

**Homo Perfidus:**

**An Antipathology**

by

**Sagi Cohen**

BA, The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 2006

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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Dr. Arthur Kroker, Department of Political Science

#### **Supervisor**

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## Abstract

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This thesis explores the notion of betrayal through a sustained examination of two politically abject types – ‘the corpse/body’ and ‘the dilettante’. By expounding on what is here termed an ‘antipathology’, it performs a phenomenology of these types, not so much enclosing them as totalities, or consistent concepts/essences, as taking them in their discursive import, “at their word”. The argument unfolds via readings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Emmanuel Lévinas – both serving as each other’s readers and interpreters – taken to share the project of critiquing morality in the name of what I term, after Lévinas, ‘ethics’. This *antipathology* of treason aims at evoking the mechanisms of political ‘abjection’ – a concept borrowed from Julia Kristeva – employed in the traitor’s expulsion from the political. It will thus probe into the ethical implications of this expulsion, insofar as it is taken here to be inscribed deep within prevalent ethico-political discourses, part-and-parcel of their sustaining inertia.

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*sed quia in altum subvenimur et extollimur magnitudine gigantean*

## Prolegomenon

Growing up, I found it very safe to identify with systems. As fate would have it, both my parents were teachers, and so school for me was always somewhere I felt at home. A “teacher’s pet”, of sorts, I understood the system and it understood me, stood under me, grounded me. With the system I felt indestructible. And I was.

Living in Israel, however, the school system did not deliver me directly to university, or, what they call in Israel, ‘civilian life’. There was – and still is – a 3-year mandatory military service I had to go through. I sincerely did not worry about it – I was sure that I could handle any system. I never expected to end up in military prison; but I did anyway.

Trying to present my case in front of the army judge (a senior officer, that is), I remember experiencing what is called a ‘cognitive dissonance’: I could not fathom how this person, this system, could reject *me*, put ‘me’ in prison; *misplace* me. I remember telling this officer precisely this – which probably did not help “my case” – that he could not put *me* in prison because “I’m not a prison-*person*”. I can still remember the look he gave me; I was obviously speaking utter nonsense.

The inevitable question now was: How could this have happened? I presented my case but it seemed like I was not making any impression. Why? Later I learned that my commanding officer had made sure – with that senior officer, prior to the trial – that I’d be found guilty. This was a system that I could neither function in nor identify with. A lot of my thought since had been informed by questioning how this could have possibly come to pass.

Prison, therefore, marked a transformative time in my life/thought, a true ‘crisis of identity’. I had there with me my brother’s ‘*Ring of Power*’, a book by Jean Shinoda-Bolen. I read there her beautiful analysis of Wagner’s opera ‘*The Ring of the Niebelungs*’. It proved to be the right book at the right time for me. The story portrays the Norse chief-God Wotan, with his system of *law*, and what happens when this system encounters its own contradictions and disavowals. The way in which Wotan handles these problems seemed all too familiar, all too similar to how I saw such problems dealt with in the military. There was a kind of violence, I noticed, which based itself on a certain disavowal. And when trying to confront this violence with its disavowals (like I, naively, did) one came up against that old saying that ‘the cannon is the king’s ultimate argument’. I had only contracted more violence.

This is then also a personal journey for me, almost inseparable from the ‘theoretical’ one. I am inscribed in it; thoroughly *implicated* in it. Growing up in Israel there was a saying among right-wing people to designate the left; they called them, quite simply, traitors; ‘those who stab the nation in the back’. In the spirit of Nietzschean affirmation, I assume that these ‘right-wing’ advocates were right, and I embrace the name they’ve suggested, the title, as ‘the truth’; I only wish to probe deeper into the ethical underpinnings of this truth. Betraying ‘the nation’ might show itself as allowing what Lévinas had termed ‘the face-to-face encounter with the Other’, disturbing the protective, sanitizing screen of ‘nationality’ from obstructing that other’s face; or, at the very least, exposing the price this screen demands we pay in violence. It is thus also, and maybe mainly, a personal wound that I am trying to work-through here – violence is never, ever, one-sided.

## Dedication

In 2004, my first university year in Israel, I met a person (well, a punk really), who is since then becoming my best friend. I know my thought owes him an impossible self.

It was he who had first suggested the figure of the traitor to me. I still recall my initial scoff: 'the traitor is the ultimate evil'. He asked me *why*. I remember turning to find my usual, trusty reasons - - but they weren't there. Had they betrayed me? I now realize that, in a deep sense, it was my friendship with this punk that made them untenable (hence, in a way, I had betrayed them first).

I've been asking this question ever since, tracking my scorned reasons, probing this curious aporia; some of my queries and inquiries are presented here, in a way. This question, and the movements I apply exploring it, not only forced me to account for so many unchecked assumptions I've had (about 'myself' and 'the world'), but also reverberated its depths with and through the depths of our friendship.

Alive in betrayal: the most banal indication of this – and it is only the banal that can be stated in this expository form – is that it is me taking credit for his idea, and, in a way, making 'my name', here, at his expense, there. But with him I learned what the horror and promise of betrayal could be: dissimulating, taking, giving (and giving-up), running-away; neither heroic, nor complete, always already leaving something (to be desired).

Betrayal is always impending, residing in a necessary deferral, ticking towards its crisis in a foreign idiom, one that pulsates in an ethical register, beckoning thought itself. And it is still uncertain – as it's always been between us – who is betraying whom. In more ways than one, overflowing these words themselves, let this be my unfinished dedication to him.

## Preface

A friend of mine in the Hebrew University's Philosophy department, asked me – when I had only first started thinking of this notion of treason – why not make it a 'stranger'; she felt a 'traitor' is unwarranted and uselessly provocative. At the time I thought that 'provocative' could not ever be useless, and I still think that (perhaps this is what made her so much more suited for 'Philosophy' than I was). But beyond provocation, or in addition to it (for how could we ever go beyond provocation?), I now see that the important idea transmitted by the traitor is his unique relation to otherness.

The traitor is, properly speaking, not 'other' in the sense of 'different'; at least insofar as his approach signals a certain consciousness of 'he is different from me because..'. No, the traitor's approach must have a certain beguiling characteristic to it; it must have a certain lulling sense of security about it. The traitor approaches unbeknownst. And, to repeat the gesture Caillois made once, he approaches not unbeknownst *to* (someone), but **unbeknownst**. It is therein precisely that his threat lies, and also - the uniqueness of the traitor lies precisely here - where his ethics unfolds. The stranger, although an extremely useful concept for the traitor, which I make extensive use of in this thesis, is only a part of the story. The traitor is the one forever undeserving of my trust, the one forever deserving of my hate. Thus I sidestep the question of racism, or mere xenophobia: whatever my preconception of a certain racial/national category that obstructs my approach toward the other, the other's approach towards me - it would always mark the encounter with an ambivalence, a convolution of connotations that I always found too intricate to unravel. However, hatred - that was something I could base a 'phenomenology' on. In an almost scientific way - and possibly not even 'almost' - the

traitor delineates a movement that is extremely useful for what I here call ‘an antipathology’: he can travel the whole gamut of feelings, thoughts, judgments in a quantum leap once identified as a ‘traitor’ (and it does not matter where on this gamut he had been before – once ‘a traitor,’ he arrives at what I see to be a distinct form of hate).

This sort of convergence is the traitor's singularity. And I believe that looking into this short-circuit, or quantum leap toward hate in relation to the traitor, could tell us something profound about hate itself, about our own premises and disavowals of it, in it, about it. And, not least, our own abilities to leap such vast psychological/semantic/moral distances, letting us engage with this leap’s conditions of possibility – as it pertains to an inherently moral/political dimension.

But this is not the whole story. I never set out on such an admittedly ridiculous and impossible quest just in order to add to a ‘body of knowledge’ (whatever body it may be that would accept this thesis as ‘knowledge’), nor to simply justify an advanced university degree. The impetus behind this project is and has always been ethical. It is hence that I turn to Emmanuel Lévinas, the French-Jewish thinker, who tried to herald an ‘ethics as first philosophy’ over and against the ‘fundamental ontologies’ sprouting about him at the time of his writing and thought. My search – my research – toward this notion of treason, is thus an attempt to make ethics a *beginning* from which to explore, explain, but most of all *relate* to this phenomenon of treason. In accepting the Lévinasian approach – that my responsibility always addresses me from an irreducible otherness (not given to me through any “interiority;” I.e. ‘conscience’) – I am able to hold on to this phenomenon, and to question its moral status (and the ethical implications arising from it). It is an approach that allows me to keep going after logic had gestured its usual dismissal (in the

form of the 'self-contradiction' argument), after epistemology stumbled its usual "intentionality" path (an intention cannot turn on itself), and after morality had effected its usual violence (treason obviates trust and destroys the community). Indeed, it is only with Heidegger's ontology that this kind of inquiry becomes possible (as Lévinas would surely be the first to acknowledge). With the upsetting of the subject/object divide, thought had made a significant step toward ethics, in that the eternal altar upon which 'I' could find *my* conscious (and therefore also moral) justification - interiority, conscience, identity - had been thrown right out there with the rest of the world: objects, fellow-men, criminals... With this, the 'I' was indeed, as Lévinas formulated it, "put into question". No longer the basis of conscious experience, no longer a ground one only needed to cultivate in order to be immune to the ethical call, the 'I' becomes disseminated in the figure of what Lévinas called 'exteriority'. With exteriority, with the upsetting of the inside/outside distinction, it was finally possible to conceive of what Lévinas considered to be the condition of all ethical encounters: proximity.

It is precisely because of 'proximity' that the traitor is not a mere 'other', and not even wholly a stranger. The traitor presupposes (a) proximity. With a recognition of otherness, the 'I' could indeed - if one accepts the Hegelian gesture of dialectic negation - recapitulate, restate its 'self', and "with a vengeance". The other's proximity, *as other*, is eliminated in the *Aufhebung*, in a "new and improved" 'I', in an Identity well on its way towards the horizon of absolute knowledge. The traitor, however, does not allow this gesture; for how can 'I' assimilate a traitor? He therefore maintains this uneasy proximity, and it is my belief that it is this proximity which constitutes the main threat in the name of which he is automatically expelled/killed.

The automaticity of the traitor's expulsion, and the curiously asymmetrical punishment wielded against him (traditionally to be executed despite not necessarily taking any lives himself), are, I think, good places to start an ethical inquiry, since it seems to me to be a paradigmatic instance in which sense bypasses thought - and resulting in another person's death (here I find real kinship with Arendt's life-project). Also, the fact that the moral abjection of that 'crime' is so intense that it even obstructs the possibility of mourning traitors after their death, is yet again disturbing and calls for some close attention (here is also where psychoanalysis is indispensable to this research). I thought that this figure - that of ultimate abjection - would be the best place to start a phenomenology in the name of ethics, which is a project I feel as directly inspired by Lévinas' thought.

Kristeva says of 'the foreigner':

*“Figure de la haine et de l'autre, l'étranger n'est ni la victime romantique de notre paresse familiale, ni l'intrus responsable de tous les maux de la cité”*

“A figure of hatred and otherness, the stranger is neither the 'romantic victim' of our sluggish familiarities, nor the intruder responsible for all the ills of the city/polis”.

This curious space between the victim and the enemy demands an engagement that is essentially political. It requires that an other enter into our very midst, in a radical sense, into our very 'being' (but never to be consumed by it). Otherness by itself cannot give a sufficient account for the political, since it gets covered-over too quickly by its representations. For politics, it seems, otherness gets reduced to a certain 'property' or 'trait', and then becomes 'manageable'. I wanted to find figures of radical abjection, ones that will possess both an intransigence and mobility, an otherness that can *protest* the ills of representation.

The figures that I try and typify in my thesis, share the quality of being resistant to such reduction, and doing so in a non-violent manner (which is precisely what leads to their political abjection, I would claim). If the politics of pity envelops an-other with a binding representation that keeps me from responding to her otherness while maintaining my bad-faith of being morally justified, and if the politics of totalitarianism pierces all otherness in view of an apocalyptic vision of a homogenous Same, and if the politics of despotism makes the other into a hero/enemy (the exception) – here we have a type which resists all three State-mechanisms: it is a figure which is not a victim (“no sympathy for the devil”); is either too intransigent, too quick or too imperceptible to be pierced/adapted in the name of the Same; and will always oscillate the hero/enemy distinction in a way that does not allow any recuperation or solidification into one or the other. Perhaps *the* political animal, **Homo Perfidus** *enacts a political gesture* and is thus not a mere depiction or ‘theoretical concept’. My attempt was to create a Nietzschean hammer – not a mere concept but a force; it is a force whose power will flow *most freely* from the *ressentiment* of its enemies.

Throughout this thesis I enlist both Nietzsche’s and Lévinas’s writings, juxtaposing them, *ap*posing them, making them complement one another. The introduction, I hope, will justify by way of showing this undoubtedly dubious action. I would like here, just in a few brief passages, give an overall explanation as to why these two thinkers are so prominent here.

Why Lévinas? Because he did several crucial things for thinking about ethics:

First, the idea of '**responsibility**' – not *accountability* any longer, the 'response' already shifts the terrain away from what 'is' (already (re-)presented), and toward the affirmation of a relation with the other that's not-reducible to any kind of 'account' (which must be, as such, representational).

Second, and related to the above, is his insistence on the **asymmetry** between me and the Other. If *moral accountability* can authorize its own slumber in mainstream ethics – whether through a utilitarian approach (which presupposes 'good' and tries to *account* for it, and *through* it) or a transcendental-categorical approach (which constantly endeavours to represent the other 'most accurately' via its maxims) – Lévinas' insistence on the asymmetry between the 'I' and the Other as both an-archic and non-representable keeps disturbing this slumber, through a gesture which is, in itself, an obsessed, disturbed gesture.

So why Nietzsche? Because he also did several crucial things for thinking about ethics:

First, by **placing morality under a psychologically sophisticated critique**, he managed to convincingly breach a line that Western Philosophy always tried to redraw – that between 'Philosophy' and 'Psychology' (which is only an indication of the more radical line it tried to draw between philosophy and nonphilosophy). In that respect, I think, he was the first 'phenomenologist' concerned with questions of *value* (which I often refer to, in this work, as 'ethics')

Second, because his **ethics of amor fati and radical affirmation** are also powerful critical tools for any system of morality which employs necessary exclusions, or a violence toward the other.

Third, because he made **his style** into an essential organ in his ‘body of work’. Thus, he gave his *address* – which was already marked by its aforementioned ethical imperative – an aesthetic value, acknowledging an active dimension in language and communication which was irreducible to what was ‘being said’ alone.

Why both of them together? Because they bring out, in my reading, the best of each other:

First, because a Lévinasian approach helps show how many of Nietzsche’s statements which seem to make him out to be espousing a ‘might makes right’ ethic could be averted, even with the most vitriolic ones, and cohere – not merely with Lévinas’ philosophy but, most importantly – with Nietzsche’s own approach to thought (where they might otherwise seem irreconcilable).

Second, because a Nietzschean approach to Lévinas helps save Lévinas from being read as ‘a priest’ who preaches either constant supplication and flagellation, or indelible guilt and self-accusation, or perpetual remorse over some primordial ‘sin’ that we had no choice but to commit. He also helps show that Lévinas does not espouse any *conventional monotheistic* approach to ethics (any unity of a God in a realm that’s beyond us would thus quickly deteriorate into a ‘representation’, which Lévinas does not allow).

Third, because they both treated the problem of ‘will’. Moreover, they did so in a way that both bears directly on the realm of ethics – the realm constitutive of ‘values’ (Nietzsche); the space opened in my encounter with otherness (Lévinas) – and tried seriously to consider how the notion of the other/unknowable – or the anterior to my

conscious ‘will’ – radically changes the way we think about ethics and values, and even ontology.

A fourth and last reason to be submitted here is that I read them in tandem not as an intellectual exercise or an attempted originality; it is to me what Derrida would call a necessity. I see them as having the same basic project, and I see them constantly interpreted in a way that does not take that into account. Only very lately did their own encounter manage to emerge in the form of a collection of essays; but I feel there is still much to be done<sup>1</sup>.

Objections, digressions, gay mistrust, the delight in mockery are signs of health:  
everything unconditional belongs in pathology

*- Friedrich Nietzsche*

Treason is sequestered to another world, a world of pure evil; and since it is a sentiment I used to share, since it is a position I myself had betrayed (and continue to betray), I thought that a tracing of my steps, going back down into this inferno was (and is) called for (perhaps this time with another kind of eyes). I am being led in this journey by my own hatreds – not so much a detective as a spy; a cowardly figure arriving in order to reveal these depths, “tell on them”. This can only be done through the mode of betrayal (fighting hate is violent; ignoring it is irresponsible to its victims). This is what I would propose as a radical critique of violence. If we are to accept Lévinas’ call for ethics as a first philosophy, then the vicissitudes of violence – shown at their starkest in the case of treason – are a primordial site for any political thought, for thought in general.

If there is any method that I suppose myself to have used almost invariably in thinking through this project, it would most closely resemble ‘a phenomenology of hate’ (what I offer, here, to call ‘antipathology’). And, often, I was asked why ‘hate’; as it seems so negative, so dirty, so contaminating. One must hate in order to engage with hate; one must be already *implicated in it*. My answer is that I, of course, *am* already implicated in it; that this project is also a self-analytic project, a self-critique - - an attempt at ethics (which for my use of this word always presupposes something unnamed and idiomatic – ‘personal’). ‘Hate’, in this case, gives me consistency, and gives this project itself its consistency – thus I am linked to it. It gives every stranger – as Kristeva noticed – consistency *as* stranger. *Hate is the stranger’s idiom*. It is in this respect that the two types I offer here are to be seen as ‘categories’ – in their original sense as accusations, not as essences; or, more precisely, they imply that ‘essence’ is the direct result of an accusation, insofar as it is given to the light and demands of representation.

Should we not get rid of hate? Should we not explore our ways of eliminating it? I am not sure. As it is a form of relation to the other person – and an ‘authentic’ form at that (persisting, as it does, quite undisturbed by all niceties and decorum of ‘civilized-people’) – I would not be so quick to give it up. Perhaps a joke I know will help clarify this point:

A man who does not believe in God has a neighbour who, every chance he gets, screams upwards at God, cursing God for a crappy world, crappy performance standards, a duplicitous nature and corrupt ethic. The day comes when they both die and reach the gates of heaven. As they stand before God, God decides to let the malicious neighbour into Heaven whilst the unbeliever gets sent to Hell. Before the sentence is carried out, the shocked unbeliever turns to God and says: ‘Ok, so, I understand: I didn’t believe in you

and I didn't pray or give thanks – so I'm going to Hell. But my neighbour here was cursing you every single day of his conscious life. And *he* gets to go to Heaven?!'; God produces what might look like a tiny smile and replies: 'He, at least, acknowledged my existence!'

As Nietzsche was quick to realize, nihilism does not consist in hating the other, but in being indifferent. Even if we consider 'war' as a product of hate – which is highly debatable – I feel it is still fundamentally different than the genocides or the mass-killings that take place in the world. The vibration, the heat of hate, invariably acknowledges otherness; as Lévinas also states – violence is always violence toward the face. Hate is an affect which still allows us to acknowledge – somehow, by its very disturbance – the otherness of the other.

'The corpse' shows how the dead's betrayal is perhaps the most devastating, precisely since it leaves hate devoid of 'reason' – which will here be considered, for all intents and purposes, as a representational justification-system. Indifference is here taken as a non-relation where violence had been inscribed into the very structures of thought and language, thus obviating the most visible clues we had of its existence (aggression and hate). It thus denies us our responsibility – our response-ability – precisely because it becomes automatic, unconscious, happening 'behind my back'.

In so far as I consider this to be a Nietzschean endeavour, this 'revaluation of values' starts with language and its automatic structures themselves, especially insofar as they are life-denying, risk-evading, comfortable (when Nietzsche criticizes Christianity as the religion of pity, which, in the end, is precisely reducible to a religion of a deeper principle of comfort – it is this *coup d'état* of the other's suffering that he referred to). In the end,

having our affects regulated/automated (around a moral-principle) is a nihilistic way-of-being that continues ‘violence-by-other-means’ – to paraphrase Clausewitz. Once aware of this, once ‘reason’ is no longer ‘pure’ and *can* no longer be ‘pure’, a new kind of critique is called-for (a critique of pure treason, perhaps?). If language itself is implicated in violence, the usual, symmetrical argument-counterargument system is thoroughly undermined. A crisis in ‘theory’ is arrived-at, *achieved*; a crisis in “praxis” as well.

When Michel Serres reflected on Rousseau’s persecution-complex or paranoia, he understood something very deep, I think, about Rousseau’s thought: as himself a professional parasite, his idea of the general will had become a metaphor for the ‘social body’ itself, a body which he had used as host. But as a true parasite, Rousseau could not allow further parasitism in this body, which urges him to conceive of the general will as, categorically, free of parasites (a parasite is, after all, supposed to be a creature of “*pure self-interest*”). Of course, this completely ratifies Rousseau’s paranoia as well; Serres writes Rousseau’s condition thus: “I am alone and there are all of them. The local is minimized to the point of solitude, and the global is maximized toward the quantified universal. I see at last, in the shadows, the aforementioned general will. And the thing is atrocious.”<sup>2</sup>. Quite *consistently*, Rousseau became his own victim, as he had to conceive of the general public as a ‘pure host’. But it left him alone – as parasite – and, of course, persecuted by the ‘parasitized host’. Serres then goes on to articulate what I consider to be a fundamental *methodological* concern for this work “[t]he general will was an abstraction, but general animosity is concrete, lived, and suffered”<sup>3</sup>. The ‘concrete-thing’ that this strain of phenomenology – this “antipathology” – has to work with – provided that it not lend itself to any transcendentalism (which does not mean abolishing

*transcendence*) – is precisely this animosity, which is also *supplementing* – in the Derridian sense – the ‘general will’ *as* this ‘abstraction’. Antipathology tries to go into the midst of the ‘atrocious’, as it is this reality that is (always?) yet to be thought; it is this ‘atrociousness’ that we must respond to<sup>4</sup>. Not a ‘phenomenology’ per se, but the speech of hate, the ‘science’ of hate; but, also, the ‘anti-path’ of logos, what responds to logos by contrasting with it.

One important thing to stress about the figures/types of this thesis: they are not a-historical entities or Platonic-style ‘Ideas’/‘Forms’. They do have a history, they are a part of living discourses. The point of this project then might be described as a critical conversing with this history. I chose this mode of encounter because I have grown highly sceptical of any qualifying description/delineation that is to trace these types to their origins, to their influences, to their causes. Not only is this becoming increasingly impossible in an age where information is truly excessive in its sheer quantities, but that this approach would somehow lend credence to something that I could not afford to lend credence to – what Derrida termed the metaphysics of presence. Thus my attempt was not at establishing a place, but at facilitating the reader’s critical institution of this ‘place’. I thus converse with this history – thus this work is neither a-historical nor anti-historical – but through its implicit traces and effects, through its workings within moral discourse itself.

When Husserl made his memorable call ‘to the things themselves’, there was always a Kantian spirit on his shoulder to remind him that this cannot be achieved. How can a consciousness get at a thing-in-itself without presupposing *relation*, a handle? In this respect I always found the saying: “beauty is only skin deep; but ugliness gets right to the

bone” to be quite profound. The most concrete ‘things’ that I can imagine, those that are concrete because my very relation to them is the most *categorical/accusative*<sup>5</sup> – are the objects of my hate: they are never “in themselves”, and they are always highly discernible (their interruption is also the form relation that constitutes their ‘reality’, that goes “right to the bone”).

Lévinas kept insisting that his thought was always called by and recalling the WWII Holocaust – where violence and modernism divulged their unholy – yet ‘rational’ – union. Ethical and political thought, philosophical language, needed, ever since, a radical break (or a radical mending). Here I pursue precisely this radical form of political and ethical critique that might be able to engage with this new problematic. It might well be claimed – as many do – that it is not a new problematic at all; that it had been with us since Marx/Kant/Aristotle/Plato. To that I cannot but answer, similarly to Nietzsche, that this is, perhaps, my own ‘injustice’ – I believe that something fundamental had occurred with the Holocaust, and the aftermath of WWII in general (Hannah Arendt, for example, never stops reminding us we are living in a world where the threat of Nuclear annihilation denotes the condition in which the means have separated themselves from the ends and now possess their own, *automatic agency* – one which might well annihilate all life on Earth). With that, I believe, humanity finally got the message that a certain madman, as early as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, tried to convey, to make us own up to: that God is dead, and ‘we’ have killed him.

With God, I acknowledge in this work what Roland Barthes referred to as the death of the author. It is a death that I consider to be more of a dissemination than annihilation, as the significations swarm beyond the reach of any authorizing autonomy, and the work becomes breached via its own linguistic parasites (metaphors, metonymies, lies, rhetoric).

This implicit assumption allows me to attempt what I believe to be an interdisciplinary project. As such, I would like to distinguish it from a *multi*-disciplinary one. In my view, and I will support it in the third chapter via both form and content, interdisciplinarity's "clay" or "research matter" is not so much the findings and/or methodologies of each discipline as their *interconnections*.

It is important to keep this in mind, since there is an aspect of universality that is kept here, but another one which is abated: the expansion and mobility, the contagion of the universal is kept in this work; it indeed proceeds, and rather quickly, from discourse to discourse, author to author, word to word. It connects these, implicitly, *in its very movement*. However, it does not maintain these connections in any other mode than that of its own mobility. It cannot authorize the totalizing aspect of universality, insofar as the latter tries to encapsulate – in a quite Hegelian fashion I might add – all movements into the self-knowledge of a 'beautiful soul' (a traitor is hardly 'a beautiful soul'), or a certain ultimate concept. This marks the difference, I believe, between the inter and the multi: the inter inheres in dialogue and the contingency of connection; the "multi" inheres in conquest and the annexation/totalization of territory/concepts/discourses/methodologies. The first is of the "logic" of nomads, the second is precisely the logic of empire. Insofar as this is an interdisciplinary thesis, it is also, if you will, my giving-back to the University of Victoria's CSPT program, which offered me such rare hospitality.

« Quand je vous parle, c'est comme si toute la part de moi qui me couvre et me protège m'abandonnait et me laissait exposée et très faible. Où va cette part de moi? Est-ce en vous où elle se retourne contre moi? »

*“When I speak to you it is as if the entire part of me that covers and protects me abandoned me and left me exposed and very vulnerable.*

*Where does this part of me go? Is it in you that it turns against me?”*

Maurice Blanchot, *L'attente L'oubli*

Que j'aie à représenter un forçat – ou un criminel – je le parerai de tant de fleurs que lui-même disparaissant sous elles en deviendra une autre, géante, nouvelle.

*Should I have to portray a convict – or a criminal – I shall so beck him with flowers that, as he disappears beneath them, he will himself become a flower, a gigantic and new one.*

L'acte est beau s'il provoque, et dans notre gorge fait découvrir, le chant: Quelque-fois la conscience avec laquelle nous aurons pensé un acte réputé vil, la puissance d'expression qui doit le signifier, nous forcent au chant.

*The act is beautiful if it provokes, and in our throat reveals, song. Sometimes, the consciousness with which we have pondered a reputedly vile act, the power of expression which must signify it, impel us to song. This means that it is beautiful if treachery makes us sing.*

Jean Genet, *Journal du Voleur*

“You know you may be setting yourself up to be crucified here.”

– Rob Walker, *in a conversation we had about my thesis*

# Chapter 1

## Introductory Gesture

How should I begin

To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?

And how should I presume?

*T. S. Eliot*

## **The Pathos of Distance**

To communicate [*mitzuteilen*] a state, an inward tension of pathos, by means of signs [...] that is the meaning of every style [...].

Always presupposing that there are ears - that there are those capable and worthy of such pathos, that there is no lack of those to whom may one communicate oneself. - My Zarathustra, for example, is still looking for those - alas, it will have to keep looking for a long time yet! - One must be worthy of hearing him.

And until then there will be nobody to understand the art that has been squandered here.

- *Friedrich Nietzsche*<sup>6</sup>

## Anachrony (“*an imperfect tense that never becomes present*”)

Ultimately, Nietzsche argues, his writings are a "squander", wasted energy. What is the nature of this waste, this 'squander'? The passage begins with *communication* and *pathos*. Communicating a state, as opposed to communicating an objective content, is also communicating, or 'expressing', one's self. Nietzsche articulates his sidestepping of

objective content by referring us to his 'style' in writing (rather than merely to its content). 'Style' is what communicates a *state* – thus a mode of being – that is always, according to Nietzsche, inscribed in the *pathos of an inward tension*. In his *Beyond Good and Evil*, called 'What is Noble', Nietzsche augments these notions of pathos and tension:

Every enhancement of the type "man" has so far been the work of *an aristocratic society* [...] a society that believes in the long ladder of an order or rank and differences in value between man and man, and that *needs slavery in some sense or other*. Without that *pathos of distance* which grows out of the ingrained difference between strata - when the ruling class constantly looks from afar and down upon subjects and instruments and just as constantly *practices obedience and command*, keeping down and a keeping at distance - that other, more mysterious pathos could not have grown up either - the craving for an *ever new widening of distances within the soul* itself, the development of ever higher, rarer, more remote, further stretching, more comprehensive *states* - in brief, simply the enhancement of the type "man", the continual *"self overcoming of man"*, to use *a moral formula in a supra-moral sense*.<sup>7</sup>

If 'enhancement' - which Nietzsche considers to be *moral* - is possible for a person, it is therefore always involved in a *reaction to an-other person*. According to Nietzsche, the nobles need slavery "in some sense or another". These nobles are often depicted by Nietzsche as the ruling caste, which is also a violent and exploitive caste.

In his *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche again mentions 'the nobles' in connection to their specific pathos; he writes:

[...] the noble mode of valuation [...] acts and grows spontaneously, it seeks its opposite only to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly [...].

The "well born" *felt* themselves to be the "happy"; they did not have to establish their happiness artificially by examining their enemies<sup>8</sup>

The pathos of nobility and distance [...] the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling order **in relation** to a lower order, to a "below" – *that* is the origin of the antithesis "good" and "bad". (The lordly right of giving names extends so far that one could allow oneself to conceive the origin of language itself as an **expression** of power on the part of the rulers: they say "this *is* this and this"<sup>9</sup>)

Nietzsche continues in the very next aphorism to offer an etymological account of the 'labels' given to the lower class as those who were "plain", "simple", or unhappy/bad<sup>10</sup>. But then there appears a tension, resisting interpreting Nietzsche – even in these provocative statements – in being conceived of as merely as advancing a "might makes right" ethic. For, if indeed the noble are happy-of-themselves, and thus do not need to be *reactive* – as the weaker do – in this *self*-definition, then the question arises ***why should the slaves be referred-to at all?*** Had the dominated been reduced to being 'pure instruments of labour', why call them "bad", "unhappy", "simple"? Why not just call them 'slaves', like horses - also instrumentalized in labour - were called 'horses'?

Every enhancement of 'man' requires a certain *dimension of height*, a **qualitative** distance. This idea of 'enhancement' presupposes a ***difference in value*** within 'mankind', but must also presuppose a *necessary connection-through-language* between those "beings-of-disparate-value" (what ***necessitates*** nobility's thinking-up of names for the slaves' value/conditions). Thus, *a necessity* suggests itself – one that nobility has to assume – that constitutes *an-other "sense" in which nobles "need" slaves*. This 'pathos of distance' is thus a linguistic-moral one, *presupposing* three essential elements:

distance/difference in value, enhancement accomplished in 'the soul', and self-affirmation<sup>11</sup>.

Lévinas' analyses in *Totality and Infinity* echo Nietzsche's profound intuition:

If at the bottom of speech there did not subsist this originality of expression, this break with every influence, this dominant position of the speaker foreign to all compromise and all contamination, this straightforwardness of the face to face, speech would not surpass the plane of activity, of which it is evidently not a species - even though language can be integrated into a system of acts and serve as an instrument. But language is possible only when speaking precisely renounces this function of being action and returns to its essence of being expression.<sup>12</sup>

So, the noble's naming of the slaves was indeed not a necessary activity, a reaction; it was a "spontaneous" growth or act, which, consisting in language, was both self-affirming – what Lévinas here calls the 'originality of expression' of the 'dominant speaker' – and sidestepping mere instrumentality (the slaves, as mentioned earlier, might just as well been given only a *name* rather than a certain *value*).

There appears, then, an inherent ambiguity in treating language as the expression of an "interior sovereign" - the noble, the soul – an ambiguity which *emanates from an exterior*. Lévinas calls this exterior 'the other's face' – inherently connected to the word 'expression' as it is also, for Lévinas, *the face's expression* (the French and the English have similar connotations here) – who addresses me without having any power of address, *because* of its lack of power. *It commands me to respond to its plight in a mode wholly other to mine:*

The world which invades me when I engage myself in it is powerless against the "free thought" that suspends that engagement, or even refuses it interiorly, being

capable of living hidden. The being that expresses itself imposes itself, but does so precisely by appealing to me with its destitution and nudity - its hunger - without my being able to be deaf to that appeal. Thus in expression the being that imposes itself does not limit but promotes my freedom, by arousing my goodness.<sup>13</sup>

The ambiguity mentioned earlier is also the ambiguity that can be spied in Lévinas' very use of 'expression': while in the previous passage it was being's expression (identified here with the noble, the self affirming, the good and strong), in this passage he refers to it as the expression of the imposing, destitute, nude being (the slave). This ambiguity in my relation to the - always destitute - other in language, takes on the form of an *unsolved tension*, which emerges as an *affirmative* precondition of language and morality.

In this sense it is perfectly consistent to attribute 'Self-overcoming' to the nobles as a their *exercise of freedom* toward 'the plain' (not a mere "reaction" to them). A Lévinasian reading would say here that the slaves – in their *moral presence* (consisting in their having an 'expression', a face) – invoke self-affirmation and goodness, and **not through pity or guilt**. It is the nobles' very mode of affirmation/goodness that constitutes their peculiar need for slaves, and their essentially moral relation to them (a relation which is *not purely instrumental* – a "speech that *does* surpass the plane of activity, in Lévinas' terms). Nietzsche's 'pathos of distance' is here translated to Lévinas' notion of ambiguity – both perform a similar gesture. Lévinas writes:

[...] the absolute authenticity of the face - the privileged case of a presentation of being foreign to the alternative of truth and non-truth, circumventing the ambiguity of the true and the false which every truth risks - an ambiguity, moreover, in which all values moves.<sup>14</sup>

All values move within the essential ambiguity of *expression*, which - inasmuch as it is self-overcoming - is inherently and inextricably tied to the lower-other, emanating from it. The nobles were commanded by the slaves – precisely as their destitute others – to refer to them in moral terms. Indeed, Nietzsche goes so far as to claim that this very tension is **the founding of morality as such**. This *command*, however, was essentially also a self-overcoming gesture of ‘nobility’ (rather than a submission or a capitulation to a higher power)<sup>15</sup>. In answering the call of the other, through this very act of language, morality is made possible.

Returning to the initial quote from Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo*, we notice that *his own* address to the other – his very *writing* – is comprised thusly: On the one hand, it is an address whose justification consists in "Always presupposing that there are ears"; on the other hand, Nietzsche recognizes that – as given in the example of Zarathustra’s address – he "will have to keep looking for a long time yet".

We seem to be facing another one of Nietzsche's tensions. Nietzsche's writes in *Ecce Homo*, in the section titled "why I write such good books":

Now let us imagine an extreme case: that a book speaks of nothing but events that lie altogether beyond the possibility of any frequent or even rare experience - that it is the first language for a new series of experiences. In that case, simply nothing will be heard, but there will be the acoustic illusion that where nothing is heard, nothing is there.<sup>16</sup>

Relating that to our main quote, we can safely assume that Nietzsche suggests that in writing his book he is really communicating an entirely new state – something wholly-other – *as if* there were others present to communicate it to. This communication seems to

have, however, no (ontological) 'substance', no 'being'. How can it be said to be 'there' if it is a voice that isn't heard? *How can it be both there and 'to-come'?*

As discussed briefly above, Lévinas insisted that 'Being' is of a very peculiar temporality, one that both allows an identity - I.e. a feeling of "interiority", a "totality" - and is also marked by a certain relation with an otherness non-reducible to this totality; forever *exterior* to it, but also forever *productive of it*. In his discussions of time, Lévinas treated this otherness as the radical alterity of the 'to-come', of the future moment as the (eschatological) breach in time-as-eternal-continuity; *radically* unknown. Lévinas writes:

Transcendence designates a relation with a reality infinitely distant from my own reality, yet without this distance destroying this relation and without this relation destroying this distance, as would happen with relations within the same.<sup>17</sup>

This transcendence is almost explicit in Nietzsche's above quote; it is 'distance'. Moreover, Lévinas' insistence that the other is in relation to me and still inassimilable by me, corresponds, I maintain, to what Nietzsche refers to when he writes about his communiqué being "there" but not "being heard", hidden behind the (epistemological) illusion that "*nothing* is there". This illusion is precisely what assumes that only the (re-)presentable, what is of the present and of presence, is something, while the rest is 'nothingness', a lack<sup>18</sup>. Both Nietzsche and Lévinas, however, insist on maintaining a certain open relation, consisting precisely in the alterity of the moment to-come, but in its ***omnipotence rather than lack***. Lévinas writes:

The relationship with the Other is the absence of the other; not absence pure and simple, not the absence of pure nothingness, but absence in a horizon of the future, an absence that is time.<sup>19</sup>

Hence Nietzsche, "*always* presupposing there are ears" recalls an **ethical/temporal** 'maxim' – a certain *faith* in the radical alterity of the 'to-come' – in order to allow his *expression to come*. Not only that, but the "always" in that sentence also alludes to a precondition of this expression: writing, for Nietzsche, would not *be* unless there was an assumption of a receiver, and a wholly other receiver, one that is of a *temporal* distance. This temporal-discrepancy is essential for 'expression;' and it also echoes the aforementioned 'power-discrepancy': both articulate the distance essential for morality, for expression.

Thus, Nietzsche's expression – again to apply a Lévinasian reading – *recalls itself in an an-archic temporality*: something that had been present can only maintain its radical temporal distance if it can never become present again, is radically past. This is the upsetting of the ontological 'present' that Nietzsche's notion of self-expression address (his voice will necessarily be present only as a past; "born posthumously", as he used to say of himself).

This temporal condition also makes its appearance in Nietzsche's writing as he refers to 'forgetting' or 'forgetfulness'. Not surprisingly, he attributes this forgetting precisely to the *moral* dimension of the noble's power. He writes in *The Use and Abuse of History*:

Imagine a man swayed and driven by a strong passion [...]. His whole case is most indefensible; it is narrow, ungrateful to the past, deaf to warnings [...]. And yet this condition, unhistorical and antihistorical throughout, is the cradle not only of unjust action, but of every just and justifiable action in the world.<sup>20</sup>

Against this 'oblivious person', against this 'interiority-centered-being', the other of her action is always both preconditioning it, *and* enabling it, like an already forgotten past

(psychoanalysis might well have said here ‘unconscious’). A true ingrate – the noble; his past is *necessarily* forgotten. The questions of *justice* and *accusation* that prop up in this context are not coincidental, and constitute the link between ‘subjectivity’ as self-affirmation – the ‘noble’ morality – and the question of ‘expression’. How is it that the darkness of not knowing can be affirmed in relation to morality? How can it be the cradle of the just? Nietzsche writes just before the above quote:

[...] there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of "historical sense", that injures and finally destroys the living thing, be it a man or a people or a system of a culture.<sup>21</sup>

So, Nietzsche maintains that reducing a ‘being’ to the visible alone – which he here calls "historical" – will suffocate action and life if left unchecked, upon reaching a certain degree. The noble man is indefensible, and it is his very nobility – his very “ingratitude”, his very *goodness* – that makes him indefensible. This indefensibility is, moreover, not to be denied or disavowed, but affirmed as a positive condition of life. This ‘antihistorical’ streak in Nietzsche urges the necessity of forgetting, the necessity of not seeing, of *not being able to re-present the entire past* – thus maintaining a past fundamentally impervious to presence. This past’s radical resistance to being re-presented is the very “cradle of *the just*” for Nietzsche, which I read here as *the positive condition of the ethical*. Lévinas writes in his *Totality and Infinity*:

The judgment of history is set forth in the visible. Historical events are the visible par excellence; their truth is produced in evidence. The visible forms, or tends to form, a totality. It excludes the apology, which undoes the totality in inserting into it, at each instant, the unsurpassable, unencompassable present of its very subjectivity.

[...] The invisible must manifest itself if history is to lose its right to the last word,

necessarily unjust for the subjectivity, inevitably cruel. [...] [The invisible] is produced in the goodness reserved to subjectivity, which thus is subject not simply to the truth of judgment, but to the source of this truth.<sup>22</sup>

Invisibility's 'manifestation' here is *not* its presence or re-presentation; it is only made manifest in **goodness** – manifest *as* invisibility, as oblivion – which, I propose here, is the noble's moral-manner. Adhering to the 'truth of judgment' alone would amount to what Nietzsche used to call 'will-to-truth' – it is the will to rid oneself of the unknown and the invisible, *the will to re-present*. This temporality lies at the base of life for Nietzsche, and so any ethos of affirmation must seek to maintain, if not promote, its radical imperfection and blindness:

[...] battle, suffering and weariness on mankind [...] reminds them what their existence really is, an imperfect tense that never becomes a present.<sup>23</sup>

This, in turn, connects back to Nietzsche's previous mention of 'squander.' He writes in *Ecce Homo*:

Not to see many things, not to hear many things, not to permit many things to come close - first imperative of prudence, first proof that one is no mere accident but a necessity.<sup>24</sup>

Warding off, not letting things come close, involves an expenditure - let nobody deceive himself about this - energy *wasted* on negative ends.<sup>25</sup>

The 'many' that Nietzsche depicts, are opposed, by definition, to the one. If we seek to hold on to experience and still hold on to an idea of a single 'self', the more variety experience offers us the harder and more threatening experience becomes to our 'self'. It is the 'many' that are allowed to persist as unknown, in what Lévinas termed 'the invisible', in what is not given to memory, to history. They are the many of the 'time-to-

come', and thus always *a surplus*, in excess. Nietzsche, I contend, could afford – in his presupposing that there are ears – such squander, precisely because the invisible, the not-given-to-knowledge is not a 'nothing', but a wealth and surplus of meaning, the living core of interiority and subjectivity, of nobility and goodness.

This tension between this core of interiority and the sense of self – 'my own consciousness and will' – is precisely the 'pathos of distance'; and this distance alludes, I suggest, almost directly to the ethical relation Lévinas articulates as the very title and topic of his first major work, the relation-of-distance between 'totality' and 'infinity'. It is a tension productive of power and a precondition of goodness (otherwise, there would be only 'truth' without any *value*). If 'the Nietzschean' acts, it is in the name of an essentially unknown future, and under cover of an always forgotten past – time is thus not totalized, not emptied; but infinite<sup>26</sup>.

