points of a cosmic ideogram under the sign of which the relentless cross-rhythmic relationship of \textit{Beloved} and the tragedy of its repetitions can be articulated. What then is the import of the \textit{dikenga}?

The \textit{dikenga} marks the crossroads, the tomb, the parting of the ways. It flags the vanishing point where village meets forest, where river meets sea, where the limitations of ordinary vision become acute. The \textit{dikenga}, when drawn, becomes a template of the Kongo altar: a cross within a circle. The vertical axis, the 'power line,' connects God above with the dead below. The horizontal axis, the 'kalunga line,' marks the water boundary between the living and the dead.
The *dikenga* circle charts the soul's timeless voyage. Soul cycles as a star in heaven. To the Bakongo its is a shining circle, a miniature of the sun. Hence they mark the sun's four moments - dawn, noon, sunset, and midnight (when its shining in the other world) - by small circles at the end of each arm of the cross, mirroring the immortal process of the soul: birth, full strength, fading, renaissance. The four corners of a diamond tell the same sequence. (Thompson, 1993; 49)

Laying this template over the action of the three chapters of the novel - and holding in abeyance for the moment the fourth movement, maturity - we would have fading (death), renaissance (rebirth), and birth, or passage out of the world, passage through the underworld, and passage back into the world. However, while this order of transitions parallels the three chapters of the novel, it only makes sense when we consider the narrative sequence of events in reverse, for *Beloved* is a story of the rupture of the cycle and its repair, a tragedy. Thus, reading backwards, the community's return to drive out Beloved at the end of part three, '124 was quiet,' marks the dawn of Sethe's return to the fold of its embrace and her potential birth to sociality. After the exorcism, Paul D finds her swathed in Baby Suggs' bedclothes, fingering her hair, and mumbling nursery rhymes. Part two, '124 was loud,' represents midnight/renaissance, the nadir of Sethe's journey (and Paul D's own descent, into the bottle), where she loses all sense of self-identity through an absolute identification with the dead child from the other side. In part one, '124 was spiteful,' after eighteen years of communal opprobrium, Beloved arrives and drives out both Here Boy and Paul D, signaling the completion of those eighteen years of limbo (fading, sunset) and the beginning of a return to the point where the cycle of turning was broken. We have, thus, three movements and three images, three times, and three acts: fading-death, sunset, chapter one; renaissance-rebirth, midnight, chapter two; and birth, dawn, chapter three. The fourth image-movement seems to have no place in the novel's world, and indeed we may say that it only exists outside it.

Both the first and third movements, fading and birth, are transitions across the liquid *kalunga* line dividing the living and the dead, and are water-marked. Beloved is said to emerge out of water soaking wet; and when Sethe first eyes her, "for some reason she could not immediately account for...Sethe's bladder filled to capacity...the water she voided was endless...like flooding the boat when Denver was born" (51). Similarly, in the climax of the novel, the voices of the communal supplicants build

...voice upon voice until they found it, and when they did it was a wave of sound wide enough to sound deep water and knock the pods off chestnut trees. It broke over Sethe and she trembled like the baptized in its wash. (261)
The abstraction of this water symbolism is insisted on as if it were a textile motif. This can be seen in the fact that both Sethe, on finding the ferryman (Stamp Paid, as it turns out) for the journey across the Ohio to freedom, and Beloved, in reaching 124, are possessed by unslakable thirsts: "She begged him for water and he gave her some of the Ohio in a jar. Sethe drank it all and begged more" (90); "...Paul D and Denver standing before the stranger, watching her drink cup after cup of water" (51). The formality of the motif is in abstract excess to the narrative realism of the moments, the fact that both Sethe and Beloved are soaking wet (Sethe is dripping with a feverish perspiration and has just given birth to Denver up to her hips in the river; Beloved has just emerged out of the water). It also is important to the symbolic economy of the novel to keep in mind the twin thirst of the Klu Klux Klan, "[d]esperately thirsty for black blood, without which it could not live, the dragon swam the Ohio at will," for this constitutes another family of animating cross-rhythms (66).

What does it mean to say that Beloved's arrival is a return to the point when the cycle was broken? To understand that rupture, we, like Denver tracing the steps of the story she is in, must first go back a long ways. Twenty-four years prior (1849) to the novel's present (1873), Sethe, aged thirteen, arrived at Sweet Home "already iron-eyed" (10). It is difficult at first to know what this epithet is supposed to mean because of the narrator's use of delayed coding. Indeed, this technique is employed throughout the narration as a structuring device: something is always to be reconstructed and recognized. The engaged reader, and in this we mimic the characters, must constantly double back in memory and stitch together the relevant fragments into a (provisional) whole cloth of sense in order to move forward. Hence the aptness of the novel's setting in the 'Reconstruction.' Following in the wake of Paul D's reminiscence, as his memory works over his image of Sethe way back then, it becomes apparent that 'iron-eyed' carries connotations of light and energy: "glittering iron" (9). This sense is corroborated by the additional description "and a backbone to match" (9). It is this life spirit that is thrashed out of Sethe (or so Paul D thinks; Sethe herself hints at another explanation) by the beating Schoolteacher's nephew inflicts on her, rendering her face, to Paul D's sight, "a mask with mercifully punched out eyes...like two open wells that did not reflect firelight" (9).10 Shortly after this meeting, Sethe, having missed the rendez-vous that would have connected her to the underground railroad going north, strikes out on her own. Somehow, through a combination of luck, determination, and the ministrations of a kind 'spirit,' Sethe manages both to deliver Denver and to find the ferryman to freedom. The journey from Sweet Home takes an undisclosed length of time, though it can later be worked out.
circumstantially, to be seven days; hence its epithet "the miracle" (161).11 (The
synecdochic twin of the 'miracle,' is what Stamp Paid calls "the Misery...Sethe's rough
response to the Fugitive Bill" (171).) Finally, returning to the present on the front steps of
124 Paul D's memory of Sethe as she was back at Sweet Home concludes with "Now the
iron was back" (9).

Between the day of the thrashing/the day of the escape and the present, Sethe's
iron will-iron spirit has been taken away and given back. We may reasonably attribute its
restitution to the 'miracle' of having successfully brought Denver to term and escaped
Schoolteacher, both of which are marked by the water motifs of the baptism and the
thirst.12 Can we assimilate these events to the infra-structure of the dikenga? To do that
we would focus on the fact that it sprinkles lightly the day of the escape and that Sethe
appears to Paul D "rain-wet," signalling the initiation of a passage across the kalunga line
(227). More important, however, would be to characterize the missing seven days of the
flight as a journey through the underworld in which Sethe is lost to time.

In that passage, despite her swollen feet, wounded back, and being late in her
term, Sethe is driven by something she calls "the little antelope" in her womb (30). It
prods her on with impatience every time she stops walking. Eventually, however, even
the antelope's encouragement cannot overcome the "tight cap of peeling bells around her
ears," and she sinks into the earth (30). At this point she begins to lose consciousness of
her self, and be possessed by something other: "Nothing was alive but her nipples and the
little antelope"; 'Sethe' herself becomes "her children's mother" (30). In a delirium she
flashes back to the place she was before Sweet Home, of which she remembers nothing
except that it was from there the notion of the antelope, a possession dance, arises. She is
less than eight years old, and truly remembers very little, "Not even her own mother,"
who is pointed out to her by another child (30).

Oh but when they sang. And oh but when they danced and sometimes they
danced the antelope. The men as well as the ma'ams, one of whom was certainly
her own. They shifted shapes and became something other. Some unchained,
demanding other whose feet knew her pulse better than she did. Just like this one
in her stomach.

'I believe this baby's ma'am is gonna die in wild onions on the bloody side
of the Ohio River.' (31)

What is notable in this passage is the conjunction of the antelope, as unborn child
and rite of possession, the dispossession of Sethe's extra-maternal identity, i.e., her
transformation into 'this baby's ma'am,' and the unidentified presence of Sethe's own
mother among the many ma'ams ('one of whom was certainly her own'). Seized by 'some unchained, demanding other,' Sethe is simultaneously a series of particulars and a series of universals: she is Denver, herself, Denver's mother, herself as child ('this baby,' who remembers her mother), herself as her own mother ('this baby[']s' ma'am), and Antelope-Dancer-Spirit-Child-Mother-Grandmother. The confluence of these two rhythmic chains of association, the one conditioned by her particular genealogy and circumstance, the other unconditioned ('unchained') by anything other than what we might call the archetype of the Ancestor,¹³ is fortuitous. For Sethe is at a point of physical and spiritual resignation:

And [dying] didn't seem like such a bad idea, all in all, in view of the step she would not have to take, but the thought of herself stretched out dead while the little antelope lived on - an hour? a day? a day and a night? - in her lifeless body grieved her so she made the groan that made the person walking on a path not ten yards away halt and stand right still. Sethe had not heard the walking, but suddenly she heard the standing still and then she smelled the hair. (31: emphasis added).

The nadir of Sethe's journey is well marked here by the use of negatives. Being beyond a certain threshold means having to take steps or pains to get back from a realm where silence is audible but walking is not - and Sethe no longer possesses that strength. Between the cross-rhythms of the longing to capitulate to death and the will to life for or of the child something unforeseen is uttered. It was not, strictly speaking, Sethe (or the Sethe we have hitherto known) who 'made the groan that made the person,' but some product of her particular circumstance and the unconditioned archetype.

The process of transformation, however, is not complete, for Sethe believes that the person who(m) discovers her/she calls is another whiteboy come to steal her milk again.

She told Denver that a something came up out of the earth into her - like a freezing, but moving too, like jaws inside. 'Look like I was cold jaws grinding,' she said. Suddenly, she was eager for his eyes, to bite into them; to gnaw his cheek.

'Come see,' I was thinking. 'Be the last thing you behold,' and sure enough here come the feet so I thought well that's where I'll have to start God do what He would, I'm gonna eat his feet off. I'm laughing now, but it's true. I wasn't just set to do it. I was hungry to do it. Like a snake. All jaws and hungry. (31)

This pregnant 'something' is an important motif that will return later in Denver's nightmares. Here it is crucial not only in calling up Amy, the helping spirit who revives
Sethe's flagging will for life, and in bringing home to Sethe the truth that she is running, completely dispossessed, and in need of succor, but also in teaching her something she will later, on a different level, need to know. It is something she will both hunger for and fear: "Anything dead coming back to life hurts" (35). Thus the at first seemingly quixotic employ of the adverb 'mercifully' ('a mask with mercifully punched out eyes') here yields up some of its intent. Sethe's blind, ghostly, lifeless determination to persevere, combined with her physical and spiritual exhaustion and her availability to possession may have been precisely what she needed (and may yet be what she still needs) to pass through.

Coming through and out of the underworld is the miracle of Denver's birth and Sethe's rebirth as a free woman. Once again water marks the event: "As soon as Sethe got close to the river her own water broke lose to join it" (83). But there are other miracles here: how does Sethe know the route? - "You could be lost forever, if there wasn't nobody to show you the way." (135); Sethe is said to be six months pregnant (30); after Amy had bet Sethe that if "you make it through the night, you make it all the way," Sethe awoke the morning of the crossing believing the baby was dead (82); and, finally, Sethe nearly loses both her own life and the baby's when the boat in which she gives birth begins to sink and the baby gets stuck "drowning in her mother's blood" (84).

Clearly the cyclic crossing over the kalunga line is as fraught with danger as the linear flight from Sweet home, and the narrowness of Sethe's escape, product of both a blind perseverance and a capitulation to possession, gives rise to what we might call the absent additional rhythm, one of the novel's three extended narrative exergues. What I mean by exergue is a point where the tireless forward cadence of the narrative comes to a halt and, as it were, steps outside itself.

...Amy wrapped her skirt around [the baby] and the wet sticky women clambered ashore to see what, indeed, God had in mind.

Spores of bluefem growing in the hollows along the riverbank float toward the water in silver-blue lines hard to see unless you are in or near them, lying right at the river's edge when the sunshots are low and drained. Often they are mistook for insects - but they are seeds in which the whole generation sleeps confident of a future. And for a moment it its easy to believe each one has one - will become all of what is contained in the spore: will live out its days as planned. This moment of certainty lasts no longer than that; longer, perhaps, than the spore itself. (84)

The quietly tenuous and ephemeral nature of this moment is in striking contrast to the Sethe's blind determination and the potentially infinite generations to come - not to mention the tireless and diligent forward momentum of the narrative voice. As coda, it
signals the end of one cycle and the beginning of another. However, as precious as it
clearly is, this new beginning, rather than being a bedrock, is curiously fleeting,
momentary. Although Sethe has had three other children, we have not been witness to
their birth. What is completed here for our benefit, through Sethe's symbolic death and
resurrection, is her survival and coming to maternity, and the beginning of her passage
into ancestry, the stage of being whose allegiance, and thus a whole gamut of necessary
choices, bears upon the future. The co-generation of ancestry and birth signals the advent
of a time in which the new cycle need not be da capo.

In this miraculous moment of fecundity, we may say that time itself is born, in the
sense that something is given absent-mindedly, without precedent, without reciprocity,
and outside the economy of exchange. Emmanuel Levinas has phenomenologically
characterized fecundity as the self's polyrhythmic engagement and disengagement with
time, "a drama, a multiplicity of acts where the following act resolves the prior one"
(1979, 284). By engagement he means one's being bound to the present, the realizing and
becoming definitive, through choice, of specific possibles, and their exhaustion and
aging; by disengagement, he means the ability to distance oneself from the present, and
the destiny engagement with it entails:

A being capable of another fate than its own is a fecund being. In paternity, where
the I, across the definitiveness of an inevitable death, prolongs itself in the other,
time triumphs over old age and fate by its discontinuity. Paternity - the way of
being other while being oneself... (1979, 282)

The distance that fecundity opens up to the self can be characterized as a setting forth of a
'work' - either as form or interpretation. As a result, the self, conscious that the work does
not belong to the past, is able to freely return to itself, in some way disengaged from or
independent of its past. In a discontinuity that preserves the authenticity and dignity of the
past through a coupling with and a separation from it, the fecund being enjoys a kind of
rejuvenescence, a liberation, we might say, within the rhythm. This liberation means that
"a free return to the past...[a] free interpretation and free choice...[and] an existence
entirely pardoned" becomes possible (1979, 282).

For Sethe, what is absolutely new is both Denver, and the rejuvenescence of
ancestry. Both these events open up possibilities for escape from the definitiveness of
mere duration, the reiterative obedience to the master's rhythm. The possibility of non-
definitiveness lies both in the sense that Denver is the promise of another future - not the
one provisioned for by the past, but one yet to come, and as such a departure from the
cycle - and in the sense that Sethe's past is now something of its own, something she can
freely return to 'in free interpretation and free choice,' as a participant and not a captive. Paradoxically, such a past, in becoming an object of contemplation or memory, will be both an *a priori*, untouchable-as-fact (disengaged from her present-future), and something whose meaning and import for the present and the future is entirely open to question. In ushering us into the exergue, the narrator intimates this potentially new future-past: '[the women] clambered ashore to see what, indeed, God had in mind.'

In what concerns the past, part of the untouchable-as-fact is the thrashing that Sethe received at the hands of Schoolteacher's nephew. Recall that out of the cross-rhythms of Sethe's longing to capitulate and the will to life for/of the child was 'made the groan that made the person.' Amy in her turn called on divinity, or its powers, in her repeated invocations of "Come here, Jesus" (78, 79, 82) and "What God have in mind" (79, 80). Those calls appear to have been heard because, through the ministrant power of Amy's "good hands," the "screaming" pain in Sethe's back and feet dissolves and disappears (79). After the night in the lean-to Amy takes another look at Sethe's back, which by this time is numb, and declares:

Looks like the Devil...But you made it through. Come down here, Jesus, Lu made it through. That's because of me. I'm good at sick things. (82)

And not only has Amy healed Sethe's wounds through a laying on of hands, she has made them visible to both Sethe and us through their transformation into an image - the chokecherry tree - of the efflorescent return of time's cycle:

'See, here's the trunk - it's red and split wide open, full of sap, and this here's the parting for the branches. Leaves, too, look like, and dern if these ain't blossoms. Tiny little cherry blossoms, just as white. Your back got a whole tree on it. In bloom. What God have in mind, I wonder.' (79)

In what concerns the future, Denver and the exergue answer the question: 'What God have in mind, I wonder?' There is a curious pregnancy to its moment in that in it the reiterative accumulation of Sethe's past, its violence and suffering, is definitively interrupted, judged or pardoned, and passed beyond without being passed over. Denver, and the potentially limitless generations that may be her issue, while being products of an engagement with time, may also be time's resurrection and recommencement. She and they will not necessarily bear the marks of *that* past, and may indeed through their distance from it be capable of forgiving it. Recall that Denver is the first of the generations the time and place of whose birth is known; it is Denver who breaks out of the closed world and locked door of 124, despite her terror of the outside; and it is Denver
who learns to read, and establishes bonds with other members of the community that eventually coalesce in the exorcism of the haunting. In the potentially new relation to the past as completed, Denver's birth gives an image of the advent of time's arrow, its non-definitiveness, its freedom. The possibility of choice has been reconstructed and reinstated. Once reinstated it will have a salubrious effect on the past to be: what is now judged can always and henceforward be reinvoked, ameliorated, and transcended.

The quizzical status of the exergue brings these two tenses into compact as a past-future. In the quiet twilight shower of silvery spores, as the two women coddle the precious and vulnerable new born, one cannot help imagining that what is also given here - in the rapture of the face to face, as it were - is the moral law: Thou shalt not kill. Yet, as I have endeavoured to show, the fragile contingency of time as the possibility of the new, the future, and the good - the intelligibility proper to time's arrow - arises from its engaging-disengaging link to a sadistic evil situated in the past. And further, we would do well to note that the potential for violence has as its necessary precondition the injunction of the moral law, whose intelligibility presupposes time's cycle, for one can only murder a being with a face.22 'What indeed did He have in mind?' Is this couple good-evil of the order of necessity? (Levinas has said "evil strikes me in my horror of evil and thus reveals - or is already - my association with the Good" (1987, 183).) To ask this question is to zero in on a point of origin that the novel perpetually circles around. To answer in the affirmative would be to point to the rhythmic conjunction of Sethe-as-snake ('All jaws and hungry') and Amy as ministering angel, and the economy of excess that is operative in the figures of both Sethe and Stamp Paid.23 This economy we will come to anon; but let me say here that such an articulation of good and evil would constitute a felix culpa:24 time gives rise to the fault and in the same gesture offers forgiveness and renewal.

The exergue is perhaps the perfect vehicle for these reflections because it itself is an interruption within, a judgement of, a passing beyond pure eventness - and entirely circumstantial.25 From within the work, it signals both its own mimetic contingency on and a diegetic freedom from the forward surge of narration and history. This curious space-time of the exergue, a without-contained-within, is one of the possible meanings of the novel's coda/da capo: "This is not a story to pass on...Beloved" (275). By this I mean that, on the one hand, with the rhythmic accent on pass, this is not a story to be passed up or on as if it were a hand of cards. One should ante up or enter into its telling and see its world from the inside. And, equally, on the other hand, with the accent fully striking the on, neither is it a story to casually retail or retell. It ought to remain outside circulation, an "outside thing that embraces while it accuses" (271). From the point of view of the cross-rhythmic relation what the narrative momentum is seeking to realize is precisely the
exergue as music-to-find-the-beat-by. Neither a **passing on**, nor a passing **on**, but some moment of salvation within time; the gift of time’s renewal that contains both the linear and cyclical rhythms and holds them in balance; a liberatory engagement with time.

It may seem perplexing to argue, as I do, that the narrator holds forth a form of knowledge that, it is suggested, is precisely what the characters need or are searching for. I am not alone in making this point. Mae G. Henderson, quoting Ricoeur, sees Sethe’s plight as a struggle to fashion a liberatory narrative: "For Schoolteacher, history is a confirming activity; for Sethe, it must become a liberating activity. She must accomplish what Morrison does in the act of historicizing fiction - namely, ‘to free retrospectively, certain possibilities that were not actualized in the historical past,’ and to detect 'possibilities buried in the...past'" (72). Fashioning a liberatory narrative is an enigmatic process in which precisely the impossibility that Kafka speaks of when he says "Man may embody truth, but he cannot know it," is passed on.26 The meaning of this enigma is clarified, without however being unraveled, through "creative exegesis," as it is in the passage from Lamentations to Lamentation Rabbah (the Midrashic commentary of Lamentations).27 and particularly through repetition: "repetition of a rhythm often serves to clarify meaning" (Chernoff, 80).

A fine example of this is the story of Joseph (Genesis: 37-47), which, as Sandor Goodhart points out, involves a series of transpositions, later replayed. In the first half of the story (up until Joseph is sold into slavery) a chain of mimetic substitutions is woven into the tale in order that we may recognize ourselves in such behaviour; in the second half, part of the import of replaying the same series is to make the "the demystification of sacrificial thinking...available to the characters themselves within the text" (71). Glossing this process we may say that in the first phase we are inserted into the cyclic inevitability of the narrative, "committed to the infinite repetition of the same acts and the same thoughts...prisoners...[for whom] history is never finished, [because] it still goes on, but makes no headway" (Levinas 1989, 139). In the second half the repetition of substitutions focuses the mind on the similarities and the differences of that which is repeated ('A rose is a rose is a rose...'). If this knowledge become available to the characters in the narrative, how much more so is it for us who recognize ourselves 'as characters' in it, and as such exterior to it?

This liberating engagement-disengagement is beautifully rendered in the second exergue where the forward momentum of the narrative dilates momentarily after Sethe realizes who, in fact, Beloved is:
'I made that song up,' said Sethe. 'I made it up and sang it to my children. Nobody knows that song but me and my children.'

Beloved turned to look at Sethe. 'I know it,' she said.