### Asymmetry

While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is "outside;" and this No is its creative deed.<sup>27</sup>

The desperate person who wills nothingness or eternal life pronounces a total refusal of the here below.<sup>28</sup>

In his *Genealogy*, Nietzsche depicts morality as having developed through a kind of 'slave revolt', which coincided with a certain economic-social order. This order rests on a specific relation to *time*: a planning ahead made in direct response to past/accumulated – and re-presentable (thus "payable") – *debt*. The future thus becomes enslaved to the past,

as the political/economical agent is forced to make promises and remember them, thus allowing the past to weigh on his present at the expense of his future. The ‘noble’s’ spontaneity is thus being extinguished: such people would soon feel the wrath of their creditors, if and when they ‘forget’ – as we’ve seen is part-and-parcel of being a ‘noble’ – to return what they owe; if they forget that they are not free of debt<sup>29</sup>.

When Nietzsche discusses the noble “mode of valuation,”<sup>30</sup> he contrasts it with the slave’s. Whilst that of the noble was free and life affirming, taking the world into themselves with little care, the slave’s morality, trying to *fabricate* this power – as the slave does not have the same means to actually possess it – is projecting its own helplessness unto the world, finding it wanting, “immoral” (and of course what’s most immoral is that the nobles have the power they do). They precisely reverse the noble’s values. This slave’s mode of valuation is also a proponent of memory, of debt, revenge, calculation, – or in one word, as Nietzsche puts it – *ressentiment*<sup>31</sup>.

Nietzsche contrasts the two modes in their relation to each other:

[...] even supposing that the affect of contempt, of looking down from a superior height, *falsifies* the image of that which it despises, it will at any rate be a much less serious falsification than that perpetuated on its opponent [...] by the submerged hatred, the vengefulness of the impotent.<sup>32</sup>

Such obvious asymmetry would probably provoke many rebukes and admonishments: when it comes to justice, it seems, *balance* must be maintained, a certain “harmony”, just like in mathematics: a **symmetry**. Nietzsche’s account here, however, is clearly biased, crooked, and dangerous.

When it comes to morality, this idea of symmetry is best represented by what Nietzsche conceived of as ‘Judeo-Christian-morality’<sup>33</sup>; it is perhaps best exemplified in the famous passage from the New Testament: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets”<sup>34</sup>. Nietzsche, however, is most vehemently opposed to this principle of ‘moral symmetry’. First, as shown above, the ‘economy of life’ for Nietzsche is not that of investment – of a symmetrical system of exchange where one receives an *equivalent* of what one invests – but one of expenditure and squander<sup>35</sup>. Subjectivity (as ‘self-expression’), is not a ‘balanced system’, but an inherently imbalanced, an-archic one; of surplus and expenditure, suggesting a radical breach in time itself. Second, Nietzsche shows, throughout his *Genealogy* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, that these psychological roots of tension and imbalance – of asymmetry – were the very roots of morality and justice as such. Thus, Nietzsche himself, precisely by virtue of his *style*, could be taken to reproduce, or reiterate, a pathos of distance through this asymmetry between the noble surplus of exuberance, and the ever-wanting black hole of the slave’s debt-reflection and mnemotechnic of representation. He writes:

[...] placing one’s will on a par with that of someone else – this may become, in a certain rough sense, good manners [...]. But as soon as this principle is extended, and possibly even accepted as the fundamental principle of society, it immediately proves to be what it really is – a will to the denial of life, a principle of disintegration and decay.<sup>36</sup>

Nietzsche is precisely referring to a system of symmetrical moral-judgments, a ‘Christian’ manifestation of justice that presupposes equality and equivalency *against* inequality and asymmetry. Connecting this to what was discussed above, this would

constitute a balance – therefore *annihilating the 'pathos of distance'*: in the realm of *equivalence*, **distance** is no longer possible. For Nietzsche this would also mean that morality itself becomes no longer possible, “does not compute”.

Lévinas, once again, will be shown here to share Nietzsche's views:

Justice would not be possible without the singularity, the unicity of subjectivity. In this justice subjectivity does not figure as a formal reason, but as individuality; formal reason is incarnate in a being only in the measure that it loses its election and is equivalent to all the others.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, ‘equivalency’ – the relation of ‘an-eye-for-an-eye’ and the “do unto others” – is inherently a non-moral or an *a-moral* relation. It is not of the same order as Justice. Justice, as *Lévinas reappropriates the term*, has to do with infinite responsibility that cannot be “cashed out” through any equivalence (which must presuppose and encourage representation). It is of a wholly other character, speaking through – and due – to ‘the pathos of distance’. I maintain that Lévinas would call this pathos, ‘responsibility’ itself. It is the binding relation between the I as self (here identified as Nietzsche's *mythical* ‘noble’) and the beyond-the-I which is the Other (corresponding to ‘the slave’, the ‘forgotten’). It is a peculiar asymmetrical relation, one that abolishes neither the ‘I’ nor the other; one that through its affirmation of distance allows for difference, for heterogeneity -- precisely the Nietzschean ‘*self-overcoming* of the soul’. This combination of responsibility and irreducibility is of a wholly other order and therefore calls for an-other concept of ‘justice’, another metaphysics of value.

No longer of the order of ‘objective morality’, which denies life, Nietzsche and Lévinas call for a radical recognition of *the inherent asymmetry of value*. This

fundamental tension supplies value with its dimension of height, with its incommensurable other, and with its call to *transcend/overcome* itself. As Lévinas writes:

Transcendence designates a relation with a reality infinitely distant from my own reality, yet without this distance destroying this relation and without this relation destroying this distance, as would happen with relations within the same.<sup>38</sup>

The next section will try and expose precisely this metaphysical – or other-than-ontological (thus, could also be ‘mythical’) – conception that would perhaps allow this new ‘Justice’ to be somehow engaged with.

### **Morality and Metaphysics**

Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance to know whether we are not duped by morality

- *Emmanuel Lévinas, Preface to Totality and Infinity*

#### Abusing the name of God

In ‘*The Gay Science*’, in an aphorism called ‘Aftereffects of the most ancient religiosity,’ Nietzsche writes:

Every thoughtless person presupposes that will alone is effective; that willing is something simple, a brute datum, undeliverable, and *intelligible by itself*. He is convinced that when he sees something – strike something, for example – it is he that strikes, and that he did strike because he willed it. He does not see any problem here; the feeling of will seems sufficient to him not only for the assumption of cause and effect but also for *the faith that he understands their relationship*. He knows nothing of the mechanism of what happened and of the hundredfold fine work that needs to be done to bring about the strike, or of *the incapacity of the will in itself to do even the tiniest*

*part of this work*. The will is for him a magically effective force; the faith in the will as the cause of effects is the faith in magically effective forces.<sup>39</sup>

Nietzsche seems to oscillate here, once again, between a historical, and a metaphysical, account; he posits ‘the thoughtless’ as some form of ‘ancient’ person, but also almost as a certain primordial ‘subjectum’, or essence – an *example*. Still, Nietzsche is not proposed here as a traditional metaphysician; this ‘essence’ is not an ontological totality, but oriented so that it is, by its very consciousness, already breached by an omnipotent outside<sup>40</sup>. Insofar as Nietzsche perceives it, this passage depicts the (‘Historical’?) origin of religion, of faith. Nietzsche is, again, presenting us with a myth<sup>41</sup>.

It is not a coincidence that Nietzsche should approach this primordial – ‘ancient’ – religiosity through the concept of ‘will’. Insofar as consciousness is never self-sufficient, insofar as it is endowed with a *directing* – and therefore always *relational* – will, it is perceived precisely as the paradox in faith: whatever it is *I can do*, is what *I understand* happens as the *result of my will*; however, ***this understanding did not originate in my will, but presupposed by it***. Hence, understanding is not under my control; it is a magical benevolence, and it is precisely omnipotent insofar as it is the precondition of any of my actions becoming constitutive of anything similar to ‘my will’.

Dominating the will by positing *a representation* of a transcendental will – a will from ‘beyond’ – is precisely what Nietzsche identifies in Judeo-Christian morality. This ‘beyond’ is indeed “God”, but a very *specific* ‘God’. This specificity inheres in a dogmatic translation of precisely the links between cause and effect mentioned in the previous quoted passage: history and reality thus *presented* under the dominion of a *re-presented* transcendental, a specific moral grid, which claims universality. However, this

‘God’ is not the only necessary God, and Nietzsche shows this particular conception of ‘God’ to perform very specific moral and psychological tasks. When considering how this notion of ‘God’ came to be made (psychologically) salient, Nietzsche identifies the core of the issue, in my reading, precisely where the question of ‘will’ arises; Christianity is then indeed acquiesced to its religiosity by Nietzsche, but limited to a specific kind of religiosity, one that constrains and tames religious faith as a creative force, one which seeks to delimit it and dominate (*a herd* of believers) through it.

In order to dominate will, as suggested above, one needs to establish *structures for understanding*, for connecting causes to effects, for interpretation. Nietzsche writes in his book *‘The AntiChrist’*:

The new conception of him [God] becomes an instrument in the hands of priestly agitators who henceforth interpret all good fortune as a reward, all misfortune as punishment for disobedience of God, for ‘sin’: that most mendacious mode of interpretation of a supposed ‘moral world-order’ through which the natural concept ‘cause’ and ‘effect’ is once and for all stood on its head. When one has banished natural causality from the world by means of reward and punishment, one then requires an *anti-natural* causality: all the remaining unnaturalness follows forthwith.<sup>42</sup>

Again, note that Nietzsche does not abolish value and morality altogether; he abolishes them only to the effect of countering the prevalent Judeo-Christian beliefs he found himself immersed in. Any possible values that might have become present are, according to Nietzsche, falsified and obscured by the priest’s re-presented ones. This notion of re-presentation of the divine is a concern that I deem, after Lévinas, precisely ethical-metaphysical (and which Lévinas will soon be shown to share).

The following quote from Nietzsche will go a long way to ground this reading:

[...] the *priest* abuses the name of God: he calls a state of society in which the priest determines the value of things ‘the kingdom of God’; he calls the means by which such a state is achieved or perpetuated ‘the will of God’<sup>43</sup>

Nietzsche indeed refuses to relinquish the language of value. In saying that there is, *that there could be*, an ***abuse of the name of God***, two major assertions are implied, which I see as complicit with Nietzsche’s life-affirming ethos (rather than inconsistencies or failures)<sup>44</sup>. The language of value and the language of metaphysics are affirmed here, but on radically new terms. This new understanding both tears the notion of ‘God’ from metaphysics and morality, and indeed reinserts it, but reversed. A few more quotes from Nietzsche will allow me to clarify this:

If one has sacred tasks, for example that of improving, saving, redeeming mankind - if one carries the divinity in one's bosom, is the mouthpiece of an other-world imperative, such a mission already places one outside all merely reasonable valuations - one *is* already sanctified by such a task, one is already the type of a higher order.<sup>45</sup>

With this small passage Nietzsche is expressing what he said in metaphysical-moral terms – the abuse of the name of God – in psychological terms. It is the same kind of movement, the same *abuse*: I posit a transcendent beyond as a background canvas, then I paint (or *project*) a certain image on it, claiming that it – *the image* projected – is **sacred** precisely because it is transcendent, “of a higher order”. What must be stressed here, and it seems that it cannot be stressed enough, is that I see Nietzsche as placing *the possibility of the higher order* within the psyche (as seen in the above quote from *The AntiChrist*). The image both blocks the approach to this transcendence and abuses its power of transcendence, dissimulating into it. This ‘other-world imperative’ presupposes the other world, whilst the pretence of being its mouthpiece constitutes its abuse (or, as will be

shown in the first chapter, its foreclosure). Not only does this have metaphysical consequences, but these consequences are being intimately related – by Nietzsche himself – to the moral sphere, in the “language of value”. Thus, according to Nietzsche, ‘Christianity’ did not create the notion of God, but abused it by reducing God to a ‘God of good’, which Nietzsche refers to as a “castration”, a reduction of the divine<sup>46</sup>.

The abuse of the name of ‘God’, as Nietzsche states above, is indeed seated in attributing to God a specific, “*divine will*”. This was a mechanism which allowed ‘divinity’ to emanate from the priest’s aforementioned projected image of moral-rules. This abuse consisted in reversing the relation to ‘God’: God was first considered in terms of Justice, and only then in terms of the bonds of community. Nietzsche says this very clearly when he recalls the great days of the Hebrews, when their God was – when they were at their height of moral power and giving-ability – the “God of Israel and *consequently* the God of Justice”<sup>47</sup>. In time, according to Nietzsche, the Hebrews’ culture and people declined, and they reversed the order; since they could no longer maintain ‘God’ in a positive, life-affirming fashion, they turned to a system of knowledge and morals which they imbued with God’s castrated remains, the ‘good’ God. They obscured God through morals, through ‘justice’ – precisely through representation. Perhaps lost faith in God and grew more and more dependent on Gods representations. And, since moral justice for man had to include a moral culpability, and also since the structures of interpretation projected by the priest purported to solidify causality and thus congeal life into an interpretation – God had to become implicated with the notion of will. Just like the illusion of will ensued from the partiality and finitude of consciousness (as shown in the Nietzsche’s quote about the origins of religiosity), this same illusion became imposed

on God, and a God wielding a “will for good” at that. It made God “bound by conditions” of conscious-manufactured morality<sup>48</sup>. This anthropomorphizing move had a dual effect: it castrated God into the level of an all-powerful subject, and it imbued men with a purported transcendence upon adhering to ‘His’ definite will. It was, precisely, abusing of the name of God. And this convergence, which of course also eliminated the necessary distance between ‘God’ as radically transcendent and conscious thought, turned on the very notion of ‘will’.

This abuse is also the beginning of nihilism, of the de-valuation of all values: values – which are always already in discourse, always already touched by language – are being subjected, by the priest, to a universal moral-system, in very much the same way that all interpretation and understanding (as noted above) were.<sup>49</sup> This shows yet another aspect of the abuse of the name of God, one which threatens to diminish the richness and proliferation in/of ‘will’ itself (and this is what Nietzsche is objecting to): if interpretation is being constrained in the name of its very *reason*, any new discourse is in an immanent (and imminent) danger of being cast out and persecuted as *blasphemy* (this is also why Nietzsche laments that there are no more *new* Gods, in what he calls *monotono*-theism<sup>50</sup>). Thus, any value is made subject to a unified-transcendental system of worth: again, for Nietzsche this is an abuse *of* ‘value’; but he is still careful enough *not to posit value qua value as ‘abuse’*.<sup>51</sup> When subordinating it to a *transcendental structure* – to insert a Lévinasian terminology again – value is being robbed of its other; the other is being denied any “un-authorized” access to value. Moreover, since it is a transcendental value, it thus becomes divorced of personal *responsibility* (or **response-ability**): if I am only a “mouthpiece” of *an unquestionable system*, then **surely I cannot answer for anything**

**that this system “authorizes”** (so long as I can somehow prove/assure that I was, indeed, working within the parameters “handed down by God” – this is where hypocrisy begins as well). These are not *my* values – they are God’s; not *my* will – but God’s. This, is precisely nihilism: for with this subordination of otherness, the very preconditions of value are being denied via value’s own coagulated representations; otherness is subordinated to sameness, and nothing new, no radical alterity, can imbue the system with any kind of new life<sup>52</sup>. This abusive, suffocating gesture toward the very origin and life-blood of value – which, I submit here, is precisely Nietzsche’s ‘God’, Lévinas’ ‘Other’ – is nihilism<sup>53</sup>. Value is nihilistic when it obscures and negates its own origins; the same thing happens – we will now see – with morality.

### Dominating Empathy

Now we move into Nietzsche’s analysis of the psychological workings of ‘Christianity’. In an aphorism titled ‘The Origins of Sin’ (in *The Gay Science*), he writes:

The Christian presupposes a powerful, overpowering being who enjoys revenge. [...] Contrition, degradation, rolling in the dust - all this is the first and last condition of his grace: in sum, the restoration of his divine honour. Whether the sin has done any other harm, whether it has set in motion some profound calamity that will grow and seize one person after another like a disease and strangle them - this honour-craving Oriental in heaven could not care less! Sin is an offense against him, not against humanity.<sup>54</sup>

Sins, then, are already “born in sin” according to Nietzsche; the presupposition of the overpowering *being* who wields a will and a purpose is already an abuse of otherness, what Lévinas would term as ‘violence’<sup>55</sup>. And we can see Nietzsche’s own allusions to

this violence in this passage itself: the believer's abuse of God consists also – as mentioned earlier – of not being responsible for 'God's will', and thus not responsible for his own actions insofar as they manifest this "will". The other person is being struck out of the moral picture, which now only holds the believer and the transcendent screen; otherness is thus thoroughly effaced (it can neither arrive from the other person, nor from the radical alterity of an unrepresented God (they might be interchangeable according to Lévinas)). It is thus the ethical implications of this abuse – this violence – always referring back to Nietzsche's observations, and Lévinas' critiques.

First let us consider the issue of will. Nietzsche provides us here with nothing less than a delineation of the psychological structure of the Christian faith: the believer projects upon the blank screen of the transcendent a certain image – given him by the priests or whomever – which is bestowed all possible *power*, whilst the believer wallows in utter lack of power; I give all *agency* to this powerful **being**. The most I can do, as a believer, is to follow 'His will'. Of course, the 'problem' then becomes having a will myself, and so the imperative becomes one of subjection and self-punishment: I subject my will to 'His', on pain of moral/societal castigation. When my 'will' becomes a hindrance qua will - - Nietzsche would say that we've already started our way down the slippery slope of nihilism.

Another theme running through this passage is that of revenge. To recall, above we've discussed the notion of the inherent asymmetry of the ethical dimension, its need for distance and height. When considering the 'God' that Nietzsche is depicting above, we can plainly spot an economy of exchange, typified here – on a moral level – as revenge: a wrong must be compensated for – this becomes the highest principle of all (and,

Nietzsche shows, also above life itself; thus, we can destroy the whole world ‘if only God wills it’). When the economy of equivalence and exchange is introduced into the moral dimension of values, what it does is to *eliminate the distance* necessary for value to subsist. In Lévinasian terms, it is the attempted effacement of my responsibility to the other, who commands me in a necessarily transcendent, *non-representable* manner.

Also, there’s something peculiar going on in this scene, particularly when considered against the background of what was stated earlier; there seems to be a strange reversal (for, as mentioned earlier, the obsequious believer also seems to be, potentially, the harbinger of doom for all humankind). I recall here Gilles Deleuze’s notion of the *masochist* as **an educator**<sup>56</sup>: when one looks upon the scene of masochism – of which the scene Nietzsche depicted above is certainly reminiscent – one notices, apart from the obvious, that this is, after all, *a game of domination*. In this game there is a master – who sets the rules – and a servant – who obeys the rules. But the appearance of the game is precisely the opposite of its actual rules (and the game’s pleasure – or *jouissance* – consists precisely in this reversal. The reversal is that the master who sets the rules is the one who’s being afflicted pain: the servant, the one charged with the duty (of inflicting pain), is in fact *contracted* to be there, contracted to inflict this pain, to take this role. She (“the master”) is servicing *him* (“the slave”), much in a way any other ‘service provider’ would; however, since the service is that of inflicting pain, it seems as if she makes the rules. *His pain is then, in fact, used to mask his actual domination*. Relegating all power to God is, when seen on these terms, precisely imputing God with such mastery only to creep up unseen and take control again, operating ‘God’ as if it were a puppet. This is the

abuse of the name of God, when our own domination – despite our ‘pain’ – is performed by our representation of ‘God’s Will’ or ‘God’s Justice’.

Both Lévinas and Nietzsche perceived the dangers of this abuse to the realm of ethics, and – if we take ‘Christian morality’ as that ‘projected image’ mentioned above – consequently what allows *and sanctifies violence toward the other person* as well. Nietzsche writes:

The striving for distinction keeps a constant eye on the next man and wants to know what his feelings are: but the empathy which this drive requires for its gratification is far from being harmless or sympathetic in kind. [...] The striving for distinction is the striving for domination over the next man, though it be a very indirect domination and only felt or even dreamed.<sup>57</sup>

Nietzsche here is at his psychological best. In the context of Christian-morality, he is describing an “indirect domination” of one man over the other, done in the name of a *specific* kind of empathy, a “contracted”, *controlled empathy* (which is also, of course, contractual and controlling). The allusion to the **dream** is very important here: it not only hints at what was to become known as a decidedly *psychoanalytic* insight, but it connects domination to a realm *other* than that of waking/conscious/present reality. Juxtaposing this with the idea of the abuse of the name of God, we can see the transcendent as the *other* realm of consciousness which exerts its power on human behaviour. The projected-image is then the structural constrictions of its effects, and its manifestation is the gaze, the “constant eye” which seeks the self’s and the other’s distinction (but always in the secret, unconscious, employ of domination: my “fear of what everyone thinks” in fact only mirrors my violence toward everyone insofar as they are other)).

Nietzsche's continuous vitriol against the "virtue of pity" derives precisely from the point alluded to above. Christianity's 'pity' can be shown in this light to be a *Christian interpretation of/on empathy*, thus already a structuring of my relation to the other person in a way that denies my direct connection to her, filtering it through a transcendental-systematic moral projection-image. I am *supposed* to feel pity toward the suffering other person. This is decidedly *not* the ethical **command** that comes at me from the other (according to both Nietzsche and – especially – Lévinas), but precisely its **dissimulated representation**, its *abuse*. The ethical command is my very moral relation to the other, being dominated through the representations of morality imposing their own anthropomorphic, transcendental, vengeful 'God'.

Dante, in his *Inferno*<sup>58</sup>, depicts his descent into Hell as a still-living Christian believer (thus, one not "deserving" to be eternally damned; yet). This presents Dante with a specific conflict insofar as 'pity' is concerned: on the one hand, one is trained to feel pity toward the suffering, as a 'good Christian'; on the other hand, feeling pity is blasphemous in this context, as it is "God's Divine Will" that these souls should suffer and, as such, it must – not only not be questioned but also – be *affirmed*. Dante's journey through Hell can then be seen as an education, a refining of his empathic qualities: he is being educated so that to be able to acquiesce suffering insofar as it is 'Just' (translation: in *accordance* to 'God's Will'). In Nietzschean terms it would mean to allow the priest's will for domination – via the abuse of the name of God – to educate, *authorize*, your own relation toward the other<sup>59</sup>. Nietzsche writes a bit further in the aphorism quoted above, (and in the direct context of Dante):

And supposing it was a god of love: what enjoyment for such a god to create suffering men, to suffer divinely and superhumanly from the ceaseless torment of the sight of them, and thus to tyrannize over himself! [...]. [...] [in relation to Dante] doing hurt to others in order thereby to hurt oneself, in order then to triumph over oneself and one's pity and to revel in an extremity of power! [...] the psychological extravagance of the lust for power.<sup>60</sup>

Here we have also a very rare incident, where Nietzsche speaks of 'love' and 'power', while putting Christianity on the side of power(!). Nietzsche does not set forth against the 'will to power' – indeed for him it is the very principle of life. What bothers him is the disguise of love, precisely what, I maintain, bothered him in the disguise of God's Justice-system: both are cases of a fundamental abuse (or violence). This disguise, this disavowal of the will-to-power produces this "lust" – which is, as alluded to above, blind to the other person and quite possibly a murderously violent one<sup>61</sup>.

The result of this abuse is thoroughly felt *in the interpersonal space* – in the space of looks, of judgments, of pain – in the space of *relation*. It is Nietzsche's concern – and a deeply ethical one – that this space is being negated, diminished by these abuses of love, of the moral-relation and of the name of God. Just as the conflict of pity will be solved by Dante realizing – by the end of his journey through Hell – that God's Divine Justice is indeed unquestionable and profound, so the believer learns that pity – like empathy in general – is always to be subordinate to 'God's will'. These representations, these abuses, all presuppose the same *transcendental structure* – they posit a blank transcendent screen upon which a certain structure of interpretation imposes its domination on the interpersonal sphere, on the sphere of relation. Nietzsche writes:

What? A god who loves men, provided only that they believe in him, and who casts an evil eye and threats upon anyone who does not believe in his love? What? A love encapsulated in if-clauses attributed to an almighty god? A love that has not even mastered the feelings of honour and vindictiveness? How Oriental this is! "If I love you that is your concern" is a sufficient critique of the whole of Christianity.<sup>62</sup>

Nietzsche's "love encapsulated in if-clauses" is precisely reminiscent of his "God bound by conditions"<sup>63</sup>: both are enclosed within a structure, and both are necessary conditions for the perversion of empathy. The reversal of domination is once again echoed here, where my love becomes a constriction upon the other, rather than the opening of myself to the other (while feigning such an opening!). This 'love' authorizes my violence toward the other. This constriction, this undercover, dominating gesture, allows, according to Nietzsche, a specific kind of **cruelty, disguised as piety** (recall here *the masochist's reversal*). Here, I will allow Lévinas to surface:

[...] the most dangerous of seducers is the one who carries you away with pious words to violence and contempt for the other man.<sup>64</sup>

The progression alluded to in Dante was one which starts with pity and piety, but must end with violence and contempt (lest God's will be negated and Dante become eternally damned himself). The violence and contempt toward the other person, the education of Dante's soul, is precisely what Nietzsche identifies as Christianity's moral import:

A certain sense of cruelty toward oneself and others is Christian; hatred of those who think differently; the will to persecute.<sup>65</sup>

The Christian notions of pity, of piety, of morality, are thus, for Nietzsche, precise tools of domination, which – in their very abuse of 'God' and 'Love' – are in the employ of an ethical violence (or, in Nietzschean terms, a 'negation of life'). It is a paradigmatic

instance of how ethical violence is being wielded through and by morality, of how we are being violent but “duped by morality” to think that we are being just. It is the abuse of the space of communication, an other-effacing violence.

### Antipity

Now let us try to become ears to Nietzsche’s expression, and to encounter Zarathustra, who will accompany us to the end of this introduction. In the final scene of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Zarathustra awakens and exits a cave (where he had spent the night with his followers – whom he calls ‘higher men’ [*höheren Menschen*]). Upon his awakening, he greets(?) the sun:

‘Greetings, Great Star’, he said, as he had said before, ‘you deep happiness-eye. What would all your happiness be, had you not *those* whom you illumine!

‘And if they stayed in their chambers while you are already awake and come and bestow and distribute: how your proud modesty would be angry!’<sup>66</sup>

This address to the sun bears a great resemblance to the workings of morality we have just discussed. If we take ‘the sun’ here to be an image of the most powerful giver, once it is anthropomorphized (like ‘God’) its gifts become represented (so as to be incorporated into a system of exchange and conditions). A stable, systematic, eternal ‘will’ – ‘loving’, all-giving – is precisely what is being alluded to here, and within the breadth of one sentence Nietzsche condenses all of the critiques expounded above: with representation, *giving* is being effaced by exchange<sup>67</sup> - - it is being already dominated by a transcendental system (not to mention the clear allusion to moral hypocrisy – and the contradiction inherent in it – when Zarathustra mentions the sun’s “proud modesty”). The sun’s anger

is a reflection of the perversion of giving as asymmetrical (thus a giving not presupposing an equivalence, not expecting anything in return – not even gratitude or reception) into symmetry. Thus, representation is, again, shown to be a blocking of virtue's conditions of possibility (those which are precisely “beyond ‘good’ or ‘evil’”).

That would precisely be Zarathustra's virtue – that of a ‘creating good’ (the virtue not tainted with ‘moralic acid’ as Nietzsche would say). This virtue is inherently connected with the idea of the pure gift, *a present not representable* (and thus not returnable, exchangeable; not even presupposing any expectation). It is the gift that, we will see, Zarathustra gives his followers as an Antichrist. A giving not “bounded” (or “castrated”) by ‘if-clauses’.

There are many times that Zarathustra tells his “followers” to stop following him<sup>68</sup>. What happens in this scene is far more radical and profound a gesture: After his “greeting” of the sun, Zarathustra has an experience which seems to me like an epiphany, referred to by Zarathustra as “transforming”: he sees his eagle, then is covered by an immense flock of birds, and finally approached by a lion, whose roar “transforms” Zarathustra<sup>69</sup>. Zarathustra and the lion enjoy this intimacy – with the lion's head nestled on Zarathustra's knee – right up until Zarathustra's followers awaken and prepare Zarathustra's morning-greeting. Upon hearing them approaching the cave's entrance, the lion rises, turns away from Zarathustra, and charges at them with a roar. This scares them so much that they let out a single great cry, and then disappear into the cave, (perhaps) never to return; the lion vanishes into the cave as well.

Zarathustra, alone again, still bewildered from his transformation, recalls right then what a soothsayer told him a day earlier; that he was yet to transcend his ultimate sin:

[...] “O Zarathustra,” he said to me, “I come to seduce you to your ultimate sin.”

‘To my ultimate sin?’ cried Zarathustra and laughed angrily at his own words: *What* was it that was saved up for me as my ultimate sin?’

- And once more Zarathustra sank into himself and sat down on the large rock again and meditated. Suddenly he sprang up –

‘*Pity! Pity for the superior human!*’ he cried out, and his visage was transformed into bronze. ‘Well then! *That* – has had its time!

‘My suffering and my pitying – what does that matter! Am I striving then for *happiness?* I am striving for my *work!*’<sup>70</sup>

If we consider this incident as the overcoming of the ultimate sin, we can see that Zarathustra is indeed the Antichrist: To Nietzsche, the whole moral structure of Christianity was based on ‘pity’ (pity would be the tortured remains of my relation toward the suffering other; an empathy dominated and mediated via an image of ‘God’s will’). Thus, it makes perfect sense that, for the destroyer of Christian values, it would be precisely *pity* to take the role of the ultimate sin<sup>71</sup>. Pity – as a proper *charitable* giving ‘from the strong to the weak’ – would have probably driven Zarathustra to seek his followers and commiserate with them; perhaps even to chastise the lion (punishment), or himself (guilt), for what had transpired.

For Nietzsche, however, a God’s believers and followers are always inherently deserving of – what I propose here to see as a – betrayal: **this, precisely, is their merit.** This betrayal is a genuine response to their faith; if Nietzsche’s *ethos* held that we should all become Gods to be *worthy* of our killing of ‘God’<sup>72</sup>, Zarathustra would then be best “followed” by precisely not being followed. The *ethos* here is one of infinite responsibility: responsibility, since it is we who performed this killing; infinite, since it

was precisely ‘God’ – or, in my reading, the representation of a dimension beyond this world consisting of an entity whose will can be represented – whom we killed.

Zarathustra’s mortal enemy in the moral sphere is thus the very essence that allows belief to become structured – *inertia* itself. Pity is what tries to lay hold of the relation between me and the other person, between me and God, relying upon the inertia of a congealed (projected) system: in the end it subordinates any empathy to a structure, a game. Not only does compassion toward those suffering alone constitute a precise condescending gesture toward the other person, but *it also implies a prescribed (moral) judgment upon which my empathy is situated* (the masochist hidden-domination game at work again). My relation to the other person, my ‘natural connection’ to her, is to be *dominated by ‘God’s moral system’, ‘God’s Divine Will’, ‘God’s Divine Justice’*.

The sanctity of the other person in my relation to her, according to Lévinas, is precisely of an ethical order, of the order of *command*. When Nietzsche gives Zarathustra the motivation of ‘work’ rather than ‘happiness’, he is not denying happiness and espousing morbidity (that would go against the Dionysian element he kept emphasizing in the approach to life<sup>73</sup>). What he *is* doing is working through a specific command upon my relation to the other, one that does not allow the reduction of other via any form of domination – be it that of a ‘follower’ or a ‘leader’. This refusal of domination precisely rejects *putting the other in the service of my happiness* (for even when pitying the other person – deifying her notwithstanding – I am still content in being a ‘just person’ – thus, again, averting responsibility via a moral structure which obstructs and replaces the unmediated, (and admittedly horrifying) relation with the other). Happiness, my happiness, as a motivation, is a dangerous one – this much can be gleaned from

Zarathustra's previous remarks toward the sun: this happiness is in fact a **covert demand** from the other. It does not matter that, for the sun, this demand is merely that the other receive its gifts – it is still an onus upon the other person, still a taxing of the other with a duty (Nietzsche's aforementioned critique of the "if I love you that is your concern"). Nietzsche's Zarathustra objects to this because his *work* consists in saying 'Yes!' to life. The moral system of 'Christianity', however, traps the subject and the other in a 'yes, but' structure of sublimated judgments – manifest through guilt and punishment (posing as 'charity'/'pity').

Even though Zarathustra's believers flee, they are never disavowed; when the lion is not admonished – it is also not being disavowed either. And when, finally, *pity and guilt are not being celebrated-eternal but allowed to dissipate*. This is illustrated quite clearly in that Zarathustra does have a moment of pity there, but one that, precisely, "had its *time*". In allowing this moment to pass, in not dwelling on it so as to solicit any kind of moral cohesion or righteousness from it, *Zarathustra himself is not being disavowed*. As for the believers themselves – they might return; they might learn to cope with this lion; and Zarathustra might find more believers and/or more lions: this structure of experience is open. It is open *precisely because all has been affirmed*, because no aspect of this experience had been put under an oppressive structure of 'virtue'. These structures signal as a necessity for Zarathustra, as his very work is precisely to destroy them; but where does this 'work' come from?

Zarathustra's followers were, I suggest here, *betrayed* by Zarathustra, who – perhaps in their perspective – suddenly, wilfully, "turned on them". But this 'turn', this betrayal, is precisely an instance of necessity, of ethical duty, of affirmation. And, as such, it could

be seen to have breached a limiting structure once this structure became constricting, violent. It thus precisely prevented Zarathustra's followers from erecting any kind of sustained belief-structure around him – a 'religion'<sup>74</sup>. Sustained structures of belief are always an abuse of the name of God, always in danger of being purported as transcendental, thus blocking the irreducible call of the transcendent other (a call not given to representation). For Nietzsche, 'Man' is a *becoming* – and it is only the morality of *ressentiment* that maintains a stable structure to keep him under control. It denies me *my response to the other, to becoming*, as it also denies my *responsibility* (not to be confused here with blame/guilt). If there is no structure to hold others accountable for, if God is dead and I now must be God, I must accept the (admittedly horrible) reality of the contingency and frailty of these relations, of how they are *not* geared toward my happiness, my domination; they are *commanded upon me to be radically affirmed*, to be embraced through my *goodness*.

When Dante placed the traitor in the last circle of Hell, he was illustrating precisely this disavowal of the other's command; for the other is always otherwise-than-represented, otherwise-than-being, otherwise-than-system. What allowed 'Christianity' its violence was presupposing the blank screen of transcendence and then projecting upon it a representation of 'Justice.' When Nietzsche rails against transcendence and metaphysics, he is actually targeting precisely this blank screen – it is *the screen that blocks the face of the other* (Lévinas); the screen that allows the abuse of the name of God (Nietzsche); that allows **cruelty toward the other** "in the name of God" (both).

## Back to Life

### Embodied will

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche depicts Zarathustra – the prophet, the annihilator of morality and the ‘revaluator’ of all values – in a curious way, which he calls a ‘riddle’. Zarathustra is climbing a mountain, (attempting to *overcome* himself through this very challenge of *height*), whilst he carries on his shoulders a dwarf, the ‘spirit of gravity’. Their relationship is of great interest, I suspect, in this context. Zarathustra thus depicts the following scene:

Upward: - in defiance of the spirit that drew it downward, drew it abyssward, the Spirit of heaviness, my Devil and arch-enemy.

Upward: - although he sat on me, half dwarf, half mole; lame, laming; dripping lead into my ear, lead-drop thoughts into my brain.

'O Zarathustra', he whispered mockingly, syllable by syllable, 'you philosophers' stone! You threw yourself up, but every upthrown stone must - fall! [...]

'Sentenced to yourself and to your own stoning: O Zarathustra, far indeed you threw the stone - but onto *you* will it come falling back!'

Then the dwarf fell silent, and that lasted long. But his silence oppressed me"<sup>75</sup>

Indeed, a strange relationship. Zarathustra, the capable, proactive, boisterous man who is in a constant activity and creativity - - how should we make sense of this dwarf that is sitting on his back? And – considering that this dwarf is his Devil and archenemy – doesn't it raise even more questions?

In a way, we could resolve these questions quite easily: Zarathustra is so powerful, so affirmative, that he does not mind the ‘extra weight’ nor the disheartening words, these are there only to prove – to ‘us readers’ – that he is indeed so powerful that he can sustain

overcoming himself even despite himself, despite his “draw-backs”, if you will; in a way – despite of his climb/quest’s impossibility. This would mean, however, that the dwarf is really in a non-relation to him: Zarathustra shouldn’t care either way then. He would be of “too noble a spirit” to care, one-way or the other.

But the last line quoted above raises the more radical problem: *the dwarf stops talking, and this makes Zarathustra feel oppressed*. All of a sudden a relation, and a deep one, is being made manifest through this oppressive silence. It appears that the dwarf *does* have significance for Zarathustra after all; and, given that this dwarf is depicted as his archenemy, it seems that this relation is indeed a deep one, rich with meaning. What is the meaning of this relation then (recall that the dwarf speaks to Zarathustra a disheartening discourse, a resentful, impeding one)? What is the solution of this ‘riddle’?

Recalling Nietzsche’s discussion of history, consider the following, parallel image that Nietzsche provides in his *The Use and Abuse of History*:

But man is always resisting the great and continually increasing weight of the past; it presses him down, and bows his shoulders; he travels with a dark invisible burden.<sup>76</sup>

Thus the motive of the dark and the invisible repeats itself, which is indeed in this context to be interpreted as of the order of the slave, the dwarf, the *other*. This burden is very similar in quality and character to that represented by Zarathustra’s dwarf (who exemplifies the spirit of gravity also in his very form – as if gravity “squished him”). What is this ‘past’ that man must carry as a dark burden? Why can’t man simply “brush off” this burden?

This burden, even if taken at its most minimal, allowing (the *still human*) ‘will’ its maximum power, would indeed be impossible to shrug-off if only for the fact that the

body itself, the biological substance of the body, decays in time. Whilst forgetfulness might at least offer a semblance of possibility to be employed by my will, I cannot will my own immortality. My body, my very mortality, speaks to me in a way that I can perhaps deny, but that I cannot efface. The dwarf, thus, speaks to Zarathustra, at the very least, of his own mortality.

Confronted with mortality, this dwarf, the will arrives at its limits, at a wholly other. In approaching Zarathustra's dwarf in this fashion, we can make sense of what Lévinas writes in his *Totality and Infinity* when he discusses will:

The violence of death threatens as a tyranny, as though proceeding from a foreign will.<sup>77</sup>

The dwarf's speech, then, could very well be seen as a "foreign will", reminding Zarathustra of his own mortality, the imminent death that awaits him (suggested by the figure of the rock that will come back down after being thrown upwards). This appearance, this address, for Lévinas, is of no small consequence:

But imminence is at the same time menace and postponement. It pushes on, and it leaves time. To be temporal is both to be for death and to still have time, to be against death.<sup>78</sup>

This figure of imminence is an exact match for Nietzsche's Zarathustra in this riddle. In his carrying on his back the promise of his own death, he is *both postponing death* – I.e. going up the mountain – *and affirming it*. This tension, as Nietzsche shows, is critical, even though it does present a logical contradiction, a contradiction that is time itself; a time that is nonetheless only experienced by an embodied will, by **a speaking being**.

Zarathustra's relation to the dwarf is an affirmation of this ambiguous character of will, its own (embodied) susceptibility to time. It is not, however, an affirmation of death

pure and simple; that would mean that Zarathustra would listen to the dwarf and stop advancing, go back, decay. Neither is it the affirmation of not-death – as Zarathustra is still carrying the dwarf, still enacting a – deep and personal – relation to it.

Zarathustra's need of the dwarf's speech is a moral need (also directly affecting his 'morale', its absence *oppressing* Zarathustra). Their relation – since it is incommensurable and in itself an embodiment of a logical contradiction (and thus not of the law of equivalence) – is of a wholly other order, an *ethical* one. Refusing this dwarf, Zarathustra would become other-effacing, detached from his own finitude, and thus detached from the relation he bears to the infinite – the ethical relation, the very **value-giving** relation. Without this relation to one's finitude – which only the infinitely other existence of corporeal susceptibility/sensibility can recall when considered by a 'conscious will' – morality becomes impossible, and thus life becomes *oppressive*, heavy, bereft of value. Nietzsche writes in another place in *Zarathustra*:

**A new will** do I teach to human beings: to will this path that human beings have walked blindly, and to call it good and no longer slink away from it[...]. [...] From their bodies and this earth they imagined themselves transported, these ingrates. Yet what did they owe the spasm and rapture of their transports? To their bodies and to this earth.<sup>79</sup>

This riddle of Zarathustra and the dwarf is here the very predicament of the embodied will. It is a powerful image of the inherent ambivalence of will, with which we come to terms only when realizing its ethical relation to its other (the dead, will-less body to give an extreme example; this will be addressed more thoroughly in the second chapter of this work). If anything drives Nietzsche's critique of Christian morality, it is their making the body out into a 'sin', a 'fall'.

Another quote from Lévinas will help us trace an initial movement from the ambivalence of will, and onto what I refer to in this work as ‘treason’:

This is the paradox and the essence of time itself, proceeding unto death, where the will is affected by the things as a thing [...] but gives itself a reprieve and postpones the contact by the against-death of postponement. The will essentially violable harbours treason in its own essence.<sup>80</sup>

### The Other’s Hell

The last of the nine circles in Dante’s ‘Hell’ is indeed reserved for traitors. That is the heart of Dante’s moral system (as it applies to his Christianity): it implies that all the sins of Hell have a certain element of treason at their base; the last circle is simply the most refined, ‘pure evil’. Like with all holistic-structural systems<sup>81</sup>, Dante tells us about the essence of Hell through what he places at its core. Whilst the entire system of his *Divine Comedy* is a manifestation of divinity through Reason (which accounts for the rational-harmonious structures, subsisting even in Hell<sup>82</sup>), the metaphysical-moral core of each node is given its essence by its main protagonist: God is represented by the divine ratio and telos of Heaven, and Satan is represented in the damned ‘irratio’ and telos of Hell. As Satan was the angel whose **Pride** drove him to plan and try and execute a coup against the rule of God, he is thus branded ultimate traitor, as his will was most *directly hostile to God* (all other damning sins could never be so direct, as Satan is the only one who had direct “access” to God)<sup>83</sup>. Thus, at least for Dante, all sins of eternal damnation were just gradations of the same anti-rational anti-just telos, exemplified by treason.

The notion of ‘will’ is inextricably implicated in betrayal. In my suggested hybrid of resentment and goodness – which is how I see the figure of ‘Zarathustra’ – the will appears as inherently treacherous (if it is, indeed, to be life-affirming): not only does it imply its own negation – like Zarathustra carrying the spirit of gravity – but that this negation is expressed in speech, and is of an *ethical* order. The ethical implication comes precisely from **a transcendent relation, which does not expend itself in the domination of representation**. Zarathustra presents us with the unfolding of the paradox of will: will is always already given over to representation, always already bears a mark, a sign, a purpose. Still, it carries within it something not given to representation, something wholly “mine” yet wholly inaccessible to ‘me’; something only accessible to the other, somehow. This secret, this inaccessibility, is not a mere negation of ‘will’, it is the very site of my subjectivity; it is the metaphysical condition of my ethical relation to the other, of my (relational) consciousness. *It is the “foil” of will* – not merely its negation – that, more than anything, denotes Zarathustra’s relation to the dwarf on his back. Zarathustra seeks a “new will”, one which affirms the path of ‘man’ but with the ability to do so while retaining *full response-ability*. I stress this since I see Lévinas’ ‘ethical’ project and Nietzsche’s affirmative ethos as radically distinct from, and highly critical of, (‘Christian’) morality; and that, furthermore, they walk on converging paths.

The contradiction of will, as discussed above, is one of an embodied will. Affirming this contradiction means precisely rejecting the religious view positing ‘man’ as a being of ‘sinful’ or ‘fallen’ materiality (the way Christianity depicts the condition of ‘man’<sup>84</sup>). This affirmation, of course, is also an assertion of ‘will’ as *inherently implicated in time* (insofar as it is *never* an ‘eternal will’).

When the dwarf speaks to Zarathustra of gravity, of *the logical conclusion to his ascent* (descent), I see it as *time* (through memory, history) that is speaking to him. In this reading, ‘will’ is depicted as always rattled by time, always harassed by it, but carrying it on its back nonetheless. ‘Will’, like Zarathustra, *needs this harassment*. This is a *metaphysical-ethical condition, a necessity* – and is why Zarathustra does not rid himself of the dwarf on his back. It is Nietzsche’s *ethos of affirmation* that requires that Zarathustra accept this oscillation of his ‘will’ as its *positive condition of possibility*. This is indeed a radical acceptance, since an oscillating will is precisely what the whole moral-system imputed to transcendence sought to efface in its “herd of believers”. An ‘eternal will’, to model ‘my own will’ after, then dominates me through the impossible and violent image of a ‘steady course’ – like the one depicted in Dante’s *Commedia* – that will lead me to a complete lack of oscillation – a merging of my ‘higher self’, my ‘spirit’, with the Divine.

It is this refusal of oscillation that both Lévinas and Nietzsche reject most emphatically, and most consistently. The fundamental metaphysical condition is one of an incommensurability of chaos and consciousness. To recall, Nietzsche writes:

The old word 'will' only serves to designate a resultant, a kind of individual reaction which necessarily follows a host of partly contradictory, partly congruous stimuli [...].  
[...] we deny that anything is to be made perfect as long as it is still made conscious.<sup>85</sup>

These contradictory stimuli, are, I contend, a fundamental condition of value qua value (as well as ‘life’ in general, insofar as chaos and opposing forces are posited as *essential and primordial* in it<sup>86</sup>). This is where I identify Nietzsche’s supra-moral dimension of morality, which here corresponds to that of the ‘embodied will’: it is an incalculable,

incommensurable, oscillating activity, which is nonetheless *individual*. Christian morality's attempt was to arrest this 'individuality' in order to maintain social domination – which would be, in Nietzschean terms, a negating, hostile gesture toward those contradictory and chaotic impulses (his famous 'Dionysian' ethos) – to impose upon it the fallacy of an eternal (and therefore always *disembodied*) will. This 'educational' gesture, in turn, produces strife precisely because will keeps its oscillations, keeps being *answerable to something over which it has no control*; and it is this strife that points to 'guilt' as a moral apparatus.

In Nietzsche's terms, guilt would be what becomes of my empathy and love after being marked by a moral *system* (imposed upon/in the name of 'God'). It is guilt, then, which keeps me "in line". In Lévinas' terms, this would be a *guilt that takes precedence over my responsibility* (this is what makes this moral structure also able to persecute and show considerable cruelty – my commitment is, through guilt, *displaced unto a moral system* rather than the person in front of me). Lévinas says this very very clearly when he speaks of responsibility, promoting a "Responsibility deriving from no guilt; a gratuitous responsibility"<sup>87</sup>.

It is this '*gratuitous responsibility*' that I see in Zarathustra's life-affirming, creative, 'new will'; a hybrid of *ressentiment* and goodness. It implies an opening to the other as a fundamental ethical condition, which is, moreover, *an affirmation of 'self'* (since it is an affirmation of the very conditions of possibility of this 'self' –the 'embodied will' itself).

It is therefore not surprising in the least that Dante placed the traitors at the core of all sin in his Infernal system: these were souls who not only *knew* the intricacies of the projected image that morality used to cover-over the transcendent (its abuse of the name

of God), but also acted, **wilfully**, *against* them<sup>88</sup>. In this respect, Zarathustra, the ‘destroyer’ of values, is the ultimate evil; an Antichrist:

And he who hath to be a creator in good and evil- verily, he hath first to be a destroyer, and break values in pieces.

Thus doth the greatest evil pertain to the greatest good: that, however, is the creating good.<sup>89</sup>

He knows the values, and thus indeed wields a will precisely against that ‘of God’, insofar as ‘the will of God’ is *represented* in those values. But what if Zarathustra were seen as one who tried to free ‘God’, free the name of ‘God’ from these (always already) false representations of it? What if this is, precisely, Zarathustra’s own faithful iconoclasm?<sup>90</sup>

Nihilism could thus be seen, then, as a reduction of will to a self-identical ‘self’, to a totality in the form of ‘a subject’, to a moral-structure. In abolishing metaphysics altogether (perhaps in making ontology fundamental rather than ethics) the command coming from the incommensurable other becomes submerged and covered over by ‘will’. This is what perverts the *command* and makes it up into *will* – the ethical command coming to me from the other (that same other that would not allow Nietzsche to give up either the metaphysical or the ‘value’ discourses) – what Heidegger “identified” in Nietzsche as the nihilistic “will-to-will” (which of course becomes the will to nothingness with the crumbling of that blank screen upon which we abused the name of God).

Let us take the ‘will to power’ (*Wille zur Macht*) at its **word**: considering Nietzsche’s philosophy and ethos of ‘becoming’ – the will to power being “how one becomes what one is” – this ‘will to power’ proves quite unwieldy if treated in conventional terms of

domination. To affirm life means to will becoming; not to will a definite ‘being’, a totality, *or any kind of structure* given to knowledge. He writes in *Ecce Homo*:

To become what one is, one must not have the faintest notion *what* one is.<sup>91</sup>

If so, what, then, *is* the ‘will to power’? As a becoming creature, as an ‘is’ already breached and haunted – embodied – by time, my own ‘willing’ of ‘me’ is already prefigured – through time – by an other (not mine, for ‘I’ has changed). Subjected to this other, the ‘I’ becomes the site of primordial displacements, not even amenable to representation – I cannot tell what ‘project’ led to the creation of what ‘I am’. Thus I have a ‘me’ already breached by a foreign and un-representable other, already owing its own existence to this other. To represent this other as having a ‘will’ (which is always already represented, *dominated via a represented telos*), to attribute it with a transcendent totality, would be to lock ‘me’ in a (moral) structure – just like what Christianity was exposed by Nietzsche as doing.

The ‘me’ of “becoming” echoes the accusative insisted upon by Nietzsche in the very heart of his philosophy: will to power. If ‘power’ is translated as, say, the hustle-bustle of consciousness (including what Nietzsche depicted as its chaotic contradictions, drives, abjections, objections, etc.) – a *becoming* ‘me’ – then the will to power is precisely the ethical command that comes at me from the (chaotic and contradictory) other. This is the transcendent force that the other employs on/in me, similar to the one the Dwarf employs on Zarathustra; similar to the one the slaves employ on the Nobles. This force/command is responsible for Nietzsche’s philosophy to be not merely about ‘will’ (Schopenhauer), nor ‘power’ (Plato – insofar as power, without a ‘becoming’, is reduced to the immobile Identity of an ‘*Eidos*’); but ‘will to power’.

If we posit will as an-archic (coming from an-other, lost time), and power as chaotic, perhaps it will be better understood what I hear in Nietzsche's ethos of affirmation, recurrence and the trans-valuation of values. Lévinas now takes the stage:

Responsibility for the others has not been a return to oneself, but an exasperated contracting, which the limits of identity cannot retain. Recurrence becomes identity in breaking up the limits of identity, breaking up the *principle* of being in me, the intolerable rest in itself characteristic of definition [or 'representation' – my comment]. The self is on the hither side of rest; it is the impossibility to come back from all things and concern oneself only with oneself. It is to hold on to oneself while gnawing away at oneself. [...] This anarchy in the recurrence to oneself is beyond the normal play of action and passion in which the identity of a being is maintained, in which it *is*. It is on the hither side of the limits of identity.<sup>92</sup>

Being is thus shown by Lévinas to be haunted by the very paradox of recurrence, *the very paradox of willing myself to become other*, the very paradox of transcendence. This paradox has ethical consequences that Nietzsche sensed, and Lévinas spent his entire life expounding; but the ethical-metaphysical basis is present in both. What comes at me from the other side of my self is precisely my 'will', but a will not defined, not represented, not abused. It comes to me in a diachronic fashion, always from a past immemorial, a past which is no longer mine, and yet utterly *commands my being to become*. This paradoxical relation of my will to my self is also inscribed within the very paradoxical ethics of recurrence: it is an affirmation of this space of otherness which allows the will to power to *keep making* me what I am (which always already is morally implicating, already irrevocably touched by the ethical dimension). Insofar as Nietzsche's ontology did affirm a chaotic "play of action and passion" (or, simply, 'power'), the anarchic, diachronous

relation brought to bear on ‘me’ by “my” ‘will,’<sup>93</sup> provides the precise *haunting of this ontology*, its peculiar rupture which Nietzsche discerned in his philosophy of becoming.

### Politics of treason?

To put Zarathustra’s riddle in our terms, let us posit Zarathustra as ‘Goodness’ and the Dwarf as ‘Ressentiment’. *Ressentiment* would thus continue to remind Goodness of its own ethical implication with the wholly other, an implication manifested in the very contradiction of the “embodied will”. This contradiction has radical implications on our notions of the political agent.

The most important thing regarding this contradiction, is that we are no longer dealing with a single, self-same, cohesive agent. We have a somewhat duplicitous creature, already inscribed within a primordial, “always already there” relation. What does that mean for societal systems of order? What would that mean for political or social institutions?

Well, for one thing, the system can no longer present itself as the ‘necessary and sufficient’ manifestation of the relation to the other. A person, an agent, already implicated in this deeper and fundamental relation – which is necessarily presupposed in every other social relation – is already at a certain remove from societal mechanisms, insofar as they are maintained within a teleological framework. Teleological frameworks are very common apparatuses of social control, where a shared sign or goal (or a sign of a goal) is used to maintain cohesion and order within a certain group. If I want what everybody else wants, we can share a culture, a set-of-values, indeed a language around it (it is not a coincidence that Marx’s dialectical materialism is almost inescapable in such a

depiction of societal control). This community would gather 'round shared definitions or depictions of good/bad, wanted/unwanted, in/out; and will thus be able – through a system of punishment and reward – to maintain cohesion and identity. But what were to happen had we put a Zarathustra there? Let's hear him once more:

Much is reckoned higher than life itself by the living one; but out of the very reckoning speaketh- the Will to Power! -

Thus did Life once teach me: and thereby, ye wisest ones, do I solve you the riddle of your hearts.

Verily, I say unto you: good and evil which would be everlasting- it doth not exist! Of its own accord must it ever surpass itself anew.

With your values and formulae of good and evil, ye exercise power, ye valuing ones: and that is your secret love, and the sparkling, trembling, and overflowing of your souls.

But a stronger power groweth out of your values, and a new surpassing: by it breaketh egg and egg-shell.

And he who hath to be a creator in good and evil- verily, he hath first to be a destroyer, and break values in pieces.

Thus doth the greatest evil pertain to the greatest good: that, however, is the creating good'.<sup>94</sup>

Zarathustra, in his very embodied willing, resembles other men. He acts and wills in the world; is a political actor. He speaks and hence can be a part of society; he is capable of rational thought and can therefore even assume some of those shared goals society has in store for him. He seems like one of 'us'.

But a dwarf talks to him. He speaks to Zarathustra behind his back. Suppose we allow societal-control its utopian vision – Zarathustra would then *become one with society*; inseminated, incorporated into the whole, into what Rousseau termed ‘the general will’. Assuming this utopian vision, we are now encountering a serious difficulty: if someone is talking to Zarathustra behind his back, then in this context it means that someone is talking to Zarathustra behind *our* backs. Zarathustra does not seem to change his actions in regard to this talk, but this talk continues, and doubt begins to nest. It is the embodiment of the will that does the talking, as if exposing will to the fact of being embodied. Lévinas’ conception of the fissure – between ‘body’ and ‘will’ – which allows the dwarf his ethical proximity and commands Zarathustra his responsibility, reverberates through what Lévinas called the interstice that separates work from the will. This is how he put it:

The part of eternal truth that materialism involves lies in the fact that the human will can be laid hold of in its works. [...] The steel touches not an inert being, the gold attracts not a thing but a will which qua will, qua "for itself", should have been immune from every attack. Violence recognizes, but bends the will. Threat and seduction act by slipping into the interstice that separates the work from the will. Violence is corruption - seduction and threat, where my will is betrayed. **This status of the will is the body.**<sup>95</sup>

This sort of power, which Lévinas terms as violence, is a form of power employed by some societal systems, hence the “eternal truth of [Marxist] materialism”: threat (the state’s monopoly on non-punishable-violence, for example) and gold (the sign of promise and progress) slip into the little crack that the will always opens with itself in its concrete actions, thus always in a position to sway the will, bending it, *as if* of its own accord. This

is how Lévinas allows Marxian critique to be implemented into his own ethical considerations.

However, what Lévinas does not address here is the fundamental relation – both in its differences and its similarities – between physical threat and seduction. Seduction always relies on an enticement that could potentially be satiated, that could even be refused (even by the “minimally willed” activity of ‘mood’). Furthermore, the further the threat is from being visible and direct – not a drawn blade of steel within reach of my body – it also shares in the *imaginary* aspect that seduction necessarily employs. This imaginary “crevice” itself is what lies at the basis of moral meaning, since it is, by definition, a relation of the will to its other, mediated by a certain “willed-material” (my body, the product of my work, etc..), thus is in itself an instance of the ‘pathos of distance’, and holds the same productive promises that Nietzsche had shown.

This very discrepancy, this very *duplicity*, is what *allows* social control. Since life would be unliveable – and would thus make society highly unstable – under individual-perpetual physical threat, the imaginary makes its (treacherous) call to be utilized as a means of ‘control over the will’, as a necessary link between the work/body and the will, subjectivity itself.

However, as societal mechanisms start “filling-in” this imaginary gap with signs and symbols, they are entering into a realm where control is imaginary-symbolic, and of an imaginary essence. This realm of meaning is *by definition susceptible to foreign wills*, to the foreignness of every will. These “means of production”, to put it in Marxist terms, are given to the proletariat, whilst it could never be ascertained that they will not take control

of these means. Indeed, the very attraction – or “false consciousness” the neo-Marxists might say – resides in these means being amenable to foreign wills.

The traitor, always defined as such after-the-fact, is not an ‘enemy’ in the classical sense. Treason is not an act which employs outside implements in order to coerce a foreign will from an ‘outside’. Treason always occurs from within. It must come as a surprise. And it must come from an individual who has access to his/her treason implements, which are *already contained within that culture/society*. For the sake of simplicity treason is abstracted here, to be considered an implicating *event*.

What sort of event is this? It is not mere ‘negation’, for the negation of a ‘will’ would only be that of the ‘enemy-will’, possible through an incorporating/annihilating war. However, it is still not fully containable within the will itself: betrayal has always been viewed as an ultimate danger to any system/society (as it has been always inconceivable in relation to will).

Lévinas’ inability to distinguish seduction from violence is to be taken seriously here, and is perhaps the only point on which I would not diverge from his thought (and here, I think, *psychoanalysis* provides a fine complement to his thought). As it is an imaginary realm, a realm, which – according to Lacan<sup>96</sup> – prefigures our symbolic order, but nonetheless structured by it (and therefore prefigures order qua order), it is nearly impossible to make out the violent threat from the enticement of seduction. The one threatens with pain, the other promises pleasure, but the very fact that pain and pleasure entail each other, brings us to an impasse in making this distinction.

Treason, I propose, is precisely what makes this distinction. As treason always works from within, it is always registered as an event (and a *traumatic* event); it is thus in a

*unique critical position* in regard to this realm of imaginary-control. As any ‘structure’ – whether cultural, national, moral, etc. – must rely on signs, which in turn must be assumed and circulated by ‘individual wills’, it offers us its violence-seductive pack with its own set of rules, its own set of values, interdictions. We become implicated, involved. As ‘threats’ become more and more sublimated, less and less visible, they circulate within these structures in the same way that “ordinary meanings” do (I am oversimplifying here, but the point remains). Thus comes into being a seemingly ‘homogenous’ or harmonious entity/structure of individual wills, whose violence had long since been blurred into the imaginary realm of symbols.

How can it be possible to make this violence manifest? To be *responsible* for it? Pointing a finger and calling a certain symbolic-imaginary construct ‘violent’ – the usual political-critical gesture – is still stuck within the co-optational logic of the imaginary system: if it is really a violence, it is too disseminated – supporting too many other structures – in order to be admonished by a mere sign, a mere pointing (within this small illustration, I feel, lies an entire discourse concerning academia’s “involvement in society”). “Anyone” can point differently, and thus it becomes a squabble over signs, “mere semantics” – the sign-system can co-opt it ipso facto.

But what happens when what is *pointing* is also of a ‘violent’ nature? What happens when ‘one violence’ is directed against ‘a second violence’? What happens when violence is *directed against itself*? This is precisely what happens in treason, which is limited, by definition, to using the system’s own violent implements. Violence’s own collapse, then, becomes a traumatic event – since this violence was already utilized (unnoticed, automated) in so many symbolic-imaginary constructions that its collapse

heralds their collapse as well. This entails a catastrophe, a poignant agony for this structure and its adherent-wills. But what is unique in this regard is that it is an agony that is impossible to pinpoint, to make sense of from within the structure, precisely because its very ‘glue’ – what keeps this structure together, the will-to-will *relation* – had been put in question in the most radical way. The system cannot co-opt this without a radical transformation, an agonizing catastrophe<sup>97</sup>.

Returning to Zarathustra, we are not talking here of this ‘new will’ as a “will-to-betray”. That would put us back within the logic of identity and resentment. Will, after Lévinas, *in its very goodness*, cannot help but be susceptible to betrayal (both as perpetrator *and* perpetrated), which for it marks a danger and a promise – that of radical breach. Who knows what the dwarf will tell Zarathustra next? As the “voice of his body”, won’t he advise him to run for his life as he “fights for his country”? Won’t he implore him a heroine indulgence every now and then? And – and this is the worst of all – won’t he do all these things *behind Zarathustra’s own back*? For the traitor is always defined *after-the-fact*. Treason – at least in the reductive conceptual cleanliness I’m offering here – *comes as a surprise to ‘the traitor’ as well*; an accident. It comes from behind his back. It has to. Otherwise he would be deemed an ‘enemy’ upfront and not be allowed in any meaning-structure. But as long as one has a will, one will be susceptible to meaning. And where there is meaning, there shall you find betrayal. It is inscribed in the very promise and threat of the future itself; treason *is* how one becomes what one is. As Lévinas writes:

The will thus moves between its betrayal and its fidelity which, simultaneous, describe the very originality of its power. But the fidelity does not forget the betrayal.<sup>98</sup>

## Chapter 2

### The Corpse

At the very depth of its hatred, reciprocity reveals itself

– *Jean Paul Sartre*

For me, for example (and this will hardly surprise you) the Holocaust is an event of still inexhaustible meaning. But in any death to which we are present, and I would even say in any approach to a mortal man, the reverberations of that extraordinary unknown can be heard. We apprehend it irresistibly in the encounter with death in the other man. The significance of that event is infinite, its emotion ethical through and through.

– *Emmanuel Lévinas*

### Introduction

One might advance the hypothesis that a (social) symbolic system *corresponds* to a specific structuration of the speaking subject in the symbolic order – *Julia Kristeva*<sup>99</sup>

One might wonder that we contest here the truth of the thought that situates death either in nothingness, or in being, as though the alternative of being and nothingness were not ultimate. Shall we deny that *tertium non datur*? – *Emmanuel Lévinas*<sup>100</sup>

The corpse is the figure of the other in its most horrifying aspect: it is uncontrolled, non-responsive, dead. It is also, irrevocably ‘there’ – a fact, something to be recognized, acknowledged, acquiesced. Thus the corpse occupies a curious phenomenological/antipathological space: it both calls out to be handled, and rejects our approach.

Being a ‘body without will’, the corpse also constitutes a symbolic threat to the consistency of the ‘Subject’: it recalls something in the Subject that is, simply, out of the Subject’s conscious control. Above, this symbolic threat has been articulated in terms of the paradoxical advent of time and its relation to will. My impending death provides me with a reminder of my own finitude, my own limits. Thus, related questions arise, to which Kristeva’s psychoanalytic approach provides an access, with the other’s death: an antipathology is called for.

The Corpse’ holds for thought, in my view, a twofold promise: First, it is, in a way, my access to Cicero’s famous dictum that ‘to learn how to philosophize is to learn to die’. In this milieu, death will not be taken to be the mere “end of all things” it is usually imputed with. What I focus on is rather the “brute fact” of death, its implication in *materiality* itself. ‘Death’ is to be thought here not as “*nothingness*”, for *it never fails to produce a Corpse*; it is to be addressed here **as an impossible question by the other’s death.**

It is this psychoanalytic vocabulary that helps me articulate that which betrayal ultimately exposes: mechanisms of violence inherent in the very system that grants the aforementioned ‘Subject’ with its consistencies and safeties. The corpse-encounter thus reveals, through the very abjection it provokes, the “stilts” upon which this “clean”

‘Subjectivity’ is supplementing itself with, which is a fundamental way of betraying it. In order to gain response-ability, hate and fear should take center-stage, should be worked with, through, and neither effaced in social-repression nor sequestered to ‘Hell’. This is emphatically not to dismiss these structures, but precisely to betray them, to bring out the violence inherent in them, as well as trace, and affirm, their own enabling conditions of possibility (for they are also, indeed, the enabling conditions of betrayal itself).

To trace back this encounter, I go to the very site of its exclusion – religious rites – and parasitize their structures to show precisely through them what they are trying to disavow or deny. These rites are of special import since, in their very sanctity, they acknowledge the irruptive meaning that the corpse encounter holds as a promise/threat. As such, they are particularly useful for this endeavour, as it will be easier to trace their disavowals (these disavowals are made explicit in them). This, indeed, is the second promise of the corpse to this thesis.

With abjection, a curious agency placed halfway between language and materiality, there occurs a fundamental moment of betrayal: the retches and convulsion of the body are a response, a communiqué, addressed to something that is beyond language, and that somehow still bears upon it just enough to produce a very real threat, terror. With abjection, the body betrays language, and in so doing surfaces its material – rather than merely symbolic – aspects. Julia Kristeva will allow me to explore this moment with a more honed vocabulary, that of psychoanalysis, which – in its concerns with subjectivity and language (after Lacan) – will be brought to bear on the more philosophical/political questions that this work tries to conjure.

### The Subject and the Object

Beginning is made heavy by itself; it is the present of being and not of a dream. Its freedom is immediately limited by its responsibility. This is a great paradox: a free being is already no longer free, because it is responsible for itself.

– Emmanuel Lévinas<sup>101</sup>

#### In the throws of Subjectivity

Lacan's breach into psychoanalytical history came with his famous lecture on the Mirror-stage. This essay was Lacan's account of a crucial moment in the founding of the 'Subject of Language', or the "I". It revolves around the distinction of 'self' and 'other', and occurs via a *dialectical* process: the baby (between 6-18 months<sup>102</sup>) sees an image of itself in the mirror<sup>103</sup>, and once recognizing it is indeed itself, is immediately struck by uncanniness: whilst the baby feels erratic, a playground of various unnameable drives and uncontrolled/unmastered motor skills, this image (re-)presents a perfection, which provides for it an *other*, which both narcissistically fascinates it (since it *is* it), and provokes its jealousy (since *it does not feel like it seems*). This (specular) image is, thus, an-other "it", another 'subject' (which, for the baby, means another *topos* for libidinal investment – this "image" is also its 'itself'). In fact, this very perfection-totality makes the image, paradoxically, "more 'subject'" than the baby itself, if only for its very coherence and stability. The baby will forever attempt to *become* this image – to *identify* with it (which is why Lacan also calls it 'ideal-ego') – thus forever recognizing otherness and forever "compensating" for it. These narcissistic forays into the image are the beginning of the baby's being able to identify with an object – thus a first manifestation of the advent of signs in the baby's psyche (the object is taken by the baby to be a sign of

him/herself). Later, these signs maintain the subject's own constitution as a 'subject' (in language). They persist as an attempt to equate "inside" to "outside" – "I" and "other" – insofar as it is this 'mirror' that created these distinctions in the first place, and insofar as this equation is already inscribed in absence, the metaphysical absence that is implied with the concept of 'sign' itself.

But had 'the mirror' created these distinctions in the first place? Kristeva, throughout her writings, insists that Lacan's formulation of the mirror-stage elides a very important dimension of language, and therefore, by (an inescapable) extension, of the very 'Subject' it traces. She contends that, while the Mirror-stage is indeed a crucial stage in the entry into language, there are still in language – and very much essential to it – drives and affects that are a necessary condition for this "symbolic inauguration" of the 'Subject'. It is also the very locus and possibility of abjection, of betrayal.

The baby's encounter with the mirror, then, always assumes a certain distinction it must experience, which Kristeva maintains is its distinction from its mother: only after the baby realizes that it has *needs*, and thus that its mother is *separate* from it (otherwise needs would not arise – like its previous, in-utero, state-of-being) can it recognize any 'outside' at all (e.g. mirror-images). The mother is then somehow separate, but, since the baby is not yet initiated into 'the Symbolic,' it does not know anything about this separate "entity" (it "learns of" separation *through* this very entity, and, most importantly, through *the very existence* of its own drives). This entity becomes, then, not an object – since 'object' is a totality only available in language (thus requiring a cognizing 'Subject') – but some sort of an unnameable **Thing**. The first distinction, then, is between the 'baby'

and ‘the Thing’. It is *the alterity of this Thing* that disrupts, but also enables, the ‘Symbolic order’, or ‘language’.

What is being addressed here is another ‘realm’, one which Kristeva calls – in contrast with Lacan’s ‘Symbolic’ – the *Semiotic*. It is where drives meet prohibition and/or constraint for the first time, thus inaugurated into the symbolic. Kristeva shows that this entry into language is conditioned upon what she calls a *dénégation* of the Thing:

[...] language starts with a *dénégation* (*Verneinung*) of loss [...]. “I have lost an essential object that happens to be, in the final analysis, my mother.” Is what the speaking being seems to be saying. “But no, I have found her again in signs, or rather since I consent to lose her I have not lost her (this is the *dénégation*), I can recover her in language”.<sup>104</sup>

Access to the Thing is, then, still preserved by the very *ambivalence* of ‘*dénégation*’. Kristeva is suggesting that a move that would disavow/deny that very *dénégation* (perhaps, indeed, one that would regard it as a simple *negation*), would preclude and foreclose upon the possibility of language itself.

It is in this context that Kristeva stresses, after Mary Douglas’ pioneering research<sup>105</sup>, the importance of *abjection*, the feelings of horror and disgust with which we turn away from certain objects. Kristeva shows abjection to be a persisting testimony of (my) drives’ mark on (my) language, producing – yet at the same time threatening with collapse – (my) sanity (since they are not objects, not yet, but an a-morphic “stuff” that exceeds (proper) signification). While the ‘object’ – already a *sign* – is identifiable, indeed “masterable” -- the *abject* slips away, never becomes proper (through)

signification, but only calls out in spasms, shouts, retches – *physical* indications of the *rejection-encounter* of a time immemorial.

### Fear and the language of want

Metaphor of want [*manque*] as such, phobia bears the marks of a frailty of the subject's signifying system. It must be perceived that such a metaphor is inscribed not in verbal rhetoric but in the heterogeneity of the psychic system that is made up of drive presentation *and* thing presentations linked to word presentations.<sup>106</sup>

Want is what indexes the absence of my Thing, ((my) secure non-differentiation with (my) mother). Excessively, irrevocably, it recalls a Thing that cannot be named. However, want still *insists in its affects* (or 'drive presentations'). The phobic object, here, corresponds to the abject; abjection still retains my encounter-rejection with/of this 'Thing'. It maintains the ambiguity of denegation itself.

[...] the phobic object is a proto-writing and, conversely, any practice of speech, inasmuch as it involves writing, is a language of fear. I mean a language of want as such, the want that positions sign, subject, and object. Not a language of the desiring exchange of messages or objects that are transmitted in a social contract of communication and desire beyond want, but a language of want, of the fear that edges up to it and runs along its edges. The one who tries to utter this "not yet a place", this no-grounds, can obviously only do so backwards, starting from an over-mastery of the linguistic and rhetorical code. But in the last analysis he refers to fear - a terrifying, abject referent.<sup>107</sup>

Thus language emerges, through Kristeva, to be inscribed by a fundamental tension created by the abject phenomenality of the Thing: ***speaking is both running away from***

**the Thing, and chasing the Thing.** This dual existence, this “near/far” game, is the source of that convulsive vertigo one can’t help but feel upon being beset by the abject/phobic-object. It all harks back to a radical alterity which lies at the very “heart” of language – the primordial exteriority of the Thing – its motivating, life-giving force; its “built-in” ambiguity. It is also the very possibility of betrayal, insofar as this ambiguity is structurally inscribed in our very linguistic subjectivity.

### The will to fear?

This aforementioned ambiguity is not easy to maintain philosophically, especially when identifying ‘subjectivity’, ‘identity’ and ‘agency’ with ‘will’. Will, as traditionally thought, involves conscious choice. It seems to be indexical of subjectivity/identity. However, the tension at the heart of language, the vibrations of the *want* through me as embodied *subject*, asks of me the impossible:

"The phobic object is precisely avoidance of choice, it tries as long as possible to maintain the subject as far from a decision; this is not done through a superego blocking of symbolization or through asymbolia, but to the contrary through a *condensation* of intense *symbolic* activities."<sup>108</sup>

So it is only in holding on to these two *heterogeneous* poles, only in assuming the inherent contradiction which the Thing and the symbolic impose upon us, do we find (our?) subjectivity in language (the aforementioned “intense symbolic activities”). **But how can this deferral of choice, this constant hesitation, allow any talk of an ethical/political subjectivity?** This is where betrayal marks its breach into political discourse: how to account for such an ambivalent will?

Melancholia – between ob and ab

This predicament is traced back by Kristeva precisely by what she identifies as the existing “solutions” to it: in psychoanalytic terms these solutions would consist in either incorporating the Thing, or denying it altogether, effecting its a priori foreclosure. The first, however, amounts to what Kristeva calls ‘depression’. This depression, as a pathological – and also political – phenomenon, tells something about the status that the ‘object’ has in the psyche:

By belittling and destroying themselves, they [depressive persons] exhaust any possibility of an object, and this is also a roundabout way of preserving it... elsewhere, untouched.<sup>109</sup>

If the Latin ‘ob-ject’ means what is being thrust *toward* me, ‘ab-ject’ is what *I thrust away* from me. This also undermines, in the very *activity* it suggests, the philosophical contention that language is a “mirror-of-nature”, and that we, as subjects, are passive receivers/conveyors of it. But the connection of the ‘I’ to the sign is also, Kristeva stresses, semiotic, bears on physical/material (or extra-symbolic) drives/needs<sup>110</sup>.

If ‘man’ is taken to be a mere perceiver of an ‘external’ world, she is then effectively erasing herself from this world in order to “let the object speak”. The object becomes, ideal, untouchable, and only offered in terms of this untouchability (any ‘touch’ already “ruins” the object, making it ‘non-objective’, etc.). The only way, however, to maintain the object’s untouched status, is to foreclose upon it. Thus, what Kristeva describes (above) in philosophical terms in her *Powers of Horror*, is being honed in psychoanalytic terms in her *Black Sun*:

The dead language they [the melancholic] speak, which foreshadows their suicide, conceals a Thing buried alive. The latter, however, will not be translated in order that it not be betrayed; it shall remain walled up within the *crypt* of the inexpressible effect, anally harnessed, with no way out.<sup>111</sup>

Feeling the Thing's loss as a primordial wound – which undermines *and* constitutes the speaking subject – the melancholic seeks to close this wound *once and for all*. But the wound itself can never be really “closed”, since the Thing lost can never be regained (consciousness itself is always already a sign of separation, bearing the scar/trace of the an-archic loss of the Thing). The radicalization of this closing gesture is what Kristeva alluded to above as the gesture of philosophical idealism, which leads to, I contend, the pathology of melancholia.

If language is a way of translating – endlessly (and perhaps “pointlessly”) – the loss of the Thing into concatenations of signs (language), then incorporating the Thing – denying its loss – amounts to a foreclosure on the enabling possibility of language. Melancholia makes language “pointless” by refusing to acknowledge the Thing's loss. As Kristeva hints, ***this is an act of loyalty: the Thing must not be betrayed (delivered)***. Also, and not coincidentally, the Thing's abjection will not be translated/betrayed, and the Symbolic thus dilapidates and slowly coagulates to a halt:

The dénegation of that fundamental loss opens up the realm of signs for us, but the mourning is often incomplete. It drives out dénegation and revives the memory of signs by drawing them out of their signifying neutrality. [...] At that point, translation - our fate as speaking beings - stops its vertiginous course toward metalanguages of foreign languages, which are like many sign systems distant from the site of pain. It seeks to become alien to itself in order to discover, in the mother tongue, a "total

word, new, foreign to the language" (Mallarme), for the purpose of capturing the unnameable. The excess of affect has thus no other means of coming to the fore than to produce new languages [...]. Until the weight of the primal Thing prevails, and all translatability becomes impossible. Melancholia then ends up in asymbolia, in loss of meaning: if I am no longer capable of translating or metaphorizing, I become silent and die.<sup>112</sup>

This is indeed the gesture that some philosophical discourses were, above, exposed as performing, their own foreclosure on betrayal, leading finally to melancholia. The second foreclosure is more ambivalent – and thus more interesting for our purposes – and enacted by Monotheism, to which we now turn.

### **Throwing Up, and Away**

“Gods, too, decompose”

- *Friedrich Nietzsche*

#### The abject as sacred

Kristeva’s inquiries into the notion of abjection are also inquiries into the meaning of religion. In that, she shares something with both Nietzsche and Lévinas.

‘The Abject’ is a construct that was initially formed by religion, the foundation of its notion of *the sacred*. Religion is shown by Kristeva, after Douglas, to have depended greatly on *purification* rites in establishing its authority. The abject is seen through its eyes as “pure filth”, and is thus a menace to be *continuously* removed. It is this ‘purity’ that will allow us to probe deeper into the meaning of abjection and its connection to betrayal.

Kristeva writes:

The purification rite appears then as that essential ridge, which, prohibiting the filthy object, extracts it from the secular order and lines it at once with a sacred facet. Because it is excluded as a possible object, asserted to be a non-object of desire, abominated as abject, as abjection, filth becomes defilement and founds on the henceforth released side of the "self and clean" the order that is thus only (and therefore always already) sacred.<sup>113</sup>

The abject is, thus, constituted as *an outside of a structure*, as what Derrida called a 'supplement'<sup>114</sup>. Thus, it is more of a "scaffold" than a 'pure outside'. This *necessary connection to the abject*, which carries into language as a threat and an urgent, fearful sign of a *pre-self* – as in Lévinas' an-archy – is brought to bear on 'the subject of language' by **the semiotic** element that comes to view in the defilement rituals. These rituals correspond, and communicate, with more fundamental rituals, those performed by the baby's care-giver insofar as its waste (urine, vomit, feces) need to be expelled<sup>115</sup>.

Thus Kristeva continually reminds us that: "there would be a "beginning" preceding the Word"<sup>116</sup>. Thus Kristeva now drives her analysis of monotheism home:

[...] there is no opposition between material abomination and topo-logical (holy place of the [Jewish] Temple) or logical (holy Law) reference. The one and the other are two aspects, semantic and logical, of the imposition of a strategy of identity, which is, in all strictness, that of monotheism.<sup>117</sup>

Religion, according to Kristeva, offers a unique "way out" of this abject-predicament. The abject is thus excommunicated from civility, from society, almost even from language. *The abject is rendered sacred* (through different forms of sacrifice), which signals, *as well as reiterates*, its primordial threat (to society and to the 'symbolic order' altogether). 'Sacredness', then, reveals **religion's ultimate dependence on the abject**:

had there been no defilement, it seems, there would have been no religion (nothing to be purified, nothing to aspire to outside of ‘this mortal coil’).

Sacredness and purity offer us assurances of ‘identity’, or being, quite simply, ‘proper’. As long as we keep ourselves ‘clean’ and ‘pure’, we indeed keep our ‘selves’ (our “souls”?). This is the logic of religion according to Kristeva. If we had mentioned the phobic object and the way it holds the subject in indecision, we have in religion a “cure” for this predicament: shunning the abject, elevating it to the level of the sacred<sup>118</sup>.

This will expose itself to be an ambivalent treatment of the abject, since in its sanctity it continues to function – and almost too explicitly – as a fundament without which religion cannot sustain itself. Its denial is ambivalent; and the moment of abjection – which comes before any symbolic construction (including those of religion) – is forever a reminder of this ambivalence. Insofar as it is undermining the totality of the ‘I’, and using the I’s own disavowals as its enabling condition – the moment of abjection is indeed a moment of betrayal.

### Identity under siege

The more or less beautiful image in which I behold or recognize myself rests upon an abjection that sunders it as soon as repression, the constant watchman, is relaxed.<sup>119</sup>

The abject urges ‘identity’, and reinscribes unity, in the subject. In the Bible, Kristeva points to the book of Leviticus – which is basically a taxonomy of purification rites and laws – as relying its entire *structural integrity* upon God’s **unitary** existence:

We then encounter one of the extreme points of that logic, which [...] states, after having thus established their foundations, the bases of those separations. It is nothing other but the One God.<sup>120</sup>

The centrality of separation is recalled by one of monotheism's interdictions against its most abject notion: the *hybrid*<sup>121</sup>. These interdictions, Kristeva claims, are telling of the whole system of religious-monotheist prohibitions as well as the monotheist relation to the abject in general. The threat consists in, as Kristeva shows, these hybrids' being *primordially suggestive of the baby's connection to its mother* (or care-giver), and hence of the subject's very coming-into-being in language, its (unfortunate/sinful/mortal) **connection to the Thing**<sup>122</sup>.

This connection recalls a time of non-differentiation from a 'material', "fleshy" origin, which means a realm where the subject is not yet formed, where the subject still bears an 'oceanic' *proximity* to, or non-distinction from, the Thing. It is a threatening, pre-objectal origin *whose forgetting is always already active*, and because of that threatens representational 'identity' insofar as it undermines its illusion of self-containment and, most importantly, the clear division between it and 'body'.

When *I* encounter the abject, **it is (my?) body that reacts**, convulses. **The abject signals a certain complicity with my body**, a certain *common language*, a certain "time immemorial" of contact. Kristeva says of this "accursed origin":

Never is the ambivalence of drive more fearsome than in this beginning of otherness where, lacking the filter of language, I cannot inscribe my violence in "no", nor in any other sign. I can expel it only by means of gestures, spasms, or shouts. I impel it, I project it. My necessary Thing is also and absolutely my enemy, my foil, the delightful focus of my hatred.<sup>123</sup>

These bodily (re-)actions, are *not willed by 'me'* as 'subject'; they are not facilitated by 'my will', but over and beyond 'my will' (and yet, *somehow*, still 'mine'). This *correspondence* is deep and does not require any "conscious approval"; it operates almost in-spite of me, suggesting some sort an-archical other, inaccessible to 'my will' (thus provoking, bothering my subjectivity).

The abject is thus, to my very horror, *talking to me "behind my back"*, as it were. It is as if it has a form of communication with my body that *I* am not master over, that 'I' cannot control. Something that was supposed to be part of 'me' "talks" to the abject, confounding my notion of self-sameness and wilful-mastery. It precisely confounds my identity, but from within it. This is the way betrayal operates – it precisely parasites such unacknowledged discrepancies in consciousness, and brings them to the fore. This is betrayal's gift to the 'I', but also the source of the intense, radical pain it inflicts.

If earlier it was the **rejection-encounter**, in this context the abject appears, in the experience of abjection, as a short-circuit, an **illegal contiguity** - - the very *hyphen* between rejection and encounter. My very rejection is already tainted, tainting, undermining my illusory control over (an always already linguistic) reality, and, most terrifyingly, *over my own body*. These "bouts" with abjection are the productive, semiotic, aspect of language; and they are also the most threatening.

### The Corpse's Betrayal

the corpse, the other that I am and will never reach, the horror with which I communicate no more than with the other sex during pleasure, but which dwells in me, spends me, and carries me to the point where my identity is turned into something undecidable.

– *Julia Kristeva*<sup>124</sup>

But before the death of the other, my neighbour, death the mysterious appears to me, in any case, as the bringing about of an aloneness toward which I cannot be indifferent. It awakens me to the other.

– *Emmanuel Lévinas*<sup>125</sup>

Is not the pure realization of self presence, itself also death?

– *Jacques Derrida*<sup>126</sup>

The concatenation of “self and clean” is, I maintain, already *a strategic move*, already inscribing a symbolic constraint. It is indeed this constraint that enables my ‘identity’ as a speaking subject under monotheist law.

Kristeva lists that which, in said ‘strategy of identity’, is considered “filthy”:

Excrement and its equivalents (decay, infection, disease, corpse, etc.) stand for the danger to identity that comes from without: the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death.<sup>127</sup>

‘Clean’, thus, becomes a precondition of ‘self’ in this symbolic economy. But there is a contradiction here: excrement and corpse are not inherently ‘outside’. They emanate from ‘inside’; **‘I’ am already implicated in them.**

Within this logic, the corpse suggests the most dangerous threat to symbolic identity: it has no ‘spirit’, and yet it is, in some form, “human”; it is a ‘me’ that somehow does not

abide by me. A “semiotic” ‘me’? This possibility, of an extra-symbolic human, cannot be tolerated within this strategy of identity.