A hobnail casket of jewels found in a tree hollow should be fondled before its is opened. Its lock may have rusted or broken away from the clasp. Still you should touch the nail heads, and test its weight. No smashing with an ax head before it is decently exhumed from the grave that has hidden it all this time. No gasp at a miracle that is truly miraculous because the magic lies in the fact that you knew it was there for you all along. (176)

Although the narrator is able to communicate to us in these moments the quasi-utopic phenomenology\textsuperscript{28} of a temporal resurrection, it is not clear whether Sethe and Amy are conscious of this need, for Amy remains somewhat futural, "Miss Amy Denver. \textit{Of Boston}" (85; emphasis added), that is, of where she has never been but hopes to arrive, and Sethe is soon trapped in the broken cycle of the \textit{dikenga}. This is perhaps why the cross-rhythms are so insistently repeated: to make the gift of the exergue available to the characters themselves.

That there still remains some phenomenological veil between the knowledge of the exergue (which we share with the narrator) and the characters themselves, reflects, perhaps, the fact that this privilege is only available in maturity. We participate in that privilege both through our 'quasi-direct' channel to a narrator who is able to stand outside and reflect on the whole of the action, something the characters, at this stage of the narration at least, do not enjoy, and through our exegesis, our subjection to the speaking voice: "Exegesis is the leading out, education, of the self from the ego, the turning of the named subject's mastery over itself and others into the other's educative mastery over the subject: the subjection of subjectivity to teaching, its de-struction by instruction" (Llewelyn, 183). The titular deity of the novel, represented above the title on the title page, gives us an image of precisely the maturity I imagine. In her curly locks and distressed countenance she represents, like the gorgon, the moral law, but she also, as aegis of \textit{Athena} (to complete the analogy), represents the tempering wisdom of a troubled and "insatiable compassion."\textsuperscript{29} From within her lunette she embodies the moment of salvation that is both engaged and disengaged with time: half of the circle is present/absent. The full black arc above her gives her compass over the multiplicity of acts where the following act resolves the prior; but the insubstantiality of her plinth (nothing seems to support her as she hovers full-winged over the title) alerts us to the knowledge that time contains within it a non-definitiveness, the knowledge of a without-contained-within. Aware of Morrison's fondness for New Testament metaphors, perhaps
the single word that would seal her compact with the novel and us is 'resurrection': "...la chose la plus sensible et la moins matérielle..."30

Finally to return to the exergue of the spores, we should say that the tenuous nature of the moment reflects the fragility of the exergue in se, its supplementarity. Simultaneously an engagement and disengagement with time, its delicacy stems from the fact that escape from time signals also the advent of a new movement in which one is once again its prisoner. Its whist-fullness is founded on the knowledge that the promise of the future is a slender reed, that many spores will die (that Schoolteacher will attempt to stake his claim), and that 'anything dead coming back to life hurts.' Indeed, as Sethe will later learn, Denver's father Halle died in "Eighteen fifty-five. The day my baby [Denver] was born" (8).

§

Sethe enjoys only twenty-eight days of freedom - "the travel of one whole moon" (95) - until Schoolteacher catches up with her. It is at this point that the cycle of the dikenga is broken, and Sethe's eyes are once again blacked out, without, however, her having undergone the requisite journey through the world below. From the mythographic point of view adopted here, what I have called the gospel according to Baby Suggs - 'Everything depends on knowing how much' - is overturned by the economy of excess.

The economy of excess is a way of describing the miracle of the gift of time, generations, and the moral law. It also describes the danger stalking the application and realization of enlightenment. Recall that in chapter one Mendelssohn had singled out for consideration the possibility that the high level of perfection that a nation may reach through culture and enlightenment bears within it the danger of excess, of falling either into sickness, since an excess of prosperity or health "can already be called a sickness," or into exhaustion, "since [a nation] can climb no higher" (317). Within the economy of excess, that danger concerns the tendency (one we are all cognizant of in the history of ideologies) that the principle become inverted into its opposite. To speak of an economy of excess is to be vigilant to that

which seeks in the particular the precise moment in which the general principle runs the risk of becoming its own opposite, which watches over the general from the basis of the particular. This preserves us from ideology. Ideology is the
generosity and clarity of a principle which did not take into account the inversion stalking this generous principle when it is applied. (Levinas; in Aronowicz, xxx)

Knowing how much, on the other hand, signals an analogic understanding. It is Baby Suggs' 'knowing how much,' the tactile knowledge of a pinch of salt, a dash of bitters, a handful of nuts in relation to the whole recipe. To ask 'how much' is always to ask 'In relation to what?' Its awareness of the more-or-less-ness of things is never so accurate as the digital or absolute understanding of a centilitre, three grams, or 440 megahertz (and if it errs it is through good intent); but it makes up for its less-than-exact-ness by its ability to avoid the 'straw that breaks the camel's back,' something a purely digital understanding tends to miss. It is this awareness that Baby Suggs' gospel seeks to embody: “But since there was still no sign of sign of Halle and Sethe herself didn't know what had happened to him, she let the whoop lie - not wishing to hurt his chances by thanking God too soon” (135).

Stamp Paid, however, starts something rolling that quickly gathers momentum and upsets the social apple cart. From his initial gift of two buckets of blackberries the "reckless generosity" of a feast for ninety soon develops (137). It is important to understand as background to this transgression the economy of excess that is operative in both Stamp and Sethe. Originally named after the warrior and conquering king Joshua, he changes his name (and implicitly relinquishes the genocidal connotations of his other avatar, King Ahasuerus, husband of Vashti, after whom his wife is seemingly named) to Stamp Paid.31 In this we may say that he exchanges and creatively transforms what might have been an excessive violence for an excess of giving.

Born Joshua, he renamed himself when he handed over his wife to his master's son. Handed her over in the sense that he did not kill anybody, thereby himself, because his wife demanded he stay alive. Otherwise, she reasoned, where and to whom could she return when the boy was through? With that gift, he decided that he didn't owe anybody anything. Whatever his obligations were, that act paid them off. He thought it would make him rambunctious, renegade - a drunkard even, the debtlessness, and in a way, it did...[but that] didn't seem much of a way to live and it brought him no satisfaction. So he extended his debtlessness to other people by helping them pay out and off whatever they owed in misery. (184-185)

What we later learn is that Joshua's original desire for murderous revenge is translated into a successful attempt to humiliate the master's son's wife. However, even that revenge is seen as futile: "I thought it would give me more satisfaction than it did. I also thought she might stop it, but it went right on" (233). Finally, about a year later,
Vashti returns for good, and at this point Joshua conceives of his most brutal revenge, directed against the victim:

'I'm back,' she said. 'I'm back, Josh.' I looked at the back of her neck. She had a real small neck. I decided to break it. You know, like a twig - just snap it. I been low, but that was as low as I ever got.'
'Did you? Snap it?'
'Uh uh. I changed my name.' (233)

There are four phases in this story. In the first phase, Joshua renounces his desire for revenge; which is to say he gives the gift of himself (saves himself from certain death) because of Vashti's request. He does not 'pay back' his superior; he does swallow the sting of his own privation. We may say that Joshua begins here to exceed himself, for if ipseity can be defined as the ability to withhold the gift, in his inability to do just that Joshua begins to become someone else, to create an ethical identity for himself. In the second phase he seeks to pass the sting of privation on to some (innocent) other as a way of dissolving it, but his strategy renders him no satisfaction. The third phase combines aspects of the first two in that Joshua's murderous intent is revived but directed against she who is the least powerful; thankfully this outcome is aborted. The fourth phase, however, signals something uncalled for.

Here, what have been until now various forms of privation/renunciation are transformed into a pure and private gift, the gift that pays back no debt. In conventional terms of exchange he is owed restitution (not to speak of Vashti): however, like Job's fear of God, 'for nought,' Stamp's gift is purely gratuitous. Through this marvelous and excessive reversal he enacts his own restitution every time he gives succor, for it is as if he sees his own privation in the face of each person he helps. The miracle is formally completed in his new name: by transposing his potentially excessive propensity for violence into a purely gratuitous caritas he remains true to his own intemperance, realizes his ethical becoming, and is 'paid in full.' Stamp Paid appears to have learned to work the economy of excess not merely for himself but for the benefit of all.

The problem, however, is that the economy of excess seeks to realize absolute maxima. To Baby Suggs' maxim, it replies, 'How can there be too much good?' What begins as a small transgression quickly takes on an unanticipated and joyfully indulgent momentum of its own. When Stamp pops a berry in baby Denver's mouth, '[t]he women shrieked...[b]ut the baby's thrilled eyes and smacking lips made them all follow suit, sampling one at a time the berries that tasted like church' (136). Exactly how things get out of hand is not adequately explained by the longing for a whoop-up to celebrate Sethe's
journey to freedom, for, as we have seen, Baby Suggs’ reservation ought to have kept things in check. There is, however, another contributing factor that could be adduced here, and that is the source of the berries.

Late in the first chapter, Stamp is explaining to Paul D about what happened eighteen years prior when Schoolteacher found Sethe out at 124. He starts the telling of his story with the party, but almost immediately stops and backs up:

Stamp started with the party, the one Baby Suggs gave, but stopped and backed up a bit to tell about the berries - where they were and what was in the earth that made them grow like that.

'They open to the sun, but not to the birds, 'cause snakes down there and the birds know it, so they just grow - fat and sweet - with nobody to bother em 'cept me because don't nobody go in that piece of water but me and ain't too many legs willing to glide down that bank to get them. Me neither. But I was willing that day. Somehow or 'nother I was willing. And they whipped me. I'm telling you. Tore me up.' (156)

It is not exactly clear why it is felt necessary to relate where the berries came from, 'and what was in the earth' that made them grow like that.' Neither does Stamp himself seem to know just why he was willing to go into 'that piece of water,' what with its snakes and all, where 'don't nobody go': 'Somehow or 'nother I was willing.' However (admittedly) equivocal the data, the interpretation is possible that these fruit are charmed in some way due to the fact that they grow in the liminal region by the riverside/in the riverbottom down where the snakes are.\textsuperscript{35} Whether or not the berries are charmed is in itself moot. What is to be noted, however, is that here, once again, the river/riverside is marked by some kind of secret (and unknown) force.

This fact becomes more salient further along in Stamp's account of that day, when he notices

how she kept looking down past the corn to the stream so much he looked too. In between ax swings, he watched where Baby was watching. Which is why they both missed it: they were looking the wrong way - toward water - and all the while it was coming down the road. (156-157)

The reason, it is offered, why Baby Suggs looks to the water, is she has awoken the morning after the party and, even though "[n]othing seemed amiss - yet the smell of disapproval was sharp" (138). Eventually she identifies "this free floating repulsion" with her friends and neighbours, "angry at her because she had overstepped, given too much, offended them by excess" (138).
Baby closed her eyes. Perhaps they were right. Suddenly, behind the disapproving odor, way way back behind it, she smelled another thing. Dark and coming. Something she couldn't get at because the other odor hid it.

She squeezed her eyes tight to see what it was but all she could make out was high-topped shoes she didn't like the look of. (138)
was doing the chore he promised to the night before. She sighed at her work and, a moment later, straightened up to sniff the disapproval once again...this free floating repulsion was new. (138; emphasis added)

I have said before that the third pulse is a product of the particular and universal (or unconditioned) rhythms. Here the third element is the arrival of Schoolteacher; and we may say that his beat (the unidentified odor) incorporates aspects of the other two rhythms (the identified smell and the image). On the one hand, Schoolteacher's arrival embodies part of the rhythm of the unconditioned archetype in which the law contains its own transgression. In this he is the agent of a force that neither he nor anyone else identifies. On the other hand, his arrival is also entirely conditioned by the Fugitive Law on the capture of runaway slaves, and by the link Sweet Home-124 established when Baby was bought out by Halle and taken north to the Bodwins by Garner. This link is reinforced by the letter(s) Baby Suggs writes to Sweet Home from 124 seeking information on the fate of her children. The quiet and Faulknerian 'clok clok clok' signals that the present has been conditioned by past events and will bring to pass what has been promised (cause and effect) with the regularity of a time piece. We may phrase the conjunction and contrast here as one between the water - fluid, windswept, changeable, routeless, lunar - and the road - grounded, linear, constant, solar.

Baby Suggs' 'failure' is a failure of vision in the sense that in her teaching "the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. If they could not see it, they would not have it" (88). As leader of the community here she looks 'the wrong way.' She looks toward Sethe's miraculous escape with her grandchildren, and does not look to her own welling pride; and she looks toward water when Schoolteacher is coming down the road and away from the good of the whole as the two pails of berries avalanches into free floating repulsion:

She fixed on [the knowledge that 'Halle got married and had a baby coming'] and her own brand of preaching, having made up her mind about what to do with the heart that started beating the minute she crossed the Ohio River. And it worked out, worked out just fine, until she got proud and let herself be overwhelmed by the sight of her daughter-in-law and Halle's children - one of whom was born on the way - and have a celebration of blackberries that put Christmas to shame. (147)

If the analogic understanding she has preached is the knowledge of more or less in relation to the whole recipe, her failure to look out for the whole allows her, and everyone else in the community, to miss what is coming. To the community her "uncalled-for-
pride," is not only to 'feast during the famine' of slavery (emancipation is still eight years further down the road; all the free blacks in Cincinnati were born slaves), but to believe she can be a Christ or Moses to them - deliver them from the wilderness or feed the many: "Loaves and fishes were His powers" (137). We may say that in this reproach the community too oversteps its balance. In calling Baby Suggs up short for her good fortune, for never having carried 100 lb. sacks, never having been thrashed, and being bought out of slavery, driven north and installed in a house with two floors and a well, the community clearly indulges in an understandable and unnecessary form of resentment.39

Everyone, it appears, becomes caught up in the economy of excess, and, as such, is subject to its inversions. We see this in the curious phrase "the stomach violence caused by the bounty" (137; emphasis added). While it is entirely within keeping that violence as metaphor substitute for indigestion on the basis of a common dyspepsia, in the context of the novel the overdetermination of the concept of violence makes us think again. Usually we might come across such a phrase in the sense of 'one cannot stomach such violence,' and reasonably link it to the violence perpetrated by the masters. Here, however, violence has either somehow been ingested or produced in the stomach, suggesting that although the black community likes to think itself different from the white, it has, nonetheless, swallowed or created a certain meanness all its own.

Not Ella, not John, not anybody ran down or to Bluestone Road, to say some new whitefolks with the Look just rode in...Nobody warned them, and [Stamp had] always believed it wasn't the exhaustion from a long day's gorging that dulled them, but some other thing - like, well, like meanness - that let them stand aside, or not pay attention, or tell themselves somebody else was probably bearing the news already to the house on Bluestone Road... (157)

The economy of excess leads the black community to think that not only must they be different from the whites (there is no mention of any of the sympathetic whites coming to warn 124), but also, and this appears to be equally destructive, in their difference from the whites the same as each other. A large part of the bile engendered by Baby Suggs' excess is the fact that she is felt to be, explicitly by the community (and implicitly by herself?), somehow different (read better) than everyone else. In the economy of excess the immoderation of goodness - bounty: boon, bonitas - is inverted into resentment and revulsion. And this leads to the interpretation that Baby Suggs and family had what happens to them coming as either test or just dessert: "Maybe they just wanted to know if Baby really was special, blessed in some way they were not" (157). There is a sense in which 'the Misery,' which can be said to begin with that morning's stomach violence, is
designed to show the black community that if they think themselves different from the whites, and as blacks all equally the same, then they themselves are in for a trial.

This theme of different/the same is furthered by the perversion of Baby Suggs’ gospel into what I call her white bile. Although after the murder Baby Suggs begs God (and Howard and Buglar) for pardon, that gift never appears to her to be forthcoming, despite the fact that Bodwin’s lobbying and legal wrangling gets Sethe out of jail after only three months. The problem appears to be that Baby Suggs

believed she had lied. There was no grace - imaginary or real - and no sunlit dance in a Clearing could change that. Her faith, her love, her imagination and her great big old heart began to collapse twenty-eight days after her daughter-in-law arrived. (89)

Exactly how she is dishonest is not entirely clear. Perhaps she truly did believe that she was a Christ or a Moses (or a Joshua) and, thus, capable of delivering (literally) on her promises of salvation. Even if that were true it ought not to have changed the verity of her gospel. One could imagine another Baby Suggs enduring the misery precisely through the strength garnered from her analogic principle. The sticking point here is her feeling that she has lied; by virtue of it we are steered towards the interpretation of her excessive pride, although the evidence for it is somewhat equivocal, in that it is something we are told of rather than see for ourselves. However, the lie begins to make sense when we recall her final words:

Baby Suggs grew tired, went to bed and stayed there until her big old heart quit. Except for an occasional request for color she said practically nothing - until the afternoon of the last day of her life when she got out of bed, skipped slowly to the door of the keeping room and announced to Sethe and Denver the lesson she had learned from her sixty years a slave and ten years free: that there was no bad luck in the world but white-people. 'They don't know when to stop,' she said, and returned to her bed, pulled up the quilt and left them to hold that thought forever. (104)

This rancorous interpretation of the world is an inverted image of the love she had earlier preached, a gospel remarkable for its tolerance. Baby Suggs here seems to have come full circle (fulfilling the transgression of her own law), from articulating a vision of the good to a heaping of all iniquity on the whites. As a last confession it seems to verify the earlier description, of which it was difficult to make sense, that "Baby Suggs, holy, proved herself a liar" (89). Sadly she ends her days ruled by the economy of excess, and to the benefit of no one: she doesn't know when to stop.40 We may well ask ourselves if
rhythms (and for that matter ideas, with which they bear some similarity) possess an unstoppable inertia. It is also worth recalling that both Stamp Paid and the Baby Suggs of her final days are ruled by a similar excess, whose different instantiations is crucial.

This question of difference opens up to the question of what kind of escape from slavery is possible. As we will see when we look at Sethe's dilemma half the momentum of the novel insists on the persistence of the regime of slavery in memory. And so the question forced on us is: to what extent is the desire to escape part and parcel of the whole economy of excess? It is interesting to note in this regard that it is not only the blacks whose break with the order of slavery is less than complete. The Garners, who run a more humane kind of slavery (the phrase itself is oxymoronic), buy Baby Suggs from a man named Whitlow, and on the sales ticket Baby Suggs is named Jenny.41 For ten years both Garners call her by that name. Finally, as she is being driven north to freedom, Baby Suggs informs Garner of her 'real' name, the name "the 'husband' she claimed" (i.e., 'Mr.' Suggs) called her: Baby (142). However, on her first meeting with the Bodwins, who are quick to point out "[w]e don't hold with slavery, even Garner's kind," sister Bodwin addresses Baby Suggs as Jenny (145). This irony is reinforced by the existence of a back black entrance to the Bodwin's house and the kneeling 'Sambo' statuette in the Bodwins' kitchen holding spare change with the words 'At Yo Service' painted across its pedestal. The point here is that even the Bodwins, who from their position of power and influence spend years in the cause of abolition, even they are blind to the legacy of slavery in their midst. Clearly they are not to be equated with the old-style slave traders of the deep south, but their self-characterized difference (and they are different) constitutes a set of blinders to those elements of their conduct that have not changed. If they who are external to the slave regime are blind, how much more blind are those who have lived within it?42

The overwhelming of the analogic principle by the economy of excess in the story of Baby Suggs' life is further played out in Sethe's story. Recall that from the very beginning she is a substitute for Baby Suggs, what the narrator calls "a timely present for Mrs. Garner who had lost Baby Suggs to her husband's high principles" (10; emphasis added). Like Stamp Paid she seems to embody a kind of absolute, which we have seen in her blind determination to escape, and which, like Stamp's can work both good or ill. As substitute or double for Baby Suggs, Sethe will bring 'to fruition' that which Baby Suggs preached, but, in her own terms, was unable to achieve: "Freeing yourself was one thing: claiming ownership of that freed self was another" (95). What I mean here is that with the onset of the 'Misery,' Baby Suggs, in believing she had lied, renounces her 'calling,' and as such, her claim on freedom - a life ruled by bilious resentment (while technically emancipated) can hardly be called free. In the case of Sethe, however, freedom, despite
her tenuous hold on it, is something she is determined to keep. In fact, she will pursue that claim to its very end, sacrificing almost everything she has - "every bit of life she had made, all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful" (163) - and in the process realize Amy's prophecy: "Anything dead coming back to life hurts" (35).

Sethe's iron willfulness carries Baby Suggs' excess to a higher level. Most obviously she commits the sacrilege of seeking the "perfect death," attempting to take her children to the 'other side' "where they'd be safe" (99; 164). From the mythic perspective this can be seen as an unauthorized transformation, or transgression, for the cycle will not be forced.4 We can see this in the fact that for the narrator Sethe stops Schoolteacher from staking his claim by her look.

The whole lot was lost now. Five. He could claim the baby struggling in the arms of the mewing old man, but who'd tend her? Because the woman - something was wrong with her. She was looking at him now, and if his other nephew could see that look he would learn the lesson for sure... (150)

The theme of difference/the same returns here in that Sethe's violence can be seen as a recurrence of that wielded by the masters, and her look the mirror image of

[t]he righteous Look every Negro learned to recognize along with his ma'am's tit. Like a flag hoisted, this righteousness telegraphed and announced the faggot, the whip, the fist, the lie, long before it went public. (157)

The murderous intent embodied in Sethe's mirrored look44 is only one of the wild inversions of the economy of excess in a state of runaway feedback. Baby Suggs' 'uncalled-for pride' is substituted for and redoubled by Sethe's overweening hubris, her "knife clean" profile when she appears before the community after the murder (152). It is precisely here in this stunning haughtiness that the dikenga, image of one's connection to the cosmic and social whole, is broken. And the community instinctively knows it, for they refrain from singing: it is their break too.

She climbed into the cart, her profile knife-clean against a cheery blue sky. A profile that shocked them with its clarity. Was her head a bit too high? Her back a little too straight? Probably. Otherwise the singing would have begun at once...Some cape of sound would have been quickly been wrapped around her, like arms to hold and steady her on the way. (152)

Years later when Baby Suggs dies, Sethe has renounced none of her pride: "I did it. I got us all out. Without Halle too...It was a kind of selfishness I never knew nothing
about before. It felt good. Good and right" (162). Indeed her insistence on her righteousness (in the face of community demands for penitence and solidarity) shows the economy of excess spiraling out of control into mutual recrimination and alienation. The community refuses to set foot inside 124 for the wake; Sethe refuses to attend the service, and will not join in the hymn singing; they refuse to eat her food and she refuses theirs.