### Integrity – the empty stable

Thus, the extra-symbolic, needs to be expelled in the name of God/Law/Identity. Expelling is, however, insufficient, for what is to assure us that this filth would not, in some way or some form, come back to haunt us? Here, the symbolic notion of ‘integrity’ plays a decisive role, resounding in its very absence, in (symbolic) frailty:

Let us posit that defilement is an objective evil undergone by the subject. [...] But from where and from what does the threat issue? From nothing else but an equally objective reason, [...] the frailty of the symbolic order itself.<sup>128</sup>

There is a clear connection to the melancholic’s predicament here. It is an attempt at foreclosing upon the wound (of the loss of the Thing), denying it, and thus sinking into what Kristeva calls *asymbolia*. It entails the loss of ‘self’, the renouncing of language, and, sometimes, life itself<sup>129</sup>.

Speech, as discussed above, can only persist through a dénegation of a loss of the Thing. Dénegation, as Kristeva points out time and again, is first of all *a doubling in consciousness*: I accept loss on one plane, and deny it on another. Symbolic activity, then, occurs as a certain “translation” between an acknowledged loss and its denial<sup>130</sup>. *Consenting* to lose the Thing, then, holds *a treacherous promise* to “get the Thing back”. *Melancholics are unwilling to trust this treachery*. Closing their psyche off, they function as misers who are, to paraphrase a popular proverb, keeping the stable doors locked – never to be opened again – but *always already after* the horses had fled.

Thus, the Thing can no longer supply – in its wounding, its absence – the impetus needed for emergence of meaning, its call is denied its audience (and with it the *ability to respond* to it is effaced, averted): whether this subject believes she prevented the Thing’s escape, or whether the subject believes he can “do without the Thing”, result in the same asymbolia. An impregnable barrier will now be attempted, to keep the abject at bay:

The constituting barrier between subject and object has here become an insurmountable wall. An ego, wounded to the point of annulment, barricaded and untouchable, cowers somewhere, nowhere, at no other place than the one that cannot be found. [...] Separation exists, and so does language [...]. But no current flows - it is a pure and simple splitting, an abyss without any possible means of conveyance between its two edges. [...] petrification on one side, falsehood on the other.<sup>131</sup>

Thus, what was designated by the symbolic order as an “objective evil”, is now being designated as “falsehood”. It is true that this is, indeed, an accurate observation.<sup>132</sup> However, it is through this very ambivalence – this very “self-deception” (*dénégation*) – that language comes into being in the first place. In a way, the discreteness of the borderline/melancholy is the most pure, *the most loyal*: it does not “dirty” itself with this deception, *it does not betray* (the Thing).

### The corpse – will’s horror

[in the Bible] A decaying body, lifeless, completely turned into dejection, blurred between the inanimate and the inorganic, a transitional swarming, inseparable lining of human nature whose life is undistinguishable from the symbolic - the Corpse represents fundamental pollution. A body without a soul, a non-body, disquieting

matter, it is to be excluded from God's territory as it is from his speech.[...] it must not be displayed but immediately buried so as not to pollute the divine earth.<sup>133</sup>

As alluded to earlier, religion and rationality offer a way of saving 'will' from its inherent ambivalence/betrayals, but at the cost of language's enabling conditions. 'Will', in both solutions, becomes intolerant of tension – and seen, on these terms, to be an arrested intervention, a 'giving up', a helpless passivity. To these ideologies, the *frailty* of our symbolic/representational system is something either to be eliminated (like in the Hegelian notion of absolute knowledge), or to be ashamed of and make sacrifices for (Religion's "in the name of God").

Kristeva mentions time and again the etymology of '*cadaver*', deriving from the Latin *cadere* – to fall<sup>134</sup>. It recalls the Biblical notion of the fall of Man from Eden (thus depicting corporealization as already a certain "necessary evil", indicative of some 'primordial sin', of a 'trespass' against a certain Absolute). Being this fallen matter represents our servitude; that this would constitute a deficiency (the result of 'sin') *makes this servitude into our detriment*<sup>135</sup>.

If our 'body' is the first "fall", effected by Adam and Eve's refusal of 'God's will' (the 'Original Sin'), then the corpse, being a refusal of man's will, constitutes a doubling, or radicalization, of this fall; a further distancing from will. The corpse seems immanently passive, non-communicative, out of bounds. It is the ultimate remainder, waste; it is utterly "useless". Lévinas writes:

Human life is the attiring of physiological movements: it is decency. Human life is a "hiding", a "dressing", that is at the same time a "denuding", since it is "associating". (There is an emphatic gradation between showing, dressing, associating). Death is the

irremediable gap: the biological movements **lose all dependence in relation to signification, to expression**. Death is decomposition; it is the no-response.<sup>136</sup>

The corpse-encounter thus suggests a predicament in which we have no connections to this ‘body’; or, more precisely, no more *symbolic control* on the body: speaking to it does not incur any response; physical interventions fail to provoke even a mere a change of focus in the eyes - - we seem unable to establish a connection.

Rather than the impossibility of connection, I maintain, we are struck with our inability to *will* a connection, to make the connection representable *as ‘what I will’*. More precisely: it is a reversal in our assumed hierarchy between will and connection itself. For, *relation* is yet to be abolished. The corpse is still abject, still horrifying. I cannot, thus, ‘ignore’ it; in this case *the death-of-the-other* is too present, perhaps an ultimate experience of excess-of-presence (as alluded to in the Derrida quote given above).

All of a sudden, this corpse calls – in ‘me’ – a connection that is unlegislated, unwarranted; not pre-ordained, as it were, by my conscious ‘will’. It invokes this connection – through my very horror, through my very fears, through my utter destitution – in *the corpse’s proximity*<sup>137</sup>. Its abjection is absolute; it signals upheaval. Something within us, primordially connected to language – here ‘the semiotic’ – disturbs us *as ‘subjects of language’*, precisely through recalling its own substitution, sacrifice (what Kristeva called ‘dénégation’).

It is this semiotic, then, that suddenly **turns the tables on ‘me’ in the corpse-encounter**. The corpse provokes in us primordial fears that persist no matter what symbolic structures or contingent meanings we lobbed at/against them<sup>138</sup>. *We react with*

*abjection despite ourselves*, placed, the way Kristeva says, “*outside ourselves*”. This corresponds precisely to Lévinas’ ‘*exteriority*’:

The exteriority of being does not, in fact, mean that multiplicity is without relation. However, the relation that binds this multiplicity does not fill the abyss of separation; it confirms it.<sup>139</sup>

Being is exteriority. This formula does not only mean to denounce the illusions of the subjective, and claim that objective forms alone, in opposition to the sands in which arbitrary thought is mired and lost, merit the name of being. Such a conception would in the end destroy exteriority, since subjectivity itself would be absorbed into exteriority, revealing itself to be a moment of a panoramic play. Exteriority would then no longer mean anything, since it would encompass the very interiority that justified this appellation<sup>140</sup>

This ‘exteriority’ is, I maintain, the ‘body-lost-to-will’; it brings us to a *proximity* that is non-negotiating as well as non-negotiable. “My will” as a ‘subject’, my mastery of ‘body’ through language, suddenly collapses into servitude, recalling an abject origin; what were initial separations betray their supplemental character for ‘my subjectivity’ (in and through rationality/faith).

Suddenly, ‘I’ am/is in *danger of becoming like the corpse*; my conscious actions – always already symbolic – have no effect. Have ‘I’ become infected with its excessive passivity? Could I have been always already “infected”? The mirror shows me only a distressing, persisting passivity that still calls to me in a strange but nonetheless e/affective idiom. I begin to mirror this body’s passivity as it mirrors mine; narcissism faces its other, its wholly other, in this moment of abjection/betrayal<sup>141</sup>.

No Exit – the corpse and the Other

The movement of human life even tends toward anguish, as the signs of expenditures that are finally excessive, that go beyond what we can bear.

– *Georges Bataille*<sup>142</sup>

Recalling Sartre's 'No Exit'<sup>143</sup>, his vision of Hell was simply: "the other". It was not, however, 'the other *person*', for within that chamber in *No Exit* everyone had already died. Estelle, one of the departed, is eventually driven mad by the very proximity of another: Inez. Inez's (projected) ability to think of and look at her drives Estelle to try and kill Inez. Inez however, knows she is *secure*, since she is already dead, and thus *cannot be murdered*.

Much has been written on Sartre's concept of '*le regard*' in this play (which supplies us here with a convincing metaphysical reason for Estelle's rage and madness at Inez's 'regard'). But what of the characters' ironic *depression*, the knowledge that there is, in fact, 'no exit'? This depression descends upon realizing that *the other cannot be murdered out of existence/thought*. This would depict *No Exit* as a play directly concerned with what Lévinas calls 'ethics'. Lévinas writes:

Can one break with being? Can one *exit* being? Don't negation and annihilation leave in place the stage on which negations and annihilations are played out? Isn't the outside inside, in a sense? Aren't we always enclosed within existence? No escape.<sup>144</sup>

So, metaphysically, there is, indeed, no exit; no escape from this peculiar, indeterminate 'Thing'. And "morally"? Again, Lévinas offers us here an important insight:

It is in vain that we dismantle the *I* that is concerned about itself [...] in order to reveal a "devotion" to the other person in its depths, to the point of cancelling out

egotism in its modality of mutual kindness in the graces of the Western world's polite society: suffering *for* the other and *in* the other does not reach disinterestment. The altruistic consciousness returns to itself. Suffering for and in others – is others making me suffer! [...] And that ends in the temptation of murder.<sup>145</sup>

In *No Exit*, then, we are dealing with *corpses, in proximity*. *Corpses* make up the protagonists/antagonists in the play. This 'Otherness', Sartre is quick to realize, defies our Symbolic order, as it defies our exchange-economy; and by defying both – this was Lévinas' import – it questions our very *morality*. For "I" cannot any longer suffer *for* the other, since this Other has relinquished all possibility of retaining anything; this other quite simply cannot accept any (moral, symbolic) *equivalence for the gift it already is* in its very *interruptive materiality*, in its very excesses.

In Sartre's play this theme is realized through the unchanging, *nonnegotiable* 'regard' of Inez (in this context, the regard can well be interpreted as the 'stage' Lévinas mentions in the previous quote). Sartre shows us that when 'the regard' – in its very materiality, facticity, *intransigence* – cannot be dealt with – controlled, bargained with, secured – it becomes unbearable; *abject*.

This Otherness invokes what I believe Mauss recognized in the insanity of 'the potlatch': its giving makes – *abjectionally* – manifest an excess which breaches exchange-economy. This results in theatres-of-destruction, meant to rid one of her ability to give (if 'I' have nothing of – an always already represented *and* sanctioned – value, then I am "no longer *accountable*"), and therefore exonerate her from any moral culpability/accountability – not to be confused with Lévinasian *responsibility* – of 'not giving back'<sup>146</sup>:

**The corpse is *the incommensurable gift***, that ‘I’ can never give (back) to, a *troubling passivity* that is incorrigible. The potlatch, then, is precisely the excessive attempt to “denude myself”, which only proves its fallacious character once ‘I’ am left with nothing but ‘body’, the incommensurable/unrepresentable, ultimate, gift. ‘*Body*’ is *exposed to the possibility of gift* in this madness (since “it is all I have left”). No longer can a symmetry – not even a fantasized one – be maintained in the system once this fallacy is exposed, once the asymmetrical performs its interruption.

**This otherness assaults me with its own radical passivity**, with its own helplessness, but also with its own invincibility. This explains how this otherness would be an invitation to murder, and probably the most extreme one (almost a command) - - but also why it is one which can never be truly fulfilled. I could suffer for this ‘body’, I could strain to the extent of my ability, but I will never receive the *recognition* – always a symbolic one, to be sure – that ‘I’ am after, the one that reassures my subjectivity (via my representational/symbolic, cohesive ‘will’).

Connecting this to the religious notion of the sacrifice, it becomes even clearer: what is given over to *God* could be reputed to *transcend* materiality, to have reached God and been received by Him. **But the corpse is too close for comfort**, in too much *proximity*. Every ‘thing’ given is *not even indulged the benefit of the rejecting gesture* (indeed, rejection would inscribe it as ‘guilty’ in our exchange/moral-economy<sup>147</sup>). It is indifferent, set, non-negotiable. How dare it?!

It is this *moral anguish* – this primordial and disavowed fear – which is brought to light here. This is, once again, the radical pain that abjection/betrayal effects.

Recalling Kristeva's linking of language, and will, to fear, this anguish then assumes its full meaning when considered as the *ambivalent* product of the **maternal gift**:

For we are dealing with imprecise boundaries in that place, at that moment, where pain is born out of an excess of fondness and a hate that, refusing to admit the satisfaction that it also provides, is projected toward another.<sup>148</sup>

Pain, anguish, are *produced in response to* this primordial, an-archic excess of fondness, or luxury. Hatred, much like abjection, is my – almost “unintentional” – response to the incommensurable (maternal) gift of materiality/body/corpse. It is ‘incommensurable’ because it is infinite; because it is entirely mired in *an economy of expenditure* that defies exchange<sup>149</sup>. It is an economy that challenges the symbolic/representational order; that *does not reciprocate in a representational manner*<sup>150</sup>. This, precisely, is the economy of betrayal.

It is indeed *the work of hatred* to seek an object, a reason, a way of expending this anguish - - but the corpse offers no respite, no options. It does not even respond. **It breaks the rules, but passively**; it could very well be that *the rules are breaking themselves in this proximity*.

Lévinas writes:

There is here an end that always has the ambiguity of a departure without return, of a passing away but also of a scandal (“is it really possible that he’s dead?”) of non-response and of my responsibility.<sup>151</sup>

The terror of the corpse is the terror of an *excessive passivity*. This ‘non-response’, this scandal that offends me to my very core, calls – through the anguish of abjection/betrayal – for **my response-ability**. Thus, *far from altruistic morality*, which denies ‘me’ in order to acquiesce ‘the other person’, this alterity persists within a radical

proximity of *both*, which unveils that ‘altruistic’ gesture’s own violence toward the other<sup>152</sup>. It is only in proximity – signalled in excess – that the other is allowed a relation, and this is always an agonized relation. When we speak of betrayal, I maintain, we refer precisely to this relation.

When Kristeva writes of Celine’s writing, she acknowledges that he knew “where to look for the other’s call”, that his writing was indeed an act of response-ability for the other:

The dizziness Celine gives way to and binds himself to in order to tap emotion from the inside is, as he sees it, the fundamental truth of scription. Such dizziness leads him to the fulfillment of a kind of challenge to abjection; it is only thus that he can, by naming it, both have it exist and go beyond it. "Vulgarity" and "sexuality" are merely stepping stones on the way to the ultimate unveiling of the signifier; at the limit, such themes scarcely matter.<sup>153</sup>

This “dizziness”, the aforementioned madness at the other’s incommensurability, is what Celine dives in to precisely because he does not ritualize – thus representing, regulating – hatred (like in Judaism), and neither does he internalize it (like in Christianity or melancholia<sup>154</sup>); he revels in it – repeatedly naming it, exploding it with signification – affirms it (he is, in fact, working through *the logic of antipathology*). Celine jumps into Hell, as it were, in order to betray its secrets.

Insofar as the other is the ultimate justification, the ultimate reason and unreason, of language, Celine’s writing is his own foray into proximity. Perhaps Celine reads as anything but ‘civilized’, but we see here that this civilized ‘morality’ is an effacing of the other insofar as ethics is concerned. It is only by diving into abjection, into hate, into Hell

– that we can betray morality, that we can learn how is it exactly that morality, to quote Lévinas, “dupes us”.

### **Conclusion: The Body’s Turn**

The corpse, in its radical passivity, pits its very flesh against me. The Corpse’s betrayal is thus made manifest in its very *material*. The Corpse “just lies there”, completely passive, and seems to have the last laugh. *This body is now, literally, out of control*, removed from the realm of (symbolic-conscious) will; the other person, in death, truly becomes, inescapably, *my* problem. And the beauty of it is that the more I hate it, the more I am afraid of it, the more it becomes my problem<sup>155</sup>.

This is an important aspect of the Corpse’s betrayal, and a fundamental element in what I here term ‘antipathology’: the corpse both instigates, enflames, *and then uses, my own hatred, against me*<sup>156</sup>. Fears suddenly rise from their dogmatic slumber to the surface: will I be infected by this thing? What is this absolute nakedness about it? What is this seemingly peaceful state that now leaves me to do all the work? Why can’t *I* be like that?

The Corpse simply does not play by the rules. The rules say that passivity is inductive to control. Suddenly, **passivity becomes that which subverts control through its own enactment**. Suddenly, we realize that *the Body* carries – I think an ethical – “weight” (indeed it was religion to first acknowledge this).

This body – usually so amenable to suggestion that we believe it to be entirely subsumed within ‘the (symbolic) will’ – stops “taking orders”; refuses ‘the will’. “**Now**”, the corpse seems to be saying, “*is the body’s turn*”. It is a turn not just in its

intransigence, in its resistance to being willed or symbolically-controlled; it is also not only the turn as the place it has in “the order of things”; it is also the turning of the rotten flesh, the risky, unusable flesh, that threatens us to our very core.

If ‘my body’ seems to follow ‘will’, seems to be a “passive matter”, it is the corpse-encounter that suggests that it will turn on us, will have the last laugh (and by implication that, in fact, it had been laughing all along). The (dead/non-responsive) body in relation to will, shows itself indeed as *supplement*: it is being disavowed but relied upon; moreover, this disavowal is precisely what is relied upon in its own ‘passivity’.

When inoperative or uncontrolled – dead, sick, impotent, etc. – **this supplement betrays**. What had been *trusted implicitly* – thus also taken for ‘given’ – gives way, betraying its own alterity. Then, suddenly, I feel a pain that is laced with confusion: **there is no ‘one’ to blame for this pain**; worse – *there is no reason* (yet another fundamental moment in this antipathology). This betrayal is presupposed by the incommensurable gap between what is identified as ‘me’ and what is identified as ‘mine’. In the corpse encounter, as in betrayal, the ‘mine’ betrays, turns on, the ‘me’.

It is otherness – exemplified in the corpse, the turned-body – that leaves me speechless and senseless. Had it been a de-finite ‘object’/‘machine’ that ‘I’ encounter, ‘I’ could impute reason upon its actions, its behaviour, thus control it symbolically. This is the way that Sartre showed that ‘*le regard*’ works its power.

The corpse, however, has no regard for ‘regard’. It, thus, betrays *regard’s own destitution*, its lack of control; it “tells-on” its brittle symbolic-nature, toppling it down from within, just like a traitor. This body does not ascribe to the regard, which is supposed to be omnipotent and omnipresent. Now this hatred, which derives from a very

real pain of “being played for a sucker” by the regard, effaces itself through morality: we ascribe a certain moral value upon this ‘traitor’ in order to “manage” him/her through our judgments (and, of course, no one is more judged than the traitor).

This judgment enacts a certain attempted foreclosure on my responsibility toward this ‘rebellious-other’, a foreclosure which then alleviates the pain, and conceals our hatred (as it is also a clear sign of our own destitution): “he/she is bad/misguided/weak”; was never “of” the regard; was never made of the right “material”. But the corpse, the other’s body, harrows our responsibility in a way that does not allow us such an easy escape. It is the perpetrator of the perfect crime, since it has no ‘subject’ (to be identified as the perpetrator); no culprit, no motive – no *reason*. Seeking to eliminate the perpetrator proves either futile, or, when taken to its radical conclusion, nihilistic.

There are more politically-abstract figures that could be analyzed in relation to this antipathology of the corpse<sup>157</sup>. My fundamental aim is to open these figures to renewed discussion, using what I identify as a radically new approach to the Symbolic through the linguistic critique of subjectivity and Lévinas’ attempts at an ‘ethics-as-first-philosophy’. Enabling as it is devastating, this critique offers us, through its notions of **responsibility** and **proximity**, a way of looking at the inherent contradictions of ‘will’. Not in order to “solve” them; and not even to “advance our knowledge” of it - - but to sustain it by *affirming its enabling conditions*.

As far as these enabling conditions go, then, they are irrevocably implicated in what I term ‘betrayal’. This idea offers a radical new promise for political thought; and perhaps a radical new threat as well.

## Chapter 3

### The Dilettante

I was not one man only, but the steady advance hour after hour of an army in close formation, in which there appeared, according to the moment, impassioned men, indifferent, jealous men... In a composite mass, these elements may, one by one, without our noticing it, be replaced by others, which others again eliminate or reinforce, until in the end a change has been brought about which it would be impossible to conceive if we were a single person

- Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*

We are all false men; the Traitor has given away the game again; by his passion to make himself human, he reminds us that our race does not exist. The author of this work is a rat, as we might have suspected. And what is more, a rat possessed.

- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Of Rats and Men*

### Introduction

The sorcerer is the Word. His magic is in a sense merely an interminable *flight* from word to word, sentence to sentence, book to book. [...] Here is the first sketch for an impossible portrait [...]. This athlete of language employs a verbal gymnastics that makes the “me” wither away as other forms of gymnastics make the paunch wither away.

- Francis Jeanson, *Somebody called Sartre*

The figure of the dilettante, insofar as my travels in the realm of knowledge permitted me to discover, was never explored ‘as such’ in any manner close to what I had in mind<sup>158</sup>. Perhaps not surprisingly, present approaches are more focused on the institutional and sociological aspects of what are called ‘amateurs’; this means mostly that the object of research became somewhat of a mirror-image of already established professions and institutions, and mostly became “useful counterparts” in a coherent onto-sociological system.

The dilettante is the recreational traveller of knowledge and experience. This chapter, thus, is written in a *form* reminiscent of the dilettante’s: it hops back and forth between various discourses and fields of knowledge, parasitizing other authors’ conceptual frameworks and arguments, thus delineating *a movement* which is as crucial to the argument made here as the ‘final conclusion’ – insofar as one could be procured here – is.

If the dilettante is employed by a passion in order to move through the flows of desire implicit in knowledge – indeed in any symbolic construction that presupposes its own totality – then it is this passion that is brought to the fore here, both thematically and performatively.

The dilettante is thus to be conceived of as an assemblage, as radically carrying the force and promise of an assemblage. I comprised this concept from as many ‘artificial limbs’ that I could manage so long as I could still have this monster smile. Thus Deleuze and Guattari’s figure of the nomad, in its effects on what they called sedentary and state-logos, will provide the basis upon which I “lump together”:

- 1) Kristeva’s account of ‘the stranger,’ insofar as the experience he brings to the fore in the citizen – or in any kind of ‘we’ into which he enters – the

animosities and/or indifferences that constitute the ‘we’ (the basis of political identification).

2) Nietzsche’s figure of the ‘gay scientist’, insofar as it is a figure that brings passion to bear on the realm of experience and knowledge (perhaps even the realm of scholarly exploration in general?)

3) Michel Serres’ concept of the ‘parasite,’ inasmuch as it constitutes a disturbance in the ontological accounts of the communication-encounter, also suggesting something of the despicability that I emphasize in the figure of the dilettante

These are adjoined with Emmanuel Lévinas’ formulations of the encounter with the other person as an ethical moment which presides and takes precedence over subjectivity as such, already suggesting a fundamental breach upon which our very subjectivity is based. Lévinas will also help me show something about the way that the dilettante’s conditions of possibility are premised precisely on that very breach which constitutes our subjectivity.

Thus my dilettante will be addressed here as a specific type of trespasser: the gay trespasser who (ab)uses knowledge to singular/individual/unauthorized ends. Insofar as all sciences and disciplines might be seen to originate by such a figure, I consider this to be a particular haunting of a repressed origin of these bodies of knowledge; perhaps it is the very ‘spirit’ of these ‘bodies’, the ghost of their machine.

## A Nomad – Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

### Nomads and States

Across his various texts, Gilles Deleuze elaborated on a figure he called the nomad<sup>159</sup>. It is crucial to the understanding of his and Felix Guattari's elaborating concept of the 'war-machine'. The war-machine could very well be called a specific mode of Being within a 'world'. It does not exist "as such", but always in collaboration (and opposition) to what Deleuze and Guattari call 'the State'. Amongst other characteristics, these represent two incommensurable and yet pertinent "logics" for thought/knowledge/politics.

Prominent in this regard is their reading of Anthropologist and Ethnologist Pierre Clastres' famous work, *Society Against the State*<sup>160</sup>. In this book he maintains – through study of the nomadic *Guayaki* tribe in Paraguay – that the assumption that the State is the more advanced/sophisticated form of tribal – or 'primitive' – societies is, at the very least, questionable. These tribal societies – not only do they not *entail* any kind of 'State' organization, but – are actively arranged as a refusal of any such possibility, an *active* rejection of this logic.

One aspect of this refusal is exemplified in this tribe's attitude toward leadership and its political role/function: a leader in this tribe is only kept a leader insofar as he is able to attune himself to the *desires* of the tribe. This contingency is not to be taken lightly, Deleuze and Guattari emphasize, as it is in direct contradiction with the 'logic of State'.

"The concern of the State", Deleuze and Guattari emphasize, "is to conserve"<sup>161</sup>. Thus, unlike the desire-oriented fluidity of power in the nomadic tribe, the State's power-structure is '*arborescent*'<sup>162</sup>: it branches out from a main locus (the 'trunk') into smaller and smaller loci of power, via a 'striated' **hierarchy**. Within such a structure, rule is maintained

by adhering to a law, usually a pre-established and static one, which insures the power position's stability solely by virtue of its '*legal standing*'<sup>163</sup>. These structures perform the aforementioned function of conservation in the State-apparatus, insofar as they prescribe specific conditions for specific goals; proceeding via *procedures*.

The nomads have a completely disparate 'logic'. The 'State-form' promotes a logic of "Sovereignty": in it the State and its structures are preserved; the world is defined in terms of definite, stable categories; and it is fundamentally dependent on a clear-cut distinction between 'inside' and 'outside', what *is* 'State' – interior to it – and what *is not*. As such it is completely at odds with the nomadic war-machine, which is taken to inhere rather in its exteriority, in its ability to be otherwise than itself, in perpetual metamorphosis:

The State-form, as a form of interiority, has a tendency to reproduce itself, remaining identical to itself across its variations [...]. But the war machine's form of exteriority is such that it exists only in its own metamorphoses.<sup>164</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari – in a very characteristic move – refuse to make these 'logics' merge in an '*Aufhebung*' of sort, nor have them cohere completely apart from each other. In fact, it is this very disparateness of character of these 'two logics' that they follow and affirm:

It is in terms not of independence, but of coexistence and competition in a perpetual field of interaction, that we must conceive of exteriority and interiority [...]. The same field circumscribes its interiority in States, but describes its exteriority in what escapes States or stands against States.<sup>165</sup>

Hence the nomad-society – which is, in my interpretation, coextensive with the 'war-machine' (insofar as it is thought against the 'State-form') – becomes a specific harassment for the State apparatus, a constant challenge to its logic; a gadfly, of sorts<sup>166</sup>.

### Nomadic spaces and 'State' territories

These two logics are further differentiated by their articulation of space. Deleuze and Guattari recall the famous Husserl text *The Origin of Geometry*<sup>167</sup>, in which Husserl addresses what he calls a 'Proto-geometry' (*proto* meaning first, or initial), as a study of *vague* forms or "morphological essences". They note that the word 'vague' in itself is reminiscent, in its etymological origin, of the *vagabond*, the nomad. Thus, the same logic which appropriated the 'primitive tribes' as "a few thoughts shy of 'State logic'", is what they consider as making Husserl account for 'Proto-geometry' as a 'vague' (and also 'primitive') form of the more *exact* 'Geometry'<sup>168</sup>. So the aforementioned disparate logics now also correspond to disparate articulations of space:

The first is a **geometrical** space, which is a space which persists only insofar as it can sustain lines, cuts, interconnections – akin to the 'arborescent' figure depicted above. This logic proceeds via *theorems* – prescriptive laws that account for a specific distribution and assure its stability, much like the way the State-form assures its own stability – and is therefore dubbed by Deleuze and Guattari as *theorematic*.

The second is an-other kind of space, a '*smooth space*', and to which the "vague-science" adheres: it is a 'smooth' inasmuch as it does not consist in *pre*-scribed delimitations, but a space which would allow for all that is *curved* – as opposed to the logos of straight lines and/or Ideal shapes (where curve is only an attribute of 'circle', for example) – to inhere in and of itself<sup>169</sup>.

These curves-and-kinks refer to what Deleuze and Guattari call '*problematic*' – as opposed to the 'theorematic' – figures, and are of an entirely different nature; they are, nonetheless, not "less rigorous" if considered within their own 'logic', or mode-of-

being/becoming. Of course, the *relation* between these disparate figures is what Deleuze and Guattari want to foreground:

A theorematic figure is a fixed essence, but its transformations, distortions, ablations, and augmentations, all of its variations, form problematic figures that are vague yet rigorous.<sup>170</sup>

In their account of the way geometry appropriates curved spaces, Deleuze and Guattari reach a general – and I would say political – conclusion: the difference between these two logics refers directly to **the figure of the ‘law’**. Unlike the traditional view of law, which makes it coincide with the Greek notion of *nomos*, Deleuze and Guattari consider *nomos* as the ‘logic’ of the *nomad*, marking it in direct opposition to the Greek *logos* (which they associate with the specific law of the *polis*):

The space of nomad thought is qualitatively different from State space. Air against earth. State space is “striated”, or gridded. Movement in it is confined as by gravity to a horizontal plane, and limited by the order of that plane to preset paths between fixed and identifiable points. Nomad space is “smooth”, or open-ended. One can rise up at any point and move to any other. Its mode of distribution is the *nomos*: arraying oneself in an open space [...], as opposed to the logos of entrenching oneself in a closed space<sup>171</sup>

This disparity is described by Deleuze and Guattari in terms of *distribution*. Distribution is **a potentiality of movement** within a certain space: the State-form’s movement must, thus, cohere with an ‘arborescent distribution’, while ‘nomadic movement’ adheres to a *rhyzomatic*, ‘nomadic distribution’<sup>172</sup>.

### Movement vs. Speed

With distribution-across-space as a defining characteristic of nomadic/State modalities, we arrive at a vital distinction, which will be highly useful for our ‘dilettantic explorations’: the distinction between two types of *movement* (which corresponds directly with the relationships of the nomads’ and the State’s modes of distribution in their respective spaces): ‘State-form’ engenders ‘movement’; the nomad’s – ‘*speed*’.

The “movement” of the nomad, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is not to be confused with any kind of ‘physical-movement’ (at least in the way that the laws of Newtonian physics depict it). True to their *unique mode of distribution* – their ‘smooth-space’ – one can already sense that any kind of ‘movement’ in the Newtonian sense would be implausible: for one thing, a ‘smooth space’ does not allow any ‘volitional’ (and thus always already re-presentational) *directed*-movement; it allows no *resistance*, no friction, to enable that. For another thing, within the Newtonian schema, movement is always space-relative; it follows from this that it is always in relation to a certain fixed point can anything be perceived as ‘moving’.

Whence the nomad’s uniqueness: since ‘smooth space’ does not contain any fixed points – as it does not support any fixed identities (only ‘State-physics’ allows points, lines, fixed identities) – its movement is *quantitatively imperceptible*. It is *time* – and not space – *relative*. The nomad’s movement is *qualitative*, and not quantitative; *intensive* and not extensive: it is instantaneous; pure ‘*speed*’. As such, it cannot be quantitatively *measured*; ‘State-science’, the science of stasis (Deleuze and Guattari sometimes call it ‘Royal-science’), cannot perceive its intensive, ‘*absolute-movement*’.

For the ‘State’ to conceive of movement – or any *change* for that matter – it must be given in the forms of the extensive, ex-tended (stretching-out) – like the branching of a tree in regard to its trunk, or James Dean’s car in regard to a police-officer’s radar-gun.

An ‘intensive movement,’ however, is pure energy; it is the very possibility, or radicalization of movement. It is an *in-tensive* (toward-stretching) one, thus more of a ‘becoming-movement’, a potentiality; closer to the contingent *action* than to authorized *procedure*. Thus, while ‘movement’ will always bear the crutches of ‘relative-to-something-fixed’, speed is instantaneous, miraculous; illegal, insofar as it is unauthorized by any (pre-existing metaphysical/ontological) ‘law’:

[...] a movement may be very fast, but that does not give it speed; a speed may be very slow, or even immobile, yet it is still speed. Movement is extensive; speed is intensive. Movement designates the relative character of a body considered as “one”, and which goes from point to point; *speed, on the contrary, constitutes the absolute character of a body whose irreducible parts (atoms) occupy or fill a smooth space in the manner of a vortex, with the possibility of springing up at any point.*<sup>173</sup>

### Nomad Science, Nomad War

The notion of ‘nomadic science’ – or ‘ambulant/itinerant-science’ – is supplied by Deleuze and Guattari precisely to counter but also to converse with what they call ‘State-’, or ‘Royal-science’<sup>174</sup>. The two sciences have been in a relation that up until now consisted in the State-form trying to, literally, “square the nomadic circle”. Deleuze and Guattari call it an appropriation of *nomos* by *logos*.

As a general rule, they say, *nomos* is translatable to *logos*. However:

[...] the complexity of the operation testifies to the existence of resistances it must overcome. [...] There is always a current preventing the ambulant or itinerant sciences from being completely internalized in the reproductive royal sciences. **There is a type of ambulant scientist whom State scientists are forever fighting or integrating or allying with.**<sup>175</sup>

The dilettante's 'antipathology' is made clearer here, insofar as the ambulant scientist can provoke discord and hostility from 'State-science'. Deleuze and Guattari even go so far as to claim something of the birthright of the scientific disciplines with regards to this excessive, somewhat "dilettantic-science":

Each time a new *field* opened up in science [...] it proved irreducible to the field of attraction and the model of the gravitational forces, although not contradictory to them. It affirmed a "more" or an excess, and lodged itself in that excess, that deviation.<sup>176</sup>

It is precisely nomadic science that settles, so to speak, "in that excess", which is also precisely the 'State-science's own *exterior*, its unacknowledged, unsung 'other'. It is in this respect that it is perfectly positioned for a political, as well as epistemological, critique of State-science and State-logic: it is epistemologically critical insofar as it delimits the knowledge-claims of 'State-science' itself – the curves which aren't representable via its geometrical/arborescent delineations (or 'striations') – and politically/ethically critical insofar as it only subsists in an already answerable position toward an other, who is **necessarily usurped** of its domain, and, furthermore, is being repeatedly appropriated, being made "digestible" to 'State-logic'<sup>177</sup>:

[...] State science continually imposes its form of sovereignty on the inventions of nomad science. State science retains of nomad science only what it can appropriate;

it turns the rest into a set of strictly limited formulas without any real scientific status, or else simply represses and bans it.<sup>178</sup>

Thus, a refusal to be incorporated, born(e) by a ‘logic’ foreign to the State, is introduced through the concept of the *war-machine*. The war-machine is the collective name that Deleuze and Guattari use to depict the movement-character of the nomads through space. If the State’s purpose is to claim space, to striate it and divide it into properties<sup>179</sup>, then the nomads’ peculiar “movement” upsets that logic by precisely moving through that ‘*Same space*’ – when they happen to intersect – and miraculously/irreverently act as if the aforementioned lines and properties were not there.

If the State divided space into territories of consumption/ownership – a movement which Deleuze and Guattari call ‘territorialization’ – then the nomads’ ‘speed’ precisely *de-territorializes* the space due to its sheer intensity<sup>180</sup>. This deterritorialization is politically perceived as dangerous for the State, since the State’s very *logos* **rests** on the assumption that everything that *is*, is territorializeable, graspable, measurable.

What gives the ‘war-machine’ its power is quite different than what makes a “strong army” in the sense we might normally think of. It is not a matter of imposing ‘a will’ on ‘a terrain’ (of claiming property, forts, lives, etc). The ‘war-machine’ is, as Deleuze and Guattari insist, *imperceptible*. Its *nomos* persists not through imposition, but through a passivity, *a radical passivity* (somewhat akin to the no-movement-pure-speed element of the warrior/nomad mentioned above)<sup>181</sup>.

Yet another jab at the willing, ‘conscious subject’ is implied in the notion of ‘*following a flow*’. The nomad-warrior, unlike the ‘State-worker’, is not interested in preservation of the Same and does not require a constant referral back to a fixed property (again, in both

senses of the word). She is thus “freed” from “working the land” so that she can *follow* it. Hers would not be a world of ‘formed-matter’, pre-authorized by *logos* and accounted for by lines-of-demarcation and the King’s signature on the blueprints; hers would a universe of assemblages, of chance-encounters, of that which opens up in the specific modality of the nomad’s presence<sup>182</sup>.

As a ‘nomad scientist’, as a warrior, she follows a flow of desire – precisely *not* ‘mastering it’; but also, most importantly, not appropriating it as ‘her desire’. In a way, she is *of* desire; desire “has” her.

The important distinction that Deleuze and Guattari make between ‘feelings’ and ‘affects’, makes for a good transition to Julia Kristeva’s concept of ‘the Stranger’:

The work regime is inseparable from an organization and a development of Form, corresponding to which is the formation of the subject. This is the passional regime of feeling as "the form of the worker". Feeling implies an evaluation of matter and its resistances, a direction (*sens*) to form and its developments [...], an entire gravity. But the regime of the war machine is on the contrary that of *affects*, which relate only to the moving body in itself, to speeds and compositions of speed among elements. Affect is the active discharge of emotion, the counterattack, whereas feeling is an always displaced, retarded, resisting emotion.<sup>183</sup>

## The Mourning Sun – Kristeva and Nietzsche

### A Violence Laid Bare (*deterritorializing morality*)

Today the notion of the *foreigner* is indeed endowed with a legal meaning: it refers to a person who is not a citizen of the country in which he resides [...]. Indeed, such a framework is soothing, it allows one to settle by means of laws the prickly passions aroused by the intrusion of the *other* in the homogeneity of a family or a group. It also ignores, without in any way resolving them, the discontents of that singular condition that amounts to claiming a difference at the heart of a set that, by definition, comes into being by excluding the dissimilar.<sup>184</sup>

To relate to the passage above in Deleuzian terms, then, would identify the ‘*legal*’ notion of the foreigner with the ‘State-form’'s attempt to square-the-circle of its nomadic other, to submit it to – explicitly a ‘State’'s – *logos*, trying to avoid or sidestep the threats of her *nomos*. The “prickly” aspect of the ‘passions’ – which I interpret as the aforementioned ‘feelings’ that Deleuze and Guattari contrast with the nomadic *affects* – would be precisely where they “spill over” in excess due to their *affective* quality; it is the way Desire “fights back” – not through resistance, but through a troubling of the hands attempting its manipulation as a tool - - like thorns on a rose.

The *deterritorializing effect* that the nomad performs in her intersections with the ‘State’, and the very affects (or Desire) that the nomad rides so effortlessly, provoke, in the ‘worker’/‘citizen’, precisely what Nietzsche would call ‘ressentiment’, or ‘bad conscience’<sup>185</sup>. This provocation is akin to arousal, and, I maintain, corresponds to Kristeva’s notion of ‘abjection’.

The stranger is not just ‘different’. As with Deleuze, “difference” – as long as it is located safely in the realm of the proper(ity) – is quite manageable. Radical otherness,

however, is not only unmanageable, but it is *the “unmanageable” as such*. If Deleuze conceived of it in terms of following the flow of Desire – which allows no mastery, and thus no prescribed – or authorizing – conception of ‘self’ (which is, of course, the first “perk” of representation) – then Kristeva conceives of it as a harrowing presence, an unresolved discontent lying deep within – or just beside – the notion of ‘citizenry’; deep within, or just beside, the ‘legal’ in and of itself. The nature and stakes of this harrowing or haunting hint-of-presence, is thoroughly implicated in Nietzsche’s thought.

In his *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche is very much preoccupied with questions of religion and morality. One might perhaps think that a ‘Gay Science’ would be an elaboration of the epistemological questions that arise in relation to it, in relation to ‘truth’, etc. Nietzsche indeed does that as well. However, for Nietzsche it seems that the epistemological questions are irrevocably linked with the questions concerning morality and values.

This, perhaps, is not new, as the ethos of “knowing the world” and achieving an “ultimate understanding” of it has always considered to be a ‘worthy ethos’. But, Nietzsche *reverses* the relation: truth is no longer seen as the justifying basis of value; quite the opposite – value will have been shown by Nietzsche to be at the basis of any claim to ‘truth’. **‘Truth’ is thoroughly dethroned of its privilege**. The ‘gay scientist’, then, is considered primarily not in her relations to ‘truth’ or ‘the objective world’, but primarily in relation to the question(ing) of value<sup>186</sup>.

This is where, I think, Nietzsche’s genius comes to the fore in – literally – the most *striking* fashion. Similarly to Socrates’ famous ‘gadfly’ function, Nietzsche is not only an agent of an-other realm of meaning – accessed through ‘gay science’ – but a *provocateur* who also provides the psychological impetus for the analytic self-question.

Consider the following passage from aphorism titled ‘*The fool interrupts*’ (Book 5 of *The Gay Science*):

If one would hate the way man was hated formerly [...], wholly, without exception, then one would have to renounce contempt. And how much fine joy, how much patience, how much graciousness do we owe precisely to our contempt! Moreover, it makes us “the elect of God”: refined contempt is our taste and privilege, our art, our virtue perhaps, as we are the most modern of moderns.

Hatred, on the other hand, places people on a par, vis-à-vis; in hatred there is honour; finally, in hatred there is fear, a good and ample element of fear.<sup>187</sup>

The reader of *The Genealogy of Morals* will perhaps be quick to note here several elements that were prominent in that book. Most importantly, Nietzsche is showing how what are considered to be ‘good moral values’ are in fact based on a condescending contempt, which bases itself on an *ideological* clinging to an exterior/interior relation to the world (through, naturally, an “abuse of the name of God”). In short, it presupposes a specific metaphysics, where ‘truth’ is ascertained by a certain **unconditional** factor – God, Sameness, the Platonic Idea – that resides outside this world, and it is this factor that “wills” our world, that knows it, masters it.

This ‘outside’, of course, has a will and a purpose – in short, a *logos* – and thus assures us, consoles us, that everything around us is subordinate to (His) Word, Law, etc. Science, then, also becomes subordinate to this mechanism of *ressentiment* – or ‘spiritual revenge’ as Nietzsche calls it – and begins to search for an “eternal truth” with the very tools that its metaphysical assumptions presuppose; namely, *representation*: the subordination of difference, or, in Deleuze and Guattari’s idiom, *logos*’ appropriation of the *nomos*.

Now we might better understand Nietzsche's complaint about the lack of 'intellectual conscience' in his fellow men, for the language he uses here exposes something of his provocative *technique*:

But to stand in the midst of this *rerum concordia discors* and of this whole marvellous uncertainty and rich ambiguity of existence *without questioning*, without trembling with the craving and the rapture of such questioning, without at least hating the person who questions, perhaps even finding him faintly amusing - that is what I feel to be contemptible, and this is the feeling for which I look for in everybody. Some folly keeps persuading me that every human being has this feeling, simply because he is human. **This is my type of injustice.**<sup>188</sup>

Hate, thus, appears here as a trigger of discord, the arousal of a questioning, of an 'intellectual conscience'. It is such a conscience that allows the *problems* of morality and value to arise. In the previous passage Nietzsche depicts it as a dimension of possible contact, a *face-to-face* ("vis-à-vis") *relation*.

To put it in the Deleuzian terms of difference: if the man of science – the priest (an "advocate of 'the State'") – "held his own" against a hated exterior, other, and was at least *bothered by the difference* which this other presented and tried to master it - - at least *he* had more intellectual conscience than she who does not even consciously try to subordinate difference anymore, simply because it had already been abolished altogether (or so it seems; Nietzsche – "*stupidly*" – refuses to believe that this is the case).

Kristeva understands this mechanism, and gives it a political twist. First, she acknowledges the possibility – simultaneously political and psychological – of the foreigner's not being taken seriously, of not being heard; thus, Kristeva speaks *to* the foreigner<sup>189</sup>:

Interest is self-seeking, it wants to be able to use your words, counting on your influence, which, like any influence, is anchored in social connections. Now, to be precise, you have none. Your speech [...] will cause no improvement in the image or reputation of those you are conversing with; [...]

One will listen to you [...] and one will forget you in order to go on with serious matters.<sup>190</sup>

This, however, presents a challenge to the foreigner, not as any ‘ethical hero’ or ‘moral teacher’ (whatever those phrases designate), but simply as an-other who wishes to be *heard* (recall Nietzsche’s necessary-folly, or ‘injustice’). If one cannot sustain such an existence of detachment and silence – in short, if one refuses melancholia – one has to become relevant, to make oneself pertinent somehow, to “get in the other’s face”.

As we saw, Nietzsche was aware of this psychological insight, and thus kept trying to *matter* to his foreign surroundings. And being a foreigner, expressing one’s otherness openly and without ‘shame’, is particularly beneficial for bypassing all ‘civility’, all sedimented forms of ‘morals’. Kristeva writes:

Detestation tells you that you are an intruder, that you are irritating, and that this will be shown to you frankly and without caution. [...] Civilized people need not be gentle with foreigners.<sup>191</sup>

Now, the question arises: why “detestation”? Why “hate”? Why not elicit a people’s ‘love’, ‘agreement’, ‘generosity’, ‘friendship’ in order to make oneself ‘seen’?

Nietzsche himself already gave us the answer to this when he says (quoted above): “[...] without *at least* hating the person who questions” [my italics]. ‘At least,’ here, suggests some sort of *scale* that Nietzsche is trying to depict (as well as climb). He suggests that any

acknowledgment of difference occurs in stages: beginning with ‘complete indifference’ (as depicted above), *then* hate/ressentiment, and only then ‘friendship’<sup>192</sup>.

This is indeed the psychological structure perhaps imposed on the foreigner, but it is also the possibility of self-critique or self-analysis that the ‘citizen’ might experience via the foreigner. Kristeva repeats this insight many times in her book; for example:

From heart pangs to first jabs, the foreigner's face forces us to display the secret manner in which we face the world, stare into all our faces, even in the most familial, the most tightly knit communities.<sup>193</sup>

The foreigner, thus, becomes a veritable *ethico-political critique of the ‘we’* in and of itself. In a way, then, Nietzsche is a Socratic gadfly, harassing his surroundings into revealing – mostly to themselves – the traces of a hatred that had been engrained so deep within their mental/linguistic-structures that it is *no longer accessed* (and becomes part of ‘access’s very structure).

Provoking my hatred of the other due to his ‘foreignness’, carries with it the psychological shock-value of a person who catches herself in a vast discrepancy with her image of herself and of her surroundings.

This realization, however, will always have to pass through the uncomfortable, “uncivilized” hatred (which ‘Christianity’ stifled consistently *in the name* of ‘morality’). Aggression, a Deleuzean reading might say, is an *affect*; it is – I propose – a recognition of the call of the other. More than that: as an affect, it lies at the base of our very response and response-ability to the other *as* other, to difference as such -- these are **never** ‘comfortable’ encounters.

Thus, any representational structure that represses this affect to a “hidden corner,” performs what Lévinas would call an ethical violence toward the other. Kristeva notes:

Eventually, the shattering of repression is what leads one to cross a border and find oneself in a foreign country.<sup>194</sup>

And even more explicitly:

[...] foreigners [...] have the fearsome privilege of causing a State to confront an other (other State, but also out-State, non-State...), and, even more so, political reason to confront moral reason.<sup>195</sup>

Thus, my Deleuzean-Kristevan reading of Nietzsche sees him trying to enact a moral *and* political deterritorialization. His attitude is, no doubt, discursive: only thus is violence “laid bare”. It is also, of course, a serious **risk**, an *implication*: not only for what might happen when the “pent-up rages” of the ‘Europeans’ are released from the territorialization imposed by the repressive State-logic (‘State-religion’/’State-law’), but mostly because Nietzsche never claimed to be a herald of a *better* time; only an other time, one of higher-men (who would be ‘friends’ *through* foreignness, and not against it).

Early on in ‘*The Gay Science*’, Nietzsche addresses “the things people call love”; in them he recognizes, time and again, that love is subordinate to what he calls ‘*possession*’. If we recall the previous section on the nomad, we can see how Nietzsche is indeed working toward a true ethic-of-the-nomad, or a true nomad-politic: possession would, in that sense, be a part of ‘State-logic’, since it presupposes an ‘Identity’ both to the ‘possessor’, *and* to whatever *is* ‘possessed’ (the former as the ‘proper-owner’ and the latter as ‘property’).

If a person, according to Nietzsche, is but a battlefield of chaotic forces<sup>196</sup>, this ‘ability for true possession’ is illusory (unless, of course, some force imposes a static representation

that an 'I' can identify with). Not given to a representation, the concept of love loses many of its characteristics, since it implies an openness to desire/affects which we like to ascribe only those who are (materially) *un-tied*. It is an *outrageous lightness*, that precisely undermines any illusions of 'possession' that we might have of the other person<sup>197</sup>. Thus, Nietzsche writes:

Here and there in life we might encounter a kind of continuation of love in which this possessive craving of two people for each other gives way to a new desire and lust for possession – a *shared* higher thirst for an ideal above them. But who knows such love? Who has experienced it? Its right name is *friendship*.<sup>198</sup>

Could this higher thirst be for the ideal of foreignness itself? For Kristeva, at least:

The foreigner's friends [...] could only be those who feel foreign to themselves<sup>199</sup>

### Odd to Joy – the 'nomadilettante'

Above, we discussed the nomad's warlike passivity; in following the flow of Desire, she would be perceived from an 'outside' – which in this case would be from within the *logos* of 'State' – as unstable, whimsical, perhaps even threatening. Not only that, but she would seem to have yet another abject characteristic insofar as she is *lacking a 'self'* (since any identification via a represented identity breaks apart – *detrterritorialized* – once coming in contact with the excess of Desire/affects).

If indeed Nietzsche is performing a critique of the 'we', he nevertheless insists that this critique should be performed under the sign of **affirmation**<sup>200</sup>. Now, this denotes a specific kind of problem: the person supposed to instigate difference – and thus to provoke hatred – is also supposed to do so under the sign of affirmation; how does one go about performing

such a feat? Here we can begin to glimpse what I tentatively call the ‘logic of betrayal’.

Nietzsche writes:

Just as a traveler may resolve, before he calmly abandons himself to sleep, to wake up at a certain time, we philosophers, if we should become sick, surrender for a while to sickness, body and soul - and, as it were, shut our eyes to ourselves. And as the traveler knows that something is *not* asleep, that something counts the hours and will wake him up, we, too, know that the decisive moment will find us awake, and that something will leap forward then and catch the spirit *in the act*.<sup>201</sup>

As Deleuze would probably immediately have noticed, the figure of the nomad is here present, again, in full view of its radicality. The figure of the traveler *who appears sedentary/static* – perhaps even a ‘good citizen’? A ‘patriot’? – but who’s in fact “ticking with intensity,” a potential nomad. Like always, with nomads, *it is only a matter of time*.

This is precisely what it meant by ‘*following a flow*’, and this is what makes the nomadic ethic so dangerous for State-logos: it is not only uncontrollable, but unpredictable. Who *knows* when this dormant, seemingly ‘normal’ traveler “wakes up” and leaps from out of his “representational illness”? Who *knows* how many carefully placed limits she will smooth-out with her deterritorializing gestures, with her unbridled affects? Who knows the potential devastation and specific stakes of his impending betrayal? Who knows them if even they – as “sleeping” – do not know?

Not only can the nomadic traveler of knowledge/thought (the seeker of self-knowledge, this “rider of affects”) become “sick” and sedentary; it seems that in order to pursue a ‘Gay Science’, it becomes a *necessity*: for it is only after such periods of “sickness” that the capacity for joy becomes more refined, better equipped to *receive* (able to “catch the spirit in the act” as Nietzsche says):

[one returns from a period of pain/sickness] [...] more ticklish and malicious, with a more delicate taste for joy, with a tenderer tongue for all good things, with merrier senses, with a second dangerous innocence in joy, more childlike and yet a hundred times subtler than one has ever been before.<sup>202</sup>

Of course, when Nietzsche refers to a ‘dangerous innocence’, he is not merely referring to his surroundings, but also to the ‘innocent noble’ himself. As Nietzsche’s ‘gay science’ – quite similarly to Deleuze’s ‘nomad science’ – concerns a *passion* for knowledge, this passion must be allowed – like all ‘affects’ – to lead where *it will*<sup>203</sup>.

Nietzsche’s ‘knowledge’ is decidedly not – or not just – the “usual” ‘body-of-work’ of scientists and scholars, lying in books and waiting for the serious researcher to uncover their secrets. What is implied here is *a different type of movement*, again. In another borderline ‘ethical’ claim Nietzsche points out:

Oh those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial - *out of profundity*.<sup>204</sup>

Thus our ethical explorations of Nietzsche’s Gay Science brought us to yet another characteristic traditionally abhorred in the dilettante: **superficiality**, surface movement. Just like the nomad’s lines of flight which operate in a supposedly ‘smooth space,’ the nomad’s ‘absolute-movement’ – as that of the ‘gay-scientist’ – is always *horizontal*. She never really *entrenches her position*. In that, she is, indeed, always a potential foreigner; and always, in a way, not ‘serious’. For ‘State-scientists’ – those who are committed to the ‘work-regime’ and the *logos* of the ‘State’ – being in proximity to this kind of attitude might trigger suspicion, or derision/effacement; but also, hopefully – *hostility*.

For Kristeva, the foreigner's very proximity to 'another's abode/property' provokes a *doubling* effect in the sedentary/resident – whether 'citizen' or 'specialist/expert/master'.

The nomad scientist, in his very presence/proximity, enacts a doubling that disturbs:

For, curiously, beyond unease, such a doubling imposes upon the other, the observer, the feeling that there is a special, somewhat insolent happiness in the foreigner. [...] something has definitely been exceeded: it is the happiness of tearing away, of racing, the space of a promised infinite.<sup>205</sup>

It is thus part of the very *excessive* quality of the 'nomadilettante' that promotes this appearance of happiness, this foreign, odd kind of joy. This 'joy' is decidedly *not* special due to its 'contents', but precisely due to its '*situatedness*' (or – more precisely – its *nomos* in conjunction with logos). Nietzsche's 'gayness' in *The Gay Science*, is also an 'odd joy':

The trust in life is gone: life itself has become a problem. Yet one should not jump to the conclusion that this necessarily makes one gloomy. Even love of life is still possible, only one loves differently.<sup>206</sup>

This new kind of happiness follows a *nomos*, an affective-flow. With it, what is being affirmed is precisely the *exteriority* of an 'I', precisely this 'I's *implication* in its surroundings/'appearances', *through and due to affect/desire*. Thus, what used to be a 'feeling' in 'State-, or representational-logic', becomes an affect; what used to be a possession becomes desire/assemblage.

It is also implicated in exteriority. The 'nomadilettante's' motion is always beckoning an exterior, not because there is 'a subject willing itself "outward"', but because it is exteriority itself that brings 'the subject' into being (though not according to any – divine or other – *will*). Kristeva articulates it accurately:

This means that, settled within himself, the foreigner has no self. Barely an empty confidence, valueless, which focuses his possibilities of being constantly other, according to others' wishes and to circumstances.<sup>207</sup>

Nietzsche's is a new, 'gay science,' because it is a science whose goal is 'value-driven' and 'life-affirming' at its core. It involves **the problem of the value of truth** – as mentioned earlier – which concerns itself *less with possession* (for when I *have* 'the truth' I can hold on to it – and through it, to 'me' – like a possession, a body-of-knowledge, or a property), and more in *the absolute-movement of the 'scientist' herself*.

This activity heralds Nietzsche's 'ethic of affirmation' since it invariably relies on, and presupposes an, excess, rather than a lack<sup>208</sup>. Thus it corresponds, in my view, to the psychoanalytic notions of 'mourning' and 'working through', but doing so in a delightful manner, without succumbing to a self-denying seriousness, or any 'pennant-flagellation'. This is how I understand the following passage, from the very last aphorism in the very last book of *The Gay Science*:

Are we not surrounded by bright morning? And by soft green grass and grounds, the kingdom of the dance? Has there ever been a better hour for gaiety? Who will sing a song for us, a morning song, so sunny, so light, so fledged that **it will *not* chase away the blues but invite them instead to join in the singing and dancing?**<sup>209</sup>

Another type of human being is announced by Nietzsche, for whom life itself becomes the problem to be celebrated, worked-through rather than 'solved'. The very essence and value of 'knowledge' and 'truth' are being revalued by it in the most radical way: a way which recognizes the – always representational/formal – obstructions that are in operation on the psychic structures presiding over our inter-connections, our 'we'.

This leads us to what Kristeva calls the foreigner's paradox, which is also, in my view, the dilettante's own paradox:

The paradox is that the foreigner wishes to be alone but with partners, and yet none is willing to join him in the torrid space of his uniqueness. [...] Accordance is the foreigner's mirage. [...] it is his only connection [...]. The foreigner longs for affiliation, the better to experience, through a refusal, its untouchability<sup>210</sup>

This mirage of accordance is in *direct apposition* to Nietzsche's use of the figure of greed<sup>211</sup>. The one who seeks knowledge is "greedy for life", since she is composed in her entirety of an intensive, nomadic affirmation, a perpetual *becoming* of the person she is<sup>212</sup>. Riding the flows of her desire, she deterritorializes many striations/prescriptions that had been in operation in her surroundings (not to be rigorously distinguished with what might be termed 'her psyche'). She rides the cusp of desire so as to be both hero and louse and victim – but never one more than the other<sup>213</sup>. And she always wants more.

Her sheer speed will make the 'sedentaries' – whether of 'State' or 'discipline' or 'religion' – aware of their own slowness<sup>214</sup>, their own distress (as shown in their 'State-symptoms' of self-preservation)<sup>215</sup>. It exposes, as Kristeva mentions *the secret manner in which we stare at all faces*, but does so in the specific realm of knowledge. Not only does the nomadilettante expose these 'secret manners', but converses with them, makes them speak (even if it be only through hostility). This is the secret of her outrageousness, the fickle, abject, treacherous mode of being of the gay-scientist, of the stranger.

**The Inter-face – “the fool interrupts” (a feast of friends)**

The minds of others I know well / but who **I** am, I cannot tell:  
 My eye is much too close to me, / I am not what I saw and see.  
 It would be quite a benefit / if only I could sometimes sit  
 Farther away; but my foes are / too distant; close friends, still too far;  
 Between my friends and me the middle / would do. My wish?  
**You** guess my riddle.

- *Friedrich Nietzsche*

We tell  
 and retell  
 a story of rats.

- *Edmond Jabès*

[*Enter the Parasite:*] Given Quite A Start..

“The difference is part of the thing itself, and perhaps it even produces the thing. Maybe the radical origin of things is really that difference, even though classical rationalism damned it to hell. In the beginning was the noise...”<sup>216</sup>

Serres’ book *The Parasite* begins with a gesture of hospitality, or sharing. Someone invites someone to eat with them, by their side. A gesture of friendship, perhaps. But by the middle of the second paragraph, this idyllic picture of friendship is already severely interrupted: they are *rats* that are eating; they are eating at *another man’s expense*; they are making *noise*. They are, indeed, *para-sites*, shown in the etymological sense of those who eat-*beside* (from the Greek: *para*-beside + *sitos*-food), those *by* the food, like remainders,

excesses. Hospitality turns then, in the blink of an eye, to hostility. The proper owner of this property, whose scraps they feed on, will soon awaken due to these unwanted visitors consumption-noises, and produce a noise of his own that would chase them away in alarm. Order had returned, finally.

But not quite; the owner goes back to bed forever changed – something had upset his equilibrium, his tranquility: the rats will probably return (have they already returned?).. He starts to wonder. Perhaps even a little ashamed, insulted – were these visitors, parasites, not also *par-odies* of him<sup>217</sup>? Should he not be ashamed to have such irreverent guests? How could this have happened? Perhaps now a moral indignation will set in, declaring war on parasites?

In many ways, Serres' book concerns itself with the epistemological account of communication. What makes for a good communication, for a message to “get through”, to “make it”? Indeed, he admits, at the beginning, that the question of the parasite is an epistemological one. He admits, he tries, as a scientist, to make the system work. But something hangs over his admission, an excess of sorts; the epistemological question surfaces for the first time, but already disturbed, itself put in question: “Can we henceforth do without an epistemology of the parasite?”<sup>218</sup>.

What, then, is the *value* of such an epistemology – is what Serres seems to be asking<sup>219</sup>. *What is the value of this ‘truth’?* To recall, this was precisely Nietzsche's own question, which led him to his revaluation of all values. And Serres' book is haunted by these questions, just like a host is haunted by parasites; thus it is very much a positive haunting – it informs the book in many unexpected ways. It also constitutes – and not by mere ‘accident’ – the book's own *start*.

It is a strange ‘start’ nonetheless; for it seems to have come from an outside. The book’s start, the property-owner’s ‘start/startling’ – both share a gesture of *an opening to an exterior as the condition of this ‘start’*. The rats crawl in through an opening in the house itself; probably an opening required for there to be any kind of air-flow, so as to enable the property-owner his further sustenance. This free-flow of air, in this case, is what the parasites are “abusing”; the *desire for air created an opening*, a folding, an *implication* in the ‘dwelling’ of the owner. Para-sites, always beside and therefore always derived, follow *this flow, which undoubtedly also betrayed the smell of food from within*. But how could such a derived, deriding entity constitute a ‘start’?

The answer begins, of course, with the question. As the words themselves indicate, the problem here is that of *relation*. The ‘de’ of the ‘de-rided’, the ‘de-rived’ – the laughed-at, the one already *trans-ferred/ex-changed* – already indicates a motion, a direction. A direction, in turn, must presuppose relation. Static points – in geometry, in ‘State-logos’ – do not have directions; they are the way geometry conceives of ‘origin’. To recall that ‘vague’ and ‘an-exact’ science which Deleuze and Guattari called *nomadic*, we can now place Serres’ position in regards to this problematic as articulating this ‘new logic’ as a kind of “*nomos*”:

Bivalent systems get lost around here. The value of belonging passes through space, through the spectrum that separates or unites the two old values. The mathematics of the "fuzzy" explores this milieu, this means, this medium.<sup>220</sup>

An an-exact, “fuzzy” science is what seems to be needed to explore the philosophical – can we any longer pretend that they are merely epistemological? – question of the parasite. It is a science that will not consider the relation as subordinate to specific, localizable

points in a pre-established grid – thus becoming the mere straight line that connects two *ontological* anchors preceding it – but the relation *qua* relation. Any noise will always have to presuppose a relation, a medium. Also, as discussed above, it is precisely a nomadic “upstart”, that gives State-sciences, logos, their own ‘start’.

Serres wants to go back to the beginning, to the *creation* of the noise. He wants to know how it came to pass; where it all **started**. But therein lies a philosophical problem, which Lévinas articulates with utmost clarity:

It [Western philosophy] does not know the absolute passivity, this side of activity and passivity, conveyed by the idea of creation. Philosophers have always been inclined to think of creation in terms of ontology, that is, in terms of a preexisting and indestructible matter.<sup>221</sup>

I identify what Lévinas here terms ‘Western philosophy’ as directly corresponding to Deleuze and Guattari’s State-logos. Lévinas here speaks of, I maintain, to the same **passivity** we discerned in the nomad – one that is of a wholly other nature, and so does not ‘move’, but is pure speed, or intensity. Concerning our parasites, the rats, it would also seem consistent: for they were lead to the house according to a flow of affect/desire: the provocation/seduction of the smell of food riding an air-flow.

Still, it would also be, of course, this same air-flow that will have produced *the noise* of their eating, to alert the owner of their presence (who, *in turn*, chases them away). It would also be the noise the owner had made himself that warned them to escape before it is too late. The air, the flow, will aid the parasite, it seems, just as it will betray the parasite (but also rescue it again).

Flows are always flows of affect, sustained here by the *smooth-space* of a **medium** (in this particularly narrow account – the air). They require a specific kind of *passivity*, again; it would be a passivity that acknowledges an exterior “source” to its actions, yet has no respect for its ‘authority’ (since its *nomos* can never fathom any active kind of ‘willing’ to it). In anticipation of the following discussion, allow me to quote Lévinas once more, who draws the most radical conclusion of this curious situation:

Does not the self take hold of itself through the very impossibility of slipping away from its identity, an identity towards which it is driven back by persecution? Does not a beginning dawn in this passivity?<sup>222</sup>

Conceiving of identity as a last recourse of a persecuted ‘owner’, might help us understand the specific ethical dimension that this new ‘nomadology’ seems to entail. Perhaps it might also explain why any owner would want to wage that ‘war on parasites’ we alluded to in the opening of this section. Perhaps ‘identity’ is his attempt to fend off parasites? That as long as there are no cracks in the proper(ty) there could be no flows, and thus no *detritorializing* of its demarcations?

But the owner has *not* always already been “in his identity” nor his proper(ty). In order to account for a beginning, for that very ‘start’ of the owner, we may have to think beyond the ontology/epistemology logocentrism of ‘station-to-station’ – or “bivalent” – systems, and toward a *nomadology* of affect and relation. The problem of the parasite appears as the problem of interruption, of noise itself: how to account for noise without disavowing communication/identity altogether?

So, “where did it all start?” Everything seemed sedentary, quiet, undisturbed; the Same. Everyone was sleeping. The owner of the house would not have awakened had it not been

for the parasites. They, in turn, would not have awakened him had they been quiet, had they not made any *noise*. “In the beginning there was noise”, Serres told us. Wasn’t it supposed to be ‘the Word’?

We will return to this question. For now let us ask one not less acute, which will connect us to the elusive ‘ethical dimension’ mentioned earlier: *Why should we even care?* It is a preliminary question perhaps, but I see it as entirely complicit with Nietzsche’s insistence of – first and foremost – engaging with *the question of value* in regards to any ‘truth’.

### Responsibility and The Don’t-Care (the insignificant-other)

The property-owner in the story didn’t care; at *first*. But something happened; and now he does. He *knows* that there are rats in his house, that his house is invadable by parasites. *Why should he care?* Let us try and keep this a “purely” ‘material-economic’ one: the rats eat the left-overs – what is beside-the-food, its excesses – they are not necessarily causing any “economic harm”. Are they?

If our philosophical/logos-centric system gets lost in trying to think them – why think of them at all? Well, the answer, once again, would be *noise*. This time, it is the effect of noise, the conditions of noise. Suppose the owner didn’t mind having some vermin take care of his leftover food. But how is he to get that vermin to do so *quietly*, not interrupt his sleep?

Serres likes to think of systems. Noise, as an *ontological* entity (and we are still trying, albeit somewhat desperately, to stay within the *logos* of the *ontos*), is the parasite of the message. It is beside it, it interrupts it; it completely blurs and problematizes the fixing of the message’s origin. Let’s just say we would like to sleep in peace. The owner, then,

knowing that his system/house is already breached, contaminated, decides to burn it down and start anew, ‘parasite-free’.

Building a new house, however, will take time, material, attention... How to build a new house *and* make sure there would be no parasites already in it when it’s done? To do that, the future-house-owner would have to be constantly awake, constantly concerned about the outside.. Doesn’t this sound like a certain, well, problem? Or, less politely, an *obsession*? Emmanuel Lévinas joins in again, uninvited – for this is/was an ontological discussion! – and abrades the surface:

Anachronistically lagging behind the present, incapable of recovering this lag and of thinking what touches it, the Ego is evinced in the ascendancy of the Other over the Same to the point of interruption, leaving it speechless: an-archic, obsession is persecution.<sup>223</sup>

It seems, then, that the tables have turned once again. Now the hunter becomes the hunted – the persecutor of the parasite is shown to be already-persecuted by the parasites. And to no avail. This persecution is something which is not given to a *logos* in any ‘systematic’ manner; for, it is precisely through this land of shadows and secrets that the question overflows itself. It is thus, literally – and precisely as a question concerning what Lévinas called ‘the ethical’ – always beside-the-point.

What the house-owner tried to do<sup>224</sup> could be translated into the *logos*, into binary logic, or the bivalent system. What he tried to do was to abandon the overcrowded, uncontrollable place he was in, as a – what they call in Boolean-logic algebra – ‘*don’t-care*’<sup>225</sup>. The ‘don’t-care’ is the place in the ‘truth table’ – the table that assigns output values for every possible input value given any binary input/output system – where the system cannot predict – and

therefore cannot be held *accountable* to – the outcome, the output. Something goes in, but we have no clue as to what comes out. In binary logic – what Serres, above, calls ‘bivalent systems’ (systems of two values) – it can only be, of course, ‘0’ or ‘1’, YES or NO, TRUE or FALSE. But if it’s a ‘don’t-care’ – it’s hopeless. We might as well not have it at all; burn it down. We just “don’t care”. Uncontrollable, in this yes/no logic, means unaccountable.

But, Serres doesn’t “buy it”; neither does Lévinas. Communication, language – seem always already contaminated by something inexplicable, something that can’t help but attract these hordes of parasites. The only logical way to get rid of them would be to eliminate their livelihood, to exclude, not only them, but also their *conditions-of-possibility*. Serres treats the problem of message-noise in systems, indeed, but comes to the conclusion that the word ‘system’ is misleading<sup>226</sup>. The noise seems unshakable – the more it is chased out the less a system can function; but not heeding it altogether means no system whatsoever. The property owner will have to, somehow, exclude these parasites’ *presence* in order to regain her tranquility<sup>227</sup>.

In traditional philosophy, this is known as the law of the excluded-middle, or excluded-third. Any ‘point’, and place, given to any consciousness, is always already “lost”. If between the ‘1’ and the ‘0’, between the TRUE and the FALSE, we wanted to maintain a perfect division, then it would be this division itself – by virtue of its very *relationality* – that betrays us. Serres acknowledges this ‘necessary irritation’ of the medium, the relation:

We see only because we see badly. It works only because it works badly. [...] As soon as we are two, there is a medium between us, the light ray is lost in the air, the message is lost in the interceptions, there is only a space of transformation. [...] Maybe I understand the message only because of the noise.<sup>228</sup>

Thus, as alluded-to earlier, in order to eliminate the parasite, we must eliminate the *medium*; we must therefore disavow *relation as such*. The parasite is here presented, then, as a detestable herald of an-other “ontology,” one that *calls me to respond* – through the ‘*nomos* of the vague’ – for shadows, for inconsistencies, for vermin. We have fallen through the realm of accountability, and we find ourselves under the an-archic sway of responsibility: I cannot *account* for the interruption, the noise; I can only **respond** with a noise of my own. It is a fundamental conditions of all response-ability.

Eliminating the medium so that the ‘system’ can function, names a *problematic* – in Deleuze and Guattari’s sense as described above – for ontology and epistemology<sup>229</sup>. It is not a problem that they will ever “solve *away*”, but instead, one that will call forth a whole dimension of thought, which Lévinas called Ethics<sup>230</sup>. It will allow us to engage with, precisely, the ‘start’, but without falling into any of the fallacies that ontology brought with it to this notion, mostly in the form – as Nietzsche was seen (above) to be so sensitive to – of the “superstition of free will”. Lévinas differentiates the ethical ‘creature’ from ontology’s ‘being’, as the word ‘creature’ refers to a certain start/creation:

It is perhaps here that ontological thinking ultimately differs from the thought which speaks of the creature rather than of being. Does not this thought, in its absolute diachrony, in the noninstant of creation, where the self called to being is not there to hear the call which it obeys, conceive an unlimited and anarchic passivity of the creature? In the absolute passivity of the creature, the Self is thought to the very end: the total passivity of the self, suggested by the idea of creation, is a recurrence to the self, on this side of the self. *A* does not come back to *A*, as in an identity, but withdraws behind its point of departure.<sup>231</sup>

If Serres asks “maybe I understand the message only because of the noise”, Lévinas takes it a step further and asks: Maybe I understand the ‘I’ itself only because it was given to me as always already interrupted, persecuted? It is still, I think, within the same concern that they both operate (only that Lévinas is committed to engage in this matter with regards to philosophy, while Serres is less constrained).

Thus, Serres arrives at three very important observations concerning this curious “logic-of-the-parasite”, which will be crucial for understanding Lévinas’ connection of this matter to what he calls ethics.

First, to recall what we’ve just discussed, Serres realizes that the system, thought of in its sedentary form, is incapable of starts, or innovations. It is only able to re-produce. He also notes that this form – though ‘sedentary’ – is very active, in that it keeps performing the Same gesture – which he calls the ‘exclusion of the Third’ – the noise-maker, the parasite. And Serres comes very very close to Lévinas in this respect, insofar as he himself suggests that staying within the epistemological/ontological does not allow us to tackle this problematic:

The parasite is an element of relation; it is the atom of relation, the directional atom. It is the arrow flying at random in broad daylight. It is the appearance of meaning.

The theory of being, ontology, brings us to atoms. The theory of relations brings us to the parasite.<sup>232</sup>

Second, Serres realizes that the deeper principle here, when it comes to making thought capable of at least engaging with the idea of the ‘start’ or ‘creation’ – or any kind of radical difference that does not seem to miraculously adhere to the Newtonian ‘State’-physics of

gravity – there must inhere within the system a constitutive disruption, a fundamental disequilibrium; an *asymmetry*:

The questions alluded to above are more or less questions of origin. All of them were resolved by the parasite. The solution was an easy one, since, without a parasite - that is to say, without asymmetry or disequilibrium - there is no irreversible, no chain emerges.<sup>233</sup>

This asymmetry, however, doesn't mean just any 'discrepancy'; it requires that the parasite be very small, secretive, *imperceptible*<sup>234</sup>. It is this very attribute of being small, weak, insignificant – for we are always more alert with regard to the threatening – that makes the parasite able to 'enter the system'. This weakness is, then, a sign of the system's very strength. The system's functioning – if it does not want to drown in the rut of its own resentment and die (recalling the burned-down house here) – requires the parasite to fool it, to enter it undetected; in short – it requires the parasite's *gift*: it is the gift of that Serres calls 'transforming hostility into hospitality'<sup>235</sup>; and it is a true gift since it is given in secret, without being able to be exchanged, recalled as a debt. The stranger's gift. It thus consists in a radically asymmetrical relation.

Thus, if we connect this to our discussion above concerning the gay-scientist and the hatred he elicits out of the system, we might say that the imperceptibility of the parasite is the first stage of its critical gesture toward the system. The noise, then – the "becoming-perceptible/annoying" of the parasite – would be the actual gift-giving 'instant': the system realizes that it had been betrayed from an outside-turned-inside, and – what's more puzzling – *betrayed by its own logic*.

According to this ‘logic of betrayal’, the parasite then gives the system the ability to evade the next parasite, as well as itself, by making it aware – *responsive* to – one of its blind-spots, its mutenesses. The parasite will always be small and insignificant, and thus is the only (potential) friend of *the insignificant other* – the victim of the system’s violence.

Noise is produced from the abrasion of the same and the other; it is the creation – perhaps always painful at first, but always opening new horizons of joy as Nietzsche would say – of a new realm of meaning. Serres refers to it, quite directly, as ‘**the logic of the included third**’. What was once mute, speaks; but not quite - - it makes an *interface* with the system, comes *face-to-face* with it. This interface-with-otherness, interrupting a ‘communication-protocol’, which was never even ‘*in*’ question, brings the system, nevertheless, into self-question<sup>236</sup>. It is also, according to Lévinas, the primordial condition of language itself, as:

[...] the absolute of an interlocutor, of a being, and not that of a truth about beings. He is not affirmed as a truth, but is believed. Faith or trust – which does not mean here a second source of knowledge, but which is assumed by every theoretical statement. Faith is not the knowledge of a truth about which one might be doubtful or certain. Beyond these modalities, it is the face to face encounter [...]. Language cannot encompass the other [...]. In speech, we do not just think of the interlocutor, we speak to him.<sup>237</sup>

Thus it is *in this capacity* that we look at the ‘stranger-as-interlocutor’ – which Kristeva also addressed above – in a way that *exposes how we look at our ‘kin’*, echoes the tribulations of that medium between our faces, **our inter-face**.

As the parasite recalls an *exteriority*<sup>238</sup> – an ‘outsid-er’ – which only inheres in relations, it is in the perfect position to note when a relation has become static, dead, violent – which

means automatic, representational, Same<sup>239</sup>. The parasite offers noise as a critique of the system's tendency to subordinate difference to representation, or otherness to sameness<sup>240</sup>. And, what's more important – it never does it in a “selfless” manner (always already implicated, in this ‘logic’, by its very imperceptibility, its own “gift-of-weakness”).

And yet, it is not an ‘exchange’. We now reach the third and deepest of Serres’ insights in this context – to be explored in the next section – his distinction between what he calls the logic of exchange and the logic of substitution, or sacrifice.

### **The An-archy of Disturbance**

[...] there is what is owed and what is freely given. They have two different kinds of logic and two different economies, and perhaps two different kinds of living as well. In the logic and economy of the law and of possession, exchange reigns, weighing and measuring, figuring out the balance; in the logic and economy of the freely given, exchange is not there. In one group, owing dominates; in another, the freely given. Two incomparable societies. In the second, there are lots of communal meals, lots of invitations to feasts, repeats, banquets.<sup>241</sup>

#### Disturbing economy

Serres announces a new economy – that of the feast, of the freely given. Over and against the economy of “law and possession”, then, there is the economy of excesses, of noise. It is not, Serres, exclaims, an economy of exchange. Later in the book, he will have identified it as an economy revolving around the logic of sacrifice.

Both Lévinas and Serres are aware of this other kind of logic. Serres arrives at it from his discussion of the parasites, and of parasites among parasites: if the parasite is whatever interrupts the Same, whatever attaches itself to a certain *flow* (of food, of air, of

information; the list is perhaps endless), then it seems to be a very unstable creature. Indeed, it is – in all senses of the word – disturbed.

I would like here to divert attention to the word itself – ‘dis-turbed’ – which holds within it many of the insights articulated here. Its dictionary denotation is: “Disquieted; agitated; having the settled state, order, or position interfered with”<sup>242</sup>. Here, we have ‘disturbance’ as the noise-element, the introduction of difference into a ‘system’.

But when we look deeper into the etymological roots of this word, we find something rather interesting: the word is made of two components – ‘dis’ and ‘turbia’. ‘Dis’, in Latin, is a word that indeed can mean splitting, coming-between, negating; but, also *excess*, richness<sup>243</sup>. ‘Turbia’ is derived from the Latin ‘turbo’, which means: a disorganized force, a swirling-vortex of forces<sup>244</sup>. ‘Dis-turbia’ could mean, then, many things. It could indeed be a splitting force, a force that creates difference. It could also be an excess of a disordered-force, an *excess of chaos* (implied, as we’ve seen, in the nomadic attribute of ‘speed’).

But, this curious conjunction of two elements of difference and disorder could also be a certain radicalization, an excess right in the middle of disturbance itself; for if we take the ‘turbo’ as a disordered, disorganized system, and we add to it a splitting element, an element of difference – we get a double interruption: an interruption of the interruption. ‘Disturbed’, then, would suggest an always already unstable and differential condition – a force of self-interruption – which is *itself* interrupted; an interruption that could only “arrive” at an *already disparate system*: “in the beginning was the noise”, indeed.

If we connect this to Kristeva we could arrive again at the insight that in order to recognize strangeness, strangeness must always already be, in some manner, *given*. If any thought of ‘origin’ may be claimed, then, it cannot assume the certainty of a fixed ‘Same’,

of a stable ontological identity/essence. These ontological ‘beings’, Lévinas exclaims, are not original. Not even arrived-at; they’re *escaped to*. Consider this couple of passages<sup>245</sup>:

[...] in the ego, the One is already contaminated by being, an exasperated and intrusive being. In its persecution, the ego returns to the self, not to reflect on the self but to denude itself in the absolute simplicity of identity<sup>246</sup>

Does not the self take hold of itself through the very impossibility of slipping away from its identity, an identity towards which it is driven back by persecution?

Does not a beginning dawn in this passivity?<sup>247</sup>

It is in this context that I consider Serres’ concept of ‘exchange’, and the way it relates to the incommensurable gift of the parasite mentioned earlier.

Exchange, as a relation, is, of course, a locus for parasites. With it they circulate and multiply; they interrupt, interrupt those interrupting, are driven away by interruptions. The system is teeming with their noise and interruptions; it is, quite simply, disturbed.

The term ‘exchange’, however, (re-)presents a mechanism, and not only a relation. When Serres says exchange, and when he speaks of the logic of exchange, he means the logic of barter<sup>248</sup>. It is a logic that attempts to bring back order to the system, to reduce the noise; it tries to handle the exchanges using an established (random) code, a general equivalent – money, for example:

Exchange does not want it to change. It wants to stabilize the flight [fuite]. Contrary to everything thought about exchange, it does not mobilize things; it immobilizes them, it disposes of them [...]. [...] The very simple idea of the equilibrium of exchanges is ontological. By the very movement of the exchange, what changes, no longer changes. It might have become rotten, and now it is money.<sup>249</sup>

In Deleuzean terms, exchange is then an attempt to subordinate *nomos* – the noise in the system, the very excess or overcodedness of it – to *logos*. A unit, supposedly identical to itself, has everything exchanged reduced back to it.

This ‘mode of exchange’, though (and perhaps, in ‘capitalism’, this mode of ‘being’) does not solve our problem. It does not even address the question in any kind of positive manner. It tries to escape it. But it has – always already – failed in eliminating noise from the system altogether.

This element of ‘money’ – that, as Serres shows, is introduced to parasite the exchange-relation only to chase away all other parasites from this relation – is itself a testimony of this insufficiency. In still being *relational*, it is still implicated in the logic of the parasite. We can think of many money-parasites – the ‘usual suspects’ are robbers, thieves, pickpockets, confidence-men, etc. (but I could also mention here bankers, stock-option speculators, governments..) – that come back to make their noise heard; and – Serres exclaims – they come back “with a vengeance”:

Chase the parasite – he comes back, accompanied, just like the demons of an exorcism, with a thousand like him, but more ferocious, hungrier, all bellowing, roaring, clamouring. Have I described the elementary link of a system of knowledge or its pathology?<sup>250</sup>

This ‘gift of noise’, it appears, cannot be refused; where there is a relation, it seems, there is this gift. And – just as alluded to above – this gift is always in excess of exchange, causing disturbance, madness; promoting an-archy. Serres is well aware of this; it is inherent to the theory of the parasite, and, furthermore, of *any communication*-system:

Exchanges are possible only if a relation is instituted. [...] The parasitic relation precedes exchange in general. [...] That is why the relation of exchange is always dangerous.<sup>251</sup>

What I exchange comes back: does it belong to me or is it outside? The question cannot be answered.<sup>252</sup>

The parasite calls our thought to consider what ontology – as subordinate to the *logos* of what *is* (the *ontos*) – cannot as yet, respond to: a relation qua relation – rather than a mere intermediate between two designated ‘points’ – a *nomos*. It is a radical approach to the question of identity and self, as Lévinas indeed insists on. Identity does not come from itself; it is also not ‘relative’, in the usual sense of the term (the sense in which we say that it is constituted in relation to another *identity*, another (geometrical) “point”).

Leaving the sphere of ontology, Lévinas recognizes what Nietzsche had consistently intuited: that we are now in the realm of ethics; one that now calls out to be articulated in itself<sup>253</sup>. And the difficulties abound.

### Substitution/Institution/Destitution

In many respects, the difficulties of thinking ethics in this sense coincide with what Lévinas calls its an-archic nature. It is not just ‘anarchic’ insofar as it is mere disorder and chaos; it is also ‘an-archic’ – it has an anterior element, an exteriority, that lies beyond me, “*as ‘is’*”. However, this is a beyond that bears a special kind of connection to the ‘me’ (or the ‘ego’ [*moi*] in Lévinas’ language): this relation is described precisely as ‘**substitution**’.

If Serres rejected the ‘logic of equivalents’ or ‘logic of exchange’ for thinking about the parasite – for thinking about relation *qua* relation – then he also noticed that what is proper

to the parasite was its very “*shiftiness* of character”, its logic of substitution. The parasite, Serres avers, suggests a logic of *sacrifice*, where a substitute is introduced in order to defer an impending violence<sup>254</sup>.

In a similar fashion, throughout Serres’ book, one parasite will *continually* chase away – but always *temporarily* – another parasite, and will do so via noise, interruption (just like the rats and the property owner in the opening pages of his book). It is like a race, or, more precisely, a *relay*; the arrival, the moment one runner touches briefly the hand of the other, gifting her with *a touch that both enables and transcends* the passed stick/torch/message – is the noise<sup>255</sup>.