So Baby Suggs, holy, having devoted her freed life to harmony, was buried amid a regular dance of pride, fear, condemnation and spite. Just about everybody was longing for Sethe to come on difficult times. Her outrageous claims, her self-sufficiency seemed to demand it... (171)

In precisely the inverted sense of Stamp Paid's miraculous transformation and renaming, Sethe appears to have wrought the economy of excess to the impoverishment of all. The community loses its leadership and cohesion; Sethe loses their support and is 'exiled' from the community. Here again she substitutes for Baby Suggs, the Baby Suggs the community sought fit to reproach: 'Maybe they just wanted to know if Baby really was special, blessed in some way they were not.' This fractured whole will not be mended until Sethe and they return to the broken point in the cycle and somehow pass through. If she (and they) can do that, if it can be done, then a restitution of the analogic principle, the awareness of the 'How much?' - 'In relation to what?', the more-in-the-less, will be possible. To do that she (and they) will have to surrender possession of - and by - what belongs only to her: her claim on her self-ownership, and thus the self-righteousness she maintains; her crime, her guilt, her Beloved.

§

In the analysis of the outbreak of 'the Misery' thus far, we have seen that it is set in motion by the small transgression of the two buckets of berries and Baby Suggs' 'uncalled-for pride.' As it gathers momentum everyone becomes contaminated by its excesses and inversions giving rise to the 'stomach violence' ingested and produced in the gut. Baby Suggs adopts her attitude of 'white bile' and the community takes on a meanness that they as freed slaves thought themselves exempt from. Here also Sethe raises the stakes one higher; her story points to an origin of her particular and conditioned stomach violence that marks her as an agent of excess.

Early in the novel the narrator tells us that Sethe's "picture of the men coming to nurse her was as lifeless as the nerves in her back" (6; emphasis added). This is a curious phrase in that used transitively, as it is here, nurse denotes care for, foster, cure, nurture,
suckle, etc., none of which seem apposite to the little we know of her experience. However, it soon becomes clear that what is being referred to is the incident where the nephews steal her milk while Schoolteacher calmly annotates his 'anthropological' field book (70). This being the case the question arises: who nurses who, and how?

Literally, and in the verbally transitive sense, she, however unwilling, 'nurses' them. This reading is clearly inappropriate, however, for there is none of the requisite caring, curing, or nurturing appropriate to the intimacy of a mother and child. The meaning must, then, be figurative, in the sense that in stealing her milk they 'nurse' her in hatred. This sense is corroborated by the sadistic whipping that follows, in which a hole is dug in the ground to protect the baby (as future work-hand), and by which it is later said a fruit bearing tree is 'planted' on her back. Hence the phrase is doubly paradoxical: literally, she is violently forced to nurse them, on the one hand, and figuratively, they nurse her, not in tenderness or benevolence but in malevolence, on the other.

These paradoxes give the phrase its curious justness because, as it turns out, Sethe's own experience of being nursed by her mother is a misrecognized and violent one. Reflecting on her memories Sethe says initially that her mother "must have nursed me two or three weeks." However, this 'memory,' we soon realize, is only an inference for she immediately adds "- that's the way the others did it. Then she went back to the rice and I sucked from another woman whose job it was" (60). And, as it later turns out during the progressive unhinging of Sethe's mind, even this inference is further revised to "[not] more than a week or two" (203).

The tenuousness of Sethe's memories vis-à-vis her mother gives us an important clue as to why the theft of Sethe's milk is so important to her, a fact she doubly emphasizes in her first explanation to Paul D:

'They used cowhide on you?
'And they took my milk.'
'They beat you and you was pregnant?'
'And they took my milk!' (17)

Although we can emotionally identify with Sethe's experience of this outrage it isn't until much later, in the monologue following Stamp's overhearing the "unspeakable thoughts, unspoken," that we are given enough shards of a story to piece together its true significance (199).

In the monologue "Beloved, she my daughter..." it is as if Sethe seeks to explain the aporia of "[h]ow if I hadn't killed [Beloved] she would have died" (200). Earlier, "[c]ircling, circling...gnawing something else instead of getting to the point," Sethe had
tried to explain this to Paul D without much success (162). Indeed her account then provoked a confrontation precisely because of her feeling that the event was unaccountable and not a complex, "long-drawn-out record of flowered shifts, tree cages, selfishness, ankle ropes and wells. Simple..." (163). Here lies something of a contradiction in that Sethe seeks to explain what she feels, as simple (simplex, singlefold), is immune to explication (unfolding). That the truth is simple suggests that it has the shape and necessity of a node that can be 'grasped' by viewing it from all sides, hence her circling. That the truth can be explained, however, suggests on the other hand that it is a question of multiple folds, a knot, the individual strands of which can be extricated and unwound, showing both where they arise and where they have lead. This tension is reflected in Sethe's words:

I'll explain it to her, even though I don't have to. Why I did it. How if I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her. When I explain it she'll understand, because she understands everything already. (200)

There is a further tension in the unsubstantiated assumption that 'if I hadn't killed her she would have died.' Here the inference seems to be that a life in slavery is a form of living death, and that Sethe (now, in the free north) knows this from experience. But as Sethe had emphasized in her conversation with Paul D quoted above, the living death she associates with slave life results not so much from the cruel beatings she receives as from the outrage of the theft of what is most intimately hers: her milk. And as she circles round the memory we realize its force stems from its being a recapitulation of another, earlier experience in which what was stolen was also most intimately hers: her mother's milk.

I'll tend [Beloved] as no mother ever tended a child, a daughter. Nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children. I never had to give it to nobody else - and the one time I did it was taken from me - they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby. Nan had to nurse whitebabies and me too because Ma'am was in the rice. The little whitebabies got it first and I got what was left. Or none. There was no nursing milk to call my own. I know what it is to be without the milk that belongs to you; to have to fight and holler for it, and to have so little left. (200)

Here the doubling of the milk (my milk as mother, my milk as child) signals that what is at stake is more than the milk per se, for Sethe does after all receive some milk from Nan. Rather, the sticking point is the fact that the milk is not exclusively hers, that some act of violence intervenes and ruptures the 'natural' (and oral) semiotic chain mother-milk-child,
and all that that implies in the way of a 'natural' relationship of nurturing and orality. As a slave child Sethe is at the 'end of the queue,' receiving little milk or none, and thus likely experienced a literal 'stomach violence' of hunger pangs. This link between the experience and the memory is reinforced by the novel's consistent employ of the 'natural' metonym memory-food. However, even here something is unexplained: why cannot her own mother nurse her?

Sethe seems to skirt the perimeter of this knowledge like a cat around a sleeping cobra. She is both instinctively drawn to it and wary of its potentially deadly, gaping jaws. The magnetism of this peril is complicated by the fact that her ruminations on the subject are compacted of both recall and discovery.

I tended [Mrs. Garner] like I would have tended my own mother had she needed me. If they had let her out of the rice field, because I was the one she didn't throw away. I couldn't have done more for that woman than I would my own ma'am if she was to take sick and need me and I'd have stayed with her till she got well or died. And I would have stayed after that except Nan snatched me back. Before I could check for the sign. It was her all right, but for a long time I didn't believe it. I looked everywhere for that hat. Stuttered after that. Didn't stop it till I saw Halle. (200-201; emphasis added)

The shuttling of referent here between Mrs. Garner, whom Sethe did tend, and her own mother, whom she says she would have tended, seems to tell us that Sethe's relation to her mother is troubled by the unexplained experience of her marked absence. Everything she does do for Mrs. Garner is compared to what she would have done for her own mother, as if by drawing the analogy Sethe is able provide evidence of her daughterly faithfulness to her 'natural' mother. If Sethe, by analogy, more than fulfilled her part of the 'natural mother'-daughter contract, what then of her mother's part? Between the lines we can read an unscripted anxiety: what Sethe cannot fathom is why her mother did not need her, as she so obviously needed her mother.

Further complicating the knot is the void of knowledge as to her mother's intentions, actions, or circumstances. For what transgression she was hanged and/or burned is never stated. Indeed part of the discovery of this rumination is that it is far from clear that it is in fact her mother's body that lies in the heap of dead. Whereas Sethe had previously claimed that she checked her mother's body for the (dikenga) mark and was unable to find it (because the body was mutilated?) - "nobody could tell whether she had a circle and a cross or not, least of all me and I did look" (61) - here she states that Nan pulled her back before she could check. How she knows it is her mother if she could neither find the mark, nor, as it now appears, even check for it, is something of a mystery:
the two signs, the absolutely unique mark and the generic headgear, have vanished. The initial question of why her mother, although present, could not nurse her, has, for Sethe, cascaded into the more troubling questions of why her mother did not need her, why her mother abandoned her. This traumatic chain of inferences is resisted with almost everything that Sethe as child can muster; the rupture of the 'natural' semiotic chain (mother-milk-child) lodges in the mouth: she begins to stutter. The 'stomach violence' of the infant's hunger pangs comes to somatic representation in the breakdown of the child's oral fluency. For the want of milk.

Here we begin to grasp that, far from being simple, Sethe's act, and the institution in which it was nurtured, is a complex of multiple layers, thornily knotted.

Slavery, [Morrison] contends, must be called more than an ideology or an economy: it was also a pathology, the effects of which are with us still. Whites have had to reconstruct everything in order to make that system appear true.' and this in itself is a form of madness.47

As a pathology it is a system of inversions imbricating ideology (what is true/false) and economy (what is valued/worthless) in the psychic constitution (what is real/unreal) of the slave and the master alike. The action of the novel is situated in the era of the (historical) Reconstruction, but it is equally a question of the reconstruction of a psychic constitution and an identity as yet uncreated, unnurtured.

For Sethe this means creating not only an identity for herself, but especially an identity for the mother she hardly knew, 'one of whom was certainly her own.' Unable to stomach the harrowing that would follow the logical inference that her mother abandoned her, Sethe searches in vain for signs that that was not the case. Ultimately she creates a death for her mother that safely seals both Sethe and her mother in a crypt of memory: 'It was her alright, but for a long time I didn't believe it. I looked everywhere for that hat.'

My plan was to take us all to the other side where my own ma'am is. They stopped me from getting us there, but they didn't stop you from getting here. Ha ha. You came right on back like a good girl, like a daughter which is what I wanted to be and would have been if my ma'am had been able to get out the rice long enough before they hanged her and let me be one...I wonder what they was doing when they was caught. Running, you think? No. Not that. Because she was my ma'am and nobody's ma'am would run off and leave her daughter, would she? Would she, now? (203; emphasis added)

The categorical untenability of the question Sethe poses here seems to hinge her mind open to a progressive psychosis. The monologue has built, quasi liturgically, to this pitch
through a series of anaphoral repetitions of the type 'I would have known'/I would have recognized.' These concern Sethe's ruin the fact that she didn't recognize Beloved at first. In this she blames Paul D for all she should have known but didn't: "but Paul D distracted me" (202). A second plateau is reached with the phrase 'like a daughter which is what I...would have been.' In this she blames an anonymous they, which we can assimilate to the slavers, for all she could have been, i.e., a good daughter, to a good mother. The culminating plateau is, perhaps, left to the reader to imagine, or, perhaps, progressively deferred throughout the chapter (this one) "124 was loud" (169). In this she is unable to blame her mother, 'Because she was my ma'am': 'No. Not that...nobody's ma'am would run off and leave her daughter, would she? Would she, now?'

Here, as if she reaches the final untied strands in the aching heart of the knot, Sethe balks. Between the contradiction of her own 'natural' election in the heart of her mother - "She threw them all away but you...You she gave the name of the black man" (Nan's report: 62) - and her here vertiginal realization that her mother most likely did run, Sethe freezes, and swallows the knot untied. As readers, we know the painful fact that not only were families torn apart by the slave economy, but also the agonizing reality that families often made voluntarily compacts to forget each other, as did Baby Suggs and her husband: "The two of them made a pact: whichever one got a chance to run would take it; together if possible, alone if not, and no looking back" (142). The ingested but undigested truth about Sethe's ma'am rises to her lips again and again in a form of tacit discursive polyptoton (or conceptual/psychic stutter) that remains forever unarticulated, forever sublimated: 'would that she hadn't...'; 'if only I had...'48

With the arrival and recognition of Beloved, the lifeless image of the men coming to nurse Sethe and the semiotic chain of the milk she has daily, rhythmically, and successfully blunted - "the day's serious work of beating back the past" (73) - is reanimated. Beloved's 'miraculous' rebirth prises open the rusted hinges of an inner door in Sethe to the shadow of all "the things she would not have to remember now," the facsimiles of her past that insure her present (182). I say shadow advisedly because from the very beginning the advent of Beloved has been dogged by shades and spectres. Indeed we may assimilate the tutelary spirits of the gravestone rubbings under this rubric, casting the entire novel behind a diaphanous veil. At the very moment that Beloved surfaces from beneath the waters, as Sethe, Denver and Paul D make their way to the carnival, Sethe catches a glimpse of something that might be:

They were not holding hands, but their shadows were. Sethe looked to left and all three of them were gliding over the dust holding hands. Maybe he was right. A
life. Watching their hand-holding shadows, she was embarrassed at being dressed for church. The others, ahead and behind them, would think she was putting airs, letting them know that she was different...Nobody noticed but Sethe and she stopped looking after she decided it was a good sign. A life. Could be. (47)

However - almost as if someone had said 'let any come forth who might object to this marriage' - this likeness of nuptials is soon challenged by Beloved: "In lamplight, and over the flames of the cooking stove, their two shadows clashed and crossed on the ceiling like black swords" (57).

And even before the explicit link Beloved-shadow is established, we have been initiated into a metonymy of memory and facsimile. We have already seen how Sethe was brought to Sweet Home as a substitute for Baby Suggs, and called Jenny by the Garners, as if she 'were' the one she replaced. A similar metonymic structure operates throughout the novel replacing memories by realities and facts by facsimiles. Some of these memories are more vivid than others:

...those ten minutes she spent pressed up against dawn-colored stone studded with star chips, her knees wide open as the grave, were longer than life, more alive, more pulsating than the baby blood that soaked her fingers like oil. (5)

Some are more beautiful than they ought to be:

...and suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes, and although there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream, it rolled itself out before her in shameless beauty. It never looked as terrible as it was and it made her wonder if hell was a pretty place too. Fire and brimstone all right, but hidden in lacy groves. Boys hanging from the most beautiful sycamores in the world. It shamed her - remembering the wonderful soughing trees rather than the boys. (6)

These, being so beautiful when they ought not to be, come at a terrible price: "As if to punish [Sethe] further for her terrible memory, sitting on the porch not forty feet away was Paul D, the last of the Sweet Home men" (6). And some which ought to be retained (and treasured) are forgotten: "Counting on the stillness of her own soul, she had forgotten the other one: the soul of her baby girl" (5).

It is in the form of a shadow that the forsaken soul of Beloved returns. In the scene where Sethe finally 'recognizes' Beloved (after returning to the house from the skating expedition in which it is four times repeated "nobody saw them falling" (174-75)), it is precisely in the form of a projection that Sethe traces the outline of Beloved's silhouette:
It was then, when Beloved finished humming, that Sethe recalled the click - the settling of pieces into places designed and made especially for them. No milk spilled from her cup because her hand was not shaking. She simply turned her head and looked at Beloved's profile: the chin, mouth, nose, forehead, *copied and exaggerated in the huge shadow the fire threw on the wall* behind her. Her hair, which Denver had braided into twenty or thirty plaits, curved toward her shoulders like arms. From where she sat Sethe could *not* examine it, not the hairline, nor the eyebrows, the lips, nor... (176-77; ellipsis in the original, italics mine)

Rapt by the spectre she cannot touch - because she must be loved? - but whose facsimile she takes for real, Sethe has not the presence of mind to react. Everything in her fractured memory that would have, could have or should have been falls into place: "The click had clicked; things were where they ought to be or poised and ready to glide in" (176).

With everything returned to its 'rightful place,' Sethe reinterprets the nuptial image, quoted above, of the three shadows holding hands. Originally she had "decided that it was a good sign" (47); now, "[o]bvously the hand-holding shadows she had seen on the road were not Paul D, Denver and herself, but 'us three'" (182). And to complete the image and its somber inversion, Sethe now espouses the challenger, herself the rightful 'bride.'

Sethe wiped the white satin coat from the inside of the pan, brought pillows from the keeping room for the girl's heads...

With that, she gathered her blanket around her elbows and ascended the lily-white stairs like a bride. Outside, snow solidified itself into graceful forms. The peace of winter stars seemed permanent. (176)

However, Sethe's snow-white ascent is not to be. Co-temporous with the narrative of Sethe's betrothal is the story of Stamp Paid's mulling over his part in the rift that developed between Sethe and Paul D, and his search for ways to make amends for this bad 'debt.' He circles the house again and again seeking entry, each and every approach to which is blocked by "the voices that ringed 124 like a noose," voices of the "people of the broken necks," voices whose only intelligible sound "was the word *mine*" (183; 181; 172). Indeed, the image of the permanent 'peace of winter stars' is immediately exploded by a narrative jump cut to one of Stamp "fingering a ribbon and smelling skin" - of another murdered child (176).

Thus, the double movement of this section is one of Stamp's remembering and seeking to restitute by creating linkages and of Sethe's remembering/forgetting and
burning her bridges. Whereas earlier Sethe could not forget what she could not but remember, now she is rapt by all she can forget she is now remembering. She appears to have made a transit from an existence (or phenomenological subsistence), the future of which was under the pressure of an all too vivid past, to a fuller temporality characterized by the freedom to forget. But this liberatory dis/engagement with time is but a shadow, for Beloved's apparition is the inverted image of Denver's 'miraculous' birth. While from this new vantage point some events can be 'seen' as if for the first time as the facsimiles they always were - "I can forget how Baby Sugg's heart collapsed; how we agreed it was consumption without a sign of it in the world" (183) - and as such, healthily disengaged from present circumstances, the dynamic of Sethe's disengagement from the world of others is actually in a state of runaway feedback. The narrator thrice repeats that Sethe did not notice the frozen footprints (Stamp's) that she steps in as she goes in search of firewood, returns with a bundle, and hurries off to work (181-83). The inverted ascent of Sethe's betrothal lies in the fact that her seemingly liberatory dis/engagement with time is actually a facsimile replacing the reality of the world.

This voidance is made more explicit in the events that follow, for Sethe's invocatory litanies of the type 'I don't have to remember...'; followed by the memories, act to dilate time and contract the world. They form, in a sense, a corrupted prayer, which, like supplications asking that one's prayers be heard, wrap her up "in a timeless present" (184). As the counterpoint narrative unfolds Stamp recalls how Baby Suggs renounced her gospel and fell into an "indifference lodged where sadness should have been": "When he stopped her with a greeting, she returned it with a face knocked clean of interest" (178). The progressive erasure of the blessed light from her face is completed by the renunciation of her 'calling': "Now too late he understood her. The heart that pumped out love, the mouth that spoke the Word, didn't count" (180). Sethe, too, grows indifferent to any communal sense of the good, rationalizing her theft of provisions from Sawyer's restaurant by its allowing her to avoid the shame she feels under the gaze of the black townsfolk queued up behind Phelps store.

Whereas by virtue of her freely recalled memories Sethe is able to discern the papered over lie of the cause of Baby Suggs' death, she is, on the other hand, oblivious to the crypt of memory she cements around herself and Beloved. When Sawyer hollers at her for being late, she turns her back tight lipped: "There was no entry now. No crack or crevice available" (188). 'Suggs-tituting' for her mother-in-law, Sethe settles into the white bile of Baby's final days, luxuriating even in the rancor that 'proved herself a liar,' and in which every act of white kindness (e.g., Amy's ministrations, Bodwin's lobbying) is annulled and erased.
All news of them was rot. They buttered Halle's face; gave Paul D iron to eat; crisped Sixo; hanged her own mother. She didn't want any more news about whitefolks; didn't want to know what Ella knew and John and Stamp Paid, about the world done up the way whitefolks loved it. All news of them should have stopped with the birds in her hair. (188)

Paradoxically she feels her choler is liberating: "Not since that other escape had she felt so alive"; and so she hurries home from the restaurant after work to escape again (only this time from a far different 'world'), to "get to the no-time waiting for her" (191). But what kind of escape is this?

Here we can see that the double rhythm of her free life, that of work and of memory (the rhythm of love being a complex absence), is overthrown in the inverted sense of her earlier 'escape.' At Sweet Home almost the sum of life was work, toil and drudgery; and with the advent of Schoolteacher's 'rationalized' order, the future promised to annul what precious little freedom from slave work Garner allowed them. Up until the coming of Beloved, Sethe had been able to maintain a tenuous balance between work and memory by beating back the past, mostly through the repetitive tasks and chores of her housekeeping. I say 'balance' because the intelligibility of the phrase 'beating back the past' is predicated on the fact that there be a rhythm of the past against which to work. Now, however, she seeks escape from those tasks in order to indulge in the pure, fluid rhythms of memory which she assimilates to those of love, and in the process destroys not only her (tenuous) link to the community and the world at large, but any cross-rhythmic sense of 'life.' Perhaps, however, this is as it should be, for as I have intimated the mythic infra-structure of the novel has been seeking to return Sethe to the point at which the cycle of the dikenga was broken, in order that she somehow pass through again, analogically reborn.52

In sealing herself off from the world to what does Sethe 'escape'? Is the 'no-time' behind the locked door of 124 a deliverance or an emancipation? Rather than throwing off the cloak (ex-cappa) of a traumatic past, she seems willingly to bind (and blind) herself more fully in it.

When Sethe locked the door, the women inside were free at last to be whatever they like, see whatever they saw and say whatever was on their minds. 

Almost. Mixed in with the voices surrounding the house, recognizable but undecipherable to Stamp Paid, were the thoughts of the women of 124, unspeakable thoughts, unspoken. (199; emphasis added)
Reflecting on this 'freedom' in her unspoken thoughts, Sethe primes her own perpetual-memorial machine, something she realizes she hadn't the liberty to do previously, because "my mind was homeless then" (204). Now, finally heimlich in the mind, and indulgent in the fractured rhythm whose only intelligible word will be 'mine', she can make the crossing she has been longing to make - across the river, and the middle passage: "Now I can. I can sleep like the drowned, have mercy" (204).

The water-marking of the moment signals to us that once again Sethe is making a dangerous transit. The force of the 'rememories' that such a suffocating sleep calls up are doubly rending in that Sethe is now bound by the tensor of the mother-milk-child chain in two directions, first as child and now as mother. Unable to unwind the strands of a simply impossible knot, neither can she un-wound herself. Not only is she unable to blame her mother, neither can she blame herself: 'If only she hadn't forsaken me...'; 'If only I hadn't abandoned her...'. Like a hook and barb this knowledge lodges in her gut and tears her inside out every time she seeks to justify her self.

Sethe was trying to make up for the handsaw...trying to persuade Beloved, the one and only person she felt she had to convince, that what she had done was right because it came from true love...Beloved was making her pay for it. But there would be no end to that... (251)

It is this barbed knot that she wretches up at the novel's turning point after literally wasting away: "decked out, limp and starving but locked in a love that wore everybody out...Sethe spit up something she had not eaten and it rocked Denver like gunshot" (243).

§

I have not until now emphasized the rebuke of the murder out of a feeling that is our quasi-instinctual 'nature' to be repulsed by violence, and perhaps particularly so by the murder of one's child. Nothing, as the phrase has it, could be more heartless. And whether or not it is our nature, it is certainly part of human social tradition that the spilt blood of one's kin tops the list (with incest and rape) as crimes par excellence, what Sethe at one point calls "the perfect death" (99). Thus, we feel it no surprise that Paul D is astounded by Sethe's description of the act. His astonishment is also ours.

'I stopped him,' she said, staring at the place where the fence used to be. 'I took and put my babies where they'd be safe.'

The roaring in Paul D's head did not prevent him from hearing the pat she gave to the last word... (164)
What Paul D cannot countenance is the metaphoric amphibology of the word 'pat', its being thrown in two directions at once. Does Sethe give the word 'safe' a caress or a cuff, and which is more apt of the two? Clearly for Paul D - "This here Sethe talked about safety with a handsaw" (164) - the accent falls on the latter, and what he hears forces on him the idea that he does not recognize 'this here Sethe.' As the community's rebuke is by and large one of silence in the novel, just as the community's complicity with the act was one of (silent) omission, it falls to Paul D to give voice to our emotions (the assertion of 'private' censure falling to Beloved, whom Denver describes as "Lonely and rebuked" (13)). For Paul D it is not so much what Sethe has done, but what it is she claims:

Suddenly he saw what Stamp Paid wanted him to see: more important than what Sethe had done was what she claimed. It scared him.

'Your love is too thick,' he said... (164)

A conflict develops here between Sethe and Paul D that mirrors the rift between Sethe and the community, a trial we might call the conflict and complicity between good deeds and the claims of love. Good is what Baby Suggs had ostensibly ministered to the community as the necessary medicine of healing and spiritual empowerment. It is that gospel that functions as an implicit rebuke to Sethe's act. But the conflict is not as clear cut as it seems, for it is said to be the force of Baby Suggs' 'great heart beat' that gives her the 'power' of calling together the community in the Clearing. And it is this same love-rhythm that she later rebukes when she realizes that she overstepped her own principle with the excess of the feast. Love, on the other hand, is, in Sethe's conception, an all-or-none wager: "Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all" (164). For her, love is an absolute and cannot be contrasted with the good, which is a question of better or worse. (Interestingly Sethe's interpretation of Baby Suggs' gospel emphasizes the un-alloyed, absolute, and the specific in place of the analogic: "Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another" (95).) In the argument that follows the above citation, Paul D baits Sethe with the taunt that her claim to have guarded her children's safety is a sham. Sethe shoots back with "They ain't at Sweet Home," that is, she succeeded because Schoolteacher was unable to claim the children. Paul D speaks for us when he replies:

'Maybe there's worse.'

'It ain't my job to know what's worse. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that.'

'What you did was wrong, Sethe.'
'I should have gone on back there? Taken my babies back there?'
'There could have been a way. Some other way.'
'What way?'
'You got two feet, Sethe, not four,' he said, and right then a forest sprang up between them; trackless and quiet. (165, emphasis added)

Can we characterize Sethe's 'position' as one claiming the priority of the other? Sethe's espousal of 'what is' over 'what's worse' (or better) likens love to the romantic passion championed by, among others, Diderot: "the possession and enjoyment of another being."\(^{53}\) Morrison discourses at length in her numerous interviews on what she sees as the excesses of romantic love, its creation of dependency, its "complicity...[between] master and servant" (in Koenen, 209):

Love in the Western notion, is full of possession, distortion, and corruption...Under the guise of change and love you destroy all sorts of things: each other, children...It's all done under the guise of civilization to improve things. The impetus for this kind of change is not hatred; it is doing good works. (in Tate, 123)
There's nothing left to love [in the fractured kinship of modern society], except the children and the member of the opposite sex. The person on the other end of that gets everything. It's too much...it seems not to question what's behind the desperate need to love only one person. (in Koenen, 212)

Morrison goes on to situate love in a tragic economy (à la Hölderlin) in which the hamartia that strikes a figure like Sethe arises precisely out of her 'noblest' qualities:

> A woman loved something other than herself so much. She had placed all the value of her life in something outside herself...it's interesting because the best thing that is in us is also the thing that makes us sabotage ourselves... (in Naylor, 584-585)

The tragic reversal of romantic love leads, for Morrison, to a comfortless truth: "Violence is a distortion of what, perhaps, we want to do" (in McKay, 414).

Assimilating these ideas, we can see that the dyad good deeds/the claims of love is far from a simple antithesis. It also appears clear that Sethe's route to claiming a free self involves the re-institution of an alternate type of master-servant relation. The seeming self assurance of Sethe's act must be tempered against her, unfulfilled, intention of self-effacement, of taking her own life along with that of all the children. When the plans for escape from Sweet Home went awry she could have stayed put. It certainly would have been safer. But, she claims, she had a greater responsibility than her own safety.
No notebook for my babies and no measuring string either. What I had to get through later I got through because of you. Passed right by those boys hanging in the trees. One had Paul A's shirt on but not his feet or his head. I walked right on by because only me had your milk, and God do what He would, I was going to get it to you. (198)

So single-minded is Sethe's 'too-thick love' that, it is later suggested, one of the things she passes right on by in fulfilling her responsibility to Beloved and Denver was the possibility that "the headless, footless torso hanging in the tree with a sign on it was her husband" (251). So absolute, so uncompromising in its freedom (cf. 'free' from the Gothic frijon: love) is Sethe's love that it recalls the Song of Solomon.

Set me as seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.
Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. (8: 6-7)

Indeed it is precisely of this gravity and purity of her passion that Sethe attempts to convince Beloved - "that what she had done was right because it came from true love" (251). True love - perfect death: the words-deeds of a ferociously alternating current.
If Sethe's truth is 'simple,' the 'act' itself may not be all that. As Elizabeth Fox-Genovese points out, in the slave-holding states a slave woman's act of infanticide, while rare, was "recognized as a crime against...[the] master's property" and as such "could be brought before the courts, which recognized such acts as attacks against the system and accordingly recognized the slave woman's legal standing as a criminal" (324; 330). The paradox of this most extreme form of resistance may have, notes Genovese, "led some of the more desperate to feel that, by killing an infant they loved, they would be in some way reclaiming it as their own" (324). In addition, neither is the act simple in what it is Sethe 'claims' by it. For Schoolteacher, Sethe is his own, his property, his chattel, with all the emphasis on the bovine associations of that word: "the one he said made fine ink, damn good soup, pressed his collars the way he liked besides having at least ten breeding years left" (149). As his own, he feels he has the right to measure, milk, brand, breed or brag about her, all of which to our horror he does. His claim is not merely sanctioned by the law of the land, but also by the racial 'science' which is clearly part of his identity as master and possessor. Sethe's 'claim' necessarily stands in strict opposition to schoolteacher's but is of another order, for, although contingently free at 124, she can be legally repossessed by virtue of the 'Dred Scott decision'.

But further than - without annulling - the question of legality, Sethe's claim is one of kinship and, paradoxically, dignity. Here, rather than the Greek tragedy's narrative of dignified progress, the accent falls on progress towards dignity. Legally her act is an act against the system, the children being not hers to dispossess; but personally her act must be seen as the act of attempting a transit from freedom to ownership, both of herself and 'what's hers.' In this she seeks to actualize the gospel according to Baby Suggs as she has interpreted it: 'Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another.' And even further, if identity and kinship are to be seen as intersubjective constructs, 'what's hers' is intrinsic to and inseparable from her/their identity. Disenfranchised from the legal standing that would allow her to challenge schoolteacher's claim in the public sphere, Sethe adopts in the freedom of time the only free choice that is available to her. Her claim is that of force majeure, and by her act of violence she usurps the legal right invested in Schoolteacher, forcing him to acknowledge her claim.

By the time she faced him, looked him dead in the eye, she had something in her arms that stopped him in his tracks. He took a backward step with each jump of the baby heart until finally there were none. (164)

What is important to stress here is that Sethe claims an identity as a free, legally enfranchised, public/private persona, a claim which the zeugma in the second sentence imbricates with the forced cardiac arrest of the baby heart. It is as if Schoolteacher is backed off out of the public sphere (into the private?) by Sethe's possession, both in the senses of demonic and of ownership. Yet her act of possession is equally one of dispossession; for both the baby and Sethe's new-won freedom are to this 'claim', and in its claiming, sacrificed. Can we read the lack of the possessive apostrophe on 'the baby heart' (which may be standard, as it is in West Indian speech) as signifying that it is as much a new-born heart as Beloved's, and that that new-born heart (i.e., Sethe's) echoes with the rhythm of freedom? The heartbeat that Baby Suggs was surprised to discover "started beating the minute she crossed the Ohio River," and which is passed on to Sethe both matrilineally from Baby Suggs and in her claiming freedom (escape) and ownership (infanticide), in this 'act' achieves its dignity - and its rebuke (147). Sethe's act of possession is simultaneously one of dispossession of both Beloved and the dignity of ownership. Sethe's split conscience, her cardiac arrhythmia, gives rise to the pathology that it is the role of possessed/dispossessed Beloved's apparition and her exorcism to re-synchronize and re-accent. That will be the task of the final act of the tragedy, the publicly staged 'drama' of the climax, to effect.
We must ask ourselves to what extent the categorical freedom claimed by Sethe's true love is complicit with the ideological, economic, and pathological inversions of the U.S. system of (the legalized excesses of) slavery. In his history of American slavery, Stanley Elkins shows the extent to which emancipation debates were shaped and carried out in the context of the Transcendentalist movement, itself an outgrowth of European Romanticism, puritan provincialism (raw America vs. cultured Europe), and the American Revolution (thermidor without a fructador: revolutionary ideas and slogans without corresponding reforms). In the wake of the post revolutionary era, a time when Jefferson's call for revolution every twenty years had long fallen on deaf ears and political disillusion was high, Transcendentalism arose as a kind of secular neo-Pietism expressing a religiously anti-state and radically individualized vision of society. "I was never molested by any person but those who represented the state," quipped Thoreau after being jailed for refusal to pay the poll tax. Emerson, perhaps more than any other, set the tone of the age, what Elkins calls "Intellectuals without Responsibility": "Particulars - particular thoughts, sentences, facts even - cannot interest [the Transcendentalist], except as for a moment they take their place as a ray from his orb. The Whole, - Nature proceeding from himself, is what he studies."

So influential were the Transcendentalists, argues Elkins, that the subsequent abolition debates (often more akin to revival meetings) were fought on precisely these abstract heights detached from any particular grounds:

Not only did [the abolitionists] fail to analyze slavery itself as an institution, but they failed equally to consider and exploit institutional means for subverting it...A strongly individualistic approach to the subject was generally matched by a conception of the object - the slave - which was itself individualistic...The question was not so much what the institution had made of him but what it prevented him from being - his naked, inviolate self. Thus, referring to 'faculties,' and 'intellect,' they asked whether the Negro were naturally 'inferior'...slavery became not really a social problem but a moral abstraction. (168-170)

And the glue which held this moral abstraction together was a radical (and digital) conception of righteousness and sin. The essential Transcendentalist-abolitionist idea was that if the sin of slavery could be squarely faced by the individual the entire institution would of itself collapse. Thoreau:

I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name, - if ten honest men only, - ay, if one HONEST man, in this state of Massachusetts, ceasing to hold slaves, were actually to withdraw from this
copartnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. (in Elkins, 169)

While Thoreau's appeal seemingly sets its sights on the particularity of a single man, it in fact stakes its rhetorical claim on the universality of that man, a man who is, thus, 'everyman,' where universality also denotes 'race-free' (Cf. Morrison 1993, xii). Given these presuppositions, Thoreau's assumption of a general and universal domino effect that would strike every man in his inner kernel of honesty and decency once shown the way by a single honest individual, can be logically entailed. Not discounting the force of example, it is as if removing a single brick could bring down the entire edifice.

This universal conception of radical individual sin and responsibility would colour the rhetoric and polemics of the arguments advanced. Concrete plans outlining the mechanics of abolition were consciously eschewed in favour of keeping the terms of the debate on the straight and narrow path of 'either-or'; and concrete reports of slavery were complicated by what Morrison calls a 'veil of discretion.' Narratives of slave life were careful to pass over too specific details of the brutality inflicted and suffered, for much the same reason that Amnesty International statements today do. One does not wish to alienate through graphic description those whose aid one seeks to enlist.

The effects of such shaping forces were far reaching. One can see that from within the mindset of the Transcendental-abolitionists once the question of emancipation was settled, the 'issue of slavery' would be a dead letter. (Indeed it has often been remarked that the mid-century American arts produced no major realistic work of (lasting) value on the cataclysm of the Civil War, until Crane's Red Badge of Courage in 1895. Note that already in this formulation of the issue, as one of 'slavery' (as opposed, say, to that of 'mastery'), Afro-Americans themselves were somewhat marginal, appearing in the debate in a merely instrumental fashion. And indeed after emancipation the 'slave narrative,' which had enjoyed a phenomenal publishing success during the period leading up to abolition, virtually disappeared for about a hundred years. The reason for this 'digitalization' of the slavery issue, Elkins advances, was the general feeling that

\[ \text{[e]mancipation...would have instant salutary effects upon the Negroes; it would } \]
\[ \text{stimulate their morals, quicken their intelligence, and convert a dangerous, idle, } \]
\[ \text{and vicious population into wholesome citizens.' The transition from slave to free } \]
\[ \text{labor might, [William Jay] thought, be 'effected instantaneously, and with scarcely } \]
\[ \text{any perceptible interruption of the ordinary pursuits of life.' (191).} \]

While we must take into account the purely rhetorical and strategic nature of such ideas, with historical hindsight it is easy for us to see that this wholesale 'transformation' could
never have been the case. We should not be so quick to judge the past, however, for a
similar belief is still widely prevalent today with respect to the penal system. The prisoner
upon release from 'rehabilitative incarceration' is tacitly believed by many to be capable
of such categorical, psycho-social transformations - a view the facts do not substantiate.

Here we return to something I have already raised in passing - what kind of escape
from slavery is possible? The point of my digression into the historical-intellectual
context of emancipation is that emancipation did not leave ex-slaves with a moral,
intellectual, or psychic **tabla rasa**. As I have endeavored to demonstrate Sethe's dilemma
insists on the persistence - and 'transubstantiation' - of the regime of slavery in memory.
She has literally been nursed into its fraternity; and her desire to escape from the 'world' is
part and parcel of its whole economy of excess.

The ideological-pathological inversions of the slave system, as represented in the
novel, are not limited, however, to slavery's 'victims.' Schoolteacher's nephew, "the one
who had nursed her" (150), upon being confronted with Sethe's bloody deeds, asks

> What she go and do that for? On account of a beating? Hell, he'd been beat a
> million times and he was white...But no beating ever made him...I mean no way
> he could have...What she go and do that for? (150; emphasis and first ellipsis
> mine)

Here the young man's question mimics Amy's 'What God have in mind?'; his stuttering
realization is that his calculus does not add up. Amy had previously made a similar
comparison between a beating she had received and that inflicted on Sethe - "Whoever
planted that tree beat Mr. Buddy by a mile" (79) - but whereas she had addressed her
question of agency to God, the nephew fixes on 'what she go and do that for?'

Schoolteacher, for his part, recognizes that Sethe had, in his words, "gone wild,
due to the mishandling of the nephew who'd overbeat her," but continues to draw the
animal-slave equation he preaches as a higher form of civilized learning (149). Although
he contrasts the slave with certain beasts, it is the **degree of animality** that is the point of
comparison: "Unlike a snake or a bear, a dead nigger could not be skinned for profit and
was not worth his own dead weight in coin" (148). He ruminates on the lesson he taught
the nephew who beat Sethe, the one he punishes by forbidding him to come on the "hunt,"
that one could not beat hounds 'that' way and still enjoy their trust: "if his other nephew
could see that look he would learn the lesson for sure" (150).

'That look' is the perfect vehicle here for the duplicity of the pathological-
ideological inversions of racial hatred, for it can refer equally to the act of looking as to
the thing seen. (It is also an accurate representation of contemporary socio-linguistic
usage.) In the paragraph that follows Schoolteacher’s ruminations and the nephew’s stuttering questions, the import-export economy of ‘that look’ is narratively worked up.

Schoolteacher beat his hat against his thigh and spit before leaving the woodshed. Nephew and the catcher backed out with him. They didn’t look at the woman in the pepper plants with the flower in her hat. And they didn’t look at the seven or so faces that had edged closer in spite of the catcher’s rifle warning. Enough nigger eyes for now. Little nigger-boy eyes open in sawdust; little nigger-girl eyes staring between the wet fingers that held her face so her head wouldn’t fall off; little nigger-baby eyes crinkling up to cry in the arms of the old nigger whose own eyes were nothing but slivers looking down at his feet. But the worst ones, were those of the nigger woman who looked like she didn’t have any. Since the whites in them had disappeared and since they were as black as her skin, she looked blind. (150)

The obsessive repetition and negation of the eyes suggests that what the slavers cannot but see, and will not countenance, is a certain blindness and a certain petrification. Hydra-eyed, it is a blindness to the inhumanity that equates white with civilization and black with animality (however ‘domesticated’); a calculating blindness that admonishes one not to shoot ‘until you see the whites of their eyes,’ because only whiteness has a humanity that can be mown down. The rest is gaming and husbandry and craziness. And Gorgon-like it is a petrification; because the all too clear reflection of the white slavers’ own look cannot be faced, the inhumanity in its eyes must everywhere be seen as other (only animals have mugs, snouts, muzzles and maws).

A crazy old nigger was standing in the woodpile with an ax. You could tell he was crazy right off because he was grunting - making low cat noises like. About twelve yards beyond that nigger was another one - a woman with a flower in her hat. Crazy too, probably, because she too was standing stock-still...the damnedest bunch of coons they'd ever seen. All testimony to the results of a little so-called freedom imposed on people who needed every care and guidance in the world to keep them from the cannibal life they preferred. (149-151; emphasis added)

Here the final (pathological? ideological?) inversion, that freedom had to be imposed on these crazy 'animals,' ices the cake of slavery's most bitter facsimile and greatest confection: the 'righteous Look' and the righteous "reconstruct[ion of] everything in order to make that system appear true."63

There is a fascinating corroboration of this confection in what Elkins calls “one of the more bizarre chapters in Southern history.”
Despite the fact that after 1831 no more slave insurrections were seen in the South, it was precisely then that the South became most victimized by its own fears, being 'racked at intervals,' as Clement Eaton writes, 'by dark rumors and imagined plots'...Indeed, the very absence of slave uprisings all during this period, and thus their very imaginary character, may have been the real key to their frightfulness...there is good reason to conclude that the South's horror of insurrection was a product not of real insurrection but, oddly enough, of a united mind. This - its own unanimity - was what the South had girded itself and rigged all its alarms to defend. It was now, in short, not so much physical peril that Southerners most feared, but something else; they feared subversion. (220-221)

Here again we can see that the role Afro-Americans played in the struggle between Southern planter culture and the Northern (industrial) abolitionists was a purely instrumental one. The terror of a fictitious black insurrection served to maintain the South's closure of ranks - against an equally fictitious, hostile and bellicose North. Elkins goes on to note that "whereas the 'real' rebellions of the pre-1835 period (those of Gabriel, Vesey, and Turner) were instigated by Negroes, the 'unreal' ones in the following period almost invariably involved white men - white abolitionists, that is created by the Southern imagination" (footnote, 222).

In the struggle between Sethe and Schoolteacher, both halves of the caustic equation, however unequal, both nursed in shadows, have replaced the reality of their worlds by facsimiles. We are accustomed to the old saw that 'Art is a lie that tells the truth'; but here the two terms of this aesthetic equation are unrecoupable, for the falsifications in question are not merely fantastic, nor the verities especially resplendent. Rather, the vilest and most contemptible of lies seems to woo, wed and bed the most hideous and shameful of truths. In Newtonian terms ('every action has an equal...'), to what is the psychic energy expended in both Sethe's and the slavers' ideo-pathological reconstructions equal? Or, in a Yeatsian idiom: "Suspended between the nastiness of [the living] and the meanness of the dead" (3-4), what rough third thing slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

Returning to the chapter where Sethe has recognized and espoused Beloved, and where the contrapuntal narration has jump cut from 'the peace of winter stars' to Stamp's 'fingering a ribbon and smelling skin,' we can hear its largo descent close on a double, sustained note. Sethe makes her 'escape' back to 124 locking the door "tight behind her" (198); and Stamp concludes his swirling rumination on the origin of 'the Misery':

Whitepeople believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet white blood. In a way, he thought they were right.
The more colored people spent their strength trying to convince them how gentle
they were, how clever and loving, how human, the more they used themselves up
to persuade whites of something Negroes believed could not be questioned, the
deeper and more tangled the jungle grew inside. But it wasn't the jungle blacks
brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place. It was the jungle
white folks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through and after life, it
spread, until it invaded the whites who had made it. Touched them every one.
Changed and altered them. Made them bloody, silly, worse than even they wanted
to be, so scared were they of the jungle they had made. The screaming baboon
lived under their own white skin; the red gums were their own. (198-199)

It is difficult to know what to make of this passage. On the one hand, it seems to
tender an unequivocal answer to questions that have been haunting the narrative,
questions which the narrative has been zeroing in on in ever-decreasing spirals: why did
Sethe's ma'am not need her; why did Sethe's ma'am abandon her. In addition it also seems
to address the questions of who nursed who, how, and in what. Yet it is precisely this
unequivocalness that is the problem: the jungle planted explains too much. On the other
hand, the account is told by Stamp Paid, he who has creatively re-written his own origins
- does that fact speak for or against his 'fidelity'? And, we must not forget, the account has
come at the end of the chapter of the 'inverted ascent,' in which all has clearly not been
what it appears to be. Do we take the account, then, as telling of the origins of racial
hatred, or as a representation of the results of such? Does the possibility of pinpointing an
origin for violence, and explaining a history from it, arise because of the 'reality' of that
origin and from the fact that we are still bound to it?; or, because the origin has been
forgotten (if it was ever known) and/or our link to it irrevocably broken? Although the
passage does not appear in an 'historical' work, it does appear to tell us something
'categorical' about history.65 It seems to embody some potent quotient of historical 'truth'
that in the same moment it obfuscates.