For Serres, it also becomes a question of *the relation between subjectivity and language*: the “I”, he says, is what is being relayed; the sign ‘I’ being a ‘joker’, an impersonal “shifter” that comes at me from an interlocutor. It is thus the ‘I’ of a decidedly *uneasy subjectivity*, riddled with substitutions:

This quasi-object that is a marker of the subject is an astonishing constructor of intersubjectivity. We know, through it, how and when we are subjects and when and how we are no longer subjects. **“We”: what does that mean? We are precisely the fluctuating moving back and forth of “I”.** The “I” in the game is a token exchanged. [...] I am I now, a subject, that is to say, exposed to being thrown down, exposed to falling [...]; then you take the relay, you are substituted for “I” and become it.<sup>256</sup>

What here constitutes the substitutions of anonymous players in relation to this ‘ball of subjectivity’ is elsewhere in Serres’ book treated in terms of feasts and disturbances, and this allows Lévinas’ idiom to become somewhat clearer, and to bring forth its unique

import. If we consider the ‘relay-race simile’ again, it could perhaps help us better visualize how Lévinas’ conception of persecution resonates with Serres’.<sup>257</sup>

Food *circulates*, as Serres had shown with his rats, **by virtue of interruption**. There would have to be an inversion here; the ‘runner’ – the one with the “stick-of-subjectivity,” with the ‘I’, with the ‘mouth-full-of-food’ – is interrupted by an-other, in a different state. There is contact, a moment of noise; the stick changes places, the ‘I’ is substituted in lieu of the interrupter, who quickly (and this is all “part of the game”) runs away. If the simile of the ball-game – which Serres invokes<sup>258</sup> – had the advantage of showing that the ball – like the ‘I’ of the subject – would have no meaning unless relayed, then this simile of the relay-race brings forth the other dimension, one that Lévinas tries to address – that of ‘persecution’.

Curiously enough, Lévinas also maintains a relation to food and enjoyment as a necessary linking to the other from whom ‘I’ is taken and escapes. In discussing what he calls the one-for-the-other characteristic of the psyche. He writes:

It is a vulnerability and a paining exhausting themselves like a haemorrhage, denuding even the aspect that its nudity takes on, exposing its very exposedness, expressing itself, speaking, uncovering even the projection that the very form of identity confers upon it. **It is the passivity of being-for-another, which is possible only in the form of giving the very bread I eat. But for this one has first to enjoy one’s bread**, not in order to have the merit of giving it, but in order [...] **to give oneself in giving it.**<sup>259</sup>

Thus, concerning language, within these relays and connections through which we compr(om)ise our identity (and, I would suggest, also what Nietzsche called ‘power’), Serres and Lévinas reach the same conclusion<sup>260</sup>: language, in its very relationality and

proximity to the other – as interlocutor, fellow-player, fellow-parasite – is already presupposed in any ‘between-two’ relation that the logos tries to articulate. In Serres’ words, in the words of his “fuzzy logic”, the third cannot be excluded for there to be a relation in the first place; the third seems to have preceded the two nodes of the relation. Any ‘geometry-logic’ could never handle such a demarcation: a direction without a line, speed without movement or origin - - an-archy.

An interesting illustration here might both help explain Lévinas’ notion of the self as ‘hostage’ and persecuted – and responsible for its own persecution no less! – with Nietzsche’s thought of revaluation of values and the affirmation of life. Lévinas maintains that it is through the condition of being a ‘hostage’ that there can be proximity in the world. No communication could ever take place if the ego were not “in its entire being, or rather its entire nonbeing, subjected not to a category, as in the case of matter, but to an unlimited accusative, that is to say, persecution, self, hostage, already substituted for others”<sup>261</sup>. This persecution, says Lévinas, produces an anguish [*angoisse*]:

This anguish is not the existential “being-toward-death” but the constriction of an “entry within”, which is not a flight into the void but a passage into the fullness of the anxiety of contraction. Such is the relation in which a being is immolated without taking leave of itself [...].<sup>262</sup>

Keeping in mind what Lévinas insisted on as the “*affirmation* called forth by obsession”, consider now the following passage, where Lévinas discusses his idea of a ‘negativity’ which, in this context, is another name for the immolation/sacrifice of the self as the self’s own *recurrence*, its uneasy coincidence with itself (directly corresponding to Serres’ ‘uneasy subjectivity’ depicted above, insofar as it is inscribed in a turn and a re-turn):

[...] negativity without the void of nonbeing, negativity entangled in its own impossibility, outside of all initiative, an incredible withdrawal into fullness, without any detachment from self, is an impossibility of slipping away, a responsibility anterior to any free commitment.<sup>263</sup>

Now, how do we conceive of this “withdrawal into fullness”? Of this “negativity without void”? This is not the first time in this chapter we’ve had to think in such paradoxical terms (to recall, for example, the nomad’s ‘speed but not movement’ concept). It also recalls Nietzsche’s assertion (also mentioned above) that he is no seeker, and yet he is after *more*. If we connect this with Nietzsche’s frequent rejection of “*the illusion of free will*”, we might arrive at what Lévinas is getting at: this ‘power’, this ‘self’ that ‘I’ is/am reaching, is indeed reached through *fullness* (and not lack) that is *affirmed* by the very assemblages which are created within the movement (the subject becomes, then, a product of absolute-movement and not the other way around – similarly to Deleuze and Guattari’s formulations).

I am thinking of the idiomatic expression of “painting oneself into a corner”, here. It is fullness itself – the excess of affects – that the ‘I’ withdraws to. It is a withdrawal because there is no driving will behind the conscious will; its driving force is anterior to it; its origin – an-archic. Indeed, it is an-other kind of passivity, one more passive than passive, as Lévinas often says<sup>264</sup>.

The ‘I’ is thus produced only through *an affirming escape*, one which had always already been effected and thus gave consciousness its very own pre-original interruption, or – what is here called – a ‘*start*’. The ‘I,’ in its nomadic distributions, is an assembled product of affects, yes; but the assemblage would be constructed under what Lévinas calls

the ‘infinite accusative’. The ‘I’ then is always already responsible, since this ‘I’ is the positive production of an assemblage which only later assumes an identification (which, according to Nietzsche, accounts for the illusion of free will<sup>265</sup>). ***‘I’ is, indeed, being painted into a corner.***

To further connect this to Nietzsche’s psychological insights, consider – yet again – his famous passage in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

”I have done that,” says my memory. “I cannot have done that,” says my pride, and remains inexorable. Eventually – memory yields.<sup>266</sup>

As Nietzsche warns time and again from any will-to-truth, I maintain that – considering the above passage – he should not be seen as in any way *deploring* the triumph of ‘pride’ over memory. It is far more appropriate, in this context, to examine it as what it says about the ‘I’ and how this ‘I’ operates (or, more precisely, is operated-into-existence’); for here we see something quite akin to what Lévinas refers to, which I referred to above as ‘the ‘I’ painting itself into a corner’.

A certain imagined dialog occurs between memory and pride here, both holding an ‘I’. However, only one remains with this ‘I’ – which is, indeed pride. If we look at ‘pride’ as *the manifestation of the persecuted subject-of-responsibility*, then we can make the fruitful connection right here: the ‘I’ is formed, as a clinging to an identification (like an assemblage’s ‘holding-together’) only via a co-responsence with something *anterior* to it, which suggests *a time always already past* (here suggested by the figure of a lost ‘memory’)<sup>267</sup>. Far from being a “heroic” battle – where one conquers and either enslaves or annihilates the other – Nietzsche depicts it as a far more *passive* struggle, like two players – pride and memory – holding on to a ball, and each is pulling in the opposite direction.

This gesture of *pulling away*, this decidedly furtive and *receding* action, is in my reading what Lévinas terms ‘the radical passivity prior to *any* will’, as well his depiction of the ‘I’ being a usurper of the Other’s place: this *essentially discursive* battle presupposes an anarchic responsibility; for, if the ‘I’ is a result of pride having ‘won’ the (*discursive*) struggle – thus as if taking the ‘I’ away from the place of ‘memory’, or ‘truth’ – then we must acknowledge that:

1. Making pride into a sin is a self-denial in the deepest sense imaginable, since it precludes the condition of possibility for ethics – as Lévinas shows – and – as Nietzsche shows – replaces them with a mechanism of self-violence (which is always already violence toward the other insofar as there is no more co-responsibility as a condition of my identity), and bad-conscience.

2. The will-to-truth is indeed nihilistic, since – insofar as it can assure the subject either a tranquil self-same *existence* (no such presupposed co-responsibility in the ‘will’ or ‘identity’), or any specific representation of such a prior-relation (like ‘original-sin’, for example<sup>268</sup>) – any ‘truth’ will obviate the necessary relation to this anterior and Other-as-exteriority (it will be as if either “memory won” – which would mean no psychological or moral ‘I’ since it becomes a “pure subject of truth”; or that memory and pride had merged, thus obviating the correspondence a priori)<sup>269</sup>.

As a moral phenomenon this could also be considered as a conversation with an actual interlocutor, who says something to you that you believe you did not do. You do not precisely remember (for memory seldom announces its silences in a conscious-content

fashion), but there is “something *in you*” that gives you certainty of the precise form of (for example) ‘*I would never have done that!*’.

Nietzsche would affirm this experience as will-to-power, over and against any ‘will-to-truth’ – I.e. “finding out what really happened”. Thus *it is, indeed, value that should be considered before truth*, ethics before epistemology. Not a denial of the self, then; the very possibility and grandeur of the self are being affirmed in this relation of co-respondence anterior to the ‘I’. In this context, Lévinas makes two crucial remarks concerning the ideas of substitution and what he calls ‘glory’<sup>270</sup>:

[...] out of an unrepresentable past, the subject has been sensitive to the provocation that has never presented itself, but has struck traumatically. Glory is but the other face of the passivity of the subject.<sup>271</sup>

**Subjectivity is from the first substitution offered in place of another, but before the distinction between freedom and nonfreedom.** Not a victim offering itself in his place, which would suppose there’s a reserved region of subjective will behind the subjectivity of substitution. **It is the null-place in which inspiration by the other is also expiation for the other, the psyche by which consciousness itself would come to signify.**<sup>272</sup>

Such a skewed logic will emerge as that of the *joyful de-stitute*, as the movement to and away from any kind of ‘stand’ will be its very sustenance; affects and assemblages – no longer authorized, and/or reducible to, any codes-of-conduct or equivalents will be opened before him as what Lévinas precisely called ‘fullness’; and it will be a subject not drawn to it because of a certain lack – not a being-toward-death – but something else entirely, something which *keeps replenishing the ethical bond while affirming the conditions of possibility of the self – a being toward the other.*

The *institute*, thus, will have always already been answerable to the de-stitute, the substitute, as its own correspondents; *not responded to as a debt*, but as the anti-memory of an anarchical persecution, the other which *always* already calls on us to denude, to cohere into an ‘identity’ – an invitation to our blessed sin of pride. Not ‘from nothing’, not ‘toward nothing’; but by virtue of the other and toward self-affirmation and life. For any thought on relation as relation to persist without reducing itself to nothingness, the will-to-power – the ‘withdrawal-into-fullness’ – is required.

### **Conclusion – the dilettante’s betrayal**

The ant who eats and does not speak, speaks nevertheless to chase out the grasshopper

- Michel Serres, *The Parasite*

As an insolent trespasser into preordained, respectable realms of knowledge, the dilettante effects a radical critique in the systems she infiltrates. Nietzsche and Kristeva helped to show the immense value that the animosity toward the dilettante can generate as precisely the system – or any other pre-existing ‘we’ – critique of itself and its own violence.

Here also Nietzsche reveals a method upon which acts as a basis for ‘antipathology’ – it is the provocation of violence from totalities by precisely signalling the ‘cover-ups’ they must engage in, in order to maintain their illusion of ‘totality’. The antipathology looks for those violent moments, where an exclusion is being made to speak.

However, the dilettante’s gesture is also, in a way, a gesture of betrayal. The dilettante continually abandons her allies, in favour of other ones. She is also, quite irritatingly, quite cavalier about it. The dilettante is also, of course, a nomad, and as such she is

following the flows of affects that she manages to parasitize, to latch on to. A dilettante derives from the Latin *'delectare'* – delight. She is criticized for her passivity, for her lack of “will-power” to maintain a ‘place’, for her “lack of seriousness”.

Still, she shows, in her very abandonment to the flows of her desires, that these are, in fact, the same flows that give sustenance and meaning to our knowledge, indeed to any and all of our symbolic structures. She tells on, betrays, a fundamental destitution to which all linguistic constructions of identity – whether subjective, scholastic, or cultural/national/civic – already presuppose. Her gesture suggests that there is an otherwise to the symbolic identification, and that this otherwise consists in its value to life. This value bears precisely on the question of the overlapping of our symbolic constructions with our desires.

It is perhaps Michel Serres’ figure of the parasite that comprises the theoretical heart of this chapter. The figure of the parasite truly helps illustrate what happens when one tries to seriously think through epistemology and ontology (after Saussure), in an idiom that was particularly useful (precisely because it was particularly *abjectionable*). Like ‘a traitor’, and not coincidentally, ‘a parasite’ is one of those phrases that constitute the ultimate allegation, the one that only leaves recourse to a yes/no distinction as to the ‘truth value’ of its judgment. But these are only ultimate allegations because they are essential to thought, to life. ‘We’ is parasitic in its essence; it is a positive condition of our language.

This is also, I believe, the answer to Nietzsche’s riddle (quoted in the final section of this chapter). He precisely wished for a parasite, for a creature of relation, to signal a relation and be contingent upon the relation. It is only such a creature that is close enough

and yet loving enough to really “grow” with one, to be a new kind of friend. It is truly the creature that allows becoming *qua* becoming, since it does not require ‘identity’ as such, but *only the energetic flows that produce it*, almost as its **side**-effect. In this case, when it comes to the dilettante, the parasite was the best entry point to articulate the dilettante’s betrayal.

A parasite will, naturally, be persecuted/hated, since an ontology of identity and representation cannot account for it, justify it. For this kind of system, the parasite can only signal a threat of ‘depletion-unto-death’ -- its gift cannot be recognized, exchanged. The parasite is blamed for the *contingency* of his relation; but, since this contingency is only alluded to and never visible/present – the parasite must work in the shadows (and as such must also preserve the horror and inevitability of the shadow) – this *vague* contingency ends up *clinging to representations* which are always already active in our perceptions of relations in general. But, what happens when one targets ‘a parasite’? What happens when one targets a dilettante?

The parasite, as ‘the ultimate opportunist,’ is imputed to be “only there because of ‘x’”. At least, that’s the only way that a parasite can be *targeted*: as an **enemy**, as a separate, antithetical *identity*, a lazy/malicious *will*. Thus, the “she’s only after my x” accusation that emerges, can say as much about the accuser as about the accused. In fact, the accused is never “available for comment”; and even if she were – her very ‘standing’ as ‘parasite’ would compromise her speech with charges of manipulation and camouflage, again *presupposing* that same aforementioned element of *contingency’s clinging to a representation*.

And so, there is a represented ‘x’ – an identity, a property – which surfaces in response to the parasite’s gift. If the parasite stays-put – becomes “a predator” in Serres’ words – there might be assimilation, loss of difference, and therefore incorporation into what Deleuze and Guattari called ‘State-logic’. But he would make no noise then, no interruptions; and thus would *give* nothing. It would also, paradoxically, not be identified as a parasite, precisely because of his imperceptible quality, his lack of noise.

Good thing that the dilettante is also a chronic stranger and a nomad; when she leaves, she interrupts, she does make noise. She deterritorializes that which, before, was oblivious to her presence. This deterritorialization precisely revolves around the imputed “x” that is identified: awareness of ‘the parasite’s presence’ is always enacted after-the-fact of her leaving. It brings forth possible ‘x’s, of course. But, this awareness is always already troubled by her nomadic gesture, the fact that she left, moved on. Not only does this undermine the ‘x’s being the ‘reason’ for her presence, but also it suggests – similarly to the way it was suggested by the corpse-encounter – that this ‘x’ is perhaps not exclusively ‘mine.’

‘I’ feel the horror of being betrayed precisely by virtue of “the same ‘x’ that is/was my own”<sup>273</sup>, which is now breached, wounded. This interruption signals a betrayal because it *shows* – which again, I feel is a more cogent critical gesture than ‘telling’ – that ‘x’ is not as ‘mine’ as I thought it was. If it is indeed “parasitizeable” – could be exploited without my previous approval or knowledge (thus *behind my back* / without consciously involving ‘my will’) – perhaps it is/was parasitized by ‘me’ as well? Thus, a manifestation of otherness in the heart of the ‘mine,’ is in this case caused by noise/interruption, immediately suggesting the ‘logic of betrayal’: something that was

supposed to be mine, isn't. More than that: something that was supposed to act in a certain way and under 'my control' – suddenly revolts.

Caught within this 'logic', 'I' – the victim of this betrayal – feel(s) that some connection of the 'x' to 'me' had been compromised, put in question. Perhaps it is the *logos* forced to look upon its shadow, what is *beside* it, or 'exterior' to it; and its exteriority, like Deleuze and Guattari stressed – is never to be conquered without remainder. The fallacy of 'self-control' – like what Nietzsche called the fallacy of *integrity*, of conscious 'free will' – will prove to be untenable; *treacherous*, perhaps. In that case, any will-to-truth – which in my reading represents precisely my will for integrity, for an assured-totality – will cause me to revolve endlessly around the *logos*, around the 'I', looking for breaches, "weaknesses," openings. But these "weaknesses" are in fact, as shown above, precisely the very possibility of mine-ness.

Suddenly, upon the dilettante's betrayal, it looks as if my hold on this 'I' – whether it was the 'I' of a discourse, a discipline, or a moral-system – had itself been temporary and contingent, de-rived (quite like the parasite). The parasite/dilettante-as-enemy reenacts the treachery explored in the corpse-encounter – something which I thought was 'me', was under my control, shows itself to be *irrevocably* vulnerable to be abused, *through me. As if 'I' weren't there.*

In fact, this is the only way in which it is "mine". I target the dilettante the parasite, I try and destroy this 'enemy' only to find that not only is it my own (proper) 'self' that 'I' am destroying, but that 'I' am becoming very much 'like' this enemy (insofar as I recognize my own representational-accusations – the 'after my x' rhetoric – in 'me'). It is my own 'gift' to this peculiar "enemy"; a gift which is my own cornucopia – the gift that,

miraculously, keeps on giving. Miraculously, for – if we remain within the logic of equivalence, to recall – any “sane ontology” would consider it as ‘suicide’.

Of course – and this is very important – the dilettante also effects a radical anguish on the systems/constructions he visits. He might instigate a violence in them that they were trying to efface; he signals a covered-over breach to which a totality cannot account and thus is struck by the inadequacy and non-fundamentality of its ontology; he breaks relations in order to achieve new ones, out of pure fancy, showing a true lack of loyalty.

As ‘a traitor,’ then, it seems that the dilettante is to be kept out of symbolic constructions; it seems as if then they would be allowed to maintain their bad faith of indeed being self-sufficient – or completely authorized and ordered – structural/essential totalities. However, once this gesture of excluding the dilettante is enacted, it settles into a reproductive, self-parasitizing, nihilistic state from which it can only emerge with the help of this traitor, this treason. Targeting the traitor, we find that we are targeting ourselves.

‘The dilettante’ thus enacts upon symbolic constructions that are knowledge-based what the corpse enacted on the symbolic constructions that were materiality based: it offered a radical critique of the totalities it comes into contact/encounter with, and proves itself to have always already infiltrated them. He overrides and trespasses – exceeds – the ‘theorematic’ closure that ‘bodies of work’ or ‘disciplines’ draw their consistencies from, in order to reintroduce them to their exterior, to give them the gift of the ‘problematic.’ This problematic cannot thus be ‘cashed’ neatly into ‘theory’. However, it still presents itself as an enigma which (re)calls the scientist’s initial – perhaps ‘intensive’ – drive for engagement; it teases the sedentary, ‘pacific’ scientist into battle. Battle, of course, will

involve risks; but, following Nietzsche, only such risks of losing everything can allow something new to ‘appear’, or to ‘present itself’.

This, of course, means that the *logos* will have squared the circle of the *nomos* once again; but it also means that the *logos* will forever bear the mark, the scar, the *discrepancy* of this suppressed otherness. It is not a debt – Nietzsche and Lévinas insist on this anti-Christian point – it is a mark of excess, of *possibility*; it is the possibility and hope of ‘becoming’ that ‘being’ either drags on the floor as a shadow, or tries to hide like an organ of sexual pleasure.

In any kind of ‘nihilistic system’ (concerned with its own survival, locked into an ontology whose limits are all too material – brutal perhaps), there is a quiet, surreptitious need for a traitor. It is a need inscribed in the shadows of this ‘Being’, in the diachronic time where an absolute alterity pulsates in its excessive tremors, driving us, reluctant, toward a creativity we are informing *as if* it were a debt we could happily do without (and it is precisely when this ‘as if’ is repressed or denied that nihilism is affirmed/willed). The dilettante is here presented as the warrior, who battles nihilism in the realm of symbolic-knowledge; a gadfly of knowledge – giving it a “start.”

One final remark: to me, the dilettante is radically implicated by what is nowadays termed in academia as ‘interdisciplinarity.’ In a way, the interdisciplinary scholar is very much a dilettante herself: as *inter* is not *multi*, she does not exhaust all the bodies of knowledge she infiltrates (with their hierarchies, methodologies, etc.), but travels through some of their symbolic constructions, utilizing the very breach upon which the sign itself – the ‘atom’ of any and all symbolic constructions – relies. With that she shows herself indeed to be, in a radical sense, a perpetual amateur. She does not compound discourses,

does not accumulate bodies of work “under her belt”, but moves through them, deterritorializing them. Irreverent – quite; irresponsible – definitely; undependable – certainly. But also, indeed, indispensable. As this is a thesis written under the generous auspices of an interdisciplinary program, let this be my modest contribution for a renewed thinking of interdisciplinarity, and its promises to academia in general – insofar as it implies not only an epistemological/ontological, but also a political/ethical, critique.

**Exergue: “Qui Intinguit Mecum”<sup>274</sup>**

[Exit the parasite]

*Je n’ai qu’une seule langue et ce n’est pas la mienne*

**“I have but one language, and it isn’t mine”**

- Jacques Derrida

**I have only one language: It’s Derrida’s**

- Ross Glover

*(dergleichen die Juden gerne versuchen, um sich auf fremde Kosten ein Ansehen von Wichtigkeit zu geben)*

**“(Just like Jews to gain, at someone else’s expense, an air of importance for themselves)”**

- Immanuel Kant<sup>275</sup>

To exit this chapter, I will attempt an excess; but one which is not an addition. It should be something more in the way of resonance, a *feed-back* effect: there ‘was’ a noise, the noise had, once – so I am told – a source, a point of origin. But now the noise comes at me, to me, from all directions. Harder to place, always already happened – the world around me gives me this noise in the form of excess. Noises interact with noises, with solid bodies that reflect their own silent noise (much in the way they reflect a certain frequency of light which is, of course, the coloring of their presence). And, of course, there’s the air; the air without which there would be neither sound nor fury; only light, perhaps, and death – my death. The ideal lab, for sure; no food will be allowed on that (s)lab-table, neither ‘feeds’

nor ‘feeds-backs’. No need for food just as there is no need for air. Light and vacuum could perform a perfect system here, perhaps; a perfect feast of reason. It will eventually be only a priest who would be allowed near this (s)lab.

But I am here; I was chased out of *there*. Why? “Reason” gave no reason. It could not; for *logos* could not speak. For that same reason, “Reason” needn’t eat, nor breathe. Air and food are two fundamental elements that only exist in the form of a *medium*. “In media Vita”, Nietzsche proclaims: ‘Life in media’ – the ‘gay-scientist’ indulges in a plurality of media, laughing gaily in the midst of dangers and victories, the “media” of life-knowledge<sup>276</sup>. There seems to be an ambiguity here; the hand that takes the food from the table becomes implicated; the hand that gives it as well. Everyone gets more than they bargained for in this feast of friends.

For it is, indeed, also a bargain; or at least that’s its façade: a host invites us all to feast, and a horde of parasites arrives to take advantage of the host, to take the host at his advantage, at his promise, his ‘word’. I am thinking of a primordial scene here, where meaning is not only informed by substitution – *via destitutia* – but it could not rely on anything else. The façade will break, to be sure; but – as Nietzsche would be quick to note, to celebrate – it breaks into more façades, becomes impossible to capture.

In the Book of Matthew’s scene of ‘The Last-Supper’, we seem to witness just such an occasion<sup>277</sup>. Jesus of Nazareth holds a feast for his disciples, celebrating his last Passover on earth. Already set in a duplicitous surroundings, the feast takes place in the house of an unknown host; marked solely by his carrying of a water-pitcher, who was marked/delivered – and this gesture will repeat itself many times throughout this scene – **by Judas Iscariot**.

The host – depicted (by Judas) as merely “the Goodman of the house”<sup>278</sup> – is nowhere to be seen or heard since. A herd of parasites takes over his place, to feast beside his table. Still, generosity does not vanish; where there are parasites – there is generosity. The host is most properly substituted; his place is taken – this time in a more radical sense – *by Jesus himself*. Thus begins the serious game of substitution<sup>279</sup>: Jesus substitutes for the host as he who *serves* his disciples (first substitution), and substituting the wine and unleavened-bread for his body and blood (a second, and far more radical, substitution)<sup>280</sup>. The play of the parasite, the logic of the parasite, is indeed, we recall, a logic of substitution<sup>281</sup>.

But substitution escalates, it does not stay put; substitution would never stay put (if it had its way). In the background of the story – we are told this by both Matthew and Luke – there is another substitution going on: Jesus’ fate is being exchanged for money by his disciple, Judas Iscariot. He is to deliver/betray the identity of his teacher to the Jewish elders, who – he does not know this yet – will condemn Jesus to mortal-death (for being God’s *representative* on Earth). At the last supper, then, an already substituting/substituted Jesus (to recall, the play of substitutions always confuses the logic of the active/passive) – taking the place of the host – is so in a double sense: his body, *and* his fate are being *given-to-materiality*, so that they can be “delivered”; the last supper as an “everything-must-go bazaar” of Jesus’ entire ‘earthly possessions’.

Is it a ‘divine-law’ at work here? Or is it, as Nietzsche said, human, all too human? I situate my discussion here, just like Nietzsche did, between economy and God. And what is happening between them is given here a name in substitution; for which I substitute another name – of treason.

Of course, this has been done before. So much so, that it had almost been forgotten, coagulated itself into our very language, become part of the ‘wor(l)d’. This radical substitution starts – between God’s disciple and the Devil’s, between Judas and Jesus – also (like with Serres) with a feast, with the sharing of food. They all shared in Jesus’ blood and body; all those para-sites, seated beside the table. But only one is singled out, and singled out in the most specific manner.

They are all seated at the table, sharing the same dishes. Yet, as Jesus identifies his betrayer (no doubt repaying, ex-changing an identity-deliverance for the one Judas had already enacted), the parasites recede into the background, leaving but one, literally, caught with his hand in the jar<sup>282</sup>. A malevolent parasite was thus born; one who is *beside-himself with malice* (as the bag of coins follows Judas into the house of the feast and lay beside him; doubled, again, by Jesus’ being beside-himself as well, as his own body is eaten by his disciples). A holy conception, yet not immaculate; it is perhaps a counterpoint for Jesus’ birth – the “birth” of his death:

And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. (Matthew 26:23-25 [King James])

Something had – surreptitiously-yet-openly – passed between Jesus and Judas; *a message*. The message required the sharing of the feast, required the parasitic element, no less than it required their sharing of the host’s space. What is this ‘space’, *how* is this ‘space’, between Jesus and Judas, set in that scene?

It has a definite vertiginous quality to it – no doubt. 12 disciples, 12 parasites, one of whom is a traitor. But who? The accusative jumps from one to the other, looking for an individuation. For now, we certainly have what Nietzsche would call a ‘drama’; an intense moment. It could very well be – Deleuze disturbs us here – a *smooth space*, the space of the **vortex**, where intensities are at play and which produces something decidedly singular – and yet eternally recurring (for a *ritual*, amongst other recurrences, is also **instituted** within these substitution) – that comes, perhaps, before the word; that reinstates the right of word, the condition of the word. The accusative would need the word to get a ‘fix’; but how?

But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. (Luke 22: 21-24)

And, who instates the word that could confer greatness? *Who authorizes the passage from ‘parasite’ to ‘traitor’ with His word?* Here, again, Jesus and Judas play at substitution; a most serious game, no doubt. For – in the gospel of Matthew, upon hearing Jesus call on them by virtue of their very parasitism (“the hands that dip in the bowl”) – the parasites – as those sitting and eating *beside* Jesus (also eating *Jesus*) – are immediately interrupted.

They begin producing other noises, this time of a moral air; who is “greater”, they ask, who is thus (by implication) “furthest away” from being Jesus’ betrayer (and thus, by

extension, who is farthest away from evil – thus the most good)<sup>283</sup>. The parasites seem to have “forgotten their place”. They start producing noise which is unpleasant to Jesus’ ears:

And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth (Luke 22: 25-27)

A tacit, tenuous connection is being made here, almost imperceptible, between the host and authority, host and king. Those sitting at the table – Jesus reminds his disciples – are the parasites. The greatest of them, the best – and thus (by *non-implication* this time) the one immune from ‘evil’ – is *the* host, the one at whose side they eat (and even further removed from this ‘evil’ if he *is the one whom they eat*). The parasites never stood a chance; once Jesus broke the bread to tell them that it was his body, and poured the wine to tell them it’s his blood – they all became implicated on a one-way street; culpable. Their play of substitution had become limited; minus-One. This *is*, in all its glory, ‘divine intervention’ *par-excellence*.

Within these two stories, only one *single* voice – other than that of the Son of God – is heard as such. As an act of divine justice perhaps, the message, the identity of Jesus’ betrayer, is finally delivered to all, *communicated*. Jesus, however, will not be the one to reveal it; he cannot. This play of substitution is coming to a head – and will end, as we shall see, at the gates of the ‘word’ itself.

The play of substitution and origin, however, continues. Jesus has yet to announce who it is that will betray him, though already connected to him through his parasitism (thus

parasitizing it). As the disciples become uneasy, they stop feasting, they stop parasitizing Christ's body. They start talking about morality. Jesus will have none of that; He must assure them of their *mortal place*: only the host can be good, and only he who gives up all material possession can be the ultimate good. Still, however, the disciples are uneasy, for there is a 'traitor' among them, an ultimate 'evil', and they are unable to tell who, as he was identified solely through his parasitic function, through his eating-beside. Had they all been baptized into this role? ***Are all parasites – traitors?***

Jesus, however, still has one more substitution – the *ultimate* one – up his sleeve, one more miracle: he will make the traitor betray himself. The book of Matthew tells of the disciples that "And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?"<sup>284</sup>. An anonymous 'they', then, approaches the Messiah, but no answer appears in the text; *not a Word from the Lord*. Judas, however, approaches the Messiah with his own name, his very own text/word, already *apart* from 'they' – perhaps because he is now not every-one but *the* one? – and asks the same question as 'they'. He, however, gets a response from Jesus, and is answered by the most acknowledging, affirming response we could expect: ***'You said it'*** ("Thou hast said"). Thus we have, finally, the Lord's vouching of the said, which of course constitutes only a self-betrayal of the other – since it was not Jesus who "said *it*". This 'it' – the 'accusative' here – had ingeniously covered its tracks.

This moment of self-betrayal is, however, *also* a moment of substitution: for, despite appearances to the contrary, Jesus *did* say, did give a 'word'; only it was not *his* word. God's 'word', thus, seems to be incapable of betrayal, of delivering. Moreover, its surreptitious play of substitution on betrayal – but what substitution isn't already a 'tradet',

a trading-of-places? – shelters the very foundation and authorization of speech. In the original texts of the New Testament’s Book of Matthew we find the Greek “su eipa”, and the Latin “tu dixisti” – the *eipos* and the *dictum* are here, for all to see. They are indeed, in a very precise sense of the term, sacrificed here, substituted for something else, holier, not to be touched<sup>285</sup>. They are substitutions themselves; for they are decidedly *not* even close to God’s language, to the Greek ‘Logos’ or the Latin ‘Verbum’ of the first Book of John. Their speech is *eipon* – in parenthesis, derived; or *dictum* – a referring-elsewhere, a delivery<sup>286</sup>. They are not spoken in God’s language – who retains the originary locus of speech in His *Logos / Verbum* – but spoken in the language of the derived, for the derived, of the derived (precisely the language of parasites). A substitution, indeed; ***but a final one***. This relation can never be parasitized again – and Christ’s death will make sure of that, once and for all.

Mortal-speech, as the speech of an ‘I’ and not the clamour of a ‘they’, is finally authorized, finally allowed visibility – but only in the ‘I’ of the traitor, the ultimate evil. The ‘Word’ is elsewhere; language’s Authority is elsewhere. But Jesus still speaks to reveal his betrayer; just like “the ant who eats and does not speak speaks nonetheless to chase out the grasshopper”. He still produces a noise – – but, as he insists, “***it is not his***”<sup>287</sup>.

Eventually, ultimately, the derived belongs to/with the parasites, the traitor; the Original stays safe with God, defended by His son, unto death (*in view of death*). Jesus thus *repeats* his meta-parasitic gesture, and will thus have won the game of the parasites – he will be the last one to parasitize them all. The first gesture consisted in denoting the wine and bread as his body and blood, thus therefore making him the ultimate host (for even if he himself eats, *he is eating himself*). The second gesture betrays who is to become in history the

ultimate traitor, the nodal point of evil; and it is a perfect parasitic betrayal: Judas is ‘the traitor’, identified by a God who nevertheless, somehow, manages to remain untouched. His Speech, his Will, his Goodness – remain His and his Son’s (as His representative) alone; the rest are already implicated by their being parasites, and their individuation within this wretched being consists in a derivation, riddled with betrayal.

This scene, then, shows something very deep, which might shed more light on Nietzsche’s reverend vitriol against ‘Christianity’ and ‘the priests’: for one thing, it *shows* that the primordial authorization of speech as a parasitic/noise entity and as a relay for excess/evil – for to deliver (a message, for example) is precisely to betray – is instituted through betrayal. For another thing, it shows that this is the ultimate act of *ressentiment*, as it is completely *and literally* self-effacing, self-denying: it is an institution of the parasite as the origin of excess and evil, through speech; but, it underhandedly attempts to have the cake and eat it too, *using speech* yet never giving up the “original rights” to it (not ‘the Word’ but a mere “saying”).

The ‘Son of God’ reflects a primordial parasite/traitor indulging in bad-consciousness and self-denial: “He” is not the one to have betrayed, to have parasitized; *it is only and always the other*. The ‘Word’ could not have participated in this feast of parasites; ‘Logos’ would be irrevocably lost in this land of sin and treason. God will have become an accomplice-traitor then (if Jesus had directly “told on” – betrayed – Judas’ treachery). Thus, noise indeed will never be eliminated without first eliminating all parasitisms and excesses; without, precisely, *dying*. This is why, in my opinion, Nietzsche called the priestly religion a religion of death. Followed to its *logical* conclusion, it indeed shows its origin to be based – as Nietzsche suspected – on *a very deep and spiritual lie*. The absolute

accusation – the one condemning Judas to Hell (and to the lowest depths of Hell) – is the one that, nevertheless, assumes the role of the puppeteer of language, a meta-language, a meta-will. Recognizing perhaps that there is no final ‘Word’ in discourse, limit feigns itself a **transcendent authority**.

## Not a Conclusion; An After-Word

thesis de estin upolepsis paradoxos ton gnorimon tinos kata philosophian [...] he peri on logon eceumen enantion tais doxais [...] ou dei de pan problema oude pasan thesis episkopein, all en aporeseien an tis ton logou deumenon kai me kolaseos he aistheseos

**“A thesis is the conception contrary to general opinion but propounded by someone famous as a philosopher [...] It is not necessary to examine every problem and every thesis but only one about which doubt might be felt by the kind of person who requires to be argued with and does not need castigation or lack perception”**

*- Aristotle*

There is a story that around 341 BC, Aristotle – who was out of Athens by then and one of the chief advisors to King Philip II of Macedonia (Alexander the Great’s father) – was informed that a good friend and ally of his and Philip’s, Hermias of Atarneus (also Aristotle’s father-in-law), had been tortured and killed by King Antraxerxes III. This happened through a ruse planned initially by the Persian king, who sent a man to capture Hermias and bring him to be questioned on his ties to the Macedonian King. The man he sent was addressed by Aristotle, who learned of this plot, convincing him to change his mind and remain with Hermias as his friend. However, after a while the tables had turned again, and this ‘friend’ betrayed Hermias to the Persian King. Aristotle, bemoaning his friend Hermias, wrote this epitaph in Delphi, in memory of his friend:

The tyrant of the Persian archer race, Broke through the laws of God to slay this man; Not by the manly spear in open fight, But by the treachery of a faithless friend.

We will return to this interesting story between Aristotle and Hermias. For now let us pay attention to this theme – since Aristotle had addressed it in his usual, concise manner – of betrayal and death. It is, indeed, the most “conclusive” gesture I could think of for this thesis.

When I first started talking to my friends of this rethinking the notion of treason – which, it might be well to recall here, was given me by a (faithless) friend – they kept asking: what about murder? And indeed, when it comes to being-with-others, murder does seem to be at least possible in conjunction with betrayal; my friend does not protect herself against me, and so I use that inattention as a weakness and kill her<sup>288</sup>.

But something might perhaps come to the fore with this conjunction of killing and treason, in the way they are represented in language (for Aristotle’s epitaph was indeed *inscribed*). ‘Murder’, of course, is the way we describe an *unjustified killing*; a killing unsanctioned by law. In war, for example, killing is sanctioned by the declaration of it, by appeal to a certain prescribed contract/convention of death. What Aristotle is alluding to above, is a kind of perception of war that we have had with us for many years: a ‘me or you’ kind of situation, where the Gods divine the outcome according to *worth*. An ultimate gamble, then; like in a duel, where a pre-established contract – referring back, through what is called ‘honour’, to an authoritative law – makes it into a ‘fair-fight’, an ‘even-exchange’. This “contract” will, in turn, *authorize* life for the one, and death to the other; all in ‘good faith’ (referring back to a mutual agreement/contract and the authority lying *at its origin*). Now, we will not discuss the issues of strategy here, although they already seriously undermine this whole conception of “equality and fairness in fights”.

Let us go where it would be hardest, I think, for my argument to go – straight to the betrayal.

The traitor, when he kills, does it ‘as if there were no contracts’. As if all that mattered was the outcome – the death of the other person (and, mostly, the implications of that death). The traitor is thus, upon killing, *always already a murderer*, in that, a priori, there could not be any contract or authority that could authorize his deed. The traitor-killer relinquishes this as unnecessary for killing; he just “goes ahead and does it”, in the way which seems to be easiest, quickest, most effective and least risky. Now, we will again not elaborate on any of these points, although, once more, much could be said about the radical difference between the speed, safety and efficiency of an ‘army of traitors’ (but *can there even be such a thing as ‘an army of traitors’?*) weighed against those of a single Hydrogen-bomb<sup>289</sup>.

Going back to Aristotle’s maxim, we see all of the aforementioned denied-authorities in plain sight, together with the villain: ‘the laws of Gods had been broken’; the laws of the ‘open fight’; and the laws of friendship as well, it seems. But what would this epitaph had said, then, had all the laws been *kept*? We need not go far in our imagination in surmising that; we know it only too well from existing tombstones of fallen soldiers. It’s usually something that has to do with “fell in the service of...” kind of statements; what comes after the “of” lends, of course, authority to the occurrence, gives it its rationale, justification: “line of duty”, “service of her country”, etc. What’s interesting in contrasting such statements with Aristotle’s is that one immediately notices that while the latter is an affirmative inscription, the former is entirely negative. More precisely, the latter type of statements make no mention of the villain/killer; the first – does. Why?

Above, in the ‘Exergue’ depiction of the Last Supper, a similar logic is at play: in both, individuality/subjectivity has its price in an ultimate accusation of betrayal. That primal scene echoes this one inasmuch as it is symptomatic of *a subjectivity put under the hold of a certain authority* (and here the point hangs on the fact of this authority being somewhat vouchsafed and kept as a totality – what is, typically, referred to as ‘integrity’ – whether “self-authored” code-of-conduct or an institutionally-assured codex).

Aristotle refers to ‘the laws of Gods’ precisely because it is the Gods that make the *represented* law **untouchable**, holy, totalitarian. Insofar as this law can authorize – and sometimes even *decree* – death, it must be deferred in its authority to an-other, one that cannot dispute its ultimate violence. It is a substitution, indeed, which is precisely the sacrifice of ‘God’, or what Nietzsche called the “abuse of the name of God”. Thus, only ‘God’ authorizes such ultimate violence – never any individual or collection of individuals.

As shown in the “primal scene”, apart from God no one has the right for the unadulterated Word; all mortals are potential traitors – and thus potential murderers – by virtue of their very intersubjectivity (their sharing of the food, their being parasites). When individuality is conferred, finally, it – in order to maintain the notion of some totalizing/totalitarian authority that has power over life itself, *the power to negate life itself* – is being held as the most ultimate of crimes: it is a crime against the Gods (in secular communities, it would be some crime against a certain mythical “contract”, or an instance of ‘psychosis’). The intersubjective individual, the relational creature’s ability to deterritorialize any and all *logos*, is always the ‘suspect’. When killing a person could be authorized under the ‘proper’ circumstances, the proper hangs over the subject’s head in a

radical fashion which the act of killing brings to the surface: ‘his’ could never be *justified*.

This is not an attempt to authorize or justify or even touch on the notion of killing in itself. Lévinas has addressed this issue in saying that the face of the other both calls forth this ultimate violence and at the same time forbids it: ‘thou shalt not kill’ is the only articulated ethical maxim that Lévinas ever mentions, and even that is given to me not *as such* but in the very horrific and strange phenomenon of the face of the other. Insofar as treason is not necessarily an effacement of the face of the other, I do not consider it to be inherently connected to killing, to murder. But what it does offer us – even with regards to such a radical notion as murder – is the perspective that makes visible the fact that we live under a regime in which killing is authorized, and thus is made legitimate.

If one is looking to the traitor to expose a violence which would had better remained unthought and unresponding – here is a good instance of the traitor’s gift. Upon the traitor’s killing, a submerged violence again comes to the fore. The murderer attains his or her (unauthorized) individuality, together with its price of despicability. What Aristotle’s epitaph exposes, most of all, is the way authority treats treason, rather than the way a traitor treats ‘life’. Upon their shared taking of a life, only she who did not have authorization is individualized, is culpable, is expelled. *Not for having killed*, but for having exposed God’s law at its most vulnerable. Perhaps a society where killing would never be justified would sidestep this kind of violence and at least be responsive for these acts and their ethical dimension; but that is not my point here. Mine is not a utopian stance. I do believe, however, that upon rethinking treason, a radical critique of politics

becomes inevitable. Utopians are too prescriptive; treason never prescribes anything – it is neither thesis nor anti-thesis. That is its force.

‘Verily, I counsel you: go away from me and guard yourself against Zarathustra!

And better yet: be ashamed of him! Perhaps he has deceived you.’

- *Zarathustra*

Two figures were explored here – each abject in its own way, each betrays in its own way – and yet they share a certain ‘logic of betrayal,’ teased out above. It is an inherently *political* abjection, insofar as it relies on fundamentally *territorial* distinctions, and deeply connecting issues of identity and property.