§

The late French historian Michel de Certeau spent a considerable portion of his
scholarly energies trying to unravel just these sorts of questions. By recourse to his
historiographic reflections we can, perhaps, arrive at one possible understanding of this
'jungle' passage. According to de Certeau, "historians never apprehend origins, but only
the successive stages of their loss" (1988, 22). This is not so much because the origins
themselves are inaccessible (although that may, of course, be the case), but because all
our expositions of the past contain an explicit or implicit philosophy of history: "any
reading of the past - however much it is controlled by the analysis of documents - is
driven by a reading of current events. Readings of both past and present...are haunted by
presuppositions, in other words by 'models' of interpretation, that are invariably linked to
a contemporary situation' (1988, 23).

de Certeau explains this inextricable complicity with an example from the history
of religions (one of his specialities):

Another 'law' (if it can be termed one) appears to rule over the evolution of
religious society...the bipolar structure that always constitutes into an exterior
unity whatever does not pertain to the Church. This will be for example, the
infidel, the atheist, the heretic, or 'the world.' This 'law' governed medieval
Christianity; it had its symbolic expression in the Crusades. But the birth of
Europe makes a national unity of each state among several others. Catholicity
crumbles into a plural organization. Perhaps because of its ideological nature,
religious society continues to consider what it opposes or what it is distinguished
from as a unique totality. (1988, 135)

de Certeau here speaks of seventeenth-century religious history, but his entire corpus can
be characterized as discoursing a 'heterological countertradition' that operates by means of
a generalized bipolar 'law.' According to Wlad Godzich, such heterologies are not
disciplines, whose axis of reference is to "the realm of representation...thematized by
Hegel as the investment of the real by the spirit," but rather "logics": "the most important
role in the constitution of that logic is reserved for the complex, and properly textual, play
of the other with the more overt, representational part of the discourse...This other, which
forces discourses to take the meandering appearance that they have, is not a magical or a
transcendental entity; it is the discourse's mode of relation to its own historicity" (xix,
xx). Because, claims de Certeau, the bipolar 'law' is so ubiquitous a structuring device in
modern historiography, every "exegesis of the past must be endlessly compared with the
form that it assumes vis-à-vis the coexisting 'other'" (1988, 137). Indeed, Morrison
herself, in her readings of the 'Africanist' presence in the work of Cather, Poe, Melville,
Twain, and Hemmingway makes use of a version of this same principle - the assumption
that "the four hundred-year-old presence of, first, Africans and then African-Americans in
the United States...has had no significant place or consequence in the origin and
development of that culture's literature" (1993, 5).67

The modern European history of the search for origins might be dated to 1786. In
that year William Jones published his Discourse on the Hindus, demonstrating that Latin,
Greek, and Persian shared a common linguistic root in Sanskrit. Of course the date is
arbitrary in the sense that, as Foucault has shown, the European systemization of
knowledge along rational-historical lines (penology, medicine, biological taxonomy, economics, museumology, etc.) had been advancing all throughout the eighteenth-century. And, of course, as arbitrary, it obfuscates all that prepared European culture for the positive reception of these rationalizing currents. But the date is important in its giving us a leverage point for discussing the advent in Europe of a movement towards the historicizing of human culture and the birth of the first historical science: philology - what Ernst Renan would later call "the exact science of mental objects" (in Said, 132). Indeed, philology was to play something of a shaping role as a kind of 'meta-discourse' for many other nineteenth-century disciplines, through its historico-scientific organization of knowledge in the form of an organic, root-trunk-branches metaphor borrowed from biological taxonomy.

And not only was this the beginning of philological science; we might also locate here, as contrapuntal rhythm to the universal historicizing trend, the beginnings of the modern European competitive search for and creation of national languages and national traditions as means of differentiating the national 'us' from the alien 'them.' Empires and antiquities were pressed into service as prestige items demonstrating one's historical continuity with and cultural inheritance from 'great' civilizations of the past; if they were great, how much more great are we their legatees and possessors. It is precisely at this time that Egyptian obelisks crop up in most of the large European (and neo-European) geo-political empires (Paris, London, Washington), as if declaiming à haute voix: 'Look on our works ye mighty, and desire.' This era was also the beginning of "both the natural history and the inalienable rights of man," and a scientific 'race-thinking' in which human skin colour began for the first time to 'mean' something in a systematic way (Morrison 1993, 49). Through application of the bipolar 'law' we might situate here the advent of 'the jungle' as an emblem legitimating 'white power.'

It is in this context that Morrison situates American independence as the quintessential self-propagation (in its own self-perception) of the origin achieved: "Young America distinguished itself by, and understood itself to be, pressing forward toward a future of freedom, a kind of human dignity believed unprecedented in the world" (1993, 33). Yet, as she carefully notes, the fulgent words of political aspiration (the snare drums, as it were, of American moral martialism) were off-set by the dark visions and troubling spectres of America's founding literature (resounding a deeper, timpanist tocsin). Here again the tenor and the texture of the grave-rubbings strikes home.

...the strong affinity between the nineteenth-century American psyche and gothic romance has been rightly much remarked. Why should a young country repelled
by Europe's moral and social disorder, swooning in a fit of desire and rejection, devote its talents to reproducing in its own literature the typology of diabolism it wanted to leave behind? An answer to that seems fairly obvious: one way to benefit from the lessons of earlier mistakes and past misfortune is to record them so as to prevent their repetition through exposure and inoculation. (1993, 36)

Morrison sees American romance not as an "evasion" of historical forces, but rather as a "head-on encounter" with America's "deep insecurities": the fear of a wild, alien continent ungraced by 'civilization'; loneliness, powerlessness, aggression, and "the terror of human freedom - the thing they coveted most of all" (1993, 36-37). And into this conventional analysis Morrison pitches the undiscovered presence of a resident, disenfranchised, black population, endeavouring to articulate how the discourse of American fear found in that body a symbolically pliant and speechless metaphor.

The ways in which artists - and the society that bred them - transferred internal conflicts to a 'blank darkness,' to conveniently bound and violently silenced black bodies, is a major theme in American literature. The rights of man, for example, an organizing principle upon which the nation was founded, was inevitably yoked to Africanism. Its history, its origin is permanently allied with another seductive concept: the hierarchy of race. As the sociologist Orlando Patterson has noted, we should not be surprised that the Enlightenment could accommodate slavery; we should be surprised if it had not. The concept of freedom did not emerge in a vacuum. Nothing highlighted freedom - if it did not in fact create it - like slavery. (38)

Morrison trains her critical sights on a truly American gestalt in which black culture and history are placed at the centre of the question of what it means to be American: "Africanism is inextricable from the definition of Americanness" (1993, 65). However, she carries out this manoeuvre not by supplanting white America with black America as the privileged object of study, but rather through an articulation of the two experiences as socio-cultural enantiomorphs. An enantiomorph is a "[f]orm related to another as an object is to its image in a mirror."69 As a technical term it is used to describe the chemical structure of certain crystals, or certain biological forms, such as aquatic plants that have one structure under water and another above. By virtue of the bipolar, and enantiomorphic, 'law' we are encouraged to imagine the structural coupling, sub-soil, or background shadow unarticulated in the notions of, for example, the 'brave new American man,' rugged individualism, frontier innocence, etc. Behind every virile hero stands that shadow that makes his heroism possible, and over which he wields power: a "raw, half-savage world."70 From this critical perspective if we consider the
linear and the cyclical (and the mechanistic and the tautological), like the Africanist and the Americanist, to be enantiomorphic rhythms or repetitive structuring tropes it is in order to clarify a meaning, to engage with the beat-in-between, to give it articulation and make available to us the demystification of a sacrificial thinking.

Morrison is quick to defend the fitness and applicability of this enantiomorphic 'law' - as a kind of analytic vice grips - to a social discourse characterized by metaphor.

Race has become metaphorical - a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than 'biological' race ever was...It seems that is has a utility far beyond economy, beyond the sequestering of classes from one another, and has assumed a metaphorical life so completely imbedded in daily discourse that it is perhaps more necessary and more on display than ever before. I am prepared to be corrected on this point insofar as it misrepresents the shelf life of racism in social and political behaviour. But I remain convinced that the metaphorical and metaphysical uses of race occupy definitive places in American literature, in the 'national' character... (1993, 63)

Although the genetic evidence for the viability of the category 'race' is equivocal, it remains a powerful agglomerative rubric in the social imaginary.71 “For, as Tvetzan Todorov reminds us, the existence of racism does not require the existence of races” (Appiah, 175). Ironically, and like rhythm, 'race' continues to be one of the most affective and least material things in the world.

I have provided all this seemingly extraneous data in order to demonstrate that Morrison's thinking on the subject of 'race' in America is both cogent and supple. She knows the history well and has thought through in detail its historiographic entanglements. She is conscious that her gestalt lies in an enantiomorphic relation with the 'greater' context of what we might call 'conventional historical opinion' or, perhaps, 'hegemonic discourse.' And, interpellating, we can see that she situates the historical advent of the 'jungle' as enabling metaphor in the era when the notion of 'Edenic America' was being born. In this light, then, it is interesting to ask the question: from where does Stamp get the jungle metaphor?

Stamp is something of an intermediary in the novel, not only as professional ferryman and sneak, but as a character mid-way between Sixo, who retains some 'bridge' to the prior, oral folk-ways and wisdom, and Denver, who becomes fully literate. (Neither character, of course, is never fully 'in' one or the other of these realms.) It is quite possible that Stamp has heard from some white or other that blacks came from the 'jungle,' or he may even have read it. In this sense he 'inherits' and re-circulates a version of the
historically invented jungle metaphor. But we must not forget that Stamp also retains a modest connection with the folk-ways of earlier times, as was seen, for example, in his explanation of where the berries came from. It is equally possible, therefore, that his account is based on some sort of folk knowledge or oral stories in common circulation. This link may be perceptible in his expression, 'But it wasn't the jungle the blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place.' However, as Stamp clearly has no direct knowledge (or none that is made available to us) of the events in question - neither of the 'origins' in America, nor in Africa - we are left wondering to what extent his explanation of origins, like Sethe's inferences vis-a-vis her mother, is a projection backwards in time.

The question of origins opens up to the very problematic of historiography. It has often been remarked that whenever one gets into an argument about origins one enters into a *mise-en-abîme*. Recall how Stephen Dedalus' scribbles in the flyleaf of his geography primer: "Stephen Dedalus / Class of Elements / Clongowes Wood College / Sallins / County Kildare / Ireland / Europe / The World / The Universe." The final term in such concatenations is always an arbitrary one; and had Stephen ended the list with Ireland, for example, the inventory would still be complete. This is because, as de Certeau highlights, the historiographical operation is always a kind of surgery; its initial act is to establish a breach between "what can be understood and what must be forgotten" (1988, 4). We have already come across two currents of this operation in the novel's metonymic structure - one replacing memories by realities and another substituting facsimiles for facts - and in two attitudes towards the past: Stamp's remembering and seeking to restitute by means of the gift that forges social links, and Sethe's remembering-as-forgetting that fashions for her a refuge from the world.

As de Certeau points out there are operative here are two cardinal limitations. First, that the past can never be comprehended *in toto*, and second, that the surgical act that initiates the historiographic operation necessarily creates fragments of history - out of which the historian infers a totality. As "only a limited number of representations can be made," some kind of data management must always be effected to avoid being overwhelmed by complexity (Conley, x-xi). A history of American slavery, for example, may begin chronologically with the adoption of a legal definition of the slave by the legislatures of Maryland and Virginia in the 1660s. But every such act of historiographic surgery must then rely on what de Certeau calls "acquired rationalizations" in order to fill in details that fall beyond the margins of the delimited field of research (in Conley, x). Thus in my example, such a history would necessarily
adopt the presuppositions and interpretations implicit in the works cited, in order to fill in the background of the pre-1660 period.

Although the excision here takes place on a temporal plane, it will as often as not also be a question of perspective. For example, "a sociological analysis" of religious history, writes de Certeau, always

makes its own limits visible. In a word, we might say that it makes the specificity of ideological or religious organizations unthinkable. It transforms them into 'representations' or into 'reflections' of social structures. Put otherwise, it eliminates them as real factors of history: they become additions and secondary effects, precious only insofar as, through their transparency, they shed light on what instigated them. (1988, 119)

Here we can see that the selection methods explicit in historiographic surgery, and the assumptions implicit in the marshalling of acquired rationalizations, combine in a design that has for its organizing principle an allegory or teleology of what the past, and especially the present, 'mean.' The slave narrative, for example, can be said to have been underwritten by an allegory of the power of literacy - of the word over the event - and of the inalienable rights of humankind, innate humanity, individual self-determination, etc.

We may say that such narratives slipped into relative obscurity in the Reconstruction because for many the concerns of the present had moved beyond the issue of the self-determination and inalienable rights of the individual to other pastures. Mutatis mutandis, the slave narrative has been revived as a text/document of interest in recent times for exactly the same reason: it speaks to where we in the Americas think we are going and to those questions we feel we need to address in order to get there.

Because the point of origin for a history is always, in the sense here outlined, arbitrary, de Certeau sees 'events' themselves as forms of 'acquired rationalizations.' It is not a question of whether an event has or has not in fact occurred, but rather one of its selection, description, and accentuation as 'meaningful.' This is the other half of the surgical operation: the suturing together of pieces excised from the raw continuum. de Certeau here assimilates a psychoanalytic understanding to his notion of the event as an un-discoursed origin.

The event is the means thanks to which disorder is turned into order. The event does not explain but permits an intelligibility. It is the postulate and the point of departure - but also the blind spot - of comprehension. Far from being the base or substantial landmark on which information would be founded, the event is a hypothetical support for an ordering along a chronological axis...[naming] what cannot be understood...Following this procedure, which allows the arranging of
the unknown with a blank square prepared for it ahead of time and named 'event,' a 'reason' of history becomes thinkable. (1988, 96; 98)

de Certeau continues to call these null points - these "obsessive knots of half-signs...grasped syntactically" - 'events,' because they contain the "affective charge" that primes the historiographic engine (Conley, xv). As evidences of the (Lacanian) Real, they persist in maintaining a refractory resistance to reduction or modification, "freezing continuous process into emblems" (ibid.). Here we might produce Sethe's notion that 'the truth was simple,' the memories of her mother, or better still, her image of 'the boys in the trees,' as examples. As undiscoursed 'events' they underwrite Sethe's ability to function in the chronologically linear world of rents, paycheques, and kitchen-garden harvests. She polices their silence through the daily labour of 'beating back the past,' and so disciplined they pay their dividend in the form of the modicum of order she enjoys. Were she able to rationalize those 'emblematic events' themselves, her ex-planation would modify, reduce, or give the lie to the sense of ravishment, illicit pleasure, or affective charge that they, as 'un-untieable' knots, figure. Like secrets we would rather not tell out of fear of corrupting them in our memory, they are uncut gems of a crystalline purity that both osmore and exude the quidity of all that is to Sethe precious. We might say that their quasi-platonic solidity and pure harmonics ground her world. When circumstances conspire to transform them into objects of a 'telling,' however, the immaculate and perfect inertia of their orbit becomes a swirling vortex in which their native gravity evaporates, overtaken by the alien spectre of loss.

Here we might adduce the working of a Freudian, and social, amnesia. If historiography "promotes a selection between what can be understood and what must be forgotten in order to obtain the representation of a present intelligibility," then what of the forgotten, the repressed, the remainder - what becomes of it?

...whatever this new understanding of the past holds to be irrelevant - shards created by the selection of materials, remainders left aside by an explication - comes back, despite everything, on the edges of discourse or in its rifts and crannies: 'resistances,' 'survivals,' or delays, discreetly perturb the pretty order of a line of 'progress' or a system of interpretation. These...symbolize a return of the repressed, that is, a return of what, at a given moment has become unthinkable in order for a new identity to become thinkable. (1988, 4)

Assimilating this insight, a number of ramifications would follow. If we view Stamp's story of origins as a kind of 'sociological analysis,' it would obfuscate the question of agency in the very act of assigning to the negation of agency a status as
originary 'event.' By positing all blacks as 'innocent' victims and by constituting white oppression and opposition as a distinct and unique totality, what would be explained? Transformed into an exemplary, and transparent, 'representation' of a social structure of oppression, Beloved would lose her specificity and spectrality. She would then, as beat-in-between, function as a kind of undiscoursed glue binding together "the severe fragmentation of the self," that Morrison views as "a cause (not a symptom) of psychosis" (1989, 16). Thus, what returns as repressed in the sense that de Certeau underlines, is that which has been rendered unthinkable, the fragmentation causal of Sethe's psychosis (the rending of the chain mother-milk-child) and the 'denied and rebuked' victim of her violence: Beloved. Beloved's apparition as shadow dogs and perturbs the order of an ironically 'righteous' progress in which the 'righteous' look of social expulsion and denial of identity (first by the slavers, later by the black community) is mirrored and doubled by Sethe's self-sequestration in a locked house without mirrors. Beloved's return is a disturbance that exacerbates that inward turn, insisting on the particular and conditioned of Sethe's situation - and here the repeated word 'mine' that Stamp hears circling the house is apposite - much as the slave narrative served to ground the abstraction of the 'emancipation of the human race.' This particularity is syntactically marked by ellipsis, such that when the text says 'Beloved' it signifies 'Beloved...of Sethe.' This delineating specificity, we may call the purchase price of the engagement with time.

However, on the other hand, the passage may well, and should also, be viewed in the context of the phenomenological character of the discourse of Sethe's descent into pathology. In this sense the passage gives us a clearer image of what has remained largely (and socially) unarticulated, what Morrison in an essay treating Moby Dick calls "the shadow of the presence from which the text has fled...the ghost [that] drives the machine" (1989, 12; 18). In this, 'the planting of the jungle' binds together fragments created by the narrative historiography of Sethe's plight: the undiscoursed 'they' in 'they nursed her,' the ironically unarticulated agency implicit in 'What she go and do that for?,' etc. Although Sethe has wished to represent her troubles (and her solution) as unique, other information seeps through the seams of the narrative that tells us this is not so. Coursing through the community is a common fragmentation and pathology that Baby Suggs' gospel has sought to address. As she remarks, "[n]ot a house in the country ain't packed to its rafters with some dead Negro's grief" (5,) the mute fallout of which is there to be read if one only has eyes and ears for it: the "permanent craziness...[of the] young woman in a bonnet whose food was full of tears...Aunt Phyllis, who slept with her eyes wide open...Jackson Till, who slept under the bed" (97). In this interpretation Beloved's return disturbs the progress
articulated by William Jay, wishful that 'the transition from slave to free be effected instantaneously with scarcely any perceptible interruption of the ordinary pursuits of life.'

As a return of the social repressed, then, Beloved disturbs the cheerful narratives of the 'emancipation of the human race' and autonomous self-determination that posit as their undis coursed, originary 'event' the 'liberation' of the slaves. The repetition of the 'jungle' as enabling-metaphor-of-white-entitlement returns not only as image of what nineteenth century white America most feared: the possibility that in a discursive space shot through with notions of social darwinism and invisible epidemiological bacilli, society was but a veneer lacquered over a Hobbsian belum omnium in omnem - but also as a present unthinkable. The unthinkable is that at a certain historical moment "whiteness became ideology,"75 and that that ideology, and the social fragmentation and pathology that resulted, were nurtured and cultivated throughout the institutional fabric of society for generations.

What I have called the persistence of slavery in (individual) memory is disturbed and exacerbated by the unconditioned archetype of the 'jungle' as undis coursed metaphor, folk-way, and/or 'transparent' representation of a common 'origin.' The ideological confection that is intensified (and ultimately laid to rest) is what the slavecatcher had called 'the cannibal life those crazy niggers preferred.' Recall that after Sethe sequesters herself behind the locked door, and as the illumination on 124 grows darker and darker, Sethe wastes away in inverse proportion to Beloved's growing larger and larger. In this the signified of 'Beloved' balloons into a syntactic ellipsis of the form 'Beloved...of X,' where 'X' stands in for the historico-allegorical (and quasi-Biblical, quasi-utopic76) subject of history: 'I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.' If, following Heidegger, 'the world' has become a representation, and as such is underwritten by an 'innate' narrative (from ancient, to medieval, to modern 'world picture') of progress (which is for Heidegger an anti-progress) then, for Benjamin, life and history are produced on the backs of, and rendered visible by virtue of the forgotten dead. In this Euro-centred view the intelligibility of the world may be seen as enantiomorphically twinned with a generalized catastrophe of history dispersed throughout its entire course.

As soon as the world becomes 'represented world' or image, the subject as subjectum affirms itself in the certainty of a centred Self, of a mastery which at bottom is sovereign will...In this sense the Prince is the Cartesian God transposed into the field of politics. But this politics, which is sovereignty and omnipotence, develops only on the ground of catastrophe, of 'a discussion of a state of emergency, and makes it the most important function of the Prince to avert this.' It
is a vicious circle of the political, where absolute power rises up on the basis of
catastrophes, in order to avert catastrophe...Here the truth of history lies no longer
on the side of law, norm, or regulation, but, on the contrary, in the violence of a
sovereignty that asserts itself to the extreme in states of emergency in which the
political relation is laid bare as one of 'war'...What are...[unrepresented in such
histories are] the 'uncontrollable' and profoundly ungovernable catastrophes
which, as it were, stage the very action of representation.77

Lest one be tempted to take this catastrophe thematic in the figurative sense one
need only consult Azurara's account of the Portuguese marauding expeditions of 1444
(sponsored by Prince Henry the Navigator, and underwritten by the papal bull of 1443).

And our men, crying 'Santiago! San Jorge! Portugal!' fell upon them, killing and
capturing as many as they could.

Then you might see mothers abandoning their children and husbands
abandoning their wives, each thinking only to flee as speedily as might be. And
some drowned themselves in the sea, others sought refuge in their huts, others hid
their children under the mud, thinking that thus they might conceal them from the
eyes of the enemy, and that they could come to seek them later. And at length Our
Lord God, Who rewardeth all that is well done, ordained that in return for the
work of this day done by our men in His service they should have the victory over
their enemies and the rewards of their fatigues and disbursements, in the taking of
one hundred and sixty-five captives, men, women, and children, without
reckoning those that died or that killed themselves. (160-161)

In a subsequent foray on the same voyage, a raiding party in a tender sights a convoy of
'Moors' fleeing on rafts.

This caused them at first much joy; but soon this joy was transformed into grief.
The joy came of finding so fair an occasion of honour and profit; but great grief
seized upon them on perceiving how small was their boat, which could hold but a
few persons...and moved by pity, albeit these rafts were filled with Infidels, they
killed only a very few. However, it must be believed that many Moors who, seized
with fear, abandoned the rafts, perished in the sea. And the Christians thus passing
amidst the rafts chose above all the children, in order to carry off more of them in
their boat... (164)

Several weeks later the caravels reached port at Lagos, Portugal. Early in the morning of
August 8th 1444 the first public sale of black slaves in modern Europe took place: "the
European slave trade had begun" (Ure, 119).

But what heart, even the hardest, would not be moved by a sentiment of pity on
seeing such a flock; for some held their heads bowed down, and their faces were
bathed with tears; others were groaning grievously, lifting their eyes to the heavens, fixing them upon the heights, and raising an outcry as though imploring the Father of Nature to succor them; others beat themselves at length upon the ground; others raised their lamentations in the manner of a chant, according to the custom of their country; and although the words uttered in their language could not be understood by us, it was plain that they were consonant with the degree of grief.

Then, as though the more to increase their suffering, came those who were commanded to make the division; and they began to part them one from another, in order to form companies, in such manner that each should be of equal value; and for this it was necessary to separate children from their parents, and women from their husbands, and brothers from brothers. There was no law in respect of kinship or affection; each had perforce to go whither fate drove him... So soon as they had been led to their place the sons, seeing themselves removed from their parents, ran hastily towards them; the mothers clasped their children in their arms, and holding them, cast themselves upon the ground, covering them with their bodies, without heeding the blows which they were given! (Azurara, 169-171)

Although Azurara is moved to pity by the spectacle, he is also quick to justify 'the work of this day done by our men in His service,' subjecting himself (and his chronicle) to the politico-religious order of 'salvation' and caudillismo. He goes on to describe how, once having embraced Christianity, the slaves - former "pagans," "beasts," [ir]rational creatures, since they did not even know what were bread and wine." "ignoran[t]...of all knowledge of the good...brutish[ly] idle..." - were treated "with much kindness" (173). Many examples are offered of how, in time, slaves mastered the Portuguese language, married Portuguese citizens, inherited fortunes, and were set free. However, Azurara does not cite any of his informants' views on the calamity, or on anything else for that matter (which would in any case only have complicated and compromised the history), because they are merely the 'raw material' of the true story, that of the sovereignty and salvation of the Infante, Dom Enrique:

See now what must surely be the reward of the Infante before the presence of the Lord God for having thus saved not these souls alone but many and many more, as you shall see by the continuation of this history! (174)

In Azurara's chronicle two things need concern us: first, that for the slaves, the vinculum with Africa was rent in a most brutal, swift, and irreparable manner; and second, that the omnipotence of the glorious Infante (and by extension the sovereignty of the 'Self-centred subjectum') 'develops only on the ground of catastrophe.' What the captives may have felt or experienced is lost beneath the wheels of historical 'representation.' If, as Benjamin
maintains, catastrophe is the staging ground of representation, then we can see that
Morrison's gestalt is, in effect, a squinting refocalization of the tapestry of history, a
drawing out of what is, albeit masked by our perceptual apparatus and representational
schemata, already there, mute.

This interpretation of the return of the social repressed opens up to a
theatricalized, redemptive history, in which "every image of the past that is not
recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear
irretrievably...Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the flame of the spark of
hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the
enemy if he wins" (Benjamin, 255).79 What returns as unthinkable, 'in order for a new
identity to become thinkable,' is that which the narrative 'trash-compactor' of rational-
political progress has annulled and excommunicated: the spectral - what Benjamin calls
the "image of petrified unrest" (in Buci-Glucksmann, 100). In the fragmented and
kaleidoscopic 'narrative' that reaches our ears and eyes of Beloved's pages 210-213,
Beloved herself agglutinates to her telling a transhistorical, and thus necessarily chaotic,
experience of the "Sixty Million and more" (first epigraph to Beloved, no page). This
fractured totality we may call (redemptive) historical necessity, and the 'will' of the
dikenga: "catalyzing an essence of time which cannot be reduced to the physical
mechanistic, empty time of chronology...In the metamorphoses of the body moved by
suffering and pleasure, [the staging of tragedy as Trauerspiel] makes visible the mortal
frailty of the human figure caught in the secularization of time" (Buci-Glucksmann, 67).
As revisitor, the spectral seeks to disturb conceptuality and redeem unconditionally all the
"[d]isremembered and unaccounted for" (Beloved, 274).

Beloved stands in for and conjures up both these possibilities. In terms of what I
have called the cross-rhythmic relationship, each of the individual 'rhythms'
(interpretations here) calls on, and calls forth its 'opposite' number.80
Enantiomorphically, the sociological interpretation is grounded and particularized in the
phenomenological - as sociological; the particular and conditioned interpretation
achieves its pointedness in the transhistorical - as particular. By inter-weaving
themselves together the two produce something far more interesting (and telling us
something far more meaningful and complex about the human predicament, the plight of
Sethe, and the metaphor of 'race') than each as a separate component 'represents.' By a
kind of narrative slight-of-hand, Morrison has returned us as readers to that which the
story has been seeking to re-establish: the analogic principle, the knowledge of the 'more
or less' in relation to the whole recipe.
Thompson gives an interesting example of this social ana-logic in his discussion of West African textiles:

Staggered motifs on certain chiefly cloths can be profitably compared with off-beat phrasing in music, dance, and decorative sculpture. The narrow bands which make up these textiles are sewn together so that what is 'on beat' at one level of the cloth is immediately 'off beat' in terms of another...

If there is a social meaning to be extracted from this element of West African visual expertise, perhaps the knot of wisdom motif ['the knot that only the wise leaders know how to unravel'] provides a clue. It may be that the chiefly person who wears a cloth with staggered pattern in effect promises to rediscover wholeness in perfecting uneven human relationships, even as he unties the knot of trouble and obstruction. Suspending the beat hints that to dwell at one level is to lose the precious powers of balance inherent in human capability. (1974, 11)

As readers, having worked through the disturbing 'knot' of social and individual violence on an interpretive level - bringing to fruition that which the narrative repetition was (as yet) unable to achieve - we have primed ourselves for an unraveling and restitution on the level of narrative discourse. All that is to come is as if already 'prescripted,' promised, inevitable.

All this may seem an overly complex form of interpretive legerdemain, and that I grant. But when I say that the cross-rhythmic relation produces something far more meaningful than the separate interpretations would allow, I do not intend that the third is a necessary reading. Each of the two not only stands on its own, but can be seen to crystalize in a way a contemporary public/academic discourse. As Stanley Elkins has written "the spiritual agony inherent in the subject itself imposes on the result a certain simplicity of organization and a kind of persistent rhythm...the rhythm of 'right and 'wrong.'" rhythms which partisans to the debate have often attempted to turn to their advantage (1). The phenomenological interpretation gives us a version of a politically 'neutral' (neutered to its opponents) formalist reading of American history that may be assimilated to a 'liberal' interpretation of the damage wrought by slavery's institutional dispossession. It is also the interpretation of choice for those who, like Saul Bellow, posture inflammatorily: 'Where is the Zulu Tolstoy?' The sociological interpretation, on the other hand, gives us a version of the catastrophic reading championed by Marxists and négritudistes that may be assimilated to an 'activist' interpretation of black resistance to the institution of slavery. It is also the interpretation of choice for those who, like Louis Farrakhan, embrace a 'reverse-race thinking' and posture inflammatorily, for example,
that the slave trade was an invention of the white 'race' (conveniently ignoring Islamic and other precedents).

In schematizing the range of existing opinion into this polarity I have obviously reduced the complexity of the moral, legal, historical, and political arguments of each 'camp' from a spectrum of opinion, to a point. However, just as the existence of racism does not require the existence of 'races,' the fact that a wide spread of opinion is the reality need not impede the wide-spread tendency to align such opinion into opposing camps. As Wynton Marsalis remarked perspicaciously of the O. J. Simpson verdict, "You want your side to win, whatever the side is going to be. And the thing is, we're still at a point in [American] national history where we look at each other as sides" (in Gates 1995, 56). I believe the binarism of the 'jungle' passage asks us to confront both our own and others' tendencies to think in just these digital terms. And thus, while each camp seems to contradict the other, the point, it seems to me, is that both provide information which is to their opposite number 'invisible.' The justness of what I am calling Morrison's gestalt is that is seems to offer us a means of greater purchase on the refractory realities of the question. This gestalt is not interpretive legerdemain because evidence for it has been there all along: there are two 'jungles' - "But it wasn't the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place. It was the jungle whitefolks planted in them" (198; emphasis added).

If the 'jungle whitefolks planted in them' is as convolutedly entangled in questions of origins, historiography, ideology and pathology, as I have made out, what, then, can be said of the first jungle, 'the jungle blacks brought with them'? Very little. If we can assimilate that jungle to the spirit of the antelope and/or snake, it is something ferocious and forbidding, something that, as Sethe approaches it, transforms her into an animal. If we can assimilate that jungle to the spirit of the antelope and/or snake, it is something ferocious and forbidding, something that, as Sethe approaches it, transforms her into an animal. If the 'whitefolks' jungle' purports to tell us about a social structure (anarchy) of which the whitefolks are in terror, the 'blackfolks' jungle' purports to tell us about a form of knowledge the link with which has been almost irreparably broken. Several critics have assayed to 'make sense' of Beloved's fractured narrative (210-213) but none of these attempts convince. Like Sethe's memory of Nan, scripted in "a code she no longer understood," all we can glean from Beloved's telling is that something catastrophic happened in the past, something we know colours everything that has happened since, and perhaps much to come (62). But we also realize that the necessary cipher for disentangling the strands of that pregnant 'something' is irretrievably lost.

Sethe herself seems to be aware of this fact. Although, as the narrator tells us, Beloved "was called, nobody anywhere knew her name" (274), Denver hints at one point
that Beloved had in fact a proper name, but it remains unspoken: "soon as she spelled her name - not her given name, but the one Ma'am paid the stonemcutter for - I knew" (208).85

Sethe is particularly conscious of this rupture as it pertains to the oral transmission of the essential practical skills of life and mothering.

'I wish I'd a known more, but, like I say, there wasn't nobody to talk to. Woman, I mean. So I tried to recollect what I'd seen back when I was before Sweet Home. How the woman did there. Oh they knew all about it. How to make that thing you use to hang the babies in the trees - so you could see them out of harm's way while you worked in the fields. Was a leaf thing too they gave em to chew on. Mint, I believe, or sassafras. Comfrey, maybe. I still don't know how they constructed that basket thing, but I didn't need it anyway, because all my work was in the barn and the house, but I forgot what the leaf was. I could have used that. I tied Buglar when we had all that pork to smoke.' (160)

What is particularly striking here is how the folk solution to the problem of how to coddle the baby and get the work done at the same time - a kind of 'proto-jolly-jumper' - is replaced. In the absence of an oral tradition passing on such folk-ways and remedies, Sethe adopts a solution metaphorically mirroring the very institution that effectively erased that knowledge: she tethers Buglar, like an animal (or a slave). And she does it 'naturally,' as it were, unconscious of its symbolic subtext.

Robert Thompson has pointed out that part of the difficulty of exhuming the (presumed) connections linking West African and Afro-American arts is that for a long time these connections were dismissed as 'folk-lore'; as such they were buried under the rationalizing tide of modern knowledge, and, hence, devalued by blacks and whites alike.

Yet because Kongo Atlantic art cuts across so many media and disciplinary interests - 'folk art,' 'material culture,' 'art history,' 'anthropology,' and that shameless verbalism masquerading as a category, 'outsider art' - it was initially easy to divide, conquer, and deny. Face vessels went to folk-art museums, yards shows were 'environments,' dimes pierced and worn as anklets reflected 'superstitions,' burial decorations were viewed apart from yard and house even though the same themes reoccurred there. Today, art historians and social scientists such as Grey Gundaker and Judith McWillie are seeing things whole at last, making points in scholarship that Renee Stout of black Washington, D.C., has made in art with her famous neo-minkisi for at least the past ten years. (1993, 285)

He goes on to say that although, for example, "[m]illions in North America have seen conga lines and heard conga drums, danced sambas and mambos," few realize the intimate link these 'entertainments' hold with Kongo religious belief and practice (ibid.).
Artists, he astutely points out, have been in the vanguard of society, creatively forging anew connections to what once was.

Although Thompson does not emphasize it, and often seems to willingly gloss over the point, we must ask ourselves to what extent the artists of whom he speaks place the accent, in 'forging anew connections to what once was,' on the neo-. What once was, is just that, a 'was' - and a 'no more.' Some critics and artists, in a desire to put behind our modern, literate culture's tendency to celebrate the distance from our predecessors, unreflectively embrace a quasi pre-modern, oral celebration of continuity with them. My quibble is not with the desire to celebrate continuity or orality; these desires are in large part 'natural' products, or secondary pendulous results, of literacy's longing to see itself as distinct from orality. We have much to learn from oral cultures, and that learning begins with the knowledge that the road between orality and literacy is not open to two-way traffic: a straight-forward return back along the route traversed is not possible. While forms of knowledge in oral culture, proverbs for example, "precisely because [their] message is not fixed, can be used again and again," and as such impart the feeling that the present is an unbroken chain to the past, literate culture obligates "a kind of consistency that oral culture cannot and does not demand" (Appiah, 132; 130). And while oral culture's absence of records makes it possible to view the past as an unchanging tableau of essence and tradition, writing forces us to address the contextual specificity (time, place, voice, mode, irony, world view, etc.) of each communicative act and the message exchanged - it throws visual flood lights on discrepancies. Appiah: "We know more about the thought of Isaac Newton on one or two subjects than we know about the entire population of his Asante contemporaries...With widespread literacy, the image of knowledge as a body of truths always already given cannot survive" (130). Indeed, the tragedy of Beloved seems to demonstrate just this point.

Thus, I must take exception with those interpretations of Beloved that argue that the narrative effects such a return to a lost given knowledge. Mae G. Henderson's essay, 'Toni Morrison's Beloved: Re-Membering the Body as Historical Text,' while offering many fine insights, is one example of many that falls into this petrification of the past.

Morrison seems to figure...a second immaculate conception, if you will, in which black motherhood becomes self-generative - a process which, in effect, reconstitutes black womanhood...It is [Sethe's] mother's story which refamiliarizes her own story. She receives from her mother that which she had hoped to discover with Paul D: 'Her story was bearable' - not because it was Paul D's, but her mother's - 'to tell, to refine and tell again' (99). The maternal discourse becomes a testimonial one for Sethe. What both mother and daughter share is protection of
their own children - the one by saving a life and the other by taking a life... (76-78)

Henderson glosses over here precisely those historiographic and phenomenologico-narrative entanglements I have striven to unearth. What such a gloss misrecognizes is how 'Self-generative black motherhood' is complicated by the fact that the nephew 'nursed her'; how what Sethe 'receives' from her mother is placed in a gestalt with the blind spot of Sethe's memories and coloured by her inferential impasto; how the 'shared' protection of the children is tangled up with the realization that Sethe's own ma'am ran away. While maternal discourse may be 'testimonial,' it is also rebuked by Beloved: "When once or twice Sethe tried to assert herself - be the unquestioned mother whose word was law and who knew what was best - Beloved slammed things, wiped the table clean of plates, threw salt on the floor, broke a window pane" (242; emphasis added).

Nursed by the nephew and cradled in a house without mirrors by her endless debt to the child, Sethe is painted in savage strokes as a woman 'enslaved' - for all the 'best' reasons - to the past, to a love 'too thick.' It is precisely the 'purity' of this vinculum matrimoni (literally: fetters of woman bondage - and here we need recall the image of Sethe's betrothal to Beloved) that is disgorged: "Sethe spit up something she had not eaten and it rocked Denver like gunshot" (243). The claim that "Her story was bearable' - not because it was Paul D's, but her mother's,' is blind to the fact that it is precisely the 'natural' semiotic chain (mother-milk-child) that is demonstrated both as ruptured in slavery and the source of a destructive and unbearable burden when reconstituted. That claim also misconstrues the 'teaching' of the tragedy and the import of the citation. The unemended sentence reads: "Her story was bearable because it was his as well - to tell, refine and tell again" (99). This wisdom appears to born out by the reconciliation between Sethe and Paul D concluding the novel, in which a shared sense of loss, that of motherhood and manhood respectively, promises...well, it's hard to say what. Is this closing pledge is to be the typological fulfillment of the novel's prophetic promise 'I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved...'. Whatever the future may be - and patently that is an entirely open question - it does seem clear that the promise proffered is one of an open-ended and uncertain hybridity. Perhaps the significance of the promise lies in its first person address.

My own sense is that 'the future promised' seems to intimate that the question "What does it mean to be black?" (or for that matter, white), entails a full knowledge of the entanglements of a sordid, exclusionary history, and, "[i]n part, it means, rejecting all exclusionary answers to the question..."87 Closure and conclusion are a characteristic
difficulty in Morrison's fiction, and particularly so in *Beloved*. This may be due to Morrison's special talent for challenging preconceptions of all types. (The quizzical thing about a preconception is that it is something you don't know you have until it is called into question.) "[T]he text," she says, 

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cannot be the authority - it should be the map. It should make a way for the reader (audience) to participate in the tale. The language, if it is to permit criticism of both rebellion and tradition, must be both indicator and mask, and the tension between the two kinds of language is its release and its power. If my work is to be functional to the group (to the village, as it were) then it must bear witness and identify that which is useful from the past and that which ought to be discarded; it must make it possible to prepare for the present and live it out, and it must do that not by avoiding problems and contradictions but by examining them; it should not even attempt to solve social problems, but it should certainly try to clarify them. (1984a, 389)
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When we combine Morrison's special talent for challenging preconceptions with the enthymematic character of fictional narrative we must ask ourselves to what extent the conclusions we reach are based upon premises we have brought to our reading. The premises I have imported have been buttressed by comments gleaned from Morrison's interviews and essays, including:

- Contemporaneous hostility to men is bothersome to me. Not that they are not deserving of criticism and contempt, but I don't want a freedom that depends largely on somebody else being on his knees. (in Koenen, 212)
- I write out of ignorance. I write about the things I don't have any resolutions for...I don't write out of what I know. It's what I don't know that stimulates me. I merely know enough to get started. Writing is discovery... (in Tate, 130)
- I simply wanted to write literature that was irrevocably, indisputably Black, not because its characters were, or because I was, but because it took as its creative task and sought as its credentials those recognized and verifiable principles of Black art. (Momson 1984a, 389)

Morrison's great courage and honesty as a writer lies in her commitment to her aesthetic principles and her willingness to imaginatively follow them *wherever they lead*.

§

Wherever they lead escorts us to the door, to education, and to the import of the tragedy. If everything depends on knowing how much, which itself presupposes the question 'in relation to what?,' a clarification of these terms ought to be by now - if not
now, when? - available to us. What is this everything in suspension?; how do I accede to this knowledge?; what is this 'what' to which everything is in relation?; and, above all, why? These may seem like large, abstract questions, and in a way they are. Perhaps we can best get a toehold on them by examining the particular questions the close of the novel throws up; for if we can come to terms with those particulars then we may just be able to intimate what the bigger things are about, or at least experience something of their enormity. And that experience may in turn lead us to an understanding of what, perhaps, is most particular: of the import of the tragedy, our lives and the language we do.

The first question that the end of the performance throws at us is why "[r]emembering seemed unwise" (274)? Although for us the haunting of Beloved is unforgettable, for "those who saw her that day on the porch" she is "quickly and deliberately forgot[ten]...Although she has claim, she is not claimed" (ibid.). If remembering seemed unwise, why then bring her back at all? Many levels can be adduced to the answer of this question, first of which is the issue of 'psychic necessity.' Morrison has suggested that the reason why there is no Black American folk-lore about the middle passage is because "it was not possible to survive on certain levels and dwell on it. People who did dwell on it, it probably killed them, and the people who did not dwell on it probably went forward" (in Darling, 5). However, she goes on to say, although that internal flight could be seen as a historical psychic necessity then, today the situation is different.

Interpellating her remarks from another location, we might claim that the necessity and responsibility of today is one of meeting head-on the "deep insecurities" of the American gestalt and its turbulent past in order "to benefit from the lessons of earlier mistakes and past misfortune...to record them so as to prevent their repetition through exposure and inoculation" (1993, 36).

The inoculative manoeuvre, however, is a curious one in that it seeks to foreclose an historical repetition, by means of a fictional repetition. As fictional discourse it raises and plumbs the psychic haunting of the past in order to drive an historical trauma out of the collective and individual imaginary. When Paul D returns to the house-no-longer-haunted, he knows "[s]omething is missing from 124," something he "can't put his finger
on" (270-271). However, although driven out, that 'something' has not been annulled; as the narrator intimates, the willfully 'forgotten' remains, analogically as it were. "just beyond his knowing [in] the glare of an outside thing that embraces while it accuses" (271; emphasis added). Here we open to the third and final exergue in which we may begin to glimpse how something new can be created in us, how we can both be loved and be good.