The corpse and the dilettante were chosen because they share certain fundamental characteristics in the kind of abjection they incite; this is the ‘phenomenon’ that I here call ‘betrayal’.

They are also different in several aspects, none of which are perhaps fundamental – for trying to think ethics as first philosophy (rather than ontology as first philosophy) means that these ‘fundaments’ are always resistant to representations, to a depiction of ‘what they *are*’ – but that were nevertheless instructive in my attempts to think through them for this thesis. This is also how I choose to answer Nietzsche’s suggestion that there are only ‘appearances of betrayal’: as betrayal bears upon the ethical, it cannot assume an ontological character in any coherent/totalizing manner. Since betrayal is shown to be always already implicated in the very use of language itself – and radically implicated thus in the notion of ‘will’ itself – an antipathology is all that was proposed here.

Antipathology is not phenomenology, as it does not presuppose a transcendental, bracketed/bracketing 'I'; it is also not an ontology, as it consigns otherness to become reduced to 'being'. Indeed, betrayal betrays itself only in its appearances – it is in that ontologically questionable realm that it has its consistency; it is in this disseminated, contaminated 'I' that it finds its purity. So, indeed, there 'is' no betrayal; for, precisely, betrayal essentially is the calling forth of the beyond the 'is', the beyond of being.

The corpse, then, would enact somewhat of a 'material betrayal'. It is the betrayal of the intransigent, of the *interruption* of passivity ('passive' become *interruptive*). It is an upsetting of territory and identity in their most material forms: a body that is other to 'me' is there brought to bear on my identification, on my constructed 'self'. A discrepancy is found, and operates in a way unbeknownst to me, behind my back.

This resonates with the psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious in a decisive manner. Thus Kristeva articulates the tension that is productive of language – according to psychoanalytic theory – as the dimension of the 'semiotic', a sort of "no-man's-land" between the body and language ('the Symbolic'). As any symbolic is shown to be already implicated in the semiotic, will (as being formulated in language) is shown to be already implicated with an irreducible otherness, thus residing in that very same "no-man's-land". Kristeva brings the political insight of psychoanalysis home: this semiotic, this "no-man's-land" of the Cogito – is the (essentially political) dimension of the decision, which presupposes the unconscious and interrupting presence that hearkens through it from behind my back. Insofar as it functions – insofar as language itself can function, thus Kristeva reminds us - it is radically open to betrayal.

This is a ‘material’ node of treason, at least in its appearances. As such, it concerns, at least by implication, all other material betrayals. ‘The pickpocket’, for example, would abuse that precise discrepancy that ‘I’ have with what ‘I’ identify with my ‘self’. My clothes, my pockets, become a part of a certain ‘me’, so that stealing something from within them becomes, through habit, almost as implausible as someone making off with my kidney without me knowing about it (though my kidney, also, is marching toward its own demise regardless of my knowledge or approval). The pickpocket thus surfaces a discrepancy in my very ‘self’ (through abusing this very discrepancy). My claim here would be that part of the moral condemnation of the pickpocket is fundamentally connected with this aspect of betrayal that she enacts, with the discrepancy she exposes (I am *not rejecting this condemnation*, just a way of making it **responsible to its ethical implications**; I believe, after Nietzsche, that it would be a radical way of *affirming it*). The same process occurs when people have their homes broken into; they frequently discover that the troubling feelings they have are less due to any ‘material loss’, but more due to the sense of having been ‘violated’. But how could ‘I’ have been violated without ‘my’ knowledge, without ‘being-there’? The discrepancy in what was considered to be ‘intimate’, ‘mine’, strikes again.

‘The dilettante’ provides a similar gesture in the realm of knowledge, of theory. He also recognizes, parasites, discrepancies in the folds of knowledge – the excesses that the *logos* could not quite appropriate, what Austin tried to discount as verbal-parasites – and uses them in order, precisely, to move through knowledge itself. As a figure of intense, absolute movement, the dilettante breaches conceptual borders insofar as these are taken to be de-finite. The dilettante shows that they are already breached, that they are a-priori

“parasitizable”. Moreover, the dilettante’s own joy enacts a mode of joy that has perhaps long since left science, or is at least kept as a ‘dark-secret’ for fear of “losing face”. A new *nomos* then, producing not (only) a new methodology – for when the *logos* ‘seriously’ attempts to appropriate *nomos* it produces precisely that – but an-other attitude toward method (a ‘methodonomy’, perhaps, in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms).

As a character of speed and mobility the dilettante would incite the type of hate that is reserved for traitors – which I consider to be of a similar type – such as ‘the translator’ or ‘the snitch’; these hold the ‘I’ ransom for a specific kind of elision, or gloss, in its notion of **integrity**. The snitch uses knowledge itself against its appropriations by ‘State-logics’ – she breaches secrets and thus proving precisely that the secret is never ‘mine’, or, more precisely, what does it mean when a notion – represented knowledge, drafted blueprint, moral-identity – is said to be mine (as ‘I’ guard it most, it is precisely what is most “parasitizable”). So, for example, the snitch could tell one friend what I wanted to keep from that friend; which would, in turn, alter that friend’s conception of ‘me’ and very well jeopardize *my own conception of ‘me’* as well. The snitch’s gesture, in this case, would be vilified precisely due to its deterritorializing effect on ‘my moral integrity’, suggesting both that it is vulnerable to attack, and that, in fact, a lot of it has to do with *the other person’s* opinion of me, given me by an-**other**. This is, of course, merely the beginning of the phenomenology of the snitch, but I just wanted to show here, as part of this concluding gesture, some of the fruitful “applications” that this thesis could offer other dilettantes, other traitors.

I am not attempting a totality here; it is not that the domain of human experience or that of treason is divided into that of knowledge/thought and that of the material/body.

No; that would give my gesture an air of originality which it never claimed, which it tries very hard to *re-fuse*. My gesture is precisely parasitic upon existing structures in discourse – and it is here where the '*antipathological*' character of this paper truly comes to the fore – and enacting upon them the treasonous gesture of infiltration, identification, and betrayal. This is also – and perhaps “only” – the *aesthetic* of this entire project: that its form will correspond, in some fashion, to its content.

In many ways, this entire project consists in a self-deconstructive gesture of what I identify as mechanisms of hate, which in turn – either silently or loudly – authorize a very concrete violence. Rethinking these issues, presenting this curious logic, will perhaps make a step towards a rethinking of hate in general, and of what and how it relates to violence. It is also a very real working-through of my own violence and hatreds.

In an 'antipathology' such as this, hate is neither negated, nor abolished. It is taken as a powerful hint, a positive tool that can be used, like pain, to learn about our enacted violence. It is an instinctive response to the call of the suffering other. Thus, I join Nietzsche in his rejection of any moral system that tries to abolish hatred and aggression in the name of 'Justice' or 'God', or 'Love'. As Nietzsche would say, it is an abuse of the name of God (and probably of 'Love' and 'Justice' as well). It would be, perhaps, using – and affirming/willing – the other's current *lack* of perceived **presence** in order to justify violence toward it (for 'God' does not come and tell us 'listen, you got me all wrong'; 'God', *paradigmatically*, cannot do that within any rational discourse – for this discourse would require that 'God' be unintelligible). Justifying through 'lack' is also, precisely, what Nietzsche called nihilism; it assumes a tacit affirmation of lack (in the employ of violence).

Hate is not affirmed here because it ‘promotes violence’; I believe that hate is a direct response to a certain ‘accusative’ that ‘I’ feel I cannot *account* for. It *is* violence, in fact, to try and eliminate that very accusative. Thus, when I use ‘violence’ in this paper, I mean just as much killing the other man for being a traitor as I mean suffocating the hatred I have toward the other man and directing it against myself (what Nietzsche called Judeo-Christianity’s ‘bad conscience’ or *ressentiment*). Both are an attempt to eliminate the other’s face, since *hatred still recognizes the phenomenon of this face*, in its very horror (it is, after all, this horror/abjection that it responds to).

Thus, Nietzsche’s repeated warnings against nihilism are here taken very seriously: upon reaching a stale indifference toward the other, upon being able to ‘account’ for the other’s call, we make our violence toward the other implicit, buried within our language and thought structures, hopefully never to be heard again. It also coincides precisely with what Kristeva calls melancholia; it is the figure of the famous French *ennui*: my hatred and aggression directed against me produce a covering-over of the very site where meaning could emerge, where the call of the other could still be heard, *where responsibility is still possible*. Allowing oneself to feel this hatred, to try and work through it, is precisely a sort of mourning affirmation, a mourning sun. In psychoanalytic terms, then, ‘I’ will be slowly symbolizing – responding to, engaging with, creating a new meaning from – the wound that the violence toward the other leaves on ‘being’, on the ‘psyche’, on the ‘I’. It is the very positive condition of individuality – as Nietzsche and Lévinas show – and it is reminiscent, in many respects, of the cardinal sin of the Devil, the sin of pride.

In a doubled betrayal, substituting Jesus, it may indeed be that I am setting myself up to be crucified, as my professor had been quoted here as saying. This would be what I call the aesthetic of this thesis, its implication in betrayal: it will show something of what interdisciplinarity is and what it means, and as such might reenact the drama of interdisciplinarity itself in its struggle to gain a better academic “standing”. Its ‘passion’ would be the passion of interdisciplinarity itself, a working through of this passion. Crucifixion will always be effected by a dogma, which will nevertheless be forced to speak up and reveal itself, and thus will be betrayed in the process. As a prophetic remark I have the distinct feeling that it is true; this is the aesthetic gesture of having the content of this thesis implicated in its fate (and, of course, also in mine).

One final remark before the closing gesture: insofar as this was supposed to be an academic *thesis*, I had to constantly hold on to a tenuous thread that stretched between these *logoi* and *nomoi* of my explorations. In its earliest uses, ‘thesis’ is a Greek word for ‘place’, for a ‘self-standing’ argument. Aristotle, in his ‘Topica’, even goes so far as to define it as *the odd opinion that nevertheless adheres to basic moral rules* – such as respecting one’s elders and one’s Gods – and in addition being promoted by someone with sufficient powers of observation to make the thesis worth discussing. Of these, I’m afraid, I promote almost precisely the opposite: instead of ‘place’ I promote an ‘all-over-the-place’; in lieu of ‘self-standing’ – a borrowing, parasitic gesture; also, being precisely immoral insofar as this thesis at least tacitly supports questioning the reverence of precisely the authorities such as Gods and elders insofar as they prescribe the right courses of action. Perhaps – and this is a big perhaps – I only retain the ‘sanity’ feature – the ‘powers of observation’ trait – of these “primordial thesis-requirements”, insofar as

those could be traced back to the Father of modern Academia. And, insofar as I retain some of the self-recognition of my own ‘improprieties’ and immoralities, I tried to qualify them as best I could without sinning against the force of my own argument.

Of course, if a clear idea, or ‘thesis’, could be discerned here – as I hope it could – then this gesture is indeed also a betrayal of the concept of betrayal – again provoking it into making ‘an appearance’. This betrayal, as a gesture of mine, is not so much self-contradicting as it is a necessity: if they say that cutting a Möbius strip down the middle only doubles it, in betraying betrayal all you get is its doubling, which is, furthermore, the only way to betray betrayal. Betrayal will have acted its escapes and double-crosses within this thesis, will have operated itself, in every reading of it, anew. Giving betrayal an appearance corresponds to the Nietzschean insight that there are only appearances of betrayal: appearance is to this existent what ethics is to ontology – an upsetting of its claims for fundamentality.

This tension, this doubling, was perhaps impossible to hold; and, as last words go, I would like to quote, yet again, someone else’s. Returning full circle to Aristotle and his betrayed friend, I now quote this faithful friend in his own (reputed) last words: upon being tortured by Artaxerxes III (for information concerning King Philip’s military plans), our hero Hermias – who was also a former student of both Plato and Aristotle – is said to have held out to the end, *not betraying his friends*. It is *his* last words that I would like to close this thesis with. This could very well be considered quite outrageous: I know, almost to a certainty, that, as for my friends – I have betrayed them here, thoroughly. Also, when it comes to what Aristotle calls ‘the laws of the Gods’ – I believe I undermined them here as well. And yet I feel I have at least a shot here, at ringing these

words again, in an idiom which is now perhaps less encumbered by the weight of a (tacit or explicit) totalizing authority; something that just might – after such a long and tortuous path – ring slightly otherwise:

"Tell my friends that I have done nothing shameful, or unworthy  
in the eyes of philosophy."\*

\* Whether this be the salvation of this saying, or its damnation – I leave here as an open question.

In many ways, it is also the open question of this thesis

הנה, כאן, על שרידיה של דת שלא העזתי ליצור  
מונחת דמות אדם נושם.  
באצבע נטולת כישרון סמן את שפתיו, גלה לו את שמו, הקשב  
לשירתו של החשמל הדק.  
זוהי שירתו של אויב יקר  
הנוסע בעורקינו.

חזי לסקלי

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See: Jill Stauffer and Bettina Bergo, *Nietzsche and Lévinas: "After the Death of a Certain God"* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. 130 [Hereinafter **PST**]

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133

<sup>4</sup> This is an ethical presupposition of this project, and it cannot really be justified on any other grounds other than its own. Though i believe that psychoanalysis at least offers the temptations to ground this response – and i sometimes give in to this temptation in this thesis itself – in some kind of ‘mental health’ image (the non-response being emblematic of paranoia, melancholia and murder/suicide), it is, ultimately, indefensible; in order to cohere as ethics as first philosophy, it cannot *rely* (but *can* relate) on any ontology (such as the aforementioned ‘psychic’ one) for its ‘ground’. It’s ground would have to be ethics itself, sprout as the meaning of the reader, of the ‘who’ that survives the encounter.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Antipathology’ is mired in precisely this nexus of the categorical and the accusative: it is an objectifying gesture of/in language , which stands as an ‘accusation’ of sort – thus having an ethical air about it – while at the same time alluding to an ontological structure (the condition of possibility of any taxonomy). This will be elaborated upon further in the course of this thesis. For now, it is only important to keep in mind that both ‘category’ and ‘accusative’ function here in an incommensurable duality between their ontological/taxonomical meaning, and their ethical implication (thus exemplifying something of the way the ontological is implicated in the ethical – a theme to be revisited many times in the course of this thesis): the accusative is the German grammar expression for a direct referral to an object (thus objectifying), and also implies the ‘accusation;’ the categorical is originally a Greek expression which captures both the “accused,” and the general possibility of any and all ontological structures as such – the general principle of classification, the condition of possibility, again, of any and all taxonomy.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “Ecce Homo,” trans. Walter Kaufmann, *On the Genealogy of Morals; Ecce Homo*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967) p. 265 [aph. 4]. (Hereinafter **EH**, aphorism number in square brackets)

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989) p. 201 [aph. 257] (Hereinafter **BGE**) [my italics; *throughout this work all emphases in quotes are there in the original texts, unless i specify otherwise*]

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Genealogy of Morals,” trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, *On the Genealogy of Morals; Ecce Homo*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), pp. 37-38 [Essay I, aph. 10] (Hereinafter **GM**, followed by: roman numeral (designating the essay number), a colon, aphorism number, comma, page number in the edition cited here).

<sup>9</sup> GM, I:2, p. 26 [my emphasis in bold]

<sup>10</sup> GM, I:4, p. 28

<sup>11</sup> I can only refer the reader to Rosalyn Diprose's excellent account of Nietzsche's stance as a fundamental ethics of giving – as a positive, rather than a negative, necessity of giving – one that is inextricably implicated in 'the body'; see: Rosalyn Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity: On Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Lévinas* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002) pp. 19-44.

<sup>12</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1969) p. 202. (Hereinafter **TI**)

<sup>13</sup> TI, p. 200

<sup>14</sup> TI, p. 202

<sup>15</sup> Consider in this context also Zarathustra's formulation:

“May your love of life be love of your highest hope: and may your highest hope be the highest thought of life!

But your highest thought you shall receive as a command from me – and it is this: the human is something that is to be overcome.” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra A Book for Everyone and Nobody*, trans. Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 42 [Part I, aph. 10] (Hereinafter **Z**, followed by roman numeral (for the part number), colon, aphorism number, comma, page number in cited edition)

<sup>16</sup> EH, p. 261 aph. 1

<sup>17</sup> TI, p. 41

<sup>18</sup> This corresponds to the logic of the excluded third attributed to Parmenides and then affirmed as a fundamental rule-of-thought in Aristotle; we will return to this theme in subsequent chapters, especially in 'the dilettante'.

<sup>19</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *Time and the Other and Additional Essays*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987) p. 90. (Hereinafter **TO**)

<sup>20</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Use and Abuse of History.” *Complete Works*, vol. 2, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. Adrian Collins (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964) p. 12. (Hereinafter **UA**)

<sup>21</sup> UA, p. 9

<sup>22</sup> TI, p. 243

<sup>23</sup> UA, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> EH, p. 252 aph. 8,

<sup>25</sup> EH, Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Consider Lévinas here:

"Objectification is produced in the very work of language, where the subject is detached from the things possessed as though it hovered over its own existence, as though it were detached from it, as though the existence it exists had not yet completely reached it. This distance is more radical than every distance in the world. The subject must find itself "at a distance" from its own being [...]. In order that objective distance be hollowed out, it is necessary that while in being the subject be not yet in being, that in a certain sense it be not yet born [...]. [...] this

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"not yet", this state of potency relative to act, does not denote a less than being, but denotes time. Consciousness of the object - thematization - rests on distance with regard to oneself, which can only be time; or, if one prefers, it rests on self-consciousness, if we recognize the "distance from self to self" in self-consciousness to be "time". However, time can designate a "not yet" that nevertheless would not be a "lesser being" [...] only as the inexhaustible future of infinity, that is, as what is produced in the very relationship of language. In designating what it possesses to the other, in speaking, the subject hovers over its own existence. But it is from the welcoming of the infinity of the other that it receives the freedom with regard to itself that this dispossession requires. It detains it finally from the Desire which does not arise from a lack or a limitation but from a surplus, from the idea of Infinity." (TI, pp. 209-210)

<sup>27</sup> GM, I:10, p. 36

<sup>28</sup> TI, p. 41

<sup>29</sup> The notions of debt and promise, as well as the relations to between debtor and creditor and their effect on the conception of time are elaborated upon in the second essay of the Genealogy; see especially: GM, II:1-15, pp. 57-82

<sup>30</sup> GM, I:10, p. 37

<sup>31</sup> GM, I:10, pp. 36-39

<sup>32</sup> GM, Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Let me take this opportunity to make a general remark concerning the role 'Christianity' plays in this thesis (which might also be extended to the roles that "slaves", "nobles", "metaphysics" and "ontology" play in it): my interest here is limited to what i believe Nietzsche means when he uses this term. Thus, when i say 'Christianity', i will always refer to what i believe Nietzsche's view of 'Christianity' was, and will thus refer to it more in its moral-psychological aspects, than its theological aspects. When i later use Dante for my discussions, i use him precisely because he embraced a systematic moral stance for what Nietzsche himself identified as 'Christianity' (for Nietzsche, Dante was the epitome of the Church). I am thus fully aware that my notion of Christianity will be lacking in its scope and scholarship, limited as it is the systematic moral – Thomistic, basically – strains in 'Christianity' rather than the entire gamut of problematic that can be called-up in its name.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 7:12 [King James]; also consider the Bible's: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 9:18 [King James])

<sup>35</sup> Even if this seems similar to Christian morality – that of turning the other cheek, deifying self-sacrifice, etc. – it is decidedly not. The difference lies precisely in the concept of Sin and Debt: while the Christian is born guilty, her actions – however squandering – are still locked within a system of equivalence, still "making up for a debt", still moved to fill a lack. For Nietzsche this is a nihilistic and life-negating metaphysics since it seeks to end debt, which of course happens immediately once on dies – thus deifying death over life. I will elaborate on this idea of lack and how both Nietzsche and Lévinas objected to it, and will show the specific aspects of Christian morality that are exposed to Nietzsche's critique in this respect.

<sup>36</sup> BGE, p. 203

<sup>37</sup> TI, p. 246

<sup>38</sup> TI, p. 41

<sup>39</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science; With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974) p. 183 aph. 127 [my italics] (Hereinafter **GS**)

<sup>40</sup> "The old word 'will' only serves to designate a resultant, a kind of individual reaction which necessarily follows a host of partly contradictory, partly congruous stimuli - the will no longer 'effects' anything, no longer 'moves' anything. [...] [...] we deny that anything is to be made perfect as long as it is still made conscious" in: Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Anti-Christ," *Twilight of the Idols ; and The Anti-Christ*. Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. London & New York: Penguin, 1990, pp. 136-137 aph. 14. (Hereinafter **AC**).

<sup>41</sup> Here, as i see it, Nietzsche gives a metaphysical explanation – for what is the historical data he relies on? – deriving precisely from his own phenomenological-psychological insights. Lévinas is again illuminating in this context: "But in the "prehistory" of the ego posited for itself speaks a responsibility. The self is through and through a hostage, older than the ego, prior to principles. What is at stake for the self, in its being, is not to be. Beyond egoism and altruism it is the religiosity of the self" in: Emmanuel Lévinas, *Otherwise Than Being, or, Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, Pa: Duquesne University Press, 1998) p. 117 (Hereinafter **OB**).

<sup>42</sup> AC, p. 148 aph. 25

<sup>43</sup> AC, p. 149 aph. 26

<sup>44</sup> Here i also see a connection with Lévinas, when he discusses the prohibition against representation of God (which i here equate with the abuse of the name of god, since representation is not just naming, but implies *knowledge*):

"May not the prohibition against representation be the denunciation of an intelligibility that one would like to reduce to knowledge, and that pretends to be original or ultimate, claiming, wrongly perhaps, the dignity of being the birthplace of, and bearer of, the indelible categories of the mind?"; in: Emmanuel Lévinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, trans. Michael B. Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) p. 125. (Hereinafter **AT**).

Also, in this context, note Lévinas' own qualms about theology, and how similar they are to Nietzsche's: "If the intellectual understanding of the biblical God, theology, does not reach to the level of philosophical thought, it is not because it thinks of God as *a being* without first explicating the "being of this being", but because in thematizing God it brings God into the course of being" in Emmanuel Lévinas, "God and Philosophy," *Emmanuel Lévinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) pp. 129-148, p. 130. (Hereinafter **BPW**).

<sup>45</sup> AC, p. 135 aph. 12

<sup>46</sup> See, for example: AC, pp. 138-139 aph. 16-17

<sup>47</sup> AC, p. 147 (aph. 25); compare with Lévinas: "[...] it is very important, in my view, that justice should flow from, issue from, the preeminence of the other" (AT, p. 176).

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<sup>48</sup> See: AC, p. 148 aph. 25

<sup>49</sup> Compare with Lévinas:

“The institutions that justice requires must be subject to the oversight of the charity from which justice issued. Justice, inseparable from institutions, and hence from politics, risks preventing the face of the other man from being recognized” (AT, p. 176); also, on more “metaphysical terms”: “Beneath the plasticity of the face that appears, the face [the ethical presence of the other] is already missed” (Ibid, p. 126).

<sup>50</sup> AC, p. 141 aph. 19

<sup>51</sup> Nietzsche declares of himself that he does seek virtue, but one that is “free of moralic acid” (AC, p. 130 aph. 7)

<sup>52</sup> Lévinas writes:

“The relationship of language implies transcendence, radical separation, the strangeness of the interlocutors, the revelation of the other to me. In other words, language is spoken where community between the terms of the relationship is wanting, where the common plane is wanting or is yet to be constituted. It takes place in this transcendence. Discourse is thus the experience of something absolutely foreign, a *pure* “knowledge” or “experience”, a *traumatism of astonishment*” (TI, p. 73)

<sup>53</sup> Also consider the following: “*nihilistic* values hold sway under the holiest of names” (AC, p. 128 aph. 2).

<sup>54</sup> GS, pp. 187-188 aph. 135

<sup>55</sup> I am still pursuing a Lévinasian interpretation here; Lévinas writes with regards to violence:

“In relation to beings in the opening of being, comprehension finds a signification for them on the basis of being. In this sense, it does not invoke these beings but only names them, thus accomplishing a violence and a negation. A partial negation which is violence. This *partiality* is indicated by the fact that, without disappearing, those beings are in my power. Partial negation, which is violence, denies the independence of a being it belongs to me. Possession is the mode whereby a being, while existing, is partially denied” (BPW, p. 9).

<sup>56</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Leopold Sacher-Masoch, *Masochism. Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1991) p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark, Brian Leiter, and R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) p. 68 aph. 113. (Hereinafter **D**)

<sup>58</sup> Dante’s ‘Divine Comedy’ is a depiction of Christian afterlife; it is composed of three areas for where the dead’s souls wind-up in accordance with their sentencing (announced by God in his Divine Judgment):

Hell, divided into 9 concentric downward-bound circles in an ascending order of sin; the lowest circle – the 9<sup>th</sup> – is that of the biggest sinners – the Devil, together with Judas Iscariot (who betrayed the son of God, Jesus), Cassius and Brutus (both betrayed Julius Caesar, thus forever splitting what Dante considered to be the Great Kingdom of Rome and a unified Italy);

Purgatory, divided into 7 stages, constructed as a ladder between Earth and Heaven, where sinners are purged of their cardinal sins via pain and suffering so that they may reach heaven;

And Heaven, made of 9 concentric (but equal in size) spheres where saints and angels are ordered according to their levels of sanctity, where in the lasts circle there is the throne of almighty God.

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See: Dante Alighieri, Cristoforo Zapata de Cisneros, and Giacomo Zuccato, *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri* (Venezia: Presso Antonio Zatta, 1757).

The text I shall use for my discussions of Dante's *Inferno* part of the *Commedia*, is: Dante Alighieri, *The Vision of Hell*, trans. Henry Francis Cary, illus. Gustave Doré (London: Cassell, 1903). [Hereinafter **VH**]

<sup>59</sup> Indeed, as the *Inferno* clearly shows, what starts off in Dante as a very timid and uneasy encounter with the those suffering in Hell, amounts to – by the end of his journey – not only to a quiet acquiescing of their fate, but also adding to it. Consider here but two examples of his newly found exuberance in one occasion where he kicks a sinner's head (whose body was frozen into Lake Cocytus in the last circle of Hell), as well as deceiving one of the souls on the same circle – also frozen – and arriving at the conclusion that this deception was 'just'. See: VH, pp. 304-307 (Canto XXXII, lines 72-82); and VH, p. 322 (Canto XXXIII, lines 146-148).

<sup>60</sup> D, p. 69 aph. 113

<sup>61</sup> Murderous violence is here to be distinguished from conflict as such. Although Nietzsche does indeed actively and explicitly promote conflict, it is – according to my (Lévinasian) interpretation of him – not a murderous or violent one, but essentially of the order of self-overcoming and risk.

<sup>62</sup> Concerning 'God' see: GS, p. 190 aph. 140-141; Concerning Christianity's appropriation of 'love' also see: AC, p. 145 aph. 23

<sup>63</sup> AC, p. 148 aph. 25

<sup>64</sup> AT, p. 177

<sup>65</sup> AC, p. 143 aph. 21

<sup>66</sup> Z, IV, p. 285

<sup>67</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that in Dante's depictions of Hell, the prevailing principle of its structure was precisely that of retribution/vengeance – what is called in Italian 'contrapasso'. Though prevalent throughout Dante's Hell, this principle is mentioned explicitly in the *Inferno* only once; see: VH, p. 268 (Canto XXVIII, line 137-8). For a more general account of this principle, see: Dante Alighieri, Maria Picchio Simonelli and Patrick Creagh, *Inferno III*, trans. Robert Hollander (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 1993) p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> For example: Z, I:3, p. 68

<sup>69</sup> Z, IV, p. 285

<sup>70</sup> Z, IV, pp. 286-287

<sup>71</sup> See: AC, p. 130 aph. 7

Dante's drama in the *Inferno* also revolves around 'pity':

“Now was the day departing, and the air,  
Embrown'd with shadows, from their toils released  
All animals on earth; and I alone  
Prepared myself the conflict to sustain,  
Both of sad pity, and that perilous road,

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Which my unerring memory shall retrace.” (VH, p. 19 (Canto II, lines 1-6))

In his preparing himself for his descent into Hell, Dante (the character) describes the perils of the road (which i take to be the physical strife of the journey in a place as inhospitable as Hell must be), and the strife of pity (where the good Christian will be torn between empathy/sympathy toward the suffering souls and the recognition and affirmation of Divine Will. The word ‘pity’ is Cary’s translation to the original Italian ‘pietà’, which means pity or mercy, but also connotes two other important words in Christianity: *Compassione* (Compassion) and *Devozione* (Piety). Here i treat Dante’s use of ‘pity’ as an implicit allusion to all three meanings, as an integrative, condensed noun.

The notion of pity and compassion being at the heart of Christian morality can also be found in the Scriptures of the New Testament; consider, for example, the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33-36); but also see, for example, the story of Jesus moved to tears by the suffering of Mary and the Jews surrounding her (John 11:32-34), as well as one of the many instances where Jesus felt compassion on the multitude that surrounded him which led him to show them charity – usually food or healing (see for example Matthew 14:14). Of course, a good Christian would be very much *in-formed* by Jesus’ actions: “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” (1 John 2:6)

Of course, the principle of ‘pity’ is a specific manifestation of the more general principle of ‘Charity’, which makes itself manifest in a form of altruism – which in pity takes the form of commiseration – that Jesus preached. This is not a material principle, but a precisely psychological one. Consider St. Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians:

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;”  
(1 Corinthians 13:3-5)

Charity here is a specific form of empathy, a trained empathy; it is a conditioning of my relation to the other person qua person (as seen above). Charity, moreover, is something that at least Paul places as the **highest virtue of Christianity**, above hope and – most tellingly – **above faith** (See 1 Corinthians 13:13)

<sup>72</sup> As he states in the famous aphorism from *The Gay Science*; see: GS, pp. 181-182 aph. 125

<sup>73</sup> See especially in: Friedrich Nietzsche, “The birth of Tragedy,” *The Birth of Tragedy; And, the Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967) pp. 15-144.

<sup>74</sup> Consider Lévinas’ own relation to religion here; for example:

“Transcendence is to be distinguished from a union with the transcendent by participation. The metaphysical relation, the idea of infinity, connects with the noumenon which is not a numen. This noumenon is to be distinguished for the concept of God possessed by the believers in the positive religions, who are ill disengaged from the bonds of participation, who accept being immersed in a myth unbeknownst to themselves” (TI, p. 77).

This, to Lévinas, is a primitive form of religion, a lower form of it, which consists precisely in subordinating otherness to representation and exchange – what he refers to as “interhuman relations”: “Everything that cannot be reduced to an interhuman relation represents not the superior form but the forever primitive form of religion” (TI, p. 79).

<sup>75</sup> Z, III:1, p. 135

<sup>76</sup> UA, p. 7

<sup>77</sup> TI, p. 234

<sup>78</sup> TI, p. 235

<sup>79</sup> Z, pp. 28-29 [my emphasis in bold]

<sup>80</sup> TI, p. 229

<sup>81</sup> Dante’s Thomistic influences are quite pronounced in this respect. See especially in: W. H. V. Reade, *The Moral System of Dante's Inferno* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1969).

<sup>82</sup> There are 9 circles of Hell, just like there are 9 spheres of Heaven; God is surrounded by 9 rings of angels; there are 100 cantos in the entire Comedy; etc. Not only that, but Dante makes the homogeneity of the system perfectly clear when he places upon the gate to Hell the inscription “To rear me was the task of power divine, Supremest wisdom, and primeval love”; in: VH, p. 26 (Canto III, lines 5-6)

<sup>83</sup> See, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas’ discussion of the Sin of Pride being the Sin of the Devil, deriving from the Devil’s wish to become like God; in: Thomas Aquinas, *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas – Vol. 1: God and the Order of Creation*, ed. Anton Charles Pegis, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997) pp. 858-594.

<sup>84</sup> Perhaps it is best to quote St. Paul’s *Romans* at length here:

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.; 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.; 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.; 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.; 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.; 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.; 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (Romans 8:1-8)

<sup>85</sup> AC, pp. 136-137 aph. 14

<sup>86</sup> Which was indeed the way Nietzsche saw the universe; see: GS, pp. 167-169 aph. 109

<sup>87</sup> AT, p. 127

<sup>88</sup> Dante’s *Inferno* is reserved for souls that sinned in a way fundamentally different to those who are destined for Purgatory. Those who had sinned against God without it involving their wills, who had not

known or been aware at the time of their sins that these were actions performed “against God’s will” – are to be sent to purify those sins in Purgatory, to become worthy of the Eternal Grace of God in Heaven (this is why the Purgatory is structured as a ladder, with seven phases, each representing a cardinal sin). Hell, however – with the exception of Limbo (which houses, for Dante, the unfortunate souls who had done no wrong but be born before they could be “baptized clean of the Primordial – Adam’s – Sin”) – is destined for those souls whose *will* was tainted in their sins; those are the ‘malicious’ of ‘prodigious’ sinners, who sinned not *despite* of God but precisely *against* God. The Devil is at the bottom – at the center – of this Hell since He was the one to sin against God most wilfully and directly; the ultimate traitor (Judas of Iscariot is being chewed by one of the Devil’s three mouths – thus also, in a way, at the center of this circle – for having wilfully acted against ‘God’s representative’, ‘God’s Son’, Jesus Christ). To give one example of this principle from the Christian scriptures: St. Paul’s ‘Epistle to the Hebrews’ states that: “If we sin wilfully after having knowledge of the truth, there is now left no sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:26). Also, see in Dante the depiction he gives – through the character of Virgil, Dante’s ‘guide’ through Hell – of the wilful aspect of sins condemning to Hell: VH, p. 118 (Canto XI, lines 23-25).

<sup>89</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (Radford: Wilder Publications, 2008) pp. 95-96. (Hereinafter Za). Once again, Nietzsche retains the language of value, and seems to do so intentionally and consciously.

<sup>90</sup> In critiquing morality, both Lévinas and Nietzsche used phenomenological-psychological insights; both would let go neither the language of value, nor the language of metaphysics – and both saw morality as the biggest enemy that a radically new ethos needs to overcome, deconstruct, transcend. In this context I think it might be important to note that Nietzsche’s historical examples of the ultimate cruelties and violence were essentially religious in origin; he did not live to see the (horrible) day where a myth-driven *secular*-bureaucracy took to the task of world domination and radical, systematic, other-‘cleansing’. For Lévinas, this was a reality that he constantly thought against (as he repeatedly states); perhaps this can explain, or at the very least excuse something of the difference in idiom between these two writers concerning the ethical import of transcendence as a metaphysical-concept, or the other as the source of the ethical command.

<sup>91</sup> EH, p. 254 aph. 9

<sup>92</sup> OB, p. 114

<sup>93</sup> But, Lévinas would say, it is mine insofar as it addresses and commands me alone, not insofar as it originates in ‘me’

<sup>94</sup> Za, pp. 95-96

<sup>95</sup> TI, p. 229 [my emphasis in bold]

<sup>96</sup> See, for example: Jacques Lacan, *The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book 1: Freud's papers on technique (1953-1954)*, ed. Jacques Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988) p. 82.

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<sup>97</sup> This fact is revealed, in my opinion, by the unique status traitors have had throughout history: they were almost always executed on the spot, even when they had not caused a single death.

<sup>98</sup> TI, p. 231

<sup>99</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) p. 67.

<sup>100</sup> TI, p. 233

<sup>101</sup> TO, p. 55.

<sup>102</sup> Lacan later states that he sees this process as not necessarily bearing on babies, but on the entrance to the symbolic order – which is always a social-inscription – of the subject qua subject; hence not limited in biological age; See: Jacques Lacan, “Some Reflections on the Ego,” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 34. (1951): 11-17.

<sup>103</sup> Or indeed a ‘mirror equivalent’, as supplied by the social image-producing symbolic order. This point, i feel, cannot be stressed enough, as it holds the promise of extending the Lacanian/psychoanalytic discourse to ‘phenomenology’ in general.

<sup>104</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989), p. 43 [translation modified]. In my modifying of the translation there’s only a small but important difference: where Roudiez writes ‘negation’ I have placed the original French term of ‘dénégation’. Roudiez is, I assume, trying to establish a clear transposition to the Freudian *Verneinung*, which has been traditionally translated by Strachey’s famous ‘Standard Edition’ as ‘negation’; however, ‘dénégation’ is a negation that functions on one level, but not on the other – it is not as total as ‘negation’ would suggest; it thus designates **both a turn and a split** – and this duality is, I believe, crucial for understanding the Subject, either that of linguistics or psychoanalysis.

<sup>105</sup> See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).

<sup>106</sup> *Powers*, p. 35

<sup>107</sup> *Powers*, p. 38

<sup>108</sup> *Powers*, p. 42

<sup>109</sup> *Black Sun*, p. 48

<sup>110</sup> Kristeva criticizes philosophical idealism on precisely those grounds; see: *Powers*, pp. 29-30

<sup>111</sup> *Black Sun*, p. 53

<sup>112</sup> *Black Sun*, p. 42 [translation modified]. Again, I changed Roudiez’s ‘negation’ with ‘dénégation’

<sup>113</sup> *Powers*, p. 65

<sup>114</sup> Derrida’s analysis of ‘*the supplement*’ bears a close resemblance to Kristeva’s dealings with the ‘abject’, but, again, i will not discuss them here. See: Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins UP, 1976) pp. 144-164 (in particular).

<sup>115</sup> “Through frustrations and prohibitions, this [maternal] authority shapes the body into a *territory* having areas, orifices, points and lines, surfaces and hollows, where the archaic power of mastery and neglect, of the

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differentiation of proper-clean and improper-dirty, is impressed and exerted. It is a "binary logic", a primal mapping of the body that I call semiotic to say that, while being the precondition of language, it is dependent upon meaning, but in a way that is not that of linguistic signs nor of the symbolic order they found" (*Powers*, p. 72).

<sup>116</sup> See: *Powers*, p. 61. This is, of course, an obvious allusion to Monotheist faith. Although "In the beginning was the word" appears in the New Testament (John's gospel), Kristeva does link both the Jewish religion and Christianity in a convincing way through their relation to the abject in the Jewish rituals of defilement and through the Christian concept of 'sin'. See *Powers*, pp. 90-133. And this is not the last of this 'Word's' undermining in this thesis..

<sup>117</sup> *Powers*, p. 94

<sup>118</sup> *Powers*, p. 73. This analysis goes a long way to explain Nietzsche's notions of the abuse of the name of God and his hatred of priests: it is only as becoming established as represented laws that the procedure giving birth to language – which is what religion acquires its very depth from – is being effaced and denied through representation, through this abuse. Once *authority over the sacred* has been given to a person/institution (the priest is precisely a conflation of both), the mechanistic causality of a symmetrical economy – and hence morality – became incumbent on the processes of symbolization and representation. Lévinas would also agree insofar as he feels that religion abuses a certain religious sentiment or faith; it destroys transcendence by bringing it down to a mechanistic-representational model. The 'will of God' fallacy reflects that of 'free will'. We will return to these themes time and again.

<sup>119</sup> *Powers*, p. 13

<sup>120</sup> *Powers*, p. 104

<sup>121</sup> This is brought to light through Kristeva's discussion of the Levitical interdiction of certain mixtures of fabric in clothing, but is illustrated best when she discussed food prohibitions: particularly the complex system of *flesh*-eating rules. Kristeva notices that flesh, in the Bible, is conscripted to be consumed neither in conjunction milk, nor blood. See: *Powers*, p. 104

<sup>122</sup> See: *Powers*, pp. 104-106.

<sup>123</sup> *Black Sun*, p. 15

<sup>124</sup> *Powers*, p. 150

<sup>125</sup> AT, p. 161

<sup>126</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, trans. Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 2000) p. 116.

<sup>127</sup> *Powers*, p. 71

<sup>128</sup> *Powers*, p. 69

<sup>129</sup> "For the speaking being life is a meaningful life; life is even the apogee of meaning. Hence if the meaning of life is lost, life can easily be lost" (*Black Sun*, p. 6)

<sup>130</sup> See, for example, in *Black Sun*:

"language is, from the start, a translation, but on a level that is heterogeneous to the one where affective loss, renunciation, or the break takes place. If I did not agree to lose my mother, I could neither imagine nor name her." (p. 41); "[...] language starts with a dénegation (*Verneinung*) of loss [...]. "I have lost an essential object that happens to be, in the final analysis, my mother." Is what the speaking being seems to be saying. "But no, I have found her again in signs, or rather since I consent to lose her I have not lost her (this is the dénegation), I can recover her in language". (p. 43); "The dead language they [the melancholic] speak, which foreshadows their suicide, conceals a Thing buried alive. The latter, however, will not be translated in order that it not be betrayed; it shall remain walled up within the *crypt* of the inexpressible effect, anally harnessed, with no way out." (p. 53).

Also, in *Powers*:

"Through the mouth that I fill with words instead of my mother whom I miss from now on more than ever, I elaborate that want, and the aggressivity that accompanies it, by *saying*." (p. 41).

<sup>131</sup> *Powers*, p. 47

<sup>132</sup> "Depressed persons do not defend themselves against death but against the anguish prompted by the erotic object. Depressive persons cannot endure Eros. [...] Messengers of Thanatos, melancholy people are witness/accomplices of the signifier's flimsiness, the living being's precariousness." (*Black Sun*, p. 20).

<sup>133</sup> *Powers*, p. 109

<sup>134</sup> *Powers*, p. 3

<sup>135</sup> Consider Lévinas again here:

"Objectivity is absorbed in absolute knowledge, and the being of the thinker, the humanity of man, is therewith conformed to the perpetuity of the solid in itself, within a totality where the humanity of man and the exteriority of the object are at the same time conserved and absorbed. Would **the transcendence of exteriority** simply indicate an unfulfilled thought, and would it be overcome in the totality? Would exteriority have to be inverted into interiority? **Is it evil?**" (TI, p. 296 [my emphasis])

<sup>136</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, *God, Death, and Time*, trans. Bettina Bergo, ed. Jacques Rolland (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000), p. 11 [my emphasis in bold]

<sup>137</sup> Thus, it is not surprising in the least that the fear of the corpse almost always entails a fear of contamination, being attacked by hordes of demons/microbes (or, what Kristeva above calls a "transitional swarming").

<sup>138</sup> This is not to say that we should stop "lobbing meanings" at them because it is "pointless"; quite the contrary (and this is precisely the point): this tension is only ever truly abolished in what Kristeva refers to as paranoia or murder; it is the positive condition of our becoming subjects in language in the first place.

<sup>139</sup> TI, p. 295

<sup>140</sup> TI, p. 290.