In order to articulate that possibility we need make one last pass by de Certeau's historiography. de Certeau assimilates all inaugural historiographic gestures to a psychoanalytic metaphor of asymmetry, in which history begins with demarcating the living from the dead. As Conley explains,

Once this 'other' time is established, interpretation is legitimized...By inaugurating this difference in their position and method, historians posit death as a total social fact (often without stating or even imagining it as such); but also, in their very act of indication, they deny its presence. A sense of loss is advanced, but its void is immediately filled with the knowledge the historian reaps from his division of past and present. Historians...produce the past by virtue of practicing arcane crafts of resurrection, animation, and even ventriloquism. (viii)

What in Beloved is so finely wrought in Sethe's first image-memory of Sweet Home, the one of the "Boys hanging from the most beautiful sycamores in the world" (6), is the tension resultant from making conscious this division (and the origins it postulates). This tension acts as a wedge prying open and crushed between the infinite and the finite, the most beautiful sycamores in the world and the headless, feetless boys in them, the past as resurrection of a 'golden' age and the past as a persistence of 'petrified unrest.' Wedged between a past made dead, denied and defied, and yet determining, the narrative discourse of Beloved holds/is held in rhythmic interrelation what/by what de Certeau calls 'the compatibility of opposites': "narrativization creates a 'depth' which allows the contrary or the remainder of the system to be placed near it" (1988, 89). It is this metonymic compatibility that Beloved labours over, both in the sense of articulating a loss that remains forever other, refractory, and irremediably void ('not a story to pass on'), and in the sense which Sethe and Paul D, at the novel's close, still seek to realize ('not a story to pass on'): "He wants to puts his story next to hers" (273). Under Morrison's stresses, the active, communal, and 'laborious' quality of (her) working language is crucial: "We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the meaning of our lives" (1994, 22).
To make conscious the division between the living and the dead would be to posit death as a total social fact by narratively whispering the silence or lip-reading the blind spot of 'origin,' or, when its speaking is unintelligible, deictically underlining it. It is as if writing the (unnamed) ghost constitutes its exorcism (literally: administration of an oath). de Certeau:

On the one hand, writing plays the role of a burial rite, in the ethnological and quasi-religious meaning of the term; it exorcises death by inserting it into discourse. On the other hand, it possesses a symbolizing function; it allows a society to situate itself by giving itself a past through language, and it thus opens up to the present a space of its own. 'To mark' a past is to make a place for the dead, but also to redistribute the space of possibility, to determine negatively what must be done, and consequently to use the narrativity that buries the dead as a way of establishing a place for the living...Here the function of language is to introduce through saying what can no longer be done...In this way it liberates the present without having to name it. Thus it can be said that writing makes the dead so that the living can exist elsewhere...so that it will still be possible to connect what appears with what disappears. Naming the absent of the household and inserting them into the language of the scriptural gallery is equivalent to liberating the apartment for the living, through an act of communication which combines the absence of the living in language with the absence of the dead in the household. (1988, 100-101)

By erecting a fictional tomb ("Pink as a fingernail it was, and sprinkled with glittering chips" (5)), and paying a fictional price for it ("Ten minutes, he said. You got ten minutes I'll do it for free" (ibid.)), the historiographic fiction is able to liberate our present - without having to name it. Fiction, mere fiction, which is to say mere words - a lie - creates a tomb we need not lie in, nor make explicit, and gives the wake that all the 'disremembered and unaccounted for' deserve. They'll lie, henceforth, in 'an outside thing that embraces while it accuses':

Through its narrativity, historiography furnishes death with a representation that, in placing the lack within language, outside of existence, has the value of an exorcism against anguish. But, through its performativity, historiography fills the lacunae that it represents; it uses this locus to impose upon the receiver a will, a wisdom, and a lesson...the dead of which it speaks become the vocabulary of a task to be undertaken. (de Certeau 1988, 101-102)

To take up this task on behalf of the all the slaves who died at sea and were thrown overboard, to give them the wake they deserve, will be to swear an oath against anguish, and, after their resurrection in Beloved, in us, to relinquish them to the undertow:
It was not a story to pass on. So they forgot her like an unpleasant dream during a troubling sleep. Occasionally, however, the rustle of a skirt hushes when they wake, and the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep seem to belong to the sleeper. Sometimes the photograph of a close friend or relative - looked at too long - shifts, and something more familiar than the dear face itself moves there. They can touch it if they like, but don't, because they know things will never be the same if they do.

This is not a story to pass on.

Down by the stream in back of 124 her footprints come and go, come and go. They are so familiar. Should a child, an adult place his feet in them they will fit. Take them out and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

By and by all trace is gone, and what is forgotten is not only the footprints but the water too and what is down there. The rest is weather. Not the breath of the disremembered and unaccounted for, but wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather. (275)

Curious that this wisdom (with its echoes of Prospero's) of voluntarily forsaking to pass the story on is written down, and hence potentially forever passed on. In this curiousness we can hear the echo of the alternating cross-rhythms with which we began, the something to escape and the something inescapable, the repetition of a past and the bringing to fruition of that which it was unable to achieve, and the active-passive "Afrikanische Aufheben" out of which arises the new, the reconstructed and uncreated (Thompson 1974, 10). As abstractions can they be likened to the 'cut' in West African drum performance, in which, by means of percussion, a signal is sounded for a change of rhythmic 'gears,' and the termination of percussion? Heard in this way the entire coda of Beloved (the final two pages of the novel) resounds with staccato repetitions telegraphing the rupture to come. James A. Snead, in his article 'Repetition as a Figure of Black Culture,' has teased out what he believes to be the symbolic import of this recurring trope.

In black culture repetition means that the thing circulates (exactly in the manner of any flow, including capital flows) there in an equilibrium...the thing (the ritual, the dance, the beat) is 'there for you to pick it up when you come back to get it.' If there is a goal (Zweck) in such a culture, it is always deferred; it continually 'cuts' back to the start, in the musical meaning of 'cut' as an abrupt, seemingly unmotivated break (an accidental da capo) with a series already in progress and a willed return to a prior series. (67)

As voluntary surrender, neither total nor final, the 'cut' leaves open the possibility of a voluntary return, because 'the thing (the ritual, the dance, the beat) is there for you to pick it up when you come back to get it' ("the magic lies in the fact that you knew it was there
for you all along" *(Beloved*, 176)). Now the question we want to ask is not so much how this thing is reconstructed (that would be answered by the protocols of ritual and musicianship, historiography and fiction) but rather how it is also uncreated. For in order for something to be both reconstructed and uncreated we will have to question the notion of transubstantiation, of how 'they can be my people who were not my people.'

Let us approach this notion gingerly as if it were fragile. Recall that the affirmation 'everything depends on knowing how much' presupposes the question of 'in relation to what?' This is first of all a question of excess, of the more, the greater, and ultimately, the infinite and the other, which are uncreated. Now we need to be specific here about in what sense these are uncreated, lest we seek to fall back on ideas of God, which is not my intention, and of which, moreover, *Beloved* says little. Perhaps taking up the counter-example of violence we can back into an understanding of the specificity desired (this counter-example is not fortuitous, as we shall see). In its simplest form violence takes the bodily 'you' as its target. It says: 'You' - and explicitly and expressly that which in the you is irreducible to every nomination, what Levinas calls the face - 'you are a thing [the ultimate noun], and as such mine [another of the same], subject to my will-to-representation, as representation: vermin, pollution, evil, enemy, slave.' This speaking voice is the autonomous 'I' where autonomy,

the philosophy which aims to ensure the freedom, or the identity, of beings, presupposes that freedom itself is sure of its right, is justified without recourse to anything further, is complacent in itself, like Narcissus. When, in the philosophical life that realizes this freedom, there arises a term foreign to the philosophical life, other - the land that supports us and disappoints our efforts, the sky that elevates us and ignores us, the forces of nature that aid us and kill us, things that encumber us or serve us, men who love us and enslave us - it becomes an obstacle; it has to be surmounted and integrated into this life. But truth is just this victory and integration...The I's identification, its marvelous autarchy, is the natural crucible of this transubstantiation of the other into the same..

This identification requires mediation. Whence a second characteristic of the philosophy of the same: its recourse to neuters...The foreign being, instead of maintaining itself in the inexpugnable fortress of its singularity, instead of facing, becomes a theme and an object. It fits under a concept already, or dissolves into relations. It falls into the network of a priori ideas, which I bring to bear, so as to capture it....Cognition consists in grasping the individual, which alone exists, not in its singularity which does not count, but in its generality, of which alone there is a science.

And here every power begins. (*Levinas* 1987, 49-50)
The iniquity of violence, its seizure, its excess, and its paradox, is that it aims at that which in the you is unthematizable - the infinite, the uncreated, and hence indomitable. "Violence bears only upon a being graspable and escaping every hold. Without this living contradiction in the being that undergoes violence the deployment of violent force would reduce itself to a labour" (Levinas; in Llewelyn, 142). What makes violence radically intolerable is not just that violence inflicts a pain that may of itself be insufferable, but that it aims it at what is inexpugnable in the you, and at no other. If this analysis is accurate (and, admittedly, there are others) then the only way to separate oneself from violence and the thought-structure that underwrites its acts ("the actual murder with words" (Hölderlin 1988, 114)) is to accept what Barthes calls "the thought of non-power" (1978, 310).

And what might be this thought? Imagine for a moment the idea of infinity. The idea of infinity puts us in an exceptional relationship: "This relationship is not that which connects a container to a content, since the I cannot contain the infinite, nor that which binds a content to a container, since the I is separated from the infinite" (Levinas 1987, 53-54). Unlike any other ideatum we can think the infinite without modifying it in the slightest, without having any purchase on it whatsoever, because we do not grasp it like a concept. Only the less, one might say, can be appropriated in thought by the more, and infinity resists such reduction, infinitely. Rather, our idea of infinity is as Levinas points out "one of the more in the less":

In thinking infinity the I from the first thinks more than it thinks. Infinity does not enter into the idea of infinity, is not grasped; this idea is not a concept. The infinite is the radically, absolutely other. The transcendence of infinity with respect to the ego that is separated from it and thinks it constitutes the first mark of its infinitude. The idea of infinity is then not the only one that teaches what we are ignorant of. It has been put into us. It is not a reminiscence. It is experience in the sole radical sense of the term: a relationship with the exterior, with the other, without this exteriority being able to be integrated into the same. The thinker who has the idea of infinity is more than himself, and this inflating, this surplus, does not come from within, as in the celebrated project of modern philosophers, in which the subject surpasses himself by creating. (54)

If my experience of the other is one of an infinite relation, then that other offers me no resistance, not because my power is not great enough, but rather because in the face of the infinite "I am no longer able to have power [je ne peut plus pouvoir]" (55): as inexpugnable and inexpungible, the other, and the absolute injunction appearing in her face, the 'Thou shalt not kill,' can never be killed, even in murder. This "resistance of
what has no resistance" is the lived interruption of the ethical (ibid.). An outside to every power which nonetheless takes up residence in me, disturbing me with a 'more in the less,' the experience of the infinitude of the other is the social relationship. As experience in the sole radical sense of the term its singular mode is desire - child of "abundance and poverty" - a thought that thinks more than it thinks:

The desires one can satisfy resemble this desire only intermittently, in the deceptions of satisfaction or in the increases of emptiness which mark their voluptuousness. They wrongly pass for the essence of desire. The true desire is that which the desired does not satisfy, but hollows out. It is goodness. It does not refer to a lost fatherland or plenitude; it is not homesickness, is not nostalgia. It is the lack in a being which is completely, and lacks nothing. (57)

Not the love of wisdom, in which every-thing is made symmetric in the freedom of consciousness and conscience, and in which the autonomous 'I' "remains the same by making of disparate and diverse events a history - its history" (48), this infinity of desire speaks the wisdom of love in which one is never, indeed, cannot be alone. To these I would like to add 'cut' in Hölderlin's (and Snead's and Morrison's) sense of a caesura signifying the outside of representation, the birth of culture in reconstruction and revelation:

Thus in the rhythmic succession of representations through which the transport [French in the original] is (re)presented (sichdarstellit), what in metrics is called a caesura, the pure word, the counter-rhythmic interruption, becomes necessary to counteract, at its acme, the turbulent succession of representations, in such a way that it is not now the succession of representations that appears but representation itself. (Hölderlin; in Lacoue-Labarthe, 41)

The 'cut' disturbs the equilibrium of the succession of representations by its showing of (in representation) that which is outside representation. It is the very mode of an an-archic revelation, opening us up to the exergue whose promise and power (the infinity of generations) guarantees the equilibrium of representation, of the representations we will use to reconstruct it. Now before we are put (or frightened) off by this word representation, whose strata (political, semiotic, ontological) are indeed profound, we would do well to reflect that its meaning is, in nuce, very simple: representation is the one for the other, or better, and more particularly: I am for the other, for my bodily vulnerability is the model of all signs. We can think of this model in several senses; in
the biblical sense of absolute asymmetry in which Moses declares before God 'Here am I' (Exodus 3: 4), expressing by and in his response an exposure, his having heard, and thus his responsibility, prior to his existing as a subjectum;⁹⁴ or in the quotidian sense of the fact that one must listen - "what is familiar must be learned as well as what is foreign" (Hölderlin; in Pfau, 29) - in order to respond, as, for example, in our usual reply to the question 'Do you mind if I ask you a favour?': 'Not at all. What can I do for you?' Here in this saying I offer up my self to the other before I know what it is he would ask of me. Saying, the very giving of signs⁹⁵ before there is a said over which we could negotiate, is a bodily openness and vulnerability of what in me is inalienable. That is, of precisely the essence that violence aims at and, in striking that essence as its target, in which it becomes intolerable:

...she opened up her dress front and lifted her breast and pointed under it. Right on her rib was a circle and a cross burnt right in the skin. She said 'This is your ma'am. This.' and she pointed. (61)

The cut throws open a portal not to something we can enter or possess - it is not ours, it does not 'be-long' (there is no increase or yearning in the infinite): only we can do that - but rather to something asymmetrical that already embraces and accuses us, and which in receiving, like a rhythm 'there for you to pick up when you come back for it.' we accept 'the thought of non-power.' This 'it' is something interior and exterior, something more in the less, the infinite fecundity of the giving of time in which the work appears that need not belong to the past and whose import is entirely open to question. Recall that as the chorus of women sets out for 124 the afternoon of the exorcism, and keeping in mind that this journey is intercut with that of Bodwin, the "'bleached nigger'" (260), coming down the road from the other direction towards his family's maternal home, "[t]hey had no idea what they would do once they got there" (257); what they find is the mirror of their past in the present: "the first thing they saw was not Denver sitting on the steps, but themselves. Younger, stronger, even as little girls..." (258). Yet even before they understand what it is that faces them they begin to respond: "A woman dropped to her knees. Half of the others did likewise. Denver saw lowered heads, but could not hear the lead prayer - only the earnest syllables of agreement that backed it; Yes, yes, yes, oh yes..."

...and then Ella hollered.

Instantly the kneelers and the standers joined her. They stopped praying and took a step back to the beginning. In the beginning there were no words. In
the beginning was the sound, and they all knew what that sound sounded like.
(258-259)

What is sounded here is pure assignment, without content. The howl of a more than mortal wounding, signifying a nearness without presence, it is a disturbance of the given by the giving that guarantees the equilibrium of all givens. Without precedent and outside the economy of exchange, it is full-bodied availability for the other as sign, what Benjamin has called *Trauergefühl*, "mourning as feeling," the "ghostly and terrible" - and enigmatic96 - "contrast between sound and signification" (in Buci-Glucksmann, 70).

For Sethe it was as though the Clearing had come to her with all its heat and simmering leaves, where the voices of women searched for the right combination, the key, the code, the sound that broke the back of words. Building voice upon voice until they found it, and when they did it was a wave of sound wide enough to sound deep water and knock the pods off chestnut trees. It broke over Sethe and she trembled like the baptized in its wash. (261)

If the 'cut' is the counter-rhythmic interruption, the pure sound of the giving of sound in which representation itself presents itself, then what is also signaled is a return of communality, the return to the point where the cycle of the *dikenga* was broken and the advent of a new cycle which need not be *da capo*. Sichère has written perspicaciously that

In the language of tragedy, *atè* designates a point of horror and ravage which, should it be crossed, renders humanity, discourse, and health, impossible. It is around this terrible point (*deinos*) that the tragic demonstrations turns, both in the order of the visible (with its complex machinations) and in the order of speech. In the order of the visible it concerns a point of excess located behind and beyond everything that can be shown...But that which cannot be seen, we understand: the accusation [*plainte*] silences the agon and this interminable howl [*plainte*] is itself the voice of tragedy, the heart of suffering and misfortune in so far as it gives voice. (45; translation mine)

In the silent sustain following the interminable howl of accusation an instruction can find in time renewed its place. Forgiveness may be possible but cannot be pronounced as that is the right of the other. The iron lance of *atè* having aimed at my heart, what befalls me in excess and no other is the tragic plaint of repentance. Remembering will seem unwise - how can I remember the suffering of another? - and although she has claim she will not be claimed, for the story is not ours to pass on. But neither can we take back our pledge, our giving, because the order of 'the-world-our-lives' depends on us: "there can be no dispensation from the response that I am *passively* held to."97 What has been given us is
to witness, which is wisdom; neither noun nor verb but gerund: the knowing. Exposed and inoculated, it is planted in the eye like a bud. We cannot see it, it is our passion: this is not a story to pass on.
Chapter Three Notes:

1: Beloved, 84. All subsequent references to this work are given in the text.
2: "From one point of view, art brings to fruition that which nature is unable to achieve, from the other, it imitates [mimeitai]." Aristotle, Physics: 199a, 16-18. Quoted in Beaufret (8); English translation mine.
3: Ferguson (paraphrasing an oral presentation by Morrison) (110).
4: Thompson (1993, 49). Thompson reproduces several variations of these dikenga, as well as masks, statues, and altar drawings that incorporate them. The earliest example is a Kongo chief's hat, collected in 1674 (Ethnografiska Museum, Copenhagen) emblazoned with a dikenga of four interlocking diamonds. See plate 20, p. 50. Mudimbe reproduces a Tshokwe mask from Zaire (undated), "symbolizing the primordial mythic mother," and emblazoned with a dikenga variant, a diamond with four small circles at each of the corners, on its forehead. See the plate on page 173.
5: Cf. Gould, passim.
6: In an early article Thompson speaks of an "Afrikanische Aufheben," by which Afro-Hegelian syncretism he seeks to finger how "in some African styles art and music forms are enlivened by off-beat phrasing of the accents" (1974, 10). This notion of a third pulse has also been used by Morrison in other works, for example in Sula, where Sula ruminates as she makes love to Ajax: "I will water your soil, keep it rich and moist. But how much? How much water to keep the loam moist? And how much loam will I need to keep my water still? And when do the two make mud?" (131).
7: Gillon, Early New England Gravestone Rubbings. I thank Mischa Biletsky of Knopf Design, New York, for locating this source. Beloved's title page reproduction is from plate 32, the others from plate 3 of Gillon's book.
8: See Gillon's introduction.
9: This moment of baptism is also doubled. In the memory spell that comes over Sethe after she relates the incident of her mother's mark, she realizes that she did not, in fact, verify the mark on her dead mother's body, as she thinks she did, because Nan, someone she forgot she had forgotten and someone who was perhaps more of a mother to her than her own mother, pulled her away. When this memory spell 'breaks,' "[a] mighty wish for Baby Suggs broke over her like surf" (62).
10: The suggestive possibility that Paul D can, at this particular moment, see no reflection, also is apposite. For at this point Paul D, captured in attempted escape, has been chained and collared. The 'mercifully' punched out eyes - offering him no reflection of his sorry state - could be an objective correlative of his shame, an experience which he still sorely rues years later.
11: On page 95 of Beloved we are told "Sethe had had twenty-eight days - the travel of one whole moon - of unslaved life." Yet, on page 135 we learn that the day of the party (the day before the arrival of Schoolteacher and the posse) is the twentieth day since Sethe's arrival at 124. Hence, the interval amounts to seven days. Interestingly, the designation of twenty-eight days of freedom is never contradicted, and only offset by the reiterated designator of the eighteen years since those events, suggesting that Sethe has been in limbo and not known freedom since? The narrator, through Denver's consciousness, reiterates the appellation "miracle" in relation to Denver's birth (29).
12: There is some cause to believe that the successful transit of the Ohio river to freedom, puts the light back in Sethe's eyes. But the brightness has a subtle, darker accent, in the manner of Gillon's gravestone rubbings. When asked by Howard and Buglar when Halle was coming, "She said 'soon' and smiled so they would think the brightness in her eyes was love alone" (95).

13: In 'Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation,' Morrison speaks of ancestors in her work as "sort of timeless people whose relationships to the characters are benevolent, instructive, and protective, and they provide a certain kind of wisdom...You know there are a lot of people who talk about the position that men hold as of primary importance, but actually it is if we don't keep in touch with the ancestor that we are, in fact, lost. The point of the books is that it is our job. When you kill the ancestor you kill yourself" (1984b, 343-344).

14: This adage is immediately followed by the reflection: "A truth for all times, thought Denver" (35).

15: This version of the crossing is told by Denver, and thus this particular interpellation in the story may be her own embellishment, reflecting, perhaps, her own sense of being dead to the world (?), or the product of a miraculous birth (?).

16: I have borrowed this 'miraculous' notion of time from John Llewelyn's interpretation of Levinas' Totality and Infinity. Cf. his chapter 'Generations' in Emmanuel Levinas: The Genealogy of Ethics. In Beloved the narrator, through Denver's interior monologue, refers to "the miraculous resurrection of Beloved" (105). Cf., also, Morrison's remark in Tate: "In a sense we all produce time" (120).

17: Levinas employs these seemingly biological categories to point towards phenomenological states not limited to biology. And whereas paternity reflects on the self's new relation to time, maternity is "carrying par excellence, the carrying of responsibility, vulnerability and suffering that is pre-natal not just in the biological sense, but in the philosophical sense in which the ethical is prior to the natural, to phusis, to being" (Llewelyn, 146). Hence, Sethe embodies both the notions of paternity and maternity.

18: "The slave must not do this and must not do that, but some things he must do over and over again; and the simpler and more limited these are, the more likely the master is to require them of him" (Canetti, 445).

19: Amy's calling is itself an echo of Sethe's own words, which I have already cited, in the first telling of the story of Denver's birth: "'Come see,' I was thinking. 'Be the last thing you behold,' and sure enough here come the feet so I thought well that's where I'll have to start God do what He would, I'm gonna eat his feet off" (31; emphasis added). In addition Amy's question passes on into Sethe's own thoughts: "Good question, she [Sethe] was thinking. What did He have in mind?" (80).

20: There are several opportunities for the pain to be mentioned, including Sethe's giving birth in the boat on her back, Ella's putting shoes on Sethe's swollen feet (shoes whose heels she has first to split in order to get them on), and Baby Suggs' washing of Sethe when she arrives at Sweet Home. Although Baby Suggs gasps at the sight of Sethe's back, there is no mention of the pain, and, with respect to her feet, Sethe's answer to "You feel this?" is "Feel what?" (93).
21: Denver's birth day and birth place are relatively firmly fixed by the narration: the south bank of the Ohio River 28 days prior to Beloved's murder, which would make it mid August 1855. Both the specificity and the opacity of this time-space can be seen as a function of the specificity-opacity of the historical time-space: for, where and when can we locate the geographical and historical boundary between slavery and emancipation, if lynchings continued in both the south and the north after 1865? The lingering opacity of the event, where on the bank of the Ohio? what day of the week/month?, can be assumed under the 'global' thematic of the novel - that slavery lingers, and endures, in memory.

22: "I can want to murder or kill only a being with a face that expresses itself phenomenally, that is to say, in the physical countenance, while at the same time escapes my power through resisting it not with a force but by the first and original expression of the face commanding 'Thou shalt not kill'" (Llewelyn, 102).

23: I am thinking here both of Stamp's story of how he took his name, and of his explanation of how the violent 'jungle' came to be implanted in the blacks.

24: Levinas (1979), 283.

25: In 'White Mythology' Derrida has profitably employed the notion of the exergue. The English translator of this essay notes: "Exergue derives from the Greek ex-ergon, literally, 'outside the work.' In French or English it has a specifically numismatic sense, referring to the space on a coin or medal reserved for an inscription" (footnote, 209).

26: Epigraph to Skvorecký's Dvorak in Love, no page.

27: Cohen (34). Compare the following analyses of Lamentations and Lamentations Rabbah: "Lamentation, taken generically...can be understood as a record of man's struggle to speak in the face of God's silence...to express the horror and contain its effects, to understand his sin and disavow it, to turn to God for relief and redress...this comfort remains self-fabricated and self-administered, and as such, limited in strength and duration. Consolation, on the other hand, is what is given from the outside" (Mintz, 16).

28: I say quasi-utopic because according to Sethé's later report Beloved is buried in a "box" (183).

29: Levinas (1986, 351) borrows this phrase from the scene in Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment where Raskolnikov confesses to Sonya: "She was plainly very deeply moved, and longing to speak, to plead, to find expression for something. An almost insatiable compassion, if one can use the expression, was depicted in every feature of her face."

30: Among Joshua's many exploits is his famous curse over the fallen walls of Jericho: "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jerico: he shall
lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." (Joshua 6:26)

Vashti, refusing to appear before her husband Ahasuerus (Xerxes) to gratify his pleasure because she was feasting with her handmaiden,s, is banished from the kingdom and is never heard of again (Esther 1). Ahasuerus, under the counsel of Haman, entertains the idea of massacring all the Jews in his kingdom of 127 provinces, but is later persuaded by Mordecai, a Jew, to hang Haman for his pride on the very gallows that Haman had constructed for Mordecai's death.

32: Canetti devotes a section of Crowds and Power to the 'The Command' (351-386). "Every command consists of momentum and sting. The momentum forces the recipient to act...the sting remains behind in him" (354). Earlier he had suggested that people "can free themselves from the sting in two different ways. They can pass on to others the orders which they have received from above...Or they can try to pay back to their superiors themselves what they have suffered and stored up from them" (67).

33: Michel Harr makes this point in his analysis of Levinasian ethics, 'L'obsession de l'autre: L'éthique comme traumatisme.'

34: Satan appears to strike the nail on the head when he exclaims "Does Job fear God for nought?" (Job 1:9)

35: The narrator later intimates that Stamp "believed his berries (which sparked the feast and the wood chopping that followed) were the reason Denver was still alive. Had he not been there, chopping firewood, Sethe would have spread her baby brains on the planking" (170).

In 'Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation' Morrison writes of seeking in her fiction to "blend the acceptance of the supernatural and a profound rootedness in the real world at the same time with neither taking precedence over the other. It is indicative of the cosmology, the way in which Black people looked at the world. We are very practical people, very down-to-earth, even shrewd people. But within that practicality we also accepted what I suppose could be called superstition and magic, which is another way of knowing things. But to blend those two worlds together at the same time was enhancing, not limiting. And some of those things were 'discredited knowledge' that Black people had: discredited only because Black people were discredited therefore what they knew was 'discredited.' And also because the press toward upward social mobility would mean to get as far away from that kind of knowledge as possible. That kind of knowledge has a very strong place in my work." (1984b, 342).

36: Morrison (1994, 10).

37: We are never told how Schoolteacher finds out where Sethe has taken refuge. The chronology of Baby Suggs' letters is somewhat cloudy. She is bought out in 1849 or 1850 and spends two years writing before she gives up. What she does learn is that "Halle got married and had a baby coming," which would date the letter(s) sometime in the period 1850-52 (147). How long this is before Schoolteacher takes over Sweet Home is also unclear. It seems perfectly within his character, however, to have saved any letters that happened to be lying around the household desk. Sethe flees in 1855, so the letter(s) would have to have been kept for anywhere from three to five years.

38: Morrison wrote her M.A. thesis at Cornell on the work of Faulkner.
39: Some would take issue with the adjective 'understandable.' In a recent article on Albert Murray, Henry Louis Gates Jr. quotes Murray's response, in *The Omni-Americans*, to the "black nationalists[...]'militant invective" against the "house Negro": "The house slave seems to have brought infinitely more tactical information from the big house to the cabins than any information about subversive plans he ever took back" (1996, 72).

40: Or does she? As her 'last words' do they signal precisely her recognition that the time to 'stop' has come? On the other hand, this judgement of hers is repeated several times at different points in the narrative so her bile does seem to the reader to be excessive. One wonders to what extent this rancor is complicit with, or compensated by, the 'color obsession' she indulges in during her final years. To be just we should note, as Morrison herself remarks of her own characters, that "all [her] errors or wickedness came out of compassion or some human feeling" (in Koenen, 207); "Under the guise of change and love you destroy all sorts of things; each other, children...It's all done under the guise of civilization to improve things. The impulse of this kind of change is not hatred; it is doing good works" (in Tate, 123).

41: There is some question as to whether this name is merely a legal formalism, for Baby Suggs' reply to Garner's question. "Didn't [Whitlow] call you Jenny?" is "No, sir. If he did I didn't hear it" (142).

42: Stamp Paid also falls within this dynamic. Recall his role in the rift that develops between Sethe and Paul D, after he passed on the information contained in the newspaper clipping about Beloved's murder to Paul D. Later he realizes that '[h]e'd gone behind [Sethe's] back, like a sneak. But sneaking was his job - his life; though always for a clear and holy purpose. Before the War all he did was sneak: runaways into hidden places, secret information to public places" (169).

43: Yet it might also be seen as falling within the compass of the *dikenga* at a greater level of the turning. This would be to view the transgression as a necessary stage on the road towards Sethe's becoming an ancestor.

44: Sethe's blind eyes may also be doubled by those of Beloved upon her arrival at 124: "...deep down in those big black eyes there was no expression at all." (55)

45: We should not forget that although Sethe "[c]an recognize...seventy-five printed words," she is functionally, if not technically, illiterate (161). One might trace the additional association of milk, nurturing, and orality through Lady Macbeth's 'the milk of human kindness.'

46: Rebecca Ferguson makes this point about the memory-food nexus in passing (121). Michel de Certeau remarks that "among the Merina of Madagascar, the *tetiarana* (former genealogical lists), then the *tantara* (past history) form a 'legacy of ears' (*lovantsofina*) or a 'memory by mouth' (*tadidivava*): far from being an 'ob-ject' thrown behind so that an autonomous present will be possible, the past is a treasure placed in the *midst* of the society that is its memorial, a food intended to be chewed and memorized. History is the 'privilege' (*tantara*) that must be remembered so that one shall not oneself be forgotten" (1988, 4).

47: Ferguson (paraphrasing an oral presentation by Morrison) (110).

48: Vickers' example of polyptoton, from his *In Defence of Rhetoric* (497), "repeating a word in a different form," is taken from Sonnet 146: "So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men. / And Death once dead, there's no more dying then."
49: This is not to deny the material reality of Beloved, which cannot be doubted: she grows pregnant with Paul D's child. Morrison stresses this 'reality' in the Darling interview: "And the purpose of making her real is making history possible, making memory real - somebody walks in the door and sits down at the table so you have to think about it, whatever they may be" (6). However, it is also true to say that the 'reality' she articulates is entirely contingent upon Sethe's having forsaken 'the other one: the soul of her baby girl.' In this she may be akin to Lacan's 
\textit{tuché}, "a tile falling on to the head of a passer-by, a person from Porlock bringing a creative trance prematurely to its end, or, to take one of Lacan's own examples, a knock of the door that interrupts a dream" (Bowie, 103). Such manifestations are conceived, functionally, as events impressing on the subject the Real, that which lies beyond our networks of signification.

It is also worth noting in this context Morrison's fondness for clichés: "My stories come to me as clichés. A cliché is a cliché because it's worthwhile...A good cliché can never be overwritten; its still mysterious" (in Tate, 120-121).

50: The fourth of these actually reads: "Making their way over hard snow, they stumbled and had to hold on tight, but nobody saw them fall" (175). This past perfect seems to complete the descent, and emphasize that it is not merely a question of an accident; for it seems that in this sentence they do not in fact stumble and fall, but merely 'fall.'

51: The image of the prayers going out in front of themselves is from Levinas, \textit{Otherwise than Being}, cited by Llewelyn (131). For Levinas this 'proto-gratitude' is evidence of the priority of the other to any notion of system, exchange, or reciprocity. Here, in Beloved, they are a corruption of this idea, to the extent that Beloved is but the shadow of an other, and in the sense that Sethe's invocations serve to cut her off from the world (of others).

52: In the Tate interview Morrison reflects on the lessons of 'writer's block' saying: "I tell my students there is such a thing as 'writer's block,' and they should respect it. You shouldn't write through it. It's blocked because it ought to be blocked. because you haven't got it right now" (120; emphasis added). My sense is that Sethe's facsimile 'escape' should be treated with a similar respect, as something 'necessary.'

53: This is Diderot's definition from the \textit{Encyclopédie}, quoted in Zeldin (102).

54: In his characterization of Greek tragedy Lattimore describes the Eumenides, in their insistence on the restitution of the law of the mother, as standing for "the dark barbarous childhood of the race and the world" (30). (Athene: "...do not inflict / your bloody stimulus to twist the inward hearts of young men...that spirit of war / that turns their battle fury inward on themselves" \textit{Eumenides}, 858-863.) According to Lattimore, from the point of view of Athene they would affect an inversion in the "grand parable of progress" (31): "Time / in his forward flood shall ever grow more dignified" (852-853). It is on this narrative of dignified progress, indeed on its very possibility, that the tribunal is asked to render judgement.

55: R. D. Laing has spoken, in \textit{The Politics of the Family}, of one's identity preceding one in the world. By this he means that one's parents and grandparents talk about you before you are born, consider possible names (kins) for you, ('if it's a boy let's call him...'), what kind of person you will be ('will she take after aunt May?'), what you will look like, and, particularly after you are born, assign (both verbally and in their behaviour) attributes to you. It is in this sense that one's identity is woven of many strands, some of which, like a hammock, cradle one's earliest experiences.
56: Morrison remarks that Margaret Garner, the historical model for Sethe, "wasn't tried for killing her child. She was tried for a real crime, which was running away" (in Darling, 6).

57: I thank Ted Chamberlin for this insight.

58: In Elkins: Thoreau quote (151); 'Intellectuals without Responsibility,' sub-chapter heading (147); Emerson quote (154). In counterpoint Elkins quotes Louisa May Alcott as defining 'philosopher' (her father was a noted Transcendentalist light) as "a man up in a balloon...[whose] family and friends [hold] the ropes which confine him to earth and [try] to haul him down" (footnote, 155).

59: Elkins quotes from an abolitionist communique, 'Particular instructions to T. D. Weld upon his commission as Agent for the year 1834' to this effect: "Do not allow yourself to drawn away from the main object, to exhibit a detailed PLAN of abolition; for men's consciences will be greatly relieved from the feeling of present duty, by any objections or difficulties which they can find or fancy in your plan." (footnote, 182)

60: Morrison (1987, especially 103-107).

61: The possible exception to this, is clearly the work of the photographer Mathew Brady. The irony, however, is that Brady's (or anyone else's) photography was not considered 'art' until roughly a hundred years later. The additional irony is that Crane's realism was not based on any battlefield experience.

62: Mitchell makes this point (189). Frederick Douglass' Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself (1845) "sold five thousand copies in four months; by 1847 it had sold eleven thousand copies" (Morrison 1987, 107). Douglass' second autobiography, My Bondage, My Freedom (written after emancipation), is still today virtually unknown, while his pre-emancipation Narrative is widely available in inexpensive paperback editions.

63: Ferguson (121).

64: In Morrison's analysis of the racial discourse of (white) American fiction, she comes to a similar conclusion on the import of unanimity: "If we follow through on the self-reflexive nature of these encounters with Africanism, it falls clear: images of blackness can be evil and protective, rebellious and forgiving, fearful and desirable - all the self-contradictory features of the self. Whiteness, alone, is mute, meaningless, unfathomable, pointless, frozen, veiled, curtained, dreaded, senseless, implacable. Or so our writers seem to say" (1993, 59).

65: Here the novel opens up to us the question of whether its relation between history and fiction can best be characterized as one of referential slippage or as one of a Venn diagram.

66: In an important definition early in Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination, Morrison writes: "I use ['Africanism'/'Africanist'] as a term for the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify, as well as the entire range of views, assumptions, readings, and misreadings that accompany Eurocentric learning about these people. As a trope, little restraint has been attached to its uses" (1993, 6-7).

67: In the preface to this work Morrison surveys the adit to the mine she seeks to plumb: 'When does racial 'unconsciousness' or awareness of race enrich interpretive language, and when does it impoverish it? What does positing one's writerly self, in the wholly
racialized society that is the United States, as unraced and all others as raced entail? What happens to the writerly imagination of a black author who is at some level always conscious of representing one’s own race to, or in spite of, a race of readers that understands itself to be ‘universal’ or race-free? In other words, how is ‘literary whiteness’ and ‘literary blackness’ made, and what is the consequence of that construction?” (1993, xii).

68: The co-temporality of the historical fictions of Walter Scott and the ‘invention’ of the Scottish family tartan tradition by an enterprising 18th century English textile merchant, is a fine example of this binomial ‘search’ for traditions. See Toulmin (12) for mention of the tartan question.


70: Bernard Bailyn, quoted in Morrison (1993, 42).


72: Joyce (15-16).

73: This, in essence, is Elkins chronological point of origin: "Such was the first legal step whereby a black skin would itself ultimately be equatable with slave" (40).

74: Borges already points this out in his essay from the 1950s, ‘The Modesty of History,’ from which I quoted earlier: "I have long suspected that history, true history, is far more modest [than popular journalistic history would allow], and that its essential dates may well be, for a long time, secret..." (179). Borges goes on to relate how the 13th century Icelandic historian, Snorri Sturlason, recorded the reply of Harold the II, Saxon king of England, to the Norwegian suit for capitulation on the eve of the defeat of the invading Norwegian army: "There is only one thing more admirable than the admirable reply of the Saxon king: the fact that it was an Icelander, a man of the blood of the defeated, who perpetrated it...It was not so much the day on which the Saxon spoke his words, but rather the day on which an enemy perpetrated them that constitutes a historic date” (182).

75: Morrison (1989, 15). She ‘dates’ this, through the scholarship of Michael Paul Rogen’s Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville (University of California Press, 1985), to the spring of 1851 when Melville was finishing Moby Dick, and Melville’s father-in-law, a Judge Shaw, handed down the decision that made the Fugitive Slave Bill law.

76: In addition, this form of address carries the communal connotations of the Old English Prayer Book wedding ceremony: "Dearly Beloved we are gathered her together in the sight of God..." Cited in Appiah (119).

77: Buci-Glucksmann (68-69; 71). The reference is to Heidegger’s ‘The Age of the World Picture,’ passim.

It is worth recalling that other historical traditions, both in Africa and the Americas, do raise to representation such ungovernable forces.

78: The ironic prophecy of Azurara’s words recalls Benjamin’s pointed use of a citation from the notebooks of Da Vinci: "Bomber planes make us remember what Leonardo Da Vinci expected of the flight of man; he was to have raised himself into the air ‘In order to look for snow on the mountain summits, and then return to scatter it over city streets shimmering with the heat of summer.” Quoted in Buck-Morss (245).
79: Morrison raises this issue of historical responsibility as a motivating factor in the writing of Beloved: "The gap between Africa and Afro-America and the gap between the living and the dead and the gap between the past and the present does not exist. It's bridged for us by our assuming responsibility for people no one's ever assumed responsibility for. They are those that died en route. Nobody knows their names, and nobody thinks about them. In addition to that, they never survived in the lore; there are no songs or dances or tales of these people. The people who arrived - there is lore about them. But nothing survives about...that" (in Darling, 5; ellipsis in the original).

80: Chernoff at one point isolates a West African drummer and asks him to aid Chernoff in transcribing the rhythm that he plays. The informant attempts to do this and then throws up his hands replying, that he can neither 'think' the rhythm, nor play it, without the complementary other. This anecdote is used to demonstrate the conclusion Chernoff has drawn from his analysis, that "one rhythm defines another" (52).

81: Morrison notes that the arguments against the "incursion" of black literature into the American canon "have marched in a predictable sequence: 1) there is no Afro-American (or third world) art. 2) it exists but it's inferior. 3) it exists and is superior when it measures up to the 'universal' criteria of Western art. 4) it is not so much 'art' as ore - rich ore - that requires a Western or Eurocentric smith to refine it from its 'natural' state into an aesthetically complex form" (1989, 6).

82: "Under those theatrical circumstances of slavery, if you made that claim, an unheard-of claim, which is that you are the mother of these children - that's an outrageous claim for a slave woman...Therefore when she is away from her husband she merges into that role, and it's unleashed and it's fierce. She almost steps over into what she was terrified of being regarded as, which is an animal. It's an excess of maternal feeling, a total surrender to that commitment, and, you know, such excesses are not good. She has stepped across the line, so to speak" (Morrison: in Darling, 6).

83: This lost knowledge is a recurring theme in Morrison's work. "No it was not language; it was what there was before language...when men and animals did talk to one another..." (Song of Solomon, quoted in Thompson 1993, 33).

84: See Elizabeth House's article for a noble attempt to view Beloved as a newly arrived slave, whose fractured narrative recounts her traumatic journey with her mother on a slave ship from Africa to America.

85: There is some suggestion that she may be named Ardélia, but it is admittedly slight. Baby Suggs, ruminating on her lost children asks, "Does Ardélia still love the burned bottom of bread?" (139). This preference is also attributed to Beloved.

86: Is Sethe's crisis one of letting go of the (strong) conception of maternity and embracing one of paternity (in the Levinasian sense)? Paul D, mutatis mutandis, seems to do just that, for he begins to 'nurse' Sethe back health at the novel's end. This hypothesis would be complicated by the Sethe's 'betrothal' to Beloved and her symbolic murder at the climax of the 'groom-substitute' Bodwin.

87: This quotation is taken from the leader to Gates' New Yorker article on Albert Murray, the full text of which reads: "What does it mean to be black? In part, it means rejecting all exclusionary answers to the question, as Albert Murray, the great contrarian of American cultural criticism, has inspired generations of thinkers to do" (1996, 70).
88: Morrison defines the principles of Black art as: "antiphony, the group nature of art, its functionality, its improvisational nature, its relationship to audience performance, the critical voice which upholds traditional and communal values and which also provides occasion for an individual to transcend and/or defy group restrictions" (1984a, 388-389).

89: We can see this more conventionally in the ontological impatience of the *Naturswissenschaften* with the *Geisteswissenschaften*, with the subjective uncertainty and, as it were, infinite nature of the latter's constitution.

90: The expression "the love of wisdom the wisdom of love" is Llewelyn's (148); "Here above all is the situation in which one is not alone" (Levinas 1987, 58).

91: Cf. Llewelyn's list "An Alephbet of Tropes" (196-197).

92: Thomas Pfau translates this passage as: "Thereby, in the rhythmic sequence of the representations wherein transport presents itself, there becomes necessary *what in poetic meter is called cesura*, the pure word, the counter-rhythmic rupture; namely, in order to meet the onrushing change of representations at its highest point in such a manner that very soon there does not appear the change of representation but the representation itself" (Hölderlin 1988, 102).

93: Bob Gibbs, whose seminar 'Philosophical and Historical Witnessing' at OISE in March 1997 I attended, is the source of these remarks on the signifying body.

94: Levinas glosses Moses' response, *Me voici* in French, as the priority and precedence of the 'me' as accusative over the 'me' as reflexive of the 'I.' Cf. (1989, 184).

95: "Saying makes signs to the other, but in this sign signifies the very giving of signs. Saying opens one to the other before saying what is said, before the said uttered in this sincerity forms a screen between me and the other. This saying without a said is thus like silence. It is without words, but not with hands empty" (Levinas 1989, 183).

96: Enigma: *ainos*: fable; *fari*: to speak.

97: Levinas (1989, 188; footnote 18). This note follows the clause "here I am pledged to the other without being able to take back my pledge" (181).
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