<sup>141</sup> The difference in stress here is precisely between the Hegelian/Lacanian 'other' and 'wholly other'. Whilst the 'other' is merely a counterpart, or foil, against which 'I' derive(s) subjectivity, the wholly other is not as discernible as an object – like the baby's mirror-image in the mirror-stage – but as an extra-symbolic entity that ruptures and interrupts (symbolic) identity.

<sup>142</sup> Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988), p. 85.

<sup>143</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit, and Three Other Plays*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Vintage, 1989).

<sup>144</sup> AT, pp. 156-157.

<sup>145</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, “On Maurice Blanchot,” *Proper Names*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996) p. 166. Notice how much this thought resonates with Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity as the ‘religion of pity’ discussed in the introduction.

<sup>146</sup> See Mauss’ discussion of the potlatch in: Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (New York & London: Norton, 1990) pp. 6-7.

<sup>147</sup> *The Gift*, p. 41

<sup>148</sup> *Powers*, p. 60

<sup>149</sup> Bataille supports this by showing how much more natural resources and processes are needed to sustain an organism as complex as the ‘human being’ (see: *The Accursed Share*, p. 85.)

<sup>150</sup> Reciprocity may well be, as Bataille also mentions, the corpse being host to many living creatures which returns it, in some form, to life’s cycle (Ibid, Ibid).

<sup>151</sup> *God, Death and Time*, p. 37.

<sup>152</sup> In terms of the previously depicted potlatch scene, the logic of exchange would then prove that its logical conclusion is of me giving over my self (perhaps as a slave) so as “not to owe anybody anything anymore”). However – and this is crucial – there is some ‘Thing’ that I cannot give because it is not, literally ‘mine’ (not given to ontology, to representation). Thus, it becomes clear that in order to arrive at that place of “zero-debt”, I must, in the final account, die. Then you can do whatever you want with ‘me’, ‘I give myself completely’. This logical progression goes a long way to show another reason i see for Nietzsche’s abhorrence toward Christianity – as it is eventually – in its language of debt and sin – death-affirming (I will only be truly righteous when ‘I’ no longer have anything left to give, when ‘I’ have given everything – then I am no longer responsible. Then I have a chance at Heaven; heaven is – perhaps essentially, radically – this place of “zero-debt”).

<sup>153</sup> *Powers*, p. 190

<sup>154</sup> See, for instance, Kristeva’s discussion of how “sadness holds back hatred” (*Black Sun*, pp. 64-65)

<sup>155</sup> Recall the many duties and interdictions relating to the corpse which Kristeva discusses in regard to monotheism; not to mention the many myths of the corpse-treatment of monsters and the primordial dread of the “undead”, some of which are still active myths in our own culture (“zombie movies”, for example).

<sup>156</sup> The undermining gesture is precisely in emphasizing the gap between the ‘my’ of the first half of the sentence, and the ‘me’ in its second half (‘my’ hatred is not controlled by ‘me’).

<sup>157</sup> The Corpse’s betrayal is, however, an extreme node, a radical one (perhaps the most radical?). i identify the Corpse’s betrayals mostly through its purveyors; those who offer us the inflammation of hatred as well as its usage against us, through offering us the horror of their very bodies: the Junkie, the Beggar, the Suicide

“victim”. All of these seem to use their bodies against us, despite of us, or with no consideration of us (“us” here being precisely the image/sign-producing mirror). The Suicide victim/perpetrator is a case in point, since he/she actually offers us his/her body, actually “gives us a corpse”. This giving could be seen as a nexus of all three forms of materialization: no regard, insufficient regard, and a full (hostile) regard. Eventually, it is this hostility that becomes manifest with the suicide’s body: this is a body that we could not control, that we will never control, precisely because it is now radically passive, and handed over to us.

<sup>158</sup> Some literature was written on the subject of ‘the amateur’ by Sociologists and Anthropologists; most, of not all, of this literature tried to identify objective criteria for separating him from the professional, and mostly concentrated around the overarching theme of ‘Leisure Studies’ (see, for example: Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens; A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955); Max Kaplan, *Leisure in America: A Social Inquiry* (New York: Wiley, 1960); Kenneth Roberts, *Leisure in Contemporary Society* (Wallingford: CABI Pub, 1999). As such ‘objects of science’, these ‘amateurs’ were subjected to specific methodologies – mostly statistical or sociological – where actual people were identified as ‘amateurs’ according to an empirical base which, in turn, ‘produces’ general objective criteria (the all-famous “Do you do this for a living?”/“Is this your main occupation” – which is modeled precisely on the time/money matrix – runs rampant in these circles (see: Robert A. Stebbins, *Amateurs: On the Margin between Work and Leisure*, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979) p. 23, 29; Robert Bierstedt, “Nominal and Real Definitions in Sociological Theory,” *Symposium on Sociological Theory*, ed. Llewellyn Gross (Evanston: Row, Peterson, 1959) pp. 127-128; Edward Gross, *Work and Society* (New York: Crowell, 1958); Talcott Parsons, “Professions.” *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills and Robert King Merton (New York: Macmillan, 1968) pp. 536-547; John F. Klein, “Professional theft: The utility of a concept.” *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Corrections*. 16 (1974): pp. 133-144; Jacques Barzun, “New Man in the Arts.” *The American Scholar A Quarterly for the Independent Thinker*. 32 (1956): p. 438; Howard S. Becker, “Notes on the Concept of Commitment.” *American Journal of Sociology*. 66 (1960): pp. 32-40; Rosabeth M. Kanter, “Commitment and Social Organization.” *American Sociological Review*. 33 (1968): pp. 499-517).

Stebbins, to take just one example here, offers to separate the ‘amateurs’ from the ‘dabblers’ and ‘novices’, mostly via the categories of ‘established profession’ (Stebbins, 28), ‘knowledge of said profession’ (Ibid, p. 30) and ‘active involvement’ (Ibid, Ibid) which make them sufficiently indistinguishable from the ‘general public’ in order not to be studied separately. Consistency of engagement, however, will allow the ‘dabbler’ to become a ‘novice’, who then one day might – due to perseverance mostly – become a “full-blown amateur”.

<sup>159</sup> The first instance being the concept of ‘nomadic distribution’; see: Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia U P, 1994) pp. 36-37. (Hereinafter **DR**). This concept will reappear in Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, as will be shown below.

<sup>160</sup> Pierre Clastres, *Society against the State: The Leader As Servant and the Humane Uses of Power Among the Indians of the Americas*, trans. Robert Hurley, ed. Abe Stein (New York: Urizen Books, 1977).

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<sup>161</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 1988) p. 394. (Hereinafter ATP)

<sup>162</sup> ATP, p. 395

<sup>163</sup> Consider that the word ‘institution’ itself depicts a fundamental, enrooted ‘standing’ – *in-statio* – a standing supported from within. The figure of the ‘institution’ and its problematic will be elaborated upon in the third section of this chapter.

<sup>164</sup> ATP, pp. 397-398

<sup>165</sup> ATP, 398

<sup>166</sup> Here Deleuze and Guattari show that although they are committed to an account of an encounter of these two logics, they nevertheless consider the logic of the nomad more fruitful for thought when it comes to making new headways/pathways in/with it. Consider, for example: “Every thought is already a tribe, the opposite of a State” (ATP, p. 416). This, i think, hearkens back to Deleuze’s own project in *Difference and Repetition*, that of thinking the concept of difference ‘in itself’, and not subordinated to the concept of ‘identity’ (what he called ‘a conceptual difference’, as opposed to ‘the concept of difference’). See in DR, p. xix

<sup>167</sup> Jacques Derrida and Edmund Husserl, *Edmund Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry': An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey and David B. Allison (New York: N. Hays, 1978); and: Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, vol. 1, trans. William Ralph Boyce Gibson (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1931).

<sup>168</sup> ATP, p. 405

<sup>169</sup> It is, i believe, a space of *illegal change*: if the change of the line’s direction in a striated geometry is given in terms of angles (which correspond of necessity to intersecting lines), then the curve is change which is unaccounted for by any linear constructions, since it is infinitely small, and thus the angles needed to depict its change would be impossible for the ‘regular’ science to handle, unless by approximation (or, as alluded to earlier, an already pre-scribed, authorized Ideal-shape, like a circle, parabola, etc.).

<sup>170</sup> ATP, p. 405

<sup>171</sup> ATP, p. xiii

<sup>172</sup> "The nomos came to designate the law, but that was because it was distribution, a mode of distribution. It is a very special kind of distribution, one without division into shares, in a space without borders or enclosure" (ATP, p. 420); In the preface to the 1994 English edition of ‘*Difference and Repetition*’, Deleuze also refers to his work – including his collaborations with Felix Guattari – as one in which he/they: “invoked a vegetal model of thought: the rhizome in opposition to the tree, a rhizome-thought instead of an arborescent-thought” (DR, p. xvii)

<sup>173</sup> ATP, pp. 420-421. A good way to envision this would be, in my opinion, a short rumination of Bohr’s discovery of quantum leaps: an atom has, in accordance with its nucleus, a certain number of energy levels, upon which its electrons revolve. When this atom receives a burst of energy, the atom becomes “charged”,

and an electron leaps from one energy level to a higher one (which is, again, discrete and pre-set). However, this does not last long, and the electron falls back to its original “resting” level, but upon its “fell”, it releases energy in the form of light (photons). Now, the electron that changes its position and reaches the higher energy-state, *does not pass inbetween the energy levels*. It makes a ‘quantum leap’, which means it literally vanishes and reappears at another level. This discovery was crucial for the development of the later ‘Quantum Theory’ (to which, i admit, i do much violence to here). The relation to our own issue i think is obvious: the electron’s ‘movement’ is precisely an example of a nomad’s ‘speed’; it is instantaneous, and completely qualitative (i.e. cannot be measured in relation to the energy levels themselves (and even if it would it would show an *infinite* speed)). Now the Bohr model here is still too conservative for Deleuze in my opinion, since it posits – what is called in Quantum Mechanics – a ‘bound-system’: it is restricted to specific energy levels since they are bound to a specific nucleus of a specific atom. If we remove the nucleus, and posit that energy levels are not discrete and not fixed, we arrive at the veritable ‘smooth space’ of (Deleuze and Guattari’s) thought, where change is instantaneous and where – most importantly – difference is given only to intensities, to energy potentials. For an account of Bohr’s model and its contribution to Quantum Theory, See: Werner Heisenberg, “The Development of the Interpretation of Quantum Theory,” *Niels Bohr and the Development of Physics: Essays Dedicated to Niels Bohr on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, eds. W. Pauli, L. Rosenfeld and V. Weisskopf (McGraw-Hill: New York. 1955) pp. 12-30.

<sup>174</sup> See ATP, pp. 410-413

<sup>175</sup> ATP, pp. 411-412 [my emphasis in bold]

<sup>176</sup> ATP, p. 409

<sup>177</sup> The ‘ethical’ dimension consists in what Emmanuel Lévinas termed ‘Ethics’, and what Nietzsche refers to as ‘the problem of *value*’. If will-to-truth is to be exposed in its nihilistic character, it is precisely through its insistence on ‘truth’ (which would’ve always already presupposed representation) which this appropriation is seen to be a strike at the heart of what gives meaning/value (which will be presented here as the aforementioned, nomadic excess). In the Lévinasian idiom, the ‘I’ – the represented identity – is always already responsible for an Other, who was necessarily usurped from its place (this usurpation/substitution is a primordial condition of there being an ‘I’ in the first place for Lévinas); this theme is so fundamental to Lévinas’ thought, that he put it as a motto to his most mature published book – ‘Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence’ – which is a quote from Pascal’s ‘Pensées’: “...”That is my place in the sun.” That is how the usurpation of the whole world began” (OB, p. vii); also consider:

“What is an individual, a solitary individual, if not a tree that grows without regard for everything it suppresses and breaks, grabbing all the nourishment, air and sun, a being that is fully justified in its nature and its being? What is an individual if not a usurper?” (Emmanuel Lévinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Sean Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) p. 100). Thus, in this context, the ‘I’ would be analogous to ‘State’, and the nomadic curves and excesses would be associated with its exterior other. In the following sections i will try to further qualify these claims.

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<sup>178</sup> ATP, p. 400

<sup>179</sup> ‘properties’ here to be taken in the sense of ‘characteristics’ and in the economic sense

<sup>180</sup> One example of such a ‘territorialization’ is brought forth by Deleuze and Guattari in their discussion of the ‘State’-army (which they differentiate from the nomad war-machine – the military will always be supposed to execute a central ‘will’ which, moreover, is directly connected to the preservation of the State (and especially its marked territory). The war-machine would more through space not to hold it as property, but according to what Deleuze and Guattari call vertiginous flows of affects/desire, which can never be pinned-down or reduced to any ‘geometrical claim’; see in ATP, pp. 462-463.

<sup>181</sup> Also consider: "Learning to undo things, and to undo oneself, is proper to the war machine: the "not doing" of the warrior, the undoing of the subject" (ATP, p. 442).

<sup>182</sup> "We will call an assemblage every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow - selected, organized, stratified - in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage, in his sense, is a veritable invention. Assemblages may group themselves into extremely vast constellations constituting "cultures"" (ATP, p. 448)

<sup>183</sup> ATP, p. 441. It is also worthwhile to consider here another subversion of the ‘willing subject’, which connects directly to the affective passivity being appropriated by the State-form of control, that of the ‘rational’, ‘determining’ agent: "Assemblages are passionate, they are compositions of desire. Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled, desire. The rationality, the efficiency, of an assemblage does not exist without the passions the assemblage brings into play, without the desires that constitute it as much as it constitutes them" (ATP, pp. 440-441)

<sup>184</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) p. 41. (Hereinafter **STR**)

<sup>185</sup> Consider the following quote from ‘On the Genealogy of Morals’:

“All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inwards* - this is what I call the *internalization* of man. [...] Those fearful bulwarks with which political [*Staatliche* – of the ‘State’] organization protected itself against the old instincts of freedom [...] brought about that all those instincts of wild, free, prowling man were turned backwards, *against man himself*. Hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction - all this was pitted against the possessors of such instincts: *that* is the origin of the “bad conscience.” (GM, II:16, pp. 84-85).

<sup>186</sup> It would perhaps be wise here to recall that Nietzsche is by no means a utilitarian – for whom he has mostly nothing but scorn. It is thus not the question of value insofar as it is a furthering-of-man toward some goal beyond man (for any ‘goal’ would then totalize man by virtue of its very telos, and close-off thought’s horizons in a totality that is – after the death of God – no longer assured any fundamental truth over other totalities). According to Nietzsche, utilitarianism reduces human quality to human quantity by presupposing their equivalence; it is also, fundamentally, a ‘Christian’ attitude that tries to work through to a ‘common denominator’ of happiness’, thus obviating the very asymmetry that any feeling – of pain and of happiness – results from and relies on (as well as our openness to the address of the other on Lévinas’ explicit ‘ethical’

level). See for example(s): GS, pp. 269-271 aph. 338; BGE, pp. 112-114 aph. 201; Ibid, aph. 228 aph. 156-158.

<sup>187</sup> GS, pp. 341-342 aph. 379

<sup>188</sup> GS, pp. 76-77 aph. 2 [my emphasis in bold]. Here, i think Nietzsche is speaking, perhaps in the most direct fashion he can do so, of his ethics. Since his attacks on morality and justice – and this applies to my interpretation of his attacks on metaphysics as well – he could not, i suspect, have used the word ‘my Justice’ without being misunderstood as merely proposing a different set of values to replace the old ones. No, it is rather an injustice; his own injustice – which i take to be the true call of an ethical necessity: the word ‘justice’ immediately suggests the ethical sphere here, whilst the appropriation of ‘my’ claims its necessity, its invariability, and Nietzsche’s assumption of responsibility toward it, *as* necessity. ‘My injustice’, moreover, keeps him on the side of the evil, the guilty; not only is this a gesture which denies him any kind of moral condescension from his fellow men, but it also hints at his method of discourse, at what drives his thinking/writing. Take, for example, the following quotes: “Affability contains no hatred of men, but for that very reason too much contempt for men” (BGE, p. 83 aph. 93)

<sup>189</sup> And in enacting a second-person voice *in this context* – most of the book is written in the third-person – i see Kristeva as here enacting her own ethical gesture toward the ‘foreigner’.

<sup>190</sup> STR, p. 20, 21 respectively

<sup>191</sup> STR, p. 14

<sup>192</sup> Of course, i am not claiming that this ‘friendship’ is a mountain top that – once it is reached – can sustain a community in complete stasis; the deeper implication of Nietzsche’s insights would be that ‘friendship’ will be a constant engagement with aggression – so as not to allow it to turn into resentment (see, for example, below – on the next note – his conjunction of friendship with feud).

<sup>193</sup> STR, p. 4; consider also Nietzsche’s rhyme titled ‘The Good Man’: “Better a whole-hearted feud / Than a friendship that is glued” (GS, p. 47 prelude 14).

<sup>194</sup> STR, p. 30

<sup>195</sup> STR, p. 97

<sup>196</sup> See, for example in GS, p. 254 aph. 322: “Those thinkers in whom all stars move in cyclic orbits are not the most profound. Whoever looks into himself as into vast space and carries galaxies in himself, also knows how irregular all galaxies are; they lead into the chaos and labyrinth of existence”

<sup>197</sup> A ‘possession’, taken at its core, can mean the very expectation of acting in a certain way; for example, if ‘my wife’ ‘sleeps with someone else’, those two representations – insofar as they are representations that affect my perception *because* ‘I’ hold them to be “true” (and sometimes my very ‘I’ is the clinging to the “truth” of such representations) – i immediately feel betrayed, and may very well decide that ‘our relationship’ is no longer – as ‘I’ has just been supplied with ‘sufficient reason’ as to why (the implied conditional iff (if and only if) ‘wife’=True => ‘wife sleeping with someone other than me’=False – which produces the reversed

if ‘wife sleeping with someone else’=True => ‘wife’=False. Promptly then, ‘I’ get(s) a divorce. This is, i think, a classic example of ‘a relationship of possession’).

It also shows, of course, a *logic of betrayal* behind it, which will be discussed below.

<sup>198</sup> GS, p. 89 aph. 14. One more important factor to take under consideration is that a person’s ability to *identify* with anything is also her very ability to connect and to follow, not only representations but also, affects, ‘Desire’ (in the Deleuzean sense). Thus, as we will see, Nietzsche will not disclaim ‘possession’ as such, but only as my territorializing/representing gesture of the other person. Possession of an ideal, however, is, in my reading, wholly different (even though i admit that it still has dangerous connotations of Platonic/Kantian ‘representation-regime’ type of entity). If we interpret ‘an ideal above them’ as the non-representational affect – and the way Nietzsche usually uses ‘high’ will enable us to do so i believe – then Nietzsche, Kristeva and Deleuze can be seen here as speaking toward the same politics, the same kind of deterritorialized sharing.

<sup>199</sup> STR, p. 23

<sup>200</sup> GS, pp. 245-246 aph. 307

<sup>201</sup> GS, p. 34 aph. 2

<sup>202</sup> GS, p. 37 aph. 4. Also see: GS, p. 255 aph. 323 – there Nietzsche recommends fighting side-by-side with one’s opponent, which he says is sometimes the path to a great victory.

<sup>203</sup> GS, p. 78 aph. 3.

<sup>204</sup> GS, p. 38 aph. 4; also consider the following:

“For I approach deep problems like cold baths: quickly into them and quickly out again. That one does not get to the depths that way, not deep enough down, is the superstition of those afraid of the water, the enemies of cold water; they speak without experience. The freezing cold makes one swift.

And to ask this incidentally: does a matter necessarily remain misunderstood and unfathomed merely because it has been touched on only in flight, glanced at, in a flash? Is it absolutely imperative that one settles down on it? That one has brooded over it as over an egg?” (GS, pp. 343-344 aph. 381); and, of course:

“To the Virtuous - Why should our virtues be grave? We like ours nimble-footed: / Even like Homer's phrase, they have to come *and go*” (GS, p. 43 rhyme 5)

<sup>205</sup> STR, p. 4. Nietzsche also conceives of the special, ‘gay foreignness’ he is proposing; thus he writes:

“Another ideal runs ahead of us, a strange, tempting, dangerous ideal to which we should not wish to persuade anybody because we do not readily concede *the right to it* to anyone: the ideal of a spirit who plays naively – that is not deliberately but from overflowing power and abundance – with all that was hitherto called holy, good, untouchable, divine; for whom those supreme things that the people naturally accept as their value standards, signify danger, decay, abasement, or at least recreation, blindness, and temporary self-oblivion; the ideal of a human, superhuman well-being and benevolence that will often appear *inhuman* – for example, when it confronts all earthly seriousness so far, all solemnity in gesture, word, tone, eye, morality, and task so far, as if it were their most incarnate and involuntary parody” (GS, p. 347 aph. 382)

<sup>206</sup> GS, pp. 36-37 aph. 3

<sup>207</sup> STR, p. 8

<sup>208</sup> This is also what i make of Nietzsche's saying that: "What I want is more; I am no seeker" (GS, p. 254 aph. 320). Also consider the second rhyme from Nietzsche *Prelude to The Gay Science*, titled 'My Happiness':

"Since I grew weary of the chase / I taught myself to find / And since the wind blew in my face / I'll sail with every wind" (GS, p. 4 [translation modified with the assistance of the original text (GS, p. 3) and The Cambridge Edition of *The Gay Science: Friedrich Nietzsche, The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. Bernard Arthur Owen Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff & Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001) p. 11. I use here the Cambridge Edition's translation of the *Gay Science* as i consider it clearer and slightly more aesthetically appealing than Kaufmann's rendering of it). And just one more:

"Need is considered the cause of why something came to be; but in truth it is often merely an effect of what has come to be" (GS, p. 207 aph. 205).

<sup>209</sup> GS, pp. 347-348 aph. 383 [my emphasis in bold]

<sup>210</sup> STR, p. 12; also consider the following:

"Meeting balances wandering. A crossroads of two othernesses, it welcomes the foreigner without tying him down, opening the host to his visitor without committing him. A mutual recognition, the meeting owes its success to its temporary nature [...]. The foreign believer is incorrigibly curious, eager for meetings: he is nourished by them, makes his way through them, forever unsatisfied, forever the party-goer, too" (STR, p. 11); combine this with Nietzsche's 'Spoiler of taste' aphorism:

"A: 'You are a spoiler of taste – that is what everyone says!' B: 'Of course! I spoil for everyone the taste for his own party – and no party forgives that'" (*The Gay Science* (Cambridge Edition), p. 136 aph. 172). In this instance i've used a different translation from the Kaufmann one, since i believe it to be clearer, and – to be (never perfectly) honest – more suited for my present purpose).

<sup>211</sup> See, for example, in GS, p. 215 aph. 289. Greed is also a figure raised by Kristeva herself – see STR, p. 11.

<sup>212</sup> See for example GS, p. 219 aph. 270

<sup>213</sup> See for example: GS, pp. 163-164 aph. 107; and: Ibid, p. 131 aph. 76

<sup>214</sup> See for example GS, p. 212 aph. 213 – where those who are 'slow to know' are depicted as believing that knowledge is acquired slowly.

<sup>215</sup> See GS, pp. 291-292 aph. 349 – the aphorism is titled 'Once more the origin of scholars'

<sup>216</sup> PST, p. 13

<sup>217</sup> The Greek word *parodos* also means a side-entrance, a narrow passage – much like the one the rats might have (ab)used

<sup>218</sup> PST, p. 18

<sup>219</sup> This could more clearly be seen, perhaps, through his various re-collections – scattered as landmarks throughout the book – to identify the object of his search, the reason for the book: On page 31, for example,

the question is ‘whether or not economic history has an outside’; on page 88 it the entire work becomes “a book of evil, the book of the problem of evil”. And on page 130 it becomes (i’m paraphrasing) “*to progressively construct the field of human or social sciences*”. Thus, the question of epistemology, seems to vacillate between that of knowledge and that of morals/ethics. This very same gesture is what i tried to point to in my discussion of Nietzsche above.

<sup>220</sup> PST, p. 67

<sup>221</sup> BPW, p. 88

<sup>222</sup> BPW, p. 89

<sup>223</sup> BPW, p. 87

<sup>224</sup> This is something which, Serres recalls, someone said about Descartes’ meditations as well: trying to eliminate doubt completely and thus remaining with only the gesture of elimination (which, of course – as Lévinas is always careful to remind us – already appeals to a radical exteriority). See: PST, pp. 181-182

<sup>225</sup> See for example in: Theodore Hailperin, *Sentential probability logic: origins, development, current status, and technical applications* (Bethlehem: Lehigh Univ. Press, 1996) p. 32.

<sup>226</sup> See PST, p. 72

<sup>227</sup> Serres connects the themes of psychology, systems-theory and morality quite succinctly in the following passage:

"This couple [noise-message] and their relation are set apart by an observer seated within the system. In a way he overvalues the message and undervalues the noise if he belongs to the functioning of the system. He represses the parasites in order to send and receive communications better and to make them circulate in a distinct and workable fashion. This repression is also religious excommunication, political imprisonment, the isolation of the sick, garbage collection, public health, the pasteurization of milk, and so forth, as much as it is repression in the psychoanalytical sense. But it also has to do with a history, the history of science in particular: whoever belongs to the system perceives noises less and represses them more, the more he is a functioning part of the system. He never stops being in the good, the just, the true, the normal. All dogmatism lives on this division, be it blind or undecided" (PST, p. 68)

<sup>228</sup> PST, p. 70

<sup>229</sup> This problematic is articulated by Serres in ways which very much remind us of both Nietzsche’s and Lévinas’s insights: "He [the parasite] becomes invisible by being impossible. Impossible, absurd, outside reason and logic. That is what is interesting; that is the point; that is what must be thought about. He becomes invisible in the inconceivable" (PST, p. 218); and also: "Absurdity is the third included in the world where the excluded third dominates" (Ibid, Ibid)

<sup>230</sup> Lévinas writes: “The ethical language we have resorted to does not derive from a special moral experience which would be independent of the description hitherto developed. It proceeds from [...] the very meaning of the approach that cuts across knowledge, from the face that cuts across the phenomenon. Phenomenology is able to follow the reversion of thematization into an-archy in the description of the approach. Ethical language succeeds

in expressing the paradox in which phenomenology suddenly finds itself, since ethics, beyond politics, features at the level of this reversion” (BPW, p. 92).

<sup>231</sup> BPW, p. 89

<sup>232</sup> PST, p. 185

<sup>233</sup> PST, p. 183

<sup>234</sup> PST, pp. 193-194

<sup>235</sup> PST, pp. 195-196

<sup>236</sup> In Arendtian terms, it would put the system back into relation with the ‘human’ element – which for Arendt is always the political element, the ability/freedom to speak and to act. Here my understanding of violence and the ‘human’ are slightly different, for the imperceptible other does not ‘speak’ in the same way that a recognized ‘political actor’ speaks. Still, if we acknowledge ‘noise’ as the excluded other, and noise as a politically legitimate entity (but I admit one has to “twist Arendt’s arm” a bit to do that), then we can also embrace Arendt’s understanding of violence into this discussion. As Arendt says in the opening of her short essay ‘*On Violence*’:

“The very substance of violent action is ruled by the means-end category, whose chief characteristic, if applied to human affairs, has always been that the end is in danger of being overwhelmed by the means which it justifies and which are needed to reach it. Since the end of human action, as distinct from the end products of fabrication, can never be reliably predicted, the means used to achieve political goals are more often than not of greater relevance to the future world than the intended goals” (Hannah Arendt, *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970, p. 4).

Lévinas offers his own language to depict what is (in my opinion) a similar thought: “[...] the intelligibility and intelligence situated in thought understood as vision and knowledge, interpreted starting from intentionality, consist in privileging, in the very temporality of thought, the present in relation to the past and the future. To comprehend the alteration of presence in the past and future would be a matter of reducing and bringing back the past and future to presence – that is, representing them” (TO, p. 99); and, insofar as we conceive – like Deleuze – the ‘iron-collar of representation’ as consisting in reducing the curves of the nomos into the yes/no grid of the logos, then Lévinas’ next statement – from his essay on Derrida – would tie our discussion somewhat also with Arendt’s thought, and perhaps show in the process something of the political awareness of Lévinas himself, as he speaks of “[...] the yes and the no – imperious alternative, thanks to which computers decide the fate of the universe” (Emmanuel Lévinas, “Wholly Otherwise,” *Re-Reading Lévinas*, trans. Simon Critchley, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) p. 6, (Hereinafter **RRL**).

<sup>237</sup> Emmanuel Lévinas, “The I and Totality,” *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith & Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) p. 31.

<sup>238</sup> And ‘exteriority’ here is not to be confused with the inside/outside divide. The ability of the parasite to be ‘an outsid-er’, already implicates the system, in a recognition of alterity as something which breaches it from within. Lévinas says this about Descartes’ meditations, which connects well to our aforementioned of

him as trying to burn down the house of reality in order to preserve it “clean”. Lévinas is trying to articulate – almost against language itself – a transcendence not given to synchrony. The Other, tapping on ‘being’'s shoulder from behind, is nevertheless no present, but the giving of the present (which is always an-archic, diachronic – from an inaccessible time): “The presence of the present that Descartes discovered in the cogito, without suspecting the unconscious was eating away at it, immediately shattered between his fingers with the idea of God that presence could not contain” (RRL, ‘Wholly Otherwise’, p. 7)

<sup>239</sup> Of course, this is also where the Parasite and the dilettante part ways. The parasite, by its very nature, has a sedentary aspect, which will always put it in a risk to become what Serres calls (above) ‘a predator’. But the dilettante’s strangeness-gayness axis – her nomadic call – will not allow such a state; the clock is always ticking, time is always active with the nomads – they can never be reduced to mere parasites.

<sup>240</sup> However, it is not “just” a critique, but an enabling condition of the system itself; even in its other-persecuting gestures, the system – Lévinas insists – attests to the incommensurability of the other. Lévinas considers the very yoke of representation, then, as the system’s gift to the other/parasite: it is the gift of its weakness, the gift of acknowledging otherness. Had there been no other, Lévinas exclaims, there would be no language. For example: “The act of designating modifies my relation of enjoyment and possession with things, places the things in the perspective of the Other. [...] The thing becomes a theme. To thematize is to offer the world to the Other in speech” (TI, p. 209).

Thus we see how the Other can be always already assumed and affirmed in my own ‘territorializing’ gesture (which I see here as the aforementioned ‘thematization’). Territorializing thus becomes an invitation to the parasite; the logic of the excluded third is thus startled by a tap on its back coming from the diachrony of the Other – my search for a ‘proper’ for a property, had always already been my attempt to give to the Other; my opening/susceptibility for the parasite.

<sup>241</sup> SPT, p. 30

<sup>242</sup> “Disturbed.” *OED Online*. 1989. Oxford English Dictionary. June 14 2009. [http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50067519?single=1&query\\_type=word&queryword=disturbed&first=1&max\\_to\\_show=10](http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50067519?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=disturbed&first=1&max_to_show=10).

<sup>243</sup> “dis.” *A Latin Dictionary*. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten by. Charlton T. Lewis, Ph.D. and. Charles Short, LL.D. Oxford. Clarendon Press. 1879.

<sup>244</sup> “turbo.”, Ibid

<sup>245</sup> The second passage brought here had already been quoted in the previous subsection, but is brought here again both due to its radical importance for my expounding on Lévinas’ thought in relation to this project, as well as reverberating somewhat differently in the specific context of this particular sub-section, as well as its adjoining quote.

<sup>246</sup> BPW, p. 88

<sup>247</sup> BPW, p. 89

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<sup>248</sup> PST, p. 150, 161

<sup>249</sup> BPW, p. 156

<sup>250</sup> BPW, p. 18

<sup>251</sup> PST, p. 80

<sup>252</sup> PST, p. 151

<sup>253</sup> Consider, for example, the following by Serres:

"Since we don't know at all what collective functioning is, the theory that accounts for it is cruelly delirious. The tortured, the hungry, the dead, know this or knew it in their very flesh" (PST, p. 119);

"We have made the same error about the collective as about God; we made it in the image of the ego. [...] In sum, we know nothing, and once more, the collective is black and makes noise" (Ibid, p. 124);

"Noise destroys and horrifies. But order and flat repetition are in the vicinity of death" (Ibid, p. 127).

"We are provided with enough senses and instinct to protect us against the danger of explosion, but we do not have enough when faced with death from order or with falling asleep from rules and harmony" (Ibid, Ibid)

<sup>254</sup> Serres uses the biblical example of Joseph's being substituted by the Scapegoat, so that he won't have to die for his brothers to convince their father – through the scapegoat's blood-stains on Joseph's garment – that he *is* no longer. See in: PST, p. 155

<sup>255</sup> Serres depicts it in terms of a ball-game, but the principle is the same. For example, he writes:

"A ball is not an ordinary object, for it is what it is only if a subject holds it. Over there, on the ground, it is nothing; it is stupid; it has no meaning, no function, and no value. Ball isn't played alone. Those who do, those who hog the ball, are bad players and are soon excluded from the game. They are said to be selfish. The game doesn't need persons, people out for themselves. Let us consider the one who holds it [the ball]. If he makes it to move around him, he is awkward, a bad player. [...] Skill with the ball is recognized in a player who follows the ball and serves it [...]. [...] Playing is nothing else than making oneself the attribute of the ball as a substance" (PST, pp. 225-226)

<sup>256</sup> PST, p. 227 [my emphasis in bold]

<sup>257</sup> Not only that, but the fact that it is this relay that constitutes the 'we' – a fact betrayed/relayed by the parasite – that resonates with Kristeva's notion of the stranger's relation to the 'we', insofar as she – much like the nomad – suggests a breach and an exteriority as a foundational questioning, as well as affirmation, of the 'we'.

<sup>258</sup> PST, pp. 225-226

<sup>259</sup> OB, p. 72 [my emphasis in bold]

<sup>260</sup> Consider Lévinas: "[...] the way by which the logos attends to the essence of the ego, passes through the third party" (BPW, p. 94); and Serres, in turn: "a third exists before the other" ['other' is here meant as my counter-part, the 'second point to which the message is addressed' – the Hegelian other – and not the Lévinasian Other] (PST, p. 63).

<sup>261</sup> BPW, p. 91

<sup>262</sup> BPW, p. 86

<sup>263</sup> BPW, p. 87

<sup>264</sup> For example: “For subjectivity to signify unreservedly, it would then be necessary that the passivity of its exposure to the other not be immediately inverted into activity, but expose itself in its turn; a passivity of passivity is necessary” (OB, p. 142)

<sup>265</sup> See, for example, in: GS, p. 153 aph. 99; and also: Ibid, p. 183 aph. 127

<sup>266</sup> BGE, p. 80 aph. 68

<sup>267</sup> Also consider that memory is a re-presenting device par-excellence; and even though ‘pride’ would also have to paint the ‘I’ into an always already represented ‘corner’ (“‘I’ would not have done X that because ‘I’ am Y”), this dynamic that Nietzsche is depicting shows that this ‘pride’ something that is stronger than mere representation, and thus not reducible to representation (but still complicit with it, in a peculiar way)

<sup>268</sup> That would correspond to establishing a code of equivalence for this correspondence and with that subjecting it to a self-same identity again; in Christianity, as I think Nietzsche saw it, that code of equivalence was basically the notion of sin and the eternal ‘debt’ that followed from it (again, and not surprisingly, ‘code’ here functions much in the same way ‘currency’ does).

<sup>269</sup> I see it as akin to what Kristeva recognizes in ‘melancholia’ – the swallowing of the wound – as discussed above in the chapter of the corpse

<sup>270</sup> I would here identify this ‘Glory’ with what would be *the an-archic possibility of pride*, the other’s call for which the biblical ‘Here I am’ is the response. This ‘Here I am’ – contrary to certain interpretations of this saying – is just as much joyful self-assertion – ‘Here **I** am’ – as an acquiescence to infinite responsibility. As I’m constantly trying to show – with this Nietzsche-Lévinas hybrid of mine – the two are complementary gestures, comprising the heart of the ethical.

<sup>271</sup> OB, p. 144

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, p. 145 [my emphases in bold]

<sup>273</sup> It might be well to note here that, as most of the texts dealt with here were written originally in French, there is a lot of play – both in Serres as well as in Lévinas and Kristeva – around the word ‘proper’; in French it plays on the meaning of the true, the right, the moral, the one’s-own, property, propriety.. Not only etymologically but in its everyday usage as well. Thus saying my own here should be treated here as my translation of the French ‘propre’, which would address all of the aforementioned meanings at once, as they are precisely collected in this one word. Had it not been awkward to write in English, this ‘my own’ would have been written as ‘proper to me’. Also, note the ‘is/was’ rhetorical device which will recur in this conclusion, and which is a certain indication of the way the an-archic always already disturbs and questions ‘being’, the ‘is’.

<sup>274</sup> “at ipse respondens ait qui intinguit mecum manum in parapside hic me tradet

Filius quidem hominis vadit sicut scriptum est de illo vae autem homini illi per quem

Filius hominis traditur bonum erat ei si natus non fuisset homo ille respondens autem Iudas qui tradidit eum dixit numquid ego sum rabbi ait illi tu dixisti”

(Matthew 26:23-25 [Vulgate])

“And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.”

(Matthew 26:23-25 [King James])

“ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· Ὁ ἐμβάψας μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ τρυβλίῳ τὴν χεῖρα οὗτός με παραδώσει. ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ· οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκείνῳ δι' οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδεται· καλὸν ἦν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος. ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Ἰούδας ὁ παραδιδούς αὐτὸν εἶπε· Μήτηρ ἐγὼ εἰμι, ῥαββί; λέγει αὐτῷ· Σὺ εἶπας.”

(MATΘΑΙΟΝ 26: 23-25)

<sup>275</sup> Letter from Kant to Carl Reinhold in regards to Salomon Maimon's critiques on Kant's philosophy; see: Immanuel Kant, “An Carl Leonhard Reinhold – 28. März 1794,” *Immanuel Kant, gesammelte Schriften Akademie-Ausgabe Bde. 1-23*, bd. 10-13 Briefwechsel, (Charlottesville, Va: InteLex Corporation, 1999) p. 495. 20 June 2009. <[http://crkn.nlx.com/xtf/view?docId=kant\\_de/kant\\_de.10.xml](http://crkn.nlx.com/xtf/view?docId=kant_de/kant_de.10.xml) >

<sup>276</sup> See GS, p. 255 aph. 324 [Kaufmann's note (no. 49) is on the same page]

<sup>277</sup> The Book of Matthew's depictions of the story of Jesus had been reputed to be the most explicit, and many Jewish scholars criticize it for being exceedingly more Anti-Semitic than the Marc version, for example. I'm using the book of Matthew here *not* because i wish to point out any anti-Semitism; Anti-Semitism operates on a deeper logic than that of race or customs in my opinion. What i will attempt to expose here – and the ‘drama’ enacted in the Book of Matthew helps make my argument clearer – is how is Judas vilified, through what means. There is a clash of ontological positions here, i believe, which is fundamentally a clash of an ethical order. I refrain from identifying any ontology or ethics as ‘Jewish’, for i was never sure of the meaning of this accusative. It is not the Jew who is vilified here, in this scene; it is precisely *Homo Perfidus*.

<sup>278</sup> Luke 22:11

<sup>279</sup> In what follows i will not keep to the order of the story's narrative – the chrono-logical order – as the breaking of the transubstantiation ritual ensues after Jesus had betrayed his traitor. The order i present here is one of escalating substitutions, and i maintain that the substitution of betrayal is more radical than that of the transubstantiation. I hope to show the rationale behind this altered progression in what follows.

<sup>280</sup> Consider the following by Lévinas in relation to this transubstantiation: “The body is neither an obstacle opposed to the soul nor a tomb that imprisons it. It is the very susceptibility of the Self, a susceptibility to wounding and sacrifice” (BPW, p. 182 n. 27).

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Could Jesus be abolishing his own sacrifice with this gesture? Becoming, again, immaculate, invulnerable? Thus, according to Lévinas, engaged in a precise violence to the face of the other insofar as he rids himself – in a symbolic manner – of his very openness/susceptibility?

In regards to our previous discussion, consider yet another quote from Lévinas, which seems to differentiate clearly between this act and substitution: “Substitution is not an act but contrary to the act; it is a passivity inconvertible into an act” (Ibid, p. 91)

<sup>281</sup> It is also important to note here – as this will prove to be a major theme in this scene – that Jesus is also absolved of the charge of taking the place of the original host (and parasiting the host) as the place had been designated by Judas. Judas is there to take the blame, and thus Jesus is free to be the host with a clear conscience. This subliminal game of musical-chairs and substitution will continue; but notice how it will always be Judas who remains singled-out in this ‘game’ which – by the time the music/noise stops – proves to be the unsuspecting victim of the most radically violent trap.

<sup>282</sup> According to Luke: “But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.” (Luke 22: 21); compare with Matthew’s “He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish” (above).

<sup>283</sup> “But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth”

(Luke 22: 21-27)

<sup>284</sup> Matthew 26: 22

<sup>285</sup> To maintain clarity, I will add that in both the Vulgate and the Greek original, Christ’s own speech is of the order of the dictum/eipon (even when saying “I say...”). This does not so much detract from my point, for ‘God’ retains the ‘Word’ in its eternal purity – which is precisely my point (on earth, parasites need sustenance for their flesh, as Jesus needed it too, and are thus unworthy of the ‘Word’). Unsurprisingly, Jesus’ way to reunite himself with God – and thus with the ‘Word’ (as on earth he was reduced to using the derived forms of speech, the speech of parasites) – is precisely to rid himself of all charges of parasitism (which means, in the final account, to die, to be rid of one’s ‘mortal remains’ – what is symbolically enacted in the transubstantiation).

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<sup>286</sup> “dico.” & “eipon,” *A Latin Dictionary*. It is also worthwhile mentioning that even in the Aramaic version of the New Testament – called the *Peshitta* – the ‘Word’/‘Verbum’/‘Logos’ of the first verse in the first Chapter of the Book of John are translated to the Aramaic ‘milta’ (‘word’), which, again is of a different root than the word used in the Book of Matthew – ‘amart’ (‘saying’).

<sup>287</sup> Since it is the *double insistence* of not saying “it is him” himself; and when he does implicate Judas, to refer to his speech-of-a-traitor, even when betraying his-self, as non-divine speech.

Curiously enough, this precise criticism is echoed by Derrida’s critique of structuralism, as he shows it to conceive of a qualifying center that is nonetheless *outside* the structure, where the structure’s ‘play’ – just like our aforementioned ‘substitutions’ – comes to a halt. See in: Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences,” *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) pp. 278-279.

<sup>288</sup> And, i will admit, the question of murder is still hard for me to think through.

<sup>289</sup> I will only address the ‘breach-of-contract’ that the traitor enacts; lets assume, for the sake of argument, that it is the easiest, most efficient method to kill a person – the ‘cowardly’ aspect of the traitor.

